

**LEGISLATIVE ETHICS AND CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA'S HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES 2003 AND 2015**

**BY**

**OMUSO AKIKABO AMOS  
PG/NILS/1714043**

**A PROPOSAL DISSEERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF  
POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE AND  
DEMOCRATIC STUDIES, ABUJA, NIGERIA.**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF  
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**AUGUST 2020**

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**AUGUST 2020**

## **DECLARATION**

I, Omuso Ikiabo Amos declare that this work is the product of my own research effort, undertaken under the Supervision of Dr. Chris Ngara and has not been presented elsewhere for the award of a Degree or Certificate. All sources have been duly acknowledged.

.....  
**OMUSO AKIKABO AMOS**  
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## CERTIFICATION

This thesis is to certify that this project, titled “Legislative Ethics and Corruption in Nigeria’s House of Representatives 2003 and 2015 has been read and approved as meeting the regulations governing the award of Master of Parliamentary Administration (MPD), of the School of Post Graduate Studies University of Benin/National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies, Abuja.

.....  
Dr. Chris Ngara  
(Supervisor)

.....  
Date

**APPROVAL PAGE**

This is to certify that this Dissertation Report titled “**LEGISLATIVE ETHICS AND CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA’S HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 2003 AND 2015**” meets the regulations governing the award of Master in Parliamentary Administration, and has been approved for its contribution to knowledge.

.....  
**Dr. Chris Ngara**  
**Supervisor**

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**Date**

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**External Examiner**

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**Date**

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**Coordinator, Postgraduate School**

.....  
**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to GOD ALMIGHTY who has been my guide, sustainer, provider, and keeper in the pursuit and accomplishment of this noble venture.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The accomplishment of this intellectual journey would not have been possible if I was not granted the necessary assistance and encouragement by one who has proved beyond reasonable doubt as a friend, brother, teacher, and supervisor, Dr. Chris Ngara. I am most grateful to him for the meticulous way he scrutinized this work, offering useful advice and constructive criticism to ensuring that this project is intellectually stimulating. As a student, I am proud to have sat under his tutelage and he is a strength to the accomplishment of this great feat! Existentially, he is one that I will ever live to associate with and for his eponymous stance for good work.

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### **Abstract**

Legislative ethics is pivotal to guiding the conduct of legislators in combating corruption in any legislature. This study examines the effects of ethical standards in guiding the conduct of legislators to averting corruption in Nigeria's House of Representatives, 2003 and 2015.

The study adopted a survey research design using Likert's scale questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Purposive sampling techniques was used to select the respondents that provided primary data, while secondary data was based on the Legislative Houses (powers and privileges) Act 2017 as the basic ethical instrument in the legislature. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze data from the primary source while simple percentage was used for the secondary data. Percentage and frequency counts were also used including bar-charts and pie-charts in the data analysis. Findings shows that legislative ethics standards have played vital role in guiding the conduct of legislators in combating corruption. However, corruption persisted partly in the House of Representatives because legislators do not take ethical standards serious by adhering to it strictly. Lack of enforcement of ethical rule, weak and inadequate provision of ethical standards also provide basis for corruption in the House of Representative. The study recommends that enforcement of ethical standards should be taken very seriously in the legislative houses while non-adherence should met with severe consequences. The need to strengthen the legislative houses (powers and privileges) Act for effectiveness and as the basic legislative ethical instrument is of utmost importance. It is finally recommended that good governance should be the hallmark for legislators to ensure the trust of the citizenry and provide the dividends of democracy.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Backgrounds to the Study**

Legislative Ethics are specific instructions designed to help legislators conduct themselves in a manner befitting their position as the people's representatives. The power to make laws is one of the major responsibilities of a legislature; it serves as the main pillar or instrument of governance in a democratic system (Orluwene, 2014). It is the legislature that lays down the basic principles which the Judiciary has to interpret and use as a framework of reference in adjudicating cases and which the Executive has to apply in the implementation of policies and execution of law (Mezey, 1983; Montesquieu, 1977). Specifically Section 4 (2) of the 1999 Constitution states that "National Assembly shall have powers to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Federation or any part thereof with respect to any matter included in the Exclusive Legislative List set out in Part 1 of the Second Schedule to this Constitution."

Also, Section 5-12 of the 1999 Constitution (as Amended) expressly provides that the law-making powers of the National Assembly can be exercised by bills passed by National Assembly and assented by the President. Likewise, section 47 – 63 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) empowers the National Assembly to alter any part of the 1999 Constitution. This however, requires the support by way of resolution of the House of Assembly of two-third of all the states of the Federation. This is why in a democratic setting, the legislature takes precedence over the other two arms of government, for it represents the sovereign will of the people (Obasa, 2016). Only the legislature is competent to express the will of the people in form of legislations. However, it is not enough to enjoy this enormous power without the

corresponding responsibility of ensuring that the law-making process in the legislature is a reflection of a credible procedure addressing the needs of society (Boix, 2003).

The National Assembly through its constitutional mandate can serve as an agent of reform where the issues involved are of public or mass appeal. This is possible because of its constitutional mandate to make laws. Egwu (2014) notes that although, the legislature is not directly involved in the implementation of policies, but plays a vital role in approving government spending, oversight, implementation of policies by the executive, drafting statutes in specific terms, etc. He added that besides the core mandate of making laws and policies, the legislature plays important linkage functions in ensuring that institutions of the state are accountable to the citizenry and policies of government are in the interest of the people. No doubt, the powers of the legislature in a constitutional democracy needs not be over-emphasised. For instance, the adoption by the National Assembly of the doctrine of necessity in 2010 to solve a political and constitutional crisis that arose following the demise of President Yar'Adua is a case in point (Joseph & Gillies, 2010).

However, corruption is known to have been a serious challenge for democratic development globally; this is owing to the fact that corrupt politicians could utilize illicitly obtained resources for their electoral campaigns in order to gain advantage over other candidates, and improve their chances to be elected (Joshua & Oni, 2014). By doing so, corrupt candidates distort electoral competition, prevent the people's will from being properly expressed and violate the spirit of democracy. Thus, corruption is a deliberate effort by an individual or group of people to secure power and wealth through illegal means for private gain at public expense; or misusing public power for private benefit (Olutola, 2016).

Although, corruption is not the only threat to democracy, any form of legislative misconduct that undermines the public trust in the democratic system could also be seen as a threat to

Democracy (NDI, 1999) Corruption is widely acknowledged as antithetical to good governance. Whilst in many countries corruption is systemic and institutionalized, in other countries; it is entrenched in the cultural values of the people as a way of life (Joseph and Gillies, 2010). Hence the need of adopting ethical principles to guide the conduct of legislators in the discharge of their constitutional mandate cannot be over-emphasised and thus of utmost importance.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The legislature is ultimately responsible for most law reforms through the passage of legislations in most democratic society like Nigeria; one of such far-reaching legislations is an Act for the amendment of the constitution. There are also several cases where the legislators themselves have been involved in financial scandals in the guise of misappropriation of funds, allegations of bribe taking, pay-for-vote cases and recently budget padding etc. (Alabi & Fashagba, 2010). It seems that the provision of ethical standards in the House of Representatives has not been adhered to by the legislators. Perhaps it could also be that the legislators are aware of the set ethical standards that guides their conduct, but since most of them become self-seeking, they are carried away to the extent that their involvement in corruption and corrupt cases becomes shamelessly rampant.

