

# **POVERTY, WAGES, AND CORRUPTION: UNDERSTANDING THE ECONOMIC DYNAMICS OF SOKOTO STATE**

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## **Abstract**

Corruption remains a formidable obstacle to political, economic, and social progress across various political systems, exerting detrimental effects on development efforts and bureaucratic efficiency while eroding the credibility of governmental institutions. In the civil service sector, corruption is particularly pervasive, exerting profound impacts on the provision of public goods and services and hindering socio-economic development in affected states. This article explores the multifaceted nature of corruption within the civil service, highlighting its detrimental consequences such as the abuse of public power for private gain. Such corrupt practices directly contribute to exacerbating poverty levels and impeding economic growth and democratic transitions. Drawing on the works of scholars like Chetwynd et al. (2003) and Adam (2015), corruption in the civil service is delineated as the illicit manipulation of delegated authority, wherein civil servants exploit their entrusted roles for personal benefit. Understanding the intricate dynamics of corruption within the civil service is crucial for developing effective strategies to combat this pervasive phenomenon and foster sustainable development and governance.

**Keywords:** Corruption, civil service, public goods, socio-economic development, poverty.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Corruption wreaks havoc on political, economic, and social progress in every political system. It stymies development efforts, retards bureaucratic progress, and undermines political institutions by undermining the credibility of government. It is claimed that corruption is widespread in the civil service, affecting the supply of public goods and services and socio-economic development of the affected state. Corruption in the civil service leads to the abuse of public power for private benefit, which directly and indirectly worsens the problem of poverty (low income, poor health and education, shock vulnerability, and other characteristics) in countries with the problem of economic growth and democratic transition (Chetwynd et al., 2003). When it comes to the civil service, corruption is defined as the unlawful use of one's delegated authority. A civil servant is paid to do tasks for which he or she has delegated authority (Adam, 2015). There may be misconduct or some type of maladministration if the civil servant does not do the tasks, or does not perform them well (Caiden, 1991) or does it in a manner that enhances his personal benefits. There have been arguments in the extant literature on the effects of low wages on corruption. Poor pay and salaries in the civil service, research has shown, play a big role in the trivialization of petty corruption. It is sometimes hypothetically stated that the higher the wages the

less corrupt a civil servant becomes. Thus, insufficient pay for civil servants is said to encourage rent-seeking behavior because good wages or high salary level allows the civil servant and its family to maintain a reasonable quality of life (Tanzi, 1998). The proposition may also be right that the lower the rate of unlawful catch-ups, the lower the level of civil service wages. Corruption opportunities therefore become the primary motivator for entering the public sector (van Rijckeghem and Weder, 2001). It is germane to note that, though wages and corruption in the public sector have continuously been linked in empirical literature, mixed results have also been found in empirical studies on whether high public-sector wages are an effective policy against corruption. In other words, different conclusions have been reached. These are frequently divided into two categories: negative and positive. Countries such as Nigeria, Argentina, Georgia, Ghana, Peru, Singapore, and others have enacted public sector reforms to raise the wages of government officials in an effort to combat corruption (Kunt et al., 2021). The evidence for such interventions' efficacy is mixed. For instance, some studies find no effect (Panizza, 2001; Ades and DiTella, 1997; Treisman, 2007) or reverse causation (Rose-Ackerman and Sreide, 2012), with high levels of corruption leading to low wages in the public sector. Previous research on the impact of increased pay on corruption, on the other hand, might be explained by wage inequalities in the public sector as well as cultural factors in a specific society, which Nigeria is no exception. This study therefore is an attempt to contribute to this debate and whether there is an inverse relationship between wages and corruption. Does low pay genuinely foster corruption in the civil service? That is the issue this paper seeks to answer. Our case study is the Sokoto State Civil Service.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS**

### **Corruption**

Corruption is ubiquitous and it is neither country bound nor culture specific. Each country's backdrop is shaped by its unique moral, legal, political, and administrative structure. In view of rising challenges in that country, each country has its own set of circumstances, a different perspective, and a different goal for constructing a definition. Because of all of these elements, finding a uniform definition of corruption has been challenging. Rather than developing a specific definition of corruption that can be applied across all social, moral, legal, cultural, and economic perspectives, a more functional approach is used, namely, to specify and identify behaviors that can be clearly defined as corrupt acts or offences, and thus prevented and sanctioned. Corruption is the misuse of public office for personal benefit. Bribery, nepotism, and the theft of public funds for personal benefit are examples of this type of behavior. It is the act of offering or obtaining an advantage through measures that are inconsistent with one's duty or others' rights. Nye (1967) defined corruption as behavior that deviates from the formal obligations inherent in public service in order to obtain a private benefit (staff, close family, private clique), in terms of money or status; or who violates rules prohibiting the exercise of certain types of private influences. This definition is in consonance with the Weberian postulations and idea of bureaucracy.

