

KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION OF JOURNALISTS IN PORT HARCOURT METROPOLIS ON THE WHISTLE-BLOWER PROTECTION BILL

DAVID, Philip Teniola

Department of Mass Communication, Christopher University, Mowe,
Ogun State, Nigeria
tenophils35@gmail.com
+2347068872187

ASHIBUOGWU, John Ubamaka

Department of Mass Communication, Christopher University, Mowe,
Ogun State, Nigeria
ashibuogwujohn1@gmail.com
+2348023054385

BONIFACE, Nikki Nimitenbofa

Department of Mass Communication, Christopher University, Mowe,
Ogun State, Nigeria
nimitenbofanikkib@gmail.com
+2348087769161

OLADIRAN, Olateju Abiodun

Department of Mass Communication, Dominion University Ibadan, Oyo
State
o.oladiran@dominionuniversity.edu.ng
+2349063397565

Abstract

The media through its watchdog function plays an influential role in holding the government and public office holders accountable to its citizens especially in a society like Nigeria where corruption has been so pervasive across several institutions. To address this corruption menace, the federal government of Nigeria developed a whistleblower protection draft bill in 2024 to enhance the effectiveness of the existing whistleblower policy. Against this backdrop, this study therefore examined the knowledge and perception of journalists in Port Harcourt metropolis on the whistle-blower protection bill. The study was anchored on the social responsibility theory. Through the use of descriptive survey, the study sampled the opinion of 160 journalists in Port Harcourt metropolis. Findings from the study revealed that awareness of the bill exists among journalists but only at a surface level, a detailed knowledge of the legal and protective dimensions of the bill is

lacking among a significant proportion of journalists. The study also revealed that journalists are generally very positive about the bill as they believe if well drafted, it would enhance transparency and accountability in governance. The study therefore recommended that relevant stakeholders should encourage the legislative arm of the government to push for the bill to become an act.

Keywords: Whistle-blower, Media, Journalists, Knowledge, Perception, Corruption

Introduction

There is no doubt that one of the major challenges facing the world today is corruption. Ultimately, corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of the global society like a cankerworm. According to Nsude & Emeka (2023), corruption has long been one of the most significant obstacles to development, and it has been a constant issue in African discussions. Many countries around the world, particularly underdeveloped countries, have been affected (Ibraheem, Umar & Ajoke, 2013). According to Okpor & Dikmen (2021), corruption is a serious scourge that exposes Nigeria and countries around the world to economic, social and developmental decline. Many developing and developed countries lose unquantifiable financial resources yearly due to corrupt practices in the public and private sectors. In Nigeria today, coming out of a public office stupendously wealthy, even if impoverished before entering office, has become the rule rather than the exception, all because of the prevalence of corruption in public offices (Oyebode, 2017). Therefore, the media certainly have the potentials to bring to the surface, information or allegations of wrong doings through investigative journalism. However, this can only be made possible by a source who releases the information exclusively or otherwise, to the journalist or the media. This source is a whistle blower. The revelation of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices by persons or organizations that maybe harmful to the general public by both past and present members of that organization according to Near and Miceli (1985), cited in Okpor & Dikmen (2021), is known as whistle blowing.

In order to complement efforts on the fight against corruption in Nigeria by agencies such as EFCC, (ICPC), etc., President Buhari in 2016, announced his decision to adopt whistle blowing policy with the promise of rewarding whistle blowers who expose the fraud and other related crimes in the public or private sectors (Adetayo, 2016; Nwabughio, 2016). The decision was received with mixed feelings. While the majority perceived the decision as following the right part, others maintained that it's a waste of time and resources. This was so because of the implications that follow whistle blowing and the risk of retaliation from the organization be it the public or private sector, and some whistle blowers had faced reprisals for blowing the whistle. One of the good examples of whistleblowers who have faced reprisals for blowing the whistle is an anonymous whistleblower, Bristol Issac Tamunobiefiri also known as Pidom Nigeria. He was arrested by the Nigerian police force for leaking sensitive government documents with the accusation that the operations of Pidom was undermining integrity of government operations. There were several accusations leveled against Pidom which included the unlawful possessions, leakages of classified documents, cyber related offences and others. According to Business Day (2024), available data show that between 2017 and 2023, amounts totaling N83,019,178,375.86 have been recovered. However, despite the relative success that has been recorded since the introduction of the policy, the implementation of the policy has encountered some challenges. There is currently no legal framework for the Whistle-Blowing Policy because the National Assembly has not yet passed the Whistle-blower Protection Bill. Thus, the federal government in 2024 developed a whistleblower protection draft bill to fully protect those who volunteer information on corruption within the system, and ensure that reports are handled with confidentiality and prompt action.

