INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (IJPADS)

Volume: [3] **| Issue:** [3] **|** Pages: 1 - 23 **| | Date:** [October, 2026]

Open Access Journal. Accessible online via https://ijpads.com

ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: A STUDY OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS (NLC), AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

IBEKWE PATRICIA EBELECHUKWU

Department of Public Administration, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State Email: obipatriciae@gmail.com

MBAMALU KINGSLEY UCHENNA

Department of Public Administration, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State Email: ku.mbamalu@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract

This study examined the role of civil society organisations in promoting transparency and accountability in public administration in Nigeria, using the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Akwa Ibom State Council, as the case study. The study addressed persistent transparency and accountability deficits in Nigeria's public administration and the limited empirical attention given to labour-based civil society organisations at the sub-national level. Guided by the Principal-Agent Theory, the study was guided by two specific objectives: to analyse the strategies employed by the Council to promote transparency; and to evaluate the impact of its advocacy on accountability among public officials. The study adopted a descriptive survey design, drawing a sample of 397 respondents from a population of 52,000 public servants using the Taro Yamane formula and multi-stage sampling. Data were collected with a structured, validated and reliable questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha = 0.86) and analysed using means, standard deviations, simple

linear regression and Pearson correlation. Findings showed that the Council employed identifiable strategies that significantly predicted transparency and accountability, and that its advocacy had a significant but moderate impact on accountability. The study concluded that the Council plays a significant role in promoting transparency and accountability, and recommended that it strengthen its digital advocacy, internal governance and oversight capacity, while government formalises its engagement with organised labour.

Keywords: Civil Society Organisations, Transparency, Accountability, Nigeria Labour Congress

Introduction

Civil society is an important pillar of democratic governance, providing channels through which citizens monitor public institutions and demand accountability. Civil society organisations (CSOs), including non-governmental organisations, trade unions and professional associations, perform watchdog and advocacy functions that complement weak formal accountability mechanisms (Mosley et al., 2023). Civil society pressure has also contributed to accountability reforms in global institutions (Lall, 2025). However, civic space remains contested, with legal and political restrictions limiting advocacy activities (Rugeiyamu & Nguyahambi, 2024; Cheeseman & Dodsworth, 2023).

Transparency and citizen participation are central to accountability. Citizens respond to information about corruption, particularly when it is widely disseminated (Schnell, 2023), while social accountability mechanisms can strengthen perceptions of public-sector legitimacy (Brummel & de Blok, 2024). Transparency and Accountability are inseparable. They are mutually reinforcing. Transparency is worthless if it does not match appropriate accountability for use of discretion and accountability is meaningless if it does not spring from a transparent medium" (Nwankwo, Atuluku, Mbamalu, & Barnabas, 2021). However, legal commitments to transparency do not always translate into actual access to information, especially in developing countries (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2023). Consequently, credible CSOs remain important intermediaries between citizens and government (Schmidthuber et al., 2023).

Across Africa, CSOs have played significant roles in promoting accountable governance, although their effectiveness varies according to institutional and political conditions

(Obadare & Krawczyk, 2022). Nwafor, Ojiako, Okonkwo and Onyeulo (2023) posit that Effective public service delivery provides important analysis for policy makers, businesses, academics and civil society organizations. Labour organisations have increasingly participated in civic advocacy, including policy debates, social dialogue and demands for government accountability (Spreen & Carter, 2025; Madi, 2025).

In Nigeria, transparency and accountability remain major governance concerns despite anti-corruption institutions and legislation. Nwozor and Afolabi (2023) observe persistent corruption challenges, while Bamgbose et al. (2025) identify weak political commitment, poor records management and limited public awareness as constraints to effective implementation of the Freedom of Information Act. These challenges have increased the importance of civil society advocacy, as demonstrated by movements such as #EndSARS (Omilusi, 2025).

