

**ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON BASIC AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
DURING THE 9TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, NIGERIA**

BY

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Legislative Studies (MLS)**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation, *Assessing the effectiveness of the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education during the 9th National Assembly, Nigeria*, is a product of my own research efforts, undertaken with the supervision of Prof. Jake Dan-Azumi. It is an original work and has not in whole or part been presented elsewhere for the award of any degree. Where material has been used from other sources, it has been properly acknowledged through references.

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CERTIFICATION

This dissertation titled, *Assessing the effectiveness of the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education during the 9th National Assembly, Nigeria*, presented by Isiyaka TIJANI (PG/NLS/2015057) has met the partial requirement for the award of the degree of Masters in Legislative Studies (MLS) of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies/University of Benin, Benin City.

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APPROVAL PAGE

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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to Almighty Allah who gave me divine guidance, knowledge, tremendous energy and determination to achieve this.

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I am grateful to the Almighty God for his infinite mercies and grace. I thank my supervisors, Prof. Jake Dan-Azumi and Dr. Abdullahi Yunusa, for their guidance throughout the entire time I wrote my dissertation. My appreciation also goes to my ever-loving life partner, Engr. (Mrs.) Ramat Abdullahi, for her support throughout the programme. Thank you also to Terfa Gbahabo for his encouragement. My clerk, Barrister (Mrs.) Osuagwu Chidinma, the staff of the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education, and to my course mates, I say thank you all.

ABSTRACT

The committee system is one of the important mechanisms through which legislatures perform their functions. Given the importance of the committee in the legislative process, this dissertation examines the effectiveness of the committee, using the Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary) as a case study. The broad objective of the study is to assess the effectiveness of parliamentary committees and legislative processes in the Nigerian National Assembly.

The study employs a qualitative approach; data were collected using both primary and secondary sources; and 10 respondents were interviewed from the legislature, civil society and government ministries and agencies. The data was analyzed using content analysis.

The study finds that the Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary) performs three functions: examine draft legislations in the Basic and Secondary Education sector; investigate matters of public concern that affect the jurisdiction of the committee; and scrutinize the policies and budgets, projects and programmes of ministries, department, and agencies under its jurisdiction. Second, the dissertation finds that the committee is effective in performing its functions: it held 16 meetings, conducted 37 oversight visits to ministries, departments and agencies, 0 investigative hearings, five public hearings and a total of nine referrals were received by the committee, ranging from bills to motions.

This study concluded that Senate committee on education (Basic and Secondary) has done very well in fulfilling its mandate. However, there are areas of improvement and this study is recommending the committee system should be professionalized. The secretariat staff should be composed of people with different experiences and fields of knowledge based on the capacity and legislative needs of the committee. The committee staff should be adequately trained and retrained on legislative matters, ICT, and legislative procedures; this in turn will enrich and reposition the committee system.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study.

The legislature symbolizes the existence of democracy. Fish (2006) argued that the effectiveness of the legislature determines the status of democracy. If the legislature of a country is strong, the democracy of that country is bound to be strong. The fundamental question is: how can we measure the effectiveness of a legislature to know how strong or weak such a legislature is? Scholars, analysts, development partners and legislative practitioners have come to realize the need to constantly and continuously evaluate the legislature to deepen the democratic process (Barkan, 2010; Okoosi-Simbine, 2010; Fish & Kroenig, 2009). The motivating factor for this belief stems from the centrality of the legislature to democratic experiences. Arguably, democracy is inconceivable without the legislature, as the tenets of democracy are construed around the legislature. Perhaps, it is in light of this that Bello-Imam (2004) asserted that any attack against the legislature is a blow against democracy. The essence of evaluating the legislature is to establish the level at which the institution fosters democratic sustenance or its extent of exposing democratic rule to the threat of truncation, especially in developing countries.

Legislatures perform most of their functions through the Committee systems. The committee system assumes great importance since parliament in its corporate nature cannot have complete oversight over government and all its activities. Committees are small groups of Legislators who are assigned, either on a temporary or permanent basis, to examine matters more closely than the full Chamber. The size of a legislature is usually too large and incongruous to examine effectively, efficiently and in any meaningful detail, the many Bills and other matters that come before it. Equally, a House cannot properly cope with many businesses at a time. Furthermore, the job of law-making, which is the primary function of a

Legislature, requires a certain level of expertise and professionalism. A Committee therefore is more suitable and better equipped to consider the technical details of draft laws. It is also comparatively easier for a committee to agree to a compromise position acceptable to the Legislature in Plenary, thus facilitating the process of law-making and decision making. Because of the ever-increasing workload of the Legislative Arm of Government, coupled with the skills required for well-articulated legislation, Committees of the Legislature have come to occupy the centre stage in the legislative decision-making process. Indeed, by their enormous contribution to law-making, Legislative Committees can be regarded as "Little Legislatures". Some writers in the United States of America have observed that "Congress in Session is Congress on Public Exhibition while Congress in its Committees is Congress at Work". Section 62 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria makes the following provisions:

- (1) *The Senate or the House of Representatives may appoint a committee of its members for such special or general purpose as in its opinion would be better regulated and managed by means of such a committee, and may by resolution, regulation or otherwise, as it thinks fit, delegate any functions exercisable by it to any such Committee.*
- (2) *The number of members of a Committee appointed under this section, their terms of office and quorum shall be fixed by the House appointing it.*
- (3) *The Senate and the House of Representatives shall appoint a Joint Committee on Finance consisting of an equal number of persons appointed by each House and may appoint any other Joint Committee under the provisions of this section.*
- (4) *Nothing in this section shall be construed as authorizing such House to delegate to a Committee the power to decide whether a Bill shall be passed into law or to determine any matter which it is empowered to determine by Resolution under the provisions of this Constitution, but the Committee may be authorized to make recommendations to the House on any such matter.*

In all democracies, citizens are always interested in the performance level of their legislators in advancing the interests of the constituencies on the floor of the House and the number of developmental benefits the legislators can attract to their constituencies. Since the 1970s when the concept of "legislative effectiveness" gained traction, different approaches, indicators, benchmarks and assessment toolkits for evaluating the legislature have been put forward by scholars. These range from self-assessment guides to minimum criteria for legislative performance. Legislatures across the globe, especially in developed democracies have institutionalized these assessment toolkits and periodic evaluations have become more of a tradition. However, the reverse is the case in developing democracies as most legislatures especially in Africa detest evaluation and the legislators are most willing to frustrate any attempt at evaluating them. More worrisome is the fact that most of the developed assessment toolkits are not applicable in these developing democracies given the differences existing across the legislatures and the specificity of the political environment where the legislatures operate.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The legislature is a key arm of government that is saddled with the responsibility of ensuring good governance and nation-building through effective legislation and oversight. One of the strategies adopted to ensure the smooth discharge of its function is the committee system. Thus, given the role the committee system plays in the legislative process, it is pertinent to look at the effectiveness of the committee. This created the imperative for the study. Furthermore, the need to study the effectiveness of the committee system is underscored by its importance. The system does not only aim at lessening the pressure of work on the floor of the house but also at increasing the efficiency of the larger house in its overall responsibilities (Hamalai, 2014). Committees are task-oriented bodies with clearly

defined purposes and directions, which act on behalf of the whole house, which confers legitimacy on them to get some specific legislative responsibilities sorted out in a more manageable and efficient manner. Moreover, the committees oftentimes provide the specialized and technical expertise needed in the legislative process.

There are numerous general statements on the importance of the work done by the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education, but very few scholars have embarked on the more demanding task of making the careful and detailed assessment necessary to determine their true value. Perhaps this can be explained partially by the difficulty of determining exactly how committee effectiveness is to be defined and measured. One can say that the measure of a committee's effectiveness is the extent of its influence on the actions or behaviour of the government. This assertion is simplistic and subjective as the standards of effectiveness would vary according to the observer. Hence, the notion that committee effectiveness should be based on the ability to influence government is somewhat narrow. Should the judgment be based on this criterion alone, it is quite likely that many committees in the Senate would be considered failures. Kunz (1965) provides clarity by pointing out that committees play two important roles against which their effectiveness may be measured. The first consists of making recommendations for government action. The second is in developing awareness of an issue, that is in exposing a situation or problem and publishing the evidence gathered during the inquiry.