That being said, Nigeria has been dubbed 'fantastically corrupt' and it

is the 145th least corrupt country out of 180 countries according to the 2023 Corruption Perception Index reported by Transparency International. Corruption which has been so pervasive in Nigeria cuts across several institutions, ranging from political, social, religious, and cultural spheres. Accordingly, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) came up with policies, programmes and bodies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), Freedom of Information (FOI) Act as well as a whistle blowing policy to the national assembly to address these challenges especially corruption and its impact on transparency in governance. In spite of all these efforts by government, illegalities, fraudulent practices and non-transparency remain in every sector of the Nigerian society. Unfortunately, the policy has not only been bedeviled by the inability of Nigerians to own the fight against corruption, but a wide “culture of silence” as well as lack of legal framework to provide some comfort for those who have, and are willing to divulge information. Also, the media whose responsibility it is to serve as a third party to whistle blowers and their activities are perceived by some social observers and civil liberty organization as non-courageous.

Statement of the Problem

The whistleblower Protection Bill in Nigeria was enacted as a vital legislative initiative to promote the revelation of corruption, misconduct, and other unethical behaviours by providing legal safeguards to those who report such information in good faith. As gatekeepers of information and watchdogs of society, journalists are expected to play a pivotal role in promoting transparency and accountability through investigative reporting and whistleblowing. However, the efficacy of the measure mostly depends on a comprehensive awareness of its contents, breadth, and legal assurances

especially among journalists, who often participate in whistleblower activities, either directly or indirectly.

In Nigeria, particularly in metropolitan areas such as Port Harcourt, preliminary observations suggest that there might be a lack of understanding of the information regarding whistle-blowers protection bill among the journalists. In addition to that, misconceptions, restricted access to proper legal information, and ineffective sensitisation activities may have resulted in diminished knowledge and misconceptions about the rights and protections granted to whistle blowers. This gap in knowledge may lead to hesitation in reporting misconduct, fear of retribution, and inadequate media support for whistle blower protection. Furthermore, without a comprehensive understanding of the provisions of the bill, journalists may inadvertently mischaracterise its intent, inadequately leverage its provisions, or neglect to ensure accountability from authorities on its execution. Based on the foregoing, this study aims to examine the knowledge and perception of journalists in the Port Harcourt metropolitan on the whistle blower protection bill. The main aim is to find out if the provision of the whistle blowing bill can encourage more individuals, journalists especially to report corruption and misconduct of government businesses, without fear of reprisal, thereby ultimately bringing about transparency and accountability in the management of public finances, and also determine ways the media can contribute towards enthroning transparency in governance.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of awareness on the whistle-blower protection bill amongst journalists in the Port-Harcourt metropolis?
2. What are the perceptions of journalists in Port-Harcourt metropolis on the whistle-blower protection bill and its effectiveness in fighting corruption?
3. How can the whistle-blower protection bill enhance the safety of

journalists in the Port-Harcourt metropolis?

4. How can the whistle-blower protection bill be used by journalists in the Port-Harcourt metropolis to enhance transparency and accountability in governance?

Conceptual Review

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing as defined by the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Finance (FMF) is the means of providing information about any illegality, usually for the purpose of protecting the public interest Ojeifo (2017). This is also seen as the act of drawing attention to an unethical behaviour, misconduct and wrongdoing that is perceived to cost the growth of an organization or government and it is considered to be one of the effective remedies of curbing the act of corruption. Idris & Babangida (2021), mentions that whistleblowing can also be described as a moral obligation of all committed members of an organization, community or state to expose violations or acts of corruption that are likely to undermine the progress or the pursuit of common good.

According to Edmund & Kelechi (2020), whistle blowing as a phenomenon has been a debatable and delicate issue because it revolves around revealing or exposing unethical secrets that a given individual, organization, government institution and company is involved and found wanting in. Whistleblowing became a tool in addressing the problem of corruption in Nigeria where corruption has entered the nooks and crannies of the society. Odinkonigbo, Nwafor & Nwoke (2019), believe that while whistleblowing is relatively new in Nigeria as a buzzword for governance purposes, there have been few isolated cases of the practice in the country. According to Ojobo (2023), the act of whistleblowing is not common in Nigeria; this can be attributed to the cultural norms of the Nigerian society where indifference is paid to those in positions of power and it is often viewed as taboo to speak up against them.