Trade unions occupy a distinctive position because they combine workers' representation with broader civic advocacy. Nigerian trade unions have organised protests and engaged government over issues affecting citizens (Houeland, 2022). However, the growing shift towards plant-level bargaining may weaken the influence of national union structures (Opute & Mahmoud, 2023). Government relationships and available resources may also influence whether CSOs adopt cooperative or confrontational strategies (Carré et al., 2025). The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Akwa Ibom State Council, provides an important case for examining this role at the sub-national level. The Council represents affiliated unions and engages the state government on issues such as wages, working conditions and administrative decisions through negotiation, petitions, public statements and industrial action.

Existing studies have largely focused on national civil society organisations and campaigns, with limited attention to labour-based CSOs operating at the state level. This study therefore examines the role of the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, in promoting transparency and accountability in public administration in Akwa Ibom State.

Statement of the Problem

Public administration in Nigeria continues to experience transparency and accountability challenges despite anti-corruption laws, oversight institutions and civil society activism. Persistent corruption and weak

implementation of the Freedom of Information Act have limited citizens' access to public information and weakened public trust (Nwozor & Afolabi, 2023; Bamgbose et al., 2025; Gebrihet, 2024).

At the sub-national level, these challenges may be more pronounced because oversight mechanisms and access to official information can be limited. In Akwa Ibom State, decisions concerning wages, working conditions and administrative policies directly affect workers and residents, yet the extent to which these decisions are subjected to civic scrutiny remains insufficiently documented. Existing research has paid greater attention to national civil society campaigns than to state-level labour councils.

Furthermore, labour councils differ from general civil society organisations because their primary mandate includes workers' representation. Changes in collective bargaining, limited resources and relationships with government may affect their advocacy strategies and effectiveness (Opute & Mahmoud, 2023; Carré et al., 2025). It therefore remains unclear which strategies the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, employs, and the extent to which its activities promote accountability among public officials.

There is also limited empirical evidence on the specific challenges confronting the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, including government interference, inadequate resources and restricted access to official information. The extent of the Council's contribution to transparency and accountability in public administration therefore remains insufficiently established. Consequently, this study examines the role of civil society organisations in promoting transparency and accountability in public administration, using the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, as a case study. It focuses on the Council's advocacy strategies, their effects on accountability, the challenges encountered, its contribution to transparency and accountability, and the relationship between its civil society role and public-sector accountability.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study was to examine the role of civil society organisations in promoting transparency and accountability in public administration in Nigeria, using the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Akwa Ibom State Council, as the case study. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. analyse the strategies employed by the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, to promote transparency in public administration in Akwa Ibom State;
2. evaluate the impact of the advocacy activities of the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, on accountability among public officials in Akwa Ibom State;

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What strategies are employed by the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, to promote transparency in public administration in Akwa Ibom State?
2. What is the impact of the advocacy activities of the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, on accountability among public officials in Akwa Ibom State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

H_{01}: The strategies employed by the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, do not significantly contribute to transparency in public administration in Akwa Ibom State.

H_{02}: The advocacy activities of the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, have no significant impact on accountability among public officials in Akwa Ibom State.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Civil Society Organisations

Civil society organisations (CSOs) are organised, voluntary and non-governmental associations through which citizens collectively pursue shared interests, promote public causes and influence government activities. They operate between the state, market and family and include non-governmental organisations, professional associations, community groups, faith-based organisations and trade unions. In Africa, the development and effectiveness of civil society are influenced by historical patterns of civic association, donor dependence and institutionalisation (Obadare & Krawczyk, 2022). This perspective is relevant to the present study because the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, operates within Nigeria's broader civil society environment.

An important function of CSOs is their watchdog role in monitoring government and exposing corruption or abuse of public office. Villanueva (2023) shows that strong civil society and public deliberation are associated with conditions that discourage corruption, while Katusiimeh and Bekoreire (2025) find that CSOs use advocacy, public awareness and monitoring of government programmes to combat corruption. Thus, the effectiveness of the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, can partly be understood in terms of its ability to scrutinise government activities and represent the interests of workers and citizens.

