GOVERNANCE AND CORRUPTION IN THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

BY

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ABSTRACT

One of the major concerns of governance is the reduction in the rate of corruption in the public service. Pursuant to this, concerted efforts are made to strengthen governance institutions in Nigeria with a view to reducing the rate of corruption. Inspite of all this however, the vice is still on the arise. The major objective of this study is to determine the effect of the quality of governance on the rate of corruption in the Nigerian Public Service. Specifically, the study seeks to ascertain the quality of governance in Nigeria and as well ascertain the rate of corruption in the Nigerian Public Service. The research design used is documentary. The source of data is primarily secondary from International Non-governmental Organisation. The study reveals a high rate of corruption in the Nigerian Public Sen'ice but a poor quality of governance in Nigeria. It, however, shows that there is no significant relationship between the quality of governance and the rate of corruption in the Nigerian Public Service. To enhance the quality of governance, the study recommends for the public service training, modern management techniques and pay reform among others. It also recommends the strengthening of anti-corruption legislation (domestic and international) and enactment and enforcement of transparency legislations.

INTRODUCTION

The state owes a lot of responsibilities to the citizens as much as the citizens owes obligations to the state, as expounded by the Theory of Social Contract. This relationship has been enshrined as the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy (sections 17 and 18 in particular) (FRN; 1999). Specifically, Section 15(5) provides that, "the state shall abolish all corrupt practices and abuses of power." However, it is through governance that the will of the state is expressed and realised (Laski; 2004). The quality of governance has therefore, become a yardstick for measuring the success and failure of the state.

The Public Service is the machinery of government for formulating and implementing policies and programmes to achieve the

objectives of the state (good governance). The devastating effect of corruption on the Nigerian Public Service and by implication on the quality of governance is increasingly becoming a matter of public concern.

Corruption is antithetical to good governance. It is believed to be a socio-economic and political illness which is cancerous and acidic. The World Bank describes it as the 'AIDS' of democracy and good governance which spreads from official to official and agency to agency-until it successfully undermines the vocal institutions of the state and until the political system they represent collapses (Bello – Imam, 2005).

As African Diaspora Initiative (2007) observes, corruption has undermined our nascent democracy and legitimacy of government by subverting formal process. This has reduced peoples' trust and confidence in their institutions. Corruption in elections and in elective bodies have reduced accountability and representation in policy making. In Public Administration, it has resulted in ineffective service delivery.

Concerted efforts have been made over the years to fight corruption with a view to ensuring good governance in Nigeria. These include the promulgation of the Criminal Justice" (Miscellaneous Provisions) Decree of 1966, the Corrupt Practices Decree of 1975, the establishment of the Code of Conduct Bureau and the War Against Indiscipline and Corruption of the Abacha era (Bello – Imam; 2005). The Public Service also has inherent conventional mechanisms for fighting corruption. These include, the Civil Service Rules, Financial Memoranda/Instructions/Regulations, the civil service hierarchy, the legislature, the Judiciary, the Auditor – General's Report and the Public Accounts Committee Report (Adamolekun 2006).

Of recent, the Federal Government established the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) in 2000, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in 2002 and equally passed the Public Procurement Fiscal Responsibility Acts in 2007 and 2005 respectively. In spite of all these, Ali (2007) reiterating the view of Maier (2000), observes that corruption still remains the fastest way to get anything done in Nigeria.

The questions arising from these problems are:

(i) What is the quality of governance in Nigeria?

(ii) What is the rate of corruption in the Nigerian Public Service?

(iii) How has the quality of governance affected the rate of corruption in the Nigerian Public Service?

(iv) How can the quality of governance be improved with a view to reducing the rate of corruption in the Nigerian public Service?

The major objective of this study is to determine the effect of the quality of governance on the rate of corruption in the Nigerian Public Service.

The specific objectives are:

(i) To ascertain the quality of governance in Nigeria;

(ii) To determine the extend of corruption in the Nigerian Public Service.

(iii) To make suggestions on how to improve the quality of governance and reduce the rate of corruption in the Nigerian Public Service.

One hypothesis presented in the Null (H_0) and Alternative (H_1) each has been postulated for the study.

