



CIVIL SERVICE CORRUPTION AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN ANAMBRA STATE CIVIL SERVICE

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Abstract

This work investigated Civil Service Corruption and Service delivery in Anambra State Civil Service. The statement of the problem is how Civil Service corruption undermines human and development in Anambra State Civil Service. The main objective of this study is to examine Civil Service corruption and Service delivery in Anambra State Civil Service. Five theories were reviewed namely: Differential Association theory, Extractive Theory of Corruption, Social Learning Theory, Classical theory, and Maxian theory. The Classical theory is adopted as the theoretical framework. The study adopted the mixed methods research design, using the multistage sampling procedure in the selection of 372 respondents that cut across ministries in the state. The structured questionnaire and In-Depth Interview (IDI) guide served as instruments for data collection. The quantitative data was coded and processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Frequency tables and charts were used to analyze, describe and present the data, while the qualitative data was analyzed using manual content analysis. Three research hypotheses were formulated and tested using chi-square inferential statistics. The study found that there is a significant relationship between bribery in Anambra state civil service and service delivery. The study equally found that embezzlement of public funds by public officials affects service delivery in Anambra state civil service. The study also finds out that poor remuneration of civil servants has generally demoralized them and drives them to corruption. Based on the findings of the study, the work recommended that any person with dented record must not assume a public office as this will go a long way in giving zero chance to corrupt civil servants who intends to embezzle public funds. The study also recommended the need to jack up wages and incentive packages of public servants to make them comfortable and less prone to corruption.

Keywords: Civil Service, Corruption, Causes, Service delivery, Economic Growth.

Introduction

Suara & Fadipe (2013) defines corruption as the abuse of public office for private gains. Public office is abused for private gain when an official accepts, solicits, or extorts a bribe. It is also abused when private agents actively offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit. Public office can also be abused for personal benefit even if no bribery occurs, through patronage and nepotism, the theft of state assets or the diversion of state. Corruption which constitutes an ethical violation on the part of public officials including the elected (politicians) and appointed (civil servants) poses a serious challenge to public trust. Corruption has a long history in Nigeria. It could be traced right from the colonial period. The introduction of Western education, the development of urbanization, and the monetization of the economy heightened their growth of individualism. All these brought outstanding changes in relationships and ways of doing things (Nnatu 2012).

According to Makinda and Nduku (2014), corruption is a global phenomenon, cutting across faiths, religious denominations, and political systems. It is ever-present in all governments and is found in democratic and dictatorial systems, feudal, capitalist, and socialist economies.



However, we can safely argue that developing countries already suffering from poverty, poor health, high levels of illiteracy, low economic growth, and political instability would be much more prone.

Corruption encourages the distortion of government expenditure. This often results in the diversion of public investment on large-scale projects, rather than on the provision of necessary public services such as health, roads, housing, and education (Ilechukwu,2014). This situation makes it inevitable for the limited but valuable funds earmarked for development to disappear into private pockets. Ilechukwu (2014) argued that Corruption also undermines efficiency as time and money are wasted through corrupt activities at the expense of productive activities which altogether discourages prospective investors. Corruption undermines human and capital development in any society or nation. Perhaps the most tragic effect of corruption on Nigeria has been the failure of the country to attain its economic potential. Corruption generates economic distortion in the public sector by devastating public investment into capital projects where bribes and kickbacks are more fraudulent. It slows down the pace of economic development through manipulation of funds for projects; it destroys or weakens the efficiency and effectiveness of public service, it detracts government from giving priority to the areas of income and social inequality, poverty, malnutrition, and other areas of need. The net impact of corruption on society is negative.

The origin of the Nigerian civil service is traceable to the British Colonial administration and the Amalgamation in 1914. Although the rudiments of Public Bureaucracy had long been established in the conquered areas, beginning from the annexation of Lagos in 1861, the British Imperialists established administrative structures in the area which metamorphosed into what is called the Nigerian Civil Service today (Anazodo 2006). This Civil Service is traceable to Lord Lugard's administration. What we see today is not much different from what we had during colonial times. The civil servants are part and parcel of the executive arm of government. The Civil service is a major factor in the success or failure of any government. It is the power that ensures good governance.

