International Journal of Scientific Research and Management (IJSRM)
||Volume||11||Issue||05||Pages||26-41||2023||
Website: www.ijsrm.in ISSN (e): 2321-3418
DOI: 10.18535/ijsrm/v11i05.as02

Quality of Government in Nigeria - Quantitative Analysis and Evaluation

[1]Ohwadua, E.O. and [2]Akanji, A.R.

[1]Department of Mathematical Sciences, Bingham University, Nasarawa State, Nigeria.
[2]Department of Mathematical Sciences, Bingham University, Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Abstract
Nigeria gained its independence in 1960, and not until 1999, the nation has witnessed a checkered democracy with military incursion in governance in far more years than civilian administration. Therefore, for Nigeria to have witnessed an unbroken democracy since 1999 to date, is a joyful moment in the annals of history of Nigeria as a nation. However, despite the unbroken democracy for over 23 years, it calls to question Section 14(2) (b) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, which states that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government. This research paper is therefore a comparative quantitative analysis and evaluation based on certain economic indices of the quality of governance of the three successive governments since Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999. We found that the trend of Corruption Perception Index is high and consistent throughout the three administrations of Presidents Obasanjo, Jonathan and Buhari. Furthermore, while Presidents Obasanjo and Jonathan performed relatively well, Buhari's administration witnessed a nose-dive trend in all the remaining indices putting his administration as the worst performer in terms of the indicators measured.

Keywords: Governance, democracy, performance, development, index.

Research Tools (Materials and Methods)
- We investigate the quantitative determinants of the quality of three successive governments since the return of democracy in Nigeria from 1999 to 2023.
- We assess the quality of governments using time series measures (metrics) of government performance on key selected economic indicators collected from various sources.

1. Introduction
Many studies have examined the relationship between the quality of government and economic development. The literature suggests that good governance is a crucial determinant of economic growth and development, as it creates an enabling environment for private investment, fosters innovation, and reduces transaction costs. However, there is debate over whether the relationship between the quality of government and economic development is causal or correlational, and whether certain types of governance arrangements are more conducive to economic growth than others.
Nigeria's democracy has been fragile and fluctuating since independence in 1960. Successive governments have struggled to offer quality governance to the citizens but each government has been characterized by missed oportunities, misgovernance and outright failures.
In the quest for a better governance, Nigeria's democracy has a long and troubled incursion by its military to the extent that for almost half of its existence as an independent nation, Nigeria has been under military rule instead of democratic government. Three republics have been overthrown by military coups since independence, and two of the four democratically-elected presidents of Nigeria's fourth republic is headed by those military dictatorships (Hoffmann & Wallace, 2022).

In 1963, the country became a federal republic with Nnamdi Azikiwe as the first president and head of state, while Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was prime minister and head of government. However, democracy under the first republic quickly deteriorated and Balewa was assassinated in 1966 in a bloody and failed military coup. In the chaos that followed, Major General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi toppled the government but ruled for only six months before being overthrown in a counter-coup, and was subsequently replaced by General Yakubu Gowon. Gowon's administration was rejected by the then military head of Nigeria's eastern administrative region – Lt. Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu and a brutal civil war followed, unleashing famine, death, and destruction. The war eventually ended in 1970 with enormous impact both in Nigeria and internationally. After the war ended, Gowon continued as military head of state and his military government was seen as corrupt, incompetent, and failing to guide the country back towards democracy. Gowon was overthrown in a bloodless coup in 1975 and was replaced by General Murtala Mohammed who was later assassinated in an unsuccessful coup d'état in 1976. His deputy, Lieutenant General Olusegun Obasanjo took charge and oversaw Nigeria's transition to democracy in 1979.

Alhaji Shehu Shagari was elected in 1979 and become the first democratically-elected president of Nigeria and a new constitution introduced an American-style presidential system, rejecting the British parliamentary model practiced in first republic in 1963. But Shagari's government was characterized by extensive corruption, and wastefulness in administering the nations resources, and was overthrown in 1983 by General Muhammadu Buhari immediately after a disputed election that gave Shagari a second term in office. The Buhari's government was toppled in another military coup in August 1985 by General Ibrahim Babangida. On assumption of office, Babangida promised a transition from military to civilian rule by 1990 but would stay in power until 1993 and within this period, he expanded a corrupt patronage network mostly sustained by oil revenues which has been reorganized but still endures in Nigeria (Hoffmann & Wallace, 2022). In June 1993, Babangida conducted election but refused to recognize the outcome and stymied the creation of a full-fledged third republic but instead, he created an interim government council headed by Ernest Shonekan who was later that year quickly replaced by a new military ruler General Sani Abacha in a palace coup. Abacha administered a corrupt and brutal leadership under which Nigeria became a pariah nation. Abacha died in mysterious circumstances in 1998. Another transitional military government led by General Abdulsalami Abubakar oversaw a return to democracy with elections held in April 1999 where former military ruler, Olusegun Obasanjo was elected as president.

The end of military rule in Nigeria brought about a new era of regular elections, civil liberties, freedom of the press, independent judiciary, the rule of law, accountability in governance as well as checks and balances. However, after more than two decades of this fourth republic, democracy has not yet delivered a considerable upliftment in the standard of living for most Nigerians. The quality of government proposition therefore raises an obvious question: how did any one government offer good governance and others do not; and to what extent did any one government fulfil Section 14(2) (b) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 which states that the primary purpose of government is to provide essential services, fulfill the fundamental duties of safety, prosperity, and justice, ensure the rights of each human and protect the country so that its citizens, businesses, and organizations have the ability to pursue happiness, live a healthy life, and chase opportunities (Patel, 2023).

2. Literature Review

The concept of the quality of government has received increased attention in recent years, with scholars and policymakers recognizing the importance of good governance for economic development, social welfare, and political stability. Quality of government is a multidimensional concept that refers to the extent to which public institutions and processes promote effective and equitable governance, including the rule of law, democratic accountability, transparency, and responsiveness to citizen's needs and aspirations. Several scholars have proposed various conceptualizations and measures of the quality of government, including the World Governance Indicators, the Corruption Perceptions Index, public sector efficiency, public good provision, size of government, and political freedom (La Porta & et al, 1999).

One of the seminal works in this area of quality of government is Robert Putnam's 1993 book, "Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy" (Putnam, 1993). Putnam argues that the quality of

government in a democracy is shaped by the level of civic engagement and social capital in a society. He uses the example of Italy to show how differences in social capital and civic engagement between the regions of the country led to variations in the effectiveness and efficiency of local government institutions. Another important contribution is the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2022), which measure the quality of governance in over 200 countries based on six dimensions: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. The WGI have been widely used by researchers and policymakers to assess the quality of government and its relationship to economic development and other outcomes.
Research has shown that higher quality of governance is associated with better economic performance, higher levels of human development, and greater citizen satisfaction. For example, a study by Knack and Keefer found that higher levels of government effectiveness and control of corruption were associated with higher levels of economic growth (Knack & Keefer, 1995). Similarly, a study by Rothstein and Teorell found that higher levels of quality of government were associated with higher levels of citizen trust in government and political institutions (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008).
In conclusion, the literature on the quality of government highlights the importance of effective governance for economic development, social welfare, and political stability. While the concept of the quality of government is complex and multidimensional, it is increasingly recognized as a crucial component of sustainable development and democratic governance.