Within this perspective, any behaviour that contradicts bureaucratic principles and models as espoused by Weber is corruption. Beyond this, corruption can be seen at a general level as the improper or even appropriate use of influence for personal gains or aggrandizement. In defining corruption therefore, motive or the motivating factor is very critical because legal procedures can be used and manipulated for a selfish end and or purpose. In our context, the end purpose of the behaviour of the bureaucrats is significant. If the behaviour derails from the public interest or benefits, it is considered as corruption. However, as the concept of corruption is generic so also its forms are numerous. Scholars have identified various distinct categories of corruption widespread among civil servants for analytical purposes and clarity this paper identified few as the have direct correlation with bureaucratic corruption. These are: Petty corruption (flies), grand corruption (tigers), and state capture are examples of these.

### ***Petty corruption***

This is characterized by lower-level authorities who may have possibilities to do wrong actions, such as forging records to evade a tax and getting a kickback as a result (Adam, 2015). It might involve doing something legal, but somewhat in an illegal way, such as providing a permission for an activity that satisfies the criteria, but allowing it to bypass the queue in exchange for a personal profit or favor. Civil servants who engage in such behavior and receive rewards in addition to their wage are using the influence and the privileges the office they occupy provides for personal benefits. This may be considered as betraying their office's trust. In this regard corruption to Hallak and Poisson (2007), involves public officials at all levels (from government to local and school levels) and many tiny sums of money; while it normally has a minimal influence, it can have a significant societal impact, particularly for the poor and most vulnerable. "Small transactions between lower-level government officials and the general population" are included. The provision of commodities and government services to the public is frequently hampered by this level of corruption (GOPAC, 2005).

### ***Grand corruption***

It is otherwise known as political corruption and an elite crime which may be a conspiracy between political elite and the bureaucratic elite. This is frequently described in the literature as a situation in which politicians manipulate state instruments for personal gain, causing policy to be terribly distorted, to the point where they effectively "own" the state, its institutions, and resources (Johnston, 2005; Pope, 1995). Grand corruption refers to the bribery of heads of state, ministers, and other high-ranking officials, and usually includes enormous sums of money. Grand corruption is defined by Andvig et al. (2001) as misappropriation or embezzlement of government funds, or the tailoring of public laws, rules, and regulations for the advantage of particular favored parties in exchange for bribes, or merely to maintain political support and power. Grand corruption, according to Hallak and Poisson (2007), involves high-ranking officials and politicians, as well as big sums of money, and has a significant economic, political, and social impact.

***State capture***

Rather than politicians extorting citizens or kleptocrats dominating business and stealing the country's assets, "state capture" scenarios occur when law, which has been legitimately drafted and approved by the government or parliament, distributes benefits in a corrupt manner (Adam, 2015). Outside interests not only sway state laws, but also utilize their clout to get laws drafted in their favor. Officials and politicians can be influenced or bribed to produce legislation that grants a firm access to natural resource exploitation, a monopoly on a railway line, media and publishing licenses, or tax exemption.

***Civil service***

Civil service of Nigeria is conceived from a broad perspective and it includes the following institutions, the federal civil service, the state civil services, local governments, statutory corporations of both the federal and state government, business enterprises with full or majority ownership by either the federal or state government, authorities or commissions established by the federal or state government, educational institutions established or financed mainly by federal and or state government, the Nigeria Police Force, the armed forces, the judiciary, the prison service, customs, civil defense Ogundiya among others (Federal Republic of Nigeria-FRN, 1999). The public service is a creation of the collective sovereign will of the people or the constitution, and as such, it is an institution created to serve the collective will of the people. It is the body of men and women employed by the state to execute and implement the policies and programs of the government of the day. It is the permanent infrastructure of government in a modern state (Obaro, 2004).