H_0: There is no significant relationship between the quality of governance and the rate of corruption in the Nigerian Public Service.

H_1: There is a significant relationship between the quality of governance and the rate of corruption in the Nigerian Public Service.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION(S) OF THE STUDY

Even though corruption occurs in both private and public sectors, without undervaluing the occurrence of the vice in the private sector, this study focuses on that of the public sector. This is because, corruption in the public sector is of greater concern to governmental studies. Good governance as used in this study encompasses; ensuring safety and security of lives and property of the citizenry; adherence to the Rule of Law (ROL), Transparency and Accountability; and guaranteeing participation of the citizenry in governance and protecting their rights. Others include, ensuring sustainable economic opportunity, and Human Development consisting of the provision of health, education and poverty reduction.

The timeframe for the study spans from year 2000 – 2008. The choice of this period can be justified on the ground of being a period of return to sustained democratic rule in Nigeria. Good governance, transparency and accountability are enshrined in democratic governance than is required of military regimes.

In terms of geographical spread, the study has a national coverage rather than regional or state. That is, the data to be used on

good governance and corruption reflects all tiers of government in the Nigerian Federation. The major limitation to this study is that, data for all the years covered especially on the indices of good governance are incomplete and not used. That is, only data for 2000, 2003, 2005, and 2008 are used. Not only that, the study uses secondary sources as primary data collection on corruption in the Nigerian Public Service would have been much more difficult if not impossible.

This study is important for research, policy making, and practice of governance cannot be overemphasised. The literature and data are rich and recent. This will provide useful information to researchers. The revelations of the study are likely to challenge previous researchers and provoke further research.

Policy makers in governance and anti-corruption will tremendously gain from this study as it will reveal some policy lapses with a view to fine-tuning them.

Practitioners who are responsible for effectuating government policies for good governance will be surely challenged by the findings of the study. Thus requiring them to readjust their skills and modus – operandi.

The research designed used in this study is documentary research. This can be justified by the existence of reliable data from reputable international non-governmental organisation (Transparency International and M. O. Ibrahim Foundation).

This approach makes a countrywide coverage easier and more affordable. The research is designed to determine the relationship between good governance and the rate of corruption in the Nigerian Public Service.

The sources of data for this study include official publications of governmental and non-governmental organisation (transparency international and M. O. Ibrahim Foundation). Others include books, journals, magazines, newspapers, other published materials and the internet. The use of these sources can be justified on the bases of accessibility, affordability and reliability.

Both descriptive and inferential tools of analysis are employed in the study. The descriptive tools include the use of frequency tables, percentages, and averages in analysing and interpreting the data. The inferential statistical tool used is correlation and specifically spearman's rank correlation.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Three major concepts and variables deserve to be critically reviewed in this study. These are governance, corruption and public service. However, none of the concepts lends itself to one sentence definition.

Governance according to Adamolekun (2002) is the exercise of political authority in managing the affairs of the state. He identifies the indices of governance as adherence to the rule of law; freedom of expression and association; electoral legitimacy; and development oriented leadership. It is in a similar vein that Ezeife (2002), defines good governance as the careful and guided application of government resources to the upliftment of standard of living of society.

Olaoye (2004), however, argues that there is both good and bad governance. He sees bad governance as one of the root causes of evil within our society. Good governance on the other hand is concerned with the management and directing, control of public affairs in a way acceptable to majority of the people being governed. This definition have however failed to identify those things that are acceptable to the majority of the people being governed. It is against this background that MO Ibrahim Foundation (2007) defines good governance as the delivery of key political goods to the citizenry specified as; safety and security; adherence to the rule of law, transparency participation and human rights; sustainable economic opportunity and human development. These, to this study, are the expected dividends of good governance and will be used as the yardstick for measuring the quality of governance.

One of the major products of bad governance is corruption. The vice in turn decimates the quality of governance. Transparency International (TI) (1999; 2002), the World Bank (1997) and the African Development Bank (ADB) (2006) define corruption as the misappropriation of public assets or misuse of public office/trust for private or personal gain. Concomitantly, Khan (1996) as espoused by Adagba (2007), defines corruption as an act which deviates from the rules of conduct governing the action of someone in position of public authority because of private regarding motives such as wealth and power. Bello – Imam (2005) and Atlas (1966) agree with the above definition and further identify the private regarding motives as bribery; nepotism and misappropriation for personal, close family member(s) or clique.