Since the return of democratic governance in 1999, the National Assembly has been enmeshed in various allegations of corruption both moral and financial in spite of its expected public trust. To combat the menace of corruption that has eating so deep in the fabric of the Nigerian political entity, the Olusegun Obasanjo administration establish the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related offences Commission (ICPC) in year 2000 and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in year 2003 respectively (Inekoba & Ibegu, 2017). Neither the EFCC/ICPC nor any legal or policy instruments have been able to effectively tame

the hydra-headed monster which has assumed a dangerous dimension in the House of Representatives. It is against this backdrop that this study examines Legislative Ethics and Corruption in Nigeria's House of Representatives, 2003 – 2015.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The major objectives of this study is are thus;

- i. Examine ethical standards in Nigeria's House of Representatives from 2003 – 2015.
- ii. Evaluate the effect of the ethical standards in checking corruption in the House of Representatives between 2003 and 2015.
- iii. Assess the adequacy or otherwise of the ethical standards in combating official corruption in the House of Representatives within the period under review.
- iv. Suggesting possible ways of improving the ethical standards to check corruption in the House of Representatives.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

This study is guided by the following research questions.

- i. Are there ethical standards set out to guide the conduct of members of the House of Representatives between 2003 and 2015?
- ii. How effective are the ethical standards on the official conduct of members of the House of Representatives from 2003 – 2015?
- iii. Were the ethical standards adequate in preventing corruption among members of the House of Representatives from 2003 – 2015?
- iv. What are the observable lapses in the ethical standards laid down in the House of Representatives between 2003 and 2015?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Legislative ethics and corruption being the crux of the study will be invaluable in extending the theoretical and conceptual frontier of knowledge particularly in understanding the ethical standards that guides the conduct of members of the House of Representatives in combating official corruption and thus enhancing democratic consolidation within the broader discipline of political science and particularly in the sub – field of Parliamentary Administration. Equally, this study is conducted with utmost hope that the outcome and findings would challenge other scholars and researchers to replicate the findings and explore other aspect of the subject with the aim of increasing the intellectual horizon of the area of study. No doubt, not many studies on the National Assembly focused on legislative ethics and corruption vis-à-vis its importance to national development, democratic consolidation and participation. Hence, this study is poised to fill this gap by making vital contribution to knowledge in this area of study and enriching the sophistication of legislative studies.

### **1.6 Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

This study is focused on ethics and corruption in Nigerian’s House of Representatives and delimited to the period of 2003 and 2015. The choice of ‘House of Representatives’ and the period of study is hinged on the plethora of activities related to ethics and corruption that were unfolded in the House of Representatives which in no small measure is worthy of study. More so, it is within this period that the government of the day established the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to fight corruption which was initially perceived by many legislators as targeted at Members of the National Assembly. The study is on the National Assembly by geographical terms and the analytical scope relates to the assessment of ethics standards that guide the conduct of members, House of Representatives in combating the social vices of corruption and its effect in the democratic process.



## 1.7 Definition of Terms

As words may mean differently in different context, the following definition are given as words used as intended to be understood for the purpose of this study.

- i. Legislative ethics in the study is said to mean a set of standards governing the conduct of members of a legislative body and a system to administer those standards. It also refers to specific instructions designed to help legislators conduct themselves in a manner befitting their position as the people's representatives. (NDI, 1999)
- ii. Corruption in this study implies the abuse of entrusted authority for private gain. It also refers to efforts to secure power, wealth through illegal means for private gain at public expense; or misusing public power for private benefit. Corruption is equally seen as acting against general interest. (Lipsat and Lenz, 2010)

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This Chapter presents a review of relevant Literature. The method of Literature review adopted is thematic approach and focuses both on theoretical and empirical works. The chapter also contains a section of theoretical framework which involves selection of theory that is most suitable or relevant to contextualise the study.

#### **2.1 Conceptual Review**

##### **2.1.1 Concept of Ethics**

The new Webster's Dictionary notes ethics as moral Philosophy or moral Science which studies the principles of right or wrong in human conduct. Similarly, Elliot (2006) averred that ethics or moral philosophy is a branch of philosophy that involves systematizing concept. He added that ethics seeks to resolve questions of human morality by defining concepts such as good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, justice and crime. Furthermore, the Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy states that, the word ethics is commonly used interchangeably with morality and sometimes it is used more narrowly to mean the principles of a particular tradition, group or individual. Hence, from the above submissions, it can be deductively asserted that ethics is basically concerned about the interest of the Society at large. It is not just about the morality of a particular action or course but also about the goodness of individuals and what it means to live a good life. Therefore, in discharging its constitutional responsibilities, the Legislature especially the House of Representatives is statutorily obliged to consider the interest of the citizenry and not institutional or personal interest. The essence of ethics rules

and principles in the Legislature can therefore, be related to good governance and general well-being of the Society.

### **2.1.2 Legislative Ethics**

According to the National Democratic institute for international Affairs (NDI, 1999) Legislative ethics is a set of standards governing the conducts of members of a Legislative body and a system to administer those standards. Hence, Legislative ethics is seen as specific instructions designed to help legislators conduct themselves in a manner befitting their position as the people's representatives. This is expedient because, in any democracy the legislature is seen as the bearer of Public trust and must always have the confidence of the electorates for democratic enhancement and consolidation (Alabi and Fashagba, 2010). Furthermore, Legislative ethics is seen as a set of Laws, regulations, code of conduct and conventions that lay down the norm for the exercise of Legislative Powers and also prescribe the acceptable ways of life for members of the Legislature (Brien, 1998). It is derivable from the above that Legislative ethics is necessary to guide the conduct of Legislators in view of the enormous responsibilities associated with the Legislature as a core democratic institution. Legislators need to be properly guided in their actions and conduct in order to effectively and efficiently discharge the duties related to their office in the best interest of the citizenry. In doing so, there must be well defined laws, regulations, code of conduct and conventions that should be focused to help Legislators discharge their statutory responsibilities in a manner that should be acceptable in the light of set standards and requirements. It could be inferred from the foregoing that the focus of Legislative ethics is to guide the conduct of Legislators to ensuring high moral and ethical standards that are required of them in discharging the legislative business.

Similarly, Stapenhurst and Pelizzo (2014) averred that the concept of Legislative ethics has become necessary in view of Politicians perceived irresponsiveness, exhibiting various forms of misconduct and corruption scandals which have eroded voters trust in politicians and hence, there is need for public trust in political institutions. These scholars stated that if parliaments are to promote greater government accountability and transparency in their operation, they too must be accountable in the light of the public. For these authors, the need for Legislative ethics is partly hinged on the quest for Legislators to regain public trust which have eroded the Legislature and cynicism arising from the citizenry for Legislators unethical behaviour. The other reason for legislative ethics derivable from the foregoing is based on general expectation that the bearer of public trust must be transparent and corrupt free in the discharge of public duties and must do so within the context of defined ethical standards. The concept of legislative ethics is therefore, premised on good governance.

Furthermore, Aktan (2015) posited that legislative ethics is necessary because high moral and ethical standard among public servants in the legislative branch of government are essential to ensure the trust, respect, and confidence of the citizenry. The author noted that a fair and open government requires that legislators and legislative employees conduct the public's business in a manner that preserves the integrity of the legislative process and avoid conflict of interest or even appearances of conflicts. It is therefore, evidenced that the concept of legislative ethics presupposes that public officials should be independent and impartial; that government policy and decisions be made through the established process of government; that a public official do not use public office to obtain private benefits; that a public official avoid action which creates the appearance of using public office to obtain a benefit; and that the public have confidence in the integrity of the government and public officials (NDI, 1999). Thus, the concept of legislative ethics is indispensable for the efficiency of the legislature in any democratic setting in view of the enormity of its statutory responsibilities.

### **2.1.3 Legislative Ethics in the House of Representatives**

Rule 123 of the House Standing Orders states that there shall be a Committee to be known as Committee on Ethics and Privileges consisting of not more than 15 members appointed at the commencement of the life of the House.

(2) The Committee's jurisdiction shall cover:

(a) Measures relating to the code of conduct of Members.

(3) The Committee on Ethics and Privileges is authorised:

(a) To recommend to the House from time to time such administrative actions as it may deem appropriate to establish or enforce as standards of conduct for members.

