

PARTY ALLEGIANCE AND THE EFFICACY OF LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN NIGERIA

Prof. Kelly B. O. Ejumudo, Igbakpa Rollands Benson and Dr. Emmanuel U. Odukwe
Department of Public Administration, Novena University, Ogume, Delta State, Nigeria

Email: profkellynovena@gmail.com.

ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of legislative oversight of the Nigerian House of Representatives and party loyalty were the subjects of the study. A research question and hypothesis were developed and examined in the study in order to accomplish this. The study's findings were explained using input-output analysis by David Easton and structural-functionalism by Gabriel Almond (1966). To elucidate the relationship between the phenomena under research, the study employed a descriptive survey design. Out of the 2,730 participants in the study, a sample of 546 was gathered. Based on the researcher's assessment, a purposeful sampling technique was employed to choose the survey participants. The questionnaire was used in the study as the data gathering tool. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation approach was used to evaluate the study's hypotheses, while mean and standard deviation were employed to analyze the descriptive data. Party loyalty affects the effectiveness of the House of Representatives' legislative supervision in Nigeria, according to the study. The study suggested that the practice in the House of Representatives should be service to the people who elected them, rather than party allegiance. This shift in mindset will encourage a sense of responsibility, objectivity, and patriotism.

Keywords: Effectiveness, House of Representatives, Party loyalty, and Legislative oversight

INTRODUCTION

One of the fundamental elements of the political system that explains how it functions and why successive elections typically produce different political outcomes is the relationship between the executive and legislative branches. The result encompasses whether a state has developed a stable democracy, the degree to which various interests are represented in the government, and the ability of a political system to provide advantages including efficient policies, people-focused initiatives, and sound governance. Weaver (2020) provides a clear explanation of the significance of the executive-legislative arrangement, which is the primary variable in explaining political outcomes. This explains why bureaucracy, federalism, and the party system are secondary (second, third, and fourth) variables.

The party system has become increasingly influential in shaping legislative and executive branch policy in recent years. The party system is so powerful that it may easily influence policy formulation and implementation in favor of the executive branch without much parliamentary discussion when the ruling party holds a majority in the legislature. But as Agor (2019) points out, things haven't always gone well for the democratic form of government. This is due to the lack of adequate checks and balances to guarantee that these policies benefit the majority. While it facilitates the expeditious and efficient execution of the budgetary process when required, it erodes the legislative branch's oversight authority. Throughout election seasons, the executive branch, which appears to benefit greatly from party influence, has always had difficulty maintaining a majority in the Senate and House of Representatives. Most notably, during previous Nigerian regimes, the House of Representatives has supported the executive branch by following party lines to maintain government continuity and to keep the administration in power. Democracy, which is dedicated to defending the voice and interests of the people through representative governance, has not benefited from this circumstance. Corruption, prebendalism, godfatherism, and nepotism are issues that will persist until

party loyalty takes precedence over popular representation. Due to their shared party affiliation, these will be the voices that are heard during the creation and execution of policies.

The legislative oversight function's utilitarian value as a veritable tool against dictatorship and maladministration that encourages strict adherence to the constitutional blueprint and legislative enactment will thus now be lost to manipulations and demands made in order to fulfill party manifestos that may conflict with constitutional provisions. The role of the House of Representatives in Nigeria is affected by this post, which is quickly becoming a focal point for governance in both rich and emerging nations, but has not received much attention in Nigerian studies. The purpose of this study is to close this research gap by examining party loyalty and the effectiveness of the House of Representatives' legislative supervision in Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

1. Investigate the influence of party system on the efficacy of legislative oversight of the House of Representatives in Nigeria.

Research Question

1. To what extent does party allegiance impact on the efficacy of the legislative oversight of the House of Representatives in Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

1. **Ho₁:** There is no significant relationship between party allegiance and the efficacy of the legislative oversight of the House of Representatives in Nigeria.

Review of Literature

Conceptual Framework for Legislative Oversight

In order to guarantee effectiveness, efficiency, and high performance, a legislative body continually monitors, examines, appraises, and reviews the work of the executive branch or its agencies. This process is known as oversight. This definition is consistent with the definition provided by Oyewo (2017), who defined legislative oversight as the legislature using its constitutional powers to check or regulate the use of those powers by other branches of government, especially the executive branch, or to hold the branch accountable to the taxpayers. As stated by Osumah (2020), it is the process by which a legislative body actively engages in comprehending and observing the operation of government with regard to the application of legislation to its other principal functions of law-making and public policy formulation, budgeting, and revenue raising. Legislative oversight, on the other hand, refers to the observation of the executive's actions and behaviors concerning law enforcement. Furthermore, as Osumah (2020) notes, it also comprises the administration's policing of all instances of waste and corruption.

