

Full Length Research

Corruption and Its Effect on Nigeria Civil Service, an Analysis of Ministry of Finance Lafia Nasarawa State-Nigeria

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Corruption run from beginning to end in every level of Nigerian government, it ranges from considerable area such as contract, fraud at the top, through insignificant bribery, money laundering schemes, misappropriation and seized salaries from fake workers. Corruption effect in the Nigeria civil service has been great pandemic over the years, it is a cross analysis on the .current situation of the country and common that contemporary issues of this nature are relevant to embarked on research of this type and suggest possible solution to the problem. The research methodology justified the research process, design, study population, setting, sample size and sampling techniques as while as the sources of data and method of data collection, while analysis were equally exposed in the work. The sample and sampling technique are what the researcher used, to justify the tendencies in the research. However, the population consulted is eighty (80) staff and the major instrument employed in this research work for data collection is questionnaire. The answer to the research questions was used to test the research hypothesis .while, the questionnaire was administered directly and the statistical techniques in analyzing the data collected from the interviewed administered is the simple percentage in which percentage are attached to the respondents and analyzed and the data analysis was adopted. Therefore, the finding buttressed that Corruption and financial abuse perpetrators are not easy to apprehend because their illegitimate way of doing it. While, the recommendation include; Government should creates enough jobs and remunerates those on the jobs by way of promotion and prompt payment of salaries and wages to eschew corruption on their work. Also, workers should be enlighten on the consequences of perpetrating economic crime on their job this will make the civil servants in the public sector (ministry of finance Lafia in this case) to be more informed on the consequences of corruption.

Keywords: Corruption, Fraud, Money Laundering, Embezzlement, Due Process and Economic.

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INTRODUCTION

The effects of corruption in civil service in Nigeria been the topic render research having taken look at the .current situation of the country today, it is common that contemporary issues of this nature are what students of the institutions of higher leaving should carryout research into and suggest possible to such problem, like corruption that has eaten deep into Nigeria civil service. This is because conducting a research on issue of this kind will go a long way in bringing

about National development in all nosh and crannies of the country (Kola, 2002).

However corruption which is one of the problems that hindered the performance of civil service will be address. This could be reduced in civil because of this; you cannot begin to deal effectively with the problem if one does not attack them simultaneously in all works of life. In fact this is what motivated authors to research in civil service and corruption in Nigeria a study of ministry of finance Lafia Nasarawa State.

Despite the fact that several attempts before successive administration to clear away the issue of corruption if possible through several mean the effort was all in vain for instance the setting up of administration and official commission of enquiring to probe the activities of various public institution.

The establishment of military tribunals, the removal from office civil servant that is fund tautly of corruption and the launching of spirited campaign against indiscipline know as war against indiscipline and corruption and the establishment of the present economic and financial crime commission (EFCC) to fight against corruption has not in any way stop the perpetrators themselves to desist from this social ills, for any society to develop, the problem of corruption must first be dealt with, if we could refer our minds to the definition of corruption according to dictionary of temporary "English means" dishonest especially by people in position of power" It is my presumption that after this research work it will be of great importance to any fellow colleagues in struggle and other people in various field of study intend in the course of corruption. Compelling this work forms of corruption it impact on our economic, political and socio -:- cultural life and at the end bring some recommendation and suggestion on how best future occurrence will be prevented.

The menace of corruption in development reached on alarming stage in that every patriotic citizen must reach strong to fight against. It's my hope that after the research work it will create the spirit of patriotism in the minds of whosever goes through it (Dadajo, 2008).

Corruption and Financial Abuse

According to section 2 of Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (I.C.P.C) Act (2000), financial abuse/corruption simply connotes impropriety and encompasses all forms of guilty, indecorous and infamous conduct in the performance of some official and non-officials responsibilities. Therefore, any act, which goes out of any normal societal behavior.

Nye, (1967), posits that corruption is a behavior, which deviates from the formal duties of a public role, because of private gain – regarding (personal, close family, private clique, pecuniary or status gains). Corruption is a behavior, which violates rules against the exercise of certain types of duties for private gain – regarding influence.

