

# CHALLENGES CONFRONTING EFFECTIVE LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHTS IN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, ABUJA

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## Abstract

Legislative oversight is a critical component in the governance of any nation, ensuring that executive actions are conducted within the boundaries of law and policy. In Nigeria, the effectiveness of legislative oversight is often hampered by a variety of challenges, which subsequently affects infrastructural development. The paper examines the challenges confronting effective legislative oversights in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Structural functionalism theory was adopted as its appropriate framework of analysis. The study utilized survey method, incorporating both primary and secondary sources of data. The study found that challenges militating against effective legislative oversight in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, include limited resources, lack of political will, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and inadequate training of legislators. Additionally, there is often a lack of transparency and accountability, along with political interference, which hampers effective oversight. To address these challenges, it is essential to promote a culture of transparency, reduce bureaucratic red tape, and ensure political neutrality in oversight functions. Strengthening institutional frameworks and fostering collaboration between government bodies can also enhance legislative effectiveness and accountability.

**Keywords:** Legislative Oversight, Accountability, Judicial Complexities, Resource Allocation, Infrastructural Development, FCT



## INTRODUCTION

Legislative oversight represents a fundamental pillar of democratic governance, acting as a critical mechanism for accountability, transparency, and adherence to the rule of law. Across the globe, this function facilitates the monitoring and evaluation of executive actions, safeguarding public interest and reinforcing the checks and balances essential in a robust democracy. In this context, legislative bodies hold the responsibility of scrutinizing governmental activities, policies, and thereby curbing excesses and fostering a culture of transparency and integrity within the public sector. However, the effectiveness of this oversight role varies significantly across different regions, reflecting a myriad of challenges that legislators encounter in their efforts to hold the executive accountable. Understanding these challenges is pivotal for developing strategies that can address the pressing issues of infrastructural development, which are vital for economic growth and societal well-being.

At the global level, the effectiveness of legislative oversight is contingent upon various institutional, political, and socio-economic factors. Legislative bodies in mature democracies often possess extensive resources, autonomy, and institutional support, enabling them to perform their oversight functions more effectively. For instance, parliaments in countries with long-standing democratic traditions typically have well-established procedures and practices that facilitate thorough scrutiny of government actions (Wehner, 2021). These legislative bodies benefit from a high degree of institutional memory and expertise, allowing them to engage in detailed analysis and oversight of complex policy areas.

Conversely, in emerging democracies and developing countries, the landscape of legislative oversight is markedly different. Here, legislative institutions often grapple with limited resources, weaker institutional frameworks, and less established democratic traditions, which can undermine their oversight capabilities (Power & Taylor, 2020). The political context in these regions frequently involves stronger executive dominance and less political will to empower legislative bodies, further complicating their oversight role. This dynamic creates a significant disparity in the effectiveness of legislative oversight between different parts of the world.

Africa presents a unique case in the discourse on legislative oversight. The continent's diverse political and socio-economic contexts result in varied experiences with legislative oversight. While some African countries have made significant strides in enhancing the capacity and

effectiveness of their legislative bodies, others continue to face substantial hurdles. In some instances, legislative oversight in Africa is characterized by strong institutional frameworks and active parliamentary committees that engage rigorously with executive actions (Opalo, 2019). These advancements reflect broader trends towards democratization and improved governance practices on the continent.

However, many African countries still struggle with weak institutional capacities, limited resources, and pervasive political interference that hamper effective legislative oversight. In such environments, legislative bodies often lack the necessary autonomy and support to challenge the executive effectively. This situation is compounded by broader governance issues, such as corruption and lack of transparency, which further diminish the capacity of legislatures to perform their oversight functions effectively (Barkan, 2018). Despite these challenges, there is a growing recognition of the importance of strengthening legislative oversight as a means to enhance accountability and good governance in Africa.

In Nigeria, the landscape of legislative oversight is shaped by the country's complex political dynamics and governance challenges. As Africa's most populous nation and largest economy, Nigeria's legislative institutions play a crucial role in the country's democratic framework. The National Assembly, comprising the Senate and the House of Representatives, is vested with significant oversight powers, including the authority to investigate the activities of the executive branch and other public institutions (Ojo, 2020). This legislative oversight function is intended to promote transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in governance.

Despite the formal powers granted to the Nigerian legislature, the effectiveness of legislative oversight in practice is often constrained by various factors. These include limited resources, political interference, and a lack of institutional capacity. Additionally, the complex and often contentious political environment in Nigeria can hinder the ability of the legislature to perform its oversight role effectively. Issues such as partisanship, executive dominance, and corruption further complicate the oversight process, limiting the impact of legislative scrutiny on governance outcomes (Omotola, 2019).

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Nigeria presents a microcosm of the broader challenges confronting legislative oversight in the country. As the seat of the national government, the FCT has unique governance structures and oversight mechanisms. The Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) and other local government bodies within the FCT are subject to oversight by the National Assembly, particularly through its committees (Aiyede, 2021). This oversight function is crucial for ensuring that

governance within the FCT adheres to legal and policy frameworks, promoting efficient and accountable public administration.

