

Accountability and revenue generation in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: Nigeria's tax revenue to GDP has averaged at about 6% until recently when it was reported at 10.68% which is still low compared to developed economies that have an average of 30%. Hence, the focus of this study is to assess the influence of accountability on the level of revenue generation in Nigeria. The research design used in this study is the ex post facto research design. The study covered a twenty-year period which spans from 2002 to 2021. Multiple regression was used to analyze the data in the study. The result of the analysis showed that government effectiveness, regulatory quality and the rule of law all have a positive influence on oil revenue in Nigeria. It also revealed that political stability, regulatory quality and rule of law all have a positive influence on non-oil revenue in Nigeria. Overall, the results showed that accountability significantly influences oil and non-oil revenue. Hence, the study concluded that accountability has a significant influence on revenue generation in Nigeria. It was recommended that laws be reviewed to reflect the current day realities and as such enhance revenue generation in Nigeria.

Keywords: Control of corruption, government effectiveness, political stability, regulatory quality, rule of law.

INTRODUCTION

Governments across the globe require revenue to be able to carry out their legitimate responsibilities. Hence, revenue generation is very crucial and important. In validating this, Audu (2022) showed how developed countries of the world average tax revenue to GDP ratio average 30% while in Nigeria at the moment, the National Bureau of Statistics reported tax revenue to GDP ratio at 10.68% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). This is far from the average and therefore shows that there is a revenue generation problem in Nigeria.

In Africa, data from the World Bank shows that the Nigerian economy is considered one of the largest which is represented by the gross domestic product (GDP) but despite this, Audu (2022) shows that its tax to GDP is below the average in Africa which is averaged at 18%. This shows that Nigeria has a peculiar revenue generation gap. Salman *et al* (2022) showed how accountability significantly influenced tax revenue. A critical review of Transparency International 2022 report of the top five rated transparent economies which are Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, Norway and Singapore does not have a tax to GDP of less than 30%. This further shows a possible

connection between accountability and revenue generation.

Awotomilusi *et al.* (2019) pointed out that there has been an increase in public capital expenditure especially which is partly due to the increase in demand for public goods such as health amenities, road infrastructure amongst others (Omolehinwa and Naiyeju, 2015). Lien (2015) posited that the tax revenue of high income countries is higher than that of low income countries by an average of 10% difference. Lien (2015) reported that a possible reason for the difference is the governance of revenue generating institutions. This, Awotomilusi *et al* (2019) described as institutional process. This, Audu (2022) pointed out as accountability among public institutions which would ensure that revenue generated are not susceptible to fraud or misappropriation and which would ultimately translate to increased revenue.

Ghura (1998) opined that the major determinant of adequate level of revenue is embedded in institutional factors which are perceived to being deficient among developing countries and as such the disparity in revenue generating abilities.

Similar studies (Audu, 2020; Chukwunwike *et al.*, 2021) in this direction have captured accountability either using the corruption perception index of Transparency International and others (Audu, 2022; Salman *et al.*, 2022; Awotomilusi *et al.*, 2019) using the World Bank Accountability Index. Despite this, there is a need for further study to validate the association that exists between accountability and revenue using different methodologies. While past studies focused on various aspects of tax revenue majorly, this study considers the total revenue accrued to the national government in Nigeria. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to assess the influence of accountability on revenue generation in Nigeria. As this would prove to be useful to the federal government in Nigeria as the dichotomy of revenue generation in Nigeria is crude oil and Non-Crude oil revenue (Omolehinwa and Naiyeju, 2015). Therefore, rather than focusing on tax revenue generation alone, like some other earlier studies, this study will cover both the main streams of oil revenue in Nigeria which are categorized as crude and non-oil revenue. The significance of this study is that it provides policy recommendations based on empirical findings that will enhance revenue generation in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual review

This section shows insight into the meaning of the two main variables adopted in this study.

Accountability

Accountability in the public space is described as mechanisms set-up to ensure that individuals who occupy public offices are made to answer for their actions while in office (Audu, 2022). From literature in contemporary times, accountability has been identified to have been measured by two main indexes. In one instance, accountability is measured using the corruption perception index of Transparency International (Audu, 2020; Chukwunwike *et al.*, 2021). While on the other hand, accountability has been shown to be measured based on the Worldwide Governance Indicator Accountability Index (Audu, 2022; Salman *et al.*, 2022; Awotomilusi *et al.*, 2019).