Public service delivery refers to services provided by governments (local, state, or national) to their citizens. Hence, it encapsulates the provision of a wide range of services such as health care, education, water and sanitation, etc. Service in this context entails tangible and intangible goods and services provided by the government to improve the well-being of the citizenry (Carlson,2005) Conceptualized service delivery as the relationship between policymakers, service providers, and poor people encompasses services and their supporting systems that are typically regarded as a state responsibility. These entail social services (Primary education and basic health services, infrastructure, water, sanitation, roads and bridges) and services that provide personal security (Justice, Police, etc.). In Nigeria, the local, state, and federal constitute the major service purports of all organizations that exist as part of government machinery for implementer's policy decisions and delivery services that are of value to the citizens. The Nigeria public service includes the civil service, which is often referred to as a core service, consisting of ministries and parastatal, judiciary and the Armed forces, the police and other security agencies, etc

Anambra State like every other state in the country is equally enmeshed in corrupt practices which has distorted its efforts at development. Since 1999 the violence, all manner of corruption, and godfatherism occurring elsewhere in Nigeria have run rampant in Anambra



(Human Rights Watch, 2007). Idemobi, Onyeizugbe, and Akpunonu, (2011), stated that even reforms in the Anambra State Civil Service have not improved service delivery. Arguably, there is a public outcry against the abysmal performance of public institutions in service delivery to the citizens. Azeem (2009) opines that the harmful effects of corruption are obvious as it takes away public resources from service delivery to the poor and marginalized in society.

Specific Objective

To ascertain the effect of embezzlement of funds on service delivery in Anambra State Civil Service

Literature Review

Conceptualization of Civil Service: The civil services in Nigeria are supposed to be a vehicle by which the government initiates, formulates, and implements policies. In other words, it is the Bureaucracy that regulates all aspects of the society. According to the civil service rules PSR 2205 and 02206,

The Nigerian civil services are so strategically, located in roles, functions, activities, and resources that their performance determines the state's pace and level of development. For some time now, the service has been riddled with inefficiency, corruption, ineffectiveness, mismanagement, shoddiness, inertia, routine, poor responsiveness, conflicts, sectionalism, incompetence, and low productivity (Ikelegbe 2005).

The problems of Nigerian civil service are traceable to a lack of management consciousness, the non-application of modern techniques of management, the absence of performance emphasis, the absence of a systematic evaluation, and the lack of emphasis on accountability and responsible managers and chief executives. It is important to note that during the colonial capitalist rationality who believed in minimum investment for maximum output. (Ake 2008). Only very few reforms were carried out in their colonial service and that was done when it was unavoidable.

The new encyclopedia Britannica (2004) defines civil service as the body of government officials who are employed in civil occupations that are neither political nor judicial. It went on to say that, it consists of people employed by the state to run the public service of a country. Abba and Anazodo (2006) argued that civil service in Nigeria comprises workers in various ministries or departments apart from those who hold political appointments. Civil service reform, on the other hand, refers to the purposeful modification of the governmental human resource management system, with the goal of maximizing important administrative values (Anazode 2009). It was the long rule of the military that facilitated the major problem of corruption in Nigeria, with the creation of many states in Nigeria, particularly, the 12 and the 19 states by Gowon and Obasanjo Regimes in Nigeria. They gave room for corruption and seriously killed or destroyed the Nigerian civil service. When states, particularly the 19 states were created, people were asked to go back to their own states. In this, those who were in lower grade levels were catapulted to grade level '12' so that they could occupy those vacant positions and this seriously destroyed the civil service. Many of those who were not qualified were placed into positions where they could not perform very well. This affected the civil service seriously (Ogunna 1999).



Concept of Corruption: Usman (2008), tried to espouse the difficulties in defining corruption in a general and acceptable manner. They posit, however, that its definition cannot be without the inclusion of ethics and normative values by the observers. In other words, it is burdensome to define it in a value-free fashion. However, the most important analytical problem is the difficulty of agreeing on what constitutes corrupt behavior and how to operationalize the concept. The difficulty in the exercise is mostly because corruption has often been defined or understood in isolation, as a discrete phenomenon and mostly not located within a wider pattern of socio-political behavior such as the diversion of resources from intended beneficiaries to private and/or group ends. That is why corruption is, here, diagnosed and discussed regarding its twin concepts of transparency and accountability. The three concepts are mutually supportive and, oftentimes, viewed as two sides of a coin by public administration scholars and practitioners alike. Corruption is no doubt a global phenomenon that has paraded the spectrum of nations, continents, and the world as a whole. It threatened the developmental road map to the progress of nations and continents of the world. Nigeria therefore is not an exception from the ravaging realities of this scourge. Adanie (2007) posited that corruption exists in one form or the other in all societies. The differential in this case of corruption in Nigeria is the extent of its pervasiveness and its implication for good governance, its value system, and political culture in particular. Corruption in service delivery is the form of corruption most frequently encountered by citizens and can plague all kinds of interactions with the state (Transparency International 2013). In the global corruption Barometer, 27 percent of respondents worldwide claimed that they have encountered corruption while dealing with a public service provider. This affects marginalized vulnerable groups as well as, more powerful groups of society that are less reliant on state assistance. Corruption affects the “re-distribution” nature of public services, hampers policy decisions such that it is no longer focused on public interest, and refocuses available public resources into the hands of corrupt groups inside, and outside and straddles the state apparatus. Corruption can drastically chop off public confidence and service delivery in nations and states of the world (OECD, 2017).

