

EFFECTS OF CORRUPT PRACTICES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: A CASE STUDY OF THE NIGERIAN POLICE SERVICE

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ABSTRACT: This study empirically studied the repercussions of corrupt practices in the Nigeria public sector and the Nigerian police service as a case study. The study adopted the correlational survey methodology wherein, Corrupt Practices Questionnaire (CPQ) were developed and validated by the researchers. Data for the study were analysed using the Chi-square and Pearson correlation analytical procedures. Findings of the study revealed there is no relationship between gender and corruption in the Nigeria Police Service. Corrupt practices in the Nigeria Police Service are statistically dependent upon poor remuneration and conditions of service. There is also empirical evidence that corrupt practices persist in the service as a result of inadequate discipline and control in the rank and file of the service. The study therefore, recommended up-scale of discipline, control and better remuneration in the Nigerian Police Service. It further recommended that the officers should undergo periodic trainings to boost their competence, morale and level of commitment to service.

Keywords: Corruption, Nigerian Police Service, Administration, Bureaucracy, Hierarchy.

INTRODUCTION

Despite its political independence in 1960, Nigerian society has not been well governed due to impunity and corruption (Oluwasanmi, 2007; Ebegbulem, 2009). According to Oluwasanmi (2007) and Imhonopi and Ugochukwu (2013), from the first democratic experiment in 1960 through military regimes and back to democracy as it is today, Nigeria has unfortunately been managed by corrupt leaders who lack vision, are weak, are parochial, are morally bankrupt, narcissistic, egoistic, greedy, and corrupt. Since 1960, the country's leadership has criminally managed its affairs, accumulating wealth at the expense of national development and throwing the people over the edge, causing them to wallow in poverty, illiteracy, hunger, rising unemployment, an avoidable health crisis, and insecurity. (Ebegbulem cited in Imhonopi and Ugochukwu, 2013).

The former president Olusegun Obasanjo assumed office in 1999 as a poor politician (all his bank accounts amounted to about N20,000), but eight years later he had refurbished and expanded a derelict agricultural (poultry) farm at Ota in Ogun State, which now holds hundreds of millions of naira (Oluwasanmi, 2007). With over two hundred million shares in various

conglomerates, Obasanjo owns educational institutions ranging from primary education to university education (Oluwasanmi, 2007). Since his friends and officials under him were corrupt, his efforts at battling corruption had little or no impact on the war against political corruption (Ebegbulem, 2012; Oluwasanmi, 2007).

Basically, the Nigerian Public Service is the combination of all government agencies that provide services as part of the government machinery. The state apparatus plays a significant role in determining the quality of life of the citizenry by determining how the objectives of the government are carried out and how resources are allocated among competing demands in the country. Good governance is essential in this regard. According to Asaju and Adagba (2012: 32–39), the Nigerian Public Service includes the Civil Service, often referred to as the core service, consisting of line ministries and extra-ministerial agencies; Public Bureaucracy, or enlarged Public Service, which includes the State and National Assembly, the Judiciary, the Armed Forces, the Police, and other Security agencies, as well as paramilitary services.

Every corrupt practice vitiates competitiveness in the economy thereby subverting innovation and engendering incompetence and waste of resources. A corrupt police service is closely associated to poor public sector performance; the Nigeria Police service plays a crucial role in public service delivery including the protection of the economic resources of a nation. We cannot, therefore, over emphasize the importance and the place of the police in the security architecture or the maintenance of law and order in the society. The police have been and will continue to be one of the agents of international peace and progress. Social disputes, prevention and detection of crime, apprehension of offenders in the society are part of the reasons for the establishment the police service.

Nigeria is perceived as a highly corrupt nation being 150th out of 180 corrupt countries in Transparency International's 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index, thus branded as one of the most corrupt public sectors. Nigeria is engulfed in a pervasive state of gradual putrefaction as a result of corruption and remains one of the least developed nations in the world even after more than 50 years of independence (Smith, 2010). Political and economic compromises are the two most common avenues individuals in positions of trust in Nigeria abuse their positions and infringe on public resources. Available statistics show that corruption level is related to a reduction in a country's life expectancy which in Nigeria has dropped to about 51 years (Ikita, 2014). Should the government and other relevant social institutions fail to tackle corruption in all its forms in the public service, the situation will worsen and escalate to where individuals will need to pay bribe in order to be safe.

The Nigerian police service was established as a federal agency under the 1960 constitution. Its duty was to uphold peace, maintain law and order in the country. However, corrupt practices observed in the Nigerian police service and the public sector at large has stigmatized Nigeria as one of the most corrupt countries in the world, (Ladapo, 2013). According to the former Inspector General of Police, corruption has come to characterize the behaviour of the average policeman, (Okiro, 2007).