However, the effectiveness of legislative oversight in the FCT is often hampered by similar issues that affect the broader Nigerian context. These include resource constraints, political interference, and institutional weaknesses. The oversight process is also complicated by the unique administrative and political status of the FCT, which requires a delicate balance between federal and local governance structures. As a result, ensuring effective legislative oversight in the FCT remains a challenging task, necessitating concerted efforts to strengthen institutional capacities and promote a culture of accountability (Agbakwuru, 2020). Therefore, the objective of this paper is to explore the challenges that hinder effective legislative oversight in the FCT, particularly in the context of infrastructural development, and propose viable solutions to overcome these challenges.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In spite of the fact that since the return to democratic rule, the legislature is expected to collaborate and check the excesses of the executive particularly in implementing infrastructural development projects within Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT). And despite the fact that the FCT is the seat of power to every administration since 1999 housing the national assembly and posing with one senator representing Abuja and two House of representative members representing Abuja-South and AMAC/Bwari; About 25 years' budgets since 1999 containing roads, water supply, and electricity infrastructural provisions have been appropriated by the National Assembly and signed by the executive for onward implementation in the FCT and environ. Yet the state of development of infrastructural facilities like roads, water supply, sewers and electricity within the environs/suburbs of the FCT which serve as home for the greatest population of its workers remains grossly underdeveloped. One primary challenge is political interference. Approximately 45% of respondents in a study by Johnson and Adeyemi (2023) indicated that political interference significantly hampers legislative oversight. This interference often manifests through pressure from higher political authorities or vested interests, which undermines the autonomy and effectiveness of legislative bodies. This aligns with findings by Adebayo (2022), who noted that political interference often results in biased decision-making and lack of accountability in the oversight process.

It is worrisome that most legislatures in Nigeria do not have a clear understanding of the economics, social and environmental aspects of infrastructure thereby raising issues as regards their capacity to ensure infrastructural developments. In 2021 alone, the Senate passed a total of N329 billion (329,963,491,523) as statutory budget for infrastructural development in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) for the 2021 fiscal year (Iroanusi, 2021). Given the sums of monies involved in infrastructural development most infrastructural development project have been shaped by the motives of their developers- who are seasoned politicians fond of vanity projects and largely rent seeking. Hence the number of white-elephant projects that yearly renders appropriation act grossly over-budgeted thereby creating a disturbing scenario that undermines performances of infrastructural development.

In the face of the dwindling fortune of basic infrastructural development like roads, electricity, water supply and Sewers in the hands of the executive arm in urban and rural settlements, the extent to which legislative interactions- through their oversight function influence the effectiveness of the executive to implement better infrastructural development projects remains to be seen. It is against this backdrop that this study interrogates the challenges militating against effective legislative oversight in enhancing infrastructural development in the Federal Capital Territory.

### **Research Questions**

- i) What are the challenges militating against effective legislative oversight in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja?
- ii) What measures can be adopted to address these challenges and ensure infrastructural development in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja?

### **Objectives of the Study**

- i) To identify and analyse the challenges militating against effective legislative oversight in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.
- ii) To propose measures that can be adopted to address these challenges and ensure infrastructural development in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK/LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Legislature**

The term "legislature" refers to a deliberative body of individuals, usually elected, responsible for making, amending, and repealing laws within a particular political entity such as a country, state, or province. Legislatures are a fundamental component of democratic governance, serving as a check on executive power and representing the will of the people. They function through a structured process of debate, negotiation, and voting, where

proposed laws, known as bills, are scrutinized and modified before becoming law.

According to Hamalai (2014) a legislature is an assembly with the authority to make laws for a political entity such as a country or city. They are often contrasted with the executive and judicial powers of government. Laws enacted by legislatures are usually known as primary legislation. In addition, legislatures may observe and steer governing actions, with authority to amend the budget involved. The members of a legislature are called legislators. In a democracy, legislators are most commonly popularly elected, although indirect election and appointment by the executive are also used, particularly for bicameral legislatures featuring an upper chamber. Each chamber of the legislature consists of a number of legislators who use some form of parliamentary procedure to debate political issues and vote on proposed legislation. There must be a certain number of legislators present to carry out these activities; this is called a quorum. Some of the responsibilities of a legislature, such as giving first consideration to newly proposed legislation, are usually delegated to committees made up of a few of the members of the chamber(s). The members of a legislature usually represent different political parties; the members from each party generally meet as a caucus to organize their internal affairs.

Saliu & Bakare (2020) opines that all democratic institutions and features exist in other forms of undemocratic regimes, all except the legislature. The legislature is central and is at the heart of democracy to the extent that it is the only institution of government that symbolizes democracy. Its inviolability is seen on the grounds that any attack on the composition or functioning of the legislature is seen as a blow against democracy. The sweeping wave of democratization is made popular and enjoys the support of the people across the globe because it makes provisions for people's assembly, which other forms of government fail to provide. It affords the people the opportunity to participate in politics and governance by constitutionally entrenching their rights to vote and be voted for. As a result of the largeness of countries, which makes it practically impossible for all people to directly participate in governance, the legislature allows them to select, nominate and in most cases, elect representatives to the legislature to represent the interests of all the communities that make up the modern countries both in urban and rural areas. While it is difficult for the people (especially those in the rural areas) to access the executive and judiciary, the legislature is quite accessible to all by virtue of the proximity of legislators to the

grassroots. Through this, legislators serve as an important link between the people and governments.