3. Data

Our analysis is based on a dataset of measures of government performance and their determinants in three successive governments since 1999 – President Olusegu Obasanjo (1999-2007), President Umaru Musa Yaradu/Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (2007-2015) and President Muhammadu Buhari (2015-2023). The definitions and sources for all the indices used in this paper are summarized in Table 1 and Appendix A presents summary statistics and data on the indices. Our measures of government performance are on quantitative historical data collected from different sources from 1999 to 2022.
We measure government performance by an index of the quality of inflation, foreign exchange rate, unemployment, corruption perception, revenue, external debt, gross domestic product (GDP), GDP per capita, debt/revenue, and debt/GDP.

Table 1: Description of the Index

Index Type	Description
Inflation Rate	Inflation rate is the rate at which the general level of prices for goods and services in an economy is increasing over a period of time. It is usually measured as a percentage change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or the Producer Price Index (PPI) over a specified period, such as a month, a quarter, or a year. Inflation is often expressed as an annualized percentage, and a higher inflation rate means that prices are increasing at a faster rate. High inflation rates can have negative effects on the Nigerian economy, such as reducing purchasing power and increasing uncertainty, while low inflation rates can indicate a healthy and stable economy.
Foreign Exchange Rate	Foreign exchange rate (also known as forex rate or FX rate) is the price of one currency expressed in terms of another currency. In other words, it is the value of one currency relative to another. For example, if the exchange rate between the US dollar and the naira is 1:100, it means that 100 naira can be exchanged for 1 US dollars. In Nigeria, foreign exchange rates are determined by supply and demand in the foreign exchange market, which is the national marketplace for buying and selling currencies. Factors that affect exchange rates include economic indicators such as inflation, interest rates, and government policies, as well as geopolitical events and market sentiment.

	Exchange rates are important for businesses and individuals engaged in international trade or investment, as they determine the cost of goods and services and the value of investments denominated in foreign currencies. Changes in exchange rates can also affect the competitiveness of countries in global markets and impact the overall Nigerian economy.
Unemployment Rate	The unemployment rate is a measure of the percentage of the labour force that is currently unemployed but actively seeking employment and willing to work. The unemployment rate is an important indicator of the health of an economy. A high unemployment rate can indicate that the economy is not creating enough jobs to meet the demand for work, while a low unemployment rate can indicate that the economy is growing and businesses are hiring. The unemployment rate can be broken down into different categories, such as youth unemployment, under unemployment, and regional unemployment, which can provide more insight into the specific challenges facing different groups and regions within Nigeria's labour market.
Corruption Perception Index (CPI)	The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) is an annual report published by Transparency International, a non-governmental organization dedicated to fighting corruption worldwide. The CPI measures the perceived levels of corruption in countries around the world. It is based on a combination of surveys and assessments of corruption in the public sector, using data from multiple sources such as business leaders, experts, and citizens. The index ranges from 0 to 100, with 0 being highly corrupt and 100 being very clean. The CPI is widely used as a barometer for measuring the levels of corruption in different countries, and it is used by governments, businesses, and civil society organizations to track progress in the fight against corruption. However, it is important to note that the CPI measures perceptions of corruption and not actual levels of corruption, so it may not always reflect the true extent of corruption in Nigeria.
Revenue	Total revenue in Nigeria, also known as national revenue, refers to the total income generated within a country's borders. It includes all sources of income, such as taxes, fees, and other forms of government revenue, as well as revenue generated by businesses and individuals within the country. The total revenue is an important measure of a Nigeria's economic strength and can be used to fund government programs and services, as well as investments in infrastructure, education, and other areas that support economic growth.
Revenue from International Trade	Revenue from international trade refers to the total amount of money that Nigeria earns from the exchange of goods and services with other countries. This revenue can come in the form of exports, which are goods and services that a country produces and sells to other countries, or imports, which are goods and services that a country buys from other countries. The revenue from international trade is typically measured by the country's balance of trade, which is the difference between its exports and imports. If a country's exports exceed its imports, it has a trade surplus, and the revenue from international trade is positive. On the other hand, if a country's imports exceed its exports, it has a trade deficit, and the revenue from international trade is negative. In addition to the balance of trade, a country's revenue from international trade can also be influenced by other factors, such as tariffs, subsidies, and exchange rates. These factors can affect the prices of goods

	and services traded between countries and can have significant impact on Nigeria's revenue from international trade.
External Debt	External debt refers to the amount of money that Nigeria owes to foreign creditors and institutions, including other countries, international organizations, and private lenders. It represents the total amount of money that a country has borrowed from outside sources to finance its economic activities, such as infrastructure projects, social programs, and other government spending. External debt can take different forms, such as government bonds, loans, and other financial instruments, and it is usually denominated in a foreign currency. The amount of external debt Nigeria has is an important indicator of the nation's economic health and financial stability, as excessive debt levels can lead to financial crises, currency devaluation, and economic instability.
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a measure of the total value of goods and services produced within in Nigeria during a specific period, typically a year. It is one of the most widely used economic indicators, and is considered to be a key measure of a country's economic health and growth. GDP is calculated by adding up the total value of all final goods and services produced within a country's borders, including consumer goods, government services, investment goods, and exports. This value is then adjusted for inflation using a price index such as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or the Producer Price Index (PPI), to arrive at a real GDP figure. There are different ways to calculate GDP, including the expenditure approach, which looks at the total amount spent on goods and services, the production approach, which looks at the total value of all goods and services produced, and the income approach, which looks at the total income earned by individuals and businesses.
GDP per Capita	GDP per capita is a measure of a country's economic output that accounts for its population. It is calculated by dividing Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP) by its total population. GDP is the market value of all final goods and services produced within Nigeria in a given period of time, typically a year. GDP per capita is a useful indicator of a country's standard of living and economic development, as it gives an estimate of the average economic output per person in the country.
Debt/Revenue Ratio	Debt/revenue ratio is a financial ratio that compares the amount of a country's debt to its annual revenue or income. It is a measure of the country's ability to repay its debts based on its income. To calculate the debt/revenue ratio, you would divide a country's total debt by its annual revenue. The resulting number is the debt/revenue ratio, expressed as a percentage. This ratio is often used by analysts and investors to assess a country's financial health and its ability to service its debt. A high debt/revenue ratio can indicate that Nigeria may have difficulty paying off its debts or may be at risk of default. Conversely, a low debt/revenue ratio suggests that Nigeria has a strong financial position and is less likely to default on its debts.
Debt/GDP Ratio	Debt/GDP ratio is a measure that compares a country's total debt to its gross domestic product (GDP). It is calculated by dividing a country's total debt by its GDP and then multiplying the result by 100 to express it as a percentage. The debt/GDP ratio is a key indicator of Nigeria's financial health and its ability to repay its debt. A high debt/GDP ratio indicates that Nigeria has a large debt burden relative to its economic output, which can lead to concerns

