

## **CORRUPTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: AN APPRAISAL OF NIGERIAS FOURTH REPUBLIC**

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### **Introduction**

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The issue of the upsurge of corruption in Nigeria is troubling. The menace of corruption is not new since it is a global phenomenon. However, corruption is pandemic in Nigeria. It cuts across the different tiers and arms of government and the private sectors. It has been identified as a major challenge to national development. Corruption in Nigeria is so pervasive that it is an existential threat to good governance, democratic processes and fair business transaction in a competitive environment (Akanbi, 2004). Studies have shown that the problem of bad governance in Nigeria is commonly attributed to poor leadership and corruption (Odinialu, 2010). However, as the World Bank (2012) admits the causes of corruption are rooted in particular political and economic conditions of each country and therefore its causes are as complex as the types of corruption are varied.

Corruption is universal and not a problem restricted to any region. In advanced countries like Belgium, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Japan, Italy, Russia, Spain allegations of corruption also play a central role in their politics (Klitgaard, 2018). As such corruption permeates all levels of government, the federal, state and local governments. According to Transparency International (TI)'s Corruption Perception Index (CPI), between 1995 and 2009, no country has a score of 10/10 on a 10-point scale, indicating that there is one level of corruption or the other in all countries worldwide (Mogue, 2010). It has on the socio-economic and political setting of a country can hardly be over emphasized. There has been a global cry and coordinated efforts to tackle this social evil through the creation and implementation of anti-graft laws and policies across nations. Some nations have been successful in their quest

to reduce the level of corruption while others are still lagging behind. In this light, Nigeria seems to be an example of a state that failed in combating corruption.

Grand corruption is a cancer that has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian polity. The general global perception about graft in Nigeria is that it is a pervasive phenomenon. It is generally acknowledged that corruption and corrupt practices are endemic and systemic in both public and private sectors of Nigeria (Eme&Okoh, 2011). While corruption in the form of distortion of the government expenditures, pillaging of the State assets and bribery is widespread in the higher level of public offices, the grand corruption in politics such as sale of party tickets, office posts and public contracts remain a critical concern because politics has become the most remunerative career. Furthermore, in Nigeria, corruption exceeds the political arena and evidences shows that it abounds in several private and official conducts of even ordinary citizens. As such, corruption is a serious problem affecting the whole sphere of Nigeria. It has also constituted an impediment to the development of the country as leadership corruption has been one of the greatest concerns to all observers of the country's

socio political and economic development (Anazodo, Okoye&Ezenwile, 2012).

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

In recent years, the agenda of sustainable development has become of paramount importance in Nigeria. This because there is a growing realization that for a nation such as Nigeria to grow and become an advanced economy, it must first experience sustainable development. However, the state of affairs is that Nigeria remains an underdeveloped country with majority of the citizens experiencing poverty and poor living conditions. Corruption has caused so many defects to the Nigerian society in terms of human capital development, unemployment, infrastructure and economic growth and development in general. Furthermore, corruption has caused other defects in the in Nigeria such as increase in crime rate, unemployment rate and social unrest. Von Hauff and Kruse (2014).

### **1.2 Research Questions**

- i. What are the causes of corruption in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the factors influencing the sustainable development in Nigeria?

- iii. What is the relationship between corruption and sustainable development in Nigeria?

### 1.3 Research Objectives

- i. To determine the causes of corruption in Nigeria.
- ii. To determine the factors influencing sustainable development in Nigeria.
- iii. To determine the relationship between corruption and sustainable development in Nigeria.

### 1.4 Research Hypotheses

- 1 **H0<sub>1</sub>**: There are no significant causes of corruption in Nigeria.
- 11 **H0<sub>2</sub>**: There are no significant factors influencing sustainable development in Nigeria.
- 111 **H0<sub>3</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between corruption and sustainable development in Nigeria.

### 1.5 Scope of the Study

This paper focuses on corruption and sustainable development in Nigeria's fourth republic. The scope of the study is current Nigeria's fourth republic and cover the period from 2010-2020.

### 1.6 Limitation of the study

Due to the nature of social science research, it is likely that a study of this nature, would be met by certain limitations and these limitations may be apparent in form of insufficient finances and lack of access to necessary data.

### 1.7 Significance of the Study

The study holds importance for Nigerian policymakers, offering guidance on addressing corruption and promoting sustainable development. It also proves valuable for International Organizations and Non-Governmental Agencies, providing recommendations for combating corruption in developing nations. Additionally, it serves as a valuable resource for researchers exploring corruption and sustainable development.