Concept of Service delivery: Carlson (2005) conceptualized service delivery as the relationship between policymakers, service providers, and poor people. According to them, it encompasses services and their supporting systems that are typically regarded as a state responsibility. These include social services (primary education and basic health services), infrastructure (water, sanitation, roads, and bridges), and services that promote personal security (justice, police, etc.). Effective service delivery involves a clear understanding of the specific services an organization provides, and its target customers. Understanding the service characteristics enhances how customers see the services an organization provides. According to Nash (2004), effective service delivery is the provision of services to a buyer in such a way the buyer's expectations can be met or exceeded while, at the same time, the business remains viable. Effective service delivery is rendering services that correspond to the customers' desires, needs, and expectations. This concept emanates from the perceived need to treat members of the public who require government services like a private-sector entrepreneur would treat his/her customers. This is against the backdrop that a major obstacle to the efficient and effective delivery of government services is the attitude of public servants to members of the public who are their customers (Fagbemi, 2006).

Acceptable service delivery can be seen as one of the core responsibilities for the establishment of public organisations. It is identified as “one of the key functions of the public sector.” (Mitel, 2007). Okafor, Fatile & Ejalonibu (2014) see public service delivery as “the result of the



intentions, decision of government and government institutions, and the actions undertaken and decision made by people employed in government institutions.” They posit that it is “the provision of public goods or social (education, health), economic (grants) or infrastructural (water, electricity) services to those who need (or demand) them”. Supporting the arguments above, Ohemeng (2010) views public service delivery from the light of its key features as “doing more with less, empowering citizens, enhancing transparency and holding public servants accountable.”

Theoretical Framework

The Study adopts Classical Theory as the theoretical framework of this study as it advocates punishment fit for corruption. Classical school of thought came about at a time when major reform in penology occurred, with prisons developed as a more civilized form of punishment. Also, this time period saw many legal reforms, like the French Revolution, and the development of the legal system in the United States. New theorists like Beccaria and Bentham looked at the causes of criminal and delinquent behavior, and began to scientifically explain such deviance. Classical Theory is relevant to this Study as it explains how to prevent workers from indulging in corrupt practices in Anambra State Civil Service. It states that punishment should be made painful and severe to make such acts unattractive. Punishment is a necessary evil sometimes intended to deter corrupt civil servants and serve as an example to those who would violate the law. Curbing corruption in Civil Service in Anambra state is possible through swift punishment that counters possible gains from criminal behaviour. According to Dow (1980), two concepts are central to their understanding of why people commit crimes. These concepts are *free-will and hedonism*. Human beings are naturally pleasure-loving animals who use their free-will to choose acts that will please them against those that will bring them pain and suffering. To boost Anambra State economy and Nigeria at large, measures and anti-graft agencies should be put in place to fight these corrupt practices which are one of the major impediments to the development in Anambra State and the nation as a whole. Punishment should be made severe and undesirable to deter potential criminals and also deal with those who commit these crimes irrespective of their economic status.

The principles of equity, fairness, justice, and supremacy of the rule of law should be adopted when meting out punishments for any civil servants found wanted.

Methodology

This Study was carried out in Anambra State. This study used a mixed methods research design. This involves the use of both the quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. The Study adopts multi-stage sampling procedure, which is made up of clusters and a simple random sampling procedure in selecting samples for the study. The Anambra State Civil Service has a staff strength of 5327 workers which serves as the population of the study (Anambra State Civil Service Commission annual report, 2012). The Taro Yamani formula was used to determine the Sample size which 372 respondents. Furthermore, with the use of the purposive method of sampling technique, total number of staff were selected from the sample size which are two males (both staff in grade level 10) and two females (both staff in grade level 9) were on the basis of gender equity and interviewed using probe questions arranged according to the study objectives in the In-Depth Interview (IDI) Guide. The quantitative data collected from the field was processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Specifically, descriptive statistics such as frequency and simple percentage tables were used for the presentation, interpretation, and analysis of the data for easy understanding and clarity. Furthermore, the qualitative data were analyzed using the thematic Method of data analysis.



