ABSTRACT
Corruption is one of the evil confronting the development of Nigeria. It is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of the Nigeria system. Various measures have been adopted by various governments and administration at all levels to combat the ugly menace. Treasury Single Account became operational in 2012 under President Goodluck Jonathan, but not much was known about it until 2015 when President Muhammadu Buhari took over the government and the full- edged implementation took effect. The objective of the study is to determine whether the introduction of a unified structure of government bank accounts through a Treasury Single Account (TSA) will solve the problem of unscrupulous spending of Government fund and hence eradicate loss and enhance cash management and helps in curbing corruption. The study shows that the adoption of TSA has helped the federal government has it pools and unifies all government accounts through a single treasury account and thereby helps in fighting against corrupt practices. The paper therefore advocates the management of unified structure of government bank accounts via a treasury single account (TSA) will solve these problems of corruption.

Keywords: Corruption, Treasury Single Account, Nigeria, Development, Policy

INTRODUCTION
One of the major challenges to financial, economic and political growth of any country is corruption. Consequently, the difficulties of corruption remain a noteworthy obliterating issue confronting Nigeria since the period of colonisation, in spite of the fact that, these issues has turned into a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of our system both political and non political. Nevertheless, the way out of these predicaments lies in our hand. That is the reason why different countries have adopted different strategies in combating the act of corruption. In Nigeria for instance, the threat of corruption has been discussed at all levels of government and different agencies has been set up by the federal government to combat this act in the society, yet these ugly incidence continue to rear its ugly head (Mohammed, 2013). The issue of corruption can be traced to the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. Corruption remains elusive and ever strives to thrive in most unlikely places. Corruption in Nigeria has become so disturbing that the former president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo once said “the truth is that, it is much tougher to fight corruption in a developing society than it is in the developed world” (Obasanjo, 2003). Different nations have adopted different strategies to contend with corruption depending on its ramifications and depth. Whatever dimension may assume, it is certain that a nation with high incidence of corruption can not grow or develop. This is because corruption is antithesis of growth and development, leaving in it trail negative socio-economic consequences. Corruption has brought instability, insecurity and failure of institutions (Fibadu, 2005) both the military and civilian administration so far have not fared any better than each other. Military interventions were always predicated to corruption against the civilian administration, but rather than remedy the situation, the
military plundered the country resources to an unprecedented level. Thus, over the years, corruption became entrenched in government and the society. The status quo has become fashionable whereby politician and public servant see government as a means of becoming rich over night. The past administrations in Nigeria condemned and declare war against corruption; while the present administration has declared zero tolerance for corruption. Whether or not the trend is going to be reversed, is a question of time.

The policy of adopting a Single Account was provided for in the constitution. Section 80 (1) of the 1999 Constitution as amended states “All revenues, or other money raised or received by the federation (not being revenues or other money payable under this Constitution or any Act of National Assembly into any other public fund of the Federation established for a specific purpose) shall be paid into and form one Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation”; successive governments have continued to operate multiple accounts for the collection and spending of government revenue in deliberate disregard to the provision of the constitution, which requires all government revenues be remitted into a single account (Oguntodu, Alalade, Adekunle & Adegbie, 2016).

A TSA is a unified structure of government bank accounts that gives a consolidated view of government cash resources. Based on the principle of unity of cash and the unity of treasury, a TSA is a bank account or a set of linked accounts through which the government transacts all its receipts and payments. The principle of unity follows from the fungibility of all cash irrespective of its end use. While it is necessary to distinguish individual cash transactions for control and reporting purposes, this purpose is achieved through the accounting system and not by holding/depositing cash in transaction specific bank accounts (IMF, 2010).

The Treasury Single Account (TSA) policy was introduced to control and block financial leakages, promote transparency and prevent mismanagement of government’s revenue, unifies all government accounts, enabling it prevent revenue loss and mismanagement by revenue-generating agencies. Apparently, a master stroke against a tactless financial strategy emanating from an unholy alliance between banks and MDAs, the current implementation of this unified accounting structure, rightly called the Treasury Single Account (TSA), is laden with high expectations of economic prospects owing to its possibility of ensuring transparency and accountability (Bashir, 2016).