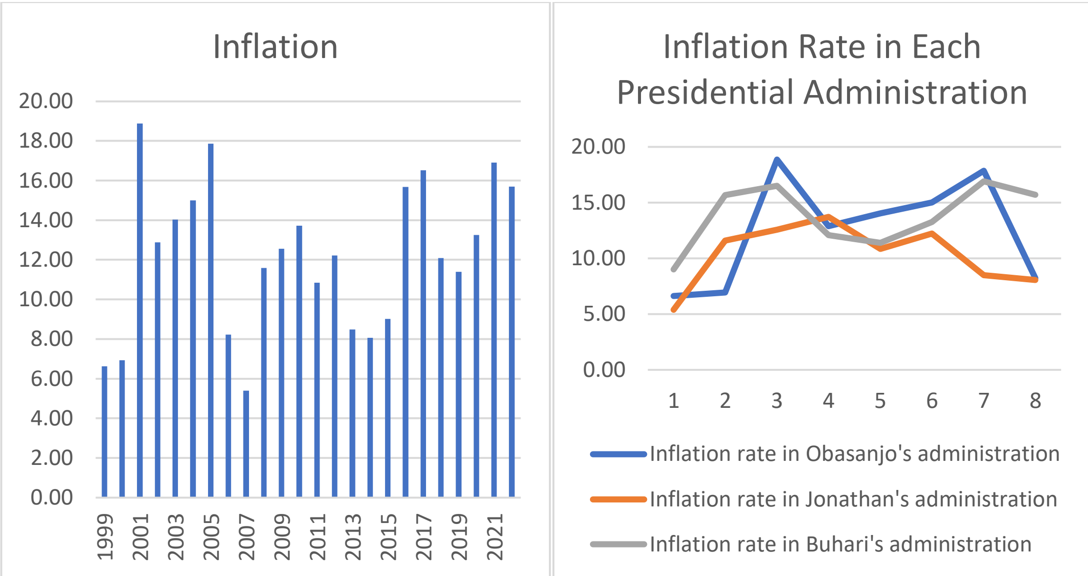
	about its ability to service its debt in the long run. Generally, a debt/GDP ratio below 60% is considered healthy, while a ratio above 90% is considered high and can potentially signal an impending financial crisis. However, the appropriate level of debt-to-GDP ratio varies depending on a country's economic circumstances, political factors, and other factors.

4. Results And Discussion

The approach outlined earlier was utilized on the dataset gathered, with an emphasis on identifying external factors that influenced economic and social conditions throughout the country and might explain the disparities in government performance, and to contrast the quality of governance between successive administrations between 1999 and 2023.

It's important to note that Nigeria has had three successive democratically-elected governments since 1999: The Olusegun Obasanjo government (1999-2007), the Umaru Yar'Adua government (2007-2010), the Goodluck Jonathan government (2010-2015), and the Muhammadu Buhari government (2015-2023). However, for the purpose of this study, Umaru Yar'Adua administration and the Goodluck Jonathan government is classified as one government spanning 2007 to 2015.

Fig 1: Inflation rate.



Source: Authors compilation (2023)

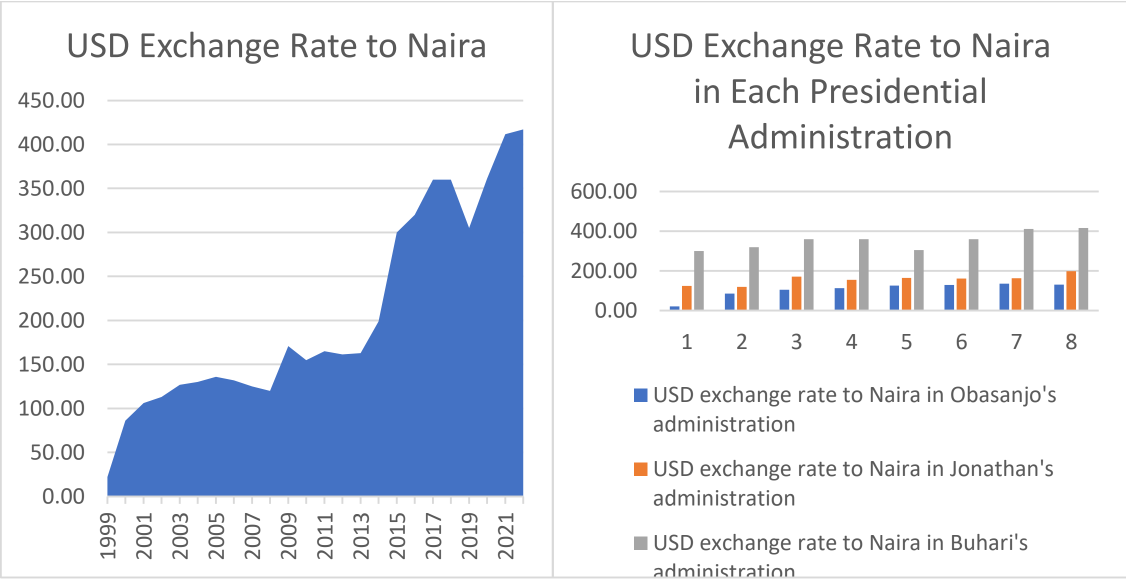
4.1 Inflation Rate

The graphical representation in Fig. 1, depicts the inflation (Macrotrends LLC, 2022) trendline spanning several years, segmented by each administration's tenure. Notably, a drastic decline in inflation occurred towards the tail end of both Obasanjo's and Jonathan's administration, while inflation rates remained relatively low throughout the latter's tenure. President Obasanjo met a single digit inflation of about 6.62 in 1999 and after about two years faced a spike up to a maximum of 18.87 in 2001 but was able to respond adequately with various economic measures that finally brought the inflation under control at an average of 8.23 as at December 2006 and further downwards before Jonathan's government took over in 2007. After witnessing all-time low of an average of 5.39 in 2007, Jonathan lost control and between 2008 and 2012 maintained double-digit with the highest in 2010 of 13.72, probably due to the global economic crisis in 2008. However, as at the time Jonathan left office in 2015, inflation has reduced to single-digit of an average of 8.06 as at December 2014. These observations suggest that both President Obasanjo and President Jonathan adeptly navigated inflationary pressures, showcasing their capacity and proficiency in economic policy management. President Buhari on the other hand, met a single-digit inflation of an average of 9.01 in 2015 but from 2016 upwards, the inflation figures have continued on an upward trajectory by maintaining a double-digit to an all-time high in December 2022 of a yearly average of 15.70.