In this study, accountability is measured using the Worldwide Governance Indicator Accountability Index which is measured by six proxies which include control of corruption, government effectiveness, political stability, regulatory quality, rule of law and voice and accountability. This is preferred to the Transparency Index which captures the corruption perception of public institutions; however, the Worldwide Governance Indicator Accountability Index seems to be more encompassing than that of Transpa-

rency International Index. Hence, the choice of Worldwide Governance Indicator accountability proxies as the proxies adopted in this study.

Revenue generation

Revenue generation refers to the total revenue raised to fund public expenditure. Audu (2022) identified that tax revenue is majorly used in raising revenue for public spending. However, Omolehinwa and Naiyeju (2015) showed that Nigeria's public revenue is broadly classified into two categories which are oil revenue and non-oil revenue. Oil revenue is shown to be income for the government which are raised from taxes, investments, penalties, fines amongst others that are linked to the oil extractive processes. Non-oil revenue on the other hand includes all income accrued to the government from non-oil extractive activities. This study therefore captures revenue proxies to include both oil revenue and non-oil revenue as it is intended to look holistically at the revenue generation for public spending in Nigeria.

Theoretical framework

This study is framed on the theory of accountability which is credited to have been developed by Lerner and Tetlock in 1999. The theory explains that those who hold offices are responsible to the people they represent (Williams *et al.*, 1981).

Lerner and Tetlock (1999) identified four factors on which accountability is setup; a distinguished office or position that is identified, resources flow through the office which is to be managed, in which there are expectations from the people they represent and finally, the office holder is aware of the fact that he or she can be called to answer for his activities while in the office.

Critics against the theory such as Mansouri and Rowney (2014) opined that despite individuals occupying an office and knowing that there are mechanisms put in place is not enough deterrent to make such individuals not to involve themselves in corrupt activities while in office.

However, Audu (2020) showed that accountability has a way of putting a check on the office holders as it affects the rating and perception of the authority of the office holder. Using the financial market, Audu (2020) showed how the expectations of the stakeholders are met and value placed on the office holder hence enhancing the perception of stakeholders on the office holder. Furthermore, Chukwunwike *et al.* (2021) explained that accountability will lead to the reduction of leakages which will enhance revenue generation. Audu (2020) also showed that accountability enhances the potential of investors' influx into the economy thereby generating commercial activities and increasing revenue for both individuals and the government.

Empirical review

Audu (2022) examined the influence of accountability on public financial management in Nigeria. The *ex post facto* research design was used and secondary data was collected from 2000 to 2018. The proxies for accountability were government effectiveness, political stability and the rule of law while the proxies for public finance were government revenue and government expenditure. The results show that accountability has a significant influence on the level of government revenue in Nigeria.

Similarly, Awotomilusi *et al.* (2019) examined the influence of voice and accountability on tax revenue in Nigeria. *Ex post facto* research design was employed and secondary data was collected over a period ranging from 1984 to 2017. The outcome of the study shows that there exists a significant influence of voice and accountability on tax revenue.

Obasa (2018) using a different method examined the influence of tax fund management, accountability and utilization by government and its implication on social development in Nigeria. A qualitative research design was used. It was shown from the study that high tax collection is linked with a high level of infrastructure.

Desta (2022) assessed the association between tax revenue and institutional quality in Ethiopia. *Ex post facto* research design was employed and secondary data was collected over a period ranging from 1996 to 2020. It was pointed out that the rule of law, political stability and government effectiveness have a positive significant influence on the level of tax revenue in Ethiopia.

On a larger scale, Salman *et al.* (2022) examined the influence of governance transparency on tax revenue performance in West Africa. *Ex post facto* research design was used and secondary data was collected over a period spanning from 2005 to 2017. They revealed that regulatory quality, political stability, absence of violence and voice and accountability all have a significant influence on tax revenue in West Africa.

Adopting a different time scale, Onuorah and Appah (2012) examined the influence of accountability on public financial management in Nigeria. The *ex post facto* research design was adopted in the study and secondary data was collected over a period range from 1961 to 2008. The study checked the influence of revenue on both recurrent and capital expenditure in Nigeria. They showed that the accountability level in Nigeria is poor.

Also in Nigeria, Modugu *et al.* (2012) assessed the level of accountability on the level of voluntary tax compliance in Nigeria. A survey research design was used in the study and data was gathered from citizens to get their views on accountability and their compliance to tax voluntarily. They pointed out that accountability influences voluntary tax compliance.

Besley and Persson (2014) assessed the reason for low income levels in developing economies. Qualitative

research design was used and it was pointed out from the study that low contestability of power, weak political institutions, weak checks and balances, culture and norms all hindered the revenue generation level.

Acosta (2013) assessed the impact and effectiveness of accountability and transparency initiatives. Qualitative research design was used and the result of the study showed that to promote accountability, data collection needs to be made possible.