### **Legislative Oversight**

Legislative oversight refers to the power and duty of legislatures to monitor and evaluate the actions and policies of the executive branch and its agencies. This function is essential to ensuring accountability, transparency, and adherence to laws and regulations within a governmental system. Legislative oversight can take various forms, including hearings, investigations, audits, and reports, and is typically conducted through committees specifically established for this purpose. The primary goal is to ensure that executive actions align with legislative intent and to prevent misuse or abuse of power. One of the fundamental aspects of legislative oversight is its role in maintaining a system of checks and balances. As noted by [Aberbach \(1990\)](#), effective oversight mechanisms are crucial for a healthy democratic system, ensuring that no single branch of government oversteps its boundaries or acts beyond its authorized powers. Legislatures use oversight to scrutinize how laws are implemented and whether public funds are spent effectively, thus protecting public interests and fostering trust in government.

Through various methods, such as public hearings and testimonies from executive officials, legislatures gather information necessary to evaluate executive performance. These activities are not just about finding faults but also about improving governmental operations. Legislators may summon agency heads or other officials to explain their actions, providing a platform for transparency and accountability. Additionally, as [McCubbins and Schwartz \(1984\)](#) describe, oversight can be either "police patrol" or "fire alarm." The former involves regular and proactive monitoring, while the latter is reactive, responding to specific complaints or issues. The oversight function is also critical in budgetary control. Legislatures review and approve budgets, ensuring that expenditures align with authorized purposes and that financial management adheres to legislative guidelines. This process often involves detailed examinations of financial reports and audits, helping to identify inefficiencies and instances of corruption or mismanagement. By holding the executive accountable for budgetary practices, legislatures help ensure that public resources are used wisely and effectively.

Moreover, legislative oversight has a significant role in policy evaluation and legislative review. Legislatures assess the effectiveness of policies and programs, providing feedback and recommendations for improvements. This continuous evaluation helps to refine and adapt policies to changing circumstances and needs. As [Rockman \(1984\)](#) emphasizes, this evaluative aspect of oversight is vital for dynamic governance, allowing legislatures to respond to new challenges and opportunities effectively. In essence, legislative oversight is an indispensable element of democratic

governance, underpinning the principles of accountability and transparency. It ensures that executive actions are in line with legislative intentions and that public resources are managed responsibly. Effective oversight mechanisms help prevent abuses of power, promote efficient government operations, and enhance public trust in the political system.

### **Infrastructural Development**

Infrastructural development refers to the construction, enhancement, and maintenance of fundamental facilities and systems that support the functioning of a society and its economy. These facilities and systems encompass a wide range of physical structures such as transportation networks, energy systems, water supply, sewage treatment, telecommunications, and public institutions like schools and hospitals. The primary objective of infrastructural development is to improve the quality of life for residents, boost economic productivity, and ensure sustainable growth.

Boyle (2023) defined infrastructure as the basic physical systems of a business, region, or nation and often involving the production of public goods or production processes. Examples of infrastructure include transportation systems, communication networks, sewage, water, and school systems. Investments in infrastructure tend to be costly and capital-intensive, but vital to a region's economic development and prosperity. Projects related to infrastructure improvements may be funded publicly, privately, or through public-private partnerships. Infrastructure includes a variety of systems and structures where physical components are required such as the electrical grid across a city, state, or country. While the facilities, equipment, or similar physical assets like bridges and roads are essential to an economy, infrastructure also enables citizens to participate in the social and economic community and provides them with necessities such as food and water. Because infrastructure often involves the production of either public goods or goods that lend themselves to production, it is typical to see public financing, control, supervision, or regulation of infrastructure. This usually takes the form of direct government production or production by a closely regulated, legally sanctioned entity. Sometimes private companies choose to invest in a country's infrastructure development as part of a business expansion effort. For example, an energy company may build pipelines and railways in a country where it wants to refine petroleum and this investment can benefit both the company and the country. Individuals may also choose to fund improvements to certain pieces of public infrastructure. For example, an



individual may fund improvements to hospitals, schools, or local law enforcement efforts.

On his part, [Fidelis, Jude and Ighata \(2014\)](#) states that infrastructural development is the basic improvements on essential facilities and services that should be put in place for development to take place. Infrastructures facilitate and accelerate economic development, such that where there are no infrastructures, economic development and growth would be difficult to achieve. Economic development or growth is virtually impossible without a thriving infrastructure sector. Over the years, Nigeria has suffered poor infrastructural development, which has affected its economic growth. There have been many conversations around infrastructural development and several presentations of blueprints for mega projects by successive governments with little or no action in reality ([Jackson, 2022](#)).

From the foregoing, this study views infrastructure as the physical framework of facilities through which goods and services are provided to the general public and sees infrastructural development as the improvements on the facilities and services to improve the living standard of the societal people. Its linkages to the economy are multiple and complex, because it affects production and consumption directly, creating positive and negative spill-over effects and involves large inflow of expenditure.

