

## Whistleblowing and Anti-Corruption Crusade: Evidence From Nigeria

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### Abstract

The legal framework to fighting corruption has been less effective probably because it is evidence-based. This study investigated the extent to which whistleblowing predicted Corruption Perception Index (CPI) score, the extent to which employees engaged in whistleblowing, and why they did not report cases of corruption. Respondents were 536 employees (298 males; 238 females) sampled from public organizations in southwestern Nigeria. Their ages averaged 32.13 (SD =9.78). Results of the simple regression indicated that the country's CPI score significantly increased with whistleblowing. Results of the  $\chi^2$  test indicated that majority of the respondents were discouraged from blowing the whistle because of social and psychological factors such as the feelings that whistleblowing would not bring desired change, fear of being ostracized, the perceived stress associated with being a witness to corrupt acts, perceived inefficiency of the court process, the perceived clumsiness in the whistleblowing process, the feelings that corrupt persons were too powerful, and the feelings that corruption had no direct victims. There were no gender differences in the effect of the social and psychological factors in whistleblowing. Similarly, there were no gender differences in the frequency of whistleblowing from 2001 to 2012. However, in the 2013 (January to June) significant gender differences occurred in the frequency of whistleblowing with more females engaging in whistleblowing than males. Implications of the findings for theory and research were discussed.

**Key words:** Whistleblowing; Corruption; Gender; Nigeria

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### INTRODUCTION

Corruption has remained a major challenge to development in most developing countries. An analysis of the Corruption Perception Index (CPI), a measure of perceived level of public sector corruption in countries and territories around the world (TI, 2012), indicates that Nigeria, for example, consistently occupied appalling positions in the list of most corrupt countries in the world between 2001 and 2012 (TI, 2013). One cannot but question the effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance of the Nigeria anti-corruption agencies such as Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and Related Offences Commission (ICPC), and Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), if one analyzes the country's ranking on the CPI and the number of corruption cases effectively prosecuted by the anti-corruption agencies. These agencies focus more on the legal framework to fighting corruption; believing that when corrupt individuals are prosecuted and convicted, it would deter others from engaging in corruption.

The inability of the legal framework to effectively reduce corruption in Nigeria may be associated with the low number of corruption cases successfully prosecuted. For example, between May 2001 and July 2005, ICPC filed 49 cases involving 104 individuals but was able to conclude just one (ICPC, 2005). Two quick questions come to mind. One, does this imply that only 104 individuals were corrupt in Nigeria? Two, is it an indication that only one Nigerian was guilty of corruption in the period under investigation?

The legal framework to fighting corruption is evidence-based and the questions underscore the challenges

associated with the framework. Suspected cases of corruption must be reported by the citizens, investigated by the appropriate government agencies, and prosecuted by courts of competent jurisdiction. Therefore, the effectiveness of the legal framework may be predicated on the quality of the employees' reports of corrupt practices. Most studies on corruption in Nigeria focused political solutions (Egwemi, 2012; Enweremadu, 2012), financial accountability (Ezeani, 2012), and politico-economic solutions e.g. privatization and liberalization (Adeyemo, 2005). However, Odeh (2011) reported that privatization was another source of corruption in Nigeria.

Whistleblowing, an act of disclosure by members of an organization of illegal and immoral acts perpetrated by the organization and organization members to persons or organizations that may bring about a change (Rehg, Miceli, Near & Van Scotter, 2008), is increasingly being recognized as an important tool in the prevention and detection of corruption and other immoral malpractices (TI, 2010). Oakley and White (2006) submitted that anti-corruption campaigns may not be successful without effective whistleblowing. No adequate research effort has investigated extent to which employees engage in whistleblowing in Nigeria: a lacuna this study aimed to fill. An understanding of this lacuna would help create the appropriate atmosphere for building the needed attitude that would aid whistleblowing among employees in Nigeria.

The importance of whistleblowing in the drive for a corruption-free society is underscored by the fact that the institutional mechanisms put in place to check corruption may not be effective without whistleblowing, especially from insiders who identify and draw attention to corrupt acts that other mechanisms may fail to pick up (Oakley & White, 2006). However, lack of support from others may render institutional mechanisms against corruption ineffective and hinder whistleblowing (Rehg et al., 2008).

Whistleblowing is not without consequences. It has adverse effects on the public confidence in the organizations concerned, the profession of the corrupt person (Oakley & White, 2006), and the whistleblowers (Cortina & Magley, 2003). Regh et al. (2008) reported that whistleblowing was strongly connected with retaliation from culprits, which culminated in strained relationships between whistleblowers and supervisors. Whistleblowing may also have adverse effects on the whistleblowers' access to work-related benefits (Rehg et al., 2008). Studies have demonstrated that, apart from perceived helplessness, fear of victimization and other risks associated with whistleblowing can discourage employees from engaging in whistleblowing or reduce whistleblowers' willingness to disclose subsequent corrupt acts (Chassang & Miquel, 2012; Near, Regh, Van Scotter & Miceli, 2004).