Accurate information on the incidence of police corruption is difficult to obtain since corrupt acts tend to take place behind closed doors and police organizations have little motivation to publicize information regarding corruption in the service, (Kratcoski, 2012).

Corruption keep festering in Nigeria even though there are laws in place to combat it, but due to weak institutions and lack of political will on the part of the authorities, it is impossible to put these laws into effect. Corruption in the public service ranges from sluggish file flow in offices, extortions, nepotism, bribery, taking undue advantage of public resources for personal gains, lateness to work, absenteeism, and many more. The rank and file of the Nigerian police extort money (roger) especially, from commercial vehicles drivers whom most often they claim breach traffic rules and regulations occasionally causing traffic jams and sometimes accidents. Many Nigerians have lost their lives to situations where drivers refuse to be extorted and in the process are shot by police at various checking-points. Majority of the time, funds designated for the wellbeing of the Nigerian police officers vanishes into thin air, reinforcing cases of the rots in the system.

The primary objective of this study is to empirically investigate the effects of corruption in the Nigerian police service and by extension, the Nigeria Public Service on service delivery and to make recommendations to mitigate the incidence and improve performance. The specific objectives include the following;

- i. To determine whether corrupt practices are significantly independent on Gender
- ii. Whether corrupt practices are significantly independent on the supervision and control system within the service
- iii. Whether corrupt practices are significantly independent on their poor living condition and welfare

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Issues

Corruption

A person or group of persons in a position of authority may engage in a corrupt practice, which is an act of dishonesty or a criminal offense, purporting to obtain improper benefits or exploiting that position for own benefit or interest. Bribery, influence peddling, and embezzlement are just a few of the behaviours that corruption may encompass. Corruption occurs in different dimensions and magnitudes depending on the circumstance and who is involved in the act. It may occur in groups, syndicates or in sequence but mostly prevalence in the public service. Within the political system corruption also occurs and it is when a public officer or other staff uses their position for personal gain (Osoba, 1996, Fatile, 2013).

On a global scale, corruption and crime are sociological endemic and occurs often in almost every country at varied degrees. As corruption grows in a country, it commits economic resources for its prevention, suppression and control. Anti-corruption is a broad phrase that is frequently used to describe tactics used to combat corruption. Additionally, international programs like the Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the United Nations have a specific objective that is meant to significantly reduce corruption in all of its forms (World Bank, 2013).

Political corruption, according to Morris (1991), is the improper use of public authority to advance a private purpose. The economist Ian Senior (2006) described corruption as the hidden

provision of a good or service to a third party to influence decisions that are in the best interests of the corrupt third party or both. Kaufmann and Pedro (2005), expanded the idea to include *legal corruption* which refers to the misuse of power in the legal system. Individuals in positions of authority frequently have the potential to pass legislation to protect themselves. The result of corruption in the infrastructure sector is an increase in costs and duration of construction, a decline in quality, and a reduction in benefits. Corruption destroys confidence, undermines democracy, stifles economic growth, and creates inequality, poverty, and social division. We can only expose corruption and hold the corrupt accountable if we comprehend how they operate and the structures that make it possible.

Police Public Image

The mass media; television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and other forms of communication serve as the main channels of communication between the Nigerian police service and the general public. Citizens learn about police activity in terms of crime prevention through what they read in their newspapers, see and hear on television and radio. As a result, the perception of the public on the Nigerian police, whether positive or negative, largely depend on what the public reads, hears, and sees in the local media.

Nature and Characteristics of Corruption

Political Corruption

Political corruption takes place at the highest levels of political authority. It occurs when the politician and political decision makers formulate, establish and implement laws are themselves corrupt. Political corruption is sometimes seen as display of greed in the manner in which decisions are being made. It includes the manipulation of the political institutions, rules of procedure, and distortion in government institutions (Ketefe, 2012). According to Michael (2002), a study conducted in the Caribbean indicated that political corruption is mostly driven by a local bourgeoisie comprised of government officials and their inefficiencies in the state economic system. Political corruption has a significant impact on the state's rule of law; the greater the corruption, the weaker the rule of law. It also demonstrates the impact on educational output, economic output, and social disparities, with the few elites remaining wealthy while the bulk stay impoverished.

Bureaucratic Corruption

This occurs in the public administrative offices or the implementation end of politics. Corruption of this nature are encountered on daily basis and at public places like hospitals, schools, local licensing offices, police, tax offices, etc. There are also, seeming petty corruption that occurs when a person obtains a business from the public sector through inappropriate procedure (Folarin, 2014).