Corruption

Corruption is a dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, and it typically involves bribery and the use of immoral or wicked acts to achieve personal or selfish gains (Kediehor, Williams, Ohikhena & Robert, 2020). It also refers to the unethical behaviour especially by persons in the positions of power or authority and it occurs daily in politics, business, law and other places where individuals misuse their power for selfish purposes. According to Aluko (2021), corruption is the bane of any country. It prevents the country from developing to a reasonable extent. The resources which are needed for the development of the people are diverted for personal uses.

Nwogbo & Ighodalo (2021), stated that corruption is regarded as a global phenomenon which ravages every society although the degree of its occurrence varies from country to country. The level of social and economic development of countries notwithstanding, corruption is prevalent in both rich and poor countries. Corruption does not only exist in developing countries but in developed countries as well. It is almost an inevitable problem in every given society from the top to bottom class of the society.

According to Zakari & Button (2022), corruption is a symptom of bad governance and weakness in institutions that exist in virtually all the countries in the world; in other words, no country is resistant to corruption, as it has become a global problem. It is a known fact that corruption is at times hard to tackle due to the fact that it is common and perceived to be a natural economic transaction. Historical examples suggest that corruption has been a persistent feature of human societies over time and space.

Whistleblowing as a tool against Corruption

The relationship between corruption and whistleblowing cannot be overemphasized. Corruption and whistleblowing are closely linked due to the fact that whistleblowing plays an important role in exposing unethical and corrupt operations within government, corporations and even amongst

common individuals. Whistleblowing does the job of revealing these unethical behaviours as corruption flourishes in secrecy.

According to Ifejika (2018), whistleblowing, the act of reporting or disclosing wrongdoing, is widely proven to have a practically useful mechanism in fighting corruption in public and private sectors. Within the ambit of the whistleblowing framework, the disclosure of corrupt practices is primarily justifiable only on the ground that the action is genuinely directed towards protecting the interest of the public. Without any issue of corrupt misconducts in any environment, the idea of whistleblowing would not be in existence.

Salihu (2019), believe that corruption is a hidden activity that is difficult to discover unless reported. However, one of the important tools increasingly used around the world today to prevent and uncover corruption in both public and private sectors is whistleblowing. According to Bello, Matthew &Cosmas (2022), corruption as a “monster” subverts public institutions and their capacity to perform their assigned tasks efficiently, thereby damaging the substantive interest and endangering the lives of citizens whom these institutions are meant to serve. Corruption usually leads to financial losses, social injustices and the rest and by reporting these corrupt practices, whistleblowing can efficiently create accountability and transparency in society reducing the space for corruption to thrive. Whistleblowing can lead to deterrence whereby one could have fear of being reported for their unethical behaviors and because of this, might think twice before indulging in any form of corruption.

According to Salihu (2019), whistleblowing policy appears to be an effective instrument for uncovering and fighting corrupt practices in Nigeria. The recovery of looted resources through whistle-blowers' information gives the impression that there is hope in the fight against corrupt practices that have distorted the growth and development of Nigeria. Ifejika (2018), asserts

that whistleblowing has thus come to be recognized as a very useful tool to all modern societies, owing to its intrinsic role and values. On the basis of its natural configuration as an anti-corruption mechanism, the whistleblowing mechanism is useful for protecting the public interest and saving the society from dangers and losses. This shows how whistleblowing and corruption go hand in hand because without one, the other will not be in existence.

Empirical review

Whistleblowing plays a significant role in exposing corruption in a corrupt-stricken country like Nigeria. A study by Kediehor, Williams, Ohikena and Robert (2020), examined the contextual of corruption concerns in Nigeria. It is a survey that involved the use of questionnaire as the instrument for data collection from respondents that were drawn from the sectors concerned. Findings from the study revealed that the mass media through news, current affairs, features, documentaries and other media contents have supported whistle blowers, and thereby contributing to the fight against corruption in Nigeria. The study findings also revealed that there is the challenge of disclosure of information, and the fear of attack from corrupt folks on whistle blowers and journalists. Hence, the study recommended that the whistle blowing laws should be strengthened, and the public should be sensitized on the tenets of whistle blowing to get more Nigerians involved. While the study was able to establish the critical role played by journalists in fighting corruption and also canvassed for stronger whistleblowing laws, the study failed to clearly establish how journalists themselves could become whistle blowers through their investigative reports. This is one of the gaps this study aims to fill, with adequate knowledge of the bill, journalists will increase their campaign be better equipped in playing their watchdog role in the society.