(b) To investigate, subject to sub-paragraph (4) of this paragraph, any alleged violation, by a member of the Code of Conduct or of any law, rule, regulation or other standard of conduct applicable to the conduct of such member and after notice and hearing to recommend to the House by resolution or otherwise, such action as the Committee may deem appropriate in the circumstances;

(c) to report to the appropriate Federal or State authorities, with the approval of the House, any substantial evidence of a violation by a member of any law applicable to the performance of his duties or the discharge of his responsibilities, which may have been disclosed in a Committee investigation; and

(d) to give consideration to the request of any member for an advisory opinion with respect to the general propriety of any current or proposed conduct of such member, and with appropriate deletions to assure the privacy of the individual concerned, to publish such opinion for the guidance of other members of the House.

(4) (a) No resolution, report, recommendation or advisory opinion relating to the conduct of a member shall be made by the Committee on Ethics and Privileges and no investigation of such conduct shall be undertaken by such committee, unless approved by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the committee:

(i) Upon receipt of a complaint, in writing and under oath made by or submitted to a member of the House and transmitted to the Committee by such member, or

(ii) Upon receipt of a complaint, in writing and under oath, directly from an individual not a member of the House or the Committee finds such complaint has been submitted by such individual to not less than three members of the House who have refused, in writing to transmit such complaint to the Committee.

(b) No investigation shall be undertaken by the Committee of any alleged violation of a law, rule, regulation, or standard of conduct not in effect at the time of the alleged violation.

(c) A member of the Committee shall be ineligible to participate in any Committee proceedings relating to his or her conduct. In any case in which a member of the Committee is ineligible to act as a member, the Speaker of the House shall designate another member of the House from the same political party as the ineligible member of the Committee to act as a member of the Committee in any Committee proceeding relating to the official conduct of such ineligible member.

(d) A member of the Committee may disqualify himself from participating in any investigation of the conduct of a member, officer, or employee of the House upon the

submission in writing and under oath of an affidavit of disqualification stating that he cannot render an impartial and unbiased decision in the case in which he seeks to disqualify himself. If the Committee approves and accepts such affidavit of disqualification, the Chairman shall so notify the Speaker and request the Speaker to designate a member of the House from the same political party as the disqualifying member of the Committee to act as a member of the Committee in any Committee proceeding relating to such investigation.

(e) No information or testimony received, or the contents of a complaint or the fact of its finding shall be publicly disclosed by any Committee or staff member unless specifically authorized in each instance by a vote of the full Committee.

The semblance of ethical standards in the above provisions is contained in Order XVII Rule .7(3)(b) which states that:

The Committee on Ethics and Privileges is authorised to investigate, subject to sub-paragraph (4) of this paragraph, any alleged violation, by a member of the Code of Conduct or of any law, rule, regulation or other standard of conduct applicable to the conduct of such member and after notice and hearing to recommend to the House by resolution or otherwise, such action as the Committee may deem appropriate in the circumstances;

Considering these provisions critically, it is obvious that there are no specific act of omission or commission prohibited by these rules but they rather refer to general Code of Conduct. That is to say, there are no specific rules nor regulation therein that basically regulate the conduct of members in discharging their political responsibilities as could be noted above. To know what actually constitute legislative ethics standards one may also refer to the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act (Cap. C15 LFN, 2010). The provisions of this Act are not exclusively for the Nigerian legislature but deals with complaints of corruption by public servants generally. It is important to note that although the Act deals with public officers generally,

public officer is defined in the Act to include the President and Deputy President of the Senate, Speakers and Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives and of the Houses of Assembly of States, and all members and staff of the Legislative Houses (Cap. C15 LFN, 2010).

Some sections of the Act are of particular interest. Section 5 of the Act states that a public officer shall not put himself in a position where his personal interest conflicts with his duties and responsibility. This provision is in line with the trend all over the world presently, where members of the legislature are prohibited from benefiting directly or indirectly when exercising legislative powers (Ayorinde, 2012). Furthermore, the Act prohibits a member of the legislature from maintaining or operating a bank account in any country outside Nigeria (Cap. C15 LFN, 2010). The Act also forbids legislators from asking for or accepting any property or benefits of any kind for themselves or any person on account of anything done or omitted to be done by them in the discharge of their duties. There are also provisions in the Act prohibiting legislators from the abuse of powers of their office or acting in any way prejudicial to the rights of any other person, knowing that such act is unlawful or contrary to any government policy. There is also a provision that also prohibit members of the legislature from belonging to or taking part in any society, the membership of which is incompatible with the functions or dignity of that office. The Act in Section 15 makes it mandatory for members of the legislative houses being public officers to declare their assets and those of their spouses and unmarried children under the age of twenty-one (Cap. L12 Laws of the Federation, 2010).

It is observed that the provision of the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act 1991 is more in breach than in compliance as almost every sector of our public life as a Nation are fraught with corruption which is a breach of these provisions (Ogundiya 2010). One other legislation with direct bearing on legislative ethics in Nigeria is the Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) Act, 2017. The Act was enacted to declare and define certain powers, privileges and immunities of the Legislative Houses established under the Constitution of the Federal



Republic of Nigeria and of the members of such legislative houses, to regulate the conduct of members and other persons connected with the proceedings thereof, and for matters concerned therewith (Act Cap. L12 LFN 2010).

Some sections of the legislation make provision for the regulation of conduct of members of the legislature, particularly section 20 of the Act which criminalises the acceptance of any bribe, fee, compensation, reward or benefit of any kind for speaking, voting or acting as such by any member of a legislative house. Also, section 21 of the Act prohibits members of legislative houses from assaulting or obstructing any other member within the chamber or while in the execution of his duty. This document is important to the extent that it sets standards to guiding the conduct of legislators in discharging their duties.

#### **2.1.4 The concept of corruption**

Nnamdi (2014), Gorafalo, Gueras, Lynch and Lynch (2011) opined that corruption is fully multicultural and appears in all societies in innumerable forms and with receptions varying from hostility to tolerance. They noted that corruption has bedevilled contemporary society in no small measure and has become a cankerworm that has eaten deep into every fabric of human society which requires a firm ethical stance to eradicate.

In another perspective, Pope (1996) argued that corruption will always flourish in the obscurity of totalitarianism, authoritarianism and dictatorships – regimes that limit power to an unaccountable few. He further stated that absolutism and dictatorship are bound by fewer ethical exigencies than in democracy. Thus, in democratic regimes the tendency of corruption could be less in relation to totalitarianism or authoritarianism regimes in view of the norms and principles obtainable in a democracy. Various scholars have looked at corruption in different ways. Lipset and lenz (2010:14) stated that, “corruption is an effort to secure wealth or power through illegal means – private gain at public expense; or a misuse of public power for private

benefit. Furthermore, Nkom (1982) sees corruption as the perversion of public office for private advantage. Similarly, Amuwo, (2005), Obayelu, (2007), and Ogundiya (2009) corroborated with the above when they stated that corruption is the exploitation of public position and resources for private gain. . Besides, Obayelu 2007 and Ogundiya (2010) sees corruption as efforts to secure power, wealth through illegal means for private gain at public expense, or misusing public power for private benefit. A derivable common factor as posited by these scholars on the concept of corruption is that, norms and principles that should guide the conduct of public office holders is subverted for personal interest and satisfaction at the expense of the general will. This could be seen as an act of moral degeneration and a set-back to the developmental indices of an organized society. In a distinct perspective, some scholars do not see corruption as a recent development; its existence has a long-standing history (Achebe, 1983; Oni, 2014; Mohammed, 2019). Little wonder that Mbeki (1999), Akanbi, (2004), and Ogbanna (2004) posited that corruption is a product of social, political, economic and historical circumstances. Hence, for this group of scholars, corruption is seen as a product of circumstances inherent in human society which emergence is not a sudden one. Noting the social ills associated with corruption, Atoyebi and Mobolaji (2004) opined that corruption is antithetical to progress and development as it breeds inefficiency, incompetence, mediocrity unethical value and other base instincts in man such as greed, avarice, and rapacity. Hence, corruption is presented as the bane of human societal progress, peace and development.

