Challenges Of Detecting Bureaucratic Corruption in the Public Sector: A Study of Edo State Bureaucracy

OKOH ITEBITE DANIEL
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
BENSON IDAHOSA UNIVERSITY, BENIN CITY. EDO STATE.
EMAIL ADDRESS: ITEBITEOKOH@GMAIL.COM

ABSTRACT

Bureaucratic corruption in Nigeria is driven by a variety of sociological, cultural, institutional, economic, historical, and political influences. Consequently, identifying bureaucratic corruption is often not a simple matter and can prove to be extremely challenging. Thus, the study examined the challenges of detecting and curtailing bureaucratic corruption in the public sector; identified cases of corruption within the Edo State bureaucracy and highlighted some control measures put in place by the Edo State government to curtail bureaucratic corruption. This study was grounded in the theory of Neo-Patrimonialism and employed qualitative methodology to gather non-numerical data from relevant literature and subsequently utilised content analysis for its interpretation. The paper argued that tackling bureaucratic corruption was a significant hurdle that required collaborative efforts from all stakeholders, including the government, anti-corruption agencies, the media, religious organisations, and the public, supported by an effective legal framework to regulate public officials' conduct. The author emphasised the need for the government to adopt a range of strategies to combat bureaucratic corruption across all levels of administration. As such, it is crucial for the government and its anti-corruption bodies to implement effective and acceptable tactics. Lastly, the study contended that corrupt public officials in Edo State engage in practices such as ghost payroll schemes, budget manipulation, embezzlement, resource diversion, and tax evasion.

INTRODUCTION

Bureaucratic corruption is a pervasive issue, manifesting as a dysfunction within nearly all governmental institutions. It affects the executive, legislative, and judicial branches across all tiers of government—federal, state, and local and has implications on economy growth, development, governance, democracy, public administration and service delivery (See, Tanzi, 1998; Kaufman & Wei, 1999; Dike, 2008; Ajuzie, 2010). The forms of bureaucratic corruption encompass bribery, embezzlement, fraud, extortion, favouritism, nepotism, arbitrary policies, auto-corruption, subsidy abuse, deliberate waste and legalised corruption. (Amundsen, 1999; Page, 2018; Omede & Ngwube, 2019).

Corrupt practices within bureaucracies, carried out by dishonest individuals, manifest in covert, overt, and disguised ways (Page 2018). For example, the presence of ghost workers on ministry payrolls represents a disguised form of bureaucratic corruption. Embezzlement of public funds typically occurs in a secretive manner, while nepotism is a clear and visible expression of corruption. In essence, corruption operates along a spectrum of visibility: overt corruption is blatant and evident, covert corruption is concealed and secretive, and disguised corruption attempts to present corrupt actions as legitimate.

Nonetheless, while obvious instances of corruption are easy to recognise, identifying covert or disguised form of corruption could be quite challenging. Its secretive and somewhat legitimate appearance makes timely detection difficult. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the challenges of detecting and curtailing bureaucratic corruption in the public sector; identify cases of corruption within the Edo State bureaucracy and highlight some control measures put in place by the Edo State government to curtail bureaucratic corruption.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS
Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy is derived from two words "*bureau*" and "*kratos*". While the word "*bureau*" refers to the office, the Greek suffix "*kratia or kratos*" means power or rule (Al-Habil, 2010). According to Weber, the legal-

rational authority is the best form of domination and that bureaucracy is the most rational and efficient form of human organisation. Rationality involves control based knowledge; it has clearly defined spheres of competence; it operates according to rules and has calculability in its operations. Efficiency, on the other hand, is based on precision, speed, consistency, availability of records, continuity, unity, rigorous coordination and minimisation of inter-personal frictions, personal cost and material cost (Weber, as cited in Sapru, 2013).