### **Empirical Review**

[Adeyemi \(2020\)](#) in his work, "Legislative Oversight in Nigeria: The Role of the National Assembly," employs a mixed-method approach combining qualitative interviews with legislators and quantitative analysis of legislative records. The study reveals that one of the primary challenges confronting effective legislative oversight in Nigeria is the lack of adequate resources. Legislators often do not have access to the necessary information, financial resources, or expert support required to effectively scrutinize executive actions. The study finds that this inadequacy limits the ability of legislators to perform in-depth investigations and follow-ups on executive activities. The author recommends increasing budgetary allocations for legislative activities and improving access to information through enhanced collaboration between legislative committees and governmental agencies. The study underscores the importance of institutional capacity and political independence in enhancing legislative oversight. However, gaps remain in addressing the unique contextual factors affecting legislative oversight in specific regions, such as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The present study seeks to fill these gaps by focusing on the FCT's distinctive administrative and political environment. Unlike other states in Nigeria, the FCT has a unique status as the nation's capital, with its administrative structure directly under the federal government's control. This peculiarity necessitates a tailored

approach to understanding the challenges and opportunities for legislative oversight in the FCT.

Ojo (2020), in his work "Strengthening Legislative Oversight in Nigeria: An Evaluation of the National Assembly," uses a case study methodology to assess the effectiveness of legislative oversight mechanisms in Nigeria's National Assembly. The findings highlight the issue of political interference and partisanship, which often undermines the impartiality and effectiveness of oversight functions. The study recommends measures such as the depoliticization of legislative committees and the adoption of a non-partisan approach to oversight activities. Furthermore, the author advocates for greater public engagement and transparency in legislative processes, suggesting that increased public scrutiny can serve as a deterrent to executive malfeasance and promote accountability.

A study by Adegoroye (2019) titled "Legislative Oversight in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects" employs a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative interviews with quantitative analysis of legislative performance data. The author finds that one of the primary challenges is the lack of adequate resources and technical expertise among legislators. This deficit hampers their ability to effectively scrutinize and monitor executive actions. The study recommends the enhancement of legislative capacity through continuous training and the establishment of specialized oversight committees equipped with technical experts. Additionally, the study suggests the need for a more robust legal framework that delineates clear powers and functions for legislative bodies in oversight activities. Despite the insightful findings, the study identifies gaps that the present study aims to fill, particularly with a specific focus on the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. One significant gap is the insufficient exploration of localized challenges and context-specific strategies. While Adegoroye provide a comprehensive overview of national-level challenges, the unique administrative and political context of the FCT requires a more tailored approach. The FCT, being the political and administrative capital of Nigeria, faces distinct challenges related to infrastructural development, such as bureaucratic bottlenecks, land acquisition issues, and the complexities of urban planning. The present study seeks to address these gaps by conducting an in-depth empirical investigation into the challenges of legislative oversight specific to the FCT and proposing targeted measures to enhance infrastructural development in this area.

Johnson (2018) in "The Dynamics of Legislative Oversight in Nigeria: Issues and Prospects," uses a case study

methodology focusing on specific oversight activities of the National Assembly. Through document analysis and interviews with key informants, Johnson identifies political interference as a significant impediment to effective legislative oversight. The study highlights that the executive arm often exerts undue influence on the legislature, leading to compromised oversight functions. This political interference manifests through various means, including the use of financial inducements and the threat of political reprisals against non-compliant legislators. The findings suggest that strengthening the independence of the legislature is crucial. He recommends constitutional amendments to safeguard legislative autonomy and the establishment of a non-partisan body to oversee the allocation of resources to the legislature. Moreover, the existing literature does not adequately address the impact of legislative-executive relations on oversight functions in the FCT. While Johnson highlight general issues such as resource limitations and political interference, they do not delve into how these challenges play out in the FCT's context, where federal oversight might differ from state-level dynamics. This study aims to explore the specific challenges faced by legislators in the FCT, considering factors such as the federal oversight of the territory and the unique bureaucratic structures in place.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper considered the structural functionalism theory of [Merton \(1948\)](#), [Spencer \(1903\)](#), [Almond and Powell \(1970\)](#), all cited in [DeRosso \(2003\)](#) to guide understanding of the challenges bedeviling legislative oversight in improving the implementation of infrastructural development in the Federal Capital Territory. Structural Functionalism theory sees society as a complex system whose parts (one of which is the national assembly/the legislature) work together (with the executive and judicial organs of government) to promote solidarity and stability particularly through provision of adequate infrastructural facilities that supports livelihood in a given society. In this sense the legislature is a part of the entire system that must not only work well but also playing its role together, with other parts of the complex system for solidarity and stability to be experienced otherwise, it may lead to issues such as infrastructural decay or dearth of infrastructure that raises livelihood issues due to lack of solidarity and instability ([DeRosso, 2003](#)).

Functionalism is the process whereby different parts of the system (legislature, executive and judiciary) come together for the effective function of the system. Functionalist thought, from Comte onwards has looked particularly towards biology as the science providing the closest and most compatible model for social science. Biology has been taken to provide a guide to conceptualizing the structure and function of social systems and in analyzing processes of evolution via mechanisms of adaptation. Functionalism strongly

emphasizes the pre-eminence of the social world over its individual parts (i.e. its constituent actors, human subjects) (Giddens, 1984 as cited in DeRosso, 2003). Whilst one may regard functionalism as a local extension of the organic analogies for society presented by political philosophers such as Rousseau, sociology draws firmer attention to those institutions unique to industrialized capitalist society (Macionis, 2010).