Besides, Nye (1967) conceptualised corruption in a behavioural perspective when he averred that corruption is a behaviour which deviates from the normal duties of a public role because of private – regarding (family, close private clique) , pecuniary or status gains, or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private – regarding influence . This includes such behaviour as bribery (use of reward to pervert the judgement of a person in a position of trust), nepotism (bestowal of patronage by reason of ascriptive relationship rather than merit), and

misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private use). In the same vein, Klitgaard (1991) notes corruption as a behaviour that abuse societal, Legal or social standards as well as public role or resources for private benefit. Still on the behavioural view, Akindele (1995) and Aluko (2002) stated that corruption is any form of reciprocal behaviour transaction where both the power /office holder can respectively initiate the inducement of each other by some rewards to grant (illegal) preferential treatment or favour against the principles and interest of specific organization (or public) within the society. Noting specifically that overall, corruption covers such acts as:

- i. Use of one's office for pecuniary advantage.
- ii. Gratification
- iii. Influence peddling
- iv. Insincerity in advice with the aim of gaining advantage.
- v. Less than a full day's work for a full day's pay.
- vi. Tardiness and slovenliness.

The behavioural perspective of corruption indicates that in every act of corruption, there is a corresponding behaviour that violates ethical standards for individual interest at the expense of the public. Besides, it is worthwhile to note that within the milieu of Nigerian polity, corruption has been identified as the bane of the nation's development and the issue has been on the front burner of public discourse (Tony, 2008; Babatope, 2008; Akanbi, 2001; Bamidele, Olaniyan and Ayodele, 2016). Furthermore, Ani, Izueke and Nzekwe, (2014) concluded that corruption in Nigeria is worrisome to the extent that it has led to the decay of ethical and moral values of citizens entrusted with public office.

#### **2.1.5 Legislative Ethics and Corruption in the House of Representatives**

According to Onyeoziri (2004), the need for ethical values and transparency has become fundamental in contemporary democracies. This he noted is premised on societies facing widespread public disaffection with politicians, citizens expect their elected representatives to conduct themselves with utmost integrity and decorum. Collins (2013) consented that in an effort to regain the trust they require to fully exercise their role, implementing ethical standards are becoming widespread throughout parliaments across the globe. Accordingly, Heymann (1996) stated that the need for adoption and implementation of ethical standards are based on four major reasons as highlighted below;

- i. Fight corruption.
- ii. Boost accountability and trust
- iii. Professionalise politics, and
- iv. Meet international standard.

Hence, it is derivable from the foregoing that public accountability and political credibility of the legislature should be a core value for the efficient discharge of legislative duties and responsibilities. In the same vein, the regulation of parliamentary behaviour and ethics standards is essential to secure public trust in the efficacy, transparency and equity of democratic systems as well as to foster a culture of public service that favours public interest over private gains. In Nigeria, the basic ethical standard and principles for guiding the conducts of legislators is provided in the Legislative Houses (powers and privileges) Act, 2017 (Nnabuike, 2010). This scholar noted that the legislative Houses (powers and privileges) Act, 2017 provides a framework that institutionalizes legislative ethics to ensure accountability, transparency and probity in the discharge of legislative duties. However, whether or not legislators were able to conduct themselves in the light of public trust is an issue that ought to be examined critically.

According to Alabi and Fushagba (2010), the fourth Republic in the Federal House of Representatives started on a wrong footing with Salisu Buhari, the Speaker accused of falsification of academic claim and was forced to resign and arraigned before he received presidential pardon. Maurice Ibekwe, a member of the House was equally alleged to have defrauded a German business man of #350,000 and #75,000. He died in prison while under trial (Alabi and Fashagba 2010). Hence, the act of corruption greeted the inception of the fourth Republic. Suleiman, (2011) stated that Patricia Etteh, Nigeria first female speaker of the House of representative was removed from office due to corrupt charges levelled against her. The author noted that she became speaker after the House inauguration on June 5, 2007 and was ousted in November of the same year together with her deputy, Babangida Nguroje.

Demola (2011) observed that she was accused of approving over #600 million for the purchase of body massage machines. The author added that she was equally accused of approving #238 million for renovation of her official quarters without going through due process. The issues presented above shows that public officials are expected to ensure that their actions are in consonance with institutional ethical standards and rules. According to Desmond (2011) Dimeji Bankole took over from Patricia Etteh on 1<sup>st</sup> of November, 2007 and remained till May 29, 2011. In his inaugural speech, he promised to nudge the House towards a new direction of transparency and accountability. The author stated that evidences however, portrayed that he did exactly the opposite noting specifically that the House purchased about 380 Peugeot 407 in 2008.

The process for the purchase of the cars for the standing committees of the house generated a huge controversy and protracted crisis to the extent that EFCC was alerted for investigation Ani, Izuke and Nzekwe (2014) opined that activities of the speaker (Demeji Bankole) in the car deal cost Nigeria #2.4 billion to sharp practices. Demola (2011) detailed that the actual cost of the 380 Peugeot 407 cars direct from the manufacturer was #1,938,000.000. The house

leadership paid the supplier the sum of #417,486,500. The author indicated that the house was supposed to have 10% discount of #235,948,650 which never reflected in the purchase.

Alabi and Fashagba (2010) consented that shortly after the purchase of the Peugeot cars, the Speaker (Bankole) and the body of principal officers approved the purchase of four unit Range rovers (v8), three units of Mercedes Benz s-600 cars for the speakers and his deputy at #335.5 million. The prices of the vehicles were discovered to have been inflated. Desmond (2011) noted that there were claims that the contract for the supply of the vehicles did not undergo any competitive bidding process before they were awarded to Wadata Global Company. The purchase of Toyota Lexus Vehicle for the use of the Chief whip at 13.7 million naira also sparked controversy. There were claims that the vehicle had been supplied at a cost of #12.5million in previous months before it was again re-awarded at the cost of 13.7 million.

The car deal scandal was investigated by the EFCC and subsequently indicted all the principal officers of the House for the colossal fraud. Hence, the report was sent to the presidency, although without being published (Demola, 2011). It is very pertinent to note from the presentation above that cases of corruption were prevalent in the House of Representative during the period of the study. It is therefore, derivable that some members of the house were not mindful of laid down standards that should guide their conduct in the discharge of the Legislative business. The trend of corruption as noted above, calls for enforcement of ethical standards with disciplinary measures to ensure sanity in the peoples House of Representatives. Demola (2011) and Chris (2011) further noted that other allegations against the Speakership of the House (Demeji Bankole) includes the purchase of LCD 40-inch Samsung LNS 341 for members at #525,000 each against the open market price of #180,000n per unit. These authors stated that Bankole also authorized the purchase of 400 units of another type of television for #210 million instead of #97.2 million market prices. Resulting to a loss of #112.5 million to the country's treasury.

Other items procured at over-inflated prices include: one unite of sharp copier 5316 at #270,000 as against open market price of #160,000; 800 units of desktop (HP Compaq disc 5700) at #330,00 instead of #160,000; about #172.8m was fleeced from the Nation;s treasury on computed items alone (Demola, 2011).

According to Suleiman (2011) the scandal that the House leadership under Bankole squandered #9 billion capital votes and obtained 10-billion-naira loan from the United Bank for Africa (UBA) which was shared by members to prosecute their election campaigns. The author stated that the scandal was brought to the public domain when President Goodluck Jonathan refused to sign the budget into law. Besides, Chris (2011) noted that the Lawmakers milk the Nation dry through jumbo allowances they approve and pay themselves without following due process. It was also discovered that the Speaker (Demeji Bankole) at a time after obtaining a loan of 40 billion naira jacked up his annual salary from #8million to #400 million which was a violation of the approved remuneration package for political, public and Judicial Office holders by the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC). Joshua and Oni (2014) opined that Aminu Tambuwal emerged as the Speaker, House of Representatives on June 6, 2011 till may, 2015. These scholars stated that, shortly after he was sworn in as the Speaker, he commented that the dignity and integrity of the House of Representatives have been called to question and noted as thus:

When we were elected to pursue the entrenchment of probity, accountability and transparency in the conduct of government business as a cardinal legislative agenda, we advised ourselves never to expect that it will be an easy task. Accordingly, I have had cause to occasionally sound a note of warning and reminder that our constitutional task is inescapably hazardous requiring total commitment, diligence, transparency, determination and sacrifice (Anayochukwu, 2012 p. 48)

Thus, Aminu Tambuwal from his inception as the Speaker acknowledged that the integrity of the House is questionable and desired total commitment and transparency on the side of the law – makers as it appertains to the discharge of their constitutional duties. When Legislative ethical standards are compromised in the Legislature the call for transparency, accountability, probity and discipline in the conduct of Legislative business arises from the electorates.