Transparency

Transparency refers to the extent to which government institutions make information concerning their decisions, procedures, performance and use of public resources available and accessible to citizens and other stakeholders. Transparency is fundamental to accountability because citizens require reliable information to assess government conduct and demand explanations from public officials (Schnell, 2023; Wang & Guan, 2023). However, transparency may involve institutional and practical challenges because disclosure can create competing interests and administrative tensions (Adeoye & Ran, 2024).

In Nigeria, the Freedom of Information Act 2011 provides an important legal basis for citizens' access to official information. However, Bamgbose et al. (2025) identify weak political commitment, conflicting legislation, inadequate records management and low public awareness as major barriers to effective implementation. Ubhenin (2025) similarly observes that civil society efforts to promote freedom of information at sub-national levels face power imbalances, corruption and political interests. These challenges are relevant to the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, particularly in seeking information relating to wages, conditions of service, administrative decisions and government policies.

Accountability

Accountability refers to the obligation of public officials and institutions to explain and justify their decisions and actions and to accept responsibility or consequences for misconduct or poor performance (Brummel & de Blok, 2024; Overman & Schillemans, 2022). It is a multidimensional concept involving questions of who is accountable, to

whom, for what actions and under what consequences (Fan, 2025).

Accountability is often explained through the principal-agent relationship. According to Nnaji, Ojiako, Ukeje, and Nwangbo (2022) accountability and high-level of transparency" are necessary for sustainable development and nation building. Public officials act as agents entrusted with responsibilities by citizens and other principals. However, internal accountability mechanisms may become ineffective where those responsible for monitoring officials are themselves involved in corruption (Graycar, 2022). Rajala and Jalonen (2025) also argue that the traditional principal-agent model may oversimplify public-sector accountability because government involves multiple actors and complex relationships. These limitations create opportunities for external actors such as CSOs to strengthen monitoring and accountability.

Strategies Employed by Civil Society Organisations to Promote Transparency

CSOs employ different strategies to obtain information, influence government decisions and expose administrative activities to public scrutiny. These strategies include lobbying, consultation, petitions, negotiation, public campaigns and protest (Mosley et al., 2023). Carré et al. (2025) distinguish between cooperative and confrontational approaches, noting that relationships with government and the availability of government support can influence the strategies adopted by civil society organisations.

Direct engagement with government officials is an important strategy. Brusseel et al. (2025) find that policymakers generally respond to advocacy inputs, particularly where advocacy is presented directly and effectively. For the NLC, such engagement may include petitions, memoranda, negotiations, participation in joint committees and discussions concerning wages and conditions of service. These activities provide opportunities for the Council to demand explanations and information from government.

Information gathering and dissemination constitute another important strategy. Research, advocacy campaigns, storytelling and networking can transform official information into knowledge that citizens can understand and use (Odilla & Bidegain, 2025; Ubhenin, 2025). For a labour organisation, this may involve examining budgets, payroll information, wage agreements and government policies and communicating

relevant findings to workers and the wider public.

Digital and social media have also become important tools of civic advocacy. Studies of #EndSARS show that Nigerian youths used social media to mobilise citizens, document misconduct and challenge government actions (Akerele-Popoola et al., 2022; Dambo et al., 2022). The NLC can similarly use digital platforms to publicise demands, communicate with members and increase public attention to transparency and accountability issues.

Mass mobilisation and industrial action remain particularly important to labour-based CSOs. Nigerian trade unions have historically used strikes, rallies, collective bargaining and public statements to challenge government policies (Houeland, 2022). Frank and Etim (2025) also report that trade unions in Akwa Ibom State pursue their objectives through collective bargaining and industrial action. Coalition building and social dialogue provide additional means through which labour organisations can strengthen their advocacy and influence government decisions (Spreen & Carter, 2025; Madi, 2025).

Impact of Civil Society Advocacy on Accountability among Public Officials

The impact of civil society advocacy refers to the extent to which advocacy activities encourage public officials to explain, justify, correct or take responsibility for their decisions. Brusseel et al. (2025) show that policymakers can respond positively to advocacy inputs, suggesting that organised civic pressure can influence public decisions.