Madue (2012) asserts that oversight can be conducted both ex-ante, or during program design and deployment of mentor policy, and ex-post, or after it has been put into practice. The aforementioned offers a plausible rationale for this assertion. Legislative oversight, he actually asserted, is the vigilant, strategic, organized, and formal examination that lawmakers perform with respect to the application of the budget, the strict observance of statutes and the constitution, and the implementation of legislation.

Conceptual elucidation of party loyalty

Nearly all of the members run for office under the banner of their party, relying on it for funding their campaigns and votes. Party loyalty, also referred to as fealty, becomes necessary as a result. For security, backing, election victory, and continued government, political players depend on the party system. Politicians' organization within and allegiance to political parties is a basic feature of their behavior. Party loyalty, according to Ejumudo and Ikenga (2021), is the act of being devoted to and compliant with party policies in order to accomplish the goals that the party has established.

All political parties have a set of guidelines that serve as a roadmap for leading the organization—and its members in particular—to electoral triumph.

Legislative oversight and party influence functions

Scholarly research highlights the issue of dwindling confidence in political parties as an institution globally. The reasons behind this mistrust of political parties could be various: for example, political parties' heavy reliance on the state (both financially and legally) as opposed to society (Van Biezen & Kopecký, 2007, p. 248), or the emergence of new technologies that facilitate direct communication between citizens and state authorities. As a result, many view the political party establishment as being fairly antiquated. Furthermore, there is less faith in the concept of parliamentarism and parliamentary democracy as a whole due to corruption scandals (Transparency International, 2019) and skepticism that politicians are advocating for the interests of big business and the political elites rather than the general public. A further worry in developing nations like Sub-Saharan Africa is the rise of ethnic political parties, which in the setting of multiethnic communities give rise to the formation of societal divisions based on ethnicity. Kimathi (2010, p. 5) noted that:

Party loyalty, affiliation, and eventually political and party power are determined by ethnicity rather than ideology. By skillfully manipulating ethnicity, the ruling class has been able to make its political success appear to be inextricably linked to that of its ethnic group

Political parties therefore function as a tool for advancing the interests of those ethnic groups that are members of the "ruling class," sometimes at the expense of other ethnic groups' interests. All of these things, including ethnic fractionalization, underrepresentation of certain (ethnic) groups' interests in the population, and scandals involving political party representatives involved in corruption, cause the electorate to lose faith in the political party system.

Notwithstanding these unfavorable aspects, the parliament continues to be the primary entity bestowed with the authority to hold administrations responsible. The parliament has a wide range of democratic oversight mechanisms on the operations of national governments. A variety of legislative oversight measures are included in them, including: "parliamentary questions, question time, interpellations, hearings in committees, hearings in the plenary assembly, inquiry committees, and an ombudsman" (Stapenhurst et al., 2014, p. 290). Thus, it is important to recognize the importance of national parliaments and their ability to provide legislative oversight, even in the face of uncertainty and mistrust.

Political parties' influence on the parliament's operations and the behavior of its members is crucial. It has been largely approved by the legislation, whether it be standing orders in the legislature, laws, or the constitution (Lai & Melkonian-Hoover, 2015). However, the actual power possessed by the parties extends well beyond the provisions written in the statute. It generally results from the parties' leading role in the nation's political life (Gunther, Ramon-Montero, & Linz, 2002). The following succinctly describes the most commonly recognized roles of political parties in the current body of literature on the topic:

- the collection of the various fundamental interests that make up the society,
- The creation of connections between citizens and policymakers—known as the participatory linkage function—and the incorporation of voters into the democratic process through means other than the electoral process
- the creation of agendas and policy programs for local or national agendas, as well as the establishment of forums to rally public support,
- choosing the political leadership and the larger political elite (parties are the main players in public elections at various levels and in forming the government and certain other state entities).

It makes sense that political parties would want to exert a strong influence over how Members of Parliament carry out their mandates given these roles. Depending on the party system and model,

the standing and position held by a particular MP, and other factors, the extent of this influence could vary. The status of an MP in their constituency should be respected by parties that depend on strong ties with their voters (Van Der Hulst, 2000). A high-ranking local member of parliament is frequently the most effective at winning over voters and securing financial backing for the party. According to Webb (2002), mass parties that prioritize programming issues and/or target particular voter segments typically behave in this manner.