In line with the submissions of the social role theory and gender expectations (Gutek, 1985) and the risks involved in whistleblowing (Rehg et al.,

2008), it is expected that more males would engage in whistleblowing than females. This is because females are expected to be more acquiescent and less vocal than males, even in reporting or protesting immoral acts (Rehg et al., 2008). Though studies reported that women were expected to exhibit higher ethics of care (Alolo, 2006), displayed higher ethical behaviors (Adebayo, 2005), and generally less tolerant of, and favorably disposed to corruption than men (Swamy, Knack, Lee & Azfer, 2000), women may engage less in whistleblowing than men due to social expectations and the risks involved. Regh et al. (2008, p. 224) opined that "...women who blow the whistle behave in a way that is inconsistent with their role as women..." They found that women suffered more retaliation following whistleblowing than men (Rehg et al., 2008). Based on this background, the following hypotheses were tested.

Hypothesis 1: *Whistleblowing predicts country's CPI scores.*

Hypothesis 2: *Social and psychological factors discourage majority of the employees from blowing the whistle.*

Hypothesis 3: *Majority of males do not blow the whistle than females due to social and psychological factors.*

Hypothesis 4: *Majority of males engage in whistleblowing than females in the last 12 and half years.*

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## 1. METHODS

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### 1.1 Design and Participants

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. The respondents were 536 employees (298 males; 238 females) sampled from public organizations in 6 States in southwestern Nigeria. Their ages averaged 32.13 (SD=9.78). The inclusion criterion was that the individual must have spent, at least, 13 years on the job. This was to ensure that the individual's job tenure covered the period of the study (2001 to 2013).

The respondents were briefed about the aim of the study. They were assured that their responses could not be traced to them. Participation was purely voluntary and questionnaires were distributed only to those who were willing to participate in the study. Out of the 550 questionnaires distributed, 540 were returned, and 4 were not duly completed.

### 1.2 Measures

**Secondary source:** Nigeria's CPI scores from 2001 to 2012 were obtained from <http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>. The CPI was scored in such that low score indicated that the country was highly corrupt and high score was a reflection of low level of corruption. Before 2012, the CPI scoring format was 0 (highly corrupt) to 10 (clean). This was changed to 0 (highly

corrupt) to 100 (clean) in 2012 (TI, 2012). In order to remove ambiguity in the analysis, Nigeria's CPI score in 2012 was divided by 10 to align it with the earlier scoring format. The CPI score for 2013 was not included in the analysis because it was still underway.

**Primary source:** The extent to which respondents disclosed corrupt acts was measured using a questionnaire. The first section of the questionnaire focused on the demographic variables. The second section access how often employees reported acts of corruption each year between 2001 and 2013 using a 6-point scale (None = 0; Over 10 times = 5). In the last section, respondents indicated the factors that affected their willingness to disclose corrupt acts in the last 12 and half years. The items of this section were based on factors identified by previous studies (Chassang & Miquel, 2012; Near et al., 2004; Rehg et al., 2008). Items included: "Perceived inability of my report to bring about the desired change in the behavior of culprits", "Fear of attack from culprits", and "Fear of being ostracized (being treated as an outcast)". Based on previous studies on corruption in Nigeria (Egwemi, 2012; Enweremadu, 2012; Ezeani, 2012) and personal interaction with some employees, some items that reflected Nigeria's peculiarity were also included. Sample included: "Government's insensitivity to the plight of the citizens", "Lack of integrity in government's anti-corruption crusades", "Lack of trust in anti-corruption agencies", "Perceived inefficiency in the court process", and "The stress associated with being a witness". Respondents were free to choose more than one reason. The data on this section reflected the number of respondents who chose each of the reasons for not disclosing corrupt acts in the last 12 and half years.

## 2. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

To test hypothesis 1, a simple regression analysis was conducted. Percentage of the respondents who engaged in whistleblowing from 2001 to 2012 was regressed was on Nigeria's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) score from 2001 to 2012. The results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Simple Regression on CPI Score (2001–2012)**

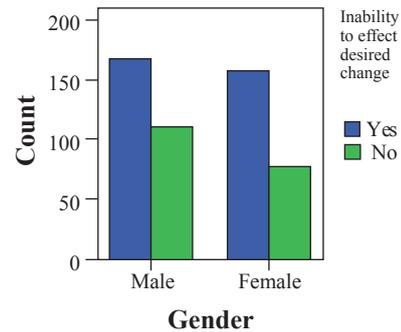
Predictor	$\beta$	$R^2$	$F$
Whistleblowing	.91*	.83	49.58* ( $df = 1,10$ )

Note: \*all values are significant at .001.

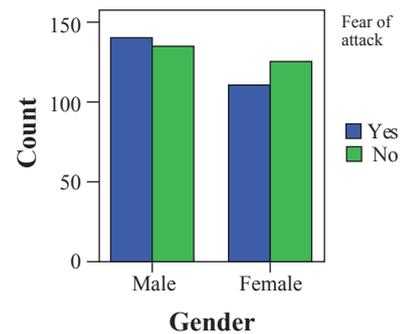
The results in Table 1 indicated that whistleblowing significantly predicted CPI score such that whistleblowing enhanced the country's CPI score [ $\beta = .91$ ;  $R^2 = .83$ ;  $F(1,10) = 49.58$ ,  $p < .001$ ]. This implies that the more the percentage of the citizens who engage in whistleblowing the better the country's CPI score. Whistleblowing accounted for 83% changes in CPI score. These results confirmed hypothesis 1.