### 1.8 Methodology

The study focuses on Nigeria, a Federal Republic with 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, having an estimated population of 154.7 million people (UNDP, 2009). The research design adopted is a survey research design, collecting data from both primary (questionnaires) and secondary sources (journals, publications). The population comprises students and lecturers in the political science departments

of the University of Lagos, Lagos State University, and Babcock University.

Using non-probability sampling, the sample size consists of 240 Political Science lecturers and students from the three universities in the South West Region (University of Lagos, Lagos State University, and Babcock University). The research instrument is a structured questionnaire divided into two sections: one for biodata and the other for research variables. A 5-point Likert scale is employed for responses.

Data analysis involves frequency and percentage tables, along with regression and correlation analyses using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for hypothesis testing.

## **Literature Review**

### **2.1 Conceptual Review**

#### **2.2 Concept of Corruption**

Corruption is a social phenomenon that is difficult to define, and it does not have a universally accepted definition. The definition varies depending on the inclination of the scholar and perception of the concept. Andrig and Fjelstad (2013) are of the opinion that corruption is a “complex

and multifaceted phenomenon with multiple causes and effects, as it takes on various forms and contexts” (p. 120). Similarly, Tanzi (2008) is of the view that while it is hard to define corruption, the crisis that is linked to corruption is not difficult to identify.

Azelama (2002) defines corruption as any action or omission enacted by a member of an organization, which is against the rules, regulations, norms, and ethics of the organization, and the purpose is to meet the selfish end of the member at the detriment of the organization.

(Agbu,(2003) observes that public office can be abused for selfish gain even if bribery does not take place. This implies that political corruption could be defined in the form of patronage, election rigging, and voters register manipulation, favoritism in the award of contract, procurement scam, tribalism and nepotism in recruitment and promotion, unfair punishment/sanctions for public officials.

Given the above definitions, corruption or political corruption implies any action that violates electoral rules/the formal duties of any public role, rules, or norms with regard to public trust.

## **2.3 Forms of Corruption in Nigerian Public Sector**

Political corruption in Nigeria encompasses various forms, including bribery, embezzlement, conflicts of interest in contract awards, fraud, nepotism, and election rigging. Scholars like (Azelama, 2002; Ijewereme, 2013; Waziri, 2010). have identified these behaviors as key contributors to the widespread issue.

### **2.3.1 Electoral Corruption**

This refers to intimidating opposition agents, obstructing election freedom, and engaging in ballot-related crimes like snatching and stuffing. These activities also include manipulating the voters' register, causing electoral violence leading to injuries and deaths, and fraudulent practices such as multiple thumb printing and false vote announcements, sometimes resulting in the reversal of election outcomes (Idada & Uhumwuangho, 2012).

### **2.3.2 Nepotism**

This is a highly biased method of distribution of state resources where a public officer prefers his or her relatives and family members or friends in awarding contracts, job recruitment, promotion, appointment to public positions, thereby ignoring the merit principle; this may lead to the downgrading

of the quality of the public service (Amundsen, 1997; Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management, 2010). It also includes exemption of once relatives and friends from the application of certain punitive laws or regulations, and this may disrupt esprit de corps and trust. Nepotism provides room for “preferential treatment of one individual over another, without taking into accounts the relative merit of the respective individuals; this represents nothing but victimization of an individual or individuals” (Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management, 2010).

### **2.3.3 Favoritism**

This is a form of corruption where a public servant gives undue preference or favor to his or her friends, family, and anybody close and trusted in recruitment, promotion, and so on.

### **2.3.4 Procurement Scam**

This refers to over invoicing of government contracts or corruption related to purchases. That is, the purchase price of an item is inflated so that the difference between the inflated price and actual price is shared between the person who does the purchasing and the sellers or it is taken by the purchaser

alone with the seller conniving. (Azelama, 2002, p. 92)

### **2.3.5 Ghost–Workers Phenomenon**

This is a practice where the management of a public organization deliberately inflates the payroll by including fictitious names to get more subventions for salary. The excess is siphoned by the members of management in connivance with some members of governing councils or boards (Azelama, 2005).

### **2.3.6 Budgeting Corruption/ padding.**

This is a form of corruption where management of a public organization in connivance with governing council or board minister/commissioner bribes some members of the legislature to approve inflated estimate for the institution during budgeting. In a situation where the budget is already approved, the management is expected to give tips or gratifications to the government functionaries whose duty it is to release money to the institutions (Azelama, 2005).

### **2.4 Effects of Corruption in Nigeria**

The effects of corruption in Nigeria are outrageous. The effects range from under development, absence of basic infrastructure such as potable water, good road networks,

misappropriation of national resources leading to massive poverty, mediocrity in leadership and cluelessness in professionalism, deficient leadership outputs, high unemployment and youth hopelessness, continuous widening gap between the rich and poor, and falling standard of education leading to production of low-quality graduates (Waziri, 2010).

