

## Nigerian Public Sector Corruption against Social Development: Empirical Cases and Remarks

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### Abstract

This study examines the social causes and effects of corruption on the Nigerian public sector. The study applies the qualitative research method where 19 cases were selected purposively from the Nigerian public sector. Some of the selected cases are key regulatory Federal Government agencies, Education sector, Judiciary, Internal Affairs Ministry and four NGOs such as the Nigerian Labour Congress, Nigeria Bar Association, CSO members and Legal Practitioners. In-depth interviews were conducted across all the selected cases in 2014 and the study used a thematic approach for data analysis. Results showed that some of the civil servants and political office holders embarked on corrupt behavior as a result of a number of causes. However, the study under context limits its finding only on social causes of corruption and the effects. The corrupt behavior exerts its effects on the social institutions, causes a downturn in the people's well-being and the country's development at large. The findings serve as guidelines for policy-makers and investors. While this research focused on Nigeria, the implication is universal in scope.

**Keywords:** Public sector corruption; Social development; Effects.



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### 1. Introduction

According to the United Nations Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, 54 countries belong to the African Group of Member States (United Nations). Nigeria, located on the West of Africa is Africa's most populous country, constituting 36 states, 774 constitutionally recognized Local Government Areas with more than 250 ethnic groups (Oyekale and Oyekale, 2013). Nigeria's major ethnic groups are the Hausa 29%, Yoruba 21%, Igbo (Ibo) 18% and 10% (Ijaw) (OECD, 2012). Other minority groups include the Kanuri, Tiv, Ibibio and others. The country's capital is Abuja while Lagos is referred to as the commercial capital with an estimated population of about 17million (Federal Ministry of Works). Nigeria, a British colony became independent on October 1, 1960, and became a Republic within the Commonwealth of Nations on October 1, 1963 (Mwalimu, 2005).

Politically, the Nigerian democracy is characterized by regular elections and frequent changes in leadership from May 29, 1999, to date. Nigeria's Fourth Republic was formed through the collective initiation of the past military statesmen and leadership and uninterrupted democracy will be 20 years old in 2019. Nigerian citizens are optimistic as the essence of democratic politics is meant to guarantee their expectations hence it motivates their participation in the social contracts. Therefore, Nigerians believed that democratic government would fully support them toward gaining self-sufficiency than what they had experienced for more than three decades under the military oppression and dictatorship mode of governance. The demilitarization of the major military installations across the nation alone and the recent successful election of a former military General into a democratic leadership style seemed to give a sign of relief that democracy would survive in Nigeria.

The problem examined by this study is that Nigerian leadership has been identified as administering corrupt government for many years but singled out as the most corrupt country on the planet for two consecutive years by the Transparency International (TI) while there are changes in leadership, its corruption records have never shown a sign of improvement. The corruption perception index conducted on Nigeria as reported by the Transparency International shows that Nigeria has been performing poorly toward improving its public sector corruption. There are issues representing living testimonies of this unethical behaviour. According to the Guardian (2010 December 2), former Halliburton unit pleaded guilty to the US charges that it paid US\$180m in bribes to Nigerian officials. The Premium Times (2015 May 27) reported that since 1981 when the first contract of e-Identity card for every Nigerian was signed by the Shehu Shagari administration, the project has been a prime waste of taxpayers' money to the tune of NGN121 billion (US\$700m) (CBN, 2014) with nothing substantial to show for project from then to date. The

article described the Nigeria eID project as “a financial black hole that consumes everything thrown at it without a trace”.