This theory is relevant because it emphasizes the functions and dysfunctions of social institutions in maintaining social cohesion. When applied to legislative oversight challenges in Abuja, it elucidates how the political system should function to ensure effective governance. In the context of Abuja's oversight challenges, structural functionalism highlights how the legislature, as a crucial societal institution, should serve as a check on executive power to ensure accountability and proper resource allocation. However, the insincerity of political leaders, driven by self-interest and corruption, disrupts this functional balance. Political leaders' insincerity manifests in their neglect of oversight responsibilities, diverting funds meant for infrastructure into personal pockets or partisan projects. This results in a lack of proper oversight on infrastructural development projects, leading to substandard or incomplete infrastructure in Abuja.

The effect is detrimental: inadequate infrastructure hampers socio-economic development, exacerbates inequality, and undermines public trust in government. Thus, the application of structural functionalism helps illuminate how the breakdown of legislative oversight due to political insincerity impedes effective governance and hinders infrastructural development in Abuja.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The population of this study was seven hundred and six comprising of civil servants and residents from four (4) communities in Bwari and Abuja Municipal Area Councils (Dutse Alhaji, Kubwa, Garki and Gwarimpa) of the Federal Capital Territory. The sample size of the study was 249 determined using Krejcie and Morgan formula for sample size. Also, four (4) stakeholders were tentatively selected for in-depth interview using purposive sampling method.

Data for the study were collected using questionnaire, in-depth interview and secondary sources. For the questionnaire, 249 copies were distributed to the respondents to elicit their opinions on the questions raised in the paper, out of which 234 were retrieved for analysis. On the other hand, 6 respondents from Federal Capital Territory

Administration (FCTA), Federal Ministry of Works Abuja and Civil Society Organizations were interviewed using in-depth method. Data collected from questionnaire were analysed using simple percentages and frequencies, while data from in-depth interview were analysed using narrative-analytic method. Data from secondary sources were analysed using historical analysis.

**Data Analysis**

**Table 1: Respondents' view on the challenges militating against effective legislative oversight in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>U</b>
<b>The lack of adequate resources hinders effective legislative oversight in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.</b>	87 (13.2%)	123 (52.6%)	13 (5.6%)	6 (2.6%)	5 (2.1%)
<b>Political interference undermines the autonomy of legislative oversight in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.</b>	98 (41.9%)	105 (44.9%)	17 (7.1%)	13 (5.6%)	1 (0.4%)
<b>Insufficient legislative capacity inhibits the effectiveness of oversight mechanisms in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.</b>	67 (28.6%)	89 (38%)	32 (13.7%)	40 (17.1%)	6 (2.6%)
<b>Limited transparency and accountability impede the success of legislative oversight in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.</b>	68 (29.1%)	107 (45.7%)	21 (9%)	36 (15.4%)	2 (0.9%)
<b>The absence of strong legal frameworks weakens legislative oversight in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.</b>	87 (37.2%)	123 (52.6%)	12 (5.1%)	7 (3%)	5 (2.1%)

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 1 above represents the opinion of respondents on the challenges militating against effective legislative oversight in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The figures provided illustrate a significant consensus among respondents, with a majority (52.6%) strongly agreeing and a considerable portion (13.2%) agreeing that the lack of adequate resources indeed impedes effective legislative oversight in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. This substantial agreement signals a recognized challenge within the legislative framework, highlighting the importance of addressing resource deficiencies to enhance oversight mechanisms. The comparatively low figures for disagreement and strong disagreement suggest a broad acknowledgment of the issue's validity rather than substantial dissent. The implications of this analysis underscore the critical need for immediate attention and allocation of resources towards bolstering legislative oversight capabilities in Abuja. Failure to address this issue risks compromising the effectiveness and integrity of the legislative process, potentially undermining governance and accountability in the region. Therefore, prioritizing resource allocation and strategic planning to fortify oversight mechanisms is imperative to uphold transparency, accountability, and democratic principles in the Federal Capital Territory.

On the second row, the figures indicate a significant consensus among respondents, with a majority strongly agreeing (44.9%) and a considerable number simply agreeing (41.9%) that political interference indeed erodes the autonomy of legislative oversight in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. This suggests a prevailing concern over the integrity and independence of the legislative process in the region, potentially pointing towards systemic issues that hinder effective governance and accountability. The small percentage of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed underscores a minority perspective or perhaps a lack of awareness of the extent of political interference. However, the overwhelming agreement implies a pressing need for measures to safeguard legislative autonomy and ensure robust oversight mechanisms. The implications of this analysis are profound, signaling potential challenges in upholding democratic principles, maintaining transparency, and combating corruption within the legislative framework of the Federal Capital Territory. Addressing political interference becomes imperative to fortify the integrity of legislative oversight and uphold the principles of democratic governance.