The research lacuna is rather interesting as most of the research efforts done earlier were on assessing the legislative role, efficiency, effectiveness and the likes of similar terms that swirl around the Budget allocation, policies, bills initiated and oversight function as elements of the legislative process. This study, therefore, seeks to address the issues of the effectiveness of the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education.

1.3 Research Questions

The study attempted to answer the following research questions:

- i. What is the role of the National Assembly in enhancing education?
- ii. How effective was the 9th Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education?
- iii. What are the challenges faced by the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education?
- iv. How can the Effectiveness of the Senate Committee Education (Basic and Secondary) be strengthened?

1.4 Objective of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to assess the effectiveness of parliamentary committees and legislative processes in the Nigerian National Assembly. The specific objectives are to:

- i. understand the role of the Senate Committee on Education in enhancing education
- ii. assess the effectiveness of the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education in the 9th National Assembly
- iii. understand the challenges faced by the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education
- iv. suggest ways that the Effectiveness of the Senate Committee Basic and Secondary Education can be strengthened.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study is concerned with legislative committees, particularly the effectiveness of committees in the legislative process in the Nigeria National Assembly. The study will cover the activities of the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education in the 9th National Assembly. Hence the scope of the study is that it focuses on the Senate and covered the period from 2019 to 2023.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study offers both theoretical and empirical significance in its contribution to knowledge. Specifically, the study will be of immense benefit to legislators as the findings and recommendations arising from it will broaden the scope and also address identified challenges with the view to promote and enhance education in Nigeria. The study is also significant because it will proffer measures to be undertaken to address the factors or challenges faced by legislative Committees. The study is also significant because it will provide a springboard for further research in this area of knowledge.

1.7 Definition of Key Concepts

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter one contains the general introduction which consists of the background, statements of the research problem, research questions and objectives, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, and the outline of the research. Chapter two provides a thorough review of the literature and theoretical framework. Also, chapter three focuses on a comprehensive statement of the research methodology. In addition, chapter four will provide the presentation of data and a discussion of results. Finally, chapter five provides a summary of the study, recommendations, and contributions of the research. The body of knowledge and conclusions are based on the findings from this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter reviews the relevant literature and adopts a thematic approach in reviewing and discussing extant and relevant literature.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

2.1.1 Legislature

The Nigeria legislature is the National Assembly which is composed of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Typically, legislatures are appointed or elected to represent citizens, make laws and supervise government expenditures. The legislature is an assembly of persons that represents constituents in a country or a state and is vested with the power to make, alter and repeal existing laws (Hamalai, 2014). Importantly, legislatures vary from other branches of government in that they pass laws that are implemented by the executive and interpreted by the judicial branch (Jewell, 1977). The Nigerian National Assembly is a bicameral legislature established under Section 4 of the Nigerian Constitution. It consists of a Senate with 109 members and a House of Representatives with 360 members.

The National Assembly has the power to make laws in terms of Section 4 of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution, which states that "legislative powers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be vested in a National Assembly, which shall have the power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Federation or any part thereof concerning any matter included in the Exclusive Legislative List set out in Part 1 of the Second Schedule to this Constitution." Furthermore, Section 58 (1) specifically states that the National Assembly's law-making powers can be exercised through bills passed by the National Assembly and signed by the President. Similarly, section 9 of the Constitution was drafted in consultation with state legislatures.

Legislative oversight is also defined as the examination, monitoring, and supervision of government agencies, programmes, activities, and policy implementation (Hamalai, 2014). Its goal is to promote accountability, transparency, executive conformity with legislative intent, the abolition of corruption, and the elimination of inefficiency and waste in government. Legislative oversight tools are mandates or instruments that parliaments use to enable and accomplish their oversight tasks, some of which are specified in the Constitution and Standing Orders (Yamamoto, 2007). The 1999 Constitution also grants the National Assembly the jurisdiction to conduct investigations into any topic on which it can make laws (Section 88); confirm executive nominations of chairman and members of established executive bodies (Section 154); and approve the budget (Section 156).

The National Assembly also performs the representation function. The concept of representation is reinforced by several provisions of the Constitution. Several provisions of the Constitution support the concept of representation. Section 14 (2), for example, states that "sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria, from whom the government derives all its power and authority through this Constitution." Furthermore, Section 71 of the Nigerian Constitution empowers the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) to divide each federation state into three senatorial districts and 360 federal constituencies for election to the Senate and House of Representatives, respectively. As a result, lawmakers are elected every four years from defined senatorial districts, constituencies, and council wards to sit in national, state, or local assemblies as representatives of the people who live in those defined geographical areas.

2.1.2 Legislative Committee

Almost all democratic legislatures employ committees to perform their function because of the high volume of work that legislatures receive-such as requests for confirmation of appointment, examination of bills, scrutiny of executive operations and

investigation of matters of public concern. The committee system is one of the primary mechanisms through which legislatures perform their function. Committees are a small of legislators that are assigned or appointed on a permanent or temporary basis to perform tasks delegated to it by the House in detail. A legislative committee, according to Ojagbohunmi (2006), is a division of parliament whose members are often chosen to carry out specific tasks or execute certain duties for the legislature as a whole. Hamalai (2014), legislative committees are groupings of legislature formed by parliament to carry out certain responsibilities or powers assigned to them. A committee, according to the definition, is a defined group of politicians who are assigned specific responsibilities under the rules of the house and have no other rights than those granted by the chamber that formed the committee.

2.1.3 Establishment of committees in Nigeria

Section 62 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides that The Senate or the House of Representatives may appoint a Committee of its members for such special or general purpose as in its opinion would be better regulated and managed using such a Committee, and may by resolution, regulation or otherwise, as it thinks fit, delegate any functions exercisable by it to any such Committee. Also, the Constitution states that the number of members of a Committee appointed under this section, their terms of office, and quorum shall be fixed by the House appointing it.

Also, Section 62 (3) provides for the establishment of Joint Committees: “The Senate and the House of Representatives shall appoint a joint committee on finance consisting of an equal number of persons appointed by each House and may appoint any other joint committee under the provisions of this section”. Moreover, the Public Accounts Committee is established by Section 85. Lastly, the 1999 Constitution as altered provides that the powers exercised by legislative committees are only delegated and that Committees cannot determine if a bill passes or not. Both Houses of the National Assembly in similitude with the above

constitutional provisions have outlined in detail the types, functions, powers and procedures of Committees (See standing Orders 95, 96, 97 and 98 Senate, and Order XVIII of the House of Representatives). As per the Standing Order of the Senate and House of Representatives, the National Assembly operates the following Committees: Special Committees, Standing Committees, and Select Committees Order 81 and Order XII, Rule 83 of the Standing Orders of the Senate and the House of Representatives respectively, provide for the committal of Bills to either the Committee of the Whole or a Standing Committee, while Order 82 and Order XII, Rule 84 define the scope of amendments to legislation in Committees. Orders 83 and 85 of the Senate and Order XII, Rules 85 and 87 of the House of Representatives prescribe procedures for consideration of Bills in Standing Committees and Committee of the Whole respectively. In addition, the Order further provides guidelines for Committees.

2.1.4 Functions of Legislative Committees

The committee system allows the legislature to examine matters in more detail than ordinarily would be performed in the plenary (Hamalai, 2014). Committees and sub-committees are the units through which legislatures do most of their work. Committees' public hearings may also try to gauge public opinion or determine which policies are accepted by the general public or specific groups. Legislative committees are a way for legislatures to explore complicated matters in greater depth than when they are debated on the House floor. They provide a less adversarial atmosphere than in the full House of Members, which aids in reaching a consensus on issues. Additionally, committees allow members to discuss issues informally and to develop relationships with colleagues from other parties. They also provide forums for compromise and agreement, as well as an opportunity for members of opposition parties to have a say in the policy-making process. Finally, committee members (and committee staff) provide continuity, stability, and historical knowledge and can develop expertise on certain matters.