## 2. Research Objective

The main research objective was to explore the causes and the effects of the Nigerian public sector corruption on Nigerian social development. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Examine the causes of corruption in the Nigerian public sector
2. Explore the effects of the public sector corruption on social development in Nigeria

## 3. Literature Review

### 3.1. Defining the Concepts of the Study

#### 3.1.1. Social Development

According to the World Bank, Social development promotes social inclusion of the poor and vulnerable by empowering people, building cohesive and resilient societies, and making institutions accessible and accountable to citizens (World Bank, 2017). The concept of inclusion may necessarily need the act of giving recognition to the poor and the most vulnerable groups who need help and affection of others in order to have sense of belonging, to make their presence in the society become valuable and acceptable to others and get involved in developmental activities to reap benefit for themselves as well as for the generality of the people in a given community. Social policy can be identified in terms of broad social objectives, meaning the promotion of social well-being - rather than the means used in pursuit of those objectives (Royal Commission on Social Policy, 1988). The integration of individuals, groups, and a people of ethnic race or community for common understanding towards building a friendship as a family leads to development in which full strength of social capital is employed. Bhattacharyya (2004) in Green (2016) expresses that community development is the “pursuit of solidarity and agency” (pp. 14, 25)

#### 3.1.2. Causes of Corruption

As per salary, a basic motivation for the workers, developing countries are identified as part of the world where low salary is paid to public officers, Nigeria not exempted and poor monitoring system could be a breeding ground for corruption as well. The fiscal adjustment policies to stabilize economy account for salary reduction, Colclough (1997) found that the erosion of public wages can have a disastrous effect on the productivity of the civil servant. However, it is not linked to causes of corruption as in case of salary compression and salary erosion as other incentives such as transportation, housing, meals travel, cost of living, training and job security are considered as important compensation to low salary as found in some African and Latin American countries (World Bank, 2000). According to Myint (2000) who notes that the causes of corruption include rent-seeking, low standard of living, and higher expectations in terms of quality of life and cultural perception. Lambsdorff (2003a) reiterates that administrative corruption or public sector corruption is a major contributor to the total corruption in developing countries. The possibility of corruption becoming the norm may due largely to either the weakness of the authority to control or the involvement of its apparatus in active participation in the illicit phenomenon. For instance, Becker (1968) notes that the probability of committing a crime depends on the penalty imposed and the probability of being caught. He mentioned further that the deterrence value of the penalties depends on the willingness of the authority to enforce the relevant regulations coupled with the level the citizens accept the judgment rendered by the institutions. Krueger (1974)’s study reveals that government restrictions on economic activities such as regulations on foreign trades generate rents and rent-seeking behavior. As some people attribute corruption perpetrated by some public workers to financial insecurity after their retirement, Stephen (2003) found that pension funds remain subject to political risk to the extent that governments fail to exercise responsibilities. In justifying the assertion, a case of illegal diversion of NGN40 billion (\$250million) from the Nigeria Police Pension Fund by 8 Civil servants where one of the accused was charged with complicity in the illegal diversion of the fund was decided in Nigeria ((The Vanguard, 2013). Likewise, OECD (1997) categorized many risks including individual risk arising out of uncertainties about the individual’s future work career.

### 3.2. Effects of Corruption on Social Institutions

In Nigeria, the consequences of corruption are identified by the stakeholders and scholars who have persistently not only condemned but also called on the anti-corruption agency (EFCC) and the judiciary to bring the perpetrators to justice for setting deterrence. In the 2017 budget passed by the National Assembly, NGN455.41b (US\$1.27b) was set aside for Education, represents 7% of the total budget, as against the UNESCO 25% standard. This is the least in Africa (Tribuneonline). New data from Nigeria’s National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) show that between 2010 and 2015, of the 10 million applicants that sought entry into Nigerian tertiary institutions, only 26% of them gained admission. The Minister of Education berated the heads of tertiary institutions in Nigeria for lack of integrity. Okorosaye-Orubite (2008) in Nwaokughu and Ezeugwu (2017) mentioned that State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) in Nigeria criminally and outrageously spent NGN800 million (US\$6.4) in executing a one-day training workshop for teachers.

