ASSESSMENT OF LEGISLATIVE-EXECUTIVE RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY OF THE 8TH AND 9TH NIGERIA'S SENATE

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Abstract

The legislative-executive relationship is a fundamental pillar of democratic governance, particularly in presidential systems where the doctrine of separation of powers aims at ensuring institutional checks and balances. In Nigeria, this relationship has often fluctuated between **cooperation** and **confrontation,** influenced not only by constitutional mandates but also by informal political practices, party dynamics, and leadership personalities. This study explored the dynamics of this relationship through a comparative case study of Nigeria's 8^{th} and 9^{th} Senates, both of which operated under the same ruling party (APC) and President (General Muhammadu Buhari, retd). The two Senates exhibited contrasting institutional behaviors: the 8^{th} Senate demonstrated assertiveness and institutional independence, while the 9^{th} Senate adopted a more compliant, executive-aligned stance.

The objective of this study is to:

i. Examine how constitutional provisions and informal political practices influenced the dynamics of the legislative-executive relationship in the 8^{th} and 9^{th} Senates.
ii. Investigate the role of party loyalty and leadership personalities in shaping legislative independence and executive compliance.
iii. Assess the governance outcomes resulting from legislative-executive interactions, focusing on policy efficiency and democratic accountability.

Using the **Principal-Agent Theory** as its theoretical anchor, the study examined how constitutional provisions, such as Sections 4, 80, 88, and 147 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,1999 (as altered) interacted with informal mechanisms like party loyalty and personal leadership styles to shape legislative behaviour and governance outcomes. The qualitative research design used a case study approach supported by document analysis, media reviews, and **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs).** Thematic analysis was used to interpret findings.

Key findings revealled that constitutional authority alone was insufficient to guarantee legislative independence. Instead, informal political realities, including party control, internal party democracy, and the ambitions or docility of Senate leadership, significantly mediate institutional behaviour. The 8^{th} Senate asserted its autonomy through delays in budget passage and rejection of executive nominees, but suffered from administrative inefficiencies and intra-party friction. In contrast, the 9^{th} Senate prioritized cooperation with the executive, enabling policy continuity and budgetary timeliness, albeit at the cost of oversight and democratic accountability. The study identifies a trade-off between policy efficiency and democratic scrutiny, highlighting the tension inherent in legislative-executive relationship.

The study recommended a comprehensive constitutional and institutional reforms to support legislative independence. Key among these are the amendment of Section 68(1)(g) to discourage opportunistic party defections, the legalization of independent candidacy, and the strengthening of internal party democracy. Additionally, reforms should aim at insulating legislative leadership selection from excessive executive and party interference. The study contributes to existing scholarship by filling key gaps in the literature, particularly the absence of a systematic comparison of successive Senates under the same political conditions. It also highlights the significance of informal political institutions—an often-overlooked dimension in constitutional and institutional analyses. For policymakers, the findings emphasized the need to cultivate a culture of principled legislative leadership and functional oversight to safeguard Nigeria's democratic gains. Further research is recommended to explore how these dynamics evolve under subsequent legislative regimes, particularly in the post-Buhari era (499 words).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The relationship between the legislature and the executive is a cornerstone of democratic governance, particularly in presidential systems where the principle of separation of powers is enshrined. In Nigeria, this relationship has been a subject of intense scrutiny since the return to democratic rule in 1999. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as altered) establishes a presidential system modeled after the United States, with distinct roles for the executive, legislature, and judiciary. However, the practice of governance often reveals a complex interplay of formal constitutional provisions and informal political dynamics, particularly in the interactions between the executive and the legislature. This study focuses on the legislative-executive relationship during the 8th (2015–2019) and 9th (2019–2023) National Assembly, specifically the Senate, under the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari. These two assemblies provide a compelling case study due to their contrasting approaches to engaging with the executive, despite operating under the same ruling party, the All Progressives Congress (APC).

The 8th Senate, led by Senator Bukola Saraki, was marked by frequent clashes with the executive, reflecting a more assertive legislative posture. His emergence as President of the Senate in 2015 was itself controversial, as he defied the wishes of his party's leadership to secure the position with the support of opposition lawmakers (Dode, 2020). This set the tone for a tense relationship with the Buhari administration, characterized by budget delays, rejection of executive proposals, and public spats over anti-corruption efforts. In contrast, the 9th Senate, under the leadership of Senator Ahmad Lawan, adopted a more conciliatory approach, often prioritizing harmony with the executive over rigorous oversight. This earned the 9th Senate the label of a "rubber-stamp" legislature, as it swiftly approved key executive requests, including loans and ministerial appointments, with minimal scrutiny (Aiyede, 2019).

The divergent trajectories of the 8th and 9th Senates raise critical questions about the factors shaping the legislative-executive relationship in Nigeria. While the 1999 Constitution provides the legislature with significant powers, including oversight, appropriation, confirmation and impeachment of executive appointments (Sections 80, 88, 147 & 143), the practical exercise of these powers is often influenced by party loyalty, leadership personalities, and informal patronage networks. For instance, the 8th Senate's assertiveness was partly driven by Saraki's ambition and his strained relationship with the APC leadership, while the 9th Senate's compliance reflected Lawan's alignment with the party's agenda and the executive's preferences (Fashagba, 2019). These dynamics underscore the tension between formal institutional design and informal political practices in Nigeria's democratic system.

This study is situated within broader debates on democratic consolidation and institutional performance in Africa. Nigeria's experience is particularly instructive given its status as Africa's most populous nation. The country's federal structure, ethnic diversity, and history of military rule add layers of complexity to its governance challenges. Scholars such as Aiyede (2016) have highlighted the weakening of legislative institutions in Nigeria due to executive dominance and patronage politics, while others like Omotoso (2020) have emphasized the role of party loyalty in undermining legislative independence. These insights provide a foundation for understanding the legislative-executive dynamics in the 8th and 9th Senates, as well as their implications for governance and democratic accountability.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The relationship between the legislature and the executive is a fundamental pillar of democratic governance, particularly in presidential systems where the principle of separation of powers is designed to ensure checks and balances. In Nigeria, this relationship has been a source of both collaboration and conflict since the return to democratic rule in 1999. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as altered) establishes a clear division of powers between the executive and legislative branches, with the legislature tasked with lawmaking, oversight, and appropriation, while the executive is responsible for policy implementation and administration. However, the practical dynamics of the legislative-executive relationship often deviate from constitutional ideals, tilting towards informal associations such as party loyalty, patronage networks, and leadership personalities.

The 8th (2015–2019) and 9th (2019–2023) National Assembly, particularly the Senate, provide a compelling case study of these dynamics. Both assemblies operated under the same ruling party, the All Progressives Congress (APC), and the same President, Muhammadu Buhari, yet their approaches to engaging with the executive were markedly different. The 8th Senate was characterized by frequent clashes with the executive, including budget delays, rejection of loan requests, and public disagreements over anti-corruption efforts (Nwankwo, 2018). In contrast, the 9th Senate adopted a more compliant posture, often prioritizing harmony with the executive over rigorous oversight. This earned the 9th Senate the label of a “rubber-stamp” legislature, as it swiftly approved key executive requests, such as loans and ministerial appointments, with minimal scrutiny (Aiyede, 2019).

These contrasting approaches raise critical questions about the factors shaping the legislative-executive relationship in Nigeria. While the 1999 Constitution provides the legislature with significant powers, including oversight, appropriation, and confirmation of executive appointments (Sections 80, 88, and 147), the practical exercise of these powers is often influenced by informal political practices. For instance, party loyalty and patronage networks frequently override constitutional mandates, as seen in the 9th Senate's alignment with the executive's agenda (Fashagba, 2019). Similarly, leadership personalities play a crucial role, as evidenced by Saraki's assertiveness in the 8th Senate and Lawan's compliance in the 9th Senate.

The implications of these dynamics for governance and democratic accountability are profound. On the one hand, the 8th Senate's assertiveness enhanced legislative oversight but resulted in policy gridlock and delayed budget approvals, undermining governance efficiency (BudgIT, 2019). On the other hand, the 9th Senate's compliance facilitated swift executive actions but eroded accountability, as critical oversight functions were neglected (ICIR, 2021). This tension between legislative autonomy and executive efficiency underscores the challenges of institutional design in Nigeria's presidential system.

Despite the significance of these issues, there is limited scholarly research on the legislative-executive relationship in Nigeria, particularly in the context of the 8th and 9th Senate. Existing studies have focused on broader themes such as executive dominance (Aiyede, 2016), party politics (Omotoso, 2020), and legislative weakness (Nwabueze, 2003). Still, few have examined the interplay of formal and informal institutions in shaping legislative-executive interactions. This study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the dynamics of the legislative-executive relationship in the 8th and 9th Senate, focusing on the role of constitutional provisions, party loyalty, and leadership personalities.

1.3 Research Questions

i. How do constitutional provisions and informal political practices shape the legislative-executive relationship in the 8th and 9th Senate?

ii. To what extent did party loyalty and leadership personalities influence legislative independence and executive compliance?

iii. What were the governance outcomes of these interactions, particularly in terms of policy efficiency and democratic accountability?

1.4 Research Objectives

The broad objective of this study is to examine the Legislative-Executive Relationship: A Case Study of the 8th and 9th Nigerian Senate. The specific objectives are to:

iv. Examine how constitutional provisions and informal political practices influenced the dynamics of the legislative-executive relationship in the 8th and 9th Senate.

v. Investigate the role of party loyalty and leadership personalities in shaping legislative independence and executive compliance.

vi. Assess the governance outcomes resulting from legislative-executive interactions, focusing on policy efficiency and democratic accountability.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

While this study provides a comprehensive analysis of the legislative-executive relationship in Nigeria's 8th and 9th Senate, it is not without limitations. These limitations stem from methodological, practical, and contextual challenges that may affect the scope, depth, and generalizability of the findings. Acknowledging these limitations is essential for interpreting the study's results and identifying areas for future research.

A significant portion of the data for this study will be sourced through interviews with key stakeholders, including former and serving senators, legislative aides, journalists, and political analysts. While these interviews provide valuable insights into the informal dynamics of the legislative-executive relationship, they are subject to potential biases. Respondents may have political affiliations or personal interests that influence their perspectives, leading to selective reporting or exaggeration of certain events. For example, pro-Saraki interviewees might overemphasize the 8^{th} Senate's assertiveness, while pro-Lawan respondents might downplay the 9^{th} Senate's compliance. To mitigate this limitation, the study employed triangulation by cross-referencing interview data with legislative records, media reports, and secondary literature.

The study faced challenges in accessing confidential or classified information related to executive-legislative negotiations. Many critical discussions between the Senate and the executive occur behind closed doors, and official records of these interactions are often not publicly available. For instance, details of budget negotiations, loan agreements, and ministerial confirmations are rarely disclosed in full. This lack of transparency limits the study's ability to provide a complete picture of legislative-executive dynamics. While media reports and public statements were used to fill some gaps, these sources may not always be reliable or comprehensive.

1.6 Scope of the study

This study focuses exclusively on the Senate, excluding the House of Representatives and subnational legislatures. While the Senate plays a critical role in Nigeria's bicameral legislature, its interactions with the executive may differ from those of the House of Representatives. For example, the House often takes a more populist approach, reflecting its closer ties to grassroots constituencies. Additionally, state assemblies, which operate under similar constitutional frameworks, may exhibit different dynamics due to variations in political culture and party dominance. By limiting the scope to the Senate, the study provides a detailed but incomplete view of the legislative-executive relationship in Nigeria.