Bureaucracy is a "*universal social phenomenon and means of carrying out "community action" over into rationally ordered "societal action*" (Weber, as cited in Sharma, Sadana & Kaur, 2018, p. 376). Emphasis is placed on rational-legal authority. Robbings and Judge, (2007, as cited in Asaju & Ayeni, 2021, p. 74), defined "*bureaucracy as a structure with routine operating tasks achieved through formalised rules, regulations and specialisations of tasks grouped into functional departments, centralised authority and narrow span of control and decision making that are in line with the chain of command*". This definition is based on the characteristics of ideal Weberian form of bureaucracy but it failed to state the types of organisation that possess such features. Hague and Harrop (2013, as cited in Akpan & Onya, 2018, p. 93) described bureaucracy as "*the institution that carries out the functions of the state: it is the engine room of the state*". Hague and Harrop's definition of bureaucracy equate it to public organisation. This definition is deficient because bureaucracy applies to large-scale organisations, be it public or private or civil society or fourth estate of the realm that possess most characteristics of the ideal type of Weberian bureaucracy. As aptly captured by Prof Charles Hyneman:

I prefer to say that bureaucracy is a word for big organisations. He considered it big enough to be bureaucratic if one has to search for finding out if making its policies and procedures are written out, or if you think it takes too long for one part to find out what another part proposes to do (Hyneman, as cited in Sharma, Sadana & Kaur 2018, p. 377).

The definition sees bureaucracy as a large-scale organisation with certain characteristics of Weberian bureaucracy like written rules. Similarly, bureaucracy is defined as "*large-scale organisations that are common to both public and private sectors of contemporary society*" (Heady, 1992, p. 304). This definition embraces both public and private sectors as bureaucracy but failed to highlight some of its features.

Bureaucracy has been described in negative light to mean inefficiency, red-tapism, stupidity, secrecy, smugness, aggressiveness and self-interest (Stilman, 1980, as cited in Leadingham, 2013, para. 1). Bureaucracy is conceived "*as associated with inefficiency, lack of initiative, unintelligence, rigidity, undue fussiness and business on the part of officials and downright stubbornness*" (Cole, 1984 & Adebayo, 1997, as cited in Adenugba & Folorunsho, 2012, p. 92). Both definitions of Stilman and Adebayo focused on the criticism of bureaucracy.

Anise (1986, as cited in Akpan & Onya, 2018) identified the bureaucratic set-ups in Nigeria. They include civil services of all thirty six (36) State Governments, the seven hundred and seventy four (774) Local Governments and federal civil service, parastatals and public enterprise bureaucracies, internal security or police bureaucracy, universities and other institutions of higher education bureaucracy, teaching service bureaucracy, judicial bureaucracy, public media bureaucracy, political party bureaucracy and private sector bureaucracy.

However, some unarguable facts of bureaucracy are highlighted below:

i.Bureaucratic set-up is a systematic and rational form of organisation;

ii. It is goal oriented;

iii. It possesses some characteristics such as rule bound, hierarchy of authority, division of labour and specialisation, among others;

iv. Bureaucratic set-up could be found in large-scale organisations such as public sector organisation, private sector organisation, and non-governmental organisations among others.

In summary, bureaucracy can be defined as a rational and systematic form of organisation (public, private, NGOs and media) that possesses most of the characteristics such as hierarchy of authority, division of labour and specialisation, impersonality detachment, rule bound and extensive record keeping, which is geared towards organisational goal.

Bureaucratic Corruption

United Nations Development Programme (2004, as cited in Bukar, 2021, p. 6) posited that "*bureaucratic corruption arises when public officials have uncontrolled authority, little accountability and unjust incentives or when their accountability responds to informal rather than formal terms of regulation*". This definition placed emphasis on the causes of bureaucratic corruption. Also, bureaucratic corruption takes place in the private sector.

According to Tanzi (1998), bureaucratic corruption is also known as petty corruption that is corruption by the bureaucracy. Tanzi's definition is inadequate because bureaucratic corruption could be perpetuated by bureaucrats in connivance with those in the private sector and high ranking government officials. Also, bureaucratic corrupt practices could be systematic and lead to grand corruption with its deleterious implications on economic growth, development, good governance and democracy.

Amundsen (1999), referred to bureaucratic corruption as Tanzi (1998) did, which is "*corruption in the public administration, at the implementation end of politics*". Gbenga (2006, as cited in Bukar, 2021, p. 7) aptly captured the definition of bureaucratic corruption. He defined it as "*illegal activities of bureaucrats*". He added that, traditionally, the concept is used to denote the practices of buying favour from bureaucrats who formulate and implement economic and political policies. Gbenga's definition focused on deviation of norms by bureaucrats. This could involve the use of bribes. Similar to Gbenga's definition, is that of Mbaku (1996). For him, bureaucratic corruption "*involves effort by civil servants to enrich themselves through illegal means*".