Anayochuwu (2012) stated that despite the warnings from Aminu Tambuwal (Speaker), Farouk Lawan, who was a member of the integrity group and chairman of the oil subsidy probe committee, admitted collection from oil marketer, Femi Otedola 500,000 dollars bribe to delist his two companies, Zenon oil and Gas and synopsis Enterprise limited on the list of companies that corruptly got subsidy payments without importing the products. The total amount allegedly involved was 3million Dollars as reported (Emmanuel, Kingsley, and Victor, 2012).

Similarly, Suleiman (2011) buttressed that, on law – making the Law – makers failed to meet up expected standards. He noted that Ita Enang, former Chairman, House Committee on rules and business disclosed that out of 489 bills introduced into the House, only 187 was passed leaving about 302 bills hanging. Suleiman (2011) further noted that most of the Legislators demanded gratification befor supporting a bill no matter how important. The author indicated that, Law – Makers were alleged to have been given ₦ 10 million to pass the petroleum industry bill (PIB). More so, Nasiru Dantiye, a former member of the House hinted that many of the Legislators were ignorant about Legislation while those who know were not committed. He added that, most Law – Makers in the House were not aware of the essence of Legislation as they see their business in the House as money sharing (Suleiman, 2011). Hence, the coinage “Legisllooters” and “representathieves” ( Oluokun & Desmond, 2011). It could be deductively asserted that some Law – Makers were not abreast with their Legislative role and by that very fact, ethical standards were of little or no essence and hence, the tendency of corruption. When general interest is sacrificed at the altar of personal interest, ethical questions are bound to arise



in any democracy (Beerbohm, 2012). Furthermore, an overview from the review made so far shows that ethics provide accountability between the Legislature and the electorates. Adherence to ethical standards in the conduct of legislative business ensures that the citizenry receive what it needs in a fair manner as expected in a democratic setting. It also guarantees the Legislature guidelines for integrity and thus, helps foster the trust the electorates should repose on the Legislature. (Stark, 2003: Thompson, 1987: Hampshire, 1978: Thompson 2012).

## **2.2 Empirical Studies**

Scholars in the Literature of social sciences have painstakingly conducted series of research on diverse aspects of Legislative ethics and corruption with the objective of arriving at viable policy recommendations and reposition it for enhancing the existential disposition of the citizenry. Ikegbu (2014) carried out a research on the “impacts of ethics and corruption in the Imo state House of Assembly”. The researcher used survey research design for the study with the population of 72 respondents sampled out of 158. Questionnaires were used as instruments for data collection. The finding of the study revealed that the absence of codified ethical standards have an impact on corruption in the Imo state House Assembly. The study was focused on the Imo State House of Assembly which is distinct from the National Assembly (House of Representatives). The present study is carried out in the Federal Capital Territory while that of Ikegbu was carried out in the South-Eastern Nigeria.

Edunam (2011) carried out a research on Ethical Standards and Corruption: A review on the Akwa – Ibom State House of Assembly. He used correlation research design for the study with a population of 52 respondents sampled out 172. Questionnaires were used as instruments for data collection. The finding revealed that there is a strong relationship between ethical standards and corruption. It was noted that a defined ethical standard put in place has the tendency to curb corruption. This present study found that legislators are non-challant to the

provision of ethical standards put in place to guide their conduct, also ethical standards are not properly defined in the National Assembly which is at variance with the study conducted by Edunam which found that there was a relationship between ethical standards and corruption.

Alalibo (2012) conducted a study on the assessment of ethical standards and corruption in the Rivers State House of Assembly. He used purposive Sampling techniques. Questionnaires were used as instruments for data collection. He adopted a case study as the research design. The study found out that ethical standard has positive influence in guiding the conduct of Legislators in fighting corruption. It was also noted that enforcement of ethical rules has a positive influence in guiding the conduct of Legislators to exposing corruption. The gap in this perspective is on the case study research designed adopted which is distinct from survey design. The environment of study also differs (i.e.) the National Assembly and that of Rivers State House of Assembly. The quest to bridge these fundamental gaps and to broaden the horizon of knowledge acquisition on existing literature as it appertains to the concept of Legislative ethics and corruption prompted the need of this study.

## **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.3.1 Principal/ Agent Theory**

The principal /agent theory has been chosen to be most suitable in the explanation of this study.

Care is taken below in the presentation and application of the theory as appropriate.

### **2.3.2 Principal /Agent Theory**

The theory was propounded by Stephen Ross in 1973. Other proponents are Barry Mitnick, Victor Goldberg, Moe, Elsenhardt, Shapiro, etc.

There is a growing body of literature in Political Science that premised on the fact that the agent should be responsible and accountable to the principal in the discharge of duties assigned to the agent (Ross, 1975; Pratt and Richard, 1985; Moe, 1984; Panda and Leepsa, 2017).

Moe (1984) averred that the Principal/Agent theory in political science refers to a situation when an individual or entity (the agent) is able to make decisions and or take actions on behalf of or that impact, another person or entity; the principal. Ross (1975) added that the theory is hinged on the understanding and principles that an agent owes the principal duties of loyalty, obedience and reasonable care in compliance with set standards that guides the conduct of the agent. This presupposes that in protecting the interest of the principal, the agent has to abide by established institutional standards and rules. This must be done within the limit of the authority of the agent. Loyalty in the context means that the agent must act in the best interest of the principal and avoiding profits and other conflicts of interest. Indicating the elements of the theory, Pranda and leepsa (2017) notes that there is consent, express or implied of the parties to establish the relationship. Secondly, the agent acts as a representative and not for himself. Thirdly, the agent acts within the scope of his authority in respect to established institutional principles and standards. Hence the Principal/Agent theory is premised to explain the relationship that should exist between a Principal and an Agent as elucidated above. The relationship is contractual in which the interest of the agent is paramount and should be protected by the agent in accordance with the parameters of his authority.

Be that as it may, the theory has inherent shortcomings. One of the short comings is bridge of contractual agreement by the agent (Legislator) which was hitherto undertaking with the principal (Electors) on mutual basis. When the agent is given the mandate of representation by the principal and is elected into office, he/she becomes self-seeking and thereby tend to violate institutional standards and rules which is inimical to the interest of the principal. This tendency is contrary to the principle of the theory in which the agent is expected not to allow

personal interest to override the interest of the principal. In the Nigerian context for instance, when some legislators are elected into office, they become disinterested about their electoral promises and pursue a personal agenda at the expense of the electorates (Anayachukwu, 2012). This is a major weakness of the theory as elucidated above. However, in spite of the identified weakness, it is considered appropriate for the study.

### 2.3.3 Application of the Theory

Taking a cue from the principles and elements inherent in the Principal /Agent Theory as expressly stated above, it is worthwhile to note that legislators and electorates are in a contractual understanding in a democratic setting in which the Legislators are voted into power to represent the interest of the electorates ( Nasir, 2014). Hence, in line with the principles and elements of the theory, the Legislators (Agents) owes the electorates (principal) duties of loyalty, Obedience and reasonable care in representation, law – making and oversight function, which are the statutory duties of the Legislators within the context of the constitutional mandate. The legislators must not be self – seeking and corrupt and avoid such acts that may lead to conflict of interest in the discharge of their official duties. Also, Legislators need to confine themselves within the principle that guides their conduct.