The study examines the 8th and 9th Senate, covering the period from 2015 to 2023. While this time-frame captures significant developments in Nigeria's legislative-executive relationship, it does not account for earlier or later Assemblies. For instance, the 7th Senate (2011–2015) under President Goodluck Jonathan exhibited different dynamics, shaped by the dominance of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and a more cooperative relationship with the executive. Similarly, the 10th Senate (2023–present) may reveal new trends under President Bola Tinubu. By focusing on a specific period, the study provides a snapshot of the legislative-executive relationship but cannot fully capture their evolution over time.

The findings of this study are context-specific and may not be generalizable to other countries or political systems. Nigeria's legislative-executive relationship are shaped by unique factors, including its federal structure, ethnic diversity, and history of military rule. While the study draws on comparative examples from Latin America and Africa, its conclusions are primarily applicable to Nigeria's presidential system. Researchers studying other countries should consider the contextual differences that may influence legislative-executive dynamics.

Conducting a study of this scope requires significant resources, including time, funding, and access to key stakeholders. Limited resources constrained the number of interviews that could be conducted and the geographical reach of the study. For example, interviews were primarily conducted in Abuja, the seat of Nigeria's federal government, potentially overlooking perspectives from other regions. Additionally, the study relied on publicly available documents and media reports, which may not always provide a balanced or comprehensive view of events.

Nigeria's political environment is highly dynamic, with frequent changes in leadership, party alignments, and public opinion. For instance, the transition from President Buhari to President Tinubu in 2023 has already introduced new dynamics in the legislative-executive relationship. While the study focuses on the 8th and 9th Senate, these changes highlight the need for ongoing research to capture emerging trends and challenges.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to both academic and policy debates. Academically, it enriches the literature on the legislative-executive relationship in emerging democracies by providing a detailed analysis of Nigeria's unique context. It also contributes to theoretical discussions on separation of powers, neopatrimonialism, and principal-agent relationships, particularly in settings where informal institutions often override formal rules (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997). From a policy perspective, the study offers insights into the challenges of balancing legislative oversight with executive efficiency, a dilemma that is central to the functioning of presidential systems. By examining the governance outcomes of the 8th and 9th Senate, the study identifies lessons for strengthening legislative institutions and enhancing democratic accountability in Nigeria and beyond.

1.8 Organization of Chapter

This project is organized into five chapters. Chapter one provided extensive background knowledge of the study, including the research problems, research questions, objectives, limitations, the significance of the study, and the organization of chapters. Chapter Two gave an account of the various literature on the legislative-executive relationship. Chapter three discusses Research methodology. Chapter four gave an account of data presentation, analysis, and discussion. Finally, chapter five enveloped the summary of the study, conclusion, and recommendations that, if adhered to, will help increase the legislative-executive relationship.

1.9 Definition of Terms

"Rubber Stamp" legislature that largely approves every proposal that emanates from the executive with little or no scrutiny.

"Cooperative legislature" legislature that prioritize collaborative relationship with the executive arm of government to ensure effective governance.

"Adversarial legislature" legislature that has a contentious relationship with the executive arm of government.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents a review and discussion of extant and relevant literature. The study was later situated within the framework of Principal-Agent Theory.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Conceptual Review

Legislature

According to Lafenwa (2009), the legislature is made up of elected officials who represent the constituent units and run the government. To Okoosi-Simbine (2010, pg. 36-55), the legislature is the body that makes laws and shapes policies in a democracy. According to Bogdanor (1991), the legislature is based on the idea that its members represent the political community and that decisions are reached through a variety of intricate processes.

The major functions of the legislature (the Senate) are to:

- make, amend or repeal laws for the good governance of the state;
- represent the people of their various constituencies;
- approve finance Bill;
- ensure transparency in public spending through oversights activities, public hearings and investigative inquiries;
- confirm appointments of government officials as required by the law;
- alter the constitution when the need arises;
- ratify treaties entered into by Executive with other countries;
- approve State of Emergency when requested by the President; and

- impeach President and Vice President when Gross Misconduct is established.

One of the best indicators of whether a democratic development can last is the condition of the legislature (Okoosi-Simbine, 2010). When Awotokun (1998) states that the legislature is the center of contemporary democratic regimes, he encapsulates the importance of the legislature.

Legislators differ in size, tenure of office, operational procedures, selection processes, and design, structure, and organization, according to Edosa & Azelama (1995).

The primary source of law is the legislature. The legislature is responsible for giving laws its legal character and transforming the state's and the people's desire into legislation (UNDP, 2003). Legislators or Parliamentarians are the members of the legislature (Parliament). Legislators are elected by the constituents in a democracy. Around the world, lawmakers must respond to and fulfill the wishes and expectations of their constituents. As the representatives of the people, legislators are tasked with creating laws and formulating policies.

Executive

Heywood (2007) asserts that the irreducible core of government is the Executive. Similar to this, Laski (1992) believes that the executive holds a very important role in state's governance. In his view, the Executive is responsible for three main functions in all democratic systems: first, deciding which policies should be submitted to the legislative assembly for approval; second, ensuring that the public services fully comply with the policies as intended by the legislature; and third, ensuring that the activities of the various state departments are delineated and coordinated.

According to Puke (2007), the Executive is in charge of ensuring that the state is governed responsibly and effectively. The Executive is also the government's implementation organ, according to Edosa and Azelama (1995). They pointed out that the main duties of government have always been to create and implement legally enforceable policies and directives through the Executive.

However, they contended that state structures without an executive organ would be difficult to find, even if political organizations have existed for ages without distinct bodies for passing laws. Heywood (2007) also backed up this claim, stating that political regimes could function without constitutions, assemblies, courts, and even political parties, but they would not be able to endure without an executive branch that would create policies and see to their implementation. In a similar vein, Ranney (1975) observed that the Executive is the branch of government that primarily deals with the implementation of the official laws and regulations in any community. The Executive is in charge of creating and carrying out different policies.

Constitutional Provisions

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) provides the legal framework for the relationship between the legislature and the executive. It establishes a presidential system of government with a clear separation of powers, assigning specific roles and responsibilities to each branch. This section examines the constitutional provisions that define legislative-executive relationship, focusing on their implications for governance in Nigeria.

Section 4 of the 1999 Constitution vests the legislative powers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in the National Assembly, which consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The National Assembly is empowered to make laws for the peace, order, and good governance of the federation. This includes the authority to legislate on matters listed in the Exclusive List (e.g., defense, foreign affairs, and currency) and the Concurrent Legislative List (e.g., education and health), as outlined in the Second Schedule of the Constitution.

Section 80 of the Constitution grants the National Assembly the power of appropriation, requiring all revenues generated by the federal government to be paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF). No withdrawals can be made from the CRF without authorization by an Act of the National Assembly. This provision is intended to ensure legislative oversight of public finances and prevent executive misuse of funds. However, in practice, the executive often dominates the budget process, with the legislature limited to making marginal adjustments (Aiyede, 2016).

Section 88 of the Constitution empowers the National Assembly to conduct investigations into any matter within its legislative competence, including the conduct of affairs of government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). This oversight function is critical for ensuring executive accountability and transparency. However, its effectiveness is often undermined by political considerations, such as party loyalty and patronage (Fashagba, 2019).

Section 5 of the Constitution vests the executive powers of the federation in the President, who is responsible for implementing laws and policies. The President is also the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and has the authority to appoint key officials, including Ministers, Ambassadors, and Heads of MDAs, subject to Senate confirmation (Section 147).

Section 58 of the Constitution grants the President the power to assent to or withhold assent to Bills passed by the National Assembly. If the President withholds assent, the Bill can still become law if passed again by a two-thirds majority of both Chambers. This provision creates a potential for conflict between the legislature and executive, as seen in the 8th Senate's disputes with President Buhari over the Electoral Act Amendments (Premium Times, pg. 4, 14th August, 2018).

Section 147 of the Constitution requires the President to appoint Ministers with the confirmation of the Senate. This provision is intended to ensure that executive appointees are qualified and accountable. However, the Senate's confirmation process is often influenced by political considerations, as seen in the 9th Senate's swift approval of all 43 ministerial nominees without rigorous scrutiny (ICIR, 2019).

Section 143 of the Constitution provides for the impeachment of the President or Vice President for gross misconduct. This is a critical check on executive power, but the process is highly politicized and has never been successfully completed in Nigeria's history. For example, attempts to impeach President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2002 were thwarted by party loyalty and procedural hurdles (Nwabueze, 2003).

Section 6 of the Constitution vests the judiciary with the power to interpret the Constitution and resolve disputes between the legislature and executive. However, the judiciary's independence is often compromised by political interference and corruption, limiting its effectiveness as a check on executive power.

Party Politics and Factionalism

Party politics and factionalism are central to understanding legislative-executive relationship in Nigeria, particularly in the context of the 8th and 9th Senate. Political parties serve as the primary vehicles for organizing legislative behaviour, shaping policy outcomes, and mediating conflicts between the legislature and the executive. However, the dominance of the ruling party, intra-party factionalism, and weak opposition often complicate these dynamics, leading to either legislative assertiveness or subservience. This section explores the role of party politics and factionalism in shaping legislative-executive relationship, with a focus on Nigeria's 8th and 9th Senates.

Political parties play a critical role in presidential systems by providing a platform for organizing legislative behaviour and facilitating executive-legislative cooperation. In Nigeria, the ruling party often dominates the legislature, particularly in the absence of a strong opposition. This dominance enables the executive to influence legislative outcomes through party discipline, patronage, and control over party machinery. For example, the All Progressives Congress (APC) controlled both the executive and legislative branches during the 8th and 9th Senates, yet the dynamics of legislative-executive relationship differed significantly due to intra-party factionalism and leadership styles (Fashagba, 2019).

Party loyalty is a double-edged sword in the legislative-executive relationship. On the one hand, it facilitates policy coherence and governance efficiency by aligning legislative and executive priorities. On the other hand, it undermines legislative independence by prioritizing party interests over constitutional mandates. For instance, the 9th Senate's compliance with President Buhari's agenda, including the swift approval of loan requests and ministerial nominees, reflected the dominance of party loyalty over legislative oversight (Sahara Reporters, 2021). Conversely, the 8th Senate's defiance of the APC leadership demonstrated the potential for legislative autonomy, albeit at the cost of intra-party cohesion (Fagbadebo, 2019).

The weakness of opposition parties in Nigeria further exacerbates the dominance of the ruling party. In the 8th and 9th Senates, the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) lacked the numerical strength and organizational capacity to effectively challenge the APC's agenda. This imbalance allowed the ruling party to dominate legislative proceedings, particularly in the 9th Senate, where opposition voices were marginalized (ICIR, 2021). The absence of a strong opposition undermines the legislature's role as a check on executive power, as seen in the 9th Senate's rubber-stamp posture.

Intra-party factionalism is a recurring feature of Nigeria's political landscape, often leading to conflicts between the legislature and the executive. Factionalism arises from competing interests, personal ambitions, and ideological differences within the ruling party, creating divisions that complicate legislative-executive relationship.

The 8th Senate was marked by intense intra-party factionalism, particularly between pro-Saraki and pro-Buhari factions within the APC. Senator Bukola Saraki's emergence as President of the Senate in 2015 was a direct result of this factionalism. Despite being a member of the APC, he defied the party's zoning arrangement by aligning with opposition lawmakers to secure the position. This act of defiance strained relationship with the APC leadership and President Buhari, setting the stage for a contentious legislative-executive relationship (Omotola, 2017).