The health sector, the most inevitable social institution billed with taking care of the health of all the people living in Nigeria is not an exemption. For instance, Rabiati Hadi in (gamji.com) notes that in 2000, the World Health Organisation ranked the Nigerian health system in 187th place out of 191 countries evaluated. Furthermore, UNDP reports that life expectancy in Nigeria has declined to 43 years (2006) from 47 in 1990. In contrast, life expectancy in Malaysia, which attained nationhood at the same time as Nigeria, has now reached 70 years. The

Nigeria health sector witnessed high profile corruption involving a former Minister of health (Adenike Grange), her Minister of state and a former federal legislator (Iyabo Obasanjo) and top functionaries of the ministry in 2008 where unspent NGN300 million (US\$2.4million) was misappropriated in the health ministry. They were prosecuted with the assistance of Nigeria's anti-corruption agency EFCC. Over 50,000 Nigerian women die from childbirth every year (equivalent to a plane carrying 140 people crashing every single day). Nigeria accounts for 10% of the world's maternal deaths in childbirth whereas the country represents 2% of the world's population. One in five Nigerian children dies before his/her 5th birthday mostly of preventable diseases (Hadi, n. d). The former President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan lamented at a presidential summit on Universal Health Coverage in Abuja that Nigeria suffered substantial capital flight to medical tourism and Africa has the largest number of people, traveling out of the continent to seek health services abroad Eme *et al.* (2014). Treated running-water are not delivered in many households in Nigeria. A water treatment expert said in an interview that corruption is killing water distribution in Nigeria and that there is a huge gap at the moment between supply and demand of treated water in the country. He laments that water supply coverage among 160 million people in the nation is about 50 percent since 1960, after independence and there is no commensurate investment in water infrastructure owing to mismanagement and corruption, which is not a secret (Daily Trust, 2013). On social issues, corruption has reduced the education and health sector budget and resultantly impacted on the falling standard of education and life expectancy in Nigeria. The social sector has been reduced to none productive institutions with billions of dollars being channeled to corrupt hands. For instance, Okeke and Eme (2015) recalled that Lamido Sanusi Lamido, the former governor of Central Bank of Nigeria, (CBN) ran into troubled waters when he revealed that the National assembly, NASS alone gulps 26 percent of the recurrent expenditure in the 2010 appropriation Act.

## 4. Theoretical Frameworks

### 4.1. Rational Choice

The macro level political institutions shape politics and political actors, who act under constraints that may influence their impact on states and policies.

According to Clarke and Ronald (1997) the main creation of the rational choice theory was to aid and give focus to situational crime prevention as it comprises opportunity-reducing measures that are directed at highly specific forms of crime; involving management, design or manipulation of the immediate environment as systematic and permanent way as possible; hence, makes crime more difficult and risky or less rewarding and excusable as judged by a wide range of offenders. Rational choice is based on numerous assumptions such as individualism: The offender sees himself as an individual who has to maximize goals, based on self-interest which makes him think about himself and how to advance personal goals Clarke and Ronald (1997). In his assessment, describes that the human being is a rational actor and since rationality involves end/means calculations, people invariably (freely) choose behavior, both conforming and deviant, based on their rational calculations that involve cost-benefit analysis relating to potential pain or punishment for violation of the social goods or social contract. The state is responsible for maintaining order and preserving the common good through a system of laws in which the swiftness, severity, and certainty of punishment are the key elements in understanding a law's ability to control human behavior (Gul, 2009).

The rational theory is widely being used in multi-disciplinary studies as it is closely related to human behavior perspective. An economic principle assumes that individuals always make prudent and logical decisions that provide them with the greatest benefit or satisfaction because it is in their highest self-interest. (Investopedia). Rational choice theory found that behavior is rational if it is goal-oriented, reflective (evaluative), and consistent (across time and different choice situations). It is evident when corrupt behavior is examined; and found that the cost of committing corruption is cheaper than the ultimate benefit as it involves adults who are rational, intelligent and have the ability and resources including official position and influence to manipulate. Rational choice theorists do not claim that the theory describes the choice process, but rather that it predicts the outcome and pattern of choices. Rational choice paradigm assumes that individual preferences are self-interested, in which case the individual can be referred to as a homo economicus. Such an individual acts in balancing costs against benefits to arrive at an action that maximizes personal advantage.

