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Dynamics of Change in Legislators' Quality and Effectiveness in Nigeria's 4th To 6th National Assembly



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Abstract: Notwithstanding the centrality of the parliament to governance, numerous studies have come to the conclusion that the legislative institution in most African democracies is weak. A report by the UN Economic Commission for Africa found that "many African legislators lack the educational qualification, information, freedom and independence to perform their constitutionally mandated functions effectively and efficiently. On this premise, this paper examines the effectiveness of the Nigerian National Parliament based on three major functional responsibilities: Oversight Power, Representation and Law Making. The paper adopts the qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. The biographies of legislators in the National Assembly were examined. This allows the researchers to know the educational background, experience and expertise of the legislators. It also examines various Bills and Acts that emanated from the National Assembly and the effectiveness of such Bills and Acts in the drive towards national development, 4th to 6th Assembly. The paper finds that the National Assembly rises above board in legislative qualities and outputs (education and bills enacted) but was adversely affected by the corrupt activities that have embroiled its leadership over the years. The paper argues that the numerous scandals that have rocked the leaderships of the National Assembly over the years had undermined the effectiveness of the legislative institution in Nigeria.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Legislation, National Assembly, Representation, Oversight

Introduction

The legislature has been widely acknowledged as an important institution of government especially in democratic societies. Students of politics, democrats, practitioners and political actors have pondered on the necessity and the importance of the legislative institution as fundamental ingredient for stable democratic practice (Aremu, Bakare and Abayomi, 2017). The legislative institution provides for the citizenry the platform for participation in a political process. Fashagba (2011:1) noted that the presence of legislative institution in any modern polity suggests the presence of indirect participation of the electorate in decision-

making on issues that affect their daily lives. Not only is the presence of a legislature salient to the acceptability of democratic regime, but also the extent to which the legislature demonstrates capability to freely express itself and asserts its power determine how democratic a state is. Infact, in order to legitimize its decision and to have sense of people participation, monarchical government such as Saudi Arabia initiates what it termed the Shura Council (Montagu, 2015:3).

Most scholars have argued that the level of representation in decision making determines the strength of democratic system (Garuba and Ameen, 2020; Omoyele, 2011:11; Barkan, 2009:17; Fashagba, 2009:8). The functions of legislation, oversight and budgeting ascribe to the legislature revolve around citizen's representation in decision making. Following similar position, Alabi (2012: 1) avers that the power to make laws distinctively resided with modern parliaments. Omoyele (2011:11) then concluded that law making is an expression of the interests of various constituents and the people of the state at large.

To some scholars, representation is the process by which elected officials act on behalf of constituents, gauging, deliberating upon, and incorporating citizen interests in political decision-making (Huber and Powel, 1994:5; Aldrich, 1995:35; Stokes, 1999:18). This will eventually result in the expending of resources to ensure that citizen preferences are attended to. According to Fish (2014:50), the presence of a powerful legislature is a blessing for democratization. Arguing further in substantiating how the strength of legislature could produce the best for democratization by adopting an index of parliamentary powers (Parliamentary Power Index, PPI).

Informed by the centrality of the legislature to democratic governance, this paper examines legislative effectiveness in Nigerian National Assembly based on three major functional peculiarities: oversight power, representation, and law making. It adopted both the qualitative and quantitative methods of research enquiry. The study assesses the biography of legislators in the National Assembly with a view to ascertaining their educational qualifications. It also examines various Bills initiated by the legislators and those passed into Acts of the National Assembly as well as the effectiveness of such Acts towards the development and wellbeing of the populace. Data for the study were accessed from the archives of the Nigerian National Institute for Legislative Studies, Parliamentary Power Index dataset, available libraries materials, books, journals, internet materials, newspapers and Nigerian 1999 Constitution as altered.

Reviewing Literature

This study acknowledges the existence of various literatures on the concept of representation in representative democracy as there are various views and perceptions on the major functions of the legislature in a democratic system. Essentially, the legislative institution provides for the citizenry the platform for participatory political process. Fashagba (2011:1) notes that the presence of legislative institution in any modern polity suggests the indirect participation of the electorate in the making decisions on issues that affect their daily lives. Not only is the presence of a legislature salient to the acceptability of democratic regime, but also the extent to which the legislature demonstrates capability to freely express itself and asserts its power determine the extent and depth of democratic institutionalization.