The factionalism within the APC empowered the 8th Senate to assert its independence, as seen in its rejection of President Buhari's loan requests and its refusal to confirm Ibrahim Magu as EFCC chairman. These actions were driven by Saraki's ambition to consolidate his power within the legislature and challenge the executive's dominance (Fashagba, 2019). However, the factionalism also led to governance gridlock, as the executive and legislature struggled to reconcile their differences.

In contrast, the 9th Senate was characterized by greater party unity. Ahmed Lawan's election as President of the Senate followed the APC's zoning formula, ensuring alignment with the executive. This unity enabled the 9th Senate to adopt a more conciliatory posture, prioritizing harmony with the executive over rigorous oversight (Omotola, 2017).

However, the absence of factionalism also weakened the legislature's independence, as seen in the 9th Senate's rubber-stamp posture. For example, the Senate swiftly approved President Buhari's $22.7 billion loan request and confirmed all 43 ministerial nominees without rigorous scrutiny (ICIR, 2020). This compliance reflected the dominance of party loyalty over legislative oversight, raising concerns about the erosion of checks and balances (Onuoha and Nwankwo, 2021).

The 8th Senate (2015–2019)

The 8th Senate was inaugurated on June 9, 2015, following the historic victory of the All Progressives' Congress (APC) in the 2015 general elections, which marked the first time an opposition party defeated an incumbent president in Nigeria. However, the emergence of Bukola Saraki as President of the Senate was controversial. A former governor and APC member, defied the party's zoning arrangement by aligning with opposition lawmakers from the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to secure the position. This move was seen as a direct challenge to the APC leadership and President Buhari, setting the tone for a contentious relationship between the Senate and the executive (Premium Times, pg. 8, 11th June, 2015).

His leadership style was characterized by a strong emphasis on legislative independence and oversight. He often positioned the Senate as a counterbalance to executive power, a stance that resonated with many Nigerians who were wary of executive overreach. However, this approach also alienated him from the APC leadership, which viewed his actions as disloyal and destabilizing (Fashagba, 2019). The resulting factionalism within the APC further complicated legislative-executive relationship, as pro-Saraki lawmakers often clashed with pro-Buhari loyalists.

One of the most significant conflicts between the 8th Senate and the executive was over the national budget. The 2016 budget was delayed for seven months due to disagreements over alleged discrepancies in the executive's proposal. The Senate accused the executive of submitting a "padded" budget with inflated figures, while the executive blamed the legislature for unilateral insertions (NILDS, 2017). This standoff not only delayed the implementation of critical infrastructure projects but also exposed the deep mistrust between the two arms of government.

In 2018, the Senate again clashed with the executive over the budget. The legislature reduced the executive's proposed budget by ₦347 billion, citing the need to prioritize critical infrastructure projects. This decision was seen as an assertion of legislative authority but also led to accusations of overreach and further strained the relationship with the executive (NASS, 2018).

In 2017, the Senate rejected President Buhari's $29.9 billion foreign loan request, citing a lack of transparency and inadequate consultation. The executive had argued that the loan was necessary to fund critical infrastructure projects, but the Senate insisted on proper documentation and accountability measures. This decision was widely praised as a rare instance of legislative assertiveness in curtailing executive borrowing (Nwankwo, 2018).

The 8th Senate's relationship with the executive was further strained by disagreements over anti-corruption efforts. A notable example was the Senate's refusal to confirm Ibrahim Magu as Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Despite being nominated by President Buhari, Magu was rejected by the Senate multiple times between 2016 and 2020, citing security reports alleging corruption. The executive responded by retaining Magu in an acting capacity, sparking a constitutional crisis and raising questions about the Senate's motives (Aiyede, 2019).

Despite the frequent conflicts, the 8th Senate also collaborated with the executive on several critical reforms. These cooperative engagements demonstrate that legislative-executive relationship were not entirely adversarial.

One of the most significant achievements of the 8th Senate was the passage of the *Not Too Young to Run Act*, which reduced the age requirement for presidential candidates from 40yrs to 35yrs and for legislators from 30yrs to 25yrs. This landmark legislation was hailed as a victory for youth inclusion and political participation. The bipartisan effort behind the Bill demonstrated the

Senate's ability to work with the executive on issues of national importance (YIAGA Africa, 2018).

The 8th Senate also worked with the executive to introduce reforms to Nigeria's electoral system. Key amendments included provisions for electronic voting, stricter campaign finance regulations, and measures to enhance the independence of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Although delays in presidential assent stalled the implementation of some reforms, the collaborative effort reflected a shared commitment to improving Nigeria's electoral process (INEC, 2019).

The 8th Senate's oversight functions were among its most notable achievements. Through public hearings and investigations, the Senate exposed corruption in several government Agencies. For example, a probe into the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) revealed mismanagement and fraudulent contracts, leading to the suspension of several projects and the recovery of misappropriated funds (The Guardian, 8th August, 2020).

The frequent clashes between the Senate and the Executive had significant economic consequences. The delayed passage of the 2016 budget, for instance, contributed to Nigeria's economic recession that year. Infrastructure projects, including road construction and power sector reforms, were also stalled due to budgetary disputes (BudgIT, 2019).

The 8th Senate's assertiveness earned it mixed reviews from the public. While many Nigerians praised its efforts to check executive power, others criticized it for political grandstanding and contributing to governance inefficiencies. For example, the Senate's rejection of the $29.9 billion loan request was seen as a necessary check on executive borrowing, but it also delayed critical infrastructure projects (Premium Times, pg. 28, 1st November, 2017).

The 9th Senate (2019–2023)

The 9th Senate, inaugurated on June 11, 2019, marked a significant shift in legislative-executive relationship in Nigeria. The 9th Senate adopted a posture of compliance and cooperation with the executive, in stark contrast to the confrontational approach of the 8th Senate. This section provides an in-depth analysis of the 9th Senate's dynamics, focusing on its leadership, key legislative actions, and the implications for governance and democratic accountability.

Senator Ahmad Lawan, a loyalist of President Muhammadu Buhari and the All Progressives' Congress (APC), emerged as President of the Senate following the APC's zoning arrangement. Unlike his predecessor, Bukola Saraki, who defied party directives to secure the position, Lawan's election was orchestrated by the APC leadership to ensure alignment with the executive (Punch, 11th June, 2019). Lawan's mantra of a "harmonious relationship" with the executive signaled a departure from the adversarial stance of the 8th Senate and set the tone for a compliant legislative agenda.

The 9th Senate's alignment with the executive was driven by the APC's dominance in both Chambers of the National Assembly. With a majority in the Senate, the APC used its control over party machinery to enforce discipline and ensure compliance with the executive's agenda. This was evident in the swift approval of executive requests, such as loan approvals and ministerial confirmations, which were often prioritized over rigorous oversight (Fashagba, 2019). Critics argued that this subservience undermined the legislature's constitutional role as a check on executive power, earning the 9th Senate the label of a "rubber-stamp" legislature (Sahara Reporters, 2021).

One of the defining features of the 9th Senate was its expedited approval of executive requests, often bypassing thorough scrutiny. Key examples include:

- **Loan Approvals:** In 2020, the Senate approved President Buhari's $22.7 billion loan request within two months, despite concerns about Nigeria's rising debt profile. Lawan defended the decision as necessary for infrastructure development, but critics argued that the Senate failed to scrutinize the terms and conditions of the loans (Punch, 6th March, 2020). Also, there is no remarkable infrastructure to back up this claim.
- **Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB):** After two decades of delays, the Senate passed the PIB in 2021 with minimal amendments to the executive's proposal. While the Bill was hailed as a milestone in the history of the country, contentious clauses, such as the 3% allocation to host communities, were criticized for favouring Oil Companies over local stakeholders (NASS, 2021).

The 9th Senate confirmed all 43 ministerial nominees within five days, a record speed that bypassed rigorous vetting. For instance, Godswill Akpabio, a former governor with pending corruption allegations, was cleared without debate (ICIR, 2020). This lack of scrutiny raised concerns about the Senate's commitment to accountability and transparency. The Senate approved security budgets, including allocations to the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), without detailed scrutiny despite Nigeria's worsening insecurity. For example, the 2021 budget allocated ₦840 billion to the security sector, but the Senate failed to investigate allegations of mismanagement and corruption (SBM Intelligence, (2021). The 9th Senate's compliance with the executive's agenda was criticized for eroding the constitutional principle of checks and balances. Key examples include:

- **Unauthorized Withdrawals:** The Senate ignored executive violations of fiscal laws, such as unauthorized withdrawals from the Excess Crude Account (ECA) and the introduction of illegal taxes (CISLAC, 2022).

- **Weak Oversight**: The Senate's reluctance to scrutinize executive actions, such as the management of the Social Investment Programme (SIP), allowed corruption to thrive. For instance, the SIP, designed to alleviate poverty, faced allegations of embezzlement without legislative intervention.

The 9th Senate's subservience to the executive sparked widespread criticism from civil society groups, media outlets, and the general public. The hashtag #RubberStampSenate trended on social media, reflecting public distrust in the Senate's oversight role (Daily Trust, 2021). A 2021 NOIPolls survey found that only 14% of Nigerians approved of the Senate's performance, highlighting a crisis of legitimacy (NOIPolls, 2021).

The 9th Senate's compliance with the executive's agenda facilitated swift policy implementation, particularly in infrastructure development. For example:

- The 2020 budget was passed in record time (December, 2019), enabling timely implementation of capital projects such as the Lagos-Ibadan railway (Budget Office, 2020).
- The PIB's passage in 2021 was hailed as a milestone in Nigeria's oil and gas sector, though its long-term impact remains to be seen (NASS, 2021).

While the 9th Senate achieved policy efficiency, its weak oversight undermined democratic accountability. Key examples include:

- **Rising Debt Profile:** Nigeria's debt rose from ₦12.6 trillion in 2015 to ₦38 trillion in 2023, with limited legislative scrutiny of loan agreements (DMO, 2023).
- **Corruption Scandals:** The Senate's failure to investigate allegations of corruption in agencies like the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the National Social Investment Progrmme (NSIP) eroded public trust (The Guardian, 28th July, 2020).

The 9th Senate's rubber-stamp posture exemplifies hybrid governance, where formal democratic institutions coexist with informal authoritarian practices. This tension between legitimacy and effectiveness highlights the challenges of democratic consolidation in Nigeria (Joseph, 2014).

2.1.2 Theoretical Review

Legislative-Executive Relationship in Nigeria

Historical Context

Nigeria's legislative-executive relationship has evolved significantly since independence in 1960. The First Republic (1960–1966) featured a parliamentary system, with the executive drawn from the legislature. However, this system was marked by regionalism and ethnic politics, which contributed to its collapse (Nwabueze, 2003). The return to civilian rule in 1999 ushered in a presidential system modeled after the United States, with a clear separation of powers. Despite this constitutional framework, the legislature has struggled to assert its independence, particularly under military rule (1966–1979, 1983–1999), when it was effectively sidelined (Egwu, 2005).

Nigeria's legislative-executive relationship has its roots in the colonial era, when the British established a system of governance that centralized power in the hands of the colonial governor. The legislative council, introduced in 1922, was largely advisory, with limited powers to check the executive. This legacy of a weak legislature persisted after independence, shaping the structure and functioning of Nigeria's political institutions (Nwabueze, 2003).

The First Republic (1960–1966) marked Nigeria's first attempt at democratic governance under a parliamentary system. In this system, the executive was drawn from the legislature, with the Prime Minister as the head of government and the President as a ceremonial head of state. The legislature, comprising the House of Representatives and the Senate, was expected to provide oversight and ensure accountability. However, the First Republic was characterized by regionalism and ethnic politics, which undermined the effectiveness of legislative oversight.