As a preliminary analysis to testing hypothesis 2, bar charts were constructed in order to determine how

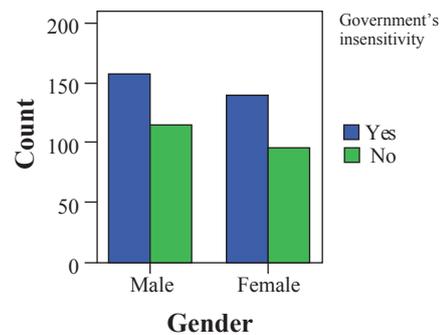
each of the social and psychological factors discouraged whistleblowing and whether there were gender differences in the responses of the respondents to each of the factors. Figures 1 to 13 show the results of the bar chart.



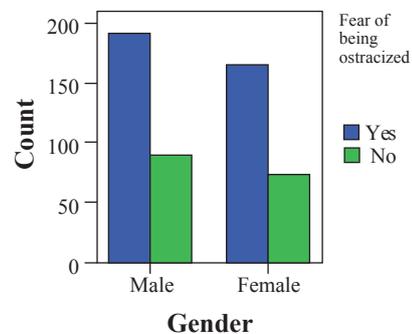
**Figure 1**  
**Gender & Inability to Effect Change**



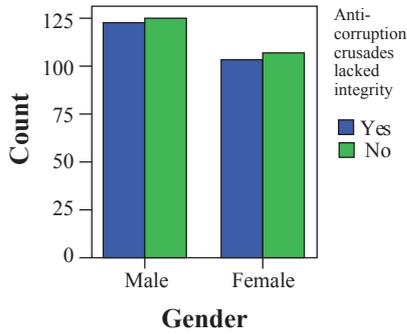
**Figure 2**  
**Gender & Fear of Attack**



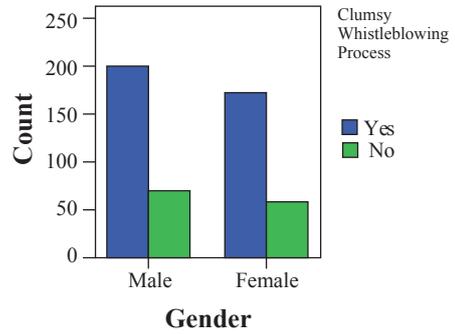
**Figure 3**  
**Gender & Government's insensitivity**



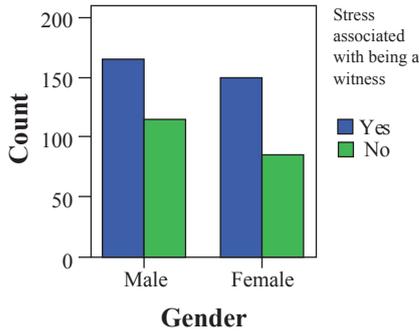
**Figure 4**  
**Gender & Fear of Being Ostracized**



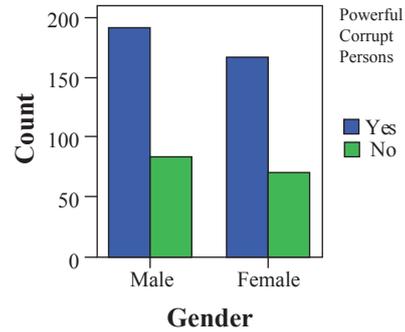
**Figure 5**  
Gender & Anti-corruption Crusades



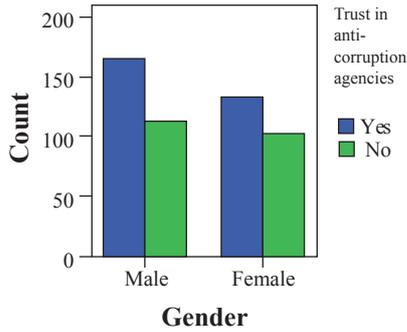
**Figure 9**  
Gender & Clumsy Whistleblowing Process



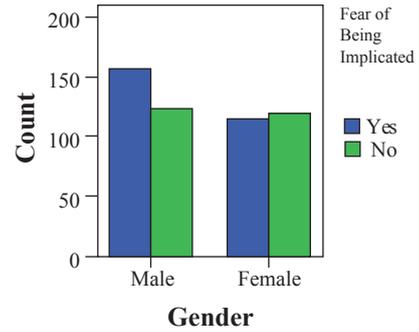
**Figure 6**  
Gender & Being a Witness



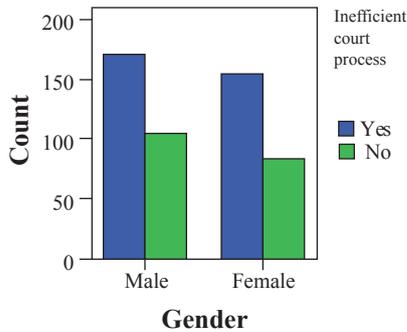
**Figure 10**  
Gender & Powerful Corrupt Persons