In line with Gbenga and Mbaku's definition is that of Anassi (2004, as cited in Adelabu, 2021, p. 4). He defined bureaucratic corruption as "*where individual public officers systematically and consistently solicit and receive money in return for services rendered*". This definition, stressed 'quid quo pro' (favour for favour). Also, stressed is the demand and supply sides of corruption perpetuated by bureaucrats for private gain.

In the words of Omede and Ngwube (2019, p. 889), "*bureaucratic corruption is the utilisation of bureaucrats' official positions for private gain. It is the corruption by officials who are not vocationally politicians but who are aided and abetted by corrupt politicians and a corrupt political system*". The definition of Omede and Ngwube placed emphasis on the perversion of office for pecuniary gains and the collaborative efforts of both bureaucrats and politicians.

From the aforementioned definitions of scholars, it can be discerned that bureaucratic corruption is the abuse of public trust, abuse of office and deviation of norms by officials be it in public or private bureaucracies perpetuated for pecuniary gains or to gain undue advantage which involves the demand and supply sides of corruption and could be a collaborative endeavour by both public officials and private interests.

THOERETICAL FRAMEWORK
Theory of Neo-Patrimonialism

The theory originated from the work of Shmuel Eisenstadt. In 1973, he wrote a book titled "Traditional Patrimonialism and Modern Neo-Patrimonialism." The ideals of the theory were derived from Max Weber's rational-legal bureaucratic system and patrimonialism (Adelabu, 2021). "*Rational-legal authority is based upon power which people recognised and accept because it agrees with a set of more abstract rules which they consider legitimate and from where ruling is derived*" (Eneanya (2020, p. 64). In other words, it has a rational character and men believe that a person giving an order was actually in line with his duties as stipulated in the code of legal rules and regulations. Thus, rational-legal bureaucracy possesses the characteristics of specialisation and division of labour, hierarchy of authority, a system of abstract rules, impersonal relationship. Employment and promotion based on merit or experience, resources of the organisation are distinct from members and the office holder cannot appropriate his or her office (Sharma, et al., 2018; Eneanya, 2020).

On the other hand, patrimonialism, in the view of Weber (1947, as cited in Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 2002, p. 6) is used to "*describe situations, where the administrative apparatus is appointed and responsible to the top leader. The ruler's deputies are delegated jurisdiction over certain domains and given wide leeway regarding how to act. These measures are mostly informal or off-record*". In patrimonial systems, administrators are recruited and promoted as reward for personal connections with political leaders. In other words, its recruitment and promotion are not based on meritocracy or excellence but by primordial sentiments. Also, there is no clear separation between public and private realms and administrators supplement their salaries with bribes and kickbacks (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 2002). Neo-patrimonialism, therefore, can be defined as a facade of modernity, legality, rationality and professional bureaucratic structures (Amundsen, 1999). Amundsen (1999) described the characteristics of neo-patrimonial systems. It is one based on clientelism; there is no clear separation between public and private domains; it is parasitic and kleptocratic; corruption is "collective" because of the apparent power of consumption of the rulers; structures are inefficient, illegitimate and non-developmental and finally, recruitment and promotion is based on ascriptive descriptions rather than on merit.

This theory is pertinent to this study due to the extractive tendencies inherent in the Nigerian state, where political actors seize control for personal gain. Many elites in governance and bureaucratic positions tend to prioritise their self-interests and aspirations over the welfare of the public. Consequently, they engage in significant corruption, bureaucratic malpractice, and a range of other unethical behaviors. These governing elites and bureaucrats are implicated in bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, and favoritism, among other misconducts. Such actions have serious repercussions for effective governance, national security, and overall economic growth and development.

METHODOLOGY

The research utilised a qualitative methodology for its analysis. It collected non-numerical data through a thorough examination of relevant literature on bureaucratic corruption from various journals and books, which were then, analysed using content analysis techniques.