**Theoretical underpinning**

Civil servants have a critical role in promoting a Nigerian administrative system that is both effective and efficient. Performance of civil servants in Nigeria has been heavily castigated because of disparity between their expected role and their actual productivity on the one hand and their non-commendable contributions to national development on the other hand. A number of factors account for the low productivity in the Nigerian public service including, fallen morale, poor appreciation of the importance of time, poor commitment and dedication to duty and corruption among others. Among these factors, corruption stands out as the major reason for low performance and poor productivity in the Nigerian civil service. Theoretically, a number of theories are competing for explaining the nature, forms and dimensions of corruption in the civil service (de Graaf 2007). Some of these include Principal Agency theory, theory of the Two Publics, Prebendalism, Patrimonialism and Clash of Morality Theory among others. The Principal Agency Theory emphasizes the presence of a supervisory principal and/or an agent who supervises the agent's duties, which could be a government auditor or a senior civil servant. Corruption may occur in this structure if the agent has more access to critical administrative documentation than the principal and tries to obtain payoffs by illegitimately providing critical information to those outside the setup or administration without the supervisor's knowledge. On the other hand, the

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prebendalism theory's main argument was based on a description of the patron-client relationship in politics for self-appropriation. They contended that civil servants use state offices as a "prebend" that can be appropriated by officeholders in generate material benefits for themselves and their associates. While the clash of morality theory argued that corruption in any society is associated with behaviour that violates some formal standards or rules set down by the state for public officials. The theory further emphasis that societies like Nigeria, granting favour to relatives and personal friends is not perceived as corruption which according to Weberian ideals it is seen as corruption. In this study, "clash of morality theory" is adopted in order to place the subject matter in a proper context. According to the "clash of moral values theory", a society's values and norms have a direct impact on an individual's behavior, leading to corruption.

For example, kinship ties as well as loyalty and favoritisms to one ethnic group or religious affiliations. This is a culture where gift-giving or cares for extended family and friends is valued highly. In this circumstance, sharing or dispersing the rewards of power may not appear to be immoral at all but which however contradicts the established civil service rules, *a la* Max Weber. This is what Ogundiya and Amzat (2020) aptly described as a clash of morality and legality. However, the clash of morality theory has been criticized for been ethnocentricism in nature, which assumes that developing countries have these tendencies of cultural values because they are still immature and so inevitably corrupt. In addition, the theories appear to focus on the symptoms of corruption caused by these moral norms rather than the underlying causes, meaning that they lack universal analytical weight. As a means of countering corruption, these principles advocate for the enforcement of ethical standards as well as the elimination of favoritism and cronyism.

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

There is a substantial number of researches on the implications of public sector employee remuneration on corruption. Dominik and Christina (2017) maintained that salaries of public officials may also be a factor to consider while analyzing the reasons of corruption. For example, one variation of the efficiency-wage theory claims that higher public-sector wages deter corruption because of the high personal costs of arrest and expulsion from government employment or administration (Klitgaard, 1997; Mookherjee, 1995; van Rijckeghem and Weder, 2001). Higher public-sector wages have also been recommended as a way to combat corruption by attracting more honest people to work for the government (Bond, 2008). According to Becker and Stigler (1974) model, greater incomes are associated with less corruption due to the consequences of wrongdoing. If a bureaucrat accepts bribes and is caught, he will lose his job and be forced to work in the private sector. According to Akerlof and Yellen (1994) "fair wage" hypothesis, public officials would participate in corruption until their pay rises to what they consider to be a fair salary. Fair pay for public officials may cause society to criticize corruption rather than accept it as a cultural norm (Van Rijckeghem and Weder, 2001). The bigger the expected loss from losing a job in the public sector compared to the private sector, the fewer the incentives to engage in