There exists consensus among scholars and practitioners that the core functions of the legislature in modern democracy include: representation, legislation, oversight and budgeting (Garuba and Ameen 2020; Aremu, Bakare and Abayomi, 2017; Omoyele, 2011; Barkan, 2009). Fashagba (2009:10) affirms that in modern democracies, the roles of representation, law-making and oversight of administration are often ascribed to the legislature while Alabi

(2012:3) establishes that the power to make laws distinctively resided with modern parliaments. Omoyele (2011) describes law making as an expression of the interests of various constituents and the people of the state at large.

Other scholars highlight the importance of these various functions accrued to the legislature but emphasize “representation” as the nucleus of other functions (Fish, 2014; Fashagba, 2009:10). They argued that representation was the basis for the evolution of the legislature as a core institution in democracy in the first place. To some scholars, representation is the process by which elected officials act on behalf of constituents, gauging, deliberating upon, and incorporating citizens interests in political decision-making. This will eventually result in the expending resources to ensure that citizens’ preferences are attended to (Huber and Powel, 1994; Aldrich, 1995; Stokes, 1999).

Legislative representation is also thought to enhance national unity in multicultural societies. According to Barkan (2009:17), legislatures are the institution explicitly established to represent society’s diverse interests in government. Barkan (2009:18) identifies representation as a legislature’s fundamental function, regardless of the type of electoral system by which the members of the legislature gain their seats, the main purpose of individual legislators and the constituencies they represent. In essence, the legislature represents or mimics the varied and conflicting interests that exist in society a whole. The legislature is the institution arena where representatives of conflicting interests articulate and strive to advance their respective objectives in the policy making process.

Omoyele (2011) notes that, members of legislative institution use deliberations and the passage of bills into laws to give expression to the interests of their constituents and the people of the state at large. Barkan (2009:17) expands representation to include constituency service. This according to Barkan (2009:17) can include regular visits by legislators to their districts to assist constituents with individual needs. Legislators can also sponsor development projects to provide public services to their district, and this might include: road projects, provision of portable water, construction of schools and health clinics, and meeting halls.

Given that government in a democratic system implies the rule of the majority, it is apparent that the legislature is one important democratic institution that allows the various constituencies to which a state is delineated to elect those that will represent their interests in government. When elected, the representatives are expected to represent the views, concerns and interests of their constituents in the legislative house. Therefore, the major contribution of this paper is that it brings in a data-driven conversation that explains the importance of education and experience to quality legislative activities viz-a-viz citizens’ representation in democratic settings.

Operationalization of the Measurements

Balancing Power/Oversight Power

Constitutionally, legislatures are separate and co-equal branches that share governmental power in modern democratic states. This has been theorized from the day of Montesquieu who derived his inspiration from Locke’s “Treatise of Civil Government”. It follows that the legislature must check and balance the power of the executive branch of government. A good legislature, accordingly, has to be relatively independent of the executive. It must insist on

participating in the initiation of policy and refuse to rubber-stamp executive proposals and bills.

According to Rosenthal (1999:25), independence was a watchword of the United States legislative reform movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Rosenthal (1999:25) notes that at that time it appeared that the legislatures, except in about a dozen states, were dominated by governors and the executives. Informed by the need for legislative independence, Ogoloma (2012:6) argues that the guarantee of liberty in any given government to the people is the practice of the theory of separation of powers. It is through the separation of powers that any given group or arm or level of government cannot at the same time prescribe, execute and adjudicate in any case as it pleases it. Thus, Ogoloma (2012:6) notes that, the development of legislative capacity will nourish a sense of legislative independence.

In the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, separation and balance of powers is a fundamental constitutional principle which spells the roles and duties of the three arms of the government. These principles are enunciated in the following sections of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria: Part I, Section 231(1); Part I, Section 231(2); Section 232 (2); Part II Section 4(8); Chapter V (The Legislature) Section 58(1); Section 58 (3); Section 58 (4); Chapter V Part II (House of Assembly of a State) Section 100 (1); Section 100 (2); and Section 100 (3) amongst others (FRN, 1999).