## 5. Methodology

The study applied a qualitative design approach to source its data. Being a case study, the technique used for data collection was one-on-one in-depth interviewing based on purposive sampling, a category of non-probability sampling methods to collect data from *a subset of the population (a group of individuals of interest to the researcher)*

In Qualitative Method, notes that case study is not a methodology but a choice of what to be studied while some other scholars like Denzin and Lincoln (2005); Merriam (1998); Yin (2003) presented case study as inquiry, methodology or a comprehensive research strategy as cited in (Creswell, 2007).

### 5.1. Sampling Techniques

The type of sample selected determines the degree to which research results can be generalized in relation to the population as a whole (external validity) (psychology.ucdavis.edu). Being a non-probability sampling, it is a non-representative of the population but found to be the suitable and relevant option to source the data for the study. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) found that purposive sampling techniques involve selecting certain units or cases based on a specific purpose rather than randomly.

### 5.1.1. The justification for the Selected Participants

As the study intends to examine one of the world most sensitive behavior that is characterized by the power of depleting the economic prospect of any nation where it rears its head, it was observed during the fieldwork that most public servants did not want to be identified or selected to grant an interview on corruption in the public sector hence, the option for the use of purposeful sampling design. Preliminary investigation about any officer offered to grant interview in the absence of the head of agency took place before accepting any other member of the executive to grant interview in order to ensure the study secure credible information [Herek \(1997-2012\)](#) reiterates that non probability sampling is in contrast with probability sampling as the population elements are selected on the basis of their availability (e.g. because they volunteered) or because of the researcher's personal judgment that they are representative. Hence, respondents for the context of this study were rather selected based on their experience and knowledge of the problem of the study and not basically for being senior citizens or administrative officers. The participants are all high-level civil servants of integrity with huge experience in their areas of expertise in the sector. They are all educated above the first-degree level. Precisely, most of them secured education status of Ph.D. level which is one of the criteria that made them more suitable to provide independently rational information within the context of the study and the context of their official duties.

## 5.2. Sample Population

The population of the study comprises the Nigerian Federal Public Sector from where the sample was drawn. There are 268 public organisations and 19 Federal Ministries that constitute the Nigerian public sector. The group of respondents drawn from this population was 21 based on non-probability sampling via a purposive method to represent the sample. This is why the sample may not perfectly generalize. The same criteria were put into consideration for selecting participants among the legal and social rights activists. Other organisations in the civil society groups are selected based on their active adversary and enlightening programme, scorecard and genuine commitment in addressing social and legal issues on behalf of the majority of the voiceless and underprivileged Nigerian public.

### 5.2.1. Ethics and Study Area

Ethics was given a very special priority to explicate transparency and moral conduct while involved in dealing with the exercise. An application for the approval for conducting the research outside the University of Malaya was sought by processing a consent form which upon approval adhered to its terms and conditions. The written permissions were received from the participants before the interview indicating their consent and readiness to participate in the interview. Choice of venue and time were left to their discretion. The fieldwork was conducted in three states of the federation. The first location where the interview was widely conducted was Abuja, the nation's capital, where all the anti-corruption establishments, the Police, the Bar Association and Nigerian Labour Congress operate their headquarters, as the seat of federal government. The city of Lagos, the nation's commercial capital was the next while the last interview took place in Ilorin, the capital of Kwara state, Nigeria.

### 5.2.2. Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

In-depth Interview was conducted for data collection and the use of open-ended semi-structured questions employed. There are 19 cases consulted for data collection within the Nigerian public sector, the majority of whom are made up of anti-corruption agencies, civil society groups, social and legal activists and education sector. Others are legal sector, social sector, police and the prison institutions. All these sectors are being administered by different federal ministries.

Questions were administered with the use of Interview protocol. The questions listed on the protocol were administered across the whole participants except where probing was unavoidably initiated for clarity and detailed information. All participants were invited by the researcher's affiliated institution while their consents to participate were received. According to [Creswell \(2007\)](#) Case Study is the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e. a setting, a context) therefore all the cases under the context of this study are bounded within the Federal civil service of the Nigerian public sector.

