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Value-Added Tax Monopoly: A Threat to Low Revenue-Generating States in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
This paper examines the effect of value-added tax monopoly by some states on low revenue-generating states. An exploratory/survey approach was adapted. Employment, revenue generation, and economic development were used as proxies to measure the monopolistic effect of value-added tax on low revenue-generating states. Primary source of data collection was employed through a closed-end questionnaire. The population of the study stand at 273 respondents drawn from Borno, Gombe, and Yobe state, with a sample size of 256 using stratified sampling technique. Linear Regression was employed to analyze the data with the help of SPSS version 27. Findings show that monopoly of value-added tax by states will negatively and significantly affect employment, revenue generation, and economic development of other states. The study concluded that value-added tax revenues should be generated for redistribution to states and local governments in Nigeria to argument their internally generated revenue as this will enhance growth and economic development. It was recommended by the study that resources should be redistributed equitable and fairly by the federal government so as to reduce persistent friction in the revenue allocation.

Keywords: *tax, value added tax, low revenue, revenue generation, nigeria*

I. INTRODUCTION

Globally, there is a current trend in the taxation landscape, with a notable shift from a focus on direct tax policy to indirect tax policy. One of the most crucial sources of revenue and indirect tax tools for any government is Value-Added Tax (VAT) (Yan, et al., 2020). VAT, a consumption tax with a multi-stage nature, is applied at each stage of the manufacturing and distribution processes on the sale of goods and services (Omondi, 2019). Its global adoption is linked to its significance and effectiveness in terms of collecting tax revenue.

VAT, as defined by (Liu & Lu, 2015), serves as a substitute for sales taxes. A notable advantage of VAT lies in its revenue protection mechanism, as it is collected through production decisions, distinguishing it from a sales tax (Liu & Lu, 2015). The effectiveness of VAT collection hinges largely on the quality of monitoring, enforcement, and efficiency, factors that improve with increased political participation and stability (Kristjánsdóttir, 2019). The global proliferation of VAT is marked by its introduction in European Union (E.U.) countries. The adoption of VAT in E.U. countries aims to standardize taxes and establish a basis for a free trade zone within European nations (Kristjánsdóttir, et al., 2017).

African nations, including Francophone countries, embraced tax reform, particularly influenced by France's early adoption of VAT. The Francophone African colonies readily followed suit due to France's policy of assimilation and affiliation. Kenya implemented VAT in January 1990, replacing the existing sales tax with the rationale that VAT offered better income potential and more cost-effective, efficient, and timely collection and administration (Omondi, 2019). VAT was viewed as the tax of the future (Kubickova, 2019).

VAT replaced the sales tax in Nigeria, introduced by Decree No. 102 of 1993, with implementation beginning on January 1, 1994 (Akinrinola, and Oreoluwa, 2021). Before its enactment, a committee was established in 1991 to study the entire tax structure in the country, suggesting the implementation of VAT. Currently, the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) oversees VAT collection, with proceeds shared among the three tiers of government to supplement their revenue sources.

II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The collected VAT flows into the central government treasury (VAT pool) for redistribution among the federal, state, and local governments. However, a dispute has arisen over whether individual states should collect and retain their VAT as part of their Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) (Akinrinola, and Oreoluwa, 2021). The controversy stems from the argument that some states generate more VAT but receive disproportionately less due to the existing sharing formula, seen as inequitable. The agreed-upon sharing ratio allocates 15% to the federal government, 50% to the states, and the remaining 35% to local governments (Adeoti, 2021).

In 2020, VAT emerged as the fastest-growing tax revenue type with a total of ₦1.53 trillion. Of the total amount generated, five highest-grossing states from VAT on local supplies according to (Adeoti, 2021) of which Lagos has the highest VAT collection, amounting to 50.5%, FCT 13.2%, Rivers 2.7%, and Kano 1.4% Oyo 2.9% (Folorunsho, 2021). The bottom 32 states contribute the remaining percentage with the bottom three being Abia 0.08%, Osun 0.07%, and Zamfara 0.06%. Consequently, amounts shared to the top states and their local governments are Lagos 14.7%, Rivers 2.7%, FCT 2.5% Kano 3.8%, and Oyo 3.2%. The bottom three states shared Osun 2%, Abia 1.6%, and Zamfara 1.6% (Oyedele, 2021) and (Adeoti, 2021).

In the initial years of VAT introduction, payments and filing were based on branch locations, posing challenges in balancing output against input VAT. To address this, a centralized filing system was introduced, where businesses now remit and file VAT centrally from their headquarters, known as the Headquarters Effect (Hakim, 2020). This has resulted in certain states, such as Lagos, receiving a disproportionate boost in VAT revenue, while others see a reduction.

Previous research has addressed several aspects of VAT which include VAT administration (Caleb, Daniel, Samuel, and Abiodun, 2019; Omodero, 2020; and Igwebuike, 2020), VAT reform (Israel, 2015; Udezo, and Onuora, 2021; and Emmanuel, 2021) VAT policies (Ewa, 2021; Enemuo, Chigozie, and Obianuju, 2021; and Onoh et. al., 2021). However, in addition, VAT encompasses several unexplored dimensions that have attracted the research attention. Some of these unexplored areas in VAT appeared to be important and worthy of investigation in the Nigerian context.

However, there is a lack of research on certain dimensions of VAT, particularly its monopoly, which remains unexplored in the Nigerian context. The contentious issue sparking debate revolves around whether the state's monopoly on VAT would compromise Nigeria's fiscal federalism in terms of wealth distribution, with potential effects on income/revenue generation, employment, and the economic development of states with low revenue generation. As such, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of VAT monopoly as it affects employment, revenue generation, and economic development of low revenue-generating states.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Every government partakes in various activities that involve spending, and to accomplish these goals, it employs various means of revenue generation, with taxation being one of them. Taxation is defined as a compulsory financial payment made to the government by individuals, organizations, institutions, or groups, and it is non-returnable (Mukolu and Ogodor, 2021). Taxes are obligatory payments to the government of a country by all involved parties in exchange for necessary services, without automatically providing detailed insights into how the funds are spent (Hakim, 2020). Consequently, the government utilizes taxation as a tool for fund generation in the public interest (Adegbie, et al., 2020). A well-designed tax system, as asserted by Akitoby et al. (2020), can contribute to developing a country's prioritized spending, enhancing democratic accountability, and establishing robust institutions.

Consumption taxes, in contrast, have a broader application as the source of adverse variance can be effectively managed with good administration (Bank-Ola, 2021). Consumption taxes generate revenue that can bolster an economy's financial foundation. This, however, requires capitalizing on the opportunity and implementing a consumption tax that recognizes taxpayers as individuals seeking to minimize their utility while deterring evasive behavior. The administrative practicality of each tax, along with its relative neutrality, revenue potentials, degree of voluntary compliance, and efficiency, are crucial factors considered when choosing between consumption taxes and other tax options. Hence, the government's decision to replace the Sales Tax with the VAT is evident (Kaka, and Ado, 2020).

IV. VAT AND REVENUE GENERATION IN NIGERIA

As a tax strategy in 1994, VAT was first employed and since at that moment, it has significantly contributed to Nigeria's generation of revenue. Beginning from a modest N7,206.8 million in 1994, revenue from VAT increases from N20.76 billion to N31 billion in the year 1995 and 1996 respectively, which was equivalent to 185.9% (percentage change in VAT) approximately. The conversion from military to democratic administration in 1999 positively impacted taxpayer compliance, with revenues rising by 27.6% from N36.9 billion in 1998 to N47.11 billion in 1999 (Edojor et al., 2019). Subsequent years saw additional revenues of N91.7 billion in 2001, while in 2002, it was N108.6 billion but in 2003, it was N136.4 billion, N159.5 billion in 2004, and in 2005 it was N178.1 billion.

According to Monica and Kazeem (2022), the introduction of VAT in 1993 and subsequent implementation in 1994 was a major achievement for Nigeria. Data from the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) shows that overall VAT revenue increased from N8.20 billion in 1994 to N163.30 billion in 2004, a decade after its introduction. VAT receipts rose from N616.90 billion in 2014 to N1.7 trillion in 2018. The total amount of VAT revenue for the country slightly decreased by N53 billion from N1.7 trillion in 2018 to N1.17 trillion in 2019 but increased in 2020 to N1.53 trillion (Oyedele, 2021).

V. VAT MONOPOLY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON STATES IN NIGERIA

Certainly, if VAT is implemented on a state-by-state basis, the ability for taxpayers who purchase items or raw materials in one state to recover or benefit from input tax paid in that state when collecting output tax on product sales is in another state would become unclear. This is especially crucial considering the variation in VAT rates among states. While certain states, such as Rivers and now Lagos, are pursuing the collection of VAT within their jurisdictions, other states across the nation may encounter challenges in fulfilling their financial responsibilities and obligations. This could lead to a significant loss of revenue from VAT in the federation account amid declining federal earnings. This potential loss might further escalate (Adebanjo, 2021).

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT), being second on the list in terms of VAT generation after Lagos, may not be negatively impacted if states were allowed to enact and enforce their VAT laws. Currently, import and non-import foreign VAT are collected by the government of the federation, that receives 15% of the VAT. However, all other states and the 774 local governments (LGs) could be adversely affected if other factors remain constant. The situation for these states may be influenced by a lack of collection capacity, auditing difficulties, and higher collection costs, especially in states where consultants and various agency structures are engaged for tax collection (Oyedele, 2021).

VI. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research was grounded in the social-political theory of taxation, which articulates the government's responsibility to taxpayers. Adolph Wegner (1880), cited by Omesi and Ihenyen (2020), argued that the primary considerations in selecting taxes should be social and political objectives. According to this theory, a tax system should not be tailored for individual benefit but rather for the collective well-being of society. Taxation, as per Wegner's perspective, addresses societal issues related to the distribution or redistribution of wealth creation capacities among different geographical components of a country. This implies that taxation is inseparable from human society and its politics if societal development and success are to be achieved.

The theory posits that the leaders, whether political or religious, responsible for administering human societies require financial resources, which can only be obtained by levying various taxes and fees on the populace. Additionally, taxation establishes a vital link between the state and its citizens, serving as an integral component of a nation's development. This theory's relevance to the current study lies in its focus on Value Added Tax (VAT) and other methods of revenue generation and redistribution.

VII. METHODOLOGY

This study relies on data generated from primary sources. Primary data was sourced through questionnaire which was administered to staff of the ministries of finance, budget and economic planning, youth and sports, and the state House of Assembly of Borno, Yobe, and Gombe State, though with different nomenclature. Furthermore, the staffs of Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) of the respective states also form part of the respondents as they are saddled with the responsibility of VAT collection in the respective states. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire with a close ended question which was based on a five-point likert scale as was adapted from Sanni, (2017). The data analysis primarily involved inferential statistics using linear regression with the help of statistic package for social sciences (SPSS) version 27 because the study involves one independent and three dependent variables. The population of the study consists of all the staff of the aforementioned organizations. Stratified sampling technique was used, as respondent were drawn from the management, and middle cadre of the respective organizations identified, and simple random sampling was applied to select 273 respondents from the respondents drawn from the various organization out of which only 256 questionnaires were correctly filled and returned.

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VIII. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Correlation Analysis

Table 1: Correlations between revenue generation and VAT

		REV	VAT
Pearson Correlation	REV	1.000	.567
	VAT	.567	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	REV	.	.000
	VAT	.000	.
N	REV	256	256
	VAT	256	256

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).
Source: Researcher's Computation (2023)

Table 1 contains the output of the correlation analysis. VAT was found to be positively and significantly associated with revenue generation (r = 0.567, sig. = 0.000). This finding implies that an increase in VAT leads to a corresponding increase in revenue generation.

IX. REGRESSION RESULTS

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig. F Change
1	.567[a]	.321	.319	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), VAT				

Source: Researcher's Computation (2023)

The model summary (Table 2) indicates that 32.1% of the variance in revenue generation is accounted for by value added tax (R^2 = 0.321), leaving the remaining percentage to be explained by other factors.

Table 3: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16.928	1	16.928	120.309	.000[b]
	Residual	35.738	254	.141		
	Total	52.666	255			
a. Dependent Variable: REV						
b. Predictors: (Constant), VAT						

Source: Researcher's Computation (2023)

The model's adequacy was evaluated using the ANOVA statistical tool, and the results are presented in Table 3. The output indicates that the model's fitness is highly satisfactory (F-value = 120.309, sig = 0.000). This result is consistent with Field's (2009) assertion that a significant and large F-value is a criterion for establishing the fitness of a model.

Table 4: Correlations between employment and VAT

		EMP	VAT
Pearson Correlation	EMP	1.000	.510
	VAT	.510	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	EMP	.	.000
	VAT	.000	.
N	EMP	256	256
	VAT	256	256

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).
Source: Researcher's Computation (2023)

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In Table 4, VAT was found to be positively and significantly associated with employment (r = 0.510, sig. = 0.000). This finding implies that an increase in VAT leads to a corresponding increase in employment opportunity.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig. F Change
1	.510[a]	.261	.258	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), VAT				

Source: Researcher's Computation (2023)

Table 5 indicates that 26.1% of the variance in employment is accounted for by value added tax ($R^2 = 0.261$), leaving the remaining percentage whereby other factors explain.

Table 6: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.571	1	11.571	89.500	.000[b]
	Residual	32.838	254	.129		
	Total	44.409	255			
a. Dependent Variable: EMP						
b. Predictors: (Constant), VAT						

Source: Researcher's Computation (2023)

The results are presented in Table 6 indicates that the model's fitness is highly satisfactory (F-value = 89.500, sig = 0.000).

Table 7: Correlations between economic development and VAT

		ECO	VAT
Pearson Correlation	ECO	1.000	.602
	VAT	.602	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	ECO	.	.000
	VAT	.000	.
N	ECO	256	256
	VAT	256	256

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).
Source: Researcher's Computation (2023)

The Table 7 above shows that VAT was found to be positively and significantly related with economic development (r = 0.602, sig. = 0.000). This finding implies that an increase in VAT leads to a corresponding increase in economic development.

Table 8: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig. F Change
1	.602[a]	.363	.360	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), VAT				

Source: Researcher's Computation (2023)

Table 8 above shows that 36.3% of the variance in economic development is accounted for by value added tax ($R^2 = 0.363$), leaving the remaining percentage whereby other factors explain.

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Table 9: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.128	1	17.128	144.683	.000[b]
	Residual	30.069	254	.118		
	Total	47.197	255			
a. Dependent Variable: ECO						
b. Predictors: (Constant), VAT						

Source: Researcher's Computation (2023)
Table 9 indicates that the model's fitness is highly satisfactory (F-value = 144.683, sig = 0.000).

X. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that VAT has a positive and significant influence on the revenue generation of the states investigated. This suggests that a rise in VAT is related to a corresponding improvement in generation of revenue, likely due to the fact that VAT form part of the total income of any state, an increase in VAT will argument the IGR of the state. This finding concurs with the findings of Kaisa, Mika, and Jukka, (2018); Aminu, Dogara, and Mohammed, (2020) and Mukolu, and Ogodor, (2021) in their research on the connection between VAT and revenue generation that exhibits a positive and significant relationship between the variables. Furthermore, the study also reveals that VAT has significant positive impact on the employment. This implies that as VAT increases, employment opportunity increases. The implication of this result is that VAT play a vital role on the spending of any state which personnel cost is one of the areas that state gives more priority. This finding conforms to the studies of Eiya and Osazuwa (2017); Collins and Peter (2019); and Bo, Jing, and Zheng (2021) who explored the relationship between VAT and employment and yielding a positive correlation. In addition, the study indicate that VAT significantly influences the economic development in the states investigated. This suggests that an increase in VAT is linked to corresponding improvement in economic development.

The three constructs are functions of adequate income of a nation, and taxation is part of such income, while VAT is one of the components of taxation. If allowed to be collected by states as part of their internally generated revenue, there is likelihood to have unequal development across the states in the nation thereby undermining its federalism status.

Furthermore, the VAT has positive and significant impact on the employment, revenue generation, and economic development of the states which translate into growth and development of the country as a whole. As such, VAT monopoly by any state and or region will have a negative effect on the development of the country (Nigeria).

XI. CONCLUSION

This research tries to explored VAT monopoly as a threat to low revenue-generating states in Nigeria. The findings indicate that VAT has significant influence on revenue generation, employment opportunity and economic development. The contribution of VAT to the growth of the economy of states cannot be overemphasized in terms of development. VAT revenues are produced for redistribution to the state and local government in Nigeria to argument their internally generated revenue. This helps in ensuring sustainability in the growth and development in the nation's economy. Its monopoly by states will negatively impact on the low revenue-generating states, which will lead to uneven development, and as such undermine the principle of federalism. In addition, there will be an increase in the cost of raw materials, finished goods, and services as states will have the autonomy to decide the rate of VAT.

RECOMMENDATION

The present argument calls for the support for fiscal federalism. The resources should be redistributed equitable and fairly by the federal government so as to reduce persistent friction in the revenue allocation. As usual, with all countries of the world, a federation that is fiscally balanced is required, such that none of the part for being poorer than the others is left behind. Nigeria should observe the global best practices. Make use of one system of fund equalization or the other to upkeep states that have lower capability of raising revenue. Taxation of a Germany, as a federation, passed state law under the federal government and the parliament to ensure that each and every state acquires its fair share in an equitable and just manner. The national solidarity intervention of a Belgium assists the regions where the average per capita income of personal income tax, decreases less average. Hence, the federal government should do the allocation solely among the states.

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