

Beyond Institutional Bottlenecks: An Empirical Analysis of Employee Perceptions in Respect to Operational Impediments in Nigeria's EFCC

GLORY, AGBOR OTONKO.¹, AU. N. NNONYELU²

Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State, Nigeria.

Abstract- The study focused on employees' perception of challenges militating against the effective operation of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in the Southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The mismatch between the mandate and the outcomes of the commission's operations demands an "insider" analysis of the institutional, legal and socio-political challenges and obstacles to the anti-graft campaign. The study was based on institutional autonomy and the human capital fulfillment, hence the choice of the two selected Zonal Commands: Enugu and Owerri. Descriptive research design was used and a mixed methodology approach to data collection. The population of this study was 1242 employees whose sample size was determined by the Yamane (1967) formula, which yielded a sample of 261 employees. Structured questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data to 231 valid respondents and the qualitative data was obtained from the In-Depth Interviews (IDI) to 12 purposively selected stakeholders. The results revealed that majority (64.1%) of the respondents considered the commission's operation to be generally effective, with a fair level of satisfaction with work hours and co-worker relationships. A large percentage (76.9%) responded with a fair degree of satisfaction with the reward and incentive systems. Importantly, the qualitative data produced a "mixed result" story that indicated that the quantitative numbers were a "false positive," as a result of professional pretense and a culture of organizational hierarchy. Parliamentarians pointed to entrenched challenges such as political involvement in high-profile cases, opacity in decision-making processes, and delays in the courts, which impede investigations. The research finds that, although administrative and technological setups have been improved, structural obstacles are still reducing the effectiveness of the commission. They include the institutionalisation of merit-based promotion, insulation from the influence of the executive, and safe space operational debriefs to increase employee input in decision-making processes.

Keywords: EFCC, Operational Impediments, Employee Perception, Anti-Corruption, Southeast Nigeria.

I. INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) is the chief bulldog in the fight against the erosion of national wealth through institutions. The commission was set up by an Act of the National Assembly in 2003 and re-enacted in 2004 in response to a great international pressure, particularly from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) [1]. Nigeria was often cited as a "Non-Cooperative Country or Territory" at the millennium turnaround, essentially because of "419" advance fee frauds, money laundering and the lack of accountability of the political class. This new development in the EFCC was a complete change from the old and sometimes slow response of the Nigeria Police Force in the fight against and prosecution of specialized financial crimes. It was all-encompassing, from investigating, prosecuting and preventing economic and financial crimes such as embezzlement, bribery, illegal bunkering of oil and the like. But over the past twenty-odd years, the debate about the EFCC has moved from its heyday, to a more critical look at its sustainability and the challenges it faces in realizing its potential [2,3].

It is important to acknowledge the context in which EFCC operates to appreciate the challenges faced by their work. Nigeria is blessed with large natural resource revenues and impoverished people, a phenomenon that has been blamed on "leakage" into private hands of public funds. The EFCC is not just a law enforcement body, but a sign of the state's desire to purify the public sector in this context. However, the morale and perception of employees is an

inherent part of the effectiveness of any organisation. The EFCC officers, from the investigative officers, legal counsel, forensic analysts to administrative officers have a special "insider" view. The work of the employees is often overlooked by those outside the agency, who tend to be interested in either arresting the wrong perpetrators or getting into hot water over politics [4,5]. Their sense of those obstacles is significant because it can directly affect how well investigations are conducted, prosecutions are moved forward and the integrity of the anti-graft war. Political power and institutional independence is one of the most persistent challenges reported by internal stakeholders. The EFCC Act grants some autonomy, but the budgetary releases are dependent on the executive arm and the Executive Chairman is appointed by the executive. There is sometimes a feeling of "selective justice" syndrome as the intensity of an investigation is sometimes determined by the political orientation of the suspect. Political pressure is not limited to direct commands, but also from the indirect aspect of job security. If investigators believe that the risks of punitive transfers or lack of promotion for a particular line of investigation are high, the "chilling effect" poses an operational challenge [6,7,8]. The lack of criticality in the internal atmosphere may cause the Commission to essentially sub-optimize its investigative powers, with "low hanging fruit" cases dealing with cybercrime, or "Yahoo-Yahoo" investigations, being pursued with vigour, but cases involving multi-billion naira losses in the public sector not being taken beyond the "preliminary investigation" stage. Nigeria's legal and judicial system is a major impediment to the efficiency of the EFCC. The Nigerian legal system is adversarial, and has been known to have a fondness for the technicalities, meaning that cases that are carefully investigated by employees can languish in the courts for decades. High profile defendants often use the 'stay of proceedings' and interlocutory injunctions to delay, or even obstruct, the process of the courts. The Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) was enacted in 2015, intending to expedite criminal trials, but this is not what is actually happening. An EFCC investigator's biggest demotivators are when a case, which he has worked on for several years, is rejected on a technicality or adjourned without any action

being taken. This makes the impression that the justice system is biased in favor of the people who are willing to pay the Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SANs) to "game" the system [9,10].