Ekumankama (2002) sums up the concept of corruption by identifying three common elements in defining the concept. These are abuse of power; violation of official or judiciary duty; and intentional design to personal gain as against the interest of the public. Even

though corruption is pervasive in both the public and private sectors, this study is concerned with corruption in the Nigerian Public Service. The Public Service is the totality of the administrative institutions and structures within which the work of government is carried out (Adamolekun; 2002)

The ADB (2006) and Gregory (2007) summarise the dynamics of public sector corruption using a simple model; C = M + D – A; when C is corruption, M is monopoly, D is discretion and A is accountability. Under this model, a public servant is assumed to have monopoly of power over a good or service which generates economic rent, and has discretion to decide who will acquire it. That is, determines how rent is distributed, and is not accountable for his action. This is further expatiated by TI (2008) that asserts that corruption thrives where temptation co-exists with permissiveness; where institutional checks on power are missing; where decision – making remains obscure; where civil society is thin on the ground; and where inequalities in the distribution of wealth condemn people to live in poverty.

The effects of corruption on the quality of governance are adverse and excruciating. Political corruption constitutes a major obstacle to democracy and the rule of law, loss of legitimacy of public institutions, and irresponsible leadership. Economically, corruption depletes national wealth and socially most damaging as it undermines people's trust in the political system, and in its institutions and leadership. This results in frustration, apathy and disillusion among the public (TI 2008).

Concerned scholars and institutions; Adebayo (1986), ADB (2006), Ali (2007), Ekumankama (2002) and Njoku (2007) advocate strategies for fighting corruption in the Nigerian Public Service. However, the ADB (2006) offers more encompassing strategies. It asserts that anti-corruption strategies must address the broader governance and institutional raison de-etre that gives rise to the problem in the first instance. At the individual level, it must address the elements of rational choice which rationalises corrupt practices as low-risk high-gain endeavours rather than the opposite. An effective anti-corruption crusade must be country specific, but also based on internationally accepted norms and standard. The strategy must incorporate elements of prevention, detection, investigation enforcement, public awareness and institution building.

The theoretical framework for the study is Agency Theory. Olaopa (2008) reiterating the views of Althous, 1994; Cham and Resembloom, 1994; Brawn 1993; Kay, 1992 and Jenses and Meckling,

1976, asserts that, Agency Theory rests on the notion that social and political life can be understood as a series of "contracts" in which one party, referred to as the principal (the state in this case) enters into exchanges with another party, referred to as the Agent (Public Servants). The Public Servants agrees to perform various tasks on behalf of the state and in exchange, the state rewards them in a mutually acceptable way.

As Mathieu (1997) adds, Agency Theory explains how best to organise relationship in which one party, the principal determines the work, which the agent undertakes in return for reward. This could be because the principal lacks the skills or the nature of the task might require team effort as in the public service.

Agency theory assumes that, individual public servants are rational self-interested utility maximises. Hence, the interest of the principal represented by the state and that of the agent represented by individual public servants are bound to conflict as a result of two major agency problems. These are; adverse selection and moral hazard. Mathieu (1997) reiterates Eisenhardt (1989) in explaining adverse selection as the condition under which the principal (state) cannot ascertain of the agent (public servant) accurately represents his ability to do the work for which he is being paid. Moral hazard on the other hand represents the condition under which the principal cannot be sure if the agent has put forth maximal effort.

Under this situation, the major concern of Agency Theory is available information to either party (the intelligence beliefs, values, attitudes and work habits) of public servants and determining their effectiveness in ensuring good governance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section presents and analyse the data on governance and corruption. The Ibrahim Index of African Governance provides complete and up-to-date data on governance. It is presented in clear and simple data and country ranking in a manner that can be easily understood. The components of good governance according to M. O. Ibrahim Foundation and as used in this paper are safety and security of life and property of citizens; rule of law and transparency in governance; participation and human rights; sustainable economic opportunity; and human development cattery comprising of health education and poverty reduction.

Data on corruption is derived from transparency international corruption, scores and ranking for 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008.