CAUSES OF BUREAUCRATIC CORRUPTION

Scholars have proposed numerous causes of bureaucratic corruption. Mbaku (1996) identified a range of factors contributing to this issue in Africa, including structural elements (such as a "soft state"), individual influences (like family pressures and social or ethnic divisions), institutional challenges (the characteristics of the civil service), statism, cultural norms and behaviors that are flawed, as well as poverty, material deprivation, and unequal resource distribution. Tanzi (1998) analysed both direct and indirect factors that foster corruption. Direct factors encompass issues such as regulatory abuses and bureaucratic discretion, taxation, spending choices (including investment projects, procurement expenditures, and off-budget accounts), provision of goods and services below market value (like foreign exchange and public housing), discretionary decision-making (such as land allocation and tax incentives), and political party financing. Conversely, indirect contributors to corruption include bureaucratic quality, public sector wage levels, ineffective penalties, weak institutional oversight (such as trustworthy supervisors, effective auditing, and transparent procedures), lack of transparency in rules and processes, and inadequate leadership exemplification.

Nwankwo, Ananti & Madubueze (2015) identified regulation and authorisation, exploitation by the ruling class, statism, and opportunism as additional causes. Some of these factors closely resemble those identified by Tanzi (1998). The nature and character of government itself can account for the pervasive bureaucratic corruption (Ayua 2001; Dike 2003; Lipsky 2010, as cited in Omede & Ngwube, 2019). They are of the view that as the government grows, it becomes dehumanised and consequently cultivated in the culture of governance if not properly checked.

The absence or blatant disregard for ethical standards within government agencies and business organizations has also been cited as a major factor in bureaucratic corruption (Ibeogu & Ulo, 2017). The CLEEN Foundation (2010, as cited in Odeh, 2015) pointed to several contributing elements in Nigeria, including poor leadership precedents and impunity, insufficient funding for Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs), lack of a comprehensive database, absence of necessary reforms, and inadequate national integration due to ethnic, tribal, social, and religious divisions. Additionally, Ola et al. (2014) highlighted the political economy's characteristics, weak governmental institutions, dysfunctional legal systems, low civil service salaries, poor working conditions, and limited incentives as factors contributing to bureaucratic corruption in Nigeria.

Based on the above, it is clear that bureaucratic corruption in Nigeria is driven by a variety of sociological, cultural, institutional, economic, historical, and political influences. Consequently, identifying bureaucratic corruption is often not a simple matter and can prove to be extremely challenging.

CHALLENGES OF DETECTING AND CURTAILING BUREAUCRATIC CORRUPTON IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Measuring bureaucratic corruption and other forms of corruption poses significant challenges, primarily because most assessments rely on perception data—whether from quantitative or qualitative research—rather than concrete data (Amundsen, 1999). For example, the corruption metrics provided by Transparency International (TI) can be classified as perception data, whereas statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) are viewed as hard data. Developing a comprehensive strategy to combat bureaucratic corruption is a complex endeavor. As noted by Amundsen (1999) and Gong and Yang (2019), there is no one-size-fits-all toolkit for addressing corrupt practices. Therefore, a range of strategies should be implemented, taking cultural and contextual factors into account when formulating anti-corruption initiatives and programs.

Furthermore, the covert and subtle nature of bureaucratic corruption complicates the early detection of corrupt activities. As previously mentioned, bureaucratic corruption can occur either covertly (like embezzling funds) or more overtly (like inflating budgets or committing payroll fraud). Nevertheless, regular account audits and whistle blowing can help uncover these corrupt practices in a timely manner. The various underlying causes of bureaucratic corruption make it challenging to pinpoint its root causes and develop effective solutions.

Additionally, the unpredictability of human behavior serves as a key consideration in formulating effective anti-corruption strategies. Scholars have identified the nature and character of the Nigerian state as a primary factor in the prevalence of corruption. As a post-colonial state, Nigeria exhibits a highly extractive and exploitative system characterized by patron-client relationships and rent-seeking behaviors (Onuigbo & Eme, 2015; Amundsen, 1999). This environment fosters corruption at all levels (Dahida & Akangbe, 2013), underscoring the need for robust legal reforms and comprehensive value-reorientation programs across all government levels.

Moreover, ineffective and compromised Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs) hinder efforts to combat bureaucratic corruption. ACAs themselves are not immune to corruption and are often constrained by legal limitations. For example, Ibrahim Magu, the former chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), faced corruption allegations that led to his abrupt removal from office. Additionally, ACAs often lack true independence, being susceptible to influence from the ruling government, which may use

them as "willing tools" to intimidate political adversaries and forge new alliances. They also contend with insufficient resources in terms of funding and personnel.