Representing Constituencies

One of the major roles of a legislature is representation. Representing various constituencies, mainly people in each lawmaker's electoral district, but also organized groups and individuals elsewhere in the state constitutes the core of the responsibilities of the legislature in democracies. Given the centrality of the representation, the question of how well the legislature performs its representational tasks to the people and represents their interests and views in the National Parliament in transitional democracies like Nigeria becomes imperative and there are number of reasons for this.

First, the constitutional system and the legislature ought to provide for substantial political equality, that is, "one person, one vote." This standard, enforced by state and federal courts, is generally met in theory not really in practice in Nigerian political system. Second, a variety of groups who previously lacked membership should be present in the ranks of legislators today. Women and various fringe and minority groups need opportunities to serve as well as to be represented. Third, as part of its representational function, the legislature must provide service to constituencies and constituents. Constituent service is normally the job of individual members who appreciate the importance of doing a good job in this area if they hope to be re-elected. Fourth, the legislature has to ensure that citizens, as well as groups, have access to members, to committees, and to the general process. Fifth, the legislature also has responsibility for civic education, especially on representative democracy, the legislative institution and the legislative process.

Law Making

Although representation deals with the relations between the legislature and the public, while lawmaking is internally focused. Of the four core functions of legislatures (representation, legislation, oversight and constituency service), according to Suberu (2014:113), legislation is the task from which legislatures derive their nomenclature or appellation and it is arguably the most critical responsibility of the parliaments. It is, as claimed by Oko (2014:87), "the most visible and most important role legislators play in a constitutional democracy." It relates

to the processes by which laws (and policies) are fashioned out and enacted. Lawmaking includes several related legislative activities. The legislative role in formulating, reviewing and adopting a state budget has special significance. It is considered to be most important and significance because this policy-making process involves not only the legislature but the entire society critically involved among the non-state actors is the executive and civil society. Barkan (2009:7) asserts that legislation involves public policy-making as legislatures craft legislation in partnership with or independent of the executive and with input from civil society and then pass such legislation into law. The budget is probably the most important bill that a legislature passes. A legislature that performs poorly on the budget is likely to be an ineffective legislature overall. However, legislation or law making is the hallmark of the legislature.

Progression in the Nigerian Legislature: Journey in Retrospect

Nigerian legislative institution like other parliamentary institutions in democracies across the world is a representative of the people. Therefore, they owe the public a duty to make laws on matters that include: "public order, safety and security; public welfare; foreign policy and control of public funds. They also have the power to investigate and declare a state of emergency among others. On the whole, welfare issues are statutory responsibility of the legislature. Thus, it is clear that the parliament is not marginal in the political economy of resources control and distribution within the matrix of the Nigerian state.

More than any other arms of government, Nigeria's federal legislature has said to be both a product and a victim of political engineering by the successive military governments that ruled the country in its 54 years of independence (The Lawmakers, 2007:34). It started off as a bicameral legislature in a British styled parliamentary government during the first republic (1960-1966) and evolved into an American typed Congress or National Assembly under a presidential democracy in 1979 (Osadolor, 2014:93-102). With every change of the constitution have come new units of representation. Every new state created has added more numbers to the make-up of the legislature. At present the National Assembly is a gargantuan institution made up of 469 legislators, representing the 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory with a breakdown of 109 Senators and 360 Members of House of Representatives.

The history of Nigeria's legislature has been riddled with disruptions, dislocations, re-establishments and reforms (The Lawmakers, 2007:35), all of which left it without strong, deeply engrained legislative tradition, norms, practices and procedures. The First Republic Parliament survived for only 6 years when it was disbanded by the first military coup in 1966. The parliament did not make a return to the political scene until the Second Republic in 1979. The Second Republic legislature was going into its 5th year when General Muhammadu Buhari terminated the democratic administration and with it, the legislature. It took nearly 10 years before military President Ibrahim Babangida established another federal legislature with partially restored functions. The Third Republic legislature lasted only a few months before it was brought to an abrupt end by General Sanni Abacha who shoved aside the Interim National Government headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan. The legislature was finally returned after 6 years with the emergence of the Fourth Republic in 1999.