Electoral Corruption

This type of corruption includes vote buying, promise of office position or other inducements and special favours, coercion, intimidation and interference with the electoral processes.

Nigeria is a good example of prevailing electoral corruption (Folarin, 2014). Ogundiya (2010) asserts that the financing of political parties through corruption has harmed democracy by creating intense intra-party rivalries between the adherents of the rival political godfathers. Additionally, it has made ruling political parties hesitant to enact stringent legislation on political party funding at all governmental levels. It also results in the political parties' slack support for the federal government's anti-corruption stance. This can be ascribed to several factors, including a lack of dedication to a national agenda, the promotion of short-term personal interests over long-term national interests, a concern with issues of ethnicity as the foundation of politics, and a lack of visionary leadership (Akivaga, 2001).

Forms of Corruption

Bribery: The payment that is taken or given in order to compromise or induce undue favour and advantage. It conduces to parting of monetary value or any item of value other than money.

Fraud: It involves trickery collusion of a syndicate or a lone manoeuvre by one or more persons to gain undue financial advantage over others either in business place or public office. It includes acts such as swindle or deceit, counterfeiting, racketing, smuggling and forgery, etc.

Embezzlement: This is theft of public resources entrusted in an officer or employee by that individual or collusion by group of persons to do so.

Extortion: This is money and other resources extracted by the use of coercion, violence or threat. It often perpetrated by the police and law enforcement personnel in Nigeria and other corruption prevalent states.

Causes of Corruption in Nigeria

There are many different political and cultural factors that contribute to corruption. According to Lipset and Lenz (2000), there is evidence linking social variety, ethno-linguistic fractionalization, and the percentage of the population that follows distinct religious traditions with corruption. A society's political structure and cultural norms may thereby increase a citizen's susceptibility to unethical behaviour. However, there are a few key elements that contribute to corrupt behaviour in less developed countries, such as Nigeria: (i) extreme wealth inequality; (ii) Using political office as the main way to obtain wealth; (iii) Conflicting moral standards; (iv) The frailty of social and governmental enforcement mechanisms; and (v) Lack of strong sense of national identity (Dike, 2004).

Effective Control of Corruption

The battle against corruption lacks a magic solution. Although many nations have made great strides in reducing corruption, professionals are constantly searching for answers and proof of their work's effects. Here are five strategies for governments and citizens to advance the war on corruption according to Transparency International;

Cut off impunity

To ensure that the corrupt are held accountable and end the cycle of impunity—the absence of penalty or loss—effective law enforcement is necessary.

Law enforcement branches, an independent judiciary, and a robust legal framework all contribute to successful enforcement strategies. Initiatives from civil society, like Transparency International's Unmask the CorruP-t campaign, can aid the process.

Reform financial management and public administration

Changes aimed at enhancing financial management and bolstering the function of auditing agencies have, in many nations, had a bigger influence on reducing corruption than public sector reforms.

Encourage information availability and openness

Nations that have been successful in reducing corruption have a long history of press freedom, open government, transparency, and information availability. Information accessibility improves a nation's public involvement rates while also making governmental institutions more responsive to citizens.

Empower citizens

Building mutual trust between citizens and government can be achieved through enabling citizens to keep government responsible and by strengthening their desire for anti-corruption measures. Initiatives aimed at community monitoring, for instance, have occasionally helped uncover corruption, minimize financial leaks, and enhance the volume and caliber of public services.

Close international loopholes

Corrupt government officials would be unable to conceal and launder the proceeds of stolen state assets anywhere in the globe if they did not have access to the international financial system. It is imperative that major financial centres implement measures to prevent money laundering through their banks and affiliated offshore financial centres (Transparency international).

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Social Learning Theory

Our Public Service Corruption analysis is anchored on Social Learning Theory. The theory developed by Albert Bandura (1977), expounds the interaction between environment and cognitive factors and their inducement on learning and behaviour of human beings. He asserts that there are two vital issues of this theory; mediating process which takes place between stimuli and responses, and that behaviour is learned from the environment by way of rigors of

observation. This study therefore, believes from the perspectives of the Social Learning Theory that interaction among individuals within environment can elicit response that trigger up a behavioural pattern either on the positive or negative ultimately create anti work response. This however, could engender corrupt practice in public office.

To explain activities that violate social norms, Akers (2000) developed social learning theory as an extension of Sutherland's differential association theory. He affirms that there are four variables work to initiate and strengthen attitudes toward social behaviour: differential association, definitions, reinforcement, and modelling. The balance of these variables affects whether a person is more likely to participate in conforming or deviant behaviour.