Finally, Devarajan *et al.* (2011) examined direct redistribution, taxation and accountability in oil-rich economies. A qualitative research design was used. They revealed that a portion of oil revenue be transferred directly to citizens and taxed in their hands to enable them to monitor closely what the government does with such funds.

From the review of existing literature, it shows that there are varied results which are mixed. It also shows that there exists a methodological gap as earlier studies either used a proxy of accountability as promoted by the World Bank (Awotomilusi *et al.*, 2019) or used the transparency international index (Salman *et al.*, 2022) or used either survey method (Modugu *et al.*, 2012) or a qualitative study (Acosta, 2013). Hence, this study intends to use six of the proxies presented by the Worldwide Governance Indicator as a measure of accountability.

METHODOLOGY

The quantitative research method was adopted in this study. The research design used was the *ex post facto* research design. This was considered suitable as it enables the review of past events, hence, secondary data was collected for this study from the Worldwide Governance Indicator and the National Bureau of Statistics over a twenty-year period which spanned from 2002 to 2021. This was used due to the availability of data and to cover the period of civilian rule in Nigeria which is believed to be framed on accountability of leaders to the citizens. The multiple regression model was used to analyze the data in order to assess the influence of accountability on the level of revenue generation in Nigeria. The model specification is formulated below:

$$Y=f(X)$$

$$REV= f (ACC).$$

Mathematically, this can be written as shown below:

$$ORV = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CCO + \beta_2 GEF + \beta_3 PST + \beta_4 RQU + \beta_5 ROL + \beta_6 VAA + e \dots \dots \dots \text{eq. i}$$

$$NRV = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CCO + \beta_2 GEF + \beta_3 PST + \beta_4 RQU + \beta_5 ROL + \beta_6 VAA + e \dots \dots \dots \text{eq. ii}$$

Table 1. Measurement of variable.

S/N	Variable	Name	Measurement	Source
1	ORV (Dependent Variable)	Oil revenue	Total revenue generated by the Federal government from oil exploration activities	National Bureau of Statistics Annual Bulletin, 2022
2	NRV (Dependent variable)	Non-oil revenue	Total revenue generated by the Federal government from non-oil activities	National Bureau of Statistics Annual Bulletin, 2022
3	CCO (Independent variable)	Control of corruption	Control of Corruption captures perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as "capture" of the state by elites and private interests. Estimate gives the country's score on the aggregate indicator, in units of a standard normal distribution, i.e. ranging from approximately -2.5 to 2.5.	Worldwide Governance Indicator Accountability Index Report, 2022
4	GEF (Independent variable)	Government effectiveness	Government Effectiveness captures perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies. Estimate gives the country's score on the aggregate indicator, in units of a standard normal distribution, i.e. ranging from approximately -2.5 to 2.5.	Worldwide Governance Indicator Accountability Index Report, 2022
5	PST (Independent variable)	Political stability	Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism measures perceptions of the likelihood of political instability and/or politically-motivated violence, including terrorism. Estimate gives the country's score on the aggregate indicator, in units of a standard normal distribution, i.e. ranging from approximately -2.5 to 2.5.	Worldwide Governance Indicator Accountability Index Report, 2022
6	RQU (Independent variable)	Regulatory quality	Regulatory Quality captures perceptions of the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development. Estimate gives the country's score on the aggregate indicator, in units of a standard normal distribution, i.e. ranging from approximately -2.5 to 2.5.	Worldwide Governance Indicator Accountability Index Report, 2022
7	ROL (Independent variable)	Rule of law	Strength of legal rights index measures the degree to which collateral and bankruptcy laws protect the rights of borrowers and lenders and thus facilitate lending. The index ranges from 0 to 12, with higher scores indicating that these laws are better designed to expand access to credit. Strength of legal rights index (0=weak to 12=strong)	Worldwide Governance Indicator Accountability Index Report, 2022
8	VAA (Independent variable)	Voice and accountability	Voice and Accountability captures perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media. Number of sources indicates the number of underlying data sources on which the aggregate estimate is based.	Worldwide Governance Indicator Accountability Index Report, 2022

Source: Researchers Compilation (2023).

Where: ORV = Oil revenue (Dependent Variable), NRV = Non-Oil revenue (Dependent Variable), β_0 = Intercept where independent variable is zero, β_1 CCO = Control of Corruption (Independent Variable), β_2 GEF = Government Effectiveness (Independent Variable), β_3 PST = Political Stability (Independent Variable), β_4 RQU = Regulatory Quality (Independent Variable), β_5 ROL = Rule of Law (Independent Variable), β_6 VAA = Voice and Accountability (Independent Variable), and e = error term.