For the first time in independent Nigeria, the National Assembly has endured for six sessions of 22 uninterrupted legislative years. Given its prior broken history, this is a remarkable feat which undoubtedly should yield equally remarkable progress. It is on this assertion that this paper intends to measure the extent of performance in the Fourth National Assembly scrutinizing whether education, experience and characters of the legislators most importantly

its leadership has made or marred the quality and effectiveness of the legislative institution in comparison across time.

Education and Expertise: A Test for Capacity and Institutionalism (Quality and Capacity)

Table 1: Education Qualification across the Assemblies, 1999-2015 (Senate)

Assemblies	Educational Qualification (%)				
	O' Level	Diploma/NCE	B.Sc./BA/HND/PGD	Masters	Ph.D./MD
4 th Assembly 1999-2003	6.6	8.5	46.7	20.6	17.6
5 th Assembly 2003-2007	4	7.8	43.2	26	11
6 th Assembly 2007-2011	0.94	12.26	44.3	31.1	8.49
7 th Assembly 2011-2015	1.8	7.3	46.8	31.2	7.4

Source: Nigeria Legislature (1861-2011) Compendium of Members and Officials (2010) The Lawmakers (2007) Sixth Assembly 2007-2011 5th Edition, The Lawmakers (2011) Seventh Assembly 2011-2015 6th Edition and various National Newspapers.

Table 2: Education Qualification across the Assemblies, 1999-2015 (House of Representative)

Assemblies	Educational Qualification (%)				
	O' Level	Diploma/NCE	B.Sc./BA/HND/PGD	Masters	Ph.D./MD
4 th Assembly 1999-2003	9.4	12	55.7	17.7	5.1
5 th Assembly 2003-2007	7	14.8	44.6	29	4.6
6 th Assembly 2007-2011	4.74	13.35	48.96	31.16	1.78
7 th Assembly 2011-2015	3.4	12.3	40.9	31.7	4.5

Source: Nigeria Legislature (1961-2011) Compendium of Members and Officials (2010) The Lawmakers (2007) Sixth Assembly 2007-2011 5th Edition, The Lawmakers (2011) Seventh Assembly 2011-2015 6th Edition and various National Newspapers.

As depicted in tables 1 and 2 above, the level of educational attainment of members of the National Assembly was high. This is an indication that those who aspire to be elected into both Chambers of the National Assembly were very cognizance of the importance of higher educational qualifications. In the Senate, there were 6.6% with O' level in 1999, this dropped to 4% in 2003 and 0.94% in 2007 and later rose to 1.8% in 2011. The percentage of Senators with diploma has fluctuated over the years from 8.5% in 1999, to 7.8% in 2003, rising to 12.26% in 2007 and stands at 7.3% in 2011.

The percentage of Senators with at least Bachelor's degree has remained steady over the years: 46.7% in 1999, 43.2% in 2003, 44.3% in 2007 and now 42.2% in 2011. There has been an upward movement in the numbers of Senators with Master's degree: 20.6% in 1999; 31.1% in 2007 and now 31.2% in 2011. A point worthy of note is the consistent drop in the percentage of Senators with doctorate degrees. In 1999 Senate members with doctoral degree stood at 17.6%, it dropped to 11% in 2003 to 8.49% in 2007 and now stand to 7.4% in 2011. In the House of Representatives, 9.4% members had O' level GCE in 1999. This fell to 7% in 2003 and 4.74% in 2007 and 3.4% in 2011. Members with diploma were 12% in 1999, 14.8% in 2003, 13.35% in 2007 and 12.3% in 2011. House of Representatives members with