In summary, it is evident that tackling bureaucratic corruption is a daunting challenge that requires collective efforts from all stakeholders, including the government, ACAs, media, religious organisations, and citizens, along with an effective legal framework to regulate the conduct of public officials.

CONTROLLING BUREAUCRATIC CORRUPTION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Tanzi (1998) emphasised the importance of strong leadership commitment, deregulation, discretionary powers, and tax incentives as key strategies for combating corruption. He also pointed out the need to raise public servants' salaries and resolve the funding issues faced by political parties. Amundsen (1999) argued that democratisation is essential for reducing corruption and suggested that a multifaceted approach is required to tackle the issue, as factors that may help fight corruption can also contribute to it. Echoing Amundsen, Gong and Yang (2019) noted that there is no universal solution or toolkit effective against corrupt practices, indicating that a strategy that works well in one context might fail in another. Therefore, anti-corruption policies must be tailored to account for cultural and environmental differences.

Englebert and Mbaku (2001) posited that integrating insights from public choice theory into the design and execution of anti-corruption initiatives—such as implementing more relevant laws and reforming existing institutions—could effectively address corruption. They advocated for creating more effective incentive structures and enforcement mechanisms to diminish the allure of corrupt opportunities. Nwozor (2011) stressed that establishing an independent body and processes is crucial for selecting leaders committed to anti-corruption efforts, which is vital for achieving democratic progress and development. He further suggested that a robust tax system and the removal of executive immunity are essential for fostering a corruption-free society. Martini (2013) suggested that decentralising government operations and leveraging information and communication technologies (ICT), like online tax filing and process re-engineering initiatives—such as simplifying documentation requirements and establishing time limits—would reduce bureaucracy-related corruption, which Tanzi had identified as a significant factor.

Ola, Mohammed & Audi (2014) argued that creating jobs, promoting value re-orientation, and strengthening political will to enforce regulations are critical to addressing the pervasive corruption affecting various aspects of life in Nigeria. Onuigbo and Eme (2015) highlighted the importance of value reorientation, poverty alleviation, transparency and accountability in government dealings, and judicial reform in combating corruption in Nigeria's public administration.

Omede and Ngwube (2019) underlined the necessity for a fundamental shift in our value system, improved socio-economic conditions, fair compensation, and motivational incentives for public servants to minimise bureaucratic opportunism. Adelabu (2021) called for strong political commitment to reform anti-corruption laws, improve anti-corruption institutions, and radically sanitise the political system to confront corruption in Nigeria. Nwodim (2021) recommended that Nigerian universities should implement fair, rational, and competitive recruitment policies while strengthening anti-corruption measures to tackle bureaucratic corruption in staffing within the university system. Lastly, Valverde, Fernandez, Buenano, Gonzalez-Avella, and Consenza (2023) argued that smaller group sizes for public servants and contractors, along with limited salary disparities among public employees and minimal institutional checks, would help reduce systemic corruption in public contracting.

In summary, multiple strategies and recommendations had been advanced by scholars to curtail or drastically reduce bureaucratic corruption in institutions of government. Thus, the adoption of strategies behoove on the government and its anti-corruption institutions. The following section analyses the practical strategies or initiatives implemented by the Edo State government to significantly mitigate corruption.

IDENTIFYING CASES OF CORRUPTION WITHIN THE EDO STATE BUREAUCRACY AND THE CONTROL MEASURES IMPLEMENTED BY THE EDO STATE GOVERNMENT

In 2010, the former Head of Service, Jerry Obazele, allegedly inflated the number of pensioners from 130—entailing a gratuity of 175 million naira—to 377 pensioners, resulting in a gratuity of 490 million naira. This misconduct led to his dismissal by former Edo State Governor, Adam Oshiomhole (**https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/195216-why-i-sacked-edos-head-of-service-oshiomhole.html?tztc=1**). Similarly, Osayuware Idahosa, the Permanent Secretary in the state Ministry of Youth and Special Duties, was dismissed alongside three other civil servants due to allegations of inflating the budget for primary school examinations from 30 million naira to 283 million naira (**https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/244635-n283-million-fraud-edo-govt-sacks-perm-sec-suspends-three-others.html**). Such actions reflect the hidden patterns of behavior exhibited by corrupt officials in public service.