A brief detail of the variables is summarized In Table 1.

RESULTS

H₀₁: Accountability does not have a significant influence on the level of oil revenue in Nigeria

The result in Table 2 shows that accountability (proxy by

Table 2. Regression result on hypothesis one.

Estimation techniques (Dependent Variable: ORV)	Regression Result			
	Coeff.	Std. Err	T-Stat	Prob
Constant	5087.575	7998.338	0.636	0.536
CCO	-6021.828	4154.072	-1.450	0.171
GEF	3399.714	4112.820	0.827	0.423
PST	-2608.642	3115.616	-0.837	0.418
RQU	6485.768	2757.389	2.352	0.035
ROL	4664.661	3588.536	1.300	0.216
VAA	-3778.104	2855.200	-1.323	0.209
Adjusted R ²	0.456			
F-Stat	0.024			

Source: Researchers computation (2023).

Table 3. Regression result on hypothesis two.

Estimation techniques (Dependent Variable: NRV)	Regression Result			
	Coeff.	Std. Err	T-Stat	Prob
Constant	1318.952	4587.663	2.874	0.013
CCO	-6764.148	2382.680	-2.839	0.014
GEF	-3001.481	2359.019	-1.272	0.226
PST	3969.376	1787.046	2.221	0.045
RQU	2461.285	1581.575	1.556	0.144
ROL	11350.076	2058.302	5.514	0.000
VAA	-1171.960	1637.677	-0.716	0.487
Adjusted R ²	0.750			
F-Stat	0.000			

Source: Researchers computation (2023).

control of corruption, government efficiency, political stability, regulatory quality, rule of law and voice and accountability) explains forty-six percent approximately of oil revenue generation in Nigeria. This means that fifty-four per cent of the influence on oil revenue is based on factors not considered in this study. The computed p-value of 0.024 shows that accountability has a significant influence on the level of oil revenue generated in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the result shows that control of corruption, political stability and voice and accountability all have an inverse influence on the level of oil revenue. However, individually, they do not have a significant influence on oil revenue. On the other hand, government effectiveness, regulatory quality and the rule of law all have a positive influence on oil revenue in Nigeria. However, only regulatory quality has a significant influence on the level of oil revenue in Nigeria.

H₀2: Accountability does not have a significant influence on the level of non-oil revenue in Nigeria

Table 3 reveals that accountability (proxy by control of corruption, government efficiency, political stability, regulatory quality, rule of law and voice and accountability)

explains approximately seventy-five per cent of non-oil revenue generation in Nigeria. This means that twenty-five per cent of influence on non-oil revenue is based on factors not considered in this study. The computed p-value of 0.000 shows that accountability has a significant influence on the level of non-oil revenue generated in Nigeria.

In addition, the result shows that control of corruption, government effectiveness and voice and accountability all have an inverse influence on the level of non-oil revenue in Nigeria. However, out of the three proxies, only control of corruption has a significant influence on non-oil revenue while the remaining two proxies do not have individual significant influence on non-oil revenue in Nigeria. On the other hand, political stability, regulatory quality and rule of law all have a positive influence on non-oil revenue in Nigeria. However, political stability and the rule of law have a significant influence on the level of non-oil revenue in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION

The result of the analysis of this study shows that accountability has a significant influence on oil revenue. This position is in accordance with the theory of accounta-

bility which states that accountability increases value and causes the expectations of the stakeholders to be met. This is in agreement with the position of scholars (Audu, 2022; Desta, 2022; Awotomilusi *et al.*, 2019) who all opined that accountability has a significant influence on revenue. However, unlike the earlier authors, the result shows that out of the six accountability qualities, regulatory quality has a significant positive influence on oil revenue. This therefore means that in enhancing accountability, the laws should be up to date to address contemporary issues and that the government should design and promote systems that will drive the implementation of the laws formulated.

Furthermore, the results also show that accountability significantly influences non-oil revenue. This is in line with the theory of accountability and also in agreement with the position of Awotomilusi *et al.* (2019) and Salman *et al.* (2022). However, unlike Salman *et al.* (2022) who opined that regulatory quality, political stability, voice and accountability have significant influence, this study shows that control of corruption, political stability and rule of law have a significant influence on revenue. The slight difference in results might be because of the geographical location of the study. While this study focused on Nigeria, Salman *et al.* (2022) focused on West Africa. A critical review of the result shows that control of corruption has an inverse influence on revenue and should not be pursued as it does not promote revenue growth. This does not mean that controlling for corruption does not yield dividends, however, it indicates that such drive will not significantly lead to an increase in revenue generation.