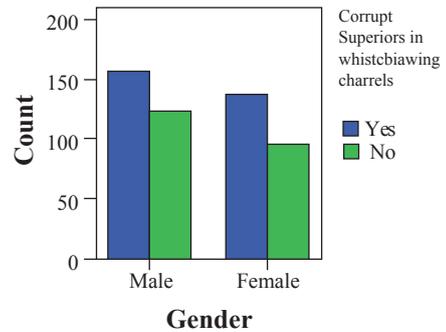
**Figure 7**  
Gender & Trust in Agencies



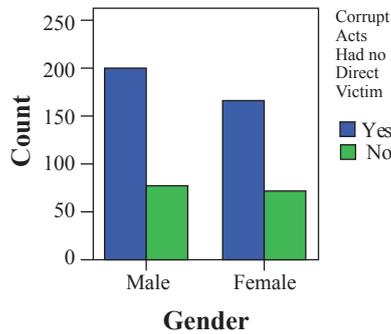
**Figure 11**  
Gender & Fear of Being Implicated



**Figure 8**  
Gender & Inefficient Court



**Figure 12**  
Gender & Corrupt Superiors



**Figure 13**  
**Gender & Corrupt Acts Had no Direct Victim**

The results in Figures 1 to 13 generally indicated that more employees were discouraged from blowing the whistle by social and psychological factors such as perceived inability of their reports to bring about the desired change in the behavior of corrupt persons, fear of being ostracized, perceived government insensitivity, inefficient court process, stress associated with being a

witness. Majority of the respondents also felt discouraged from reporting corrupt acts because some of the culprits were too powerful.

Perceived lack of integrity in the anti-corruption agencies, clumsiness of and insincerity in the whistleblowing process and channel as well as a feeling that corruption had a fluid victim also discouraged most of the employees from reporting corrupt act. However, fear of attack from culprits, perceived lack of integrity in the anti-corruption crusades, and fear of being implicated seemed did not guarantee whether or not employees would blow the whistle. In the case of gender, the graph generally show that the social and psychological factors discouraged more males than females from reporting corrupt acts.

The graphs in Figures 1 to 13 did not provide enough support for hypotheses 2 and 3. Consequently, 13 sets of 2 (Response category: yes versus no) x 2 (Gender: male versus female) Pearson's Chi Square test were conducted. The results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Summary of 2 X 2  $\chi^2$  Test on Social and Psychological Factors in Whistleblowing**

Social & psychological factor	Gender	Response category		df	$\chi^2$	p
		Yes	No			
Perceived inability of report to effect desired behavioral change	Male	167 (32.7)	110 (21.5)	1	5.22	< .05
	Female	156 (30.5)	78 (15.3)			
Fear of attack from culprits	Male	141 (27.6)	136 (26.8)	1	.95	> .05
	Female	109 (21.3)	125 (24.5)			
Perceived government insensitivity to citizens' plights	Male	159 (31.1)	118 (23.1)	1	.13	> .05
	Female	138 (27.0)	96 (18.8)			
Fear of being ostracized	Male	189 (37.0)	88 (17.2)	1	6.20	< .05
	Female	164 (32.1)	70 (13.7)			
Lack of integrity in the anti-corruption crusades	Male	138 (27.0)	139 (27.2)	1	.02	> .05
	Female	115 (22.5)	119 (23.3)			
Stress associated with being a witness	Male	164 (32.1)	113 (22.1)	1	5.19	< .05
	Female	150 (29.4)	84 (16.4)			
Lack of trust in anti-corruption agencies	Male	165 (32.3)	112 (21.9)	1	.52	> .05
	Female	132 (25.8)	102 (20.0)			
Inefficient court process	Male	174 (43.1)	103 (20.2)	1	5.25	< .05
	Female	152 (29.7)	82 (16.0)			
Clumsiness in the whistleblowing process	Male	205 (40.1)	72 (14.1)	1	6.80	< .05
	Female	174 (34.1)	60 (11.7)			
Corrupt persons appeared too powerful	Male	191 (37.4)	86 (16.8)	1	6.25	< .05
	Female	165 (32.3)	69 (13.5)			
Fear of being implicated	Male	154 (30.1)	123 (24.1)	1	1.85	> .05
	Female	116 (22.7)	118 (23.1)			
Corrupt superiors in whistleblowing channels	Male	155 (30.3)	122 (23.9)	1	.35	> .05
	Female	137 (26.8)	97 (19.0)			
Corrupt acts had no direct victim	Male	201 (39.3)	76 (14.9)	1	6.52	< .05
	Female	163 (31.9)	71 (13.9)			

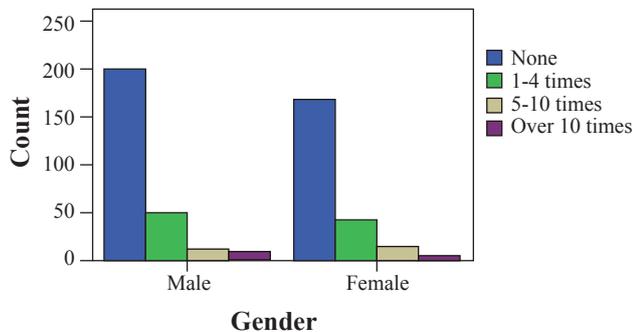
Note: percentages are in brackets.