Results/Findings

In this study, 372 questionnaires were administered and only 353 (94.9%) of the questionnaires were correctly filled and returned.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by their socio-demographic characteristics

Variables	Frequency	Percent
SEX		
Male	170	48.2
Female	183	51.8
Total	353	100
AGE		
18-22	1	0.3
23-27	48	13.6
28-32	182	51.6
33-37	77	21.8
38-42	31	8.8
43 years and above	14	3.9
Total	353	100
MARITAL STATUS		
Single	201	56.9
Married	149	42.2
Widowed	3	0.85
Total	353	100
EDUCATION		
SSCE/GCE	26	7.4
OND/NCE	21	5.9
Bachelor's degree/HND	288	81.6
Postgraduate degree	18	5.1
Total	353	100
DURATION OF WORK		
Less than 1 year	16	4.5
1-5 years	207	58.6
6-10 years	64	18.1
10 years and above	66	18.7
Total	353	100

Field Survey, 2023.

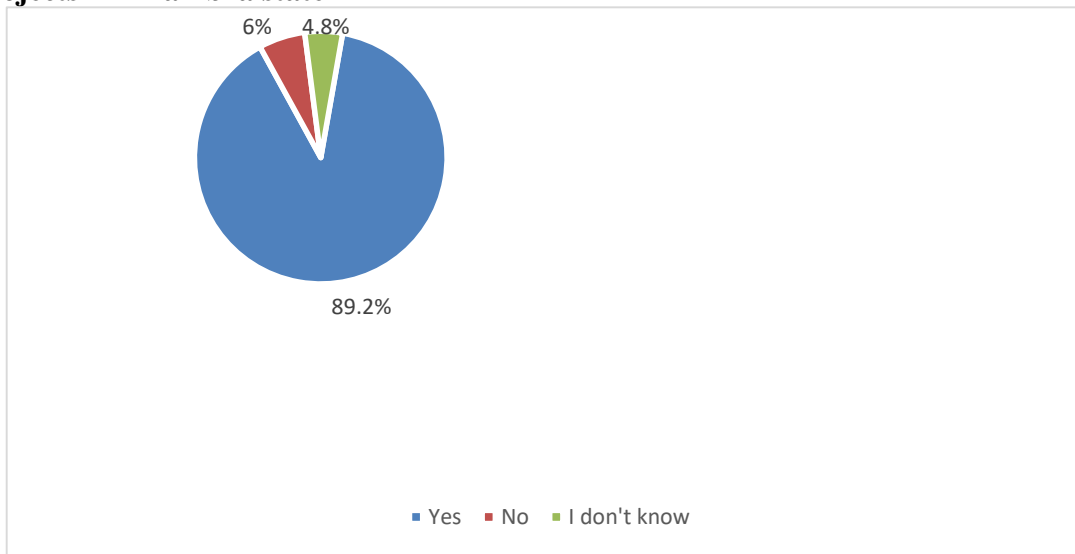
Table 1 shows that 48.2% of the respondents were females, while 51.8% were males. 51.6% of the respondents are fall under the age bracket of 28-32, while 0.3% falls under the age bracket of 18-22. 56.9% of the respondents are single, while 0.85% are widowed. 81.6% of the respondents have a bachelor's degree as their highest educational qualification, while 5.1% have a postgraduate degree as their highest educational qualification. 58.6% had been in the civil service for 1-5 years, while 4.5% had been in the civil service for less than one year.

Analysis of Study Objective

This section analyzed the specific objective formulated to guide this study. How does embezzlement of public funds by public officials affect service delivery in Anambra State Civil Service? Questionnaire items 6, 7 and 8 were designed to answer research question 1. The findings are presented in graphs and tables below:



Figure 1: Respondents’ responses on whether public officials embezzle funds meant for state projects in Anambra state



Field work, 2023

89% of the respondents agreed that public officials embezzle funds meant for state projects in Anambra state, 6% disagreed, while 4.8% had no idea. According to an IDI participant:

Yes, I am a civil servant, but the truth is that money is being embezzled by the ogas at the top. They are usually the ones who embezzle funds allocated to the MDA where they head. The thing is that those in charge of ensuring that money allocated to these MDAs are properly accounted for usually connive with them to embezzle funds. So at the end of the day, nothing happens (Female, 42 years, Civil Servant).