## 5.3. Extraction of Data

Information was carefully recorded on tape in form of audio, video and participants were photographed where the preference is allowed while the information was transcribed shortly afterward. The research team jots some information to prevent an unprecedented loss of relevant information. It was later extracted and narrowed down to represent respondents' contribution in the thematic coding method. During the interview session, probing was initiated for clarity when and where necessary to lend more insights into the context of the phenomenon without allowing distortion in the original statement collected from the participants. This information was triangulated to ascertain the uniqueness of the data in relation to the literature and the statistical aspect to make sense for the reliability of the study regarding the issues surrounding the types, causes, effects and anti-corruption initiatives in Nigeria.

## 6. Findings

There are different reasons found as the causes of corruption in the literature. Scholars are understood to have extensively sought causes of the phenomenon from the sources covered in the literature. However, the study under

context has scientifically examined the causes and effects of the phenomenon in order to pave the way for better handling of the corruption control measure in the public sector for the sake of the policy-making body. These findings help the policy and decision makers to be proactive on how and when to legislate laws and regulations that could effectively address the scourge and seek relief for all affected elements of political, social and economic development in Nigeria.

Causes and effects of corruption in the Nigerian public sector, most of the participants responded positively with various causes. In respect of the causes of corruption, the participants made a series of contributions and for the purpose of this study; the first case found about the adherence of the public servants to the law and regulation of their official function, three of their submissions would be treated as causes and effects of corruption because the template for the journal publication restricts authors to a limited number of pages. When the researcher posed a question that: "How are the public servants adhering to the civil service law and code of conducts that guide them at public work? one of the respondents reacted as follows:

Box 1: Case No. 1 - September 6, 2010

*They hardly do, the only time you hear of adherence to the rule of law is when it's convenient for them (corrupt public officials) to show adherence but anything that is strategically opposed to their interest and which directly prevented their access to power and prestige. And for the fact that they are in complete control of the institutions, that are supposed to ensure the rule of law like the police & armed forces, they are always willing to disobey court order and to flout the rule of law.*

*Respondent No. 1: Sept., 6, 2010: 11-11:45am)*

A participant, who is a legal activist in the among the members of the Civil Society organisation was asked if he finds any reason to have caused the proliferation of the corrupt behavior among the public servants in the Nigerian public sector. He responded that:

Box: 2: Case No.2- September 6, 2010

*Causes of corruption could be greed, undue advantage to acquire wealth. He said greed, avarice, uncertainties about the future and the poor economy, government's attitude towards those who had served the country meritoriously or a combination of those. In some instances, a few of them combined together, in some other instances just one reason, in other instance two of these reasons combine together, why I say one reason is because some people keep on too greedy whether you give them one billion salary they will still steal*

*(Respondent No. 1: Sept. 6, 2010: 11-11:45am)*

One of the highly respected legal luminaries of the Nigerian Court of Appeal among the participants in respect of Ministry of Justice as well as anti-corruption agency section was asked during the interview if he agreed that anything can cause civil servant like the legislative arm of government to commit the act of corruption in spite of their higher income? He leaned forward and responded swiftly by saying that:

Box 3: Case No. 3- August 30, 2010

*I agree. They (the legislative arm of government) are corrupt, it's unfortunate, and for instance, I have argued that even in the case of judiciary, judges have no reason to be corrupt. Because when I was in the judiciary I know what I was earning. They (the judges) earn jumbo salary and they retired on very comfortable pension. There is no basis. As for the legislators, you see, the problem with legislators is that they are politicians and they want to satisfy myriads of their followers and they need money to do that. I can tell you, many of them are part of us; they are putting up mighty buildings here and there. Do you want me to argue the man is making money, I can't argue, there is no question for me to argue, I can't argue, the man is a corrupt man. The only thing is that I don't have a statistic available but like I have said we all hear what people are saying.*