For example, the dominance of regional parties—such as the Northern People's Congress (NPC), the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), and the Action Group (AG)—created a fragmented legislature that prioritized regional interests over national unity. This fragmentation weakened the legislature's ability to check the executive, contributing to political instability and the eventual collapse of the First Republic in 1966 (Dudley, 1982).

Military Rule (1966–1979, 1983–1999)

The collapse of the First Republic ushered in a period of military rule, during which the legislature was effectively sidelined. Military regimes, such as those led by General Yakubu Gowon (1966–1975) and General Ibrahim Babangida (1985–1993), centralized power in the executive, using decrees to bypass legislative processes. The legislature, where it existed, was often a rubber stamp, with no real authority to check the executive (Egwu, 2005).

For instance, during the regime of General Sani Abacha (1993–1998), the legislature was dissolved, and all legislative functions were assumed by the executive. This period was marked by authoritarianism, human rights abuses, and the erosion of democratic institutions, including the legislature (Joseph, 1999). The absence of a functional legislature during military rule created a culture of executive dominance that persisted even after the return to civilian rule in 1999.

Second Republic (1979–1983)

The Second Republic, established under the 1979 Constitution, marked Nigeria's transition to a presidential system modeled after the United States. The Constitution provided for a clear separation of powers between the executive, legislature, and judiciary, with the legislature granted significant oversight and appropriation powers. However, the Second Republic was short-lived, lasting only four years before another military coup in 1983.

During this period, legislative-executive relationship were characterized by intense rivalry and gridlock. For example, the Senate, though having the majority of members from the ruling party (36) but in total, it has fewer than the opposition members (55) put together, and they frequently clashed with the executive led by President Shehu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). These conflicts, coupled with allegations of corruption and electoral malpractice, contributed to the collapse of the Second Republic (Diamond, 1988).

Third Republic

The Third Republic (1992–1993) was Nigeria's attempt to transition from military rule to democracy under General Ibrahim Babangida's regime. However, the relationship between the legislature and the executive during this period was fraught with instability, largely due to military interference, political crises, and the eventual collapse of the Republic.

The 1989 Constitution established a bicameral legislature (Senate and House of Representatives) and an executive branch led by a civilian president. However, the military retained significant influence, undermining democratic principles. The National Assembly was expected to provide checks and balances, but its authority was weak due to the military's dominance (Osaghae, 1998). The legislative-executive relationship was strained from the outset. The executive, under Interim President Ernest Shonekan (after Babangida's resignation in August 1993), lacked legitimacy, as he was appointed rather than elected. Meanwhile, the legislature, though constitutionally empowered, was ineffective in holding the executive accountable due to political instability and military interference (Jega, 2007).

The annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election, widely believed to have been won by Chief MKO Abiola, further eroded trust in both arms of government. The legislature failed to prevent this executive overreach, exposing its weakness in Nigeria's fragile democracy (Diamond, 1997).

The republic's collapse was finalized when General Sani Abacha seized power in November, 1993, dissolving all democratic structures. This marked the end of the Third Republic, demonstrating how military interference disrupted legislative-executive relations.

Fourth Republic (1999–Present)

The return to democratic rule in 1999 marked the beginning of the Fourth Republic, which has been characterized by a presidential system with a bicameral legislature (the Senate and the House of Representatives). The 1999 Constitution provides the legislature with significant powers, including lawmaking, oversight, and appropriation (Sections 4, 80, and 88). However, the practical exercise of these powers has been constrained by executive dominance, party loyalty, and patronage networks.

For example, during the presidency of Olusegun Obasanjo (1999–2007), the legislature was often criticized for its subservience to the executive. Obasanjo's control over the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) enabled him to influence legislative behaviour, particularly in the confirmation of executive appointments and the passage of budgets (Aiyede, 2016).

The 8^{th} Senate (2015–2019) and 9^{th} Senate (2019–2023) under President Muhammadu Buhari provide a more recent example of legislative-executive dynamics. The 8^{th} Senate was marked by frequent clashes with the executive, reflecting a more assertive legislative posture. In contrast, the 9^{th} Senate adopted a more compliant approach, earning the label of a "rubber-stamp" legislature (Onuoha and Nwankwo, 2021).

2.1.3 Methodological Review

Comparative Perspectives

Comparative analysis of legislative-executive relationship across different political systems provides valuable insights into the factors that shape these dynamics. By examining how other countries navigate the tension between legislative autonomy and executive efficiency, we can better understand Nigeria's unique challenges and opportunities. This section explores legislative-executive relationship in Latin America and Africa, highlighting key similarities and differences with Nigeria's experience.

Latin America

Latin America offers a rich context for studying the legislative-executive relationship, as many countries in the region share Nigeria's presidential system and historical struggles with democratic consolidation.

Brazil: Assertive Legislature

Brazil's legislature, particularly the National Congress, has historically played an assertive role in checking executive power. For example, during the presidency of Dilma Rousseff (2011–2016), the legislature initiated impeachment proceedings against her, citing fiscal mismanagement and corruption allegations. This demonstrates the legislature's ability to hold the executive accountable, even in a highly polarized political environment (Pereira & Melo, 2012).

However, Brazil's legislature is not without challenges. The fragmented party system often leads to coalition-building difficulties, requiring the executive to negotiate with multiple parties to pass legislation. This has resulted in a phenomenon known as coalitional presidentialism, where the executive uses patronage and cabinet appointments to secure legislative support (Amorim Neto, 2006). While this fosters collaboration, it can also undermine legislative independence and accountability.

Mexico: Dominant Executive

In contrast to Brazil, Mexico’s legislature was historically subservient to the executive during the dominance of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (IRP) from 1929 to 2000. The IRP’s control over both the executive and legislature created a de facto one-party state, with the legislature functioning as a rubber stamp for executive decisions (Weldon, 1997).

However, the transition to multiparty democracy in the 2000s has empowered the legislature to play a more active role. For example, the legislature has used its oversight powers to investigate corruption scandals, such as the Casa Blanca scandal involving President Enrique Peña Nieto (2012–2018). Despite these gains, the executive still wields significant influence over the legislature through party loyalty and patronage (Langston, 2017).

Africa

Africa’s diverse political systems provide additional insights into the legislative-executive relationship, particularly in countries with similar colonial histories and governance challenges as Nigeria.

Kenya: Strengthened Legislature

Kenya’s 2010 Constitution significantly strengthened the legislature’s oversight powers, enabling it to challenge executive overreach. For example, the legislature has used its budgetary powers to block excessive executive spending and investigate corruption scandals, such as the Eurobond scandal under President Uhuru Kenyatta (Barkan, 2009).

However, Kenya's legislature faces challenges similar to Nigeria's, including party loyalty and ethnic politics. The dominance of the Jubilee Party under Kenyatta often led to a compliant legislature, particularly on contentious issues such as security and taxation (Cheeseman, 2015).

South Africa: Dominant Party System

South Africa's legislature operates within a dominant party system, with the African National Congress (ANC) controlling both the executive and legislature since 1994. This has often reduced the legislature to a rubber stamp, particularly under the presidency of Jacob Zuma (2009–2018), who faced numerous corruption allegations without significant legislative pushback (Mattes, 2018).

However, the legislature has shown signs of assertiveness in recent years. For example, it played a key role in Zuma's resignation in 2018, following pressure from opposition parties and civil society. This demonstrates the potential for legislative oversight, even in a dominant party system (Gumede, 2018).

Comparative Insights for Nigeria

The comparative analysis of Latin America and Africa reveals several key insights for Nigeria:

Institutional Design Matters: Countries with strong constitutional provisions for legislative oversight, such as Kenya and Brazil, are better equipped to hold the executive accountable.

Party Loyalty and Patronage: Excessive party loyalty and patronage, as seen in Mexico and South Africa, can erode legislative independence and undermine governance.

Civil Society and Opposition: The role of civil society and opposition parties is critical in fostering legislative assertiveness, as demonstrated by Brazil and South Africa.

2.1.4 Empirical Review

Edward (1948) focused on historical, constitutional, and political contexts that shape the presidency. The study adopted a combination of historical, constitutional documentary research methods, and he used several theoretical frameworks, among which are constitutional, historical institutional, political, and power dynamics theory. His view on the legislative-executive relationship focused mostly on historical, constitutional, and political contexts, and these, he said, help to shape the policies of that administration.

Ogul (1976) examined the complex interactions between Congress and the bureaucracy, highlighting the factors that influence the success or failure of oversight efforts. He adopted qualitative and quantitative methods in his research approach using the theoretical framework of separation of powers, institutionalism, rational choice, and principal-agent theory. His findings revealed the significance of institutional and personal factors, such as party relationships and individual legislator priorities, in shaping legislative-executive relationship. He equally provided valuable insights into the legislative-executive relationship, particularly in the context of congressional oversight of the bureaucracy.

Richard (1990) argued that the separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches always create a dynamic of tension and bargaining. The study adopted qualitative research approach, combining historical analysis, case studies and observational research. The theoretical framework of his bargaining and negotiation focused on the president's ability to persuade and influence parliamentarians to achieve their goals. Key findings revealed that presidents must spend a significant amount of time building relationships with lawmakers, negotiating, and compromising to achieve their goals. This is particularly important in a presidential system, where the president is directly elected by the people.

Ethan et al (2008 pg. 211–235) in his study focused on the proper balance of power between the executive and the legislature. He employed the use of mail survey sent to all legislators in parliament who are used as the basic data source for the study. The dependent variable required the legislators to indicate if a proper balance of power existed using the hierarchical generalized linear modeling (HGLM). The result revealed that majority of legislators believed that a proper balance existed, with perceptions of the power relationship influenced by party identification and legislative experience. He also found that older legislators were more likely to mention the veto power as a cause of imbalance, while newer members cited other reasons. His work provides valuable insights into the complexities of legislative-executive relationships, shedding light on the factors that influence the balance of power between these two branches of government. He concluded that the relationships between the two branches of government are not inherently contentious but rather was a proper balance of power between the executive and the legislature.

José (2010 pg. 34–51) focused on both parliamentary and presidential systems of government, which were considered to represent two completely independent and alternative forms of democratic government. He adopted both conflict theory and the inter-branch relationship as an approach in its theoretical framework. The findings revealed that these approaches guaranties coordination and bargaining which is key to relationship between both parties. It helps also to prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful there by eliminating the zero-sum game, in which the gains of the executive happen at the expense of the legislature. He advocated for a relationship that will guarantee coordination and bargaining which is key to both parties as this will help to prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful thereby culminating into the zero-sum game, in which the gains of the executive happen at the expense of the legislature.

Yvonne (2011, pg. 55-72) focused on the separation of powers in a single party-dominant system and examines the role of the leader of government business in parliamentary processes. The study employed a combination of research methods using a desk top study approach by consulting relevant literature on the subject matter. Interviews were also conducted with both politicians and relevant officials in the South African Parliament. The author used the combination of qualitative and quantitative models in his theoretical framework. The findings revealed that the synergies between the executive and the legislature are in most cases due to the fact that most Members of Parliament belong to the same political party.

Eze (2016 pg. 93–107.) in his study addressed the executive legislative relationship in Nigeria viz-a-viz prolonged military rule. The study was based on structural functionalism of the military which centered on openness, participation, and decentralization. The author used the approach to analyze the relationship, concluding that the legislative-executive relationship in Nigeria is under siege, partly because of the prolonged military rule. He advocates the institution of adequate training centres for legislative-executive study to imbibe the culture and ethic of each arm of government.

Fatile (2017 pg. 84–99) study focused on the effect of the legislative-executive relationship on policy formulation and implementation with particular reference to Lagos State, Nigeria. The study used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. His findings indicated that a cooperative legislative-executive relationship engenders improved performance in public policy formulation and implementation in Lagos State.