Bachelor's degrees have ranged between 43% and 55% over the years: 55.7% in 1999, 44.6% in 2003, 48.96% in 2007 and now 36.4% in 2011. After the earlier jump in the percentage of House members with Master's degree from 17.7% in 1999 to 31.16% in 2007, the numbers have remained steady in the 30th percentile. And now in 2011, there is just a slight increase to 31.7%. The steady decline of interest among Doctoral degree holders in the Senate was also evidenced in the House of Representatives over the years. It started with 5.1% in 1999, dropped to 4.6% and 1.7% in 2003 and 2007 respectively but later back up to 4.2% in 2011. In educational term there is a great and steady improvement in the educational records of the legislature across the line of the study which can be translated into progress, quality representation and improved output in relations to the quality of Bills debated and passed. Indeed, 85.4% of Nigerian Senators have a minimum of a first degree. Among these, 4.6% have a post graduate diploma, 31.2% have Master's degree and 7.4% have Ph.Ds. In fact, there are three Professors in the Senate. Only 1.8% of the Senators have the minimum requirement of O'level certificate, while 7.3% have diplomas. The trend explained above is the same with little difference in the House of Representatives. In the lower house of the National Assembly 84.3% have a minimum of first degree with 4.5% who possessed a postgraduate diploma, 31.7% have Master's degree and 4.2% have Ph.Ds. There is also one Professor in the House and those with just the minimum qualifications of O' level and diplomas stood at 3.4% and 12.3% respectively.

Maturity and Experience

Hamalai (2010:17) contends that there are so many challenges attached to the issue of immaturity and inexperience of lawmakers dominating the Nigerian National Assembly. Hamalai (2010:18) notes that, "many of the legislators who had good parliamentary experience were usually not re-elected back into the assembly while those who had poor parliamentary experience were re-elected. Legislators that had spent at least one term in the Assembly and acquire useful experience in law making were thrown out. The tables 3 and 4 below explain the variations in expertise/experience of legislators across different assemblies (1999-2015) which can be used to advance our claims when compared with the output (turnover) of the assemblies.

In terms of experience, it was recorded that the current Assembly is endowed with experienced members. According to Anyanwu (2011), 34% of senators in the 5th Assembly won re-election and returned into the 6th assembly. Among the current legislators are 18.3% who have been in the Senate alone, another 5.5% who have been members of both the Senate and the House of Representatives and yet another 1.8% who have been in the House of Assembly, in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. This is an improvement compared to 2003 where 30.2% of such returned. It dropped to 22.7% in 2007 and now up to 34% in 2011. Among them are 2 Senators, David Mark (Senate President) and Hayatu Bello Gwarzo (Chief Whip) who are fourth timers. A growing number of Senators who were previously State Governors and Deputy Governors, 9.2%. And there is another 3.7% who have been both Senators and Governors. In the class of 2011, 7.3% came from House of Representatives, 4.6% had been in the State House of Assembly and 2.8% had been Local Government Chairmen. There is also 3.7% as both Local Government Chairmen and House of Representatives members before coming to the Senate. 6.4% of them were also former Ministers, 15.6% former Commissioners, 4.6% former Special Advisers to state governors and 4.6% former Secretary to the State Government (Anyanwu, 2011).

In the House of Representatives, we have a data that closely aligned to that of the Senate as 31.7% of its members are returnees. Significantly, about 7% of the members are third and

fourth time legislators. Among them are 4 members who have retained their seats since 1999: Farouk Lawan and Sirajo Harisu (Kano); Safianu Ubale and Bashir Adamu (Jigawa). The current rate of return is slightly above the 2007 figure of 30% and 25% in 2003. Others include House of Representatives and Local Government Chairmen (4.8%), both House of Representatives and House of Assembly (3.7%), House of Representatives (3%), State Commissioners (12.4%), Special Advisers to State Governments (6.7%). There were also Permanent Secretaries (2), Director-General (6), Ex-military Officers (2) and Ambassadors (3).

Profession/Occupation Profile (Expertise)

Table 3: Senate Profession

Profession/Occupation %	ASSEMBLIES		
	4th Assembly	5th Assembly	6th Assembly
Legal Practitioners	17	15	21
Public Servants	1	2	17
Civil Servants	1	3	4
Banking/Finance	4	11	7
Engineers	12	6	7
Entrepreneurs	8	17	12
Farmers	4	3	2
Ex-Military/Other Security	1	3	7
Media Practitioners	3	3	6
Educationists	8	6	5
Medical Practitioners	6	4	6
Others	32	24	4
Not Stated	1	3	2

Source: Source: Nigeria Legislature (1861-2011) Compendium of Members and Officials (2010) The Lawmakers (2007) Sixth Assembly 2007-2011 5th Edition, The Lawmakers (2011) Seventh Assembly 2011-2015 6th Edition and various National Newspapers.