The respondents were further asked why civil servants in Anambra state embezzle funds entrusted to them. Their responses are captured in table 2 below:

Table 2: Respondents’ views on why civil servants embezzle funds

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
To enrich themselves	274	77.6
Poor salary	49	13.9
High cost of living	30	8.5
Total	353	100

Field survey, 2023

77.6% of the respondents opined that civil servants embezzle funds in order to enrich themselves, while 8.5% opined that civil servants embezzle funds in order to keep up with the high cost of living. An IDI participant opined that:

They steal money to enrich themselves. They stack enough to go round their own people and still store more than enough for even their great grandchildren yet unborn. It is just what it is. We the junior staff find it difficult to get along with our meagre pay, but the bosses have access to huge money, so they help themselves to as much of it as they possibly could (Male, 37 years, Civil Servant).



The respondents were further asked how embezzlement of public funds affect the service delivery in Anambra state. Their responses are captured in table 3 below:

Table 3: Respondents' view on how embezzlement of public funds affect the service delivery in Anambra state.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
It leads to money laundering	300	85
It hinders development in the state	40	11.3
Disruption in the operation of the civil service	13	3.7
Total	353	100

Field survey, 2023

85% of the respondents opined that embezzlement of public funds leads to money laundering, while 3.7% opined that it leads to disruption in the operation of the civil service.

Discussion of Findings

This study found that public officials embezzle public funds meant for state projects. This finding is in line with Ogbu (2021) whose study found that public officials embezzle funds meant for developmental projects. Similarly, Audu, Daniel and Tanze found in their study that public servants usually embezzle public funds and divert them for their personal use. The study also found that civil servants embezzle funds in order to enrich themselves. This finding is in line with the finding of a study by Fan, Lin and Treisman (2010). This study found that embezzlement of public funds by public officials leads to money laundering. This finding is in line with the finding of Ogbu (2021).

Conclusion

Corruption is a monster that has continued to exist in our society and has become a common phenomenon in both public and private settings in the country. The public in Anambra State perceived corruption as a serious problem that must be stopped. Several factors were observed as being responsible for the continued existence of corruption in Anambra State Civil Service. These factors must be addressed so that corruption could be stemmed in the area. The factors and consequences of corruption in the study area are numerous. These have caused untold hardship for the people in the area. Despite government efforts geared towards curtailing corruption in Anambra State in particular and Nigeria in general, the monster has continued to spread almost without control. It appears that the fight against corruption by the different tiers of government and anti-graft agencies is not yielding positive results. It is incontrovertible that no society is corrupt-free. However, the nature and magnitude of corruption in some societies especially the developing ones like Nigeria is not only a source of concern rather it has become necessary that the malaise is checkmated to avoid pronging the country into more devastating complications associated with corruption. The desire to acquire wealth by all means should not be encouraged at all levels of Nigerian society. This work evaluated civil service corruption and service delivery in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Poor remuneration was found to have a significant effect on employee performance in public servants in Anambra State. From the standpoint of Anambra state civil service, corrupt practices take benign forms and perspectives. They are also caused by various factors. Some of the initiatives designed to curb corrupt practices in the Anambra state civil service were ineffective. Some factors inhibit the curbing of corruption in the Anambra state civil service. These findings



are in line with the findings of Osimen, Adenegan, and Balogun (2013) who examined and assessed corruption in the public sector in Nigeria with particular reference to Akure South Local Government Area of Ondo State. Corruption is known to deter investment because it can (negatively) bias an entrepreneur's assessment of the risks and returns associated with an investment (Swenson 2005). Allocation of investment itself will be biased in the presence of political corruption. Corrupt officials will direct state and private investment to areas that maximize their returns and not those of the society (Alesina and Angeletos, 2005).

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the study recommends that:

People's sources of wealth should be questioned. Conspicuous and flamboyant display of wealth should not only be discouraged but be penalized where necessary to minimize the tendency of wanting to become rich overnight. Embezzlement should be eschewed so as to enhance the operations and capacity development of employees in Anambra State Civil Service. Amnesty for civil servants who have looted the public treasury for personal gain is a bad measure. It should be abolished for the sake of curbing corruption in Anambra State civil service to the minimum.

There is also the need to promote sound policies remuneration for effective civil servants for effective service delivery. These policies will contribute immensely to enhancing and promoting professionalism, and ethical values of honesty, integrity, confidentiality, political neutrality, accountability, discipline and transparency in the conduct of government business. Recruitment and promotion or advancement on the employee remuneration should be strictly based on meritocracy, performance and achievement.

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