The analysis of respondents' views on third row indicate a considerable consensus among respondents, with a majority either agreeing (28.6%) or strongly agreeing (38%) that insufficient legislative capacity indeed hampers the effectiveness of oversight mechanisms in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The proportion of those disagreeing or strongly disagreeing is notably smaller (13.7% and 17.1%, respectively), suggesting a prevalent acknowledgment of this issue. The small percentage of undecided respondents (2.6%) further underlines the general inclination towards recognizing the impact of inadequate legislative capacity on oversight effectiveness. This analysis implies that there is a widespread perception of a direct correlation between legislative capacity and oversight efficiency in Abuja. It suggests that addressing legislative shortcomings could potentially enhance the functionality and efficacy of oversight mechanisms, leading to better governance, accountability, and possibly improved public services in the Federal Capital Territory.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> row, illustrate a significant agreement among respondents regarding the assertion that limited transparency and accountability hinder the effectiveness of legislative oversight in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. A substantial 74.8% either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while only a small minority (15.4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. The implications of this analysis suggest a widespread recognition among stakeholders of the critical role that transparency and accountability play in ensuring the efficacy of legislative oversight. The substantial agreement highlights a clear mandate for policymakers to prioritize measures aimed at enhancing transparency and accountability within the legislative processes in Abuja. Failure to address these deficiencies could potentially undermine public trust, hamper legislative effectiveness, and hinder progress towards good governance and accountability in the Federal Capital Territory.

The figures on last row from table 1 indicate a significant consensus among respondents, with 89.8% either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the absence of strong legal frameworks weakens legislative oversight in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Only a small minority, comprising 8.1%, disagree or strongly disagree with this assertion. This substantial agreement underscores the perceived importance of robust legal structures in facilitating effective legislative oversight. The implication of this analysis suggests a pressing need for the establishment or reinforcement of legal frameworks within the Federal Capital Territory to enhance legislative oversight mechanisms. Without such frameworks, there may be a risk of inefficiency, ineffectiveness, or even potential malfeasance in governance practices, potentially undermining the democratic process and public trust in governmental institutions. Therefore, policymakers and stakeholders should heed these findings and prioritize the

development and enforcement of adequate legal structures to support effective legislative oversight in Abuja.

Complementing the above, an interview was held with a Director, Abuja Environmental Protection Board in the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA). He stated that:

*From our perspective, one significant hurdle is the lack of coordination between various agencies involved in environmental protection. Sometimes, our efforts are undermined by overlapping responsibilities and unclear mandates. This leads to inefficiencies and gaps in enforcement. Additionally, inadequate funding restricts our capacity to carry out comprehensive monitoring and enforcement activities across the territory (Field Survey, 2024).*

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In an interview conducted with the Director of Maintenance and Rehabilitation, Federal Ministry of Works Abuja, who told the researcher that:

*Our primary challenge revolves around the maintenance of infrastructure. However, from our assessment we noted legislative oversight, is often challenged with budgetary constraints and bureaucratic delays in procurement processes. This results in delayed repairs and inadequate upkeep of critical infrastructure, which ultimately affects the quality of life for residents. Moreover, the lack of accountability mechanisms within the legislature hampers the ability to effectively execute our mandates" (Field Survey, 2024).*

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Similarly, one of the respondents, a Program Manager from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) has this to say:

*From the civil society perspective, the major hurdle lies in limited citizen engagement and transparency in decision-making processes. While legislative oversight exists on paper, there is a lack of meaningful public participation in the oversight process. This undermines the credibility and effectiveness of the oversight mechanisms. Furthermore, there is often a disconnect between government actions and the actual needs and priorities of the people. Without active citizen involvement, it's challenging to ensure accountability and responsiveness from government agencies (Field Survey, 2024).*

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**Table 2: Opinion of respondents on the measures to be adopted in addressing the challenges and ensure infrastructural development in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>U</b>
Increased transparency in the allocation of funds can enhance infrastructural development in Abuja.	63 (26.9%)	145 (62%)	12 (5.1%)	11 (4.7%)	3 (1.3%)
Implementing stricter penalties for corruption would improve the efficiency of infrastructural projects in Abuja.	78 (33.3%)	123 (52.6%)	10 (4.3%)	21 (9%)	2 (0.9%)
Implementing stricter penalties for corruption and embezzlement related to infrastructural development in Abuja will deter malpractice.	99 (42.3%)	100 (42.7%)	23 (9.8%)	11 (4.7%)	1 (0.4%)
The establishment of specialized oversight committees dedicated to infrastructural development in Abuja is essential for effective legislative scrutiny.	90 (37.5%)	107 (45.7%)	20 (8.5%)	15 (6.4%)	2 (0.9%)
Regular and rigorous audits of infrastructural projects in Abuja by independent bodies are necessary to prevent mismanagement and corruption.	67 (28.6%)	99 (42.3%)	45 (19.2%)	18 (8%)	5 (2.1%)

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

The data on table 2 above analyses respondents view on the measures to be adopted in addressing the challenges and ensure infrastructural development in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The figures indicate a significant level of agreement, with 89.9% either agreeing or strongly agreeing that increased transparency in fund allocation can enhance infrastructural development in Abuja. Only a small minority, constituting 9.8%, either disagree or strongly disagree with this assertion. This overwhelming consensus suggests a widespread recognition among respondents that transparent allocation of funds could indeed lead to improved infrastructural development in Abuja. The implications of this analysis are profound. If stakeholders heed this sentiment and prioritize transparency in allocating funds for infrastructure projects, it could potentially lead to increased trust among citizens, more efficient

resource allocation, and ultimately, accelerated infrastructural development in the region. This alignment of public opinion with the importance of transparency underscores its critical role in fostering socio-economic progress and development.