4.2 USD Exchange rate to Naira

As evidenced by the graphical depictions in Fig. 2, the USD exchange rate (Olugbemi, 2021) has demonstrated a consistent upward trajectory over the years, with a sharp escalation observed during the tenure of President Buhari. President Obasanjo met an overvalued Naira at 21.89 to USD and within two years between 1999 and 2001 devalued the currency first to an average of 85.98 in 2000 and next to 106.00 to USD in 2001. He was subsequently able to maintain the value of the exchange rate and the Naira was relatively stable at an average of 131.80 as at December 2006. As at the first year of President Jonathan 2007, the exchange rate witnessed a downward trend and firmed up at an average of 125.00 to a USD. It further went down to 120.00 the next year until it started rallying upwards in 2009 and finally to an average

Fig 2: USD Exchange rate to Naira



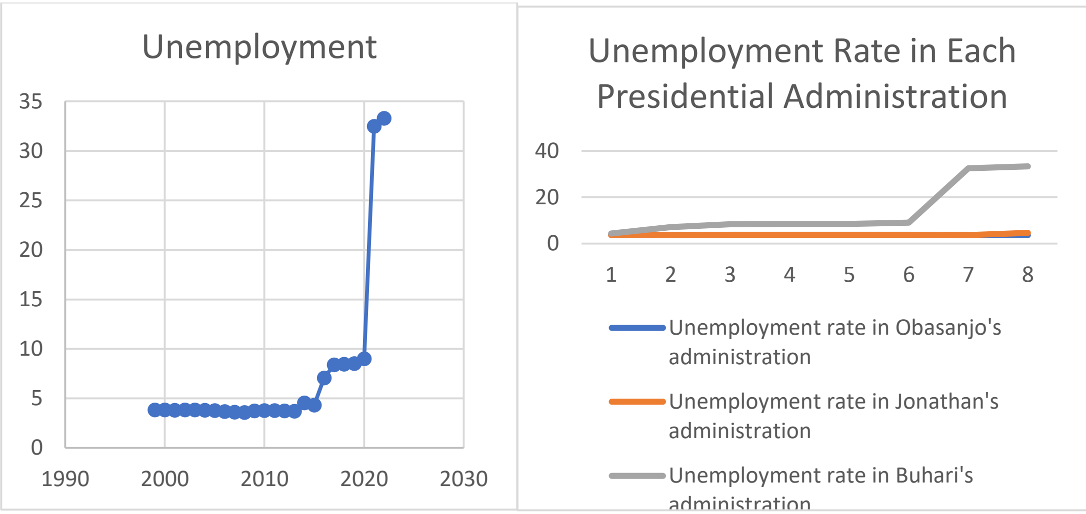
Source: Author's compilation (2023)

of 199.00 in December 2014. However, within the first year of President Buhari, there was a significant surge to 300.00 as at the end of 2015 and by the end of 2022 after more than 7 years of his administration, the value of the Naira has fallen to an all-time low of 417.00 to a USD on the official window while the black/parallel market is about an average of 750.00 to a USD. This surge in exchange rate bears significant implications for the economy, potentially resulting in increased import costs, trade imbalances, and inflationary pressures, among other industry-specific effects.

4.3 Rate of Unemployment

As illustrated by the graphical data in Fig. 3, the rate of unemployment (Macrotrends LLC, 2022) experienced an insignificant growth trend during the tenures of both Presidents Obasanjo and Jonathan. In 1999, the unemployment rate was as low as 3.85% and for about 16 years – 1999-2014, highest unemployment rate was witnessed in 2014 with an average of 4.56. However, the situation took a sharp turn during President Buhari's administration, with an alarming spike in unemployment levels peaking at an all-time high of 33.30% as at December 2022. This trend holds significant ramifications for both citizens and the economy, potentially leading to decreased consumer spending, increased poverty rates, reduced productivity, and other industry-specific consequences.

Fig 3: Rate of Unemployment

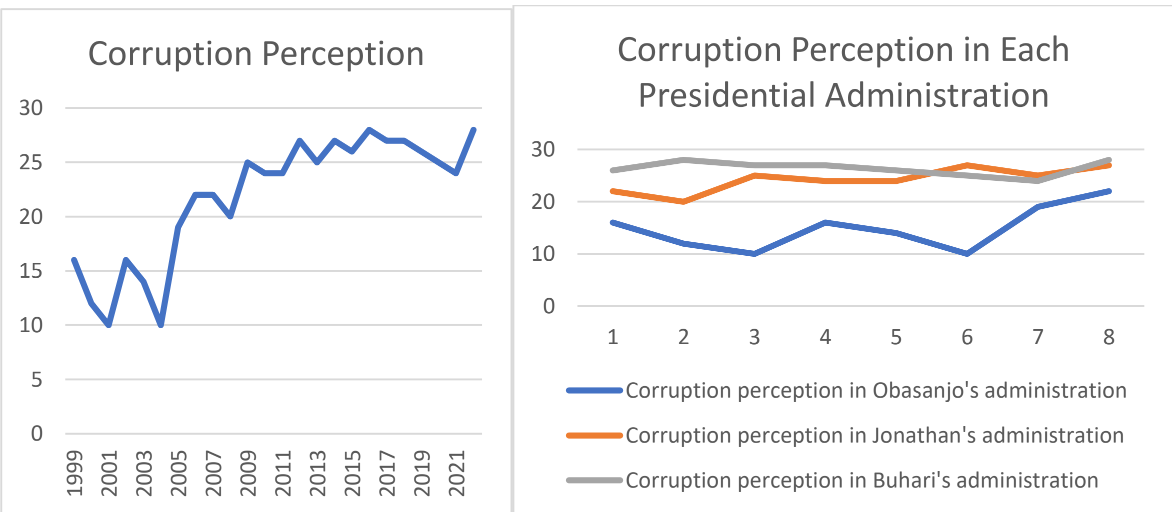


Source: Author’s compilation (2023)

4.4 Corruption Perception

The graphical representations in Fig. 4, portrays a consistent upward trend in the perception of corruption (countryeconomy.com, 2023), with notable variations across successive administrations. It is imperative to note that corruption perception refers to the public's opinion regarding the prevalence of corrupt practices in government and society. In this regard, a high perception of corruption can significantly undermine public trust in government institutions, deter foreign investment, and hamper economic growth. Thus, proper governance and a robust anti-corruption framework are crucial to mitigate the negative effects of corruption perception and foster sustainable economic development. The charts indicate that while corruption perception was intertwined during the administrations of Presidents Jonathan and Buhari, it was comparatively lower during President Obasanjo's tenure. Corruption is widely recognized as a key barrier to the quality of government, undermining public trust in institutions and eroding the rule of law. Several studies have explored the impact of corruption on various