Table 4: House of Representatives Professions

Profession/Occupation %	ASSEMBLIES		
	4th Assembly	5th Assembly	6th Assembly
Legal Practitioners	13	10	13
Public Servants	1	10	20
Civil Servants	1	3	5
Banking/Finance	6	6	5
Engineers	13	10	6
Entrepreneurs	5	22	20
Farmers	11	2	4
Ex-Military/Other Security	1	6	3
Media Practitioners	4	3	2
Educationists	7	7	5
Medical Practitioners	4	6	3
Others	34	14	14
Not Stated	-	-	-

Source: Source: Nigeria Legislature (1861-2011) Compendium of Members and Officials (2010) The Lawmakers (2007) Sixth Assembly 2007-2011 5th Edition, The Lawmakers (2011) Seventh Assembly 2011-2015 6th Edition and various National Newspapers.

Table 7: House of Representatives Bills Comparatively by Categories 4th-6th Assemblies

	4 th Assembly 1999-2003	5 th Assembly 2003-2007	6 th Assembly 2007-2011
Executive Bills	66	146	93
Private Bills	221	169	363
Senate Bills (Harmonization)	21	18	8
Number of Bills Passed	112	141	140
Total Number of Bills	314	333	464

Source: Nigeria Legislature (1861-2011) Compendium of Members and Officials (2010), The Lawmakers (2007) Sixth Assembly 2007-2011 5th Edition, The Lawmakers (2011) Seventh Assembly 2011-2015 6th Edition and various National Newspapers.

Table 8: Senate Bills Comparatively by Categories 4th-6th Assembly

	4 th Assembly 1999-2003	5 th Assembly 2003-2007	6 th Assembly 2007-2011
Executive Bills	24	138	116
Private Bills	186	227	350
House of Reps Bills (Harmonization)	48	27	58
Number of Bills Passed	65	132	84
Total Number of Bills	258	392	524

Source: Nigeria Legislature (1861-2011) Compendium of Members and Officials (2010), The Lawmakers (2007) Sixth Assembly 2007-2011 5th Edition, The Lawmakers (2011) Seventh Assembly 2011-2015 6th Edition and various National Newspapers.

Table 9: Bills That Became Acts in the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Assemblies (1999-2011)

Year	Number of Acts
1999	2
2000	8
2001	4
2002	11
2003	29
2004	11
2005	20
2006	13
2007	41
2008	4
2009	4
2010	19
2011	12

Source: Nigeria Legislature (1861-2011) Compendium of Members and Officials (2010), The Lawmakers (2007) Sixth Assembly 2007-2011 5th Edition, The Lawmakers (2011) Seventh Assembly 2011-2015 6th Edition and various National Newspapers.

Representation

Representation is the core value of the legislature as the other functions revolved around the issue of representation. It is on the basis of representative democracy and equal representation that the legislators get the ticket to the Assembly. Thaddeus (2013) avers that as a representative of the people, the legislature is the signpost of public opinion and any decision they take on behalf of their constituency is final. Therefore, they owed the public a duty to

make laws on matters such as: “public order and security; amendment of the constitution, implementation of treaties; and powers and control of public funds (Aligba, 2007). By their functions, they are not marginal in the political economy of resources control and distribution within the matrix of the Nigerian state.

Oversight

The oversight function of the legislature can be interpreted to mean some wide powers given to the legislature as accredited representatives of the Nigerian people to look into those areas that are not specifically identified for legislation in the constitution, by which in the wisdom of the legislature, will enhance good governance of the country or state as the case may be (Alabi & Egbewole, 2010:239-270). The legislature occupies a central position in the control of public funds at both the federal and the state levels in Nigeria. The legislature is the only body empowered to authorize expenditures from the Consolidated Revenue and other contingency funds which it does through the annual appropriation or supplementary appropriation bills (Alabi and Egbewole, 2010:239-270). They also check executive actions by introducing mechanisms of supervision over public spending, administration and economic policies. Thaddeus (2013) contended that the legislature has the powers to approve or reject executive appointments. And with the power of impeachment, it can effectively check the excesses of the executive arm of government.