But one could legitimately wonder how much legislative monitoring tools are used by parliaments in Sub-Saharan African nations. Academic research identifies a variety of variables that could impact the efficacy of monitoring, with the exception of political (government structures and degrees of democracy) and economic variables (wealth levels). Additionally, cultural (or contextual) elements like common norms, beliefs, customs, and morality may have an impact on how effective legislative supervision is (Pelizzo & Stapenhurst, 2004; Pelizzo & Stapenhurst, 2013; Sartori, 2005). Taking into account the significance of contextual elements, we postulate that the "fluidity" and stability of party systems have an effect on governance metrics and legislative supervision (Nwokora & Pelizzo, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

The structural-functionalism of Gabriel Almond's (1966) input-output analysis variation of general system theory will be used to describe the theoretical framework of this investigation. As a crucial component of presidential democracy, it is vital to clarify the fundamental ideas of Montesquieu's (1788) division of powers. The three main branches of government must be clearly and effectively divided from one another in order to avoid tyranny or misrule, according to Montesquieu's original theory of the separation of powers. A similar argument was made by Willoughby (1936) who claimed that the concentration of all authority—legislative, executive, and judicial—in the hands of one person, a small group of people, or many—and regardless of whether those positions are elected, hereditary, or self-appointed, is unquestionably the definition of tyranny. Locke reinforced the idea of the division of powers when he pointed out that if one person or organization performed all of the duties of government, it may lead to tyrannical and arbitrary rule. Power should be used to check power, according to the concept of checks and balances, which is complimentary to the theory of separation of powers.

Each of the three branches of government is supposed to be a watchdog over the others, according to theory. As required by the constitution, the legislature's role is to serve as a check on the powers of the executive and judiciary. Additionally, it is the legislature's constitutional responsibility to make that the administration uses state resources effectively and efficiently. The foregoing concept is reinforced by Section 88 of the 1999 Constitution. By authorizing laws and allocating funds for federal expenditures, the National Assembly exercises control over the purse thanks to the concepts of checks and balances and separation of powers. Therefore, the House of Representatives' or the Senate's oversight authority is a crucial check on the executive branch that keeps agencies accountable and regulates public policy. That being said, structural-functionalism holds that all political systems are made up of a few fundamental structures that serve vital roles without which the system cannot function.

This theory primarily clarifies the roles that a political system must play in order to endure and identifies the structures that are most suited to carry out these roles. Structures are defined as "observable activities which make up a political system" by Almond (1966) in his structural-functional analysis paradigm. Almond provides more clarification by pointing out that in any situation where a government is in existence and a regular function is found, a structure responsible for carrying out that duty exists. Taking a hint from above, we can say that the executive is a crucial branch of government whose duties include formulating policy, preparing the budget to support it, and carrying it out. As a body, the legislature is supposed to enact laws pertaining to this kind of policy, examine and approve the budget, and keep a close eye on the executive branch in order to maintain accountability, openness, and probity within the system given their oversight responsibilities. This

notion promotes stability, ensures smooth system operation, and serves the interests of the country. Therefore, within the framework of the division of powers among the three branches of government, this view best explains the significance of legislative supervision.

Research Method

The study used a descriptive survey design, and its application is based on the researcher's utilization of primary and secondary sources to gather information from the sample that was selected from the public on the variables under investigation. There are 2,730 participants in the study. The study's sample consists of 546 senior staff members and managers from the six federal government ministries, departments, and organizations. Using a judgmental or purposive sampling technique, 546 senior employees and managers were selected. The researcher chose to use a questionnaire with three parts to distribute the questions/items among the independent and intervening variables as the data collection instrument. The research questions were addressed by the study utilizing the mean and standard deviation, and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was utilized to test for significant differences at the 0.05 level of significance for each of the null hypotheses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Items		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	128	32.7
	Female	264	67.3
Educational Qualification	OND	49	12.5
	HND/B.A./B.Sc.	222	56.6
	M.A/M.Sc.	79	20
	PhD	42	10
Ministries/Departments/Agencies	Federal Ministry of Works	61	15.6
	Federal Ministry of Power	57	14.5
	Federal Ministry of Housing	51	13.0
	Niger Delta Ministry	87	22.2
	The Nigeria Customs	65	16.6
	Federal Road Safety Corps	71	18.1