Awor (2020 pg. 42–58) examines the legislature-executive relationship in the budget process between the 7th and the 8th National Assembly. The study adopted a Purposive sampling technique and the statistical package for social science (SPSS 16.0) to analyze its data. Also, the effect of the pattern of the relationship in the budget process in both Assemblies affected governance, which resulted in delays in budget submission, approvals, poor implementation, and poor infrastructural development. He posited that the legislature-executive relationship in the budget process between the 7^{th} and 8^{th} Assembly was frosty and thereby affected governance processes which resulted in delay in budget submission, approvals, poor implementation, and the result of all these was poor infrastructural development across the country.

Makar (2021 pg. 58–74) assessed the legislative-executive relationship on good governance in Nigeria. The data collected were analyzed using the qualitative model that involved conceptual and thematic narratives. The study centred on the theoretical assumptions of functionalism theory explaining the problem of legislature and the executive and why it persists in the country. The study found that legislative-executive conflicts have profound negative and positive impacts on good governance in the country. Findings from the analysis showed that there are institutional roles prescribed for each arm of government (legislature and executive), and that over the years this principle of separation of powers has not enjoyed proper application in the Nigerian political practices.

Onyekaba (2021, pg. 14-28) focused on the separation of powers in a single-party-dominant system and examined the role of the leader of government business in parliamentary processes. The study employed a combination of research methods. It used a desktop study approach by consulting relevant literature on the subject matter. She used the combination of qualitative and quantitative models in his theoretical framework. The findings revealed that the synergies between the executive and the legislature are in most cases due to the fact that most Members of Parliament belong to the same political party.

Alabi (2022, pg. 113–139) posits that Nigeria's legislature has come under the hammer of the military through Coup d'état, which has disrupted the balance of power between the legislative and executive arms, potentially undermining democratic governance and the rule of law. The legislature's ability to perform its oversight functions and hold the executive accountable was compromised, leading to an imbalance in the relationship between the two branches. The military involvement in governance led to the bastardization of the principle of separation of powers through the fusion of legislative and executive power in one entity known as the Supreme Military Council. Studies have shown that these incessant military incursions in the country's political space in one way or another have affected the growth of the legislative arm of government, part of which is its relationship with the executive.

Kayode (2022 pg. 76–91) investigated the dynamics of the power relationship between the executive and legislative arms of government in Kwara and Osun States from 2007 to 2019. He adopted a mixed method of data collection through questionnaire, person-to-person, key informants, and focus group discussion interview methods. He used a thematic and quantitative approach in his theoretical framework. The findings revealed that the preponderance of the master-servant relationship between the executive and legislature at the sub-national level in Nigeria was largely responsible for the failure of governance at that level, and these also inhibit economic development.

2.1.5 Gaps in the Literature

The relationship between the legislature and executive constitutes a fundamental pillar of democratic governance, particularly in presidential systems where the principle of separation of powers is designed to ensure institutional checks and balances. In Nigeria's Fourth Republic, this relationship has oscillated between collaboration and conflict since 1999. While the 1999

Constitution establishes clear divisions of power - assigning lawmaking, oversight, and appropriation functions to the legislature while vesting policy implementation in the executive - the practical dynamics of governance frequently deviate from these constitutional ideals. In reality, informal influences such as party loyalty, patronage networks, and leadership personalities often supersede formal institutional arrangements, creating a complex interplay between constitutional mandates and political realities.

The contrasting approaches of Nigeria's 8th (2015-2019) and 9th (2019-2023) Senates under the same ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and President Muhammadu Buhari present a compelling case study of these dynamics. The 8th Senate demonstrated remarkable legislative assertiveness through budget delays, the rejection of executive loan requests (notably the $29.6 billion loan proposal in 2016), and confrontations over key appointments, such as the rejection of Ibrahim Magu as EFCC chairman. This assertive posture stood in stark contrast to the 9th Senate's approach which earned it the "rubber-stamp" epithet for its compliant approval of executive requests, including the swift passage of a $22.7 billion loan in 2020 and the uncritical confirmation of all 43 ministerial nominees. These divergent approaches within the same political and constitutional framework reveal significant gaps in existing scholarship on Nigeria's legislative-executive relationship.

Current literature remains limited in several critical aspects. Studies on executive dominance (Aiyede, 2016; Fashagba, 2019 pg. 57–75) failed to account for variations in legislative assertiveness under identical political conditions, while analyses of party politics (Omotoso, 2020) overlook the crucial role of leadership personalities in shaping legislative independence. Constitutional examinations (Nwabueze, 2003) focus on structural weaknesses without explaining why some legislatures overcome these constraints, and broader studies of legislative ineffectiveness (Onapajo, 2021pg. 22-41) cannot explain the 8th Senate's relative robustness. Three key gaps emerge from this literature review: first, the absence of systematic comparative analysis of successive Senates under similar conditions; second, insufficient attention to how leadership styles (Saraki's assertiveness versus Lawan's compliance) mediate institutional behaviour; and third, inadequate examination of how informal practices like patronage networks interact with formal constitutional provisions to shape legislative-executive relationship. Addressing these gaps are crucial for understanding the trade-offs between legislative oversight and executive efficiency, and their implications for democratic accountability in Nigeria's evolving political system.

2.2 Theoretical framework

Principal-agent theory, developed by Michael Jenson and William Meckling (1976 pg. 305–360), provides a framework for understanding the delegation of authority and accountability in governance. In this model, the legislature delegates authority to the executive but retains oversight to ensure accountability.

In principle-agent theory, the principal delegates authority to the agent to act on their behalf. However, the principal cannot fully observe or control the agent’s actions, leading to potential conflicts or misalignments in priorities. In the case of the Nigerian Senate, legislators act as the principal, holding the executive accountable. However, the executive may not always align with the legislature’s goals or priorities, resulting in tensions, especially when personal ambitions and leadership styles come into play.

This theory is relevant to the 8th and 9th Nigerian Senate, as it helps explain power struggles and the shifting balance between the legislature and the executive. For instance, Senate leadership’s relationship with the President, personal ambitions, and party loyalties significantly influenced legislative outcomes and governance. Principal-agent theory emphasizes how legislative control over key decisions, such as budget approvals and policy support, can be challenged or strengthened depending on the interpersonal dynamics and trust between the two branches of government. The theory offers valuable insights into the complexities of governance, highlighting how leadership styles, ambitions, and trust affect the broader legislative-executive relationship.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter is a presentation of the research blueprint with a detailed explanation of the approaches deployed in investigating the research objectives. Research methodology is a principle that guides the systematic nature of a study. Methodology can be referred to as the heart and soul or nucleus of the research. This is because it explains to the researcher and the readers how data collection is carried out; the method used in arriving at a scientific conclusion.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative case study approach to examine the legislative-executive relationship in Nigeria's 8th and 9th Senate. This design was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of complex political phenomena within their real-life context (Yin, 2014). The case study approach is particularly suited for analyzing institutional dynamics, as it enables researchers to investigate how formal and informal factors interact to shape outcomes.

3.1.1 Rationale for Qualitative Case Study Design

Complexity of the Legislative-Executive Relationship

The Legislative-executive relationship in Nigeria is shaped by a combination of constitutional provisions, party politics, leadership personalities, and informal practices such as patronage. A qualitative case study approach allows for a nuanced understanding of these interactions, which cannot be captured through quantitative methods alone (Stake, 1995).

Focus on Context

The 8th and 9th Senates operated under the same political party (APC) and President (Muhammadu Buhari), yet their approaches to engaging with the executive were markedly different. A case study design enables a detailed examination of the contextual factors, such as leadership styles and intra-party dynamics that contributed to these differences (Gerring, 2007).

Exploratory Nature of the Study

This study seeks to explore how constitutional mandates, party loyalty, and leadership personalities influenced legislative-executive relationship. Qualitative methods are well-suited for exploratory research, as they allow for flexibility in data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2014).

3.1.2 Data Collection Methods

The study employed a mixed-method approach, combining both primary and secondary data sources to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings. The following methods were used:

Primary Data

The primary data was collected using the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) method. This source of data collection is very useful and important as the key stake holders are usually targeted and interviewed. It is also important as it is very cost effective for the researcher who is constrained by fund. Since certain kinds of information are easily obtainable through direct contact with the persons who possess the desired information, this source was adopted in this research work.

Secondary Data

Executive Communications: Presidential speeches, policy statements, and correspondence with the Senate will be reviewed to assess the executive's engagement with the legislature. For instance, President Buhari's letters to the Senate requesting loan approvals will be analyzed.

Media Reports: News articles from reputable Nigerian outlets such as Premium Times, Punch, and the Guardian will be used to track public perceptions and controversies surrounding legislative-executive relationship.

Academic Journals: Scholarly articles on legislative-executive relationship in Nigeria and other Presidential systems will be reviewed to situate the study within the broader academic discourse.

Policy Reports: Reports from organizations such as BudgIT, the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), and the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR) will provide insights into governance outcomes, such as budget implementation and anti-corruption efforts.

3.2 Data Analysis

The data collected will be analyzed using thematic analysis, a qualitative method that involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.2.1 Objective 1. Examine how constitutional provisions and informal political practices influenced the dynamics of the legislative-executive relationship in the 8th and 9th Senate.

Relevant sections of the constitution will be used to conduct Key Informant Interview (KII) to examine the role of constitution in influencing legislative-executive relationship. Also, effort will be made to examine how Informal Political Practices (such as party loyalty, choice of leadership) contributed in shaping the relationship.

3.2.2 Objective 2. Investigate the role of party loyalty and leadership personalities in shaping legislative independence and executive compliance.

Mixed methods was used in analyzing this research work and they includes Key Informant Interviewed (KIIs), Executive Communications, Media Reports, Academic Journals and Policy Reports. Here, Key Principal Officers were interviewed. Also, relevant documents were also collated and reviewed. All these were geared towards examining the role of party loyalty and leadership personalities in shaping legislative independence and executive compliance.

3.2.3 Objective 3. Assess the governance outcomes resulting from legislative-executive interactions, focusing on policy efficiency and democratic accountability.

In trying to assess the governance outcomes resulting from the legislative-executive relationship, the following population were mapped out for interview. They consist of a population size of One Hundred and Sixty Five (165) respondents as shown below in table 1.

Table 3.1

NO.	POPULATION SIZE	8^{TH} Senate & 9^{th} Senate
1.	Principal Officers of the Senate	10
2.	Committee Chairmen	77
3.	Clerk of the Senate	1
4.	Committee Clerks	77
	TOTAL	**165**

Source: Senate Journal, 2023

In an effort to get reliable data owing to paucity of fund, the Key Informants below were chosen to be interviewed as shown in table 2 below. These were both present during the 8th and 9th Senate hence are able to represent both Senates.

Table 3.2

NO.	KEY INFORMANTS	8TH SENATE & 9TH SENATE
1.	Presiding Officers of the Senate	2
2.	Majority Leader	1
3.	Minority Leader	1
4.	Chairman; Senate Committee on Rules and Business	1
5.	Clerk of the Senate	1
6.	Clerk; Senate Committee on Rules and Business	1
	TOTAL	**7**

Source: Senate Journal, 2023

Out of the seven (7) Key Informants targeted for this interview, only five (5) were reached for the interview. Despite having only five (5) Key Informants available for the interview, the outcome is still very relevant for this study as they were the major players in the Senate. Details of the analysis of the outcome will be provided in the next chapter of work.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

A comprehensive analysis of the empirical findings on legislative-executive relationships during the 8^{th} and 9^{th} Nigerian Senates (2015–2023) was presented in this chapter. The analysis was thematically structured around the research objectives, informed by data drawn from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), documentary reviews, and comparative scholarly literature.