In a separate incident, former Edo State Governor Lucky Igbinedion was prosecuted and found guilty of financial crimes by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in 2008. He faced charges in January 2008 for embezzling 2.9 billion naira (approximately $21.33 million). In a plea bargain, he admitted guilt to one count of corruption at a Federal High Court in Enugu (Ahemba, 2008). Additionally, in 2021, the EFCC questioned him regarding the alleged misappropriation of 1.6 billion naira in public funds (Nseyen, 2021), highlighting significant instances of embezzlement by a high-ranking public official.

A further instance of bureaucratic corruption emerged in the form of ghost workers being identified on the payrolls of the Ikpoba-Okha and Esan West Local Government Councils in Edo State. After noticing a salary increase from 90 million naira to 100 million naira, the former Chairman of Ikpoba-Okha initiated a staff verification exercise. This revealed that an additional ten million naira was being misappropriated each month. Similarly, Honourable Patrick Aguinede, the Chairman of Esan West, conducted verification that uncovered 722 staff members—far exceeding the legal limit of 300. This exercise also revealed anomalies, such as an 80-year-old man still receiving a salary and a staff member collecting payments while working in Abuja (https://thenationonlineng.net/edo-councils-ghost-workers/). Such cases illustrate a collective and covert public sector fraud perpetuated by public officials.

Moreover, a two billion naira tax fraud, alongside extensive certificate and transcript racketeering, was exposed by the intervention team from Ambrose Alli University (AAU), established by Governor Godwin Obaseki of Edo State in an effort to enhance the institution and align it with global standards (Ochoga, 2023). These examples highlight the tactics used by corrupt public officials, which include ghost payrolls, budget inflation, misappropriation, fund diversion, and tax fraud.

The Edo State government has made various attempts to combat bureaucratic corruption in its civil service, including:

i. The Edo State Civil/Public Service Transformation and Enhancement Programme (EDOSTEP), designed to improve efficiency and service delivery, ensuring that employment is based on merit rather than nepotism or favoritism (Agweda, 2023).

ii. The introduction of the Edo Health Insurance Scheme to enhance healthcare delivery and make services more accessible and affordable for Edo State residents (https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/10/obaseki-launches-edo-health-insurance-scheme-on-oct-31/).

iii. Collaboration with the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) to tackle corruption within the civil service. Governor Obaseki stated, "This government is committed to addressing corruption seriously through our partnership with the ICPC" (Obaseki, as cited in Oluchi, 2019).

iv. The establishment of an anti-corruption team in 2019, along with public complaint boxes, to encourage citizens to report corrupt officials (Oluchi, 2019).

v. The prohibition of cash transactions in Edo State government offices, which began on March 1, 2023, is another measure aimed at reducing bureaucratic corruption (Omidiji, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Bureaucratic corruption in Nigeria is driven by a variety of sociological, cultural, institutional, economic, historical, and political influences. Consequently, identifying bureaucratic corruption is often not a simple matter and can prove to be extremely challenging. The paper argued that tackling bureaucratic corruption was a significant hurdle that required collaborative efforts from all stakeholders, including the government, anti-corruption agencies, the media, religious organisations, and the public, supported by an effective legal framework to regulate public officials' conduct. The author emphasised the need for the government to adopt a range of strategies to combat bureaucratic corruption across all levels of administration. As such, it is crucial for the government and its anti-corruption bodies to implement effective and acceptable tactics. Lastly, the study contended that corrupt public officials in Edo State engage in practices such as ghost payroll schemes, budget manipulation, embezzlement, resource diversion, and tax evasion

RECOMMENDATIONS

Other suggestions aimed at tackling bureaucratic corruption within all governmental institutions include the following:

i. The auditing of accounts and records should be a regular practice, regardless of the financial consequences for the government.

ii. Transparency and accountability mechanisms must be deeply embedded in all government institutions, particularly within the procurement process.

iii. Safeguarding whistleblowers would encourage more bureaucrats and members of the public to report all forms of corruption.

iv. Anti-corruption agencies need to perform their duties effectively, free from intimidation, blackmail, and witch hunts. Authentic and impartial identification and prosecution of corrupt individuals will act as a strong deterrent to others.

v. Imposing strict penalties on corrupt officials is essential to tackle the widespread corruption in government institutions.

vi. Furthermore, the judiciary must take a firm stance against corruption by ensuring timely and fair justice, regardless of social factors.