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2023

The data presented in Table 4.1 indicates that 32.7 percent of respondents were male and 67.3 percent were female. This suggests a higher percentage of female respondents to the study. The educational backgrounds of the respondents showed that 12.5 percent had an OND and those with an HND/B.A./B.Sc. M.A./MSc. holders made up 56.6% of the group. possessed 20%, while PhD holders held 10%. The Federal Ministry of Works accounts for 15.6 percent of the respondents, Federal Ministry of Power accounts for 14.5 percent, Federal Ministry of Housing shows 13.0 percent, Niger Delta Ministry shows 22.2 percent, Nigeria Customs accounts for 16.6 percent, and Federal Road Safety Corps accounts for 18.1 percent, according to the distribution of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies.

Research Question: What is the extent to which party allegiance impacted on the efficacy of the legislative oversight of the House of Representatives in Nigeria?

Table 4.2: Respondents' responses on party allegiance and efficacy of legislative oversight of the House of Representatives in Nigeria

S/N	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
	The oversight functions of the house of representatives in Nigeria have been affected by the party allegiance and discipline.	2.75	.92	Agree
	Commitment to the oversight functions of the house of representatives in Nigeria has been affected by the party allegiance and discipline. The quality of the oversight functions	2.66	.84	Agree
	The quality of the oversight functions of the house of representatives in Nigeria has suffered as a result of the party allegiance and discipline.	2.60	.87	Agree
	Party allegiance and discipline has contributed to the poor performance of the oversight functions of the House of Representatives in Nigeria	2.81	.83	Agree

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 4.2 presents the mean scores and standard deviation analysis of the House of Representatives' legislative oversight efficacy and party affiliation in Nigeria. The analysis's findings indicate that all of the respondents' opinions were shared. In particular, the respondents acknowledged that party loyalty and the House of Representatives members' dedication to the oversight role in Nigeria have an impact on the House of Representatives' oversight tasks. Additionally, they both acknowledged that party loyalty has negatively impacted the quality of the House of Representatives' oversight functions in Nigeria and has played a role in the body's subpar performance in these capacities. The mean scores for this are 2.75, 2.66, 2.60, and 2.81, in that order. From what is said above, it can be inferred that party loyalty and dedication to the oversight functions of the Nigerian House of Representatives have an impact on those functions. Party loyalty has negatively impacted the quality of the House of Representatives' oversight duties in Nigeria and has added to the body of work that the House of Representatives does in this regard.

Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between party allegiance and the efficacy of the legislative oversight of the House of Representatives in Nigeria.

Table 4.3: Hypothesis testing for the relationship between party allegiance and the efficacy of the legislative oversight of the House of Representatives in Nigeria.

		party allegiance	the efficacy of the legislative oversight of the House of Representatives in Nigeria
party allegiance	Pearson Correlation	1	.341**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	390	390
the efficacy of the legislative oversight of the House of Representatives in Nigeria	Pearson Correlation	.341**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	390	390

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The null hypothesis test is accepted if the estimated Pearson r value is greater than the Pearson r critical value, which implies that H_0 is rejected and H_1 is retained. If not, though, hold onto H_0 and reject H_1 . The crucial Pearson r value at the 0.05 level of significance is 0.1946 with a degree of freedom of 390. Table 4.3's result shows that the computed Pearson r value of 0.341 is higher than the crucial value of 0.1946. As a result, H_1 gets approved whereas H_0 is denied. This indicates that the effectiveness of the legislative supervision provided by the Nigerian House of Representatives is significantly correlated with party loyalty.

Discussion of Findings

The test of the hypothesis showed a substantial correlation between party loyalty and the effectiveness of the House of Representatives' legislative supervision in Nigeria. Political party domination in parliaments, according to Langdon (2020), can render lawmakers obedient to partisan interests when it comes to issues of resource allocation and service delivery, as well as prevent the administration from carrying out crucial monitoring duties. Furthermore, according to Adamolekun (2017), in parliamentary systems where a single party controls the majority of parliamentarians, there may be less of a need to monitor executive branch actions in order to prevent government collapse or cabinet minister rebuke. This is due to party loyalty, the desire to demonstrate that the party is in charge of the government, and a desire to back a political party administration. King (2016) further contended that public spats between the legislative and executive branch are likely to be curbed by a shared partisanship. According to Transparency International (2019), the idea of parliamentarism and parliamentary democracy has lost even more credibility since political party representatives are advocating for the interests of huge corporations and political elites rather than that of the general public. A further worry in developing nations like Sub-Saharan Africa is the rise of ethnic political parties, which in the setting of multiethnic communities give rise to the formation of societal divisions based on ethnicity. Kimathi (2010), the researcher, noted that party identification, loyalty, and eventually political power are determined by ethnicity rather than philosophy. By skillfully manipulating ethnicity, the ruling class has been able to make its political success appear to be inextricably linked to that of its ethnic group.

CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of the legislative supervision provided by the Nigerian House of Representatives is influenced by party loyalty. The House of Representatives' effective operation is actually impacted by party loyalty, as members tend to act in the interests of their parties rather than those of the people who elected them. This leads to corruption, inadequate oversight, a lack of accountability, and weak parliamentary functions among members of parliament, particularly the House of Representatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the House of Representatives, service to the people who elected them should take precedence over party loyalty. For the Federal House of Representatives to effectively carry out its legislative oversight role, lawmakers must also possess a strong sense of accountability, objectivity, and patriotism.

REFERENCES

- Agor, W. (2019). *The struggle for supremacy and authority exercise by arms of government in present democracies around the world*. Texas: Prentice Hall.
- Almonds, G. (1966). *Comparative Politics*, Boston, Little Brown.

- Ejumudo, K.B.O. and Ikenga F.A. (2021). The Problematic of Legislative Oversight in Nigeria: a Study of Delta State. *The Indonesian Journal of International Clinical Legal Education*. Vol. 3(2) pp 125-138.
- Gunther, R., Ramon Montero, J., & Linz, J. J. (Ed.). (2002) *Political Parties: Old Concepts and New Challenges*. Oxford University Press.
- Kimathi, L. (2010). Toward democratic consolidation in Kenya: the role of political parties. In K. Lawson, L. Sindjoun, & Simms, M. (Eds.), *Political Parties and Democracy. Africa and Oceania*. (pp. 37-53), Vol. IV, Santa Barbara, California, Denver, Colorado, Oxford, England: Praeger
- Lai, B., & R. Melkonian-Hoover, R. (2015). Democratic progress and regress: The effect of Parties on the Transitions of States to and Away from Democracy. *Political Research Quarterly*, 4 551-554
- Madue, J.G. (2017). *Managing value for money in the public sector*. London: Champman & Hall.
- Montesquieu, C.L. (1978). *The Spirit of Laws*, 2nd edition, HAFNER.
- Nwokora, Z., & Pelizzo, R. (2015). The Political Consequences of Party System Change. *Politics and Policy*, 43(4), 453-473. <https://doi.org/10.1111/polp.12124>
- Osumah, O. (2020). Responsibility and rascality: The Nigerian National Assembly, 1999-2013. *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*, 10(2), 34-46.
- Oyewo, E.B. (2007). *The Nigerian fiscal system*. Ibadan: Belpot Publishers.
- Pelizzo, R. & Stapenhurst, R. (2004). *Tools of Legislative Oversight: An Empirical Investigation*. Singapore Management University. Research Collection School of Social Sciences. Retrieved from https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1043&context=soss_research.
- Pelizzo, P. & Stapenhurst, F. (2013). The Dividends of Good Governance in Policy Studies Organization. *Poverty & Public Policy*, 5, 4. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/pop4.49>.
- Sartori, G. (2005). Party Types, Organization and Functions, *West European Politics*, 28:1, 5-32, DOI: 10.1080/0140238042000334268
- Stapenhurst, F., Jacobs, K. & Pelizzo, R. (2014). Corruption and Legislatures, Meso-Level Solutions for a Macro-Level Problem, *Public Integrity*, 16:3, pp. 285-304. <https://doi.org/10.2753/PIN1099-9922160304>.
- Van Biezen, I., & Kopecký, P. (2007). The state and the parties: Public funding, public regulation and rent-seeking in contemporary democracies. *Party Politics*, 13(2), 235–254. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068807073875>.
- Van Der Hulst, M. (2000). *The Parliamentary Mandate. A Global Comparative Study*, Inter Parliamentary Union 2000, p. 8.
- Webb, P., D. Farrell, D., & Holliday, I. (Ed.), (2002). *Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, Oxford University Press.
- Weaver, K. (2020). *Comparative analysis of the operation of government at the federal house of Assemblies in Sweden and South Korea*. Sweden: Mcgraw Hills.
- Willoughby, W.F. (1936). *The Government of Modern States*, Appleton century.