CORRUPTION AND POVERTY IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The increasing incidence or corruption and poverty in Nigeria has been issues of major concern to governance. Many policies and programmes as well as institutions have been established over the years to fight these twin chailenges. In spite of these efforts, the level of corruption and poverty seemed to be on the increase. Why is the level of corruption and poverty still high in Nigeria? This paper is tailored toward determining the levels of corruption and poverty in Nigeria and to ascertain the relationship between the two. The research design was content analyses using secondary sources of data. These were presented in tables and percentages using the Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient to test the hypothesis postulated. The study revealed that both the level of corruption and the rate of poverty was high and that there was a significant relationship between the two variables. The paper recommended for the strengthening of anti-corruption institutions, judicial reform for quick dispensation of corruption cases, and severe punishments for corruption offences to serve as a preventive and deterrent measure. Others were provision of physical infrastructure and an enabling business environment to reduce the cost of doing business, create jobs and empower the citizenry.

Keywords: corruption, poverty, transparency and development

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Corruption and poverty are the major twin challenges to governance especially in the first decade of the twenty first century. The rising incidence of corruption and poverty with impunity has over the years become a matter of public concern. This has equally attracted the attention of global and national governments. Hence, the eradication of extreme hunger and poverty has earned a prime position on the agenda of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (FRN, 2008). The Nigeria National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) also has the reduction of poverty to 5% by 2015 and the fight against corruption as some of its goals (FRN, 2004 and 2008). These are also in consonance with the provisions of sections 16 – 17 and 15(5) of the Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 1999) pertaining to the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy. Pursuant to this, the Federal Government of Nigeria enacted enabling laws and established institutions aimed at fighting corruption. These include inter-alia, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) in 2000, the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) in 2002 and amended in

(2004) as well as the Fiscal Responsibility, Public Procurement, and the Nigeria Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative Acts of 2007.

The government also formulated policies and embarked on programmes aimed at reducing the incidence of poverty in the country. These include the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) within 1987 – 1990 and the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in 2000. Others were the establishment of the Peoples Bank of Nigeria (PBN), Nigerian Agricultural Cooperatives and Rural Development Bank (NACRDB) in 2000 – 2004 and Micro-Finance Banks in 2005 (Akanji, 2002; FRN, 2004; CBN, 2005).

In spite of these efforts, Transparency International's (TI) Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for Nigeria staggers from the lowest of 1.0 in 2001 to the highest of 2.7 in 2008 only to slip back to 2.5 in 2009. (TI, 2009). Similarly, the percentages of Nigerians that have been rated to be absolutely poor still remain high. It was 72.0% in 1999, 74.0% in 2000, and 88.0% in 2002. It reduced to 54.4% from 2004 – 2007 (Abubakar, 2011) only to skyrocket to 76.0% in 2009 (Nwokeoma 2010). Why is the rate of corruption and poverty still high in Nigeria in spite of the efforts made by the government to reverse the trends?

The objectives of this paper are to examine the levels of corruption and poverty in Nigeria and determine the relationship between the two variables. Others are to identify the problems associated with reducing the rate corruption and poverty in Nigeria with a view to making suggestions for improvement. The hypothesis for the study is stated in the Null (H_0) and Alternate (H_1) in order to avoid bias thus; H_0: There is no significant relationship between the level of corruption and the rate of poverty in Nigeria. H_1: There is a significant relationship between the level of corruption and the rate of poverty in Nigeria.

Previous studies (Akanji, 2002 and Chambers, 2007) were concerned with poverty reduction strategies, while Manning (2007) and Zupi (2007) discusses the conceptual and policy challenges of the multi-dimensions of poverty. An empirical study on the relationship between corruption and poverty and vis-versa is scanty in development literature. This paper will cover this gap especially that Transparency International (2001) discovered a very high rate of corruption in the poorest countries of the world. The data provided on corruption and poverty will also be of tremendous significance to researchers. Policy makers and practitioners alike will also be able to assess the effectiveness of their anti-corruption policies and poverty reduction strategies with a view to fine tuning them.