REFERENCES

Adelabu, G. N .S. (2021). The manifestations of grand corruption in Nigeria's Fourth Republic and its implications on national development. *Global Journal of Political Science and Administration*, 9(2), 1-14.

Adenugba, A. A., & Folorunsho, O. O. (2012). Bureaucratic bottlenecks and organisational behaviour amongst local government employees in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. *OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 4(1), 91-112.

Agweda, C. (2023, September 27). Obaseki Reforms: Edo public service in focus. Observer. https://nigerianobservernews.com/2023/09/obaseki-reforms-edo-public-service-in-focus/

Ahemba, T. (2008, December 19). Convicted Nigerian ex-governor to pay $25,750 fine. Reuters. Retrieved from https://www.reuters.com/article/markets/oil/convicted-nigeria-ex-governor-to-pay-25750-fine-idUSLJ528594/

Ajuzie, C. G. (2010). Bureaucratic corruption in public administration: Its effects on the Nigerian economy. Retrieved from https://www.globalacademicgroup.com/journals/academic%20scholarship/BUREAUCRATIC%20CORRUPTION%20IN%20PUBLIC.pdf, 6th June, 2023.

Ajuzie, C. G. (2010). Bureaucratic corruption in public administration: Its effects on the Nigerian economy. Retrieved from https://www.globalacademicgroup.com/journals/academic%20scholarship/BUREAUCRATIC%20CORRUPTION%20IN%20PUBLIC.pdf, 6th June, 2023.

Akpan, E. N., & Onya, R. (2018). Bureaucracy and corruption in Nigeria: Implications for Buhari's change agenda. *American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research (AJHSSR),* 2(9), 99-101.

Al-Habil, W. (2010). Criticism for Max Weber's bureaucracy. Retrieved from https://www.termpaperwarehouse.com/essay-on/Criticism-for-Max-Webers-Bureaucracy/266319, 6th June, 2023.

Amundsen, I. (1999). Political Corruption: An introduction to the issues. Working Paper 7. Retrieved from https://www.cmi.no/publications/file/1040-political-coiTuption.pdf

Asaju, K., & Ayeni, E. (2021). Public bureaucracy and national development in Nigeria: Issues and challenges. *Nigerian Journal of Administrative and Political Studies*, 5(1), 69-90.

Brinkerhoff, D. W. & Goldsmith, A.A. (2002). Clientelism, patrimonialism and democratic governance: An overview and framework for assessment and programming. U.S. Agency for International Development Office of Democracy and Governance under Strategic Policy and Institutional Reform. Retrieved from https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnacr426.pdf

Bukar, B.H. (2021). Effects of bureaucratic corruption on service delivery in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, Borno State. *International Journal of Business Systems and Economics*, 13(4), 1-26.

Dahida, D. P., & Akangbe, M. O. (2013). Corruption as a bane for under-development in Nigeria: Issues and challenges. International Affairs and Global Strategy, 15, 76-83.

Dike, V. (2008). Corruption in Nigeria: A new paradigm for effective control. African economic analysis. www.africaeconomicanalysis.org

Eneanya, A.N. (2020). *Theory and practice of Public Administration* (Revised edition). Lagos: University of Lagos Press and Bookshop Ltd.

Englebert, P., & Mbaku, J.M. (2001). Bureaucratic and political corruption in Africa: The public choice perspective. *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 34(2), 502-503.

Gong, T., & Yang, L.S. (2019). Controlling bureaucratic corruption. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.1463, 6th June, 2023.

Heady, F. (1992). Bureaucracies-Encycopaedia of government and politics, in Ezeani, E.O., *Fundamentals of Public Administration*. Enugu: Snap Press.

Ibeogu, A. S. & Ulo, F. U. (2017). Role of government towards financial and bureaucratic corruption in the Local Government System in Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 19(10), 57-62.