Conclusion

The main focus of this study is to examine the influence of accountability on revenue generation in Nigeria. The result shows that control of corruption, political stability, and voice and accountability all have an inverse influence on the level of oil revenue. However, individually, they do not have a significant influence on oil revenue. On the other hand, government effectiveness, regulatory quality and the rule of law all have a positive influence on oil revenue in Nigeria. However, only regulatory quality has a significant influence on the level of oil revenue in Nigeria. Furthermore, the result shows that control of corruption, government effectiveness and voice and accountability all have an inverse influence on the level of non-oil revenue in Nigeria. However, out of the three proxies, only control of corruption has a significant influence on non-oil revenue while the remaining two proxies do not have individual significant influence on oil revenue in Nigeria. On the other hand, political stability, regulatory quality and rule of law all have a positive influence on non-oil revenue in Nigeria. However, political stability and the rule of law have a significant influence on the level of non-oil revenue in Nigeria. Hence, it is concluded from this study that accountability has a significant influence on revenue

generation in Nigeria. Finally, it is important to mention that this study is limited to Nigeria and the findings are confined to the timeframe in which this study is focused on. Similar studies can be taken on a larger scale to cover the West African region or the entire Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

1. Regulatory quality be improved by reviewing the laws in Nigeria to reflect the current realities and enhance accountability and transparency in the public administration process;
2. Control of corruption should not be the focus of the government as it will not improve the revenue potential of Nigeria but as mechanisms are set, loopholes will also be laid that will make it a never-ending cycle;
3. Political stability should be promoted and military interference should be avoided so that transparency and accountability will enhance investment into the economy and thereby lead to an increase in non-oil revenue; and
4. Rule of law to be promoted such that no one is treated above the law and everyone is treated equally before the law and as such accountability and transparency is enhanced.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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Appendix

Appendix Table 1. Secondary data retrieved for the study.

Year	(a) Control of Corruption: Estimate	(a) Government Effectiveness: Estimate	(a) Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism: Estimate	(a) Regulatory Quality: Estimate	(a) Rule of Law: Estimate	(a) Voice and Accountability: Estimate	(b) Oil Revenue (N' Billion)	(b) Non-Oil Revenue (N' Billion)
2002	-1.43	-1.03	-1.63	-1.22	-1.41	-0.63	1,230.9	501.0
2003	-1.36	-0.96	-1.63	-1.25	-1.43	-0.66	2,074.3	500.8
2004	-1.34	-0.94	-1.75	-1.35	-1.41	-0.80	3,354.8	565.7
2005	-1.16	-0.89	-1.67	-0.76	-1.35	-0.87	4,762.4	785.1
2006	-1.12	-0.97	-2.03	-0.91	-1.07	-0.62	5,287.6	677.5
2007	-1.05	-1.04	-2.01	-0.89	-1.07	-0.76	4,462.9	1,264.6
2008	-0.89	-0.98	-1.86	-0.80	-1.04	-0.74	6,530.6	1,336.0
2009	-1.03	-1.21	-2.00	-0.75	-1.15	-0.85	3,191.9	1,652.7
2010	-1.05	-1.17	-2.21	-0.73	-1.16	-0.78	5,396.1	1,907.6
2011	-1.17	-1.10	-1.96	-0.68	-1.18	-0.71	8,879.0	2,237.9
2012	-1.17	-1.00	-2.04	-0.71	-1.15	-0.70	8,026.0	2,628.8
2013	-1.22	-0.99	-2.09	-0.66	-1.11	-0.69	6,809.2	2,950.6
2014	-1.27	-1.19	-2.13	-0.82	-1.05	-0.59	6,793.8	3,275.0
2015	-1.08	-0.96	-1.93	-0.85	-0.96	-0.37	3,830.1	3,082.4
2016	-1.02	-1.09	-1.88	-0.92	-1.02	-0.32	2,693.9	2,922.5
2017	-1.08	-1.01	-2.00	-0.88	-0.87	-0.34	4,109.7	3,335.1
2018	-1.05	-1.02	-2.10	-0.80	-0.88	-0.43	5,545.8	4,005.9
2019	-1.08	-1.18	-1.92	-0.93	-0.92	-0.43	5,536.7	4,725.7
2020	-1.08	-1.12	-1.87	-1.01	-0.83	-0.58	4,732.5	4,543.6
2021	-1.07	-1.00	-1.78	-0.93	-0.86	-0.64	4,358.3	6,397.1

Source: (a) Worldwide Governance Indicator Accountability Index Report, 2022; (b) National Bureau of Statistics Result, 2022.