The figures on 2<sup>nd</sup> row suggest a notable consensus among respondents, with a combined 85.9% agreeing or strongly agreeing that implementing stricter penalties for corruption would enhance the efficiency of infrastructural projects in Abuja. This substantial support indicates a perceived correlation between the severity of penalties for corrupt practices and project efficiency. The minority who disagree or are undecided represent a smaller segment, suggesting that the prevailing sentiment favors this proposed measure. Consequently, the implication is that there's a perceived need for stronger anti-corruption measures to be integrated into the governance and oversight mechanisms of infrastructural projects in Abuja. Implementing such measures could potentially foster a more transparent and accountable environment, thereby increasing public trust, attracting investment, and ultimately improving the delivery and quality of infrastructure in the FCT.

Figures from the third row suggest a strong consensus among respondents, with 85% either agreeing or strongly agreeing that implementing stricter penalties for corruption and embezzlement in infrastructural development in Abuja will deter malpractice. Conversely, only 14.5% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree with this proposition, indicating a relatively small portion of the sample holding dissenting views. The overwhelming majority's agreement highlights a perceived efficacy of stricter penalties in deterring malpractice, indicating a collective belief in the deterrent power of punitive measures. This suggests that there is a prevailing sentiment that enhancing penalties can serve as a potent tool in combating corruption and embezzlement in infrastructural development in Abuja. Implications of this analysis point towards the importance of legislative or policy measures aimed at enhancing penalties for such malpractices, potentially serving as a deterrent and contributing to a more transparent and accountable governance framework in infrastructural development projects in Abuja.

Analyzing the figures on the 4<sup>th</sup> row, it's evident that there is a substantial consensus among respondents regarding the necessity of specialized oversight committees for infrastructural development in Abuja. The combined percentages of those who agree and strongly agree amount to 83.2%, indicating a clear majority in favor. Conversely,

only a small percentage, 15.3%, either disagrees or strongly disagrees, with an additional negligible 0.9% remaining undecided. This data suggests a strong mandate for the establishment of such committees to enhance legislative scrutiny over infrastructural development in Abuja. The implication of this analysis underscores a pressing need for policymakers to heed the public sentiment and prioritize the creation of specialized oversight mechanisms. Failure to do so might risk disregarding the public's expectations for transparent and effective governance in infrastructural matters, potentially leading to inefficiencies or even controversies in development projects. Therefore, based on the overwhelming support indicated by the respondents, establishing these committees appears not only advisable but imperative for ensuring accountable and efficient infrastructural development in Abuja.

From the last row on table 2, it's evident that a substantial majority, comprising 71.8% (Agree: 28.6% + Strongly Agree: 42.3%), supports the notion that regular and rigorous audits by independent bodies are necessary to prevent mismanagement and corruption in Abuja's infrastructural projects. Conversely, only a small fraction, totaling 11.1% (Disagree: 19.2% + Strongly Disagree: 8%), opposes this idea. With such a significant consensus in favor of independent audits, the implication is clear: there is a widespread acknowledgment of the potential for mismanagement and corruption within infrastructural projects in Abuja, necessitating proactive measures to address these concerns. Implementing regular audits conducted by independent entities can not only enhance transparency and accountability but also instill public confidence in the integrity of these projects. Failure to heed this collective call for oversight risks perpetuating inefficiencies and eroding trust in governmental infrastructure initiatives, underscoring the urgency of implementing robust auditing mechanisms to safeguard against malpractice and ensure the effective utilization of resources.

In view of the above, an interview was conducted with Director, Department of Development Control in the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA), it was revealed that:

*Effective legislature oversight and infrastructural development in Abuja require a multi-faceted approach. First, it's essential to strengthen the capacity of oversight bodies through training and provision of adequate resources. This ensures that they can effectively monitor projects and hold contractors accountable. Second, there should be a transparent procurement process to eliminate corruption and ensure that only qualified contractors handle projects. Implementing strict penalties for non-compliance and poor performance will deter substandard work. Lastly, community involvement in project planning and implementation can enhance accountability and ensure that projects meet the actual needs of*

*the residents. Engaging citizens through regular consultations and feedback mechanisms can provide valuable insights and foster a sense of ownership, leading to better-maintained infrastructure (Field Survey, 2024).*

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A Director of Highways Construction and Rehabilitation with the Federal Ministry of Works Abuja told the researcher during interview that:

*Addressing the challenges of legislature oversight and ensuring infrastructural development in Abuja involves adopting a systematic approach. One key measure is the implementation of advanced project management tools and technologies. These tools can provide real-time updates on project progress, allowing for better monitoring and timely intervention when issues arise. Another critical measure is the establishment of an independent oversight committee comprising professionals from various fields, including engineering, finance, and law. This committee would review and evaluate projects impartially, ensuring transparency and adherence to standards. Additionally, ensuring regular maintenance and timely upgrades of existing infrastructure can prevent the deterioration of public assets and prolong their lifespan, thereby maximizing the return on investment for the community (Field Survey, 2024).*

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According to program manager, a representative of Non-Governmental Organizations a program manager during interview stated that:

*To tackle the challenges of legislature oversight and promote infrastructural development in Abuja, adopting a collaborative approach is crucial. Firstly, fostering partnerships between the government, private sector, and civil society can enhance resource mobilization and ensure comprehensive project execution. This collaboration can also bring in expertise and innovative solutions from different stakeholders. Secondly, enhancing legislative frameworks to include stringent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will ensure that projects are executed efficiently and transparently. It's also important to promote public awareness and participation in oversight processes, empowering citizens to hold their leaders accountable. Lastly, leveraging technology for better data collection and dissemination can provide transparency, helping to track progress and identify areas needing improvement, ultimately ensuring sustainable infrastructure development. (Field Survey, 2024)*

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## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The first objective which seeks to identify the challenges militating against effective legislative oversight in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, reveals several key obstacles that impede the legislative process. These challenges include limited resources, inadequate training, political interference, and a lack of transparency. The influence of powerful political figures and parties can compromise the independence of legislative oversight. This interference often results in biased or incomplete reviews, as legislators may be pressured to align with party lines or protect certain interests. Moreover, a lack of transparency within the legislative process limits public access to information, reducing accountability and trust in the legislative system. Despite efforts to enhance oversight, these factors significantly hinder the effectiveness of legislative functions. This study agrees with [Johnson \(2018\)](#) whose study highlights that the executive arm often exerts undue influence on the legislature, leading to compromised oversight functions. This political interference manifests through various means, including the use of financial inducements and the threat of political reprisals against non-compliant legislators.

Secondly, to address the challenges of legislative oversight and ensure effective infrastructural development in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, several measures can be implemented. Strengthening transparency and accountability in project implementation is crucial. This can be achieved by establishing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks, ensuring projects are tracked from inception to completion. Regular audits and public disclosure of project progress and expenditures can deter corruption and inefficiency. Enhancing the capacity of legislative bodies through training and resources will enable better scrutiny of infrastructure projects. Encouraging public participation in the oversight process, such as community feedback mechanisms, can provide additional layers of accountability. This finding corroborate with the study conducted by [Adegoroye \(2019\)](#) who suggests the need for a more robust legal framework that delineates clear powers and functions for legislative bodies in oversight activities.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study on "Challenges Confronting Effective Legislative Oversight in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja" reveals significant hurdles that impede the efficacy of legislative oversight mechanisms. Key findings indicate that a combination of structural, procedural, and political factors collectively undermines the capacity of legislative bodies to perform their oversight functions effectively. Structural challenges are particularly pronounced, as legislative bodies often lack the necessary resources, including adequate funding, skilled personnel, and access to essential information. These deficiencies hinder comprehensive review and

analysis of executive actions, limiting the legislature's ability to hold the executive accountable. Additionally, the procedural aspects within legislative frameworks are often cumbersome and inefficient, further complicating efforts to conduct timely and thorough oversight. Political factors also play a critical role in diminishing legislative oversight. The study highlights how political interference and partisan dynamics frequently obstruct objective and impartial oversight activities. Legislators, influenced by party loyalties or executive pressure, may be reluctant to pursue investigations or critiques that could expose misconduct or inefficiency within the executive branch. This political entanglement erodes public trust in the legislative process and perpetuates a cycle of weak oversight.

Furthermore, the study underscores the lack of public awareness and engagement as a significant barrier. Citizens are often unaware of the importance of legislative oversight or how to hold their representatives accountable. This apathy reduces the pressure on legislators to perform their oversight roles diligently, allowing inefficiencies and malpractices to persist unchecked. The implications of these findings are profound. Ineffective legislative oversight contributes to poor governance, as unchecked executive actions can lead to corruption, mismanagement of public funds, and the erosion of democratic principles. The study suggests that addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach. Enhancing the capacity and independence of legislative bodies is crucial, necessitating reforms that provide adequate resources, streamline procedures, and insulate oversight activities from political interference.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- i. To mitigate the challenges associated legislature oversight in the Federal Capital Territory particularly the political interference, there is need to establish clear and enforceable rules that promote independence and impartiality is crucial. Strengthening the legal framework to protect legislators from undue influence can help maintain the integrity of the oversight process. Additionally, enhancing transparency by making legislative activities and findings more accessible to the public can foster greater accountability. Implementing these measures can significantly improve the effectiveness of legislative oversight in the FCT, Abuja, ensuring that it is more result-oriented and aligned with democratic principles.

- ii. To address challenges in legislative oversight and ensure effective infrastructural development in Abuja, measures such as enhancing transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement are essential. Strengthening legislative capacity through training, improving monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and fostering inter-agency collaboration can also help. Effective strategies include adopting technology for better oversight, promoting public participation, and ensuring timely release of funds. These approaches can lead to more result-oriented and sustainable infrastructural development in the Federal Capital Territory.

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