2.1.5 Types of Legislative Committees

There are different types of committees in the Nigerian National Assembly, and these include Special Committees, Standing Committees, Ad-hoc Committees, and Committee of the Whole. First, Special Committees are formed for the term of the National Assembly and their role is to facilitate the legislative process and assist in the smooth conduct of business.

Second, Standing Committees are created in line with the existing ministries, departments and agencies of government for oversight of those sectors in the Nigerian political economy. These types of committees are the most common type of committees found around the world. They are most often referred to as standing committees but sometimes are referred to as permanent committees. They deal with subject matters or specific areas of the work of the Legislatures. They exercise the legislative body's oversight functions over the specific executive agencies within their purview, mainly by scrutinizing appropriations proposals and monitoring Budget implementation. The characteristic of a standing committee is that it is more permanent in nature and is set within the system's rules. Thus, the number and jurisdiction of standing committees tend to be more stable over time than other committees. Although the functions of these committees will depend on their jurisdiction, standing committees tend to have a greater focus on considering legislation than other types of committees. Additionally, there is a special type of standing committee that exists when the legislature is not in session. Standing Committee Members gain considerable expertise about the subject matters within their jurisdiction. Examples of standing committees in the National Assembly are Committee on Health, Committee on ICT, Committee on Judiciary, and Committee on Basic and Secondary Education. Standing committee members, usually gain considerable expertise about the subject matters within their committee's jurisdiction. (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, 1996); (Stoddard, 2018, p. 6-10)

Third, Ad-hoc committees are another common feature of the committee system. These committees are more varied in their names. Ad hoc committees are also commonly known as select or special committees. These committees are formed for a single legislative session and have a far more restricted jurisdiction. The functions of these committees will vary depending on the purpose of their creation, but ad-hoc committees tend to be more investigatory than deliberative. An exceptional instance of ad-hoc committees is the emergency committee, which is created in response to a state of emergency declared by the executive branch. This committee operates while the remainder of legislative functions tends to diminish or disappear for the duration of the emergency. These committees are given powers comparable to the larger legislative body in terms of magnitude, but their jurisdiction is limited to matters arising from the emergency. While these committees are comparable to other ad-hoc committees in their presumed limited time frame, their powers are exceptionally expansive (Stoddard, 2018. p. 7-8).

Fourth, Joint Committees are a feature of bicameral legislatures. These committees are composed of members from each house and address issues concerning the operation of the Legislature. These committees can simplify deliberative and investigative functions that would normally be shared between the two houses and strengthen the legislature's collective position on issues about the executive.

Fifth, Conference Committees are another feature of bicameral legislatures. When legislation passes through both houses, a conference committee is formed to negotiate the inconsistencies between the two drafts. These committees are generally composed of equal members from both houses of the legislature. If a conference committee can reach an agreed-upon version of the bill, it then proceeds along the legislative process and then sends it to the executive for approval. If a compromise cannot be reached, the committee is disbanded and the bills return to the respective houses. Although some states use the term "joint committees" to refer to conference committees, the two categories are conceptually distinct.

A conference committee has no power to address any matter beyond the text of the bills assigned to it, whereas a joint committee operates more comparably to a standing or ad hoc committee, but with the benefit of representing both houses. Interviews with legislators indicate that conference committees create less competition between the two houses and more collaboration between legislators with similar interests.

Sixth, Committees of the Whole is the least common type of committee, with most examples found in members of the British Commonwealth and other former British colonies. In Nigeria, the Committee of the Whole is when the legislature or one of the houses sits together but utilizes committee procedural rules rather than traditional floor procedures. This happens when the entire membership of a Chamber forms a committee that is chaired by its Presiding Officer to consider a bill or a matter of concern (Hamalai, 2014). A traditional purpose for having and utilizing a committee of the whole was to avoid the public record that accompanied traditional floor procedure (Hamalai, 2014). While committees of the whole utilize committee procedures, they do not result in the same costs and benefits that result from the rest.

Seventh, subcommittees are smaller committees formed within the jurisdiction of a larger committee. A subcommittee's creation and functions are typically left to the discretion of the parent committee, and their precise role varies from system to system.

2.1.6 Legislative Effectiveness

The unanimous view in the literature on legislative effectiveness is that the effectiveness of a legislator may be measured in different ways, including but not limited to the number of bills sponsored by the legislator, whether the bills see any action, whether the bills are reported from committee, whether they pass the chamber, the proportion of the bills sponsored that succeed, and whether bills sponsored by different members possessing similar characteristics are more likely to succeed. These indicators of measuring the effectiveness of

legislators have been examined by different studies. Cox and McCubbins (1993) posit that bills sponsored by mainstream legislators are more likely to be successful either because the sponsor's ideology sends a signal that a proposal reflects the preferences of the entire legislature or party median. The study also highlights that the role of the sponsor's ideology may differ depending on the stage of the bill because parties play a central role in setting the floor agenda. This position lends credence to the party-dominated committee theory which holds that legislative power lies with the political parties. The study by Hall (1996) highlights that committee leaders tend to possess attributes and resources that contribute to their effectiveness in crafting and advancing policy proposals that are more likely to win the support of other legislators.

Consequently, in the absence of precise empirical measures, the following criteria would be used to assess the committee's effectiveness:

- The influence of committees over the actions of the government;
- The output of committee activities;
- The number of bills introduced and passed by committees;
- The extent to which committees deployed their oversight tools.

2.1.7 Challenges of Committees

Committees are challenged by several problems such as Inadequate funding for Committees activities; poor record/information management arising from frequent changes of committee clerks;proliferation of Committees leading to jurisdictional conflict and multiple memberships; the relative inexperience of the legislators in democratic principles and legislative practice and procedure; and the effects of unified government leading to party loyalty and the unwillingness of the legislature to openly criticize the activities of the government;

Dan-Azumi and Gbahabo, (2014); Egwuand Dan-Azumi (2016) suggested that legislative capacity in Africa, and Nigeria particularly, is comparatively underdeveloped due to several factors such as:

- a. Lack of institutional continuity and development especially due to coup d'état, high turnover rates and low educational standards of some Legislators and their Aides;
- b. The problem of high turnover rates of legislators in the National Assembly;
- c. Inadequate access to research, information, and parliamentary facilities, such as the Internet and advanced facilities;
- d. The number, size and composition of Committees in a legislature are important in determining their effectiveness. On the one hand, and as reported by the NDI's (1996) study of defence Committees in 30 legislatures, Committee size is essential to Committee effectiveness. Related to the above is the issue of the right number of Committees that a legislature should have. Standing Order stipulates the number of Committees that each House should constitute. On the other hand, having a large number of standing Committees in a legislature may lead to the following negative consequences: members will belong to several Committees than is healthy for the legislature; a problem of overlapping mandates or jurisdictional conflict across Committees will be created;
- e. And, available resources for Committees may be greatly hampered (Hamalai, Obadan & Egwu, 2015).
- f. Other challenges that Committees face include the weak administrative and professional capacity to function effectively; inadequate office space and equipment for some Committee staff; late submission and consideration of Committees' reports; inadequate funds for Committee activities; weak application of oversight power deriving from lack of or limited political will; negligence in information management arising from a frequent change of Committee clerks; insufficient enforcement of

compliance with resolutions on sensitive national issues; and absenteeism or non-participation of some members to Committee functions, overbearing of executives.