The legislators in the past made no attempt at performing oversight functions as it was customary for the executive of political nominees/appointees/public officers to settle legislators so as to have whatever goal achieved (Ali, 2013). Consequently, the failure of the legislators in Nigeria to perform their oversight functions in most cases is interpreted by the general public as a cheap compromise on the part of the legislators calculated at money making. This might largely be because the political process is structured around distributional contention and the capture of rent rather than mechanism of representation or accountability (Lewis, 2009: 179).

Another area of oversight function of the legislature is the frequent questioning or otherwise of the executive decisions and policies which usually degenerated into brick bats and conflicts between the legislature and the executive.

Findings and Analysis

In the above tables that illustrated the outputs of the National Assembly in the 4th, 5th and 6th Assemblies, it is glaring that 5th (2003-2007) and 6th (2007-2011) Assemblies made demonstrable advances in legislative initiatives and quality of laws emanating from the institution, something that put them ahead of their predecessors. Tables (4 and 5) above have shown that fourth Senate introduced a total of 258 bills out of which it passed only 65 while the Fifth Senate considered 392 bills and passed 132 bills. In the same vein, fourth, fifth and sixth House of Representatives had a total of 314, 333 and 464 bills were considered respectively. It was a delay in signing of the passed bills that allow the number of emanating Acts to drop between 2007 and 2011 as shown in table 9 and figure 5 above. Thus, there is an increase in the performance of the legislature in terms of the Bills and Acts it considered even if it is only marginal in terms of overall output. However, the paper advances numerous variables that might be responsible for the improvement, ranges from steady educational improvement among the legislators, internal unrest in the previous Assemblies, conducive work environment, distractions such as the fear of impeachment, executive interference to external pressures.

There is a steady improvement in the educational records of the legislature across the line of the study which can be translated into progress and quality output from Nigeria future legislature. It should be known that that educational status improvement is one of the most important among the variables advances. Tables 1 and 2 have it that both the Senate and the House of Representatives increases in its educational status, upon which the paper posited and agreed that "input determine the output". The percentage of Senators with at least Bachelor's degree has remained steady over the years: 46.7% in 1999, 43.2% in 2003, 44.3% in 2007 and stood at 42.2% in 2011. There has been an upward movement in the numbers of Senators with Master's degree: 20.6% in 1999; 26% in 2003, 31.1% in 2007 and now 31.2% in 2011. It is important to note that there is drop in Senators with doctoral degrees. The drop ranges from 17.6% in 1999, to 11% in 2003 to 8.49% in 2007 and now to 7.4% in 2011. Thus, the Ph. D inclusion in the analysis is just serve as a pointer to the fact that the academia seem to be withdrawing from the Senate in particular. Also, in the House of Representatives, 9.4% members had GCE O' level in 1999. This fell to 7% in 2003 and 4.74% in 2007 and later dropped to 3.4% in 2011. Members with diploma were 12% in 1999, 14.8% in 2003, 13.35% in 2007 and 12.3% in 2011. House members with Bachelor's degree have ranged between 43% and 55% over the years: 55.7% in 1999, 44.6% in 2003, 48.96% in 2007 and 36.4% in 2011. After the earlier jump in the percentage of House members with Master's degree from 17.7% in 1999 to 31.16% in 2007, the numbers have remained steady in the 30th percentile. And now in 2011, there is just a slight increase to 31.7%. The steady decline of interest among Doctoral degree holders in the Senate was also evidenced in the House of Representatives over the years. Starting with 5.1% in 1999, it dropped to 4.6% and 1.7% in 2003 and 2007 respectively but later back up to 4.2% in 2011.

Secondly, the earlier Assemblies (most especially 4th Assembly) contended with numerous teething problems arising from the fact that it was the first after a long period of military rule. The fourth Assembly leadership spent much energy and time defining terms of co-existence with other branches of government (The Lawmakers, 2007) especially warding off the incursions of an aggressive Executive.

The Assembly was also plagued by internal unrest often fired by outside interests which brought about divisions among members and, consequently, leadership instability, as illustrated in tables 11 and 12 below.