The study spans from 1999 – 2009. The choice of this period can be justified on the basis of being a time of return to sustainable democratic governance in Nigeria. Democratic governments are expected to be more transparent, accountable and much more concerned with the problem of poverty than military regimes. This study is also limited to corruption in the public rather than the private sector. This is because public sector corruption is of greater concern to governmental studies and partly due to the availability of data. The study is also concerned with absolute rather than relative poverty in Nigeria. Developing countries like Nigeria are characterised by absolute rather than relative poverty found in advanced

countries. The utility in this study is that it has a national rather than a regional or local coverage.

The research design for the study is content analysis using secondary data from both national and international reputable organisations. These are Transparency International for data on corruption and the Central bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) for data on poverty in Nigeria. These were presented and analysed using tables and percentages. The Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient (R) was used in testing the hypothesis postulated with the aid of computer Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Corruption is a very common term. However, it defies a precise definition. Scholars, practitioners and concerned organisations therefore, advanced different definitions of the concept based on their orientation and milieu. The World Bank (1999), Transparency International (1999 and 2000), Ladipo (2000), and Aduda (2007) define corruption as the abuse of public office for private gain. Public office is abused when officials accept, solicit or extort a bribe and when private agents offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profits. Others include patronage and nepotism, theft of state assets or diversion of state revenues among others.

Ekumankama (2002) reiterating the view of Atlas (1980) and Brokes (1990), identifies three common elements in the definition of corruption. These are abuse of power, violation of official or judicial duty, and intentional design for personal gain against the interest of the public or individuals. The definitions advanced above limits corruption to the public sector as if it does not exist in the private sector. This however, serves the purpose of this paper. It is instructive to note that corruption may not necessarily be for self gain but, it could also be for the benefit of a third party.

Bello – Imam (2005), Njoku (2007), Transparency International (TI) (2008), and the African Development Bank (ADB) (2006) asserts that corruption is antithetical to good governance as it adversely affects the socio-economic and political well being of the state. They add that corruption hurts the weak and the vulnerable more than the rich and the powerful. This is because, corrupt practices confer favours on undeserving citizens, it creates injustice since it circumvent due processes, the outcome of the public service becomes unpredictable leading to uneven service delivery such as health, education and basic infrastructure. These adversely affect both human and physical capital resulting to poverty.

There are both monemetric or reductionists and multi-dimensional perspectives to the definition of poverty. The reductionist perspective sees poverty mainly in terms of material deprivation. The multi-dimensional perspective on the other hand perceives poverty from a broader view as comprising of material, social and psychological deprivations. The United Nations at the Millennium Summit sees poverty "as a lack of income ..., people are said to be poor if they earn less than $1 a day" (Macionis and Plummer, 2005; 225). This definition represents the reductionist perspective. Zupi (2007) however, argues that poverty is a subjective and comparative term that carries both moral and scientifically measured evaluation. He adds that poverty is a dynamic process and captures the various forms

deprivations. That is material, social and psychological deprivations. These can either be relative or absolute (Macionis and Plummer, 2005) and chronic or transient (Shepherd, 2007).

Absolute poverty refers to the number of people who are unable to command sufficient resources to satisfy basic needs and they represent those who are living below a specific *minimum level of real income; that is, an international poverty line of one dollar per day* (Todaro and Smith, 2009). Chronic poverty is absolute poverty that is experienced for a long period of time (Shepherd, 2007). Poverty in this study is concerned with absolute poverty. But unlike the United Nations Criteria, it is not limited only to material deprivations, but also includes social and psychological deprivations. A materially deprived citizen may not only lack the basic necessities of life, but may not also afford education, health, esteem and freedom. Corruption adversely affects government's ability towards efficient delivery of social services such as health and education as well as physical infrastructure that would have been used for human development and poverty reduction.