As shown in Table 2, there were significant differences in the number of respondents who felt discouraged from engaging in whistleblowing in the last 12 and half months by some of the social and psychological factors. Most of the respondents (63.2%) felt that their whistleblowing activities would not bring the desired change in behavior [ $\chi^2(1) = 5.22, p < .05$ ]. Majority of the respondents (69.1%) were discouraged from engaging in whistleblowing because of the fear of being ostracized [ $\chi^2(1) = 6.20, p < .05$ ]. The perceived stress associated with being a witness to corrupt acts also discouraged majority of the respondents (61.5%) from whistleblowing [ $\chi^2(1) = 5.19, p < .05$ ]. Perceived inefficiency of the court process was another setback to whistleblowing, as 63.8% of the respondents felt so [ $\chi^2(1) = 5.25, p < .05$ ]. Majority of the respondents (74.2%) felt discouraged from engaging in whistleblowing because of the perceived clumsiness in the whistleblowing process [ $\chi^2(1) = 6.80, p < .05$ ]. The feelings that some of the corrupt persons were too powerful to be prosecuted was another strong factor against whistleblowing, as 69.7% of the respondents felt discouraged from blowing the whistle because of it [ $\chi^2(1)=6.25, p < .05$ ]. Majority of the respondents (71.2%) did not engage in whistleblowing because of the feelings that corruption had no direct victims [ $\chi^2(1) = 6.52, p < .05$ ].

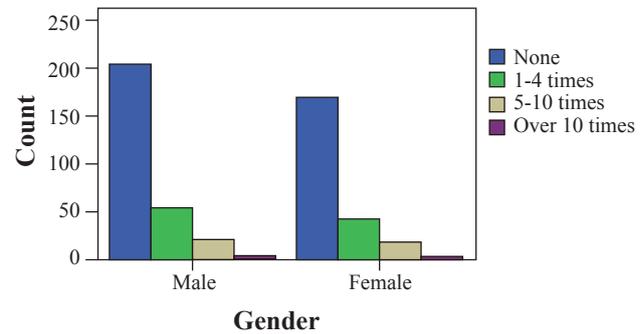
Six of the 13 social and psychological factors were not regarded by majority of the respondents as strong discouraging factors in whistleblowing. The factors were fear of attack from culprits, perceived government's insensitivity to the plight of the citizens, perceived lack of integrity in the anti-corruption crusades, lack of trust in the anti-corruption agencies, fear of being implicated, and the feelings that there were corrupt superiors in whistleblowing channels.

The results in Table 2 indicate no significant gender differences in the effects of the social and psychological factors in whistleblowing. The implication was that female employees were as discouraged as male employees from engaging in whistleblowing by those factors.

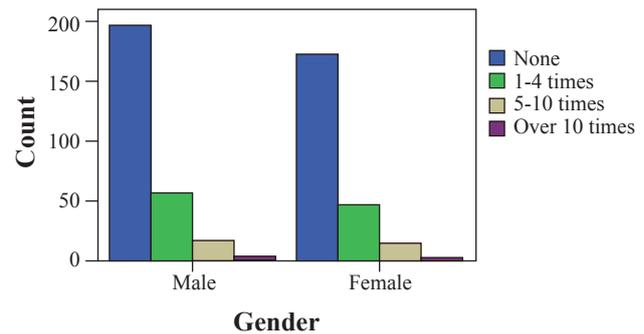
Preliminary analysis on hypothesis 4 indicated that some cells had expected frequencies that were less than 5. Therefore, the response format of the yearly frequency of whistleblowing was changed from 6 to 4. The graphical representations of the results are shown in Figures 14 to 26.



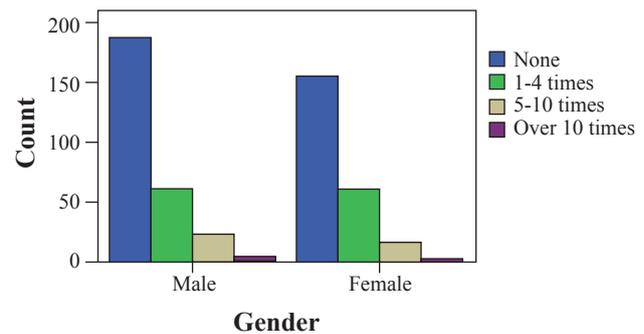
**Figure 14**  
Gender Differences in Whistleblowing in 2001



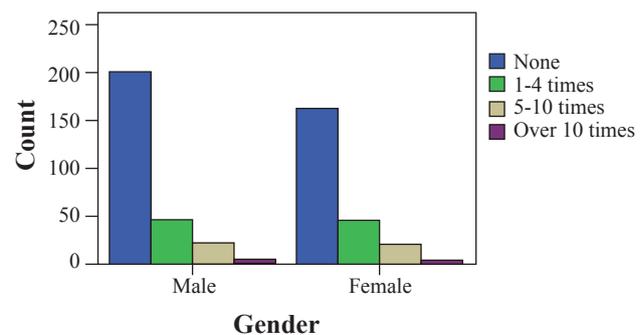
**Figure 15**  
Gender Differences in Whistleblowing in 2002