Another study by Nsude and Emeka (2024), investigated the role of the media in ensuring accountability of public officials from the audience's perspective and it reveals how the respondents view the media as

incompetent in terms of holding the officials accountable for corruption. The study found out that by monitoring government performance on a daily basis and uncovering corruption, the media will be trusted as the watchdogs against corruption thereby gaining trust of the public. The study however failed to establish specifically how the whistle blower protection bill could further assist the media in holding public office holders accountable, and this is one of the gaps this study aims to fill.

A study by Okwuokei (2024), examined the role of whistleblowing in combating corruption in Nigeria and the critical need to enable laws safeguarding whistleblowers. The study aimed to show that Nigeria lacks the necessary legal framework to protect whistleblowers from retaliation and ensure safety despite its potential. Using the Framing Theory, the researchers showed a positive climate where enabling laws can likely gain public and legislative backing, promoting a custom of good governance and responsibility. It concluded that whistleblowing laws are non-existent in Nigeria, only a policy exists and to confront corruption. The study however failed to examine how journalists who invariably happen to be information molders in the society can be at the forefront when it comes to whistle blowing. The need for journalists to become forerunners in whistle blowing is crucial because as the fourth estate of the realm, they are expected to be watchdogs of the society, and this is why this study is necessary.

Theoretical Framework

The Social Responsibility Theory, introduced by Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm in 1956, arose as a critique of the shortcomings found in both the Libertarian and Authoritarian press theories (Siebert et al., 1956). This theory champions a press that is not only free but also responsible, ensuring that media content contributes positively to society while upholding ethical

norms. It asserts that the role of the press extends beyond merely delivering information; it also encompasses the promotion of democracy, accountability to the public, and social equity. This theory holds significant importance in conversations about the responsibilities of journalists regarding whistle-blower protections and anti-corruption initiatives, highlighting the media's obligation to reveal misconduct while following ethical and legal guidelines.

The fundamental principle of Social Responsibility Theory posits that the media ought to act as a guardian, ensuring that those in power are held accountable while steering clear of sensationalism or false information (McQuail, 2010). This viewpoint is in harmony with the primary goal of whistle-blower protection statutes, which aim to shield individuals who bring to light corrupt practices, thus promoting transparency within governance. Moreover, the theory emphasizes that press freedom entails responsibilities—journalists are required to report accurately, showcase a variety of viewpoints, and place public welfare above commercial or political interests. Consequently, media professionals must navigate their investigative responsibilities while considering ethical implications, especially when covering whistle-blowers who face possible backlash for disclosing corruption.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey in eliciting information for the study. According to the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) secretariat in Port Harcourt, there are 350 registered journalists in the Port-Harcourt metropolis. Using the Taro Yamane formula (1967), a sample size of one hundred and eighty-six (186) was derived. After utilizing a proportional technique to establish the number of respondents (journalists), convenient sampling was used to pick respondents in different media houses. The equation is as follows: $n = N / 1 + N(e)^2$.

Journalists in Port-Harcourt metropolis 350

$$(350/1+350(0.05)^2$$

$$350/1+350(0.0025)$$

$$350/1+0.875$$

$$n=186$$

The instrument of data collection for the study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to 186 journalists in the Port-Harcourt metropolis in different media houses as part of the data collection procedures. Through descriptive statistics, the study made use of frequency distribution, mean, and standard deviation. The data was analyzed using the statistical product and service solution (SPSS) version 25 software.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of a total of 186 questionnaires distributed to journalists in Port-Harcourt, 160 were successfully retrieved, resulting in an 86% response rate.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	88	55.0
	Female	72	45.0
Total		160	100.0
Age	21–30 years	60	37.5
	31–40 years	55	34.4
	41–50 years	30	18.8
	51 years and above	15	9.3
Total		160	100.0
Educational Oualification	OND	18	11.3
	HND	32	20.0
	B.Sc.	85	53.1
	PhD	25	15.6
Total		160	100.0
Years of Experience	0–5 years	50	31.3
	6–10 years	63	39.4
	11–15 years	32	20.0
	20 years and above	15	9.3
Total		160	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Research Question 1: What is the level of awareness on the whistle-blower protection bill amongst journalists in the Port-Harcourt metropolis?