Table 11: Illustrating Senate Leadership Instability in Nigeria 1999 to 2015

Senate	Term
Evans Enwerem	June, 1999 – Nov. 1999
Chuba Okadigbo	Nov. 1999 – August, 2000
Anyim Pius Anyim	August, 2000 – May, 2003
Adolphus Nwabara	2003 – 2005
Ken Nnamani	April, 2005 – May, 2007
David Mark	2007 – 2015

Source: Authors Compilation from Nigeria national dailies.

Table 12: Illustrating House of Representatives Leadership Instability in Nigeria 1999 to 2015

House of Representatives	Term
SalisuBuhari	1999-2000
Ghali Umar Na'Abba	2000-2003
AminuMasari	2003-2007
Patricia Etteh	2007-2007
Oladimeji Bankole	2007-2011
AminuTambuwal	2011-2015

Source: Author's Compilation from Nigeria national dailies.

Again, fifth and sixth Assemblies had the advantage of a more conducive work environment. It was a calmer, more stable place doing legislative business. The two chambers in this period also had more cordial relationship with the Federal Executive. The cordial relationship with the Executive on its own had been claimed, responsible for stable leadership in fifth and sixth Assemblies.

Consequently, distractions such as the fear of impeachment which hung strongly over the hallowed chambers of the previous Assemblies was virtually absent started from fifth to sixth and even not shown in the present seventh. Even when the fifth Senate President of the fifth Senate, Adolphus Wabara, obviously strayed and was publicly scandalized by then President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Senate protected him and advised him to resign instead of the impeachment supposedly sought by the Presidency.

Apparently, because of the inclusion of more technocratic hands in legislative business, as shown in tables (3 and 4), steady improvement in educational status, maturity and experience as advanced by Hamalai (2010). This accounted for the more impressive record they had.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Education is the bedrock of any development and social change. It is advisable to limit the legislators' minimum pre-requisite to bachelor degree. This will enhance their productivity, reduce biased judgment and will allow them to be easily integrated into the system. As it was depicted in the various tables above, as the educational status of the legislators improved over the years, the National Assembly outputs (law making and oversight functions) improve across the Assemblies.

Next to that is the importance of information and technology to productive activities in any society. The legislative process is driven and defined by information, study and deliberation. All these must therefore align for the legislature to adequately and effectively meet the needs and challenges of a rapidly developing society anxious to consolidate and deepen democracy. The Nigerian National Assembly, like legislatures over the world, is not without problems and challenges. But the critical question is whether it is doing what it is expected to do by law and society. As it stands, the National Assembly is digging below its weight and has not met popular expectation in terms of performance of its statutory responsibility.

No one formula exists to make the legislature effective in any democracy. Every country needs to be empirical in dealing with the problem of legislature effectiveness and performance. A reform must be driven by local realities in Nigeria and not mimic other countries experience or political process. The legislature can be transformed into a more

effective forum of debates and dialogue if the underlying social factors that lead to dysfunctional anti-democratic behaviours are addressed.

Legislative code of ethics is another important factor towards sustainable legislative activities in a country. One way to achieve and promote ethical standard is to establish a code of conduct for legislators. In confronting the daunting array of ethical dilemma, legislators need a code of ethics that will clearly define and demarcate the boundaries of acceptable conduct and require them to disclose their assets and liabilities as well as interests in all their dealings. This will cater for the problem of corruption and other corrupt practices within the leadership circle and among the legislators. The code of ethics needs to be clearly articulated and expressed in language easily understandable by both legislators and citizens.

No doubt the legislative institution occupies a central position in the scheme of thing in democracies across the world. However, it is important to note that the capability, credibility and character of members elected to represent the interest and will of the populace determine the extent to which the legislature will perform its functions in different democracies.

As analyzed in this work, the Nigerian legislature in the fourth republic witnessed great stride in performing functions known with legislative institutions in any democracy. Having said this, it is also important to note that an issue that had robbed off negatively on the image and credibility of the legislature in Nigeria's fourth republic, (the Nigerian National Assembly) has been the series of corruption scandals that have engulfed the leadership of the National Assembly since the return to civil rule in May, 1999.

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