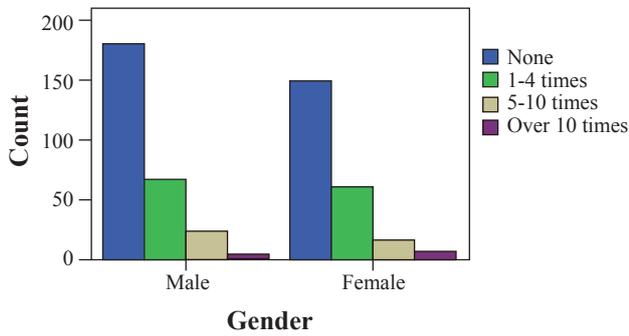
**Figure 16**  
Gender Differences in Whistleblowing in 2003



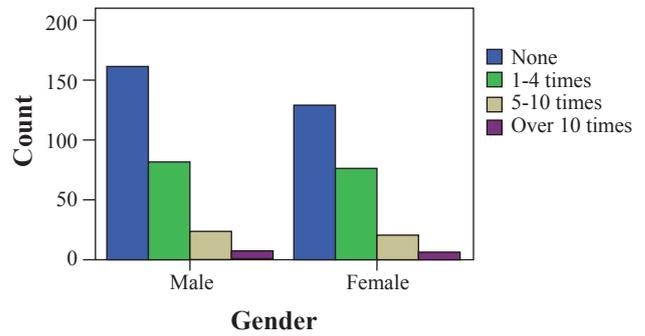
**Figure 17**  
Gender Differences in Whistleblowing in 2004



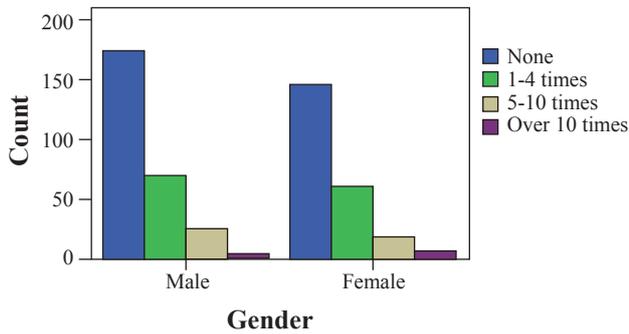
**Figure 18**  
Gender Differences in Whistleblowing in 2005



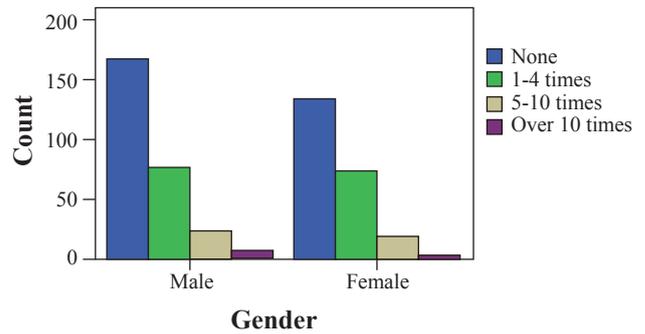
**Figure 19**  
**Gender Differences in Whistleblowing in 2006**



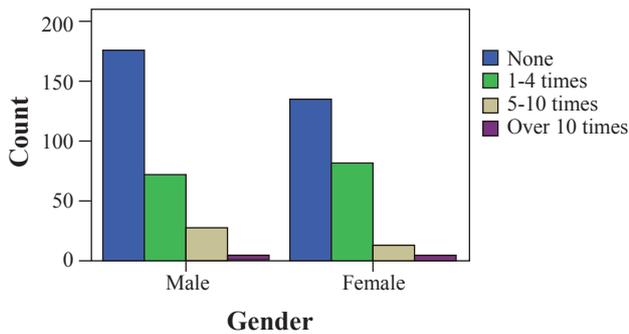
**Figure 23**  
**Gender Differences in Whistleblowing in 2010**



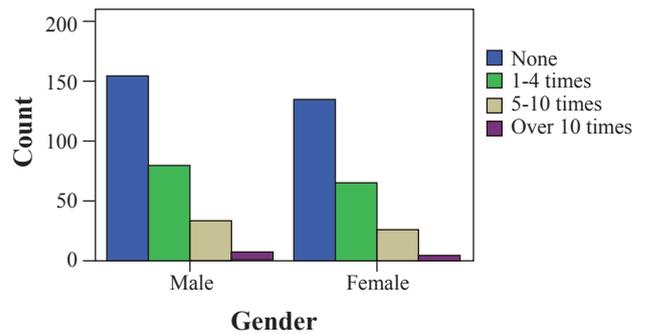
**Figure 20**  
**Gender Differences in Whistleblowing in 2007**



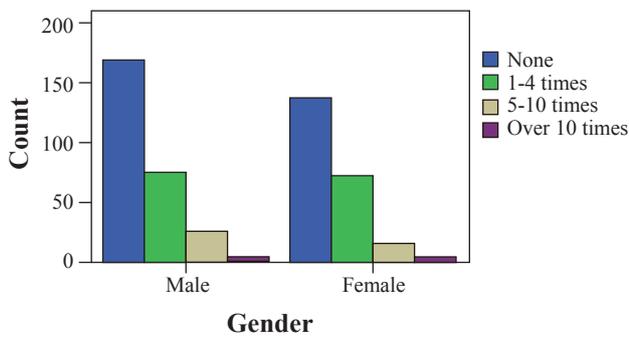
**Figure 24**  
**Gender Differences in Whistleblowing in 2011**