Another area of operational difficulty is resource allocation, both in terms of human and material resources. The EFCC is considered as a "well-funded" agency compared to the police, however, in a digitalised and globalised economy the volume of financial crimes demands a certain technological sophistication which EFCC lacks. Lack of forensic technology, lack of access to international financial databases, and lack of a nationwide data integration system are often cited as major impediments. With financial criminals adopting blockchain, cryptocurrencies and complex offshore shell companies to cover their tracks, sometimes the EFCC's personnel are fighting a 21st-century war with 20th century tools. The well-being and safety of the employees are more important [11,12]. Being subjected to threats, harassment and physical risk is common for employees and their families, as corruption is countering its rise. Employees and their families are frequently threatened, harassed and put at risk in a setting where corruption is fighting back. If the perception is that the risks of working in the field are not matched by the benefits, and that the job isn't sufficiently protected against institutional threats, the brain drain of highly-trained forensic experts and lawyers to the private sector becomes a self-inflicted obstacle to effective operations. Perceived impediments also stem from the internal bureaucracy and organisational structure of the EFCC. The commission expanded from a small, agile unit to a huge Federal parastatal and, inevitably, picked up some of the "civil service" inefficiencies associated with Nigeria. There has been some friction between promotion backlogs, lack of clarity on career path, and the perception that "seconded" police officers are pushing too hard on the "core" officers in the commission, the "cadets" [2,13]. In this "poly-centric" command system, professional rivalry and disintegration of operations can occur. Sometimes employees may not be prepared to commit to a long-term career in the tough challenges of anti-corruption activities due to the perception that they are not being given chances for their future development. A lack of

long term commitment to the long hours of anti-corruption work may be due to the perception that they are not being given opportunities for their future development. Thus, the internal workings, belongingness and justice of the internal system cannot be divorced from the commission's external performance [14].

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Staff working within a structure of autonomy, safety and administrative support are vital to the institution's effectiveness and success in detecting and prosecuting high level crime. In Nigeria, however, the EFCC, over the last two decades, has faced a series of systemic problems, including allegations of political interference in high-profile cases; a lack of technological sophistication for addressing new forms of cyber-financial crimes; and the judiciary system's lack of efficiency, long court times and technicalities [4,8] This has resulted in the workers' sense of frustration and ethical degradation because of the anti-graft assignments environment where the seconded workers dominated the career employees, the workers' reward and welfare system was not proportional to the high risk of the anti-graft assignment, and insufficient protection for the workers and informants/eyewitnesses from retaliatory threats. These clearly suggest the operational context of the EFCC is not up to the international best practices and the expectations of a lead agency as expected of an institution [16,17]. While these are increasing concerns about the agency's external performance, the extent to which these perceived constraints, specifically, impact the delivery of the agency's day to day effectiveness from the "insider" perspective is largely anecdotal. This is due to the fact that little concerted research efforts have been directed towards capturing the perceived experience of the employees themselves as the key actors in driving the anti-corruption mandate in Nigeria. As a result, the disparity between the actual power of the commission and the power it is authorized to exercise is still largely unchallenged in terms of its human resources [15].

Study Objectives:

1. To determine the perceived level of operational effectiveness among employees in the selected

Zonal Commands of the EFCC in the Southeast zone of Nigeria.

2. To identify the specific institutional, legal, and socio-political impediments that hinder the effective performance of employees within the commission.
3. To ascertain the strategies required to mitigate these impediments and enhance the operational efficiency of the EFCC workforce in the Southeast zone of Nigeria.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research design adopted for this study was the mixed-method research approach. This design combines both quantitative and qualitative methods in the collection, analysis, and presentation of data. The choice of a mixed-method design is justified by its ability to provide; the quantitative component allows the researcher to examine the features of a large population sample at a relatively low cost to draw statistical inferences, while the qualitative component (In-Depth Interviews) provides a deeper, nuanced understanding of the professional experiences and "insider" perceptions of the EFCC staff. This dual approach ensures that the findings are both statistically significant and contextually rich.