4.1 Legislative-Executive Relationship and the Role of Constitutional Design

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria articulates a robust separation of powers, with clearly defined legislative functions of appropriation, oversight, and confirmation. However, this formal design proved inadequate in insulating legislative behaviour from informal political pressures.

Section 4 (1-2) – Legislative Powers of the Federation: vests legislative power in the National Assembly to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Federation.

Section 80 (1-4) – Control of Public Funds: requires that no money shall be withdrawn from the Consolidated Revenue Fund except as appropriated by the National Assembly.

Section 88 (1-2) – Investigative and Oversight Powers: grants the National Assembly power to conduct investigations into any matter concerning the administration of laws, public expenditure, or the conduct of affairs in any government agency.

Section 147 (2) – Confirmation of Ministerial Appointments: requires Senate confirmation of ministerial nominations made by the President.

Section 143 (1-11) – Impeachment Powers: grants the National Assembly power to remove the President or Vice President for gross misconduct through a rigorous impeachment process.

4.1.1 Section 4: Analysis of Constitutional Sections (Lawmaking Authority)

Question: *How did constitutional provisions and informal political practices affect legislative-executive relationship in the 8th and 9th Senates in the area of law making?*

Table 4.1

S/N.	RESPONSES	CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS		INFORMAL POLITICAL PRACTICES	
		8TH	9TH	8TH	9TH
1.	Strongly	4	0	1	5
2.	Not sure	-	-	-	-
3	Weak	1	5	4	0
	Percentage %	**80%**	**0%**	**20%**	**100%**

Source: Field Interview, February, 2025

With regard to law making, Five (5) out of the seven respondent which constitute 71% were interviewed given credence to the outcome of the result. From the table 1 above, 8th Senate applied constitutional provisions to the tune of 80% and 20% informal political practices while the 9th Senate jettisoned the provision of the constitution and opted for 100% informal political practices.

Finding

8th Senate: Asserted this authority robustly by refusing to automatically pass executive Bills, such as the Petroleum Industry Governance Bill (PIGB), which stalled due to disagreements over fiscal terms. It insisted on legislative review and consultation.

9th Senate: Largely deferred to the executive's legislative agenda. The Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), for example, was passed swiftly in 2021 with minimal amendments to executive proposals, demonstrating a deferential legislative posture.

4.1.2 Section 80: Analysis of Constitutional Sections (Appropriation and Budgetary Powers)

Question: *How did constitutional provisions and informal political practices affect legislative-executive relationship in the 8th and 9th Senates in the area of Appropriation and Budgetary Powers?*

Table 4.2

S/N.	RESPONSES	CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS		INFORMAL POLITICAL PRACTICES	
		8TH	9TH	8TH	9TH
1.	Strongly	5	1	0	4
2.	Not sure	-	-	-	-
3	Weak	0	4	5	1
	Percentage %	**100%**	**20%**	**0%**	**80%**

Source: Field Interview, February, 2025

With regard to Appropriation and Budgetary Powers, table 2 above, shows that the 8th Senate applied constitutional provisions to the tune of 100% and 0% informal political practices while the 9th Senate applied the provision of the constitution to the tune of 20% and 80% informal political practices.

Finding

8th Senate: Exercised strong control over the budget. It delayed budget passage in 2016 and 2017 due to accusations of padding and lack of clarity in executive submissions. The Senate made substantial revisions to budget items.

9th Senate: Prioritized “budget cycle restoration” and passed budgets before the fiscal year-end. However, KIIs and media reports suggest minimal scrutiny of budget processes, loan requests, and sectoral allocations, indicating a passive application of Section 80 (National Assembly Legislative Record Journal, 2023).

4.1.3 Section 88: Analysis of Constitutional Sections (Oversight Function)

Question: *How did constitutional provisions and informal political practices affect legislative-executive relationship in the 8th and 9th Senates in the area of oversight function?*

Table 4.3

S/N.	RESPONSES	CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS		INFORMAL POLITICAL PRACTICES	
		8TH	9TH	8TH	9TH
1.	Strongly	5	0.5	0	4.5
2.	Not sure	-	-	-	-
3	Weak	0	4.5	5	0.5
	Percentage %	**100%**	**10%**	**0%**	**90%**

Source: Field Interview, February, 2025

With regard to Oversight Function, table 4.3 above, shows that the 8th Senate applied constitutional provisions to the tune of 100% and 0% informal political practices while the 9th Senate applied the provision of the constitution to the tune of 10% and 90% informal political practices.

Finding

8th Senate: Deployed oversight powers actively. For instance, it led inquiries into the budget of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and rejected certain executive financial policies.

9th Senate: Rarely initiated independent probes into executive misconduct. Though the NDDC continued to generate scandals, the 9th Senate's response was muted compared to its predecessor. Oversight was weakened by internal alignment with the presidency.

4.1.4 Section 147: Analysis of Constitutional Sections (Confirmation of Appointments)

Question: *How did constitutional provisions and informal political practices affect legislative-executive relationship in the 8th and 9th Senates in the area of Confirmation of Appointments?*

Table 4.4

S/N.	RESPONSES	CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS		INFORMAL POLITICAL PRACTICES	
		8TH	9TH	8TH	9TH
1.	Strongly	5	0	0	5
2.	Not sure	-	-	-	-
3	Weak	0	5	5	0
	Percentage %	**100%**	**0%**	**0%**	**100%**

Source: Field Interview, February, 2025

With regard to Confirmation of Appointments, table 4.4 above, shows that the 8th Senate applied constitutional provisions to the tune of 100% and 0% informal political practices while the 9th Senate applied the provision of the constitution to the tune of 0% and 100% informal political practices.

Finding

8th Senate: Rejected nominees deemed unsuitable (e.g., Ibrahim Magu as EFCC Chairman). It demanded rigorous vetting, citing security and ethical concerns. This demonstrated the Senate's autonomy in checking executive power.

9th Senate: Confirmed all 43 nominees in less than a week, including some with pending corruption allegations. As revealed in Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), political loyalty and executive-legislative alignment took precedence over merit or scrutiny.

4.1.5 Section 143: Analysis of Constitutional Sections (Impeachment Powers)

Question: *How did constitutional provisions and informal political practices affect legislative-executive relationship in the 8th and 9th Senates in the area of exercising Impeachment Powers?*

Table 4.5

S/N.	RESPONSES	CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS		INFORMAL POLITICAL PRACTICES	
		8TH	9TH	8TH	9TH
1.	Strongly	2	0	3	5
2.	Not sure	-	-	-	-
3	Weak	3	5	2	0
	Percentage %	**40%**	**0%**	**60%**	**100%**

Source: Field Interview, February, 2025

With regard to Impeachment Powers, table 4.5 above, shows that the 8th Senate applied constitutional provisions to the tune of 40% and 60% informal political practices while the 9th Senate applied the provision of the constitution to the tune of 0% and 100% informal political practices.

Finding

8th Senate: Though it never attempted impeachment, the Senate used this latent power rhetorically to constrain executive excesses, as seen during debates on constitutional breaches and fiscal violations.

9th Senate: This constitutional tool remained largely dormant. Public discourse on executive accountability, including allegations of illegal withdrawals and policy failures, failed to trigger any deliberation of impeachment procedures, highlighting legislative passivity.

Synthesis and Implications

The comparison illustrates that constitutional design alone does not guarantee institutional autonomy or effectiveness. The same legal framework (1999 Constitution) produced two very different legislative behaviours:

The 8th Senate acted as a vigilant institutional counterweight, invoking constitutional powers to reinforce oversight, scrutinize appointments, and protect legislative integrity.

The 9th Senate, though operating under identical legal conditions, subordinated its role to executive convenience—effectively reinterpreting constitutional powers as procedural formalities rather than substantive checks.

This institutional divergence underscores the critical role of political context, leadership character, and party dynamics in mediating how constitutional provisions are operationalized in practice.

The 8th Senate: Constitutional Vigilance in Practice

Informed by the Principal-Agent Theory, the 8th Senate actively exercised its oversight role, often to the discomfiture of the executive. Budget delays, rejections of executive loan requests (such as the $29.9 billion in 2016), and the refusal to confirm Ibrahim Magu as EFCC Chairman underscore a legislature operating as a co-equal branch of government. This assertiveness was corroborated by a former senator who emphasized during a KII:

"We did not oppose the President out of spite. Our role was to question, to interrogate, to ensure executive proposals met national interest, not political convenience."

Empirically, this aligns with findings by Richard (1990), who argued that in presidential systems, institutional tensions, when constructively deployed, promote accountability through bargaining and compromise.

The 9th Senate: Procedural Compliance, Substantive Retreat

Conversely, the 9th Senate epitomized legislative compliance. While adhering to procedural formalities, it largely subordinated its substantive oversight function to executive convenience. Its speedy confirmation of all 43 ministerial nominees without significant vetting and the uncritical approval of a $22.7 billion loan in 2020 exemplify a deferential posture. An anonymous Legislative Aide admitted during Key Informant Interview (KII):

"The priority was to avoid unnecessary confrontation. Governance was already slow—we could not afford political gridlock"

While such a cooperative stance improved administrative efficiency, it eroded constitutional accountability, echoing Ethan et al (2008), who found that perceptions of institutional balance often diminish when one branch consistently dominates.

4.2 Party Loyalty and Leadership Personalities; effect on Executive Compliance

Party loyalty emerged as a critical determinant of Senate behaviour, but with divergent manifestations in the two legislative eras. The role of political parties in shaping legislative behaviour in Nigeria is not only normative but also codified within the legal framework. The 1999 Constitution, under Section 68(1)(g), provides that a member of the National Assembly shall vacate his seat if he becomes a member of another political party before the expiration of the period for which he was elected, unless the defection is a result of a division in his original party or a merger of parties. This provision legally enshrines party supremacy and fundamentally conditions the security of tenure of legislators on their loyalty to the political party on whose platform they were elected.

This constitutional stipulation has profound implications for the institutional behaviour of legislators, especially in a political context like Nigeria's, where the party apparatus, rather than constituency accountability, often determines access to electoral nomination, legislative leadership positions, and committee appointments. The consequence is a systemic tilt toward party cohesion at the expense of institutional autonomy, making legislative-executive relationship vulnerable to the dynamics of intra-party politics and elite bargaining.

4.2.1 Section 4: Analysis of effect on Legislative Independence and Executive Compliance (Party Loyalty)

Question: *To what extent do party loyalty affect legislative independence and executive compliance in the 8th and 9th Senates?*

Table 4.6

S/N.	RESPONSES	PARTY LOYALTY	
		8TH	9TH
1.	Strength	0	5
2.	Not sure	-	-
3	Weakness	5	0
	Percentage %	**0%**	**100%**

Source: Field Interview, February, 2025

With regard to Party Loyalty in table 4.6 above, the 8th Senate affirmed an independent posture, asserting its constitutional powers even at the risk of party loyalty. Key Informant Interview put party loyalty at 0% while the 9th Senate imbibed party loyalty to the tune of 100%.

Finding

From the above table, this dynamic manifested differently across the 8th and 9th Senates, reflecting the relative strength or weakness of party control and the leadership's orientation toward executive authority.

In the 8th Senate, party loyalty was tested and frequently contested. Senator Bukola Saraki's controversial emergence as President of the Senate facilitated by opposition votes as against the APC leadership's preference—challenged the supremacy of party hierarchy. This act of political defiance created a divided Senate leadership structure and weakened the enforcement of party discipline. Consequently, the Senate adopted a more assertive and independent posture, asserting its constitutional functions even at the risk of executive disapproval or internal party sanctions.