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corrupt activity-given that there is an adequate level of monitoring (Dominik and Christina, 2017). Others focus on the moral consequences of corruption. Higher compensation may appear more equitable to bureaucrats, making it morally more difficult for them to bribe their employer, the government (Van Veldhuizen, 2011). Some scholars argued to the contrary. For instance, Mookherjee and Png (1995) maintain that a greater public-sector wage does not guarantee honesty when bargaining over the worth of a bribe. This is confirmed in a study by Foltz and Opoku-Ageyemang (2015) when they examined the impact of tripling police officer wages on bribe extortion from truck drivers in Ghana. They discovered that raising police salaries boosted the amount and frequency of bribes given to cops by truck drivers. The authors speculate that the wage reform boosted the officers' social status and affected their definition of "fair" income, resulting in upward revisions of predicted bribe amounts. Mishra et al. (2008) investigates the consequences of a 1997 pay reform in India, which raised the salary of customs officials. They discovered that the change had little effect on tariff evasion: officials continued to accept bribes at the same rate after obtaining raises in salary. According to Light (2014) a large boost in police officer salary as part of the reform of the police system resulted in a major drop in corruption in Georgia. In Argentina, Di Tella and Schargrodsky (2003) investigated the link between wage premiums and corruption. They found that conducting audits on a regular basis reduces corruption. When the risk of discovery is either low or extremely high, however, increased compensation for procurement officials do not diminish corruption; instead, larger wage premiums combined with intermediate auditing levels reduce corruption. The data on the influence of salary reductions on corruption, on the other hand, is more conclusive. Wage cuts in the public sector are likely to increase corruption. Borcan et al. (2015) study the impact of an unanticipated 25% salary cut in Romanian public schools on standardized exam passing rates. They discovered that the percentage of pupils who passed the tests in public schools increased when compared to private institutions. According to Gorodnichenko and Peter (2007), public sector employees in Ukraine who are underpaid in comparison to their private sector counterparts may compensate by accepting bribes. They point out that the wage disparity between the public and private sectors is growing at the top of the wage distribution, suggesting that decompressing public sector wages might curb corruption. The hypothesis is intriguing, but there is no empirical data to back it up. van Rijckeghem and Weder (2001) look at 31 nations and find that there is a negative relationship. They found that corruption index reduces by 0.5 points when the civil service wage increases by one point relative to the manufacturing sector wage. However, their sample is tiny, and it primarily includes developing countries, which could lead to a reversal of causality problem. Poorer countries may pay low wages to their workers due to the widespread belief that administrators make enough money from corruption. In addition, their fiscal policy is less efficient in general than that of industrialized countries, creating another endogeneity problem (Lambsdorff, 2006). Other studies like Treisman's (2007) likewise suffer from same difficulties and/or insignificant results. Indeed, it is evident that

the empirical evidence on the effect of public sector wages on corruption remains inconclusive. This is partly due to the scarcity of micro-level empirical literature on corruption and pay, as well as the challenges of gathering highquality data (Gans-Morse et al., 2017; Olken and Pande, 2012). Individuals who exploit public service for personal benefit have no motive to divulge information that could jeopardize their position (Ackerman, 2016). When accounting for the factor that facilitate corruption, scholars argued that motivation for corruption is quite strong due to poverty, low and declining civil service salaries, no concept of insurance or other risk-spreading mechanisms as is prevalent in richer countries to cover risks like illness, accidents, and unemployment, similarly on the other hand, opportunities to engage in corruption are numerous due to weak accountability mechanisms (Gray and Kaufmann, 1998). According to studies, civil servants are underpaid but have a lot of administrative flexibility and a low risk of being discovered and punished, which gives them a lot of possibilities to misuse their power and engage in corruption. Furthermore, the Nigerian culture of gift-giving and family ties may be a factor in corrupt behaviour.

#### **Nature of bureaucratic corruption in Nigeria civil service**

Bureaucratic corruption is defined as "any sort of enticement or compensation offered and taken" in order to complete official work or assignments that should be done on a regular basis, or to circumvent official processes or bend rules and regulations for personal gain. As a result, bureaucratic corruption comprises a complex web of favors that are only given in exchange for further favors that are either predicted or expected. In essence, bureaucratic corruption is concerned with the ways and means by which all types of corruption have become entrenched in Nigerian institutions (Aluko and Adesopo, 2003). Bureaucratic corruption is tied to bureaucrats' activities. Historically, the term was used to describe the process of buying favor from government administrators who design and implement economic and political policies. The concept, on the other hand, goes beyond favor buying to include the violation of public duty by bureaucrats or public officials. According, Lawal and Tobi (2006) bureaucratic corruption could be explained by the type and character of the bureaucratic entity. They stressed that when bureaucracy outgrows its organizational structure, it becomes dehumanized and monolithic; as a result, corruption is more likely to evolve, persist, and spread due to an undefined structure, a lack of social values, the integration of selfish interests above and beyond those of the organization, and the absence of rules and procedures (Lawal and Tobi, 2006). Each succeeding administration or government in Nigeria has always accused the previous administration or regime of corruption, particularly during the numerous military Ogundiya regimes. Systemic corruption has been shown to skew incentives, erode institutions