Area of the Study / Study Organization

The Southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria was the study area. This region is the Southeast, which previously had been called Eastern Region of Nigeria after the country was divided into three regions in the 1950s. In 1967, the area was divided into three states. More states were created such as Imo and Anambra only in 1976. The region is now made up of five states which are Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. The main target organization of this study however, is the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and in particular the operational centres of the EFCC in the Southeast zone. The EFCC is set up in a decentralized manner under the aegis of its Zonal Commands to effectively monitor financial crimes at the grassroots level. The main focus of this study is on the Enugu Zonal Command (previously the Zonal Command which co-ordinated operations in the region) and the Uyo Zonal Command (which shares jurisdictional boundaries

with the zone) and also the specialized field offices located in Awka and Owerri. The offices are the hubs of administration and investigation for the commission's regional staff, including the legal, investigative and forensic staff required to implement the anti-graft mandate in the Southeastern states.

Population of the Study

This study involved all the staff of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), in the Southeast zone of Nigeria. The HRU records and administrative records of the commission's regional offices showed that the total number of all commission employees as at the time of this study was one thousand, two hundred and forty-two (1,242). This study, however, was carried out among the different cadres of staff in the two Zonal Commands (Zones) selected in Southeast Nigeria (Enugu Zonal Command & Owerri Zonal Command). The selection of these two commands out of the existing operational hubs was done using the simple balloting method. The data gathered from the administration of the two commands revealed that at the time of this study there were seven hundred and fifty four (754) employees in the two commands altogether.

Table 1: Population Composition of Core Operational Staff Categories in the Selected EFCC Commands

Staff Categories	Enugu Command	Owerri Command	Total
Detective Superintendents/Senior Officers	42 (11.5%)	38 (9.8%)	80 (10.6%)
Detective Inspectors/Investigative Officers	155 (42.6%)	162 (41.5%)	317 (42.0%)
Legal Officers/Prosecution Counsel	68 (18.7%)	75 (19.2%)	143 (19.0%)
Detective Assistants/Field Officers	99 (27.2%)	115 (29.5%)	214 (28.4%)
Total	364 (100.0%)	390 (100.0%)	754 (100.0%)

Staff Categories	Enugu Command	Owerri Command	Total
)

For the administrative and support staff category, ten operational units were used for this study (including Forensics, ICT, and Internal Affairs). The population composition of each of the ten units in the two selected EFCC commands is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Population Composition of Support and Administrative Units within the Selected EFCC Commands

Support/Admin Units	Enugu Command	Owerri Command	Total
General Administration	124 (54.1%)	110 (51.2%)	234 (52.7%)
Finance and Accounts	12 (5.2%)	15 (7.0%)	27 (6.1%)
ICT & Cyber-Forensics	18 (7.9%)	22 (10.2%)	40 (9.0%)
Media & Publicity	8 (3.5%)	10 (4.6%)	18 (4.1%)
Human Resources (Personnel)	14 (6.1%)	12 (5.6%)	26 (5.8%)
Planning, Research & Statistics	11 (4.8%)	9 (4.2%)	20 (4.5%)
Case Records & Exhibits	15 (6.6%)	12 (5.6%)	27 (6.1%)
Intelligence & Internal Affairs	10 (4.4%)	11 (5.1%)	21 (4.7%)
Training & Development	9 (3.9%)	7 (3.3%)	16 (3.6%)
Logistics & Works	8 (3.5%)	7 (3.3%)	15 (3.3%)
Total	229 (100.0%)	215 (100.0%)	444 (100.0%)

Sample Size

For this study, two hundred and sixty one (261) samples were used. The researcher used the method of the sample size determination suggested by Yamane (1967) for the sample size determination,

which uses a simplified formula to compute sample sizes for finite (known) population with 95% confidence level or 0.05 margin of error [18,19].

Sampling Techniques

The proportionate stratified sampling technique was used as the sampling technique for this study. This was to facilitate selection of respondents in different strata in the selected EFCC Commands as per their relative percentage to the total number of population of the study. The researcher used In-depth Interview (IDI) to select 12 participants (six for each of the selected Zonal Command) for the qualitative aspect of this study.

Data collection instruments were used.

A mixed method was used in this study to collect the data. This included both quantitative and qualitative instruments which were used in obtaining data and information for the study.

Methods of Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected was sorted, coded and processed using the aid of statistical package for social science (SPSS) software. For the descriptive part of the data, however, the data was presented in frequency counts and simple percentages. The qualitative data was however analyzed using the method of content analysis. This approach was done in two steps, first, the reading of notes and transcriptions to get a general sense of the data collected and the body of it and then, second, the analysis of the data collected that took place after reading the notes and transcriptions. The variables and ideas in the data were then coded and classified in various themes. In this perspective, the theme was outlined and quotes were removed from the quantitative data to support and clarify the theme.