Nigeria's scores in governance and corruption is in table one below; in this paper, governance is the independent variable while corruption (in the public service) is the dependent variable.

Table 1: Nigeria's Governance and Corruption Scores

Year	Governance (%)	Corruption (%)
2000	46.1	88
2002	45.5	84
2005	48.3	81
2008	48.5	73
Average	**47.1**	**81.5**

Source: Extracted MO Ibrahim Foundation
www.moibrahimfoundation.org and Transparency International htt:/www.transparency.org

Transparency International provides data on the rate of Nigeria's transparency scores were 12%, 16%, 19% and 27 for 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008 respectively.

Thus, the country's corruption scores represents the balance of the transparency scores which are 88%, 84%, 81% and 73% for 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008 respectively.

Test of Hypothesis using Spearman's Rank Correlation given as;

$$r = 1 - \frac{6\Sigma d^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

Table ii: Analysis of Data from Table 1

Year	Governance (X)	Corruption (Y)	RX	RY	Rx Ry	d^2
2000	46.6	88	3	1	2	4
2002	45.5	84	4	2	2	4
2005	48.3	81	2	3	-1	1
2008	48.5	73	1	4	-3	9
						18

$$r = 1 - \frac{6\Sigma d^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

$$= 1 - \frac{6(18)}{4(4^2 - 1)}$$

$$= 1 - \frac{108}{4(16 - 1)}$$

$$= 1 - \frac{108}{4(15)}$$

$$= 1 \frac{108}{60}$$

$$= 1 - 1.8$$

$$= 0.8$$

Subject r = 0.8 to t test of significance at 95% and 4 degree of freedom.

$$= 0.8\frac{\sqrt{4-2}}{\sqrt{1-0.8^2}}$$

$$= 0.8\frac{\sqrt{2}}{\sqrt{1-0.64}}$$

$$= 0.8\frac{\sqrt{2}}{\sqrt{0.36}}$$

$$= 0.8\frac{1.4}{0.6}$$

$$= 1.86$$

Calculated value = 1.86
Critical value = 2.13

From table i above, the average quality of governance for the period between 2000 – 2008 using the four year figures in 47.1% while that of corruption is as high as 81.5%.

In essence, while Nigeria has a score of 47.1% in terms of the quality of governance, she has 81% in terms of the rate of corruption. In other word, the rate of corruption in the Nigerian public service is higher than the quality of governance.

From the Spearman's Rank Correlation and Test of hypothesis, the calculated value is 1.86 while the critical value is 2.13. Going by the decision rule, the calculated value is less than the critical value, hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between the quality of governance and the rate of

corruption in the Nigerian Public Service is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings above, we can conclude that, the quality of governance is low (caverage of 47.1) while the rate of corruption in the Nigerian Public Service is very high (81.5%). The study however, shows that three is no significant relationship between the quality of governance and the rate of corruption in the Nigerian Public Service.

In view of this, the study makes the following recommendations aimed at improving the quality of governance and reducing the rate of corruption in the Nigeria Public Service.

The provision of security of life and property of the citizenry has been a mundane function of government. Only in an atmosphere of safety and security can productive activities take place. To achieve this, there is need for reform in the security sector. This should focus on training and re-orientation as well as equipping security personnel with modern facilities for the detection, prevention and control of threat to security.

Rule of law and transparency can be enhanced through political will, reform of the judiciary, transparency legislations such as freedom of information Act, strengthening of anti-corruption legislations and institutions in detecting, investigating and prosecuting corrupt officials: strengthening of domestic laws and international collaboration is essential to genuine fight against corruption.

Mass mobilisation and participation of the people in governance can be achieved through effective communication, existence of impartial electoral bodies, conduct of free and fair elections and committed political leadership that is development oriented as well.

In terms of human development (provision of health, education and poverty reduction) this sectors require greater government attention through increased funding, manpower development and improvement of basic infrastructure such as water and sanitation, power supply and improved transport facilities. This will also go a long way in reducing the cost of doing business for sustainable economic opportunities.

Since the hypothesis tested shows that, there is no significant relationship between the quality of governance and the rate of corruption in Nigeria Public Service, further research should focus on the effect of societal value system on the rate of corruption in the Nigerian Public Service.

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