*(Respondent No. 3, August 30, 2010, 4:20-6pm)*

In the Ministry of Education, the causes of corruption in the Nigerian Public sector was given extensive, elaborate and concise approach by one of the intellectuals in the capacity of a university professor with vast experience in social sciences. He could not wait to provide empirical causes of the scourge in Nigerian within the context of the Nigerian public sector. He mentioned the following as the third factor he provided in the causes of corruption when he said that:

Box 4: Case No. 4- October 31, 2011

*The third factor perhaps is the state of economy which is not helping matters too, the Nigerians state too is a capitalist state with the emphasis of liberal economy and policies of privatization, deregulation, where states are now being turned to supervisor of the market system, and it is not helping matter, so that one too actually encourages corruption. Fourthly was the welfare package. Civil servants do not have that job security any longer, there is no tenure again, and you can be hired and fired anytime. And when you are hired and fired, even the pension or gratuity is no longer forth coming. It shows Nigerian civil servants are not well taken care of because the security assurance of the service is no longer there again. Therefore, people see it as a transient stage, epoch, so when they get there, they want to use the shortest possible of time to make money. To make any money, means to protect your future and, you know, corruptly use your position to award contract, inflate contract. Sometimes, you have to carry out the contracts yourself because they believe they are not sure of tomorrow, lack of certainly, insecurity encourages corruption in the Nigerian civil servant.*

(Respondent No. 9: Oct. 31, 2011: 4-4.30 pm)

## 7. Effect of Corruption on the Social development

The study identified the following during the fieldwork of the research as effects of corruption: Poor infrastructures and social institutions, poor local and foreign investments, the Judiciary compromises the legal standards etc. The study shows the reaction of participants on some of the effects when they were posed with questions to comment on the impacts of public sector corruption on social institutions:

Respondent No. 2 reacted strongly to the state of deplorable condition of the Nigerian infrastructures. As an active civil servant, the researcher asked "In what ways have you been affected with the effect of the Nigerian public sector corruption? He responded by claiming that the Nigerian situation needs a quick attention. He said that:

Box 5: Case 5- September 13, 2010

*If I am going to court, or I am going to prepare or type letters in my office, (I may have to spend hours in the traffic jam) the road is blocked because the money meant for repairing the roads has been stolen by some public officers.*

(Respondent No. 2, Sept. 13, 2010, 3-4pm)

Respondent No. 3 from the anti-corruption section talked to the researcher when asked to comment on "What effect the Nigerian public sector corruption has impacted on the social needs of the people of Nigeria so far"? The respondent said that:

Box 6: Case 6- August 30, 2010

*They know that this corruption is killing us (Nigerians), making it difficult for government to tar the roads, for government to revive the railway system. Isn't it a shame that Nigeria has no national aircraft? Look at Ethiopia, look at other countries but they don't know.*

(Respondent No. 3, August 30, 2010. 4:20- 6pm)

In the case of Respondent 4 from another federal government anti-corruption agency that asked to enumerate some identifiable effects that Public corruption had posed to social development. The reaction was that:

Box7: Case 7- September 24, 2010

*Effects of corruption... it prevents the provision of basic social amenities for the citizens. This makes economic hostile to local and foreign investments. There are bad roads that hampered smooth movement of people and lead to expensive transportation of goods and services within Nigeria.*

*Respondent No. 4, Sept. 24, 2010, 4-4:45pm)*

Public sector corruption in the case of Nigeria has a very strong link to historical factor as findings show it has been in practice prior independence in 1950 and during post-independence after when it gradually extends to date. The military psyche tendencies affect both the democratic leaders who still perceived the use of the command in dispensing democratic activities while the ruled are still living with the perception of being controlled without the

opportunity to exercise their right or being completely disenfranchised of their civil rights. The participants emphasized on job insecurity and uncertainty in earning a pension or retirement benefit after retirement as common causes. They are being identified as serious concerns to public servants from an empirical standpoint. Weak legal system; the judiciary is found to be corrupt with some empirical evidence against some of its members. Poor salary played a crucial role; the salary of civil servants is very poor comparing to other countries with less economic status to that of Nigerian. For instance, the minimum salary in Nigeria payable to e.g. (A Cleaner) is \$110 per month while a counterpart African nation; South Africa pays US\$240 as minimum salary in the same year this study was concluded in 2015. Greed and poverty are found to be part of the causes of corruption in Nigeria as far as the empirical finding revealed.