III. RESEARCH FINDINGS / RESULTS

This section presents an analysis and presentation of the field research data. Two hundred and sixty one (261) copies of the questionnaire were given to the respondents, 242 of which were retrieved. But, after careful sorting of the returned copies, only two hundred and thirty one (231) copies were found to be valid, eleven (11) copies were found to be invalid

because of improper filling of the items in those copies of the questionnaire. So, 231 valid copies were used for the analysis of data in this study. The qualitative data gathered from the answers of the selected key informants of the anti-graft agency comprised a Zonal Commander, Senior Investigators, Prosecution Counsel and Unit Heads were analyzed and complement the quantitative data.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Socio-demographic data of the respondents were analysed in items 1 – 6 of the questionnaires. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

VARIABLES DESCRIPTION	Enugu Command	Owerri Command	TOTAL
GENDER			
Male	54 (46.2%)	55 (48.2%)	109 (47.2%)
Female	63 (53.8%)	59 (51.8%)	122 (52.8%)
Total	117 (100.0%)	114 (100.0%)	231 (100.0%)
AGE CATEGORIES			
20 - 29 Years	15 (14.2%)	14 (13.7%)	29 (13.9%)
30 - 39 Years	39 (36.8%)	34 (33.3%)	73 (35.1%)
40 - 49 Years	31 (29.2%)	32 (31.4%)	63 (30.3%)
50 - 59 Years	17 (16.0%)	19 (18.6%)	36 (17.3%)
60 Years & Above	4 (3.8%)	3 (2.9%)	7 (3.4%)
Total	106 (100.0%)	102 (100.0%)	208 (100.0%)
MARITAL STATUS			
Single	32 (28.1%)	31 (28.2%)	63 (28.1%)

VARIABLES DESCRIPTION	Enugu Command	Owerri Command	TOTAL
Married	77 (67.5%)	72 (65.5%)	149 (66.5%)
Divorced	1 (0.9%)	2 (1.8%)	3 (1.3%)
Separated	1 (0.9%)	1 (0.9%)	2 (0.9%)
Widowed	3 (2.6%)	4 (3.6%)	7 (3.1%)
Total	114 (100.0%)	110 (100.0%)	224 (100.0%)

CURRENT DURATION OF SERVICE

Less than 5 Years	50 (43.9%)	44 (40.0%)	94 (42.0%)
6 - 10 Years	24 (21.1%)	27 (24.5%)	51 (22.8%)
11 - 15 Years	21 (18.4%)	15 (13.6%)	36 (16.1%)
16 - 20 Years	7 (6.1%)	13 (11.8%)	20 (8.9%)
Above 20 Years	12 (10.5%)	11 (10.0%)	23 (10.3%)
Total	114 (100.0%)	110 (100.0%)	224 (100.0%)

EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES

Support/Admin Staff	83 (70.9%)	85 (74.6%)	168 (72.7%)
Core Operational Staff	34 (29.1%)	29 (25.4%)	63 (27.3%)
Total	117 (100.0%)	114 (100.0%)	231 (100.0%)

RANKS OF SUPPORT STAFF

Junior Employee	15 (18.1%)	23 (27.1%)	38 (22.6%)
Intermediate Employee	8 (9.6%)	8 (9.4%)	16 (9.5%)
Senior Employee	60 (72.3%)	54 (63.5%)	114 (67.9%)
Total	83 (100.0%)	85 (100.0%)	168 (100.0%)

RANKS OF OPERATIONAL STAFF

Detective Assistant	11 (32.4%)	12 (41.4%)	23 (36.5%)
Detective Inspector	10 (29.4%)	8 (27.6%)	18 (28.6%)

VARIABLES DESCRIPTION	Enugu Command	Owerri Command	TOTAL
Detective Superintendent	9 (26.5%)	5 (17.2%)	14 (22.2%)
Senior/Chief Superintendent	4 (11.8%)	4 (13.8%)	8 (12.7%)
Total	34 (100.0%)	29 (100.0%)	63 (100.0%)

Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 3. The data show that a majority 122(52.8%) of the respondents were females compared to 109(47.2%) of them who were males. When it comes to age category of the respondents, the data reveals that majority 73(35.1%) of the respondents was between the age category 30-39 years old with least proportion of 7(3.4%) respondents aged 60 years and above. The mean age of the respondents was 38.4 with a standard deviation of 9.2. This means that the respondents were within the active/prize age and were able to voice their opinions and feelings on the obstacles faced in the institutional and effective functioning of the commission. In terms of marital status of the respondents, the data revealed that majority (149 respondents or 66.5%) were married respondents while 63(28.1%) were single respondents. The data also indicated that 7(3.1%) of them were widowed, 3(1.3%) of them were divorced, while the least proportion 2(0.9%) were separated. The analysis of the data by the time spent by the respondents in the two chosen EFCC Zonal Commands reveals that the majority of the respondents (94 – 42.0%) had been working in the organisation for less than 5 years. Also, 51(22.8%) of them had worked between six to ten years. Also, 36(16.1%) of them indicated that they had worked within the commission for a period between eleven to fifteen years. Only 23(10.3%) of them indicated having worked more than twenty years within the institution; while a lower proportion of them 20(8.9%) had worked between sixteen to twenty years. The data in the employee categories indicate that the employee population in the selected Zonal Commands are split into support/administrative staff and core operational staff, at 72.7% and 27.3% respectively. This is a stark indication that there is a huge disparity in terms of