Civil society advocacy can also promote accountability by providing citizens with information about government activities. Schnell (2023) finds that citizens respond to information about corruption, especially when such information is widely disseminated. Similarly, Brummel and de Blok (2024) show that social accountability mechanisms can improve perceptions of the legitimacy of public institutions.

At the institutional level, sustained civil society pressure has contributed to accountability reforms. Lall (2025) links civil society pressure to accountability reforms in international organisations, while Lo Piccolo (2023) and Aprasidze (2025) document civil society contributions to whistleblower protection and anti-corruption reforms. These findings demonstrate that civil society advocacy can produce both immediate

responses and longer-term institutional changes.

In Nigeria, organised labour has repeatedly challenged government decisions through protests and collective action. Houeland (2022) shows that Nigerian trade unions have spearheaded protests against fuel subsidy removal and other government policies. At the state level, Frank and Etim (2025) report that union activities in Akwa Ibom State were associated with improvements in workers' welfare outcomes. However, advocacy does not automatically produce accountability. Its effectiveness depends on political conditions, institutional responsiveness, available resources and the strength of formal oversight mechanisms (Sonnenfeld et al., 2024; Villanueva, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Principal-Agent Theory, associated with Ross (1973) and Jensen and Meckling (1976). The theory explains a relationship in which a principal delegates authority to an agent to perform specific responsibilities. Agency problems may arise when agents possess more information than principals or pursue interests different from those of the principals. In public administration, citizens are the principals, while elected officials and public servants are agents responsible for managing public resources and implementing government policies (Pérez-Durán, 2024; Rajala & Jalonen, 2025).

The theory is relevant because transparency and accountability depend on the ability of principals to monitor agents and access information about their activities. CSOs can strengthen this process by representing citizens, reducing information gaps and demanding explanations from public officials.

Tenets of Principal-Agent Theory

Delegation of Authority: Citizens delegate authority to elected representatives and public officials to manage public affairs (Jensen & Meckling, 1976; Ross, 1973).

Divergence of Interests: Agents may pursue personal or institutional interests rather than those of citizens, resulting in corruption, rent-seeking and misuse of public resources (Jensen & Meckling, 1976; Graycar, 2022).

Information Asymmetry: Public officials generally possess more information about government activities than citizens. Transparency helps reduce this information gap (Wang & Guan, 2023; Schnell, 2023).

Monitoring and Agency Costs: Monitoring, incentives and sanctions are necessary to control agency problems. CSOs can support this process by gathering information, questioning officials and demanding accountability (Pérez-Durán, 2024; Overman & Schillemans, 2022).

Multiple Principals: Citizens are numerous and dispersed, making individual monitoring difficult. Organisations such as trade unions can aggregate citizens' interests and strengthen collective monitoring (Overman & Schillemans, 2022; Yaghi et al., 2025).

Relevance to the Study

The theory provides a framework for examining the role of the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council**,** in promoting transparency and accountability. Workers and residents are regarded as principals, while political office holders and public servants are agents entrusted with public resources and administrative responsibilities.

The NLC acts as an organised intermediary that represents workers and helps overcome the collective-action problem. Through petitions, negotiations, information requests, public statements, digital communication and industrial action, the Council can reduce information asymmetry and demand explanations from government officials.

The theory also explains challenges such as limited access to information, inadequate resources and government interference. Overall, it guides the study in examining the Council's strategies, advocacy impact, challenges, contribution to accountability and relationship with transparency and accountability in Akwa Ibom State.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The design was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to obtain the views of public servants who are members of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Akwa Ibom State Council, on its strategies, advocacy impact, challenges, contribution to transparency and accountability, and relationship with accountable public administration.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State, one of the six states in Nigeria’s South-South geopolitical zone. Created on 23 September 1987 from the former Cross River State, the

state has Uyo as its capital and comprises 31 local government areas. It is bounded by Cross River State to the east, Rivers and Abia States to the west, and the Atlantic Ocean to the south.