In every eventuality, finding highlighted some primary effects of the scourge on individuals, the organisations and the states in Nigeria, the study found that corruption;

Leads to poor infrastructure and weak social institutions

Poor local and foreign investments

Judiciary compromises legal standards in exchange for bribery

The judiciary that is saddled with lawmaking has some of its leading members caught in bribery and corruption. The worst is that a sector of the government paid a bribe to another for performing its formal duty. The example of this was the bribe paid by the Minister of Education to the National Assembly members involving the Senate President for the purpose of increasing the education budget in the appropriation amendment bill

## 8. Discussion

### 8.1. Nigerian Public Sector Corruption on Social Issues and its Effects

Based on the qualitative method explored to source data for the study in the Nigerian public sector institutions, this study presents the causes of corruption in the Nigerian public sector and the corresponding effects of such devastating behaviour against the development in Nigeria. The study sources its data from 19 participants that were selected via the purposive sample design. The heads of various anti-corruption agencies, the civil and legal society organisations and few federal government Ministries consented to participate in the face-to-face in-depth interview as corruption is a serious crime in Nigeria, most of the civil servants are not at comfort to grant an interview. However, the paper is part of a Ph.D. thesis, hence there are more cases discussed but the social aspect of the study was initially prepared for this publication. There are few participants take as sample from whom we generate the information even though they are in charge with huge experience in relevance to the management of the phenomenon, the result couldn't still be generalized as many other civil servants not selected may have other information about courses and effects of corruption within the purview of their positions. This is one of the key limitations of the study.

Lambsdorff (1999) has argued that perceptions are commonly a good indicator of the real level of corruption; this is demonstrated in the table1 modified from transparency international through the years corruption has been under the searchlight of the organisation. Empirically, what is widely spread as news of corruption in Nigeria is real and verifiable. The rational theory was vindicated in its explanation of corrupt public servant being rational by choosing the more beneficial choice against punishment for being corrupt when argued that some government personnel are assumed to be just as self-interested as any other economic actors hence, monopolize certain decisions to generate rents. The finding is in line with the previous study on culture when Robert (2009) reiterates that cultural backgrounds often play a large role in these attitudes especially in actions that involve exchanges of gifts or favours while the finding too revealed that corruption has a strong link to historical background.

These findings show convergence argued that the effects of corruption.... prevents the provision of basic social amenities for the citizens, hence social development is hampered. Equally, (World Bank, 2017) conceptualizes that social development promotes social inclusion of the poor and vulnerable by empowering people, ...making institutions accessible and accountable to citizens, whom their corruption works against in the development of Nigeria.

The corrupt behavior was identified to have been so deeply entrenched that it became unabated syndrome, practiced in the Nigerian public sector from the study carried out on the fieldwork and the myriad of studied literature. Apart from the most unambiguous, widely spread evidence in the Nigerian annual ranking for eighteen years shown on the Table: 1 of Corruption Perception Index (CPI) released by the Transparency International (TI), the globally respected anti-corruption watchdog and complaints of the people' economic situation in Nigeria shows the alarming rate of corruption. This study is similar to the previous studies about the ongoing corruption behavior in the public sector in Nigeria as claimed by corrupt practices in the health sector. Findings show lack of adherence to the rule of law and code of conducts that guide the conduct at work if a well vast intellectual in the capacity of Minister of health, a Professor of medicine and a member of Senate could be found wanting in misappropriation of the unspent fund meant for health where 500, 000 women died of childbirth annually (Hadi, n. d) and health issues responsible for Nigeria suffered substantial capital flight to medical tourism. This shows the depth of corruption in Nigeria. Stephen (2003) found that pension funds remain subject to political risk to the extent that governments fail to exercise responsibilities. This correlates with the findings where participants reiterate that civil servants have no future, they believe they are not sure of tomorrow, lack of certainty and insecurity encourages corruption in the Nigerian civil servant. They said greed come from uncertainties about the future and the poor economy, the government's attitude towards those who had served the country meritoriously not encouraging. The finding was in line with the literature that raised concern over the effect of lack of Nigeria Carrier that was grounded out of

corruption. The BBC (2003) reports that Nigeria has demanded the return of some \$400m, which it says has gone missing from the state-owned Nigeria Airways.