In contrast, the 9th Senate was characterized by unambiguous party alignment, orchestrated through the APC's internal consensus and strict adherence to the party's zoning formula, which enabled Ahmad Lawan's smooth emergence as President of the Senate. His leadership explicitly committed to a "harmonious relationship" with the executive, and this translated into a "rubber-stamp" legislative culture where party loyalty was paramount and dissent was institutionally discouraged.

This party-defined pathway to legislative office and security of tenure created a compliance incentive structure, particularly evident in the 9th Senate, where lawmakers, fearing expulsion or political marginalization, aligned closely with the executive, often at the cost of institutional oversight. Anonymous Legislative Aide noted in an interview:

"No senator wants to risk his return ticket by standing against the party or the presidency. The party giveth, and the party taketh away."

This observation is corroborated by empirical findings from José (2010), who emphasized that in systems where party allegiance is tightly enforced, legislators become extensions of the executive when both arms are controlled by the same party, thus diminishing legislative independence.

Moreover, as Onyekaba (2021) noted in the South African context—equally applicable to Nigeria—the dominance of a single political party often transforms parliaments into instruments of executive validation rather than checks on its power.

Thus, while the Constitution mandates legislative independence, the same legal instrument enforces a loyalty structure that incentivizes alignment over autonomy, a duality that became especially pronounced in the transition from the relatively assertive 8th Senate to the compliant 9th Senate.

Factionalism and Independence in the 8th Senate

The 8th Senate's posture cannot be divorced from intra-party factionalism within the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC). Saraki's controversial emergence as President of the Senate with the backing of opposition PDP members signaled a defiance of party orthodoxy. This factionalism enabled greater legislative independence, even as it generated institutional friction.

An anonymous political correspondent interviewed stated that:

"Saraki weaponized dissent to shield the legislature from party control. It was risky but necessary to establish independence."

This finding contend that institutional strength in African democracies often stems not from formal frameworks but from the ability of actors to defy hegemonic party influence.

Cohesion and Compliance in the 9th Senate

In stark contrast, the 9th Senate operated within a unified party architecture. Senator Ahmad Lawan's ascendancy was orchestrated by the party hierarchy, ensuring alignment with the executive agenda. The result was a legislative chamber often criticized as a "rubber stamp", prioritizing party cohesion over national scrutiny.

As confirmed by an anonymous former Legislative Aide:

"Every major decision came with a clear directive from the party caucus. It was more about loyalty than legality."

These dynamic parallels the South African case reviewed by Yvonne (2011), where party dominance compromised parliamentary oversight, especially when executive and legislative leaders emerged from the same political faction.

4.2.2 Section 4: Analysis of effect on Legislative Independence and Executive Compliance (Leadership Personalities)

Question: *To what extent do leadership personalities affect legislative independence and executive compliance in the 8th and 9th Senates?*

Table 4.7

S/N.	RESPONSES	LEADERSHIP PERSONALITIES	
		8TH	9TH
1.	Strength	5	0
2.	Not sure	-	-
3	Weakness	0	5
	Percentage %	**100%**	**0%**

Source: Field Interview, February, 2025

With regard to Leadership Personalities in table 4.7 above, the 8th Senate exemplified a legislature that challenged executive overreach and asserted its autonomy. Key Informant Interview puts the level of leadership personalities at 100% in the 8th Senate while the 9th Senate whose leader embedded loyalty produced a Senate that largely operated as an appendage of the executive hence leadership personalities accounted to 0% (zero percent).

Finding

Leadership style served as a mediating variable, influencing how constitutional and partisan forces translated into institutional behaviour. In parliamentary politics, the personality and strategic orientation of the President of the Senate often transcend procedural formalities to fundamentally shape the institutional character and legislative conduct of the chamber. Leadership in this context functions not merely as a managerial or ceremonial role, but as a critical driver of institutional posture, mediating between constitutional mandates, party imperatives, and the legislature's relational dynamics with the executive.

The 8^{th} and 9^{th} Senates offer compelling evidence of how contrasting leadership styles (assertive versus compliant) can redefine the legislature's functional disposition, even under identical constitutional and political contexts. This variance illustrates that legislative independence or subservience is not structurally predetermined but can be strategically cultivated or suppressed by those at the helm of the legislative institution.

Bukola Saraki: Defiant Leadership and Institutional Assertion

The 8^{th} Senate exemplified a legislature that challenged executive overreach and asserted its autonomy. His controversial emergence as President of the Senate achieved through a tactical alliance with opposition lawmakers was an act of defiance against the APC's formal zoning arrangement. This not only fractured party cohesion but simultaneously created an opportunity for institutional independence.

An anonymous former legislator, interviewed as part of this study, remarked:

"Saraki was not just leading the Senate; he was defending its independence with political brinkmanship. He didn't owe his seat to the party hierarchy, and that freed him to act institutionally."

Under Saraki's leadership, the Senate actively interrogated executive proposals, delayed budgets for proper scrutiny, and refused to confirm presidential nominees like Ibrahim Magu. These actions, while polarizing, aligned with the core tenets of institutional checks and balances.

Hi's leadership strategy aligns with the theoretical observations of Richard (1990) and Edward (1948), both of whom emphasized the centrality of legislative leadership in asserting parliamentary prerogatives in presidential systems marked by executive dominance. Saraki's Senate, through deliberate procedural engagement and tactical use of investigative powers, positioned itself as an institutional counterweight, a vital function for democratic accountability.

Ahmad Lawan: Consensus Leadership and Institutional Conformity

In stark contrast, the 9th Senate adopted a leadership style oriented around consensus-building and executive accommodation. Lawan's emergence was engineered within the APC's internal hierarchy, following the party's zoning preferences and enjoying explicit endorsement from the presidency. This embedded loyalty produced a Senate that largely operated as an appendage of the executive.

An anonymous respondent interviewed observed:

"Senator Lawan saw himself as a stabilizer. His goal was to ensure that nothing disrupted the president's agenda not even legitimate legislative objections."

Lawan's Senate prioritized the expeditious passage of executive Bills, approved all ministerial nominees in record time, and rarely contested executive financial decisions, including controversial loan requests. While this fostered policy efficiency, it simultaneously eroded legislative oversight and public trust in institutional independence.

This style of legislative leadership conforms to Ethan et al. (2008), who argued that where legislative leaders prioritize party cohesion over institutional responsibility, legislative-executive balance is structurally compromised. Moreover, the findings echo Fatile (2017), who documented similar patterns in state legislatures where executive-backed leaders neutralized legislative oversight mechanisms to maintain political alignment.

4.2.3 Comparative Analysis

Both Saraki and Lawan operated under the same constitutional powers and led the Senate within the same ruling party. Yet, their personal leadership philosophies and strategic alignments produced diametrically opposite institutional outcomes:

Under Saraki, the Senate functioned as a co-equal branch, conflictual but autonomous.
Under Lawan, the Senate embraced consensus and institutional quietude—efficient but compliant.

From a Principal-Agent perspective, he represented a principal demanding accountability from its agent (the executive), whereas Lawan inverted this dynamic, allowing the agent to set the principal's agenda.

In sum, legislative behaviour (assertive or consenting) cannot be fully explained by constitutional texts or party politics alone. Rather, it is profoundly influenced by the leadership choices made at the helm of the legislative institution. These choices define whether the Senate operates as a platform for democratic accountability or as a facilitator of executive convenience.

4.3 Governance Outcomes: A Trade-Off between Efficiency and Accountability

The legislative-executive dynamics of Nigeria's 8th and 9th Senates reveal an enduring tension between two pillars of democratic governance: efficiency (i.e., the swift and smooth implementation of public policy) and accountability (i.e., the constitutional oversight of executive action to ensure transparency and public interest).

This trade-off emerged as a structural dilemma within presidential systems, especially in emerging democracies like Nigeria, where informal political practices such as party loyalty and patronage often dilute formal mechanisms of institutional checks and balances. Drawing on data from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and empirical scholarship, this section analyzes how the contrasting approaches of the 8th and 9th Senates to legislative-executive relationship produced divergent governance outcomes, particularly in the areas of budgetary policy, public accountability, and institutional legitimacy.

4.3.1 Section 4: Analysis of Legislative-Executive Interactions (Governance Outcomes)

Table 4.8

S/N	GOVERNANCE OUTCOMES	8TH SENATE		9TH SENATE	
1.	Bills passed	Passed 172	Assented 70	Passed 500	Assented 131
2.	Oversights	Strict oversight of MDAs		Minimal oversight of MDAs	
3.	Loan approval	Rejected some loan request after rigorous scrutiny		Approved all without serious scrutiny (unchecked borrowing)	
4.	Summons	Effectively utilized its power of summon		Weakened down the power of summon	
5.	Investigative Hearings	Numerous Investigative Hearings		Very few Investigative Hearings	

Source: National Assembly Legislative Record, 2025

Finding

4.3.2 The 8th Senate: Accountability at the expense of Efficiency

Under the leadership of Bukola Saraki, the 8th Senate prioritized institutional autonomy and executive scrutiny, often at the cost of administrative efficiency. Legislative assertiveness was reflected in prolonged budget deliberations, rejection of key executive nominees, and refusals to approve borrowing requests without comprehensive justification.

One respondent, during a Key Informant Interviews (KII), noted:

"The 8th Senate made governance messy, but that mess was democracy in action—deliberation, contestation, and accountability."

The 2016 budget delay, for instance, which led to a near seven-month fiscal impasse, highlighted the Senate's insistence on proper documentation and transparency from the executive. Similarly, its investigation into the NDDC exposed deep-rooted corruption and forced administrative reforms within the Agency.

These outcomes validate Makar's (2021) findings that legislative friction, while often disruptive to executive timelines, plays a critical role in reinforcing transparency and deterring abuse of power. Awor (2020) also noted that the 8th Senate's defiance, especially in the budget process, though politically inconvenient, prevented unilateral executive budgeting and ensured legislative input in national planning.

However, critics argue that this confrontational posture fostered policy gridlock, slowed project implementation, and undermined investor confidence, especially as public disagreements between the executive and legislature cast doubts on the unity of governance.

4.3.3 The 9th Senate: Efficiency without Scrutiny

The 9th Senate shifted this paradigm by emphasizing legislative cooperation and executive facilitation. The Senate approved the 2020 budget by December, 2019, marking the first time this occurred since 1999, and ensured that subsequent fiscal documents were expedited through the legislative process. The prompt passage of the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) in 2021 and the swift approval of several executive loan requests demonstrated a commitment to rapid governance delivery.

Anonymous respondent affirmed:

"For the first time in two decades, capital projects were being implemented on time. That wouldn't have been possible with an adversarial Senate."

From a performance perspective, this led to faster infrastructure development, especially in the transportation and energy sectors. However, during this same period, Nigeria's public debt increased significantly from ₦25.7 trillion in 2019 to ₦38 trillion by 2023, often without rigorous legislative debates or cost-benefit analysis.

This pattern of unchecked executive borrowing and minimal oversight reflects what Fatile (2017) termed a "subdued legislature" one that expedites governance at the expense of democratic accountability. Moreover, allegations of corruption within social intervention programs (e.g., the National Social Investment Programme) largely went uninvestigated, reinforcing the perception of a rubber-stamp Senate unwilling to challenge the executive, even in the face of clear misconduct.