**Commented [Ma1]:** In applying the theory, you should be able to speak to the specific context which your work is focused. I see you are still referring to legislators whereas you are supposed to be talking about NASS

**CHAPTER THREE**  
**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter focuses on the methods and procedures employed to conduct this study with a view to answering the research questions raised. It covers the research design, population and sample size, research instrument and method of data collection.

**3.1 Research design**

This study adopted a survey research design. Kathari (2010) posited that research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted. The author further buttressed that research design is the framework on how a particular study is carried out, it involves the method of data collection, data analysis and it enable the researcher to address a large proportion of respondents by means of questionnaire.

**3.2 Population of the Study**

The population for this study comprises of Honourable Members of the House of Representatives, Management staff, non-Management staff and Legislative Aides. There are 360 members in the House of Representatives, 1,800 legislative Aides, 100 Management staff and 412 non-Management staff. This yields a total of 2,672. As can be seen in the table below

**Table 3.1 Population of the Study**

---

1. Members House of Reps	-	360
2. Management Staff	-	100
3. Non-Management Staff	-	412
4. Legislative Aides	-	1800
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,672</b>

---

*Source: National Assembly Nominal Roll*

### 3.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure

For even representation, a non-stratified random sampling procedure was used to select sample from the Members of House of Representatives, Management and non-Management staff and Legislative Aides. 10% of the population of Members of House of Representatives, Management and non-Management staff and Legislative Aides were used. This is as recommended by Rosoe (1977) that 10% of a population is adequate for a study. Table 3.2 shows sample of the population for the study, thus 267 respondents forms the target population for the study.

**Table 3.2 Sample population for the study**

1. Members House of Reps	-	360	10%	36
2. Management Staff	-	100		10
3. Non-Management Staff	-	412		41
4. Legislative Aides	-	1800		180
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,672</b>		<b>267</b>

### 3.4 Method of Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was questionnaire. This is because questionnaire as an instrument for data collection allows the researcher to cover a large number of respondents (Obanya 2012). The questionnaire was developed by the researcher, and constructed on the basis of the research questions on a four-point Likert scale. The instrument is made-up of four (4) question items on ethical standards set to guide conduct of members in cluster A, five (5) question items on effects of ethical standards in guiding official conduct of members in cluster B, two questions on adequacy of ethical standard in cluster C and six (6) question items on observable lapses of ethical standard in cluster D. The questionnaire has two parts. Part one provide personal data of the respondents, part two provide information on the questions items. The questionnaire was constructed in form of four – point likert scale coded as follow:

Strongly agree (SA) – 4, Agree (A) – 3, Disagree (D) -2, strongly disagree (SD) – 1.

### **3.5 Techniques for Data Analysis**

In this study, descriptive statistics was used. The completed responses obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentage. This according to Sidhi (2000) is to express the extent to which changes in one variable are accompanied by or dependent upon changes in the second variable. A fundamental ethical instrument that guides the conduct of Legislators in the House of Representatives, the Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) Act, 2017 was also analyzed using content analysis.

### **3.6 Administration and Retrieval of instrument**

The researcher administered the instrument directly to the respondents. A total of 267 questionnaire was administered to the target population. The respondents were given ample time to fill the questionnaire. Out of the 267 questionnaire that was administered a total 133 questionnaire was retrieved.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents data collected for the study in order to address the issues identified in the objectives of the study. Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) Act, 2017 was critically analysed as a fundamental ethical instrument.

#### 4.1 General Description of Responses from the Questionnaire

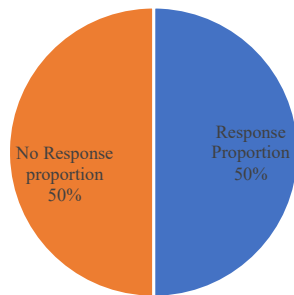
A total of 267 questionnaires were administered to a cross section of respondents in the House of Representatives involving Honourable Members, Management staff, Legislative Aides and Non-Management staff. Of the 267 questionnaires administered however, a total of 133 responses were retrieved thus, yielding a response rate of 50% (see Fig. 4.1). The distribution of the respondents by affiliation shows that 47% (63 out of 133) are Legislators, 47% (63 out of 133) are management staff, 3% (4 out of 133) are Legislative Aides and 2% (3 out of 133) are other staff.

Table 4.1 – Distribution of respondents by affiliation.

Category of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Legislative Aides	4	3.01
Legislator	63	47.37
Management Staff	63	47.37
Non-Management Staff	3	2.26
Total	133	100



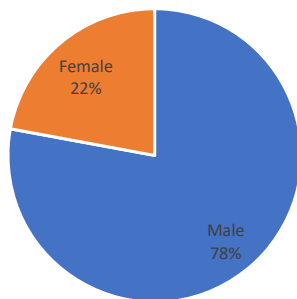
Responses of the Respondents



Source: Field Survey, 2020

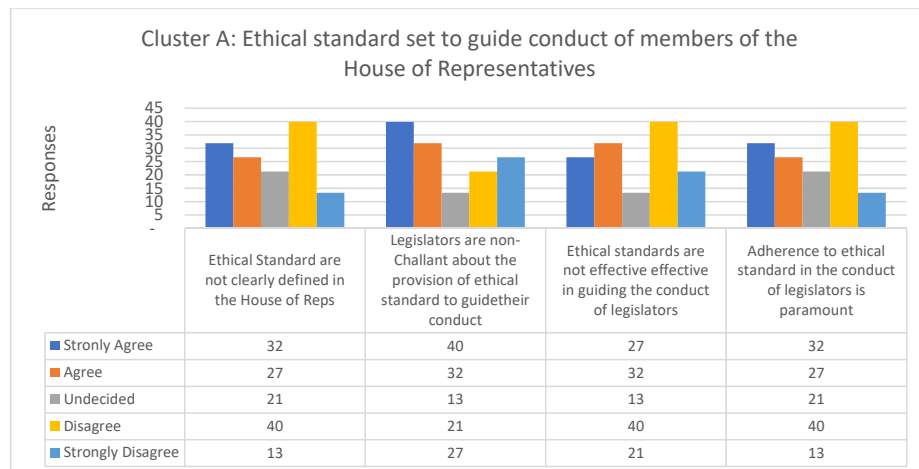
The distribution of the respondents across gender shows that male respondents account for 78% of the respondents while 22% of the respondents are females.

Gender Distrubution of Reposndents



Source: Field Survey, 2020

## 4.2 Ethical Standards in Nigeria’s House of Representatives from 2003 – 2015



From the table above, a combination of 32% respondents strongly agreed that ethical standards are not clearly defined in the House of Representatives, 40% disagreed, 27% agreed and 13% strongly disagreed while 21% were undecided. Given the analysis above, it can be seen that the 32% and 27% who strongly agreed carries higher percentage of respondents who are of the view that ethical standards are not clearly defined in the House of Representatives.

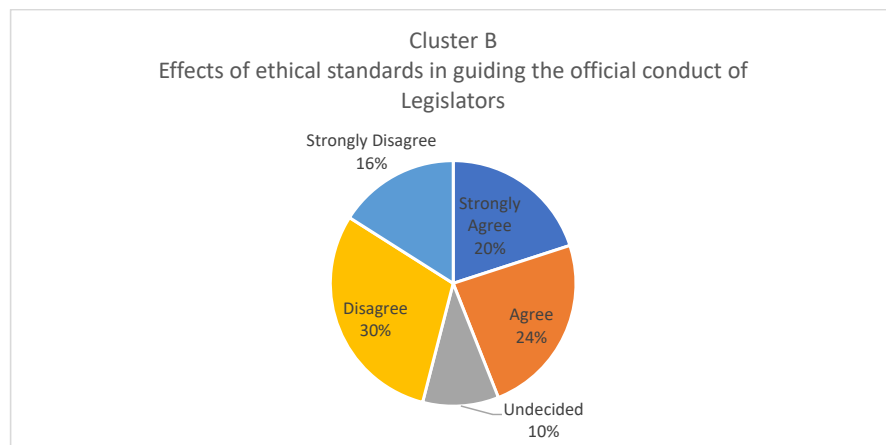
Table above, it can be seen that Legislators are non-challant about the provision of ethical standard to guide their conduct. 40% strongly agreed that Legislators have non-challant attitudes towards the provision of ethical standards, 32% concurred to it by agreeing that Legislators are non-challant on the provision of ethical standards. The 40% and 32% of strongly agreed and agreed carried higher percentage implying that legislators are truly non-challant about the provision of ethical standard set out to guide their conduct.