According to the former A.G.F prior to TSA, Nigeria had fragmented banking arrangements for revenue and payment transactions. He stated that, “There were more than 10,000 bank accounts in multiple banks, which made it impossible to establish government consolidated cash position at any point in time. It led to pockets of idle cash balances held in MDAs’ accounts when government was out borrowing money.” (Obinna, 2015:52)

The Treasury Single Account (TSA) initiative is the operation of a unified structure of Government Bank Accounts, in a single account or a set of linked accounts for all Government payments and receipts. President of Nigeria, Muhammad Buhari’s directive to all federal Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to start paying all government revenues, incomes and other receipts into a unified pool of single account with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), is a bold and highly commendable move directed at one of the bastions of corruption in the polity, namely, public institutions (Bashir, 2016)

**Conceptual Clarification**

**Treasury Single Account**

The concept “Treasury Single Account (TSA)” has been defined from different perspective but nearly depicts the same idea. Adeolu (2015) defined Treasury Single Account as “a public accounting system under which all government revenue, receipts and income are collected into one single account, usually maintained by the country’s Central Bank and all payments done through this account as well.” Utilization of a Treasury Single Account will aid the management of funds and helps in of funds.

Oyedele (2015) viewed Treasury Single Account as “a unified structure of government bank accounts that gives a consolidated view of government cash resources. Based on the principle of unity of cash and the unity of treasury, a Treasury Single Account is a bank account or a set of linked accounts through which the government transacts all its receipts and payments. The principle of unity follows from the fusion of all cash irrespective of its end use. While it is necessary to distinguish individual cash transactions for control and reporting purposes, this purpose is achieved through the accounting system and not by holding or depositing cash in transaction specific bank accounts. This enables the treasury to delink management of cash from control at a transaction level.

Treasury Single Account can be defined as unified structure of government bank account that gives a consolidated view of cash resources. Pattanayak and Fainborn (2010) emphasized that a full-fledged TSA
shares three essential features; first, the government banking arrangement should be unified, to enable Ministry of Finance (MOF) (or treasury) oversight of government cash flows in and out of these bank accounts. A unified structure of government bank accounts allows complete control of all cash resources, including on a real-time basis if electronic banking is in place. The TSA structure can accommodate external zero-balance accounts (ZBAs) in a number of commercial banks. Secondly, no other government agency operates bank accounts outside the oversight of the treasury. Options for accessing and operating the TSA are mainly dependent upon institutional structures and payment settlement systems. Thirdly, the consolidation of government cash resources should be comprehensive and encompass all government cash resources, both budgetary and extra-budgetary. This means that all public monies irrespective of whether the corresponding cash flows are subject to budgetary control or not (e.g., in the case of reserve funds, earmarked funds and other off-budget and/or extra budgetary funds) should be brought under the control of the TSA (Shah, 2007). The cash balance in the TSA main account is maintained at a level sufficient to meet the operational requirements of the government (sometimes together with an optional contingency or buffer reserve to meet unexpected fiscal volatility).

Nelson, Adeoye and Ogah (2015) are of the opinion that Treasury Single Account is an account that all ministries and government departments’ account balances are collated by the Central Bank, whereas there is an intermediate account for every ministry and department that shows the total of all debt and credit transactions. Thus, the total amount will be reflected eventually on the treasury single account at the end of the day.

Corruption

Corruption like most concepts in social sciences is classified into the group of concept described by Gallie as highly contestable concepts. Thus, the definition that may be attached can be dissected and restricted. Otite (1986) defined corruption as “the perversion of integrity or affairs through bribery, favour, or moral depravity... societal impurity” (cited in Okafor, 2009). Lipset and Lenz (2000) define corruption as an “effort to secure wealth or power through illegal means for private gain at public expense” (Fagbadebo, 2007).

Corruption, according to Nkom (1982) is the perversion of public affairs for private advantage. Nkom was also of the view that corruption includes bribery or the use of unauthorized rewards to influence people in position of authority either to act or refuse to act in ways beneficial to the private advantage of the giver and then that of the receiver. It includes the misappropriation of public funds and resources for private gains, nepotism etc. In a similar vein, Doig (1996) described corruption as, the use of official position, resources or facilities for personal advantage, or possible conflict of interest between public position and private benefit. This involves misconduct by public officials and usually covered by a variety of internal regulations (Public Service Rules and Extant Rules).