Fig 4: Corruption Perception



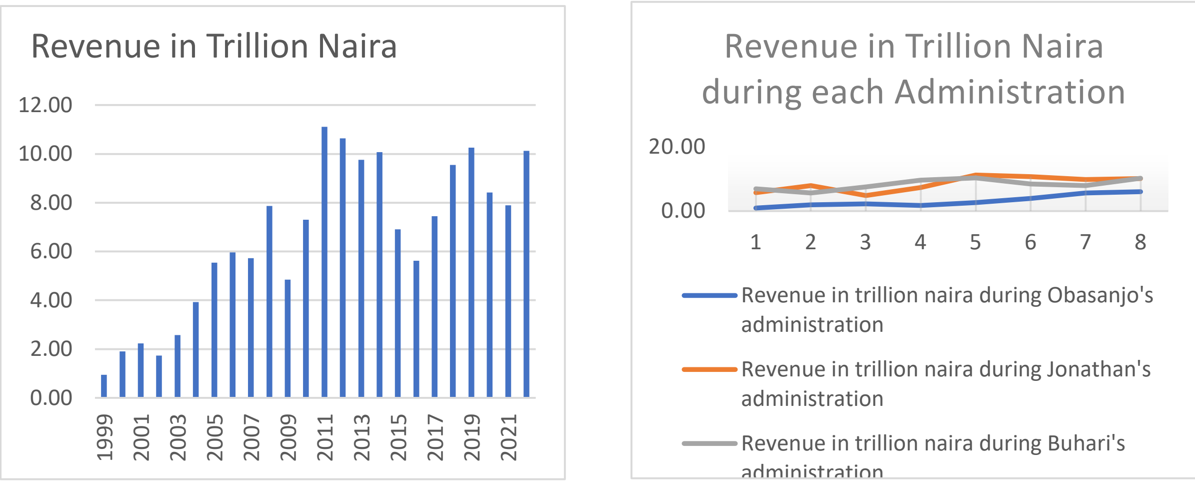
Source: Author’s compilation (2023)

aspects of governance, including the provision of public services, the allocation of public resources, and the enforcement of regulations. However, there is debate over how corruption can be effectively addressed, with some scholars advocating for institutional reforms and others emphasizing the importance of social norms and collective action.

4.5 Revenue in Trillion Naira

The graphical data in Fig. 5, depicts a gradual increase in revenue (OECD, 2023), measured in Trillion naira, across successive administrations. Notably, during President Obasanjo's tenure, the revenue growth trend remained consistent and steady, while a more erratic pattern was observed during Presidents Jonathan and Buhari's administrations. Obasanjo met a paltry revenue generation of about 0.95 trillion naira in 1999 and he was able to significantly grow it to 5.97 trillion naira as at December 2006. President Jonathan on the other hand, continued on an upward trajectory from 5.73 in 2007 to almost double the size to 10.07 trillion as at December 2014. As at the time President Buhari took over, the revenue witnessed a downward

Fig. 5: Revenue in Trillion Naira



Source: Author's compilation (2023)

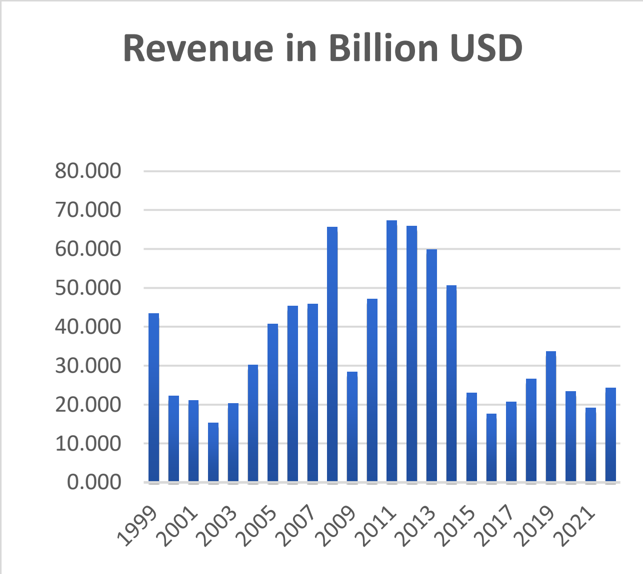
trend to 6.91 as at the end of his first year. Although, he was able to drive it back to 10.26 in the life of his administration, he however lost momentum afterwards and managed to sluggishly reach 10.13 trillion naira as at the end of December 2022. It is crucial to note that revenue growth is a vital component of a robust economy, enabling governments to fund essential public services, reduce deficits, and invest in infrastructure and human capital development. Hence, a steady and sustainable revenue growth trajectory is paramount to ensuring long-term economic stability and sustainable development.

4.6 Revenue in Billion USD

The chart in Fig. 6 illustrates that the revenue measured in billion USD/foreign exchange earnings (Opeyemi, 2022) experienced a notable increase during President Jonathan's tenure. It is observed that the average total foreign exchange earnings (total exports and FDI) between the various administrations from 1999 to 2023 are \$262.11B, \$827.48B, \$433.05B respectively. It is important to note that revenue growth, particularly in foreign currency, is a crucial component of a strong economy. It enables governments to bolster foreign reserves, promote international trade, and finance large-scale infrastructure projects and social programs.

Therefore, a high revenue base in billion USD can significantly boost economic growth, foreign exchange rate, drive job creation, and enhance overall standards of living.

Fig 6: Revenue in Billion USD

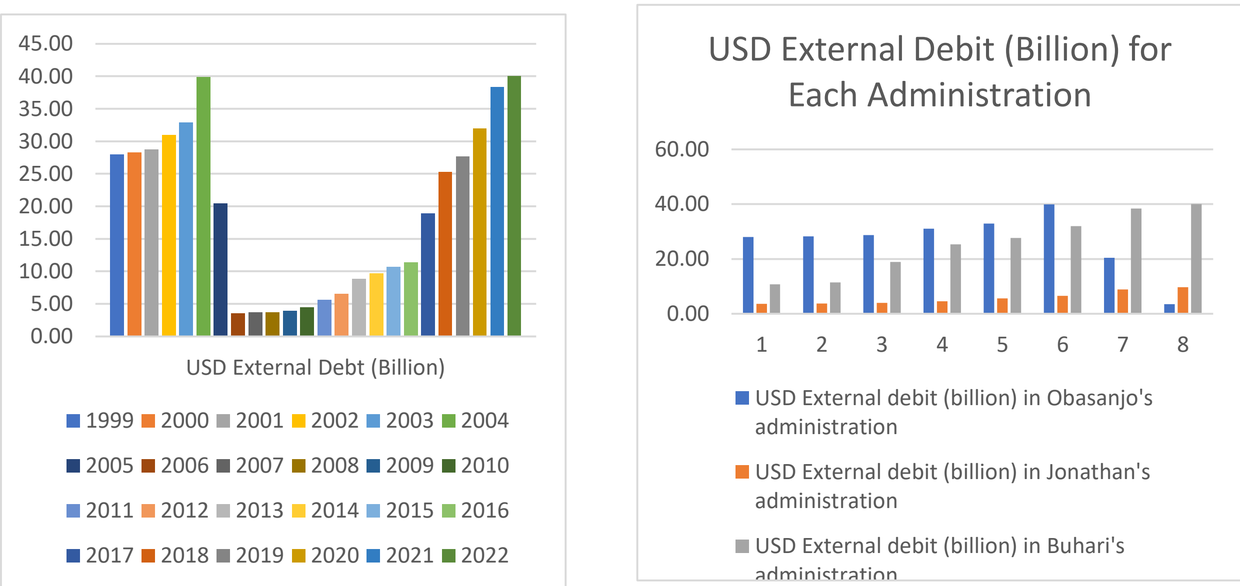


Source: Author's Compilation (2023)