The theoretical framework for the study is the Developmentalist paradigms of Institutions. Its proponents are Armsden (1989), Evans (1995) and Chang (2002) (Jayyadev, 2010). It was used by Jayadev (2010) as a framework in his study; Global Governance and Human Development, Promoting Democratic Accountability and Institutional Experimentation and Published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The theory posits that a central function of a developmental state is to provide opportunities whereby the poorest and most vulnerable can invest and enhance their capacities. In relation to this paper, the government must fight corruption in order to improve the efficient, effective and equitable provision of educational and health service as well as physical infrastructure. These will enable citizens engage in productive ventures and earn income to meet their basic needs and confer on them, self-esteem and freedom.

3.0 SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION

The independent and dependent variables for the study are corruption and poverty respectively. The data on corruption was obtained from Transparency International while that on poverty was obtained from NBS and CBN as used by Abubakar (2011).

3.1 The Level of Corruption in Nigeria

Transparency International is the world's foremost Berlin-based anti-corruption watchdog established in 1993. The organisation uses Corruption Perception Index (CPI) to reflect the perceived level of corruption in the public sector. It ranges from Ten (highly clean) to zero (0) highly corrupt. The organisation uses the perception of knowledgeable respondents, local and expatriate residents, business elites, scholars and country analysis in arriving at the CPI. The CPI also indicates the level of transparency in a country. This is because transparency and corruption are two sides of the same coin. Whatever scores a country has in transparency out of ten, the balance represents the country's score in corruption. For the purpose of this paper, Nigeria's scores in corruption are presented in percentages in order to tally with the country's scores in poverty as presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Nigeria's Scores (%) in Corruption 1999 – 2009

Year	CPI	Transparency (%)	Corruption (%)
1999	1.6	16	84
2000	1.2	12	88
2001	1.0	10	90
2002	1.6	16	84
2003	1.4	14	86
2004	1.6	16	84
2005	1.9	19	81
2006	2.2	22	78
2007	2.2	22	78
2008	2.7	27	73
2009	2.5	25	75

Source: Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index, 1999 – 2009 Editions.

The data in table 1 indicate a very high level of corruption and very low level of transparency in Nigeria. The level of corruption was highest in 2001 with 90% and lowest in 2008 with 73%. The average level of corruption was 81.9%. The figures however, shows a very slight decline from 2006 – 2009.

3.2 The Rate of Poverty in Nigeria, 1999 – 2009

The percentage of Nigerians that were rated poor from 1999 – 2009 is presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: The Level of Poverty in Nigeria, 1999 – 2009

Year	Rate of Poverty (%)
1999	72.0
2000	74.0
2001	83.1
2002	88.0
2003	65.1
2004	54.4
2005	54.4
2006	54.4
2007	54.4
2008	-
2009	76.0

Source: Abubakar (2011) Assessment of the Impact of Policies and Programmes for Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria and Nwokeoma (2010) Has Nigeria Lost the War Against Corruption?

The rate of poverty in Nigeria was very high especially in 2002 and 2001 with 88.0% and 83.1% respectively. This dropped substantially to 54.4% in 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007. This

was neither maintained nor improved upon as it skyrocketed to 76.0% in 2009. The average level of poverty for the ten years for which data was available is 67.63%. This is quite high.

3.3 Test of Hypothesis

The H_0 hypothesis states that; there is no significant relationship between the level of corruption and the rate of poverty in Nigeria. This hypothesis was tested with the aid of SPSS. The SPSS products are presented in tables 3,4,5 and 6 as follows.

Table 3: The Level of Corruption in Nigeria 1999 – 2009 (Independent Variable)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1999	84	9.3	9.3	9.3
	2000	88	9.8	9.8	19.1
	2001	90	10.0	10.0	29.1
	2002	84	9.3	9.3	38.4
	2003	86	9.5	9.5	47.9
	2004	84	9.3	9.3	57.3
	2005	81	9.0	9.0	66.3
	2006	78	8.7	8.7	74.9
	2007	78	8.7	8.7	83.6
	2008	73	8.1	8.1	91.7
	2009	75	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	901	100.0	100.0	