Sources of Data Collection

The study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through a structured questionnaire administered to respondents to assess the role of the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, in promoting transparency and accountability. Secondary data were obtained from Council records and communiqués, Akwa Ibom State Government publications, relevant legislation including the Freedom of Information Act 2011, textbooks, journal articles and credible online sources.

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Civil Society Organisations, Transparency and Accountability Questionnaire (CSOTAQ)**,** developed from the study objectives. The questionnaire contained six sections. Section A covered respondents' demographic characteristics, while Sections B–F addressed the Council's strategies, advocacy impact, challenges, contribution, and relationship with transparency and accountability. Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1).

Population of the Study

The population comprised public servants of the Akwa Ibom State Government across the state ministries, departments and agencies and the 31 local government councils.

Table 3.1: Population of the Study by Senatorial District

S/N	Senatorial District	Number of LGAs	Population (N_h)
1	Akwa Ibom North-East (Uyo)	9	15,097
2	Akwa Ibom North-West (Ikot Ekpene)	10	16,774
3	Akwa Ibom South (Eket)	12	20,129
	Total	**31**	**52,000**

Source: Researcher's field survey (2024)

Sample Size

The sample size was determined with the Taro Yamane (1967) formula for a finite population at a 5 per cent margin of error, as adopted by Frank and Etim (2025) in their study of the NLC in Akwa Ibom State. The formula is stated as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \quad (1)$$

where: n = sample size; N = population of the study (52,000); e = margin of error (0.05); and 1 = a constant. Substituting the values:

$$n = \frac{52000}{1+52000(0.05)^2} = \frac{52000}{1+130} = \frac{52000}{131} = 396.95 \approx 397 \quad (2)$$

The sample size for the study was therefore 397 respondents.

Sampling Technique

The study adopted the multi-stage sampling technique, which combined stratified sampling, proportionate allocation and simple random sampling in three successive stages. The multi-stage technique was considered appropriate because the population of 52,000 public servants was large and dispersed across the thirty-one local government areas and the state ministries, departments and agencies of Akwa Ibom State, so that a single-stage selection from the whole population was neither practicable nor likely to guarantee the representation of every part of the state.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analysed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 27. Frequencies and percentages described the respondents' demographic characteristics. The research questions were answered with the mean and standard deviation. Since the items are rated on a five-point scale, the decision benchmark is the mean of the scale values, (5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1) ÷ 5 = 3.00, so that an item mean of 3.00 and above indicated agreement and a mean below 3.00 indicated disagreement. The null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. Simple linear regression was used to test H_{01} to H_{04}, since each examines

the effect of one dimension of the Council's role, while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test H_{05}, which concerns a relationship. A null hypothesis was rejected where the p-value was less than 0.05.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The following subsections present and interpret the data on the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the answers to the research questions, based on the field survey carried out with the research instrument (questionnaire).

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 4.1: Personal Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Count	Column N %
Gender	Male	213	53.7%
	Female	184	46.3%
Age (years)	18 to 30	111	28.0%
	31 to 40	149	37.5%
	41 to 50	90	22.7%
	51 and above	47	11.8%
Highest Educational Qualification	SSCE/OND	40	10.1%
	NCE	69	17.4%
	HND/B.Sc./B.A.	188	47.4%
	Postgraduate (PGD/M.Sc./Ph.D.)	100	25.2%

Source: Field survey (2024)

Table 4.1 shows that 53.7% of the respondents were male and 46.3% female. Most were aged 31 to 40 years (37.5%) or 18 to 30 years (28.0%), while 11.8% were 51 and above. Nearly

half (47.4%) held the HND or a first degree and 25.2% held postgraduate qualifications, so the respondents could answer the instrument meaningfully.