Banfield (1961) opined that financial abuse and corruption culminated behavior as bribery the use of recompense to avert judgment of a person in a position of trust; nepotism and misappropriation the illegal appropriation of public resources for private uses. It is the efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means or private gain at the public expense; or a misuse of public power for private benefit. Lipset and Lenz, (2000) posit that section 46 of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission defined financial/economic crimes to means, "the non – aggressive criminal and illicit action committed with the aim to earn riches unlawfully either independently, group or organized mode that infringe existed legislation that governed economic activities of government and its management which encompassed any of fraud, narcotic drug trafficking, money laundering, embezzlement, bribery, looting and any type of corrupt practices, illegal arms deal, smuggling, human trafficking, child labour, illegal oil bunkering and illegal mining, tax evasion, foreign exchange malpractice which comprise counterfeit currency, theft of intellectual property and piracy, open market abuse toxic and prohibited goods dumped.

Corruption and Financial Abuse in Nigeria

Corruption and financial abuse in Nigeria predates our political independence, from the origin. The evidence of this fact derives from the allusion to the following statements. For instance, "on February 26, 1952, the Emir of Gwandu moved the following motion in the Northern House of Chiefs: "That this House, agreeing that bribery and corruption are widely prevalent in all walks of life recommends that Native Authorities should make every effort to trace and punish offenders with strict impartiality and to educate public opinion against bribery and corruption" (Adebayo, 1986).

From the above observations, it is clear that corruption now common in Nigeria grown-up beyond imagination and to a degree, which boggles the mind. "Corruption" is a prevalent word and has turn into part of everyday usage.

Types of Financial Crimes

Financial crimes are certainly a solemn threat to the public sector and consequently a risk to the nation since the public sector is the nation heart. The existence and prosperity of a nation can be held to ransom by the activities of economic crimes perpetration. On this juncture, the research will focus on the following types of financial abuses, such as advance fee Fraud, fraud, money laundering and embezzlement of government funds.

Advance Fee Fraud

Advance fee fraud is a criminal offense defined and punishable under section 419 of the Nigeria criminal code. Constitutional section 419 of the criminal code of Nigeria provides thus any person who falsely pretense and with the intent to defraud, obtain any other person anything capable of being stolen is guilty of felony and is liable to 3 years imprisonment.

The scam popularly known as “419” was initially subsumed under the category of criminal offences which have described as “obtained under false pretense” but now it under the EFCC Act. There are many variations, which are constantly been adapted to change some inherent elements of advance fee fraud in the public sector (Okolie, 2006).

Fraud

Fraud is an irregular and deception to obtain an unjust and illegal financial advantage. Fraud may involve Falsification and alteration of accounting records or other documents. Misappropriation of assets, theft suppression and omission of the effects of transactions from records.

Recording of transactions without substance, Intentional misapplication of accounting policies. Willful misrepresentations of transactions and of the entity’s state of affairs, with these main types of frauds: Falsification of Accounts Forgery, Fraudulent Conversion (Okolie, 2006).

Money Laundering

These are related crimes that has attracted greater attention to recent times. Any crime, be it extortion, terrorism, drug arms and human trafficking, fraud, bribery and corruption, that generate huge proceeds and creates the need for laundering. Laundering takes place in order to avoid the proceeds from being used as evidence against the perpetrators of the offences a process by which monies, sourced from illicit activities are brought into the formal economy and used for lawful purpose (Okolie, 2006).

Embezzlement of Government Fund

The act of an official person who unlawfully and wrongly uses his station and character contrary to ones duty and the rights of other. Government workers who are either induced financially to do their work largely commit these types of crime and they convert public funds for their own use. This is the case with clerks who takes bribes to get document for stamp duty stamped for client and to search for files in their offices to pass letter to their superiors for quick attention and other behavior. Nye (1967), posits that corruption is a behavior which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private status gains and violate rule against the exercise of certain types of private regards influence.

The Causes of Financial Abuse

The causes of financial and economic crimes are numerous; and they have political and cultural variables. Among the prominence proof and relation between corruption, social diversity, ethno–linguistic fractionalization, and the proportions of country’s population who adhered to different religious traditions and culture (Lipset, and Lenz, 2000). According to Amundsen, (2000), thus the political system and the culture of a society could make the citizens more prone to corrupt activities. The factors that cause financial abuse in the public sector of Nigeria include: Great inequality in distribution of wealth; Political office as the primary means of gaining access to wealth; Conflict between changing moral codes; the weakness of social and governmental enforcement mechanisms; and absence of strong sense of national community (Bryce, 1921).