employment quotient between administrative and front line investigative/legal positions in the EFCC in Southeast Nigeria. The data show that within the support staff category, a majority 114(67.9%) of them were senior employees compared to 38(22.6%) and 16(9.5%) of them who were junior and intermediate employees respectively. These data are also included in the two selected commands. Contrary to this, the proportion of Detective Assistants (Junior) (23(36.5%)) showed that majority of the core operational staff were found with this job title as opposed to 18(28.6%) Detective Inspectors (Intermediate), 14(22.2%) Detective Superintendents (Senior) and very lower proportion of 8(12.7%) who were Senior or Chief Superintendents respectively. From these data, it is clear that there is a lack of high ranking investigative officers and thus there is a need to build capacity and career progression of the next generation of officers in investigative skills, inter-agency instructional workshops, and international anti-corruption seminars.

Research Question 2:

How effective are the employees of the EFCC in the southeast zone of Nigeria? Items 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 in the questionnaire answered research question 2. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the respondents based on their perception of the operational effectiveness by job designation.

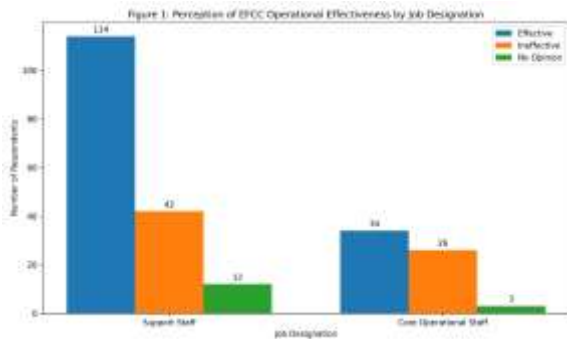


Fig 1: Perception of the operational effectiveness by job designation.

The respondents were asked whether the functioning of the EFCC in the two Zones selected were effective or not. The outcome showed that majority of 148(64.1%) of the respondents felt that the activities were effective. Only 68(29.4%) of them indicated

that operations were ineffective; while a very lower proportion 15(6.5%) of them had no opinion on that. As indicated in Figure 1, there is not significant difference between the relative perception of the operational effectiveness of the support staff as perceived by the support staff itself and the core operational staff. In the support staff category, a majority 114(67.9%) of them indicated that operations were effective. This is against 42(25.0%) of them who indicated that operations were ineffective. Also, in the core operational staff category, a significant proportion 34(54.0%) of them indicated that operations were effective, while 26(41.3%) of them indicated that they were ineffective. However, a higher proportion of members from the core operational staff (investigators and legal officers) (41.3%) were dissatisfied with the outcomes of operations than support staff (25.0%), with the two groups perceiving themselves as ineffective. The qualitative data collected using the In-Depth Interview (IDI) however, had mixed results, some matching the quantitative data and some not. For example, an IDI participant was asked to share his thoughts and emotions regarding the efficiency of the commission's operation. The interviewee noted that: Not effective...it is not only applicable to Enugu Command. I can confidently tell you that the system is on its toes and many are not happy with the outcomes that we are achieving, during joint operations with officers of other zones (48, Male, Senior Detective, Enugu Zonal Command).

Yet, another Interviewee had a similar opinion to the above by noting that:

... I don't feel the operations are as effective as they look on the paper. At times there is a lot of window-dressing for the media. The basic constraints have not yet been resolved; only a lot of pretending that everything is okay (Male, 52 Years Old, Legal Officer, Owerri Zonal Command).

The same was true on the topic of operational bottlenecks, as another respondent did not vary his opinion. The interviewee said that:

...only people who are close to the Zonal leadership or the 'High Table' in Abuja are the ones who feel that the operations are effective. As a field officer

with those connections, you don't feel the weight of the impediments that much. You see a rookie officer that you're more likely to look up to than a seasoned investigator, but they have a greater influence on a case. Thus, there is no streamlined system. The relationship between the employee and the management seems to be a more important factor of effectiveness than the resource available (Male, 45 Years Old, Unit Head, Enugu Zonal Command).