Table 4.2: Employment and Union Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Count	Column N %
Senatorial District of Workplace	Akwa Ibom North-East (Uyo)	115	29.0%
	Akwa Ibom North-West (Ikot Ekpene)	128	32.2%
	Akwa Ibom South (Eket)	154	38.8%
Tier of Employment	State Ministry, Department or Agency	241	60.7%
	Local Government Council	156	39.3%
Affiliate Union	NCSU	69	17.4%
	NULGE	120	30.2%
	NUT	92	23.2%
	MHWUN	70	17.6%
	Other NLC affiliate	46	11.6%
Position in the Union	Ordinary member	266	67.0%
	Branch/LGA officer	96	24.2%
	State Executive Council member	35	8.8%
Years of Union Membership	Less than 5 years	112	28.2%
	5 to 10 years	130	32.7%
	11 to 15 years	95	23.9%

Variable	Category	Count	Column N %
	Above 15 years	60	15.1%

Source: Field survey (2024)

Table 4.2 reveals that the three senatorial districts were represented in line with the allocation in Table 3.2, and that 60.7% of the respondents worked in state MDAs. NULGE (30.2%) and NUT (23.2%) were the largest affiliates. Most respondents were ordinary members (67.0%), and 71.8% had at least five years of membership, which equips them to assess the Council. Full demographic frequency tables are presented in Appendix III, Section A.

4.1.2 Answers to the Research Questions

Research Question One: *What strategies are employed by the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, to promote transparency in public administration in Akwa Ibom State?*

Table 4.3: Mean Ratings on the Strategies Employed by the Council to Promote Transparency

Descriptive Statistics

Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Petitions and memoranda demanding disclosure	397	2	5	3.75	.686
Negotiation and joint consultative meetings	397	2	5	3.74	.714
Press conferences, public statements and communiqués	397	2	5	3.74	.676
Social media and digital platforms	397	2	5	3.68	.632
Collaboration with other CSOs and the media	397	2	5	3.77	.679

Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strategies of the Council	397	2.20	5.00	3.7360	.53375
Valid N (listwise)	397				

Table 4.3 shows that all five strategy items had means above the criterion mean of 3.00, ranging from 3.68 (social media and digital platforms) to 3.77 (collaboration with other CSOs and the media). The grand mean of 3.74 (SD = 0.53) indicates that respondents agreed that the Council employs these strategies to promote transparency.

Research Question Two: *What is the impact of the advocacy activities of the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, on accountability among public officials in Akwa Ibom State?*

Table 4.4: Mean Ratings on the Impact of the Advocacy of the Council on Accountability among Public Officials

Descriptive Statistics

Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Advocacy makes officials explain and justify decisions	397	3	5	3.44	.502
Officials respond to demands within reasonable time	397	2	4	3.38	.511
Threat of protest makes officials careful with funds	397	2	5	3.39	.514
Advocacy led to reversal or review of decisions	397	2	4	3.37	.500
Officials more willing to accept responsibility	397	2	5	3.38	.515
Impact of Advocacy	397	2.60	4.00	3.3914	.26596

Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Valid N (listwise)	397				

Table 4.4 reveals that all five advocacy items had means above 3.00, ranging from 3.37 (reversal or review of decisions) to 3.44 (officials explain and justify decisions). The grand mean of 3.39 (SD = 0.27) shows that respondents agreed, though moderately, that the advocacy of the Council improves accountability among public officials.

Test of Hypotheses

A null hypothesis is rejected where Sig. is less than 0.05; the ANOVA and residual output for H_{01} to H_{04} are in Appendix III (Sections C to F).

H_{01}: The strategies employed by the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, do not significantly contribute to transparency in public administration in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4.8: Simple Linear Regression of Transparency and Accountability on the Strategies of the Council

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.835[a]	.697	.696	.26154	1.846

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategies of the Council

b. Dependent Variable: Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.862	.093		9.277	.000
	Strategies of the Council	.742	.025	.835	30.134	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration

Table 4.8 shows that the strategies of the Council explained 69.7 per cent of the variance in transparency and accountability (R^2 = .697; F(1, 395) = 908.03). The coefficient was positive and significant (B = 0.742, β = .835, t = 30.134, p < .001). H_{01} is therefore rejected: the strategies significantly contribute to transparency in public administration.