The drawback in ethical standard in Nigeria agencies, government and business. According to Bowman, (1991) ethics is action, practice of values; it is a guidance system to be used in making decisions. The issue of ethics in public sector and in private life which encompasses a broad range, with a stress on obedience to authority, on the necessity of logic in moral reasoning, and on the necessity of putting moral judgment into practice.

Consequences of Financial Abuse in the Public Sector.

In the recent past, Nigeria was adjudged by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as one of the non–co–operative countries of territories in the fight against money laundering.

Consequences of financial abuse include fuelling of inflation, uneven distribution of resources, undermining of development efforts, weakening of morals and commitment of citizens, creation of elitism and a thriving parallel

economy. The unpleasant effects of economic crimes on the operations of political, economic and financial institutions should, therefore, provide strong incentives to discourage the use of their services by persons engaged in illicit activities.

The effects of financial abuse on a nation's socio-political and economic development are innumerable and the negative impact of economic, reduced public spending on education (Mauro, (1997). Lipset, and Lenz, (2002), note that the effect on growth, is in part, a result of reduced level of investment, as it adds to investment risk. The effect of corruption on education comes from the fact that the government spends are relatively more items to make room for fix (Lipset, and Lenz, 2000).

Efforts made to curbing Financial Abuse

The empty cancer (corruption and financial abuse) could be uprooted systematically through this proposed solutions: The standard efforts to tackle the menace (Baba, 2005) are as follows:

Since corruption emanates from the top, it can be checked by putting honest people in position of authority. There should be a requirement that all reasons advanced to justify the use of the discretionary power should be documented and accessible to all parties to the transaction. By introducing transparency, the practice of exercising discretionary powers frequently and with impurity, without fear of accountability, will be automatically curtailed.

Mechanism to Curb Financial Abuse in the Nigeria Public Sector

Due Process is based on wide spread corruption, conducting government business degenerate so much by the year 2000. Owe to the fact that no serious attention was given to public service rule, financial regulations and ethics and norms because of selfish reasons. The Federal Government noted the urgent need for transparency in government procedures so as to be able to move the system forward. Hence the federal government in 2000 commissioned the World Bank to collaborate with some private sector specialists to study financial systems and general procurement-related activities in the country. The essence of this request to the World Bank is to assist Nigerian Government" with a process of enthroning efficiency, accountability, integrity and transparency in government procurement and financial management systems" (Ekpenkhio, 2003). It was based on this that the country procurement assessment report was produced through a participatory review approach from key stakeholders including representatives from private sectors and the federal, state and local governments with assistance from international and national consultants. The Country Procurement Assessment Report (CPAR) identified some major weakness in the procurement system in Nigeria as follows (Ekpenkhio, 2003).

That Nigeria lacks a modern law on public procurement and permanent oversight and monitor purchasing entities.

That the finance (control and management) Act, 1958, together with Financial Regulations, which set basic rules for managing public expenditure, have gaps, deficiencies and faulty implementation of existing regulations on procurement (e.g. lack of permanent arrangements for control and surveillance), which create opportunities for bribery and corruption.

Statement of the problem

A clear concise and carefully selected statement of problems of the research, it also give momentum insight to the research. It is in this regard therefore that the researcher clearly states the research problems as follow:

- i. How corruption could be reduce to a minimal level in civil service ministry of finance Nasarawa State.
- ii. To find out how civil service could be used as instrument to reduce corruption and enhance productivity in the Ministry.
- iii. To find out how corruption is been introduces in the state civil service Ministry of Finance Lafia Nasarawa State. General speaking people involved corruption practice as a result of:

- i. The desire to be like other
- ii. Scarcity of resources
- iii. Domination by political class

Therefore, corruption has eaten deeply into our minds and it is of the cause of social problem. The issue of corruptions in our society becomes like another part of the society finds by civil servants "Settlement" brown envelop, my biro need inks etcetra. Like in Nigeria civil service corruption as an issue brought a lot of obstacles against the performance and progress of Nigerian civil service this prompted the research.

Objectives of the Research

The research has the following objectives:

1. To examine the extent of financial abuse, corruption (economic crime) in the Ministry.
2. To examine the causes of financial abuse corruption (economic crime) in the Ministry and suggest measures to reduce the financial abuse in the research area.

Research Hypothesis

1. Do you agree that inefficiency of the civil servants is caused by corruption in Ministry?
2. Is corruption the cause of low performance of civil service especially in the Ministry?
3. What government efforts have been made to ameliorated corruption over the years?