Effectiveness of ethical standards in guiding the conduct of Legislators. In determining this, the option of strongly disagreed and disagreed carries a rate of 40% and 21% respectively which is above the percentage of strongly agreed and agreed at the rate of 27% and 32% respectively. This implies that the ethical standards are effective in guiding the conduct of

Legislators. A rate of 32% and 27% strongly agreed and agreed respectively. This value is below the percentage score of strongly disagreed and disagreed.

Adherence to ethical standards by Legislators. 32% and 27% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that adherence to ethical standard is paramount. While 40% and 13% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that adherence to ethical standard is paramount. 21% is undecided. This shows that adherence to ethical standards in the conduct of legislators is paramount.

#### 4.3 Effects of ethical standards in guiding the official conduct of legislators



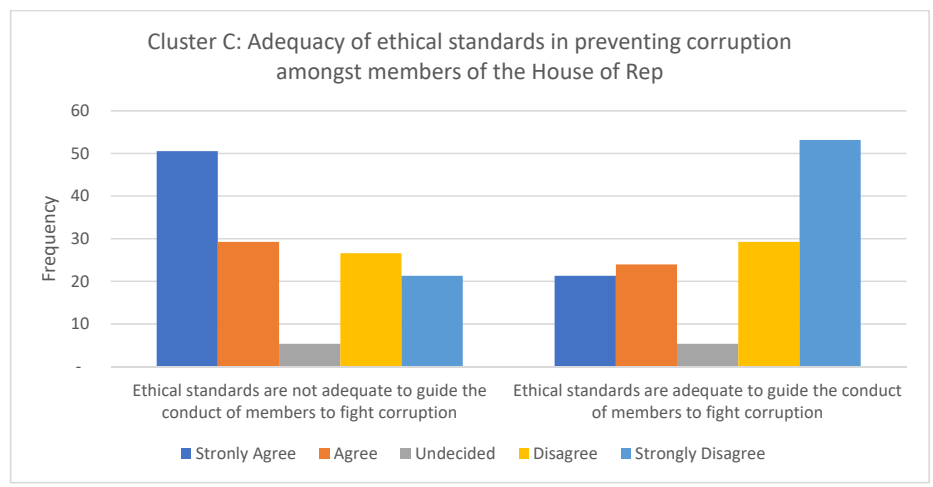
Ethical standard have helped legislators to discharge their official duties responsibly. 30% and 16% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that ethical standards have not helped to guide the conduct of Legislators. Similarly, 24% of the respondents agreed that ethical standards have helped while 20% strongly agreed that ethical standards have helped in guiding the conducts of Legislators. The result shows in slight proportion that ethical standards have not helped in guiding the conduct of legislators in performing their duties.

When asked if ethical standards have brought about transformation in the conduct of legislative business, 20% strongly agreed while 24% agreed that it has brought about

transformation in legislative business. On the other hand, 16% strongly disagreed while 30% disagreed that it has brought about transformation in the conduct of Legislative business. The result shows that ethical standard have yielded to transformation in the conduct of legislators.

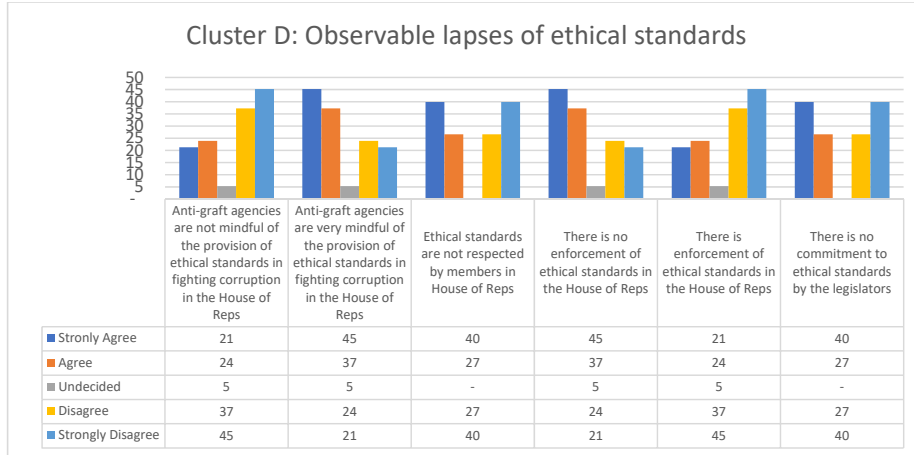
From the table above, responses gathered from the respondents' shows that 36% and 16% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that legislators do not comply with ethical standards which carried the highest proportion.

#### 4.4 Adequacy of ethical standards in preventing corruption amongst members of the House of Representatives



Another objective of the study is to examine the adequacy of ethical standards in preventing corruption amongst members of House of Representatives. The frequency distribution shows that the number of respondents that strongly agreed that ethical standards are not adequate to guide the conduct of Members to fight corruption is higher as clearly indicated above.

#### 4.5 Observable Lapses of Ethical Standards



Anti-graft agencies are not mindful of the provision of ethical standards in fighting corruption in the House of Representatives. Available statistical data gathered from the respondents' shows that 37% and 45% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that the anti-graft agencies are not mindful of the provision of ethical standards in guiding the conduct of Legislators. Whereas, 21% and 24% strongly agreed and agreed that anti-graft agencies are mindful of the provision of ethical standards in guiding the conducts of members.

Ethical standards are not respected by members in the House of Representatives. Results obtained from the respondents' shows an equal percentage by the respondents who both agreed and disagreed on equal terms that ethical standards are respected and not respected by Legislators.

There is enforcement of ethical standards in the House of Representatives. 45% and 37% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively, noting that there is no enforcement of ethical standards in the House of Representatives.

#### **4.6 Examining the ethical standards set to guide conduct of members of the House of Representatives.**

The enabling framework that institutionalizes legislative ethics to ensure accountability, transparency and probity in the House of Representatives is the Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) Act 2017. Examining the ethical content of this piece of legislation is therefore critical as it is aimed to deter corrupt practices in the nation's legislature and scale up good governance. The approach is to appraise the Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) Act, 2017 and its potency in enhancing ethical standards in the House of Representatives. The Act is structured into 26 sections. Sections 1, 2 and 3 provides for immunity and litigation, power to summon a witness, issue and service of summons. Power to issue warrant to compel attendance, and provision that witness may be examined on oath, are contained in sections 4 and 5.

The content of sections 6 to 12 are: privileges of a witness, false evidence, obstruction of members of the legislative house, answers in committee not to be admissible in proceedings, power of arrest, ejection of a person from chamber or its precincts, and influencing members. Acceptance of bribe, contempt of a legislative house, restriction on suspended member, restriction on evidence as to certain matters, prohibition of certain statements, printing false copies of laws or proceedings, and protection of persons responsible for publications authorised by legislative house, are the content of sections 13 to 19. The powers of President, Speaker or chairman to be supplementary to powers otherwise conferred, pre-action notice, notification of arrest of members of legislative house, civil process not to be served in chamber or precincts, repeal, interpretation, and citation, are the content of sections 20 to 26.