### **2.5 Corruption in the Nigerian Public Sector**

Corruption has significantly impacted the downfall of Nigeria's First and Second Republics. In the First Republic, Tafawa Balewa's government faced rampant looting of public funds without effective intervention (Ijewereme & Dunmade, 2014). The issue escalated with the onset of electoral corruption during the 1964 and 1965 elections, marked by rigging and violence, eventually leading to a coup in 1966 (Ajayi, 2008; Dudley, 1982).

Subsequent administrations, including those of Gowon, Shagari, and Babangida, grappled with varying degrees of corruption. While Buhari's administration demonstrated determination to eradicate corruption through the War Against Indiscipline (WAI) crusade, later leaders like Babangida engaged in large-scale corruption practices,

diverting funds and engaging in extravagant spending (Lawal & Tobi, 2006).

This trend persisted through Abacha's regime, Abdusalam's administration, and into the Fourth Republic under leaders such as Obasanjo, Yar'Adua, and Jonathan. Despite the establishment of anti-corruption institutions like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), corruption persisted. There were issues of selective prosecution, with influential figures often escaping accountability (Falana, 2012; Human Rights Watch, 2011).

The shift from an agrarian economy in the 1960s to total dependence on oil and oil revenue from the 1970s exacerbated corruption. This transformation, coupled with factors like poverty, personalization of public office, and political culture, has contributed to the ongoing challenges faced by Nigeria in addressing corruption (Lawal & Tobi, 2006).

In summary, the struggle against corruption in Nigeria has been multifaceted, involving historical events, political decisions, and economic shifts, as documented by various scholars and reports.

### 3.0 Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the Principal-Agent theory, examining organizational relationships between the "Principal" ((in this case, the Nigerian citizens)) and the "Agent" who providing it i.e. (the government officials, politicians, legislators, bureaucrats etc) (Batley, 2004:38). It explores how citizens (Principal) can manage the self-interest of agents like government officials, aligning it with desired goals. Corruption in public administration, vulnerable due to significant power, is a key concern (Hague, 1996).

Corruption is viewed as actions contradicting moral principles guiding official obligations, violating ethical rules (Adefulu, 2007). Achieving consensus on the causes and effective ways to combat corruption is challenging due to societal uniqueness and dynamic socio-political and economic interactions (Agubamah, 2009).

The modernization theory suggests that economic and political development in modernizing societies can lead to corruption (Huntington, 1968, cited by Adefulu, 2007). In Africa, theories like patrimonialism, neo-patrimonialism, and prebendalism explain corruption as a consequence of grafting modern structures onto traditional socio-political systems (Adefulu, 2007).

Neo-patrimonialism describes officials treating bureaucratic positions as personal property, leading to corruption (Clapham, 1985, cited by Adefulu, 2007). Prebendalism sees corruption as a return for loyalty, with patrons rewarding supporters for personal or political gain (Agubamah, 2009; Okojie, 2005).

The paper relies on secondary data from various sources, employing content analysis to analyze the data. Overall, corruption is seen as a complex issue influenced by various theories and factors, making a consensus on its causes and effective solutions challenging.

**4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis**

**Table 1 Analysis of General response rate**

Number of Questionnaires administered	Number of Questionnaire received	Response Rate
240	196	81.9%

*Source: Online Survey 2020*

**Table 3 Analysis of Bio data**

**Percentage distribution of Sex**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Female	61	31.1	31.1	31.1
Male	135	68.9	68.9	100.0
Total	196	100.0	100.0	

In carrying out this research, a total of 240 questionnaires were distributed, however 196 questionnaires were returned giving remarkable response rate of 81.67%.

**Table 2 Preliminary Analysis Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
.799	12

The table 2 shows the Cronbach alpha coefficient, which is used to describe the reliability of the research instrument. The higher the score, the more reliable the generated scale is. The reliability coefficient for the scale items is 0.799 hence seeing they are above 0.7 it can be concluded that the internal consistency of the scales is good and the research instrument is reliable.

**Analysis of General Responses**

**Table 4 :Poor moral ethics in Nigerian society creates a culture of corruption among citizens**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	95	48.5	48.5	48.5
Agree	63	32.1	32.1	80.6
Undecided	18	9.2	9.2	89.8
Strongly Disagree	11	5.6	5.6	95.4
Disagree	9	4.6	4.6	100.0
Total	196	100.0	100.0	

The table above shows the responses of the respondents to the hypothetical statement “Poor moral ethics in Nigerian society creates a culture of corruption among citizens”. From the table above it can be seen that 48.5 percent of the respondents

strongly agree, 32.1 percent of the respondents agree, 9.2 percent of the respondents are undecided, 5.6 percent disagree while 4.6 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed.