Source: Computer Output of SPSS, 2011

Table 4: Rate of Poverty in Nigeria 1999 – 2009 (Dependent Variable)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1999	72	8.0	10.7	10.7
	2000	74	8.2	11.0	21.7
	2001	81	9.0	12.1	33.8
	2002	88	9.8	13.1	46.9
	2003	65	7.2	9.7	56.5
	2004	54	6.0	8.0	64.6
	2005	53	5.9	7.9	72.5
	2006	55	6.1	8.2	80.7
	2007	54	6.0	8.0	88.7
	2009	76	8.4	11.3	100.0
	Total	672	74.6	100.0	
Missing	System	229	25.4		
Total		901	100.0		

Table 5: Level of Corruption in Nigeria: Rate of Poverty in Nigeria 1999 – 2009
(Independent Variable) (Dependent Variable)

*Responses on Nigeria's Scores in Corruption 1999-2009 (Independent Variable) * Responses on Level of poverty in Nigeria 1999-2009 (Dependent Variable) Crosstabs*

			Responses on Level of poverty in Nigeria 1999-2009 (Dependent Variable)								
			1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Responses on Nigeria's Scores in Corruption 1999-2009 (Independent Variable)								0	0	0	0
								4.6	8.8	6.9	8.8
								.0%	0%	0%	0%
		% within Responses on Level of poverty in Nigeria 1999-2009 (Dependent Variable)	100.0%	18.2%	.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
		% of Total	10.7%	1.8%	.0%	.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	2000	Count	0	40	26	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Expected Count	9.6	8.7	10.6	11.3	8.5	7.1	6.9	7.2	7.1
		% within Responses on Nigeria's Scores in Corruption 1999-2009 (Independent Variable)	0%	70.9%	29.1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
		% within Responses on Level of poverty in Nigeria 1999-2009 (Dependent Variable)	0%	83.8%	32.1%	.0%	0%	0%	.0%	0%	.0%
		% of Total	0%	9.2%	3.9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	2001	Count	0	0	55	35	0	0	0	0	0
		Expected Count	9.6	8.8	10.8	11.5	8.7	7.2	7.0	7.4	7.2
		% within Responses on Nigeria's Scores in Corruption 1999-2009 (Independent Variable)	0%	0%	61.1%	38.9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
		% within Responses on Level of poverty in Nigeria 1999-2009 (Dependent Variable)	0%	0%	67.9%	29.9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
		% of Total	0%	0%	8.2%	5.2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	2002	Count	0	0	0	63	31	0	0	0	0
		Expected Count	9.6	8.8	10.1	11.0	8.1	6.8	6.6	6.9	6.8
		% within Responses on Nigeria's Scores in Corruption 1999-2009 (Independent Variable)	0%	0%	0%	68.1%	33.9%	0%	0%	0%	0%
		% within Responses on Level of poverty in Nigeria 1999-2009 (Dependent Variable)	0%	0%	0%	60.2%	37.2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
		% of Total	0%	0%	0%	7.9%	4.6%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	2003	Count	0	0	0	0	34	52	0	0	0
		Expected Count	9.2	8.5	10.4	11.3	8.3	6.9	6.8	7.0	6.9
		% within Responses on Nigeria's Scores in Corruption 1999-2009 (Independent Variable)	0%	0%	0%	0%	39.5%	60.5%	0%	0%	0%
		% within Responses on Level of poverty in Nigeria 1999-2009 (Dependent Variable)	0%	0%	0%	0%	52.3%	96.3%	0%	0%	0%
		% of Total	0%	0%	0%	0%	5.1%	7.7%	0%	0%	0%
	2004	Count	0	0	0	0	0	2	53	30	0
		Expected Count	8.6	8.3	10.1	11.0	8.1	6.8	6.6	6.9	6.8
		% within Responses on Nigeria's Scores in Corruption 1999-2009 (Independent Variable)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2.4%	63.1%	34.5%	0%
		% within Responses on Level of poverty in Nigeria 1999-2009 (Dependent Variable)	0%	0%	0	0	0	3.7%	100.0%	52.7%	0%
		% of Total	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	.3%	7.9%	4.3%	0%
	2005	Count	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	54
		Expected Count	4.7	4.6	5.6	10.6	7.8	6.5	6.4	6.6	6.5
		% within Responses on Nigeria's Scores in Corruption 1999-2009 (Independent Variable)	0%	0%	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	32.1%	66.7%
		% within Responses on Level of poverty in Nigeria 1999-2009 (Dependent Variable)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	47.3%	100.0%
		% of Total	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3.9%	8.0%
	2006	Count	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Expected Count	8.0	8.3	9.0	9.6	7.3	6.0	5.8	6.1	6.0
		% within Responses on Nigeria's Scores in Corruption 1999-2009 (Independent Variable)	0%	0%	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
		% within Responses on Level of poverty in Nigeria 1999-2009 (Dependent Variable)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0	0%	0%
		% of Total	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0	0%	0%
Total		Count	72	74	81	98	65	54	53	72	54
		Expected Count	72.0	74.0	81.0	98.0	65.0	54.0	53.0		54.0
		% within Responses on Nigeria's Scores in Corruption 1999-2009 (Independent Variable)	10.7%	11.0	12.1	13.1	9.7%	8.0%	7.9%		8.0
		% within Responses on Level of poverty in Nigeria 1999-2009 (Dependent Variable)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		100.0%
		% of Total	10.7%	11.0	12.1	13.1	9.7%	8.0	7.9%		8.0