Differential association, or the influence of individuals with whom one regularly associates, is the primary variable in social learning theory. According to Akers (1998), individuals establish favourable or unfavourable definitions of deviance through interactions with their peers. The rewards and penalties then reinforce these definitions, either positively or adversely. This idea is relevant to law enforcement because it recognizes the subculture as the major peer group from whom officers learn definitions. Peer influence, according to Alpert and Dunham (1997), is one of the most powerful factors at work in police departments. In this vein, most researchers and police officers agree that a police subculture exists (Conser 1980). As a result, the formation of a deviant subculture and, in particular, corrupt behaviours by police is aided by the departments in which they are employed. This is accomplished by disseminating beliefs, ideals, definitions, and "manners of expression" that deviate from approved behaviour.

As a result of the theory's premise, because the subculture has already been developed, a new officer who is engaged enters the peer group and is exposed to models of behaviour that will impact his or her own views and behaviour. Because police officers are more likely than other people to be exposed to their co-workers, it is possible that the officer will learn to accept and internalize the definitions shared by other officers. The corrupt lifestyle has infiltrated the Nigerian police force to the point where constables see bribery as a fundamental right. This occurs because the common value system of the subculture permits such officers to rationalize, excuse, and justify misconduct (Kappeler, Sluder, & Alpert, 1998).

Empirical Studies

Apeloko, (2021) studied "The legitimization of Corruption: Analysing Public Perception of Police Extortion and Bribery among NURTW Members in Southwestern Nigeria". The study adopted the bottom-top approach to analyse public perception of police corruption; its causes, consequences and the prevention mechanism. It sought to determine if police corruption on the highways is a consequence of attitudes or moral codes of members of the public which tolerate or legitimize the act. The paper employed primary method of data collection in form of interviews with respondents selected from the NURTW members and other stakeholders in the transport sector in three southwestern states of Oyo, Ondo and Lagos. The findings of the study revealed that poor remuneration of the police force are the key causal factors of police extortions in Nigeria.

Kayode, Sunday and Salisu (2019) investigated effects of corruption on Nigerian public service and good governance. The data for the study was secondary data. The study adopted the

content method of analysis. The findings of the study revealed that corruption is the bane of Nigeria's public service and her inability to provide effective services. The paper thus concludes that good governance is at a very low level in Nigeria as indicated by the high rate of poverty, insecurity and unemployment, low level of infrastructural facilities, education, among others. These are because of the pernicious impact of corruption, an endemic vice in the Nigerian Public Service, as well as the poor political system. The paper recommended among others a holistic ethical re-orientation for the citizenry which abhor corrupt attitudes in their dealings with the government, her agents and the private institutions.

Osakede et al. (2015) studied corruption in Nigeria public sector and the challenges of good governance and sustainable development. Using secondary data and qualitative approach to data analysis, the study findings showed that poverty, insecurity, kidnapping, ethno-religious crisis, bad governance are attributed to corruption. The paper recommended that government should urgently initiate moves to work with the National Assembly to review Nigeria constitution and legal order so as to empower the anti-corruption agencies to work assiduously without interference.

Egbedina, Popoola and Lawal (2014) investigated the impact of corruption on maintenance of law and order. The adopted the purposive sampling method to sample 65 respondents. Findings of the study revealed that corruption is affecting the efficiency of the police in many ways. A commonly mentioned effect of corruption on the performance of police is the ever increasing crime rate. The study also showed that citizens have developed lukewarm attitude towards reporting cases to the police as a result of lack of faith in the Nigerian police.

Osimen, Adenegan and Balogun (2013) examined corruption in the public sector in Nigeria with particular reference to Akure South Local Government Area of Ondo State. Survey research method was used questionnaire was deployed as instrument of data collection. The study findings revealed that lack of transparency, moral laxity, weak government institutions, unemployment and poverty were significant factors stimulating corruption in Nigeria. The study thus, recommended among others, that government should strengthen the institutions established to fight corruption.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

The study adopted the correlational survey approach, wherein primary data was sourced through the use of questionnaire. A structured questionnaire of the alternative response type was developed and validated by experts. The purposive sampling technique was employed to sample 100 serving and retired police officers in Abia, Anambra and Imo states all in Southeast political zone of Nigeria.

Method of Data Analysis

To test the null hypotheses that there is no significant association between the independent variables and the dependent variable, the Chi-square and Pearson correlation statistics were deployed. The hypotheses were tested at a significance level of 0.05.