Shehu (1991) defines Corruption as “the diversion of resources from the betterment of the community to the gain of individuals at the expense of the community”. Corruption involves effort to secure wealth or power through illegal means for private gain as public expense, or misuse of public power for private benefit (Lipset and Lenz, 2000). Osoba (1996) adds that “Corruption is an antisocial behavior conferring improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms which undermine the authorities to improve the living condition of the people.” In the view, Windson and Getz (2000) define Corruption as socially impermissible deviance from some public duty or more generally, some ideal standard of conduct. In this sense, Corruption means the use of public resources for the achievement of personal ends (Aluko, 2006). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) define corruption as “abuse of authority or trust for private benefit and is a temptation indulged in not only by public officials but also by those in positions of trust or authority in private enterprises or non profit organisations” (IMF, 2000)

According to Olugbenga (2007), Odofin and Omojuwa (2007) the word corruption cannot easily be define. Similarly, Ajibewa (2006), Falouore (2010) and Igbuzor (2008) cited in Egwemi (2012) maintains that corruption is not an easy task to define. Indeed, defining corruption is a daunting challenging venture. However, Andrig and Fjelstad (2001:4) view corruption as a “complex and multifaceted phenomenon with multiple causes and effects, as it takes on various forms and contexts”. According to them, one of the major difficulties in conceptualizing corruption is that while it is difficult to disappear it has a capacity to take on new forms (Andrig and Fjelstad, 2001). In a similar fashion, Tanzi (1998) maintains that while it is difficult to define corruption, the crisis associated with corruption is not difficult to recognize.

The United Nations Global Programme against Corruption (GPAC) defines it as “abuse of power for private gain”. The Transparency International has chosen a clear and focused definition of the term as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain”. It can also be defined as a perversion or change from the general
accepted rules or laws for selfish gain (Farida, 2010). The World Bank however defines corruption as: “the abuse of office for private gains.” Public office is abused for private gain when an official accepts, solicits or extorts a bribe. It is also abused when private agents actively offer bribes to circumvent public offices and processes for competitive advantages or profit.

**History of Treasury Single Account in Nigeria**

The TSA policy was first recommended by the Federal Government's Economic Reform and Governance (ERG) Programme in 2004. Also, the TSA is a part of The Public Financial Management (PFM) reforms which falls under Pillar 3 of the National Strategy for Public Service Reforms towards Vision 2020:20:20 to address impediments to effective and efficient cash management. The government embraced electronic payment (e-payment) system for all its financial transaction in 2008. Consequently, the Accountant General of the Federation issued a treasury circular for its take-off on January, 1st 2009 in all MDAs (Odia & Odia, 2016).

TSA was introduced to block ghost workers syndrome, but was resisted by some MDAs and the harmonisation of the country’s various data banks hosted by different government agencies such as, the CBN; National Population Commission, INEC, Customs, Immigration Service and others. (Guardian Editorial, 2015:14)

Concerning its practice, as far back as the government of former President Olusegun Obasanjo, the need for a consolidated Federation Account was what informed the establishment of the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS). However, it was President Goodluck Jonathan who piloted the TSA in its present form, when he commenced implementation with about 42 public institutions comprising ministries, departments and agencies, until recently when President Buhari began full implementation (Bashir, 2016).

**EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

According to Lin and Liu (2005) in business management, financial ratios are usually one of the indicators used to evaluate a firm’s performance. Generally, the financial information of an organisation operation is reported in the financial statements. Financial ratios serve as a preliminary reference for the analysis of the business performance.

According to Barth and Landsman (2010) discuss the role of financial reporting by organisations in the financial crisis. They discuss such financial reporting features as fair values, asset securitisations, derivatives and loan loss provisioning. They conclude that lack of transparency on derivative financial instruments and the pooling of debt resulted in problems in determining the real financial position of an
organisation. Determining the real position of an organisation through financial reports is the key to reliability, which in turn affects the usefulness of the reports on profitability.

According to Miller and Bahnson (2009) state that the role of financial reporting is “to reveal the truth, honestly, openly, completely, clearly, unambiguously and with sufficient frequency to be timely’’ They stressed further that financial reporting should fulfill this role before, during and after a crisis. Before a crisis, transparent financial reporting would give signs of trouble ahead and give a forewarning to investors. During a crisis, financial reporting should provide information about where the problem areas are and how future cash flow prospects are affected.

According to Peter B. Madoki (2013) establish the relevance of financial reporting in the organisational management. The researcher concluded that a deeper understanding of the importance of financial reporting can lead to enhancement of organisational growth achievement of corporate performance.

According to Berger and Patti (2002:2) the measures of firm performance are usually ratios fashioned from financial statements or stock market prices, such as industry-adjusted operating margins or stock market returns.