4.7 USD external debt (Billion)

The graphical data in Fig. 7 illustrates a significant disparity in USD external debt (Macrotrends, 2023) levels between President Jonathan's tenure and those of his successors. Notably, the external debt burden was relatively low during President Jonathan's administration, while both Presidents Obasanjo and Buhari's administrations saw a high external debt levels. It is however noteworthy that President Obasanjo met a total foreign debt stock of $28.04B and as at the time he left office in 2007, he was able to renegotiate and pay off the debt leaving a paltry balance total of $3.54B as at December 2006. President Jonathan on the other hand, met an average of $3.54B on assumption of office in 2007 and left office with an average foreign debt profile of $9.71B in 2015 – adding a total of $6.17B in eight years of his administration. Whereas President Buhari met an average foreign debt stock of $9.71B

Fig 7: USD external debt (Billion)



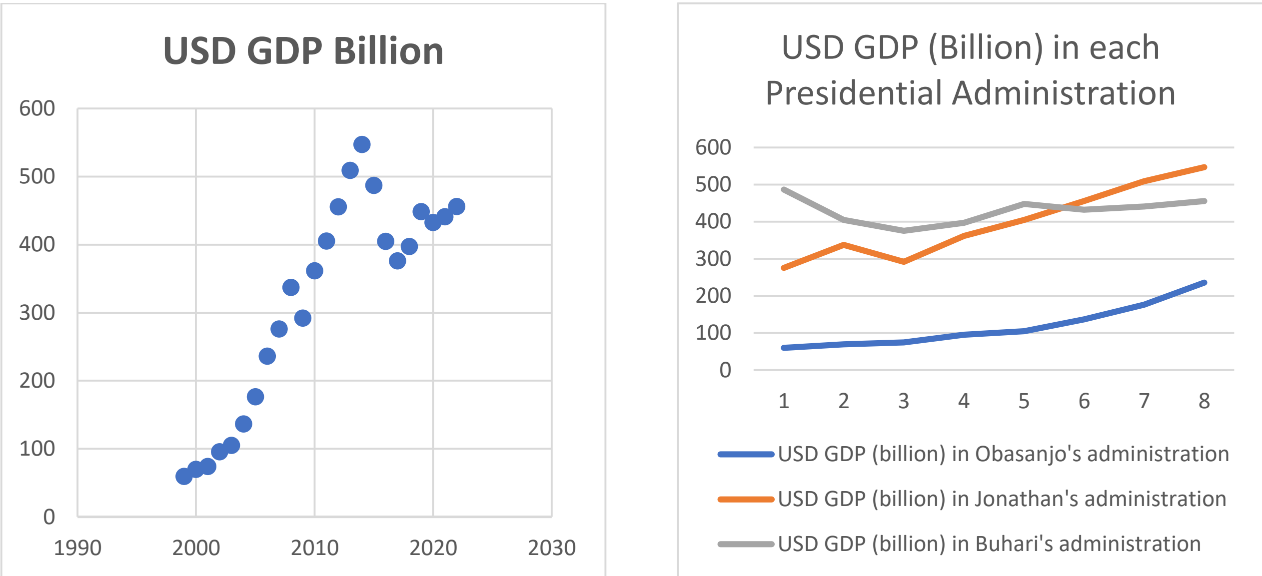
Source: Author's compilation (2023)

and he is due to leave office this year in May 2023 and he is leaving with an average total foreign debt of \$40.00B as at December 2022 – adding a total of \$30.29B in his eight years. It is essential to note that an excessively high external debt burden can significantly impede economic growth, limit public investment, and raise the risk of default. Thus, managing external debt levels is critical to ensuring sustainable economic development and long-term financial stability.

4.8 USD GDP Billion

The graphical representations in Fig. 8, reveals intriguing insights into the evolution of USD GDP, a critical economic indicator that measures the value of goods and services produced within an economy in a given period, across successive administrations. Notably, the data indicates that during President Obasanjo's tenure, the USD GDP (in billion) experienced a low growth trajectory. However, the trend shifted during President Jonathan's administration, with a consistent upward trend observed. Nevertheless, the growth trajectory during President Buhari's tenure was not maintained, indicating the challenges faced in managing the economy during that period. It is crucial to note that USD GDP is a crucial barometer of economic health, driving investment, and reflecting the standard of living. A steady and sustainable USD GDP growth trajectory is essential to ensure long-term economic stability, boost job creation, and enhance living standards for citizens.

Fig 8: USD GDP Billion

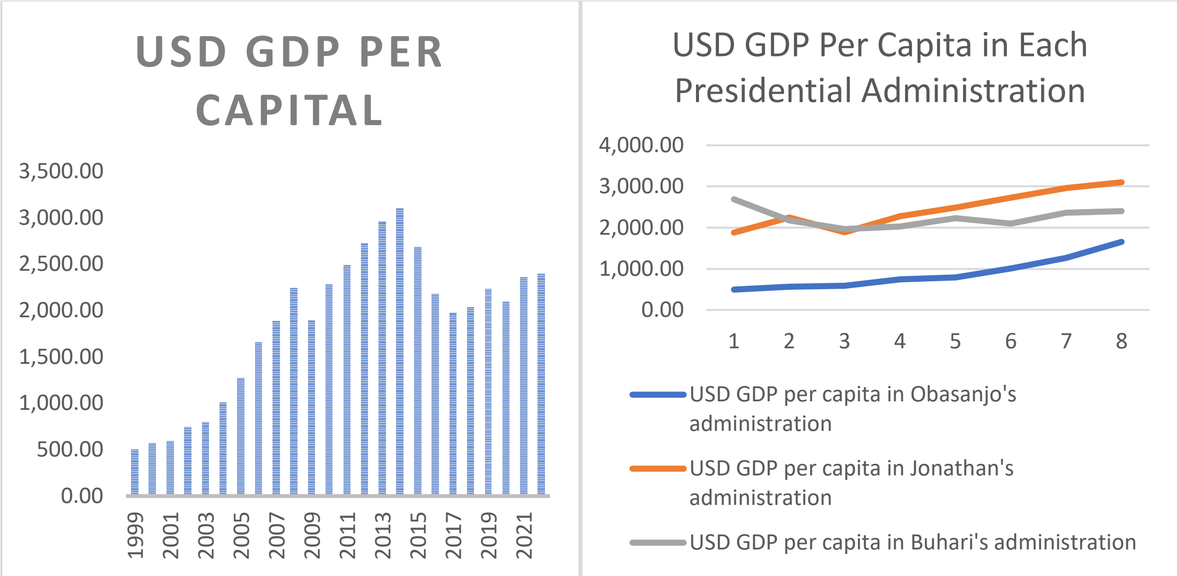


Source: Author's compilation (2023)

4.9 USD GDP per capital

The graphical data presented in Fig. 9, provides valuable insights into the trends in USD GDP per capita, a crucial measure of economic productivity that indicates the value of goods and services produced per person in an economy. Specifically, the data reveals that during President Obasanjo's tenure, USD GDP per capita experienced a low growth trajectory. However, this trend shifted during President Jonathan's tenure, with a consistent upward trajectory observed. Nevertheless, the growth momentum was not maintained during President Buhari's tenure, indicating the challenges he encountered in managing the economy during that period. It is important to note that USD GDP per capita is a critical indicator of economic welfare, measuring the standard of living of citizens and driving investment. Thus, a steady and sustainable growth trajectory is crucial to ensuring long-term economic stability, promoting job creation, and enhancing the well-being of the populace.