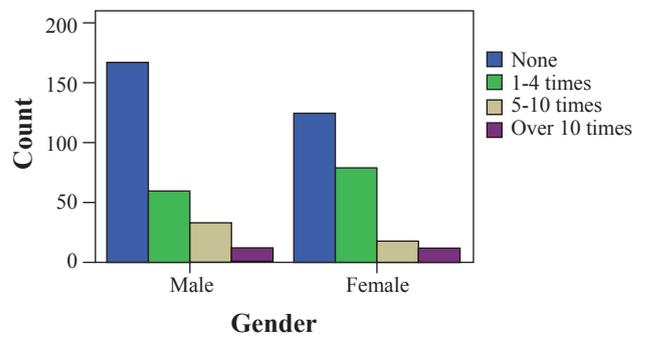
**Figure 21**  
**Gender Differences in Whistleblowing in 2008**



**Figure 25**  
**Gender Differences in Whistleblowing in 2012**



**Figure 22**  
**Gender Differences in Whistleblowing in 2009**



**Figure 26**  
**Gender Differences in Whistleblowing between January and June 2013**

The graphs generally indicate that males engaged in whistleblowing more than females in last twelve and half years, except in 2008 and 2013 where more females reported acts of corruption than males. There were variations in the yearly frequency of whistleblowing. In order to ascertain if the observed gender differences in

the frequency of reporting corrupt acts in each year were significant, 13 sets of 2 (gender: male versus female) x 4 (frequency of whistleblowing: none, 1 to 4 times, 5 to 10 times, and over 10 times) Pearson's Chi Square test were conducted to test hypothesis 4. The results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**Summary of 2 X 4  $\chi^2$  Test on Gender Differences in Yearly Frequency of Whistleblowing**

Year	Gender	Response category				df	$\chi^2$	p
		None	1-4 times	5-10 times	Over 10 times			
2001	Male	205	52	12	8	3	2.73	> .05
	Female	169	44	17	4			
2002	Male	204	53	19	1	3	.69	> .05
	Female	171	43	18	2			
2003	Male	198	57	18	4	3	.55	> .05
	Female	172	46	14	2			
2004	Male	190	60	22	5	3	2.41	> .05
	Female	158	60	14	2			
2005	Male	201	46	24	2	3	1.17	> .05
	Female	162	47	19	6			
2006	Male	180	68	25	4	3	2.51	> .05
	Female	148	63	16	7			
2007	Male	175	71	27	4	3	1.28	> .05
	Female	146	63	19	6			
2008	Male	175	72	25	5	3	5.90	> .05
	Female	135	81	13	5			
2009	Male	170	76	26	5	3	1.90	> .05
	Female	139	75	17	3			
2010	Male	163	83	24	7	3	.68	> .05
	Female	131	77	19	7			
2011	Male	166	78	19	7	3	1.11	> .05
	Female	134	75	25	8			
2012	Male	154	80	35	8	3	.46	> .05
	Female	139	66	26	6			
2013	Male	169	61	34	13	3	11.31	< .01
	Female	123	80	17	12			

As shown in Table 3, majority of the employees, irrespective gender did not report corrupt acts in their organizations. There were no significant gender differences in the frequency of whistleblowing from 2001 to 2012. However, in the 2013 (January to June) significant gender differences occurred in the frequency of whistleblowing [ $\chi^2(3) = 11.31, p < .01$ ]. More females (n = 80), compared with males (n = 61) reported corrupt acts about 4 times, more males (n = 34), compared with females (n = 17) reported corrupt acts about 10 times, and the number of females who reported corrupt acts over 10 times approximated those of males in the first half of 2013. The general trend of the results did not provide support for hypothesis 4.

**Additional analysis on yearly whistleblowing:** Generally, it can be deduced from the above results that majority of the respondents did not engage in whistleblowing in the last 12 and half years. It was therefore, necessary to determine the percentage of whistleblowing incidence each year. Results indicated that 2013 seemed to have witnessed the highest incidence of whistleblowing. In the first six months of 2013, 42.5% of the respondents indicated that they had reported corrupt acts, at least, once. This was followed by 2012 with 43.2% of the respondents indicating that they reported corrupt acts, at least, once that year. Year 2002 witnessed the lowest incidence of whistleblowing. Only 26.6% of the respondents reported corrupt acts, at least, once in 2002.

### 3. DISCUSSION

This study investigated the extent to which whistleblowing is related with CPI scores. Apart from that, this study also aimed to fill the lacuna on factors influencing whistleblowing and the extent to which gender differences existed in the frequency of whistleblowing in Nigeria.