There seems corruption in almost every country of the world as no secured ranking is 100% but the propensity is heavier in one country than the other. Acts of corruption in Nigeria had been under the searchlight of the Transparency International (TI) for more than 18 years and Nigeria never scored 30% of the standard score even when many developing countries improved their corruption performance.

**Table-1.**Corruption Perception Index of Nigerian Public Sector, 1995-2013

Rank/ Total	Nigeria Year	Score (Max. 10)
54	1995	0.69
54	1996	0.69
52	1997	1.7
81/85	1998	1.9
98/99	1999	1.6
90/90	2000	1.2
90/91	2001	1.0
101/102	2002	1.6
132/133	2003	1.4
144/146	2004	1.6
152/179	2005	1.9
142/163	2006	2.2
147/180	2007	2.2
121/180	2008	2.7
130/180	2009	2.5
134/178	2010	2.4
143/183	2011	2.4
139/176	2012	2.7
144/177	2013	2.4

**Source:** Excerpt from Transparency International (TI), (2013); Balogun (2015).

In Table 1 above, Nigeria scored the highest rank of 2.7 in 2008 and 2012 when ranked as 33<sup>rd</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> most corrupt country in the world while some African countries such as Botswana scored 63: 64, Cape Verde, 57: 58 Seychelles, 55: 54 And Mauritius with 54: 52 in 2013:2014 when Nigeria scored 2.4 with no sign of improvement till date.

For instance, corruption in the transportation sector was uncovered with the alleged attempt by the Managing Director of the Nigeria Railway Corporation to have awarded two contracts valued at NGN68.1 billion (US\$500m) to some favoured companies against the due process (The Daily Trust, 2011).

The Washington Post (2005) reports that El-Rufa'i estimated that, at least three out of every four lawmakers are corrupt, as are more than half of the nation's governors and many of its civil servants. "If a few more ministers go to jail, if a few more members of the National Assembly go to jail, believe me, people will line up and do the right thing," el-Rufa'i said.

## 9. Contribution and Remarks

Therefore, against these backdrops, the study of the phenomenon may not stop soon until dramatic measures that focus on making deterrent more aversive on corrupt behaviours against public funds is regularly and efficiently implemented as to finally reduce corrupt behavior to the minimum or virtually make it disappeared in every sector of the public institutions. However, this study examines some of the ways corruption is being perpetrated that makes it constitutes a barrier to social development in Nigeria. In such a situation, most of the policy implementations and the outcomes may not be socially and economically favourable to the ordinary people but only to the policymakers and the elite. Although, wherever corruption is widely spread and uncontrollably overridden the status quo, people may experience a sort of leadership that systematically oppress people where citizens are prevented from expressing their views by such a corrupt authority. For instance, witnesses in court may be subject to intimidation, death threat as lawlessness and corruption may have been embraced by some judges.

It is necessary at this juncture that corruption should be legislated against in Nigeria as a crime that attracts strict punishment such as a life imprisonment to set a new and fearful deterrent. By this measure, corrupt perpetrators may spend the active part of their life in prison if found guilty of corruption charges, this must scare perpetrators away from committing this crime just like the measures taken in China, Singapore, Hong Kong to curb the menace otherwise, corrupt behavior would continue unabated. The finding shows that at the end of the light jail term, the corrupt accused may secure the custody of his loots. In some instances, a huge fine equivalent to five times (500%) of the defrauded amount may be placed by the judge with jail term that could not be appealed in appellate court and each perpetrator should be barred from active politics for at least a three-decade as another strict deterrent.

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