Although the Act provides for a set of issues as contained in its long title, the focus of this section is to examine the aspects that borders on legislative ethics, and to ascertain if these provisions are adequate to curtail corrupt practices in the House of Representatives. From the

26 sections contained in the Act, sections 1 – 23, makes direct or indirect provision that concerns legislative ethics. Of these 23 sections, 42% have direct concerns for instituting ethical standards in the House. The other 58%, do not. The frequency table showing this distribution is provided below.

Table 4.3: Section by Section Analysis of the Legislative Houses Act, 2017

Section	Provision	Comments	Does the section make provision for ethical standards to guide the conduct of legislators?
Section 1 provides that:	A criminal or civil proceeding shall not be instituted against a member of the legislative House on respect of words spoken or written at the plenary session or at Committee proceedings of the Legislative House	Protects the Legislator	No
Sections 2-7	A legislative House or Committee shall have power to summon any person ...	Gives the Legislator Power to summon others	No
Section 8	A Member of a Legislative House shall not be obstructed or hindered from gaining entrance into the legislative chambers	Protects the Legislator	No
Section 9	An answer by a person to a question put by a Committee of a Legislative House shall not, be in any proceeding, civil or criminal, admissible in evidence against him.	Protects persons summoned from being 'tried' by the House	Yes
Section 10	Empowers an officer of a legislative house, with or without an order of court arrest persons who commits an offence contrary to the provision of the Act or commits an offence contrary within the Chamber or its precincts, contrary to the Act	Gives Legislators powers to arrest offenders within or outside the Chambers so long as it is contrary to the Act	No
Section 11	The President or Speaker of a Legislative House may, at any time, order for the ejection of a stranger or any person from the Chamber or its precincts	Protects the Legislators from others	No
Section 12, 13	Makes provision that will deter others from giving legislators bribes and criminalizes any such act by payment of a fine of N500,000 or 2 years imprisonment or both	Enforces ethical behaviour by legislators by discouraging and criminalizing bribe taking and related acts	Yes
Section 14	Makes provision to criminalizes actions of legislators relating to authorized publication of reports, and other unethical conducts	Enforces ethical behaviour by legislators by criminalizing unprofessional conduct relating to unauthorized publications of official documents	Yes
Section 15	Denies access into the Chambers of any member of Legislative House that has been suspended	Keeps suspended members out of chambers	Yes
Section 16	Protects the sanctity of the House from the ill-actions of persons who have access to	Enforces ethical behaviour by legislators	Yes

	reports of House Committees to be tendered to any person without the permission of the Senate President, Speaker or the Chairman of the Committee	by discouraging authorized disclosure of materials by persons who had privilege access to the documents	
Sections 17 and 18	Makes provision to protect the House from persons making false statements or making unauthorised print of legislative documents by imposing a fine of N2,000,000 or imprisonment for a term of 12 months	Penalizes others from making false or scandalously statements that can defame the character of legislators. Also penalizes authorised publication of legislative documents by others	Yes
Section 19	provides for the protection of persons responsible for publications authorized by a legislative house	Protects persons authorised to print legislative documents and provides for the court to deal with any matter to the contrary.	No
Section 20	Provides for the Powers of President, Speaker or Chairman to be supplementary to powers otherwise conferred	Provides for the Powers of President, Speaker or Chairman to be supplementary to powers otherwise conferred	No
Section 21	Provides a timeline of 3 months for which persons with cause of action against a legislative House, to serve such notice	Makes provision for unethical behaviour of legislators to be made known within a time frame of three months	Yes
Section 22	provides that a member of a legislative House when arrested or detained upon warrant or order, should be communicated to the President or Speaker	Recognizes that legislators found wanting when arrested upon court order should be immediately communicated to the President or the Speaker	Yes
Section 23	Provides that a member of a legislative House shall not be arrested in the Chamber or precincts of a Legislative House	Provides that a member of a legislative House shall not be arrested in the Chamber or precincts of a Legislative House	No

Source: Authors Analysis using the Legislative Houses Act, 2017



Table 4.4: Frequency Distribution of the Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) Act, 2017 set to guide conduct of legislators.

Section	Frequency of Yes/ No	Percentage of Yes/ No
Section 1	1	4
Sections 2-7	6	30
Section 8	1	4
Section 9	1	4
Section 10	1	4
Section 11	1	4
Section 12 and 13	2	9
Section 14	1	4
Section 15	1	4
Section 16	1	4
Sections 17 and 18	2	9
Section 19	1	4
Section 20	1	4
Section 21	1	4
Section 22	1	4
Section 23	1	4
Total	23	100

#### 4.7 Discussion of Findings

In the course of carrying out this study and the interpretation of data collected from the respondents, major findings were revealed. It was found from the study that ethical standards in the House of Representatives are not clearly defined. It was also found that Legislators are non-challant to the provision of ethical standards in the House of Representatives. The study further revealed that ethical standards are not effective in guiding the conduct of Legislators. Also, it was revealed from the study that adherence to ethical standard is paramount to guide the conduct of Legislators. Revelation from the study further indicated that ethical standard have helped in guiding the conduct of Legislators. It was also revealed that ethical standards have not yielded to transformation in the conduct of Legislative business. The study equally noted that Legislators are not mindful with the provision of ethical standards which resulted to lack of trust by the electorates. Again, findings from the study noted that the provision of ethical standards are inadequate. The study further revealed that anti-graft agencies are not

mindful of the provision of ethical standards and that there is poor enforcement of ethical standards in the House of Representatives.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study examined Legislative ethics and corruption in the Nigerian's House of Representatives, 2002-2015. Chapter one is an introduction which presented the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, delimitation of the study and definition of terms. The study has four objectives and four research questions. Relevant literatures related to the study centred on the concepts of ethics, legislative ethics, and Legislative ethics in Nigeria, comparative legislative ethics, concept of corruption, legislative ethics and corruption in House of Representatives, empirical review was also made. Theories considered relevant to the study was presented. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. A total of 267 questionnaires were administered, sampled out of 2,672. Thus, 267 becomes the target population, however, 133 questionnaires were retrieved hence, used for the study. The questions were analysed using frequency tables, charts and percentages.

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

This study has brought to bear in no small measure that setting in place a codified legislative ethics is inevitable to guiding the conduct of legislators to avert corruption in the discharge of their official responsibilities. More to this is the enforcement of the legislative ethical standards with a focus to ensuring consequences to those who may tend to subvert the ethics standards put in place. The impacts of corruption in the Legislature has far reaching effects given the fact that this arm of government is the basic illuminant of the society in any democracy. Given this prominence, it is instructive to note that any calculated action or omission from it will attract negative effects on the general outlook of the country. Corruption is a viral and antithetic to democratic ethos and as such demands firm, elaborate and codified ethical

standards with spelt out penalties and enforcement against person or group of persons that may tend to be deviants in the legislature.

No doubt the fact that laudable achievements have been made in the legislature but unfortunately, the ugly incidences of corruption in the system has beclouded these strides basically due to failure to adhere to ethical standards and lack of enforcements. Hence, there is an urgent need to strengthened and repositioned the legislative ethical instrument to guide the conduct of legislators. By so doing the utmost desire for good governance by the citizenry will be ensured and the nation will be saved from drifting into regrettable political consequences arising from the ill effects of corruption.

## **5.2 Recommendation**

Based on the major findings from the study, the following recommendations were made.

- i. Enforcement of ethical standards should be of utmost importance in the Legislature.
- ii. Ethical standards should be clearly spelt out with penalties for non-adherence in a booklet and handed over to Legislators during documentation and orientation.
- iii. There should be periodic seminars and retreat on the importance of Legislative ethical standards for the Legislators
- iv. There should be periodic assessment and appraisal on the adherence of ethical standards in the Legislature.
- v. The Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) Act, 2017 should be amended to provide for strict compliance and measures against violations of the provisions of the Act, such as outright removal from office, imprisonment, and being barred from holding further political offices.
- vi. Sacrosanct of legislative ethical standards should be brought to the notice and knowledge of Members at the point of entry into the National Assembly, especially during orientation and retreat.

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