2.2 Empirical Review

Review the previous study using the following themes: objective, research methods, findings, limitation. In a study of the subnational legislature, Fashagba (2009b) studied the effectiveness of the committee system in enhancing legislative efficiency in Nigeria between 2003 and 2006, relying on personal interviews and documentary evidence. The study concluded that the committees of the Kwara State House of Assembly enhanced the performance of the State Assembly. The study, however, finds that the effectiveness of committees is constrained by several factors: (1) the executive considers oversight activities as interference; (2) inadequate financial resources; (3) lack of implementation of the recommendations from committees; and (4) the problem of *godfatherism* in Kwara State hinders the legislature and its committees from performing their task dispassionately.

Agunyai and Ojakorotu (2021) examine the lessons Nigerian Legislative Committees can learn from the Singaporean counterpart, using desktop research. Legislative committees are important in lawmaking, ensuring responsible constituent representation, and monitoring government institutions. Agunyai and Ojakorotu (2021) examine the lessons that Nigerians can learn from Singapore's parliamentary committee system about corruption control. The paper argues that the Nigerian Parliament has been criticized for its committee structure, as members who are supposed to expose corruption are heavily implicated. The paper concludes that political corruption among members of parliamentary committees exacerbates constituency problems and impedes Nigeria's socioeconomic progress. Singaporean parliamentary committees have had some success in eliminating corruption, as indicated by the country's status as the least corrupt in Asia.

Dauda (2021) examined the role of the 7th Senate Public Account Committee (SPAC) in ensuring Legislative Effectiveness from 2011 to 2015. Primary data was used to assess the challenges faced by the SPAC, and secondary data was used to assess its performance. The study found that the SPAC performed well in some of its legislative functions, but had some lapses in terms of several queries treated and other implementation strategies. Recommendations were made to enhance the legislative activities of the Committee, such as an annual action plan, expanding the membership of the SPAC, effective punitive measures against erred MDAs, and continuous capacity building of members and staff.

According to Nwozor and Olanrewaju (2019), the legislature is at the heart of the modern democratic system for two reasons: first, it houses the most elected representatives, and second, it is the engine room of modern governance, performing the traditional four-fold tasks of representation, lawmaking, oversight, and constituency services. Legislative assemblies must sift through competing expectations and act in the general public interest to meet the demands of modern governance. Legislative assemblies have established the committee structure to expedite its activities to meet these expectations. The National Assembly of Nigeria has been carrying out its fundamental tasks through the use of committees.

According to Nwozor and Olanrewaju (2019), the committee system in the National Assembly has been used as a pretext by successive leaderships to consolidate their tenures, in addition to its relevance in reducing workload and improving overall efficiency. While the paper acknowledges that committees have been embroiled in several corruption scandals that have undermined their moral authority to instill integrity in governance, it concludes that the committees have made significant contributions to the development of critical competencies that have aided the National Assembly's overall legislative success.

Pere, Osain, and Orueze (2013) conducted a study to investigate the functional impact of the Public Accounts Committee on public accountability over financial crimes in Nigeria.

The study discovered that there was a positive and significant relationship between PAC function and public accountability, the relationship was very weak due to a lack of maintaining cordial relationships between them. Not only that, the Nigerian PAC lacked a systematic approach to carrying out its functions to enhance public accountability. Secondly, PAC in actual function carried out a measure of statutory duties but not good enough to enhance transparency and accountability in Nigeria. Thirdly, there was the great significance of the PAC function for public accountability over financial crimes in Nigeria. Thus, awareness has been created of PAC functions and their role in enhancing transparency and accountability in Nigeria. Fourthly, there was no check on accountability and equilibrium of power, therefore, undermining the accountability forums that were able to contribute to the prevention of corruption and the abuse of powers. Regarding accountability and reflective governance, the study also observed that there was not much learning perspective of political administrators in Nigeria. Otherwise, accountability arrangements could have stimulated administrative bodies and officials to achieve a higher awareness of the environment, increase self-reflection and induce the ability to change. Finally, the study discovered that Auditor General's dependency on auditees was not helping matters with due regard to give adequate support to the PAC in terms of producing absolute annual reports.

Okanya and Salman (2021) examine the implication of the number and size of Committee, the frequency and dissolution and reconstitution of Committees and the general operations of Committees in the National Assembly. This paper examines the emergence, characteristics, structure and operations of the committee system in the Nigerian National Assembly (NASS). The paper suggests that to strengthen the activities of Standing Committees, there is a need to restructure their number and size to bring them in line with reality and address other operational deficits bordering on leadership and resource gaps.

Akande (2020) assessed the Appropriation Committee's contributions to the 8th National Assembly's budget oversight operations. It also identified the issues that the 8th National Assembly's Appropriation Committee faced during the budget scrutiny process, as well as suggestions that can assist make the Appropriation Committee more effective in budget scrutiny in Nigeria. As a guide, the survey research method was utilised, therefore a questionnaire was used to obtain the necessary data from 45 out of 57 respondents who were chosen based on their understanding of the factors under consideration. The data was collected and analysed using the most recent SPSS version, and it was presented in tables, graphs, and charts. According to the study, the Committee on Appropriation's budget oversight operations have expanded dramatically since 1999, yet the effects have not been noticed by Nigerians due to the difficulties encountered by this Committee. These issues include insufficient technical capacity, a lack of organic budget law, a high rate of lawmaker turnover, and late budget presentations by the Executive. As a result, the study stated that members of the National Assembly's Appropriation Committee should be fully trained as well as adequately resourced.

2.2.1 Knowledge Gap

The review of empirical literature reviews that there are several recent studies conducted to assess the effectiveness of legislative committees (Fashagba, 2009; Agunyai and Ojatorotu, 2021; Dauda 2021; Nwozor and Olanrewaju, 2019; Pere, Osain, and Orueze, 2013; Akande, 2020; Okanya and Salman, 2021). However, there are limited empirical studies done to assess the effectiveness of legislative committees (see for example, Fashagba, 2009; Akanda, 2020; Dauda, 2021). Yet, there are limited study on the effectiveness on the Senate Committee on Education. Hence, this study aims to fill this gap.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Several theoretical frameworks can be used to interpret the result of the study on oversight, such as institutional theory, accountability framework, and principal-agent theory. In this study, while accountability and the principal-agent theory have been discussed, this study employs the principal-agent theory (PAT) to interpret the result of the study.

2.3.1. Principal Agent Theory (PAT)

The Principal Agent Theory (PAT) is a suitable theoretical framework for assessing the effectiveness of the Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary) in the 9th Senate. PAT explains the relationship between the legislature and its committees with the executive. Pioneers and proponents of the PAT include Weingast and Moran (1983); Moe (1984); Fukuyama (2004). According to Pelizzo and Stapenhurst (2012), the principal-agent paradigm emphasizes institutional structures via which principals (legislature) can monitor and impose compliance on their agents (executive). This theory is particularly well suited to explaining, first, the accountability relationship between citizens (as principals) and the executive and legislative branches (both as agents), and, second, the accountability relationship between the legislature (as principals representing citizens) and both the executive and the bureaucracy (as agents). PAT is appropriate for understanding parliament's oversight tasks since the legislature has been granted constitutional rights and powers to monitor and supervise (on behalf of citizens) the conduct of the executive and its agencies.

Fukuyama (2004, pp.190-191) used the PAT to describe public service. He stated that the ultimate principals are the general public (people). He contends that in a democracy, elected representatives are the first-level agents who function as principals in the executive branch, which acts as agents authorised to implement legislation and policies enacted by the legislature. He observed that issues arise when individual agents - government employees - prioritize their financial interests over the interests of their patrons. To counteract such

behaviour and better align the principal-agent model interests, greater transparency in agent activity is required, along with holding agents accountable for their actions through a variety of rewards and punishments (Pelizzo and Stapenhurst, 2012).