Source: Computer Output of SPSS, 2011

Source: Computer Output of SPSS, 2011

Table 6: Symmetric Measures

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Inter Pearson's R	.981	.001	130.719	.000[c]
Ordinal by Ordir Spearman Correlati	.987	.001	160.159	.000[c]
N of Valid Cases	672			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

The calculated value of Spearman Rank Correlation as presented in table 6 was 0.987 while the critical value of Spearman's Rank Coefficient at 0.05 was 0.564. The decision rule in using spearman's Rank correlation coefficient in the test of hypothesis is; accept H_0 if *calculated value is less than the critical value and reject the* H_1 *and vice-versa. In this case,* the calculated value of 0.987 is greater than the critical value of 0.564 and thus, the H_0 which states that, there is no significant relationship between the level of corruption and the rate of poverty in Nigeria is rejected. Conversely, the H_1 which states that, there is a significant relationship between the level of corruption and the rate of poverty in Nigeria is accepted.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the data in table 1 and 2, the study concludes that the level of corruption in Nigeria for the period 1999-2009 was high. Similarly, the rate of poverty in Nigeria for the same period was equally high. From the hypothesis tested, the study indicates that there was a significant relationship between the level of corruption and the rate of poverty in Nigeria between 1999-2009. In other words, the high level of corruption is one of the factors responsible for the high rate of poverty in Nigeria. Thus, a reduction in the level of corruption will to a significant extend, reduce the incidence of poverty in Nigeria.

In relation to the theoretical framework, the institutions of the Nigerian state have not been active enough to check the incidence of corruption to enable the state provide for the poor and most variable through effective service delivery (health, education and security) as well as the enabling environment (electricity and other physical infrastructures). These would have enabled them to engage in productive ventures, meet their basic needs and confer on them esteem and freedom.

In view of these, the study recommends for the continuous reform of the public service to reduce the incidence of corruption in the public sector. A corollary to this is societal value re-orientation as the public service is part of the larger society.

In the reform process of the public service, anti-corruption institutions should be strengthened and made more autonomous. The reform of the judicial system is also imperative for prompt disposal of corruption cases. Punishments for corruption offences should be made more severe to serve as preventive and deterrent measure.

The state institutions should also provide for effective education and health care services as well as provide physical infrastructures that is expected to reduce the cost of doing business

in Nigeria. This will enable individuals and firms engage in productive ventures, create more jobs, have more earnings, meet their basic needs and free themselves from the shackles of poverty. Further research is recommended on the effect of sustainable economic opportunity on poverty in Nigeria.

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