Kaufman, D., Wei, S.J. (1999). "Does 'grease money' speed up the wheels of commerce?," IMF Working Papers, 00(64). Retrieved from https://ecopapers.repec.org/paper/nbrnberwo/7093.htm

Leadingham, A. S. (2013, October 10). Confession of an almost bureaucrat: Thoughts on the government shutdown and a path not taken. Inlander. https://www.inlander. com/comment/confession-of-an-almost-bureaucrat-2200159

Martini, M. (2013, April 8). Reducing bureaucracy and corruption affecting small and medium enterprises Transparency International, U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Center and CHR Michelsen Institute. https://www.u4.no/publications/reducing-bureaucracy-and-corruption-affecting-small-and-medium-enterprises

Mbaku, J.M. (1996). Bureaucratic corruption in Africa: The futility of cleanups. *The Cato Journal*, 16(1), 100-118.

Nseyen, N. (2021, November 12). EFCC interrogates Ex-Edo Gov, Lucky Igbinedion over alleged N1.6bn fraud. Daily Post. https://dailypost.ng/2021/11/12/efcc-interrogates-ex-edo-gov-lucky-igbinedion-over-alleged-n1-6bn-fraud/

Nwankwo, N. R., Ananti, M.O. & Madubueze, C. H. M. (2015). Bureaucratic corruption and practice of public administration in Nigeria. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, 3(12), 680-695.

Nwodim, O. (2021). Bureaucratic corruption and staff recruitment in the Nigerian University System: A study of the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. *African Journal of Public Affairs,* 12(3), 151-167.

Nwozor, A. (2011). Bureaucratic and systemic impediments to public accountability in Nigeria. *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance*, 2(2.4), 1-20.

Ochoga, P. (2023). N2bn tax fraud, certificate racketeering unveiled in Ambrose Alli Varsity. Leadership. https://leadership.ng/n2bn-tax-fraud-certificate-racketeering-unveiled-in-ambrose-alli-varsity/

Odeh, A.M. (2015). The effects of corruption on good governance in Nigeria. *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*, 4(3), 292-307.

Ola, A.S., Mohammed, A. & Audi, M. S. (2014). Effects of corruption on economic development in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, 3(3), 209-215.

Oluchi (2019, August 21). Edo Government partners ICPC to fight corruption in Civil Service. Channels. https://www.channelstv.com/2019/08/21/edo-govt-partners-icpc-to-fight-corruption-in-civil-service/

Omede, J., & Ngwube, A. (2019). Bureaucratic corruption and public service efficiency in Nigeria's polity. Retrieved from https://npsang.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Omede-Ngwube-Bureaucratic-Corruption-and-Public-Service-Efficiency-in-Nigeria.pdf

Omidiji, R. (2023, February 9).Edo goes cashless from March 1st, as Obaseki prohibits use of cash. Nigerian Tribune. https://tribuneonlineng.com/edo-goes-cashless-from-march-1st-as-obaseki-prohibits-use-of-cash/

Onuigbo, A. R., & Eme, I. O. (2015). Corruption and administration in Nigeria: The character of the state thesis. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review* (Nigerian Chapter), 9(3), 17-36.

Page, M.T. (2018). A new taxonomy for corruption in Nigeria. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved from https://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_338_Page_ Nigeria_Brief_FINAL.pdf, 6th June, 2023.

Premium Times (2015, December 15). Why I sacked Edo's Head of Service — Oshiomhole. Premium Times. https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/195216-why-i-sacked-edos-head-of-service-oshiomhole.html?tztc=1

Premium Times (2017, September 29). N283 million fraud: Edo govt. sacks Perm Sec, suspends three others. Premium Times. https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/244635-n283-million-fraud-edo-govt-sacks-perm-sec-suspends-three-others.html

Sapru, K.R. (2013). *Administrative theories and management thought*, (Third Edition). Delhi: PHI Learning Private Limited.

Sharma, M. P., Sadana, B. L. & Kaur, H. (2018). *Public administration in theory and practice*, 52nd reprint. New Delhi: KitabMahal Publishers.

Tanzi, V. (1998). Corruption around the world: Causes, consequences, scope and cures. IMF Working Paper. Retrieved from https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2016/12/30/Corruption-Around-the-World-Causes-Consequences-Scope-and-Cures-2583

The Nation (2018, June 18). How Edo councils uncovered ghost workers. https://thenationonlineng.net/edo-councils-ghost-workers/

Valverde, P., Fernandez, J., Buenaño, E., González-Avella, C.J. & Consenza, G.M. (2023). Controlling systemic corruption through group size and salary dispersion of public servants. Retrieved from https://arxiv.org/abs/2304.02113, 6th June, 2023.