4.3.4 Comparative Synthesis: The Double-Edged Sword of Institutional Posture

The governance outcomes of both Senates offer contrasting lessons:

The 8th Senate, while prone to legislative-executive gridlock, fulfilled its constitutional mandate of oversight, promoting transparency and protecting institutional integrity. Its assertiveness demonstrated the legislature's potential to serve as a democratic safeguard, even when politically costly.

The 9th Senate, while recognized for promoting executive efficiency and ensuring budgetary stability, did so by undermining its watchdog role, consequently diminishing its legitimacy as an independent branch of government. Its adherence contributed to policy continuity but came at the expense of increased public skepticism regarding legislative relevance.

These outcomes affirm the empirical claims of Ogul (1976) and José (2010), both of whom emphasized that while coordination between the branches enhances operational governance, it must not override the legislative responsibility to question, deliberate, and, when necessary, oppose executive excesses.

Ultimately, the findings demonstrate that governance efficiency and democratic accountability are not mutually exclusive; rather, they require careful institutional balancing. While the 8th Senate leaned towards the latter and the 9th towards the former, neither chamber succeeded in harmonizing both. This underscores a central finding of this study: that constitutional structures must be actively defended through principled leadership and institutional resolve, not merely upheld through procedural compliance.

4.4 Summary of Key Findings

The comparative analysis of Nigeria's 8th and 9th Senates shows that legislative behaviour is not solely determined by constitutional architecture or party dominance; it is significantly influenced by informal political dynamics, leadership personalities, and strategic institutional choices. Utilizing the principal-agent theory, this study demonstrates how the same constitutional provisions can lead to different governance outcomes when viewed through various institutional lenses and political motivations. The following sections summarize the key findings:

4.4.1 Constitutional Design/ Institutional Autonomy is mediated by Informal Politics

Although Sections 4, 80, 88, and 147 of the 1999 Constitution grant the National Assembly considerable powers in lawmaking, appropriation, oversight, and confirmation, their effective enforcement relies heavily on the existing political climate. The 8th Senate wielded these powers assertively, upholding institutional independence despite executive opposition. In contrast, the 9th Senate demonstrated a more procedural rather than substantive approach to these powers, frequently sacrificing thorough scrutiny for the sake of expediency. This reinforces the assertion by Edward (1948) and Makar (2021) that constitutional authority alone is inadequate to ensure legislative autonomy in environments dominated by informal political pressures.

Perhaps the most profound insight from the study is that legislative effectiveness is not guaranteed by constitutional texts alone. It necessitates an alignment of institutional will, leadership integrity, and political courage to confront executive encroachment. The 8th Senate, despite facing political backlash, showcased the potential for institutional independence in a presidential democracy. The 9th

Senate, while politically stable, illustrated the dangers of legislative complacency in the context of executive dominance.

4.4.2 Party Loyalty/ Leadership style functions as a mechanism of Executive control

Section 68(1)(g) of the Constitution, which mandates the loss of a legislative seat upon party defection, entrenches party supremacy in Nigeria's legislative process. The 8th Senate, amid conditions of intra-party conflict, leveraged its partial detachment from party orthodoxy to assert independence. However, the 9th Senate displayed strict alignment with the ruling party's executive agenda, thereby weakening its oversight functions. As corroborated by José (2010) and Onyekaba (2021), this loyalty dynamic transforms legislatures into extensions of the executive in single-party dominant systems, undermining institutional checks and balances.

The study found that the personality and strategic orientation of President of the Senates were pivotal in shaping the institutional identity of the legislature. Bukola Saraki's assertive and combative leadership in the 8th Senate facilitated legislative resilience and robust oversight. Ahmad Lawan's consensual and deferential leadership in the 9th Senate, by contrast, promoted executive harmony but diluted legislative scrutiny. These findings are consistent with Richard (1990) and Ogul (1976), who argued that legislative-executive relationship are fundamentally shaped by the leadership's ability to negotiate institutional boundaries.

4.4.3 Governance outcomes reflect an Efficiency-Accountability Trade-Off

A key finding of the study is the observable trade-off between democratic accountability and policy efficiency. The 8th Senate enhanced accountability through its assertive oversight, but this often led to legislative-executive gridlock and delayed fiscal operations. The 9th Senate achieved greater policy efficiency, demonstrated through timely budget passage and continuity of infrastructural policy, but at the expense of democratic accountability and increasing public debt. This dichotomy reflects the theoretical dilemma outlined in the Principal-Agent Theory, where agents (executives) may act with impunity when principals (legislatures) are either unwilling or unable to enforce compliance.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter of the study provides a summary to pave a deductive path to the study's conclusion, drawing recommendations and suggestions for future research.

5.1 Summary of finding

This study critically examined the dynamics of the legislative-executive relationship in Nigeria's 8th (2015–2019) and 9th (2019–2023) Senates to evaluate how constitutional provisions, informal political practices, party loyalty, and leadership personalities influence institutional behaviour and governance outcomes in Nigeria. Drawing on Principal-Agent Theory and supported by empirical literature and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), the study explored the interplay between legislative autonomy and executive compliance within the framework of Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

Chapter One introduced the study by articulating the research problem, objectives, and significance. Chapter Two engaged with existing literature, situating the study within debates on institutional accountability, neopatrimonialism, and constitutional design, while identifying a notable gap regarding the comparative analysis of successive Senates under the same party and presidency. Chapter Three outlined the qualitative case study methodology, which included document analysis and elite interviews. Chapter Four provided a rigorous analysis of the constitutional and political dynamics of both Senates, emphasizing contrasting institutional postures and their implications for governance.

The study's key findings are as follows:

i. Constitutional authority, though substantial, is constrained by political realities and informal practices.

ii. Party loyalty serves as both a facilitator of executive-legislative harmony and a hindrance to legislative independence. Additionally, leadership style greatly influences the strategic orientation of the legislature.

iii. Governance outcomes revealed a clear trade-off between policy efficiency and democratic accountability across the two legislative eras studied.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are provided:

1. Reassess and clarify constitutional provisions that institutionalize party supremacy.

The 1999 Constitution grants extraordinary powers to political parties, embedding their authority in various sections that significantly influence legislative behaviour and institutional autonomy. Notably:

Section 68(1)(g) states that a legislator must vacate his seat if he defects to another political party before his term ends, unless the defection results from a division in the original party or a merger involving that party. This provision enforces strict party loyalty and acts as a legal deterrent against dissent, even when such dissent is based on issues rather than ideology.

Section 221 prohibits individuals from canvassing for votes or contesting elections except through a political party, thereby eliminating the legal space for independent candidacy and reinforcing the monopoly of parties over electoral participation.

Section 228(a–d) grants the National Assembly the authority to regulate the operations of political parties and empowers the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to oversee their organization, thereby legitimizing internal party processes as decisive for public political outcomes.

Section 40 of the Constitution guarantees the right to association but paradoxically empowers party leadership structures to impose discipline that often undermines internal democracy and individual legislative conscience.

In light of the above, this study recommends a thorough review of the constitution to diminish the excessive centralization of political power within party hierarchies. Specifically:

- Section 68(1)(g) should be amended to establish clearer, more specific criteria for determining "division" or "merger," in order to prevent opportunistic defections and partisan manipulations that undermine legislative independence.
- The Constitution should be reformed to allow Independent Candidacy, thus expanding political pluralism and decreasing the over-reliance on party machinery for electoral legitimacy.
- Legislative measures should be implemented to enhance internal party democracy, ensuring that party primaries and leadership decisions are transparent, participatory, and non-coercive.

By reducing the party leadership's disproportionate influence over legislative tenure and institutional behaviour, these reforms would promote principled legislative engagement, protect lawmakers from retaliatory expulsion, and enhance the independence of the legislature as a co-equal branch of government.

2. Strengthen Internal Legislative Independence through Institutional Reform

The National Assembly should enhance its autonomy through reforms that minimize the influence of party leadership in appointing legislative officers and Committee chairs. This can be achieved by implementing internal rules that prioritize merit, experience, and cross-party consensus over party loyalty.

3. Institutionalize Legislative Oversight Mechanisms to Assure Effective Governance Outcomes

Oversight should not be discretionary or dependent on leaders (Dogara, 2016). Standing Committees must be empowered with enforceable timelines, independent audit resources, and legal protections to ensure that executive agencies are held continuously accountable, rather than reactively.

- **Promote Leadership Accountability through Peer-Based Performance Evaluation:** The performance of President of the Senates and Committee leaders should undergo regular peer evaluations based on objective criteria such as Bill scrutiny, Committee outputs, and oversight activities. This approach would discourage subservient leadership while encouraging principled independence.
- **Strengthen Civil Society Engagement with the Legislature:** Civil society organizations (CSOs) and the media must be further empowered to monitor legislative proceedings, demand transparency, and publicize instances of executive collusion or oversight failures. A well-informed citizenry serves as a secondary check on legislative behaviour.
- **Enhance Political Education on the Role of the Legislature:** Civic understanding of legislative functions should be integrated into national political education frameworks. When citizens recognize the distinct role of the legislature in governance, they are more likely to demand accountability and resist the normalization of legislative passivity.

5.3 Conclusion

This thesis concludes that the legislative-executive relationship in Nigeria is not just a function of constitutional engineering but is also shaped by political will, leadership character, and party dynamics. The comparative analysis of the 8^{th} and 9^{th} Senates shows that institutional autonomy depends on the strategic choices made by legislative leaders and the extent to which party mechanisms allow or suppress dissent.

The 8^{th} Senate showcased a rare example of legislative independence and institutional defiance, exercising oversight and check functions even while operating under the same party as the executive. This came at the expense of administrative efficiency and intra-party cohesion. In contrast, the 9^{th} Senate embraced a more harmonious and compliant approach, which improved policy implementation but diminished democratic accountability and public trust in the legislature.

The implication of this finding is clear: legislative strength in a presidential democracy requires more than legal powers, it demands institutional courage and leadership committed to democratic principles, even in the face of political adversity. In the absence of such leadership, the legislature risks becoming an instrument of executive convenience, thereby undermining the very purpose of the separation of powers and constitutional oversight.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

This study examined the 8^{th} and 9^{th} Senates of the National Assembly; therefore, future studies can have a broader scope or focus on the 10^{th} Senate upon the completion of its tenure. Future research could expand this study in the following directions:

A quantitative assessment of voting patterns and legislative outputs in the 8^{th} and 9^{th} Senates to further support claims of institutional assertiveness or compliance.

A comparative sub-national study investigating executive-legislative dynamics in State Houses of Assembly, where executive dominance is frequently more pronounced.

An evaluation of the 10^{th} Senate under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to assess whether emerging trends reflect continuity or departure from the patterns established in the 8^{th} and 9^{th} Senates.

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APPENDIX 1

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Question 1: How did constitutional provisions and informal political practices affect legislative-executive relationship in the 8^{th} and 9^{th} Senates in the area of law making?

Question 2: How did constitutional provisions and informal political practices affect legislative-executive relationship in the 8^{th} and 9^{th} Senates in the area of Appropriation and Budgetary Powers?

Question 3: How did constitutional provisions and informal political practices affect legislative-executive relationship in the 8^{th} and 9^{th} Senates in the area of oversight function?

Question 4: How did constitutional provisions and informal political practices affect legislative-executive relationship in the 8^{th} and 9^{th} Senates in the area of Confirmation of Appointments?

Question 5: How did constitutional provisions and informal political practices affect legislative-executive relationship in the 8^{th} and 9^{th} Senates in the area of exercising Impeachment Powers?

Question 6: To what extent do party loyalty affect legislative independence and executive compliance in the 8^{th} and 9^{th} Senates?

Question 7: To what extent do leadership personalities affect legislative independence and executive compliance in the 8^{th} and 9^{th} Senates?