Research Design

The purpose of many surveys is simply to provide the researcher with information needed. The researcher adopted a survey research based on earlier hypothesis formulated. This help the researcher in data generation and it provide insight unto the research effectively.

Population of the Research

Population is also seen as the total number of people consulted under study (Nwana, 1984).When carrying out this research, the population consulted is 100 on the staff of Ministry of Finance Lafia Nasarawa State.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The researcher conducted a research on the Ministry of Finance Lafia Nasarawa State, which comprise of the 80 questionnaires returned. 33 staff of the ministry are outside the organization, 18 casual staff, 15 permanent staff within the organization and other 14 questionnaires were also administered.

The calculation formula of Yaro Yamane is presented as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{100}{1+ 100 (5\%)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{100}{1+100 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{100}{1+100 (0.0025)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{100}{1.25}$$

$$n = 8$$

Presentation of Analysis of Data based on Sex

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Male	45	56.25
Female	35	37.5
Total	80	100

Source: Field Work (2022)

Fifty respondents representing 56.25% were male while 30 respondents making 37.5% of the respondents were female.

Distribution on marital status

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Married	30	37.5
Single	40	50
Divorced	10	12.5
Total	80	100

Source: Field Work (2022)

37.5% of the respondents were married, 50% were single while minorities of 10% representing 12.5% were divorced.

Distribution on Educational Qualification

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	4	5%
Secondary	15	18.75%
OND/ NCE	29	36.25%
HND/BSC	32	40%
Master	0	0%
Total	80	100

Source: Field Work (2022)

75% represents 60 of the respondents were senior staff while 25% represents 20 of the respondents were junior staff.
Do you agree that inefficiency of the civil servants is caused by corruption?

Opinions	Yes	No	Frequency	Percentage
	Yes			
No			29	36.25%
Total			80	100

Source: Field Work (2022)

51 represents 63.75% of the respondents are of the opinion that inefficiency of the civil servants is caused by corruption. 29 represents 36.25% of the respondents are of the opinion that inefficiency of the civil servants does not is caused by corruption.

Whether corruption is the cause of low performance of civil service?

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	53	66.25%
No	27	33.75%
Total	80	100%

Source: Field Work (2022)

66.25% are of the opinion that corruption is cause of low performance of civil service, 33.75% are of the opinion it is not the cause of low performance in civil service.

FINDING

There is a high awareness of the modus operandi of economic crime; this has aid to increase the level of financial abuse. It is discovered that those who engage in corruption and financial abuse are not seen as criminals by their friends, relatives and most members of the public.

However, Corruption and financial abuse perpetrators are not easy to apprehend because their activities are cloaked as legitimate activities and some cases of economic crime are carried out in cohesion with law enforcement officers.

Poor governance is also a major cause of corruption and economic crimes that is prevalence.

Though the independent corrupt practice commission and Economic and financial crime commission blushed to fight crime, it is not fully useful as it find it difficult to prosecute certain high ranked civil servants. Apart from for the economic and financial crime commission there is inadequate awareness of other agencies established to fight financial crimes.

CONCLUSION

The research was able to reveal that financial abuse and corruption are carried out in the public sector (Ministry of finance Lafia) at a high rate and it has affected the state economic development negatively.

Though, the measured adopted by government in curbing financial abuse, corruption and economic crimes has reduced crimes in the ministry. This means that government agencies that are saddled with check mating corruption in both the public sectors and ministry can only condense the financial abuse and economic crimes but cannot totally eradicate it due to their ineffectiveness in some certain area too.

In lieu of this, there is need for all government, religious bodies, schools, traditional rulers, friends and families as well as the public sector and workers to contribute efforts to fight a vigorous war against corruption, economic crimes in our public sector, ministry and the society in general.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, the following recommendations:

Government should create enough jobs for the teeming public thereby reducing unemployment, idleness in youths and increase job security.

The ministry should work hand in hand with law enforcement agencies to catch offenders of financial abuse, corruption and economic crimes both in ministries.

Government should provide enabling environment and give free hand for internal and external auditors to do their job right as this would discourage civil servants from carry out fraud and corruption in both public sector and ministry.

And finally, government should provide adequate remuneration and allowance through their management, as comfortable civil servants would not have a motive to perpetrate fraud and corruption.

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