According to Osisioma (1996:339) the ratios are aimed at bringing to light the profitability of a firm’s operation, the management efficiency as measured by the returns on capital employed and the intensity of capital usage-the rapidity with which invested capital is turned over.

According to previous evidence, those organisations with better quality of financial reports are associated with subsequent higher performance, due to the fact that market positively assesses those organisatons which are more committed to the issuance of good financial information for shareholders and other stakeholders, aiming to reduce information asymmetries between market participants (Garcia-Lara, 2010; Ahmed and Duellmand, 2011; Bushman and Smith 2001; Bens 2002; Gunny, 2005).

Impact of Treasury Single Account (TSA) in combating corruption.

The adoption of TSA in Nigeria has helped the federal government has it pools and unifies all government accounts through a single treasury account. The advantages and benefits of the Treasury Single Account are numerous. The consolidation into a Treasury Single Account paves way for timely capture and payment of all due revenues into government coffers without the intermediation of multiple banking arrangements and this has contributed in no small measure in waging war against corruption .

Establishing a unified structure of government bank accounts via a treasury single account (TSA) will solve these problems, improving cash management and control. It should therefore, receive priority in any public financial management (PFM) reform agenda. A TSA also facilitates better fiscal and monetary policy coordination as well as better reconciliation of fiscal and banking data, which in turn improves the quality of fiscal information. Finally, the establishment of an effective TSA significantly reduces the debt servicing costs (IMF, 2010).

According to Pattanayak and Fainboim (2010), the primary objective of a TSA is to ensure effective aggregate control over Government cash balances. Other objectives for setting up a TSA are as follows:

- Minimizing transaction costs during budget execution, notably by controlling the delay in the remittance of government revenues (both tax and nontax);
- Controlling the delay in the remittance of government revenues by collecting banks, in both tax and non-tax;
- Making rapid payments of government expenses;
- Facilitating reconciliation between banking and accounting data;
- Efficient control and monitoring of funds allocated to various government agencies; and
- Facilitating better coordination with the monetary policy implementation

The benefits thus accrued to the system are:

- Allows complete and timely information on government cash resources;
- Improves appropriation control;
- Improves operational control during budget execution;
- Enables efficient cash management;
- Reduces bank fees and transaction costs;
- Facilitates efficient payment mechanisms;
- Improves bank reconciliation and quality of fiscal data; and
- Lowers liquidity reserve needs (Pattanayak & Fainboim, 2010).

Locating the TSA at the central bank offers several advantages:

- Provides a safe haven for government cash deposits which minimizes credit risk exposure.
Aids the efficient management of government liquidity, and facilitates the central bank’s coordination of its monetary policy operations in managing liquidity in the economy with government’s cash and debt management functions.

- Can facilitate cost effective banking arrangements and speedy settlements (it might be possible to negotiate with the central bank to act as the clearing house for government operations, which may speed settlement).

- Allows for clarity of banking arrangements and remuneration policies between the treasury and the central bank (a service level agreement is normally negotiated to clarify obligations and responsibilities when the central bank acts as the clearing house for government operations).

In the common sense appreciation of Buhari’s anti-corruption roadmap, the proper implementation of the TSA would remove the ambient secrecy in the management of public finance in MDAs. Under the guise of non-descript official secrecy, government staff and politicians have been known to employ all sorts of administrative devices and illegal liaisons to engage in business ventures for private gains using government money, and thereby frustrating proper execution of projects, as well as causing salary delays (Bashir, 2016).

Furthermore, it was common practice for agencies saddled with revenue generation to defraud government by siphoning public funds through all sorts of bank accounts in their custody and unknown to the authorities. With all government revenues and receipts being pooled into the TSA, not only would it be difficult for this monumental fraud to continue without serious sanctions, but also it would afford government a quick glance at the daily funds pooled into the TSA by revenue generation agencies. TSA also has the advantage of blocking capital flight and other leakages that would ensue from the pockets of unauthorised foreign accounts; and thereby retain more revenue for the system (Bashir, 2016).

Conclusion
Corruption is a cankerworm that hinders development in any society. Introduction of a Treasury Single Account in Nigeria is a key element of an efficient and effective public financial management system and an essential tool for minimizing government and frivolous spending which was introduced by the federal government of Nigeria to fight against corruption.

Recommendation
Based on this, it is therefore recommended that the federal government should initiate policies and various means that propel proper accounting of the funds into the Treasury Single Account and make sure it follows due process and any subsequent foul play by any individual, ministries, agencies, or even the CBN is duly prosecuted and involve effective sanction.
References


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