Fukuyama (2004b) points out three problems when applying the principal-agent theory to public sector governance: unclear goals, high transaction costs, and differing degrees of delegated discretion. This set of mechanisms is referred to as oversight tools or mechanisms, which have been discussed in Section 2.4 and Table 2.1 above. The principal-agent theory is suitable for this research because the study focuses on the effectiveness of committees of the National Assembly. This is because PAT allows the opportunity to examine the relationship between the executive and the legislature and how legislatures deploy oversight tools to ensure agents' compliance with the principal's intention. While the PAT explains the nature of governance in an ideal context, this is far from the case in Nigeria, where the legislature's oversight role has been marred with corruption (Fashagba, 2009) and lack of political will (Pelizzo and Stapenhurst, 2014). One of the critiques of the PAT is that it does not assign a collaborative or partnership role to the executive in the oversight functions besides one of compliance. Moreover, PAT wrongly assumes that all agents would want to undermine the authority of the executive. The theory is silent in instances where there are multiple principals such as the legislature and the executive.

2.3.2 Accountability

Accountability is one type of oversight measure. Oversight is the process by which an oversight institution, such as the legislature, checks in on the executive. However, accountability refers to the process through which the executive accounts for its policies and actions (Kinyondo, Pelizzo, & Umar, 2015). According to Dykstra (1939, pp.1-25), the idea is frequently used interchangeably with concepts such as accountability, answerability, blameworthiness, liability, and so on. Accountability is relevant to the issue of governance

and has been used to discuss difficulties in the public sector, non-profit organisations, and, more specifically, private enterprises (Dykstra (1939)). Accountability is defined as the acceptance or assumption of responsibility for acts, choices, and policies, including administration and governance, as well as the requirement to report, explain, and answer for repercussions. Tumushabe et al. (2010), p. Importantly, the ultimate purpose of the Senate Committees on Education's oversight responsibility is to guarantee that people entrusted with public money are held accountable for how taxpayers' money is used.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discussed the methodological technique applied in the study. The chapter was structured into research design, population, sampling and sampling techniques, and method of data collection, both primary and secondary were discussed alongside the technique of data analysis in this chapter.

3.1 Research Design

This study used a qualitative technique with a descriptive research design to reveal the truth by analysing the phenomena in their real-life environment. As a result, the design is used to define people's attitudes, opinions, and behaviour. The qualitative technique is used by the researcher to study the role and performance of the Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary) because it provides an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon under examination with a focus on stakeholders' viewpoints.

3.2 Population of the Study

A population is made up of persons who have one or more traits that are of interest to the researcher, are related in the context of the study, and on whom the research is founded and carried out. The population of the study is comprised of legislators, civil society, and staff of the Ministry of Education and its departments and agencies.

| | Category of Organisation | Population |
|---|--|-------------------|
| 1 | Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education | 17 |
| 2 | Civil Society Organisation: Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) | 29 |
| 3 | Staff of the Ministry of Education | 900 |
| 4 | Staff of National Examination Council | 536 |
| | Total | 1482 |

Source: Fieldwork, May 2023

3.3 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A sample is a group of items taken from the population to provide the needed information for the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, the sampling technique is divided into probability and non-probability. The sampling technique for the qualitative study is non-probability (purposive sampling) in which units are purposely selected to replicate specific characters of groups inside the sampled units or population (Sandelowski, 1995).

The sample size of this study is drawn from the following stakeholders: Members of the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education; National Examination Council (NECO); Ministry of Education; Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC). For the purpose, three (3) respondents were chosen from the Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary), two (2) staff of the National Education Council (NECO), two (2) staff of the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), two (2) staff of the Ministry of Education, and one (1) Committee Clerk). Hence, the sample size for this study is 10, as presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Showing the distribution of the Sample Size

| Population | Sample Size |
|---|-------------|
| Legislators | 3 |
| Ministry of Education | 2 |
| National Education Council (NECO) | 2 |
| Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) | 2 |
| Clerk of the Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary) | 1 |
| Total | 10 |

Source: Author, May 2023

The number (00) of the informants in this study was determined by the point of saturation. This is a point in the data collection process where no new information is emerging from the informants during the interviews. The sampling stopped once it reached a saturation point as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Merriam (1998) highlights that numbers and size of informants is not the case in qualitative research since the study is not expected to make a generalization, but placed priority on informants with in-depth knowledge on the issue under investigation. Therefore, drawing large number beyond the saturation point is contrary to the principle of qualitative research (Marshall, 1996; Rubib& Rubin, 2011). According to Sandelowski (1995), the sample size for qualitative research is frequently a subjective judgement because the target populations are people who are considered knowledgeable about the topic being examined. The nature of this study (qualitative) relies on a small size sample to enable the researcher to explore the responses of the major stakeholders.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

In assessing the legislative effectiveness of the Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary) in Nigeria's 9th National Assembly, the research employed both primary and secondary data to answer the research questions. The adopted two sources of data collection were discussed in detail below. Different data sources were used for some of the objectives

3.4.1 Primary Source

The primary source of data collection adopted for this research is exclusively based on the oral tradition which is an integral and vital component of the source of the information from the fieldwork which would be obtained through the use of semi-structured interviews.

Interview

The semi-structured interviews were conducted for the study with 10 respondents. The information gathered was transcribed, recorded and labelled for easy analysis. The aims were to allow the researcher to collect data from the stakeholders' voices. As a result, three (3) respondents were chosen from the Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary), two (2) staff of the National Education Council (NECO), two (2) staff of the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), two (2) staff of the Ministry of Education, and one (1) Committee Clerk).

3.4.2 Secondary Source of Data Collection

The secondary data were sourced largely from documents such as Sessional Reports of the Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary), Journal Articles and Books.

Document Review

The document is a method that was used to collect data in the research and it provided an important source of information in the study. Sessional Reports of the Senate Committee on Education, Bill Progression Chart, etc.

3.5 Technique of Data Analysis

This section explains the data analysis process in this study. The analysis in this study started by transcribing the interview manually. The transcripts were used as the basis for the analysis through the use of thematic analysis. The researcher followed the analytical procedures proposed by Creswell (2007). Firstly, the researcher transcribed all the interviews. Secondly, each of the transcribed interviews was read, re-read and re-read in its entirety for familiarization and preparation for coding. Thirdly, the researcher reduced the collected data into various themes through the process of coding (Hills, Huberman and Saldana, 2014)

The analysis of data requires several closely related operations such as the establishment of categories, the application of these categories has been on raw data through coding, tabulation and then analysis by using the responses of informants from the interview. In the case of the topic under discussion, the data collected for this research was analyzed using thematic content analysis. This helped in measuring the relationship between the assumptions of the researcher and what has been found in reality in the field. On the other hand, qualitative data has been analyzed based on the responses of respondents to the questions raised in the interview, which will give the researcher a guide on the role and performance of the Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary)

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presented the analysis and discussions of the data obtained in the course of the research. The primary objective of the study was to assess the effectiveness of the Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary) in the 9th Senate. The data employed in the study were generated using in-depth interviews but augmented with secondary data such as the sessional report of the Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary) in the 9th Senate. Pseudonyms were employed to identify the respondents at their request. The presentation, analysis and discussion of data were done according to the objectives of the study as outlined in chapter one.

4.1 The Role of the Senate Committee on Education in enhancing education

The data from the interview reveals that the Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary) performs three functions: to examine draft legislations in the Basic and Secondary Education referred to it; investigate matters of public concern that affect the jurisdiction of the committee; and to scrutinize the policies and budgets, projects and programmes of ministries, department, and agencies under its jurisdiction" (Chairman, Senate Committee on Education, personal interview, April 17, 2023, 4.00 pm). This confirms the mandate of the committee as stated in the Sessional Report of the Committee: the is mandated to interact with stakeholders in the educational sector with the view to bringing tangible inputs that would help to move the sector forward; identify the challenges and constraints facing our educational institutions and systems, and proffer possible and effective solutions to achieve the desired results; initiate legislations in line with government policies that would bring about positive changes in our educational sector and to oversee ministries, departments and agencies under the Committee's jurisdiction and relevant laws.