Fig 9: USD GDP per capital

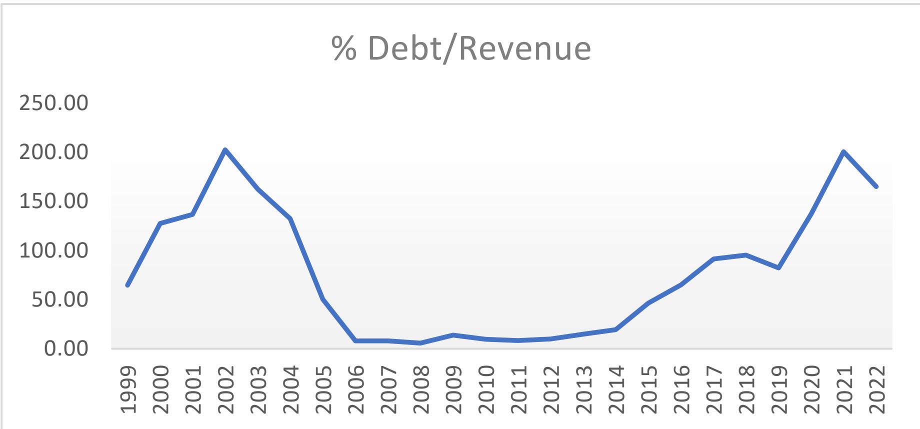


Source: Author’s compilation (2023)

4.10 %Debt/Revenue

The data presented in the chart in Fig. 10 reveals an intriguing insight into the percentage of debt per revenue, a crucial economic indicator that reflects a government's ability to manage its debts effectively. Notably, the data indicates that during President Jonathan's administration, the percentage of debt per revenue was relatively low, suggesting a relatively healthy

Fig 10: Percentage debt per revenue



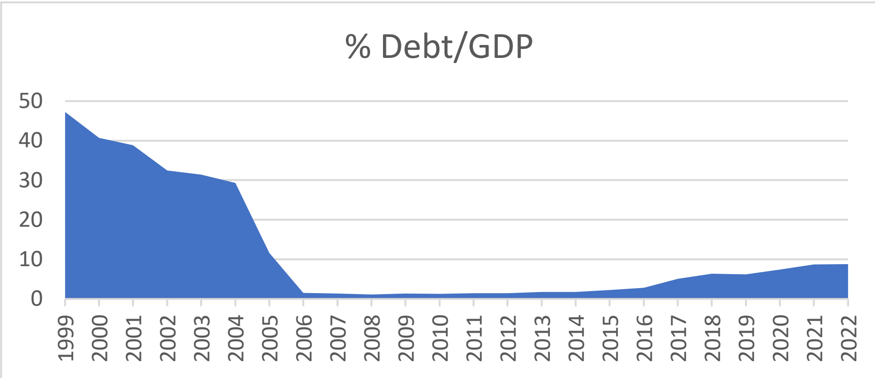
Source: Author’s compilation (2023)

debt management strategy. It is observed that President Obasanjo administration witnessed a spiraling ratio from 64.66 in 1999 and got to a peak of 202.22 in 2003 until it achieved a reversal and down to a record level of 7.83 in December 2006. President Jonathan maintained the low level trajectory for about 2 to 3 years and thereafter faced some turbulence period in 2009 but was able to overcome temporarily and finally peaked at 19.19 in December 2014. On the other hand, President Buhari met an average ratio of 19.19 and it has been an upward trajectory since he took over governance in 2015, and as at December 2022, it has gone to 164.76. This is a critical metric that investors and creditors often scrutinize when assessing a country's economic stability and creditworthiness. Thus, an efficient debt management strategy is crucial to ensuring the long-term financial viability of a government and boosting investor confidence.

4.11 Percentage debt per GDP

The data presented in the chart in Fig. 11 sheds light on the percentage of debt per GDP, a critical economic indicator that reflects a government's level of indebtedness relative to its economic output. Intriguingly, the data reveals that during President Obasanjo's tenure, the percentage of debt per GDP was alarmingly high, indicating a potentially unsustainable level of borrowing relative to the country's economic productivity. However, Obasanjo was able to bring the ratio down from 47.23 when he assumed governance to 1.50 in December 2006, while President Jonathan was able to maintain the trajectory but slightly nudged forward to 1.78 as at December 2006. President Buhari on the other hand, could not sustain the trajectory and continued on an upward spiral to 8.78 as at December 2022. This indicator is a critical issue that investors and creditors often scrutinize when assessing a country's creditworthiness and economic stability. High levels of debt can lead to a debt crisis, economic instability, and damage to investor confidence. Hence, maintaining a manageable level of debt relative to GDP is crucial to ensuring

Fig 11: Percentage debt per GDP



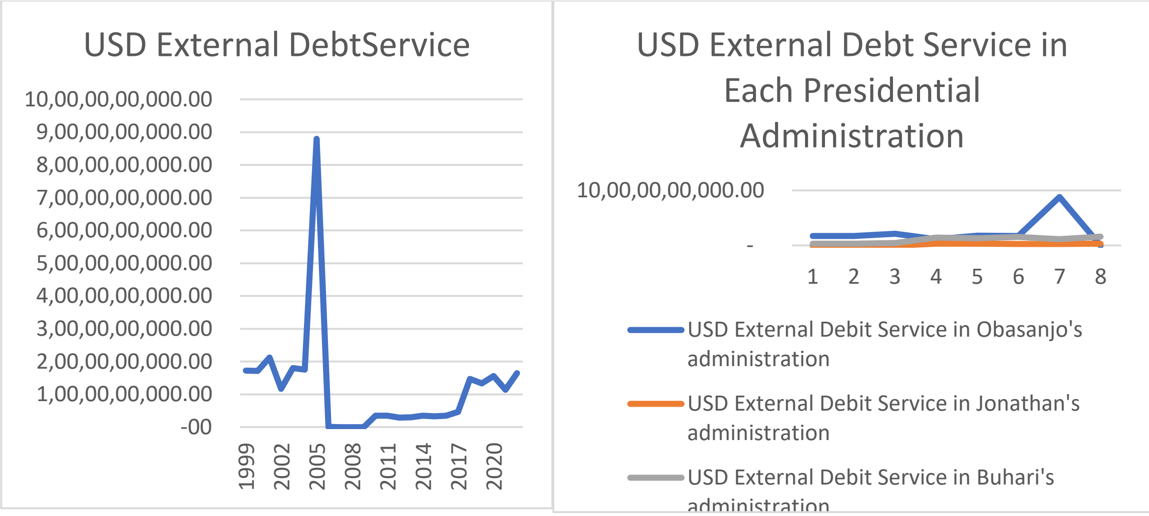
Source: Author’s compilation (2023)

long-term financial stability and sustainable economic growth.