**Table 5: Nigerians do not hold politicians accountable for corrupt practices**

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	46	23.5	23.5	23.5
Agree	64	32.7	32.7	56.1
Undecided	36	18.4	18.4	74.5
Disagree	23	11.7	11.7	86.2
Strongly Disagree	27	13.8	13.8	100.0
Total	196	100.0	100.0	

The table above shows the responses of the respondents to the hypothetical statement “Nigerians do not hold politicians accountable for corrupt practices”. From the

table above it can be seen that 23.5 percent of the respondents strongly agree that, 32.7 percent of the respondents agree, 18.4 percent of the respondents are undecided,

11.7 percent disagree while 13.8 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed.

**Table 6: The system of checks and balances in government is poor**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	107	54.6	54.6	54.6
Agree	54	27.6	27.6	82.2
Undecided	12	6.1	6.1	88.3
Disagree	16	8.2	8.2	96.4
Strongly Disagree	7	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	196	100.0	100.0	

The table above shows the responses of the respondents to the hypothetical statement “The system of checks and balances in government is poor”. From the table above it can be seen that 54.6 percent of the respondents strongly agree that there is there is absence of political violence, 27.6 percent of the respondents agree, 6.1 percent of the respondents are undecided, 8.2 percent disagree while 3.6 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed.

(89.8%), In addition, majority of the respondents agree that a lack of accountability of politician in Nigeria is a cause of corruption (56.1%). Finally, majority of the respondents agree that the system of checks and balances in the government is poor. As such, the result shows that most of the respondents agree that the major causes of corruption in Nigeria are poor moral ethics, poor parental guidance, a lack of accountability and a poor system of checks and balances.

**4.1 Discussion of Findings**

**Research Question One:** What are the causes of corruption in Nigeria?

The responded of this question agree that poor moral ethics in Nigerian society is a cause of corruption in the country (80.6%). Furthermore, most of the respondents agree that poor parental guidance is a reason for the prevalence of corruption in Nigeria

**Research Question 2:** What are the factors influencing the sustainable development in Nigeria? In answering this research question the regression analysis was adopted in order to test the factors suggested by respondents as influences on sustainable development in Nigeria

Respondents of this question agreed that (Functioning Government, Improved Infrastructure, Inclusive Government, Sustained Economic Growth) are making a significant contribution to the dependent variable (Sustainable Development). Furthermore, the beta co-efficient of the independent variables (Functioning Government, Improved Infrastructure, Inclusive Government, Sustained Economic Growth) is 0.917, 0.684, 0.709 and 0.347 respectively implies that 91.7%, 68.4%, 70.9% and 34.7%, of the dependent variable (Sustainable Development) is explained by the independent variables (Functioning Government, Improved Infrastructure, Inclusive Government, Sustained Economic Growth).

**Research Question 3:** What is the relationship between corruption and sustainable development in Nigeria?

In answering this research question the correlation analysis was adopted in order to test the relationship between corruption and sustainable development in Nigeria

The respondents agreed that the relationship between corruption and sustainable development in Nigeria was investigated using Spearman rank correlation coefficient.

There was a strong significant positive relationship between the two variables,  $r=.890$ ,  $n= 196$ ,  $p <.05$  at significant level of (.000) with corruption and sustainable development significantly associated with one another. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient value is negative which indicates an inverse relationship between corruption and sustainable development. Thus the results indicate that an increase in corruption will lead to a decrease in the pace of sustainable development. This suggests that the presence of corruption is likely to slow down sustainable development in Nigeria. Therefore, we can conclude that corruption is a significant hindrance to sustainable development in Nigeria.

## 5.0 Conclusion

Corruption is no doubt a menace that disrupt the progress of society and the nation as a whole. The findings of the study show that major causes of corruption in Nigeria are poor moral ethics, poor parental guidance, a lack of accountability and a poor system of checks and balances. The study also found that an increase in corruption will lead to a decrease in the pace of sustainable development. Therefore, based on the findings of the study it was concluded that

corruption is a significant hindrance to sustainable development in Nigeria.

### 5.1 Recommendations

1. The legislative arm of the Nigerian government should institute a proper system of checks and balance to ensure that administrators and the executive branch of government is held accountable for their actions.
2. The powers and authority of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission should be broadened to deal with corrupt acts of governmental administrators and those in positions of power.
3. There should be a sensitization program led by the government and educational institutions to teach Nigerian youths regarding the dangers of corruption and the essence of integrity in day to day life.

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