Moreover, The position of the Standing Order 2022 concerning the role of the Committee is confirmed by interviews conducted with Senator James John: "The Committee performs three functions, to examine draft legislations in the Basic and Secondary Education referred to it; investigate matters of public concern that affects the jurisdiction of the committee; and to scrutinize the policies and budgets, projects and programmes of ministries, department, and agencies under its jurisdiction" (Chairman, Senate Committee on Education, personal interview, April 17, 2023, 4.00 pm),

4.2 Assessment of the effectiveness of the Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary) in the 9th National Assembly

This subsection of the dissertation assessed the effectiveness of the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education in the 9th National Assembly. The activities of the Committee were assessed to determine its effectiveness. The scope of activities assessed includes meetings, public and investigative hearings, bill and motion referrals, oversight visits and project inspections. To assess the effectiveness of the Committee, the output or quantity of the committees and the outcomes or direct results or effects of the activities conducted by the Committees were assessed. This data was complemented by oral interviews conducted with 10 respondents. Interview data suggest that the committee is effective in performing its lawmaking, oversight and representation functions. This is confirmed by analysis of the Sessional Reports of the Committees from 2019 to 2023. The committee conducted a total of 16 meetings, including budget defence meetings, interactive meetings with the MDAs; 37 oversight visits to ministries, departments and agencies to inspect projects and the level of compliance with the appropriation law; five public hearings.

Committee meetings

A meeting is a gathering of a group of people that is planned for a specific reason. The committee held a total of 16 meetings within the period under review. Of these 16 meetings, 8 were conducted in the First session, 2, 3, and 3 were conducted in the Second, Third and Fourth Sessions, respectively, as Table 4.1 shows.

Table 4.1: Committee Meetings of the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education, 2019-2023

| Committee Tool | 1st Session | 2nd Session | 3rd session | 4th Session | Total |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Meetings | 8 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 16 |

Source; Sessional Reports of Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary), 2019-2023

The meetings included regular Committee meetings, budget defence meetings, and interactive meetings with the agencies i.e. Ministry of Education, National Examination Councils, etc. The meetings of the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education in the 9th Senate were held to discuss and plan on how the committee can execute its mandate.

Oversight Visits and Project Inspections

Oversight visits and project inspections are physical visits by legislators to inspect policy, programme and project implementation to government ministries, departments and agencies on which the legislature exercises oversight. These visits entail onsite inspection of projects and programmes for which funds were appropriated to ascertain the progress of implementation and possible challenges. Table 4.2 reveals that a total of 37 oversight visits were conducted by the Committees on Education (Basic and Secondary) in the period under review, out of which 2, 9, 19 and 7 were embarked on in the First, Second, Third and Fourth Sessions, respectively.

Table 4.2: Oversight Visits Conducted by the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education, 2019-2023

| Committee Tool | 1st Session | 2nd Session | 3rd session | 4th Session | Total |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Oversight Visits | 2 | 9 | 19 | 7 | 37 |

Source; Sessional Reports of Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary), 2019-2023

According to Hamalai (2014), there is usually no regulation on the number of visits that a committee should undertake. However, the more the number of visits the better because such visits enable committee members to obtain first-hand information and enable the Committees on Education (Basic and Secondary) to ascertain the activities and projects on which money approved is being expended and to determine if MDAs are complying with legislations in the education sector.

During the period under review, the committee carried out its oversight visit to several ministries, departments and agencies of government. Some of these oversight activities included: an oversight visit to NECO to monitor the conduct of NECO Examinations across the country in their various Senatorial Districts and FCT to ascertain the standard of the examination and adherence to the COVID-19 safety protocols in schools. The Committee observed that NECO made adequate arrangements for the conduct of the examinations; most schools complied with the safety protocols for the pandemic, while the Committee provided face masks and hand sanitizers to some students found without any in some schools in the FCT. The Committee equally observed dilapidated infrastructures in schools visited in Oyo State.

An oversight visit was also conducted to monitor the conduct of the Professional Qualifying Examination (PQE) conducted by the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria on Saturday 22nd May 2021. The programme was aimed at ensuring that only Teachers with proven capacity to handle commensurate pedagogical responsibility, get registered as

Professional Teachers in Nigeria. The examination was well organized and orderly. There was, however, a low turnout for the diet monitored.

More so, the Committee visited the following Agencies to oversight their activities and the full implementation of the 2020 Budget, Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) and challenges: Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) – Thursday 11/3/21; Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) – Friday 12/3/21; National Mass Literacy and Adult Education Commission (Mass Literacy) – Tuesday 18/5/21. The Committee observed from the presentation and detailed submission made by the Council as follows: that the Capital Budget Allocation was fully utilized to implement and service the core mandate programmes of the Council, which was commended but a substantial sum of the IGR, higher than the budget allocation, was equally committed to same programmes such as the Professional Qualifying Examinations (PQE); that enforcement of Registration and Certification of Professional Teachers which commenced in 2019 was hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating effects. Other observations include:

- i. Despite the huge sum spent by the Council on the PQE and Mandatory Continuing Professional Development of Teachers, the Sector is still bedeviled with a lack of professional and qualified Teachers, due to a lack of interest occasioned by poor regard and condition of service for Teachers;
- ii. Teaching and teaching profession are presently considered by candidates as a last resort to unemployment and a source of livelihood;
- iii. IGR was substantially spent on Capital, Personnel and Overhead items including some already budgeted items, without details of expenditure;

Furthermore, the committee conducted an oversight visit to Mass Literacy Commission which was established to develop policies strategies, and service delivery aimed at eradicating illiteracy for National Development; monitor and standardizing implementation of mass literacy service delivery in Nigeria; network with local and international

stakeholders; and to produce neo-literates that are self-reliant through skill acquisition and functional literacy. An oversight visit to this committee revealed that there were no releases of funds that seriously affect budget implementation by MDAs, the Need for increased budgetary allocations for the Basic and Secondary Education sub-sector, that the unforeseen pandemic and system shutdown stalled most of the Committee's work plan and activities, and no adequate infrastructural ICT facilities or measures were on ground to sufficiently carry out Committee activities.

Public Hearings

Public hearings on draft bills are frequently praised as a method of soliciting input from different parties. It is a venue for the exchange of ideas on topics of private and national interest with the executive branch, independent legal or academic experts, representatives of business groups, civil society movements, labour unions, non-governmental organisations, private persons, and so on (Hamalai, 2014). Committees' public hearings served several functions. For starters, it allows committees to acquire as much information as possible regarding potential financial crime legislation. In the context of legislative oversight, committees collect information regarding the operations of the executive branch and its agencies under scrutiny through the public hearing process. As a result, public hearings are a key component of oversight efforts since they encourage public discussion of concerns. Despite this, public hearings were not among the top oversight techniques used by Senate Committees on Education throughout the time under consideration. The Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary) conducted a total of 5 public hearings: 0, 2, 2, and 1 in the First, Second, Third and Fourth Sessions, respectively, as Table 4.3 reveals.

Table 4.3 Public Hearing Conducted by the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education, 2019-2023

| Committee Tool | 1st Session | 2nd Session | 3rd session | 4th Session | Total |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Public Hearings | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 |

Source; Sessional Reports of Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary), 2019-2023

Furthermore, Table 4.4 presents the details of the number of Public Hearings conducted by the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education in the period under review.

Table 4.4: Number of Public Hearings Conducted by the Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary)

| S/N | TITLE OF BILLS | DATE REFERRED |
|------------|---|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Federal Unity Schools (Establishment) Bill | 30 th November 2021 |
| 2. | National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (Establishment) Bill | 15 th February 2022 |
| 3. | National Secondary Education Commission Act (Repeal & Re-enactment) Bill | 11 th May 2022 |
| 4 | Motion on the Urgent Need for the Restoration and Revalidation of the Safe School Initiative in Nigeria – 30 th September 2021 | |
| 5 | National Examination Management Commission (Establishment) Bill – 28 th February 2022 | |

Source: Sessional Report of the Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary), 2019-2023

These Public Hearing were conducted on get stakeholders view on both motions and bills referred to the Committee by the Senate at plenary.