The decision rule for the Pearson correlation coefficient will be as follows: 0.00 = no relationship, 0.01–0.19 = very low relationship, 0.20–0.39 = low relationship, 0.40 –0.59 = moderate relationship, 0.60–0.79 = high relationship, 0.80–0.99 = very high relationship and 1.00 = perfect relationship.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

H0₁: Corrupt practices are significantly independent on Gender

Table 1: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	6.454 ^a	1	.053
Continuity Correction	5.310	1	.061
Likelihood Ratio	6.299	1	.052
N of Valid Cases	100		

Author’s computation

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.62.

Table 2: Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.254	.061
	Cramer's V	.254	.061
N of Valid Cases		100	

Author’s computation

H0₂: Corrupt practices are significantly independent on the supervision and control system within the Nigerian police service

Table 3: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	4.220 ^a	1	.040
Continuity Correction	3.404	1	.065
Likelihood Ratio	4.309	1	.038
N of Valid Cases	100		

Author’s computation

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 15.91.

Table 4: Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	-.205	.040
	Cramer's V	.205	.040
N of Valid Cases		100	

Author's computation

H₀₃: Corrupt practices are significantly independent on their poor living condition and welfare

Table 5: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	13.776 ^a	1	.000
Continuity Correction	11.886	1	.001
Likelihood Ratio	20.107	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	100		

Author's computation

- a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.03.

Table 6: Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	-.371	.000
	Cramer's V	.371	.000
N of Valid Cases		100	

Author's computation

		GENDER	Q1	Q2	Q3
GENDER	Pearson Correlation	1	.314**	.254*	.229*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.011	.022
	N	100	100	100	100
Q1	Pearson Correlation	.314**	1	-.205*	-.215*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		.040	.032
	N	100	100	100	100
Q2	Pearson Correlation	.254*	-.205*	1	-.371**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.040		.000
	N	100	100	100	100
Q3	Pearson Correlation	.229*	-.215*	-.371**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.022	.032	.000	
	N	100	100	100	100

Interpretation of Results

The chi-square tests results on the relationship between corruption practices and gender can be summarized as; $X^2 = 6.454$, $df = (2-1)*(2-1) = 1$, $P\text{-value} = 0.053$. This result indicated that there is no significant association between corruption practices and gender since the p-value is greater than 5 percent and we therefore cannot reject the null hypothesis ($0.053 \leq P\text{-value} > 0.05$).

The Phi and Cramer's V in table 2, symmetric measure, provide information on the effect size which describes the degree of association between the dependent and the independent variables. The Phi value of 0.254 is very small and the P-value of 0.61 suggested that the Phi value of 0.254 is insignificant hence corrupt practices in the Nigerian police service is statistically independent of gender.

The chi-square tests results on hypothesis 2 is summarized as; $X^2 = 4.220$, $df = (2-1)*(2-1) = 1$, $P\text{-value} = 0.04$. This result indicated that there is a significant association between corruption practices and supervision and control within the Nigerian police service since the p-value is less than 5 percent, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ($0.04 \leq P\text{-value} < 0.05$).

The Phi value of -0.205 is very small with an associated P-value of 0.4 suggested a significant inverse relationship. That is a unit increase in supervision and control in the Nigerian police service will lead to 0.205 decrease in corrupt practices within the Nigerian police service, hence corrupt practices in the Nigerian police service is statistically dependent on supervision and control within the system.

The chi-square tests results on hypothesis 3 was summarized as; $X^2 = 13.776$, $df = (2-1)*(2-1) = 1$, $P\text{-value} = 0.00$. This result indicated that there exist a significant association between corruption practices and poor living condition and welfare of men of the Nigerian police service since the p-value is less than 5 percent, we therefore reject the null hypothesis.

The Phi value of -0.371 is very small with an associated P-value of 0.00 suggested a significant inverse relationship. That is a unit increase in the living condition and welfare of men of the Nigerian police service will lead to 0.371 decrease in corrupt practices within the Nigerian police service, hence corrupt practices in the Nigerian police service is statistically dependent on the poor living condition and welfare of men of the Nigerian police service.

The Pearson correlation statistics indicated that corrupt practices and the poor living condition and welfare of men of the Nigerian police service have inverse significant correlation to corrupt practices

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the above findings, the following conclusions were drawn;

1. There is no association between gender and corrupt practices in the Nigerian police service.

2. Corrupt practices in the Nigerian police service are dependent on supervision and control within the system.
3. Corrupt practices in the Nigerian police service are dependent on the poor living conditions and welfare of the men of the service.

Recommendations

The police authority should scale up their supervision and control mechanism within the force and punish any officer found wanting in his/her line of duty.

The government should improve on the remuneration and welfare of officers and men of the Nigerian police service while also ensuring periodic training of the rank and file to boost their competence, morale and level of commitment to service.

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