Table 1: Level of Awareness on the Whistle-blower Protection Bill

Items	Yes Freq. (%)	No Freq. (%)	Maybe Freq. (%)	Unsure Freq. (%)	Total
Are you aware of the Whistle-blower Protection Bill in Nigeria?	110 (68.8%)	50 (31.3%)	—	—	160 (100%)
Do you understand the provisions made in the Bill?	84 (52.5%)	40 (25.0%)	20 (12.5%)	16 (10.0%)	160 (100%)
Have you ever been a whistle-blower?	36 (22.5%)	124 (77.5%)	—	—	160 (100%)
Are you aware of any agency enforcing the Whistle-blower Bill?	66 (41.3%)	54 (33.8%)	20 (12.5%)	20 (12.5%)	160 (100%)
Have you received training on the Whistle-blower Protection Bill?	49 (30.6%)	111 (69.4%)	—	—	160 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table indicates that majority of the respondents are aware of the whistle-blower protection bill. The level of the awareness is high as shown in the table above.

Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of journalists in Port-Harcourt metropolis on the whistle-blower protection bill and its effectiveness in fighting corruption?

Items	N Freq. (%)	SD Freq. (%)	D Freq. (%)	A Freq. (%)	SA Freq. (%)	SD	
The Bill encourages more journalists to go into investigative reporting.	15 (9.4)	8 (5.0)	12 (7.5)	74 (46.3)	51 (31.9)	3.86	1.12
The Bill provides adequate protection for whistle blowers in Nigeria.	20 (12.5)	10 (6.3)	28 (17.5)	60 (37.5)	42 (26.3)	3.59	1.18
The Bill improves confidentiality and source protection among journalists.	14 (8.8)	9 (5.6)	17 (10.6)	73 (45.6)	47 (29.4)	3.82	1.08
The Bill improves safety and security of journalists in Nigeria.	13 (8.1)	10 (6.3)	20 (12.5)	68 (42.5)	49 (30.6)	3.81	1.10
It will be somewhat challenging to implement the Bill in Nigeria.	18 (11.3)	8 (5.0)	24 (15.0)	62 (38.8)	48 (30.0)	3.71	1.20

Source: Field Survey, 2025

With an average weighted mean of ($\bar{x} = 3.76$) and standard deviation ($SD = 1.14$), as shown in Table 2, respondents generally agreed that the Whistle-blower Protection Bill is effective. The results from Table 2 reveal a consistent pattern of agreement among respondents, suggesting that the Whistle-blower Protection Bill is generally perceived as effective in encouraging investigative journalism, protecting sources, and improving safety. Nevertheless, practical implementation challenges remain a concern among journalists in Port Harcourt.

Research Question 3: How can the whistle-blower protection bill enhance the safety of journalists in the Port-Harcourt metropolis?

Table 3: Whistle-blower Protection Bill and Safety of Journalists in Port Harcourt

Items	N Freq. (%)	SD Freq. (%)	D Freq. (%)	A Freq. (%)	SA Freq. (%)	\bar{X}	SD
The Bill significantly contributes to the safety of journalists reporting on corruption.	12 (7.5)	6 (3.8)	14 (8.8)	80 (50.0)	48 (30.0)	3.91	1.04
Strengthening the Bill would improve protection of journalists on sensitive cases.	11 (6.9)	8 (5.0)	16 (10.0)	76 (47.5)	49 (30.6)	3.89	1.07
Knowledge of the Bill encourages reporting without fear of reprisal.	10 (6.3)	9 (5.6)	15 (9.4)	78 (48.8)	48 (30.0)	3.90	1.06
The Bill addresses the primary safety concerns journalists face in Port Harcourt.	15 (9.4)	10 (6.3)	20 (12.5)	70 (43.8)	45 (28.1)	3.75	1.15
I am aware of instances where the Bill improved journalist safety.	16 (10.0)	12 (7.5)	26 (16.3)	68 (42.5)	38 (23.8)	3.62	1.21

Source: Field Survey, 2025

With an average weighted mean of (\bar{X} = 3.81) and standard deviation (SD = 1.11) as shown in Table 3, respondents generally agreed that the Whistle-blower Protection Bill enhances journalist safety in Port Harcourt. The findings from Table 3 reveal a general consensus that the Whistle-blower Protection Bill contributes positively to journalists' safety in Port Harcourt, especially for those reporting on corruption. Although awareness of its direct impacts varies, respondents clearly see its potential when strengthened and implemented effectively.