Investigative Hearings

According to Hamalai (2014), investigative hearings are an important aspect of public hearings. Investigative hearings or legislative probes are employed to conduct investigations

on subject matters relating to issues of public concern/national interest and wrongdoing. Probes are to ensure that due process was not breached. Unfortunately, the Committee did not perform any investigative hearings in the 9th National Assembly, as revealed by Table 4.5

Table 4.5 Investigative Hearings Conducted by the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education, 2019-2023

| Committee Tool | 1st Session | 2nd Session | 3rd session | 4th Session | Total |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Investigative Hearings | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Source: Sessional Report of the Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary), 2019-2023

Investigations are aimed at unravelling the circumstances surrounding various issues of public concern or interest and the need for public accountability. However, most of the findings and recommendations from the probes are never implemented (Hamalai, 2014). There is the perception that although there is evidence of increased legislative oversight in the last few years, especially through increased investigations of malfeasance in the activities of MDAs and collaborating private sector operators, nothing seems to happen thereafter. From the above-stated investigations, it is clear probes are aimed at unravelling the circumstances surrounding various issues of public concern or interest and the need for public accountability. However, most of the findings and recommendations from the probes are never implemented (Hamalai, 2014). There is the perception that although there is evidence of increased legislative oversight in the last few years, especially through increased investigations of malfeasance in the activities of MDAs and collaborating private sector operators, nothing seems to happen thereafter. It is interesting to note that the Committee did not employ the oversight tool of investigative hearing in the 9th National Assembly.

Bill Referral

One of the important matters that engage the attention of committees is a detailed review of proposed legislation. After the Second Reading, the bill is usually forwarded to the committee covering the subject matter for detailed consideration. Considering that Committees in the National Assembly are an integral part of the legislative process, their level of engagement in the review of draft legislation is a pointer to their level of activities (Hamalai, 2014). A total of 5 Bills were referred to the Committee in the 9th Senate.

Table 4.6 No of Bills Referred to the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education, 2019-2023

| Committee Tool | 1st Session | 2nd Session | 3rd session | 4th Session | Total |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| No of the Bills referred to the Committee | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 |

Source: Sessional Report of the Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary), 2019-2023

As Table 4.6 shows, these Bills include: Federal Unity Schools (Establishment) Bill; National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (Establishment) Bill (SB 832); National Secondary Education Commission Act (Repeal & Re-enactment) Bill (SB 996); National Examination Management Commission (Establishment) Bill – 28th February 2022, and National Commission on Child Destitution (Establishment) Bill, 2022 (SB 42).

Table 4.3: Number of Bills Referred to the Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary) in the 9th National Assembly

| S/N | TITLE OF BILLS | STATUS |
|-----|--|--|
| 1. | Federal Unity Schools (Establishment) Bill | Report Laid 20 th July 2022 |
| 2. | National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (Establishment) Bill (SB 832) | The report concluded but not yet Laid |
| 3. | National Secondary Education Commission Act (Repeal & Re-enactment) Bill (SB 996) | Report Laid, Presented and Bill Passed 26 th July 2022; Conference Report Laid & Approved 28 th December, 2022 |
| 4. | National Examination Management Commission (Establishment) Bill – 28 th February 2022 | Report Laid, Presented and Bill Passed 20 th July 2022 |
| 5. | National Commission on Child Destitution (Establishment) Bill, 2022 (SB 42) | Pending and awaiting the lead legislative action from the Lead Committee (Establishment and Public Service Matters) |

Source: Sessional Reports of Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary), 2019-2023

Motions Referral

Motions are legislative proposals requesting that the legislature take certain actions or take a required decision (Hamalai, 2014). Motion frequently leads to resolution. The 9th Senate Committee on Education received 4 motions which were considered and the report laid on the floor of the Senate. Three of the four motions have been considered by the Committee and Reports have been laid on the floor of the Senate. A cursory look at the list of motions referred to the Committee reveals that all the motions received were targeted at improving the quality of the education sector in Nigeria. Table 4.4 captured in detail all these motions received by the Committee:

- Motion on the Urgent Need for the Restoration and Revalidation of the Safe School Initiative in Nigeria- Report considered and Laid on 9 March 2022
- Urgent Need to Address the Sorry State of Computer Education by Providing Training for Teachers and Basic Computer Facilities in Public Schools- Report considered and laid on 20th February 2020;

- Need to Integrate Almajiri Education into Modern System of Education in Nigeria with the mandate to come up with ways and means to collaborate with State Governments to integrate out-of-school children into basic & secondary education - Report considered on 23rd June 2020 and laid the report on 21st July 2020; and
- Urge the Federal Government to promote the Development of Classroom/Modern Libraries and Robust Reading Culture in Nigeria: a mandate to interact with the Federal Ministry of Education on the level of achievements regarding the provision of Library Facilities in Schools across Nigeria-Motion under consideration

Table 4.4: Status of Motions referred to the Committee on Education

| S/N | MEASURES | REMARKS |
|-----|--|---|
| 1. | Motion on the Urgent Need for the Restoration and Revalidation of the Safe School Initiative in Nigeria | The report was considered by the Committee and Laid on Wednesday 9 th March 2022 |
| 2 | Urgent Need to Address the Sorry State of Computer Education by Providing Training for Teachers and Basic Computer Facilities in Public Schools | The report was considered, laid and presented the Report to the Senate on 20 th February 2020. |
| 3 | Need to Integrate Almajiri Education into Modern System of Education in Nigeria with the mandate to come up with ways and means to collaborate with State Governments to integrate out-of-school children into basic & secondary education - | The report considered it on 23 rd June 2020 and laid the report on 21 st July 2020. |
| 4 | Urge the Federal Government to promote the Development of Classroom/Modern Libraries and Robust Reading Culture in Nigeria: a mandate to interact with the Federal Ministry of Education on the level of achievements regarding the provision of Library Facilities in Schools across Nigeria. | Motion is being considered by the Committee |

Source: Sessional Report of the Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary), 2019-2023

4.3 Assessing the challenges faced by the Senate Committee on Education

Data from oral interview with respondents on the challenges faced by the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education suggest that Committees are challenged by the problem of capacity, inadequate financial resources, high turnover rate of members of the

Committee, and executive interference. The texts of the interviews conducted with participants are captured below:

The challenges encountered by the Committee are many. For example, there are inadequate funds for committee activities. We didn't have enough money to conduct the public hearing. Sometimes, when you apply for funds for committee activities we do not receive it and sometimes it doesn't come on time. Also, the duplication of jurisdiction between the Committee and the Committee on Education (Tertiary & TETFUND); also lack of good office and essential equipment such as Desktop/Printer/Photocopier (Sen. Johnson, February 10, 2023, 1.00. pm, Personal interviews).

Also, text from interviews identified to following as the challenges faced by the Committee:

First, non-releases of funds seriously affect budget implementation by MDAs; the lack of ICT facilities: the unforeseen pandemic and system shutdown stalled most of the Committee's work plan and activities, and no adequate infrastructural ICT facilities or measures were on the ground to sufficiently carry out Committee activities. Another problem is the problem of lack of funds and office working tools. Many of the staff are not well trained (Mr Musa, March 28, 10, 2023, 9.00. pm, Personal interviews).

This findings corroborated the previous studies on the performance of legislative committees at the Federal and State level. For example, Fashagba (2009b) studied the effectiveness of the committee system in enhancing legislative efficiency in Nigeria between 2003 and 2006, relying on personal interviews and documentary evidence. The study found that the effectiveness of committees is constrained by several factors: (1) the executive considers oversight activities as interference; (2) inadequate financial resources; (3) lack of implementation of the recommendations from committees; and (4) the problem of *godfatherism* in Kwara State hinders the legislature and its committees from performing their task dispassionately. Also, Akande (2020) assessed the Appropriation Committee's contributions to the 8th National Assembly's budget oversight operations. The study found that the committee was challenged by insufficient technical capacity, a lack of organic budget law, a high rate of lawmaker turnover, and late budget presentations by the Executive.