H_{02}: The advocacy activities of the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, have no significant impact on accountability among public officials in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4.9: Simple Linear Regression of Transparency and Accountability on the Impact of Advocacy

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.507[a]	.258	.256	.40932	2.041

a. Predictors: (Constant), Impact of Advocacy

b. Dependent Variable: Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.564	.263		2.144	.033
	Impact of Advocacy	.905	.077	.507	11.705	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration

Table 4.9 indicates that advocacy explained 25.8 per cent of the variance in transparency and accountability ($R^2 = .258$; $F(1, 395) = 137.00$). The effect was positive and significant ($B = 0.905$, $\beta = .507$, $t = 11.705$, $p < .001$). H_{02} is therefore rejected: the advocacy of the Council has a significant impact on accountability among public officials.

Summary of Findings

The major findings of the study, arranged in line with the specific objectives, are summarised as follows:

1. In line with the first objective, which sought to analyse the strategies employed by the NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, to promote transparency in public administration, the study found that the Council promotes transparency through petitions and memoranda, negotiation and joint consultative meetings, press conferences and communiqués, social media and digital platforms, and collaboration with other civil society organisations and the media (grand mean = 3.74). Collaboration with other civil society organisations and the media was the most used strategy, while social media and digital platforms were the least used. The strategies significantly predicted transparency and accountability, explaining 69.7 per cent of its variance ($R^2 = .697$, $\beta = .835$, $p < .001$), and H_{01} was rejected.
2. In line with the second objective, which sought to evaluate the impact of the advocacy activities of the Council on accountability among public

officials, the study found that the advocacy of the Council makes officials explain and justify their decisions, handle public funds more carefully and accept responsibility for lapses, although the reversal or review of unfavourable decisions was the weakest outcome (grand mean = 3.39). Advocacy had a significant but moderate impact, explaining 25.8 per cent of the variance in transparency and accountability ($R^2 = .258$, $\beta = .507$, $p < .001$), and H_{02} was rejected.

Conclusion

The study examined the role of civil society organisations in promoting transparency and accountability in public administration in Nigeria, with the Nigeria Labour Congress, Akwa Ibom State Council, as the case study, and the evidence leads to the conclusion that the Council plays a significant, though uneven, role in making public administration in Akwa Ibom State more open and answerable. The Council has developed a clear repertoire of strategies, anchored on petitions and memoranda, negotiation, press engagement, digital communication and collaboration with other civil society organisations and the media, and these strategies are the strongest driver of transparency and accountability among the dimensions of its role. Its advocacy has also made public officials more willing to explain and justify their decisions and to exercise greater care in the handling of public funds, although it has been less successful in securing the reversal or review of contested decisions, so that the answerability it produces is stronger than the enforcement it achieves.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The NLC, Akwa Ibom State Council, should sustain and intensify its use of petitions, negotiation, press engagement and collaboration with other civil society organisations, while investing more deliberately in social media and digital platforms, the least-rated strategy, to broaden and sustain the reach of its transparency campaigns.
2. The Akwa Ibom State Government should institutionalise mechanisms, such as joint review committees, through which the advocacy of the Council can lead more consistently to

the reversal or review of contested administrative decisions, rather than to explanation alone.

References

Adeoye, O., & Ran, B. (2024). Government transparency: Paradoxes and dilemmas. *Public Management Review, 26*(8), 2194–2217. https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2023.2181981

Brummel, L., & de Blok, L. (2024). Do political and social accountability arrangements increase citizens' legitimacy perceptions? A vignette experiment in the Netherlands. *Public Management Review, 26*(11), 3365–3389. https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2024.2337843

Brusseel, A., Raeymaeckers, P., & Verschuere, B. (2025). How can nonprofit policy advocacy influence policymakers? A factorial survey experiment on the effects of nonprofit advocacy strategies on policymakers' willingness to act. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 54*(2), 241–266. https://doi.org/10.1177/08997640241252616

Carré, B., Oosterlynck, S., Verschuere, B., & Raeymaeckers, P. (2025). Advocacy on a tightrope: Effects of government funding and perceived support for advocacy on nonprofit cooperative and confrontational advocacy tactics. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership, 36*(1), 25–37. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21647