Research Question 4: How can the whistle-blower protection bill be used by journalists in the Port-Harcourt metropolis to enhance transparency and accountability in governance?

Table 4: Whistle-blower Protection Bill and Transparency/Accountability in Governance

Items	N Freq. (%)	SD Freq. (%)	D Freq. (%)	A Freq. (%)	SA Freq. (%)	\bar{X}	SD
The Bill is an effective tool for journalists to enhance transparency in governance.	10 (6.3)	7 (4.4)	18 (11.3)	74 (46.3)	51 (31.9)	3.92	1.03
The Bill contributes significantly to holding officials accountable for their actions.	12 (7.5)	9 (5.6)	20 (12.5)	69 (43.1)	50 (31.3)	3.86	1.10
Journalists in Port Harcourt are well-equipped to use the Bill to expose governance-related issues.	14 (8.8)	12 (7.5)	26 (16.3)	68 (42.5)	40 (25.0)	3.67	1.18
The Bill will lead to a noticeable increase in transparency and accountability in governance.	13 (8.1)	10 (6.3)	21 (13.1)	72 (45.0)	44 (27.5)	3.78	1.11
The current version of the Bill adequately supports journalists' efforts toward accountability.	16 (10.0)	11 (6.9)	25 (15.6)	66 (41.3)	42 (26.3)	3.68	1.17

Source: Field Survey, 2025

With an average weighted mean of ($\bar{X} = 3.78$) and standard deviation ($SD = 1.12$), Table 4 indicates that participants generally agreed the Whistle-blower Protection Bill enhances transparency and accountability in governance.

Discussion of Findings

The first objective of the study was to ascertain the level of awareness among journalists in Port Harcourt metropolis on the Whistle-blower Protection Bill. Findings from the study showed that awareness may exist at a surface level, but detailed knowledge of the legal and protective dimensions of the bill is lacking among a significant proportion of journalists. In terms of personal experience with whistleblowing, only 36 journalists (22.5%) admitted to having acted as whistle-blowers in their careers, while a

significant 124 (77.5%) had never done so. This suggests a culture of under reporting, possibly due to fear of retaliation, lack of institutional protection, or distrust in the government's commitment to protect whistle-blowers. These findings align with the argument of Okwuokei (2024), who noted that while the Whistle-blower Protection Bill has existed in Nigeria's legislative framework for years, the implementation is largely elite-centred and poorly disseminated at the grassroots level, including within professional communities such as journalists. Similarly, Okoro and Onyebuchi (2020), argued that poor access to legal literacy has significantly hindered the optimal use of protective laws by journalists and civil actors.

The second objective of the study was to examine the perceptions of journalists in Port-Harcourt metropolis on the whistle-blower protection bill and its effectiveness in fighting corruption. The study findings showed that the respondents generally held a favourable view of the bill, as reflected in the overall mean score of 3.76 and standard deviation of 1.14. This supports the findings of Adebajo and Nwakpa (2021), who emphasized that legal protection increases journalists' willingness to report ethically controversial or dangerous stories. When journalists perceive a legal structure that upholds their rights, they are more likely to act as watchdogs and agents of societal change (McQuail, 2010).

The third objective of the study was to examine how the Whistle-blower Protection Bill can enhance the safety of journalists in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Findings from the study suggests a strong consensus that the bill if it becomes an act will play a significant role in enhancing their safety, with an average weighted mean of 3.81 and a standard deviation of 1.11. A notable 80 respondents (50.0%) agreed and 48 (30.0%) strongly agreed that the bill will significantly contribute to the safety of journalists reporting on corruption. Only 8.8% disagreed and 3.8% strongly disagreed, while 7.5% were neutral. This demonstrates a high level of agreement and suggests that

journalists see potential in the Bill to act as a protective legal buffer in their professional pursuits. Additionally, 76 (47.5%) agreed and 49 (30.6%) strongly agreed that strengthening the bill would further improve protection for journalists involved in sensitive investigations. This reflects not just support for the existing Bill but a call for its enhancement and effective enforcement. This supports the findings of Okpor & Dikmen (2021), who argue that the safety of journalists in Nigeria is often undermined not by a lack of legislation but by a gap in implementation and institutional safeguards.