4.4 **How to strengthen the Effectiveness of the Senate Committee Education (Basic and Secondary)**

Analysis of the field data on the ways to strengthen the effectiveness of the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education reveal there is need for the professionalization of committees and constitute committees in such a way that it is composed of people from different fields of knowledge based on capacity and legislative needs of the committees. Moreover, field data reveal that there is need for committees members to be trained on legislative practice and procedure and on how to perform their task effectively. Legislators need to cultivate political will to perform their task as intended. The excerpt from oral interviews on how to strengthen the effectiveness of the Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary) is captured below:

The committee system needs to be professionalized. There is also a need to balance the composition of the Secretariat Staff with different fields of knowledge based on the capacity and legislative needs of the Committee. The Committee equally recognizes that experiences garnered during training and re-training of staff are enormous, hence the need for more adequate training on Legislative matters, ICT and Legislative procedures, in turn, will enrich and reposition the Committee system (Sen. Peter, April 23, 2.30 pm, personal interviews).

It seems to me that as legislators, we need to hire experienced and well-trained legislative aides. The use of consultants is also helpful because sometimes legislators are assigned to the Committee without consideration for expertise. Legislators should develop the political will to perform their duties judiciously ((Sen. Johnson, February 10, 2023, 1.00. pm, Personal interviews).

In summary, the followings are the ways through which the activities of the committee can be strengthened: The committee system needs to be professionalized. The secretariat staff should be composed of people with different experiences and fields of knowledge based on the capacity and legislative needs of the Committee. The Committee staff should be adequately trained and retrained on Legislative matters, ICT and Legislative procedures, this in turn will enrich and reposition the Committee system. Moreover, legislators should hire experienced legislative aides. The use of consultants is also helpful because sometimes legislators are assigned to the Committee without consideration for

expertise. Legislators should develop the political will to perform their duties judiciously. Adequate funding of committee activities should be encouraged to ensure that the legislative performs its work with fear or favour. Lastly, adequate and well-equipped office space should be provided for the Committees Secretariat

This findings is inline with previous studies. For example, Akande (2020) assessed the Appropriation Committee's contributions to the 8th National Assembly's budget oversight operations and recommended that members of the National Assembly's Appropriation Committee should be fully trained as well as adequately resourced.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

The study finds that the Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary) examines draft legislations in the Basic and Secondary Education referred to it; investigates matters of public concern that affect the jurisdiction of the committee; and to scrutinize the policies and budgets, projects and programmes of ministries, department, and agencies under its jurisdiction.

Second, the study found that the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education is effective in performing its functions. This is because it held 16 meetings and conducted 37 oversight visits to ministries, departments and agencies for onsite inspection of projects and programmes for which funds were appropriated to ascertain the progress of implementation and possible challenges. Some of these oversight activities included an oversight visit to NECO to monitor the conduct of NECO examinations across the country in their various senatorial districts and FCT to ascertain the standard of the examination and adherence to the COVID-19 safety protocols in schools, for example, with serious findings. More so, while no investigative hearing was performed by the committee in the entire four-year period, the committee conducted a total of five oversight visits to collect information regarding the operations of the executive branch and its agencies under scrutiny through the

public hearing process. Lastly, a total of nine referrals were received by the committee, ranging from bills to motions.

Third, the challenges encountered by the Committee were inadequate funds for committee activities; the duplication of jurisdiction between the Committee and the Committee on Education (Tertiary and TETFUND); and a lack of good office and essential equipment such as a desktop, printer, and photocopier.

Fourth, the ways to strengthen include: The committee system needs to be professionalised. The secretariat staff should be composed of people with different experiences and fields of knowledge based on the capacity and legislative needs of the committee. The committee staff should be adequately trained and retrained on legislative matters, ICT, and legislative procedures; this in turn will enrich and reposition the committee system. More importantly, legislators should hire experienced legislative aides. The use of consultants is also helpful because sometimes legislators are assigned to the committee without consideration for expertise. Legislators should develop the political will to perform their duties judiciously. Adequate funding of committee activities should be encouraged to ensure that the legislative branch performs its work without fear or favour. Lastly, adequate and well-equipped office space should be provided for the committee secretariat.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter introduces the summary of the findings, the conclusion of the writer and recommendations based on the findings gotten from each research objective.

5.1 Summary

The committee system is an intermediary stage for a thorough examination of proposed policies, and as such, the content of a bill is examined in great detail, clause by clause. Congress gets a lot of its work done through committees and subcommittees. Plans are made, special interests are considered, and laws are drafted. Senate Committee on Education (basic and secondary) deals with education from its basics down to secondary school. From the data collated and analyzed in chapter four, it was evident that the membership form of a committee of any type is key. Based on the information gotten from our respondents, this committee is faced with a lot of challenges that range from funding, the untimely release of funds, unethical behaviour of the agencies and parastatals during budget defence and public hearings, lackadaisical behaviour of members of the committees towards the activities of the committee. It was suggested that the prompt release of funds, and attendance of meetings by the members will go a long way in making prompt and decisive decisions on time which would not be possible if the committee members are absent.

5.2 Conclusions

The dissertation finds that the Senate Committee on Education (Basic and Secondary) performs three functions: to examine draft legislations in the Basic and Secondary Education referred to it; investigate matters of public concern that affect the jurisdiction of the committee; and to scrutinize the policies and budgets, projects and programmes of ministries, department, and agencies under its jurisdiction.

Second, the confirm is effective in performing its functions: it held 16 meetings and conducted 37 oversight visits to ministries, departments and agencies for onsite inspection of projects and programmes for which funds were appropriated to ascertain the progress of implementation and possible challenges. Some of these oversight activities included an oversight visit to NECO to monitor the conduct of NECO examinations across the country in their various senatorial districts and FCT to ascertain the standard of the examination and adherence to the COVID-19 safety protocols in schools, for example, with serious findings. More so, while no investigative hearing was performed by the committee in the entire four-year period, the committee conducted a total of five oversight visits to collect information regarding the operations of the executive branch and its agencies under scrutiny through the public hearing process. Lastly, a total of nine referrals were received by the committee, ranging from bills to motions.

Third, the challenges encountered by the Committee were inadequate funds for committee activities; the duplication of jurisdiction between the Committee and the Committee on Education (Tertiary and TETFUND); and a lack of good office and essential equipment such as a desktop, printer, and photocopier.

Fourth, the ways to strengthen include: The committee system needs to be professionalised. The secretariat staff should be composed of people with different experiences and fields of knowledge based on the capacity and legislative needs of the committee. The committee staff should be adequately trained and retrained on legislative matters, ICT, and legislative procedures; this in turn will enrich and reposition the committee system. More importantly, legislators should hire experienced legislative aides. The use of consultants is also helpful because sometimes legislators are assigned to the committee without consideration for expertise. Legislators should develop the political will to perform their duties judiciously. Adequate funding of committee activities should be encouraged to

ensure that the legislative branch performs its work without fear or favour. Lastly, adequate and well-equipped office space should be provided for the committee secretariat.

5.3 Recommendations

The following is how the activities of the committee can be strengthened: The committee system needs to be professionalised. The secretariat staff should be composed of people with different experiences and fields of knowledge based on the capacity and legislative needs of the committee. The committee staff should be adequately trained and retrained on legislative matters, ICT, and legislative procedures; this in turn will enrich and reposition the committee system.

More importantly, legislators should hire experienced legislative aides. The use of consultants is also helpful because sometimes legislators are assigned to the committee without consideration for expertise. Legislators should develop the political will to perform their duties judiciously. Adequate funding of committee activities should be encouraged to ensure that the legislative branch performs its work without fear or favour. Lastly, adequate and well-equipped office space should be provided for the committee secretariat.

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Appendix 1: Interview Guide

1. What is the mandate of the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education?
2. What is the role of the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary education in enhancing education
3. How effective is the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education?
4. What are the challenges faced by the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary education
5. In what ways can the effectiveness of the on Basic and Secondary education be strengthened?