4.12 USD external Debt Service

The charts presented in Fig. 12, offer a fascinating insight into the trends of USD external debt service, a crucial economic indicator that measures a country's ability to meet its debt obligations to foreign creditors. The data indicates that during President Obasanjo's tenure, the USD external debt service was notably high, particularly in the second-to-last year of his administration. This implies that the country was dedicating a significant portion of its foreign exchange earnings to servicing external debts, potentially at the expense of other critical sectors of the economy. However, his strategic debt management approach paid off and despite the high level of debt servicing obligation - \$1.72B that he met on assumption of office, he was able to manage and drive it down substantially to \$6.72M as at December 2006 and further to an average of \$0.91M in the 2nd quarter of 2007 when President Jonathan took over the reign of leadership. President Jonathan maintained the trajectory downward to \$0.43M in 2009 and thereafter spiraled upward to \$0.35B as at December 2014. President Buhari took it continuously upward and as at December 2022, it is \$1.65B. It should be emphasized that this is a crucial metric that international investors and creditors often scrutinize when evaluating a country's creditworthiness and economic stability. Therefore, maintaining a manageable external debt service level is essential to ensuring long-term economic stability and sustainable growth.

Fig 12: USD external Debt Service



Source: Author's compilation (2023)

5. Evaluation

In chapter 4, we have presented and analyzed the time series charts in 12 metrics and have provided the performances of successive government from 1999 to 2023. This chapter is meant to provide the evaluations of each government as it relates to the quality of governance.

5.1 President Olusegu Obasanjo (1999-2007)

In all the indices considered in this paper, President Obasanjo performed relatively well – his government introduced several reforms that helped to stabilize and grow the economy. He tackled inflation which he met at 6.2 and despite the headwind, he was able to bring it back to about 6.0. Similarly, he maintained a single digit unemployment of less than 4.0, he grew the revenue from 0.95 trillion naira to 5.97 trillion as at December 2006. Although in foreign exchange management, he devalued the Naira twice – first in 1999 from 21.89 to 85.98 Naira to a Dollar, and in 2000 he further devalued it to 106.00 and as at 2007, the naira was exchanging for about 125.00. The greatest strength of Obasanjo was witnessed in the management of the nation's foreign debt. On external debt and debt service, President Obasanjo demonstrated high level of management acumen as he was able to renegotiate and liquidate Nigeria's foreign debt to the extent that as at 2007 when he left office, the foreign debt has been reduced from \$28.04B to a paltry \$3.54B as at December 2006 with a debt/revenue and debt/GDP of 7.83 and 1.05 respectively. Although, he fought corruption by the creation of two new agencies – Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Corruption Perception Index still climbed from 16 points where he met it, to 22 points in 2007 and corruption remained a major problem throughout his presidency.

5.2 President Umaru Musa Yar'adua/Goodluck Jonathan (2007-2015)

As indicated earlier, the tenures of Umaru Musa Yar'adua/Goodluck Jonathan are classified as President Jonathan's (2007-2015). President Jonathan met a fairly stable economy between 2007 and 2010 and he unveiled his Transformation Agenda – a framework designed to implement policies that would accelerate economic growth and reforms that will improve the lives of Nigerians and bring development in critical spheres of the economy (Akande, 2022). Under his transformational watch, Nigeria was rated as the largest economy in Africa and the 23rd in the world by the World Bank and the IMF, with a GDP well above \$486.80B in 2007. He left inflation at single digit of 8.06 as at December 2006 despite the global economic crisis between 2008 and 2009, and unemployment at 4.56. The foreign exchange rate was fairly managed but slumped from 131.80 in 2007 to 199.00 Naira to a Dollar as at December 2014. Jonathan met a low foreign debt burden and was able to sustain the low external debt and debt service throughout his administration, although he handed over a debt burden slightly higher than he met it at \$9.71B while debt/revenue and debt/GDP were 19.19 and

1.78 respectively. On the revenue side, he was able to grow the revenue from 5.73 trillion naira to 10.07 trillion as at December 2006. Despite the favourable economic indicators during his tenure, his main albatross was corruption, on which his administration is rated 27 in Corruption Perception Index as at December 2014.

5.3 President Muhammadu Buhari (2015-2023)

President Buhari came into office on a mantra of anti-corruption, economy and security in 2015. In anti-corruption, he failed just like his predecessors with a Corruption Perception Index of 24 points as at December 2022. In the economy, he performed far below his predecessors with inflation of over 21%, unemployment of over 33.30%, and foreign exchange rate of 465 naira to a Dollar at official rate and about 760 at parallel rate – this has seen the value of Naira slumped from 199.00 to a Dollar in 2015 to this all-time low in 2023. In other areas such as foreign debt stock, the story is the same. It may be noted however, that one of the worst legacy of Buhari;s administration is the huge debt burden that he amassed during his 8-year tenure. As at December 2022, Nigeria's external debt stock has ballooned to $40.00B from about $10B that he met at assumption of office. Correspondingly, the debt/revenue and debt/GDP ratios have equally escalated to an all-time high of 164.76 and 8.78 respectively. It may be necessary to state that managing external debt is essential in maintaining a stable economy and avoiding debt crises (Goyal & Bhatnagar, 2021). In some cases, the size of the debt might be huge in relation with the economy size of the borrower and this may lead to a possible capital flight and even more, it discourages private investment (Ejigayehu & Persson, 2013). Equally, debt servicing by export earnings may affect economic growth by depleting available income for social service activities.

6. Conclusion

Based on the time series analysis and evaluation, the quality of government was measured in about 12 basic economic indicators which include Inflation, Exchange Rate, Unemployment, Corruption Perception Index, Revenue, External Debt, GDP, GDP per Capita, Debt/Revenue, Debt/GDP, and External Debt Service. It is evident that the Nigerian economy experienced different trends during the tenures of Presidents Obasanjo, Jonathan, and Buhari which tend to provide an indication on the impacts of their respective economic policies and programs on the overall wellbeing and quality of life of citizens. In conclusion, this research has shown that higher quality of government is associated with better economic performance, higher levels of human development, and greater citizen satisfaction, and that varied factors may be responsible for variation in any government performance.

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