The fourth objective of the study was to examine how the Whistle-blower Protection Bill can be used by journalists in Port Harcourt Metropolis in enhancing transparency and accountability in governance. Finding from the study revealed that a significant majority of respondents view the bill as a valuable mechanism for promoting transparency and good governance. Specifically, 74 respondents (46.3%) agreed and 51 (31.9%) strongly agreed that the Bill is an effective tool for enhancing transparency in governance. This suggests that over 78% of journalists support the role of the Bill in this regard. This is consistent with Kediehor, Williams, Ohikhena and Robert(2020), who argues that whistle-blower legislation enhances journalistic capacity to reveal unethical practices in public administration, thereby fostering openness in government.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made by the researcher

1. There should be more awareness creation to increase the knowledge level of journalists in Port Harcourt metropolis on the Whistle-blower Protection Bill.
2. There should be regular training and retraining of the journalists in Port Harcourt metropolis to enable them understand the legal

framework of the Whistle-blower Protection Bill.

3. There should be effective passage of Whistle-blower Protection Bill into law as it will enhance the safety of the journalists in Port Harcourt metropolis.
4. The government and civil society should facilitate that implementation of the Whistle-blower Protection Bill as it enhance crime prevention and stable society.

References

- Adetayo, O. (2016, December 22). F Gokays 5% of recovered loot for whistleblowers. Punch. Retrieved from <http://punch.ng.com/fg-okays-5-recovered-loot-whistleblowers/>
- 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).
- Egboh, E. A., & Akobundu, K. G. (2020). Whistle Blowing Policy and Fight against Corruption in Nigerian Administrative System. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 4(9), 285-291.
- Idris, S., & Babangida, M. A. (2021). Whistleblowing policy and fraud prevention in Nigeria. *UMYU Journal of Accounting and Finance Research*, 1(1), 113-130.
- Ifejika, S. I. (2018). The “other side” of whistleblowing practice: Experiences from Nigeria. *Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Center Journal*, 2018(1), 4.
- Kediehor, C., Williams, A., Ohikhen, P., & Robert, E. (2020). The mass media, whistle blowing laws, and corruption in Nigeria. *International Journal of Recent Innovations in Academic Research*, 4(2), 1-13.
- Nsude, I., & Emeka, W. E. (2023). Audience Perception of the Media, Corruption and Accountability of Public Officials in Imo State Nigeria. *Media, governance and accountability in Nigeria*, 7, 41-61.

- Nwogbo, D. C., & Ighodalo, A. (2021). Governance and corruption in Nigeria. *Journal of Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Africa*, 6(2), 81-97.
- Odinkonigbo, J., Nwafor, N., & Nwoke, U. (2019). Disclosures of unethical practices: framework for the promotion of whistle-blowing in Nigeria's corporate governance. *International Journal of Corporate Governance*, 10(1), 1-19.
- Ojobo, E. (2023). A review of the effectiveness of the Nigerian whistleblowing stopgap policy of 2016 and the whistleblower protection bill of 2019. *Journal of African Law*, 67(3), 487-494.
- 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.
- Okoro, L.N., & Onyebuchi, A.C. (2020). Evaluation of southeast residents' perception of the effectiveness of media campaign on the whistle blowing policy of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration in Nigeria. *IDIA Journal of Mass Communication*, 5(2), 325-350.
- Okpor, S. O., & Dikmen, F. (2021). A comparative analysis of the media coverage of whistleblowing cases. *Antalya Bilim Üniversitesi Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler*, 2(1), 24-41.
- Okwuokei, E. (2024). Whistle blowing policy in combating corruption in Nigeria: Need for enabling laws. *IRLJ*, 6, 145.
- Oyebode, M.O. (2017). Weak-kneed media and festering corruption in Nigeria. *Journal of International and Global Studies*, 8(2), 34-49.
- Transparency International (2024). Corruption ranking. Retrieved from <https://tradingeconomics.com/country-list/corruption-rank> in August, 2025.
- Zakari, M. B., & Button, M. (2022). Confronting the monolith: insider accounts of the nature of corruption in Nigeria. *Journal of White Collar and Corporate Crime*, 3(2), 100-108.