Results indicated that country's CPI scores increased with the percentage of individuals who whistle blew corrupt acts. Whistleblowing accounted for 83% changes in the country's CPI score. This finding was in consonance with the position of TI (2010) that whistleblowing was increasingly becoming an important tool in the fight against corruption. Oakley and White (2006) also submitted that institutional check on corruption might not be effective without whistleblowing. For example, in 2001, when Nigeria was rated the second most corrupt country in the world with a CPI score of 1.0, the percentage of individuals who engaged in whistleblowing was 26.8. However, the CPI score increased to 2.4 in 2011 when the percentage of individuals who reported corrupt acts increased to 41.3. This might be because increase in whistleblowing, apart from checking and discouraging corruption, indirectly showed that the citizens do not condone corruption.

As regard the factors that discouraged whistleblowing, the present study indicated that employees' feelings that their whistleblowing might not lead to the expected change in the corruption situation was one of the major hindrances to whistleblowing. This finding corroborated the submission of Rehg et al. (2008) that individuals would be more enthused to report corrupt acts when they feel that such report would bring the expected change than when they feel otherwise. The prospective whistleblowers might have felt that their reports would not be significant enough to bring about a dramatic change. This might be because corruption seems endemic and intractable and the little drop of whistleblowing from the employees appeared unimportant.

The present study has identified the fear of being ostracized as another important factor discouraging employees from whistleblowing corrupt acts. Previous studies (e.g. Rehg et al., 2008) reported that lack of support from others served as a major hindrance to whistleblowing. When whistleblowers do not receive support for reporting corrupt acts they feel like an outcast. Employees who do not want to be treated as an out-group might be discouraged from engaging in whistleblowing, especially if corruption is widespread in the organization and whistleblowers are ostracized (Cortina & Magley, 2003).

In tandem with previous studies (e.g. Chassang & Miquel, 2012; Near et al., 2004), whistleblowing was associated with some risks, which may discourage whistleblowers from reporting corrupt acts. The present study has found that the stress associated with being a witness to corrupt acts was another risk to whistleblowers.

However, fear of being attacked and fear of being implicated were not regarded by most of the respondents as discouraging factors in whistleblowing. This might be because most whistleblowers in Nigeria report corrupt acts anonymously. Therefore, fear of attack or being implicated might be an issue only when whistleblowers disclose their identities; thereby becoming a witness.

The results of the present study show that 63.7% of the respondents felt that the corrupt persons were too powerful. This was in line with the postulations of the resource dependence theory (Near & Miceli, 1987; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), which posited that whistleblowing may not thrive where wrongdoers are more powerful than the whistleblowers. This might be because the whistleblowers felt that their reports might not enhance the outcome of the organization's fight against corruption but culminate in serious consequences for them (Cortina & Magley, 2003). This may explain why majority of the respondents perceived inefficiency in the court process prosecuting corrupt individuals and felt that the whistleblowing process was clumsy. However, majority of the respondents reported that they were not deterred from whistleblowing by corrupt superiors in whistleblowing channels. This may be because such whistleblowers could blow the whistle using external channels (Rehg et al., 2008).

Current study found that when employees felt that nobody was directly affected by corruption, they were less likely to whistle blow corruption. The reason may be that the employees did not feel directly affected by the corrupt acts and therefore did not feel obliged to blow the whistle (Rehg et al., 2008).

Perceived government insensitivity to the plights of the citizens was not a strong factor in whistleblowing. The number of employees who blew the whistle approximated those who did not blow the whistle because of perceived government insensitivity to the plight of the citizens. That is, whether the government was sensitive to the plights of the citizens or not employees would blow the whistle. This might be because the respondents saw no link between corruption and government insensitivity to the plights of the citizens.

Similarly, perceived lack of integrity in the anti-corruption crusades and trust in the anti-corruption agencies were weak factors in whistleblowing among employees. This may be because whistleblowers felt they could blow the whistle (e.g. through social media) irrespective of the activities of the anti-corruption agencies.

The findings of previous studies (e.g. Rehg et al., 2008) and the position of the social role theory (Gutek, 1985), which expected males to be more involved in whistleblowing than females were not supported by the results of the current study. As indicated in the results, there were no gender differences in the effects of the social psychological factors on whistleblowing and the frequency of whistleblowing. Generally, females blew the whistle as males and were as affected as males by

the social and psychological factors when blowing the whistle. Females felt as obliged as males to report corrupt acts, probably because they felt equally affected by corruption and therefore, felt as responsible as males for reporting corrupt acts (Rehg et al., 2008).

## CONCLUSION

This study has shown that whistleblowing could be a viable option to fighting corruption if effectively managed. It could enhance a country's CPI scores; indirectly enhance her dignity and foreign investment drive. In order to encourage whistleblowing among employees, the social and psychological barriers to whistleblowing should be removed.

A unique contribution of this study to the literature on whistleblowing was the provision an empirical link between whistleblowing and country's CPI score. Apart from that, the study has added a new perspective to the social role theory (Guttek, 1985) by indicating that females could blow the whistle as much as males if they felt the corrupt acts had similar direct effect on them.

In spite of the contributions of this study it was not without limitations. The study did not cover private sector organizations and data was limited to one of the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Therefore, results may not be a true reflection of whistleblowing in the country. The hypothesis on the connection between whistleblowing and country's CPI score should be generalized with caution because only one country was studied. Future studies need to involve public sector organizations, cover more geopolitical zones, and compare data from other countries.

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