The respondents who indicated that the operations were effective and that they were satisfied with their roles were further probed to ascertain their level of satisfaction with selected aspects of their work in the Commission. The findings are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Respondents' Level of Satisfaction with Aspects of their Jobs within the EFCC

Options	Support/Admin Staff	Core Operational Staff	Total
Satisfaction with Medical/Hazard Benefits			
Very Satisfied	50 (43.9%)	10 (29.4%)	60 (40.5%)
Fairly Satisfied	64 (56.1%)	24 (70.6%)	88 (59.5%)
Total	114 (100.0%)	34 (100.0%)	148 (100.0%)
Satisfaction with hours of work			
Very Satisfied	78 (68.4%)	22 (64.7%)	100 (67.6%)
Fairly Satisfied	36 (31.6%)	12 (35.3%)	48 (32.4%)
Total	114 (100.0%)	34 (100.0%)	148 (100.0%)
Satisfaction with investigative/IT facilities			
Very Satisfied	36 (31.6%)	8 (23.5%)	44 (29.7%)
Fairly Satisfied	78 (68.4%)	26 (76.5%)	104 (70.3%)
Total	114 (100.0%)	34 (100.0%)	148 (100.0%)
Satisfaction with reward/incentive systems			
Very Satisfied	27 (23.9%)	7 (20.6%)	34 (23.1%)
Fairly Satisfied	86 (76.1%)	27 (79.4%)	113 (76.9%)
Total	113 (100.0%)	34 (100.0%)	147 (100.0%)
Satisfaction with case/workload			
Very Satisfied	57 (50.0%)	13 (38.2%)	70 (47.3%)
Fairly Satisfied	57 (50.0%)	21 (61.8%)	78 (52.7%)
Total	114 (100.0%)	34 (100.0%)	148 (100.0%)
Satisfaction with co-workers relationship			
Very Satisfied	75 (65.8%)	17 (50.0%)	92 (62.2%)
Fairly Satisfied	39 (34.2%)	17 (50.0%)	56 (37.8%)
Total	114 (100.0%)	34 (100.0%)	148 (100.0%)
Satisfaction with overall operational conditions			
Very Satisfied	44 (38.6%)	11 (32.4%)	55 (37.2%)
Fairly Satisfied	70 (61.4%)	23 (67.6%)	93 (62.8%)
Total	114 (100.0%)	34 (100.0%)	148 (100.0%)
Satisfaction with physical office environment			

Options	Support/Admin Staff	Core Operational Staff	Total
Very Satisfied	39 (34.2%)	9 (26.5%)	48 (32.4%)
Fairly Satisfied	75 (65.8%)	25 (73.5%)	100 (67.6%)
Total	114 (100.0%)	34 (100.0%)	148 (100.0%)
Satisfaction with employee-management relationship			
Very Satisfied	40 (35.1%)	8 (23.5%)	48 (32.4%)
Fairly Satisfied	74 (64.9%)	26 (76.5%)	100 (67.6%)
Total	114 (100.0%)	34 (100.0%)	148 (100.0%)
Satisfaction with decision-making pattern			
Very Satisfied	41 (36.3%)	9 (26.5%)	50 (34.0%)
Fairly Satisfied	72 (63.7%)	25 (73.5%)	97 (66.0%)
Total	113 (100.0%)	34 (100.0%)	147 (100.0%)

Table 4 provides information on the respondents' satisfaction with various aspects of their work. Two levels of satisfaction (very satisfied and fairly satisfied) were presented to the respondents. Accordingly, a majority 88(59.5%) of the respondents indicated being fairly satisfied with medical and hazard benefits compared to 60(40.5%) of them who indicated being very satisfied with it. At the level of satisfaction with hours of work, majority of the respondents (100 67.6%) indicated that they were very satisfied, while 48 (32.4%) indicated that they were fairly satisfied. In addition, majority 104(70.3%) of the respondents said that they were fairly satisfied with the investigative facilities and available IT facilities in their workplaces while 44(29.7%) said they were very satisfied with the IT facilities and investigative facilities in their workplaces. The analysis also shows that majority 113(76.9%) of the respondents were fairly satisfied with the reward and incentive system whereas a lower proportion 34(23.1%) were very satisfied with the system. About half proportion 78(52.7%) of the respondents were also fairly satisfied with case workloads and another sizeable proportion of them 70(47.3%) were very satisfied with workloads. The results of the level of satisfaction with co-workers' relationship showed that a majority of 92(62.2%) respondents indicated that they were very satisfied, while 56(37.8%) respondents only indicated moderate level of satisfaction. In addition, 93(62.8%) of the respondents had a fair level of satisfaction with the overall operational conditions, while 55(37.2%)

respondents were very satisfied with the overall operational condition. A majority 100(67.6%) of the respondents indicated being fairly satisfied with the physical environment; while a lower proportion 48(32.4%) of them indicated being very satisfied on that. In terms of their satisfaction with the relationship with employees, 100(67.6%) of the respondents responded fairly satisfied, and 48(32.4%) of the respondents responded very satisfied on that. Lastly, the data indicated that majority 97(66.0%) of the respondents were fairly satisfied with the decision-making pattern in the organisation, while only a lower proportion 50(34.0%) was very satisfied with the decision-making pattern. In terms of how they are satisfied with decision making processes of the commission, the IDI respondent had the following to say:

When there was a requirement for fresh intake or specialization postings, it used to be conveyed via the proper chain of command, but now you see... before you reach the office, you will see a newly seconded officer or new cadet with an authorization letter from headquarters. You are the Unit Head and you don't know who was appointed to the vacancy. The grumblers then are those who have served their time, and should be promoted or be assigned to those key investigative roles who are complaining about this lack of transparency. How could someone be assigned to a sensitive operational unit without the direct supervisor's input? It generates a lot of friction

(Male, 49 Years Old, Senior Detective, Enugu Zonal Command).

Table 5: Respondents' Views on how Job designation meets their desired jobs.

Options	Support/Admin Staff	Core Operational Staff	Total
YES	70 (51.1%)	26 (55.3%)	96 (52.2%)
NO	45 (32.8%)	16 (34.0%)	61 (33.2%)
NO OPINION	22 (16.1%)	5 (10.6%)	27 (14.7%)
Total	137 (100.0%)	47 (100.0%)	184 (100.0%)

Missing Values = 47(20.3%)
 Field Survey, 2025.

Table 5 shows that a majority of the respondents 96(52.2%) agreed that the character of their jobs was commensurate with their desired jobs, while 61(33.2%) disagreed on this and 27(14.7%) of them did not give any opinion on this.

IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study was designed to investigate the perception of the employees on the challenges facing the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in the Southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria with focus on two selected Zonal Commands of the EFCC in Southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria namely Enugu and Owerri. Operational effectiveness of employees working in the selected commands was moderate. The qualitative data, however, indicates that this outcome might be a 'false positive' result stemming from professional caution and pretense of the respondents with regard of commission internal bottlenecks. The qualitative data therefore imply that most employees are very conscious of the existence of major operational bottlenecks like political interference and judicial delays but are reluctant to openly criticise the agency's image because of the nature of their jobs and the hierarchy that obtains in the Nigerian policing dispensation.

V. CONCLUSION

The factors affecting the optimal work of the staff of anti-graft institutions include: institutional autonomy and the operational conditions of an institution. The aim of this study is to explore the challenges faced by the EFCC in the Southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria. This study concludes that opinions of the respondents were varying significantly depending on the approach from mixed data collection in the complexity of the data found. The quantitative results indicate that employees' perceptions of operational success are reasonable, but the qualitative results indicate that there is significant professional pretense among employees as to the true constraints of their operations; this may not adequately reflect the structural constraints. In view of these divergent results, the study further finds that though there are evident improvements in the technological and administrative structure of the EFCC in the Southeast which enhanced its operations beyond the documentation that occurred during the early days of the agency, Nigeria still has challenges. Such enhancements can be credited to the recent legislative and policy changes such as the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA), and to greater cooperation between countries in the field of forensic capacity building. But there are many aspects of personnel welfare, merit-based promotion and insulation from political pressure that still need to be improved, especially. This therefore calls for the mobilization of all hands to remove the operational hurdles, since a satisfied and self-sustaining personnel is the most important asset in making the commission's mandate a reality and will ultimately lead to the eradication of all economic and financial crimes in Nigeria.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Commission needs to set an example for transparent and merit-based principles in the management of its employees, especially in terms of posting and promotion. This will help to make the workforce feel more included in the process and make them feel a part of the decision – making process, further influencing their sense of commitment, investigative drive and institutional

ownership, which are crucial factors to achieving successful operations.

2. It is also necessary that the Zonal Commands organize compulsory monthly operational debriefing sessions in varied units (Legal, Investigative and Forensic). The sessions should be structured to provide each officer, regardless of rank, a safe forum for expressing operational concerns, technical problems and solutions to dealing with the barriers imposed by bureaucracy.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Other institutes like Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Nigeria Police Force (NPF) in the Southeast Nigeria should also be included in the comparative study in order to discover cross institutional structural problems of the EFCC.

REFERENCES

- [1] Chioke, S. C. (2026). Sluggish or fast? Interrogating Nigeria's economic and financial crimes commission's effectiveness in offloading the load of internal inconsistencies. *SN Social Sciences*, 6(2), 40.
- [2] Okonta, M. (2025). AN INVENTORY ON THE ROLE AND CHALLENGES OF THE EFCC IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA. *KB Scholars Journal*, UK, 3(2).
- [3] Esoh, P. A., Daniel, U. S., & Asangausung, O. S. (2025). An assessment of Nigeria's anticorruption agencies: challenges and implications for national development. *IJO-International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, 8(5), 1-17.
- [4] Jisalo, B. A., Magaji, S., & Ismail, Y. (2025). Investigating the Constraints to the Performance of the National Directorate of Employment in Abuja, FCT, Nigeria.
- [5] Sunday, U. M. (2025). Economic and financial crimes commission (efcc) and the fight against corruption in nigeria. An overview (2012-2022).
- [6] Bello, P., Matthew, F., & Cosmas, A. O. (2022). The role of Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) in combating corruption in Nigeria. *Musamus Journal of Public Administration*, 5(1).
- [7] Muheeb, I. O. (2020). State Institutions and the Consolidation of Popular Government in Nigeria. In *Governance and Societal Adaptation in Fragile States* (pp. 65-94). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- [8] Ogundare, Y. D. (2025). Navigating Ethical Leadership and Corporate Governance in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects. *RVIM Journal of Management Research*, 47-54.
- [9] Ezeoha, A. E., Akinyoade, A., Ehrhardt, D., & Uche, C. (2026). Nigeria and the practice of whistleblowing—How not to mobilize citizens' participation in anti-corruption programme. *Public Integrity*, 28(1), 112-132.
- [10] Rajis, A. I. (2021). Strategies to Reduce Corrupt Practices at the Firm Level in Nigeria (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University).
- [11] Muller, S. R. (2022). Digital Forensic Readiness of Cybercrime Investigating Institutions in Nigeria: A Case Study of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Nigeria Police Force. *Academia. edu*.
- [12] Bamidele, O., Olaniyan, A. O., & Ayodele, B. (2016). Culture, corruption, and anticorruption struggles in Nigeria. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 32(2), 103-129.
- [13] Onoseme, A. F. O. A. F., Samuel, I. T. S. I. T., & Johnson, A. S. J. A. S. (2025). ASSESSING THE UTILIZATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF FORENSIC TECHNOLOGY IN NIGERIAN CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS AND PROSECUTION. *FUDMA International Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(4), 51-63.
- [14] Chinedu, C. S., Chukwuemeka, N. B., & Victor, O. I. (2023). Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and war against white-collar crimes in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration, Finance & Law*, 15(3), 45-60.
- [15] Adejoh, E., Omada, M. O., Tukura, T. P., & Odaudu, A. (2023). THE IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION (EFCC) IN CURBING CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA. *International*

- Journal of Global Affairs, Research and Development, 1(2), 150-178.
- [16] Okafor, O. N., Opara, M., & Adebisi, F. (2020). Whistleblowing and the fight against corruption and fraud in Nigeria: perceptions of anti-corruption agents (ACAs). *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 73(2), 115-132.
- [17] Samuila, T. A., Danjuma, I. F., Timothy, P. G., Samaila, E. G., & Ahmadi, L. (2025). Fight against corruption in Nigeria and South Africa. *Institutions, governance and social change in Africa*, 88.
- [18] Fagbadebo, O. (2025). Institutions and the Crisis of Governance in Nigeria. In *Political Governance and the African Peer Review Mechanism: A Comparative Analysis* (pp. 247-261). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- [19] Anugwom, E. E. (2020). *Development in Nigeria: Promise on Hold?*. Routledge.
- [20] Sotande, E. (2019). Impediments affecting the curbing of illicit financial flows of organised crime in developing economies: policy implications. *Journal of Financial Crime*, 26(1), 5-21.
- [21] Onwunyi, U. M., & Akama, H. E. (2024). Political Interference and Effectiveness of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, 2010-2020. *ESUT JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES*, 9(2).
- [22] Hoffmann, L. K. (2025). *Taking Action Against Corruption in Nigeria*.
- [23] Nwosu-Iheme, U. (2021). *A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFICACY OF THE NIGERIAN ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR POLITICALLY EXPOSED PERSONS* (Doctoral dissertation, Durham University).
- [24] Sa'id, S. U. (2020). *Exploring Fraudulent Practices in Nigerian Public Sector: Evidence of Bauchi State* (Master's thesis, University of Malaya (Malaysia)).
- [25] Alaye, A., & Fakoya, V. (2025). Corruption and the trends of socio-economic development in Nigerian states.. 57-81. *Emerging Opportunities and Challenges in Africa*. Nairobi: CEDRED Publications. ISBN, 978.
- [26] Bolarinwa, I. S., Olola, T., Awofadeju, M., & Fonkem, B. (2023). The Death of Whistleblowing Policies in Nigeria and How It Entrenches Corruption and Financial Misappropriation. *Iconic Research And Engineering Journals*, 7(6), 376-389.
- [27] Oni, E. O. (2021). Forging ahead as an anti-corruption agency: the case of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) in Nigeria (2000–2017).