Cheeseman, N., & Dodsworth, S. (2023). Defending civic space: When are campaigns against repressive laws successful? *The Journal of Development Studies, 59*(5), 619–636. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2022.2162882

Houeland, C. (2022). The social contract and industrial citizenship: Nigerian trade unions' role in the recurring fuel subsidy protests. *Africa, 92*(5), 860–879. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972022000523

Katusiimeh, M. W., & Bekoreire, M. B. (2025). Civil society, accountability, and anti-corruption: A critical examination of CSOs in Uganda. *Journal of Government and Civil Society, 9*(2).

Lall, R. (2025). Making global governance accountable: Civil society, states, and the politics of reform. *American Journal of Political Science, 69*(1), 96–117. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12824

Mungiu-Pippidi, A. (2023). Transparency and corruption: Measuring real transparency by a

new index. *Regulation & Governance, 17*(4), 1094–1113. https://doi.org/10.1111/rego.12502

Nnaji, I. L., Ojiako, C. I., Ukeje, I. O., & Nwangbo, S. O. (2022). Governance intervention in developing economies: An appraisal of public enterprises approach to sustainable nation building. *Review of Public Administration and Management, 9*(19), 194–208.

Nwafor, A. E., Ojiako, C. I., Okonkwo, E. R., & Onyeulo, F. L. (2023). Administrative weakness, politics of recruitment and impediments to effective service delivery in the Nigerian public sector: The dilemma of human resource managers. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews, 4*(2), 216–221.

Nwankwo, B. C., Atuluku, A. A., Mbamalu, K. U., & Barnabas, R. N. (2021). Integrity, transparency and accountability in governance—Pathway to sustainable growth and development in Nigeria. *Sapientia Foundation Journal of Education, Sciences and Gender Studies, 3*(1), 315–325.

Obadare, E., & Krawczyk, K. (2022). Civil society and philanthropy in Africa: Parallels, paradoxes and promise. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 51*(1), 76–102. https://doi.org/10.1177/08997640211057453

Ojiako, C. I., Umeasiegbu, L. O., Onyeulo, F. L., & Okoye, E. C. (2024). Democratic issues and electoral violence in Nigeria: A critical analysis of the 2023 general elections. *Journal of the Management Sciences, 60*(3), 309–320.

Okoye, E. C., & Ojiako, C. I. (2021). Feedback mechanism and improved service delivery in the university system: A study of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. *Nigerian Journal of Social Development, 10*(1).

Overman, S., & Schillemans, T. (2022). Toward a public administration theory of felt accountability. *Public Administration Review, 82*(1), 12–22. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13417

Pérez-Durán, I. (2024). Twenty-five years of accountability research in public administration: Authorship, themes, methods, and future trends. *International Review of Administrative Sciences, 90*(3), 546–562. https://doi.org/10.1177/00208523231211751

Rajala, T., & Jalonen, H. (2025). Beyond simplification in public sector accountability: Contradictions between principal-agent and complexity theories. *Public Administration Review, 85*(6), 1757–1770. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13941

Ross, S. A. (1973). The economic theory of agency: The principal's problem. *The American Economic Review, 63*(2), 134–139.

Schmidthuber, L., Willems, J., & Krabina, B. (2023). Trust in public performance information: The effect of data accessibility and data source. *Public Administration Review, 83*(2), 279–295. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13603

Schnell, S. (2023). To know is to act? Revisiting the impact of government transparency on corruption. *Public Administration and Development, 43*(5), 355–367. https://doi.org/10.1002/pad.2029

Villanueva, P. A. (2023). Locating the role of civil society in anti-corruption. *Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics, 9*(2), 131–164. https://doi.org/10.17356/ieejsp.v9i2.937

Yaghi, A., Aboelwafa, T., & Al Ahbabi, A. (2025). Exploration of principal-agent theory in a consultative policy-making context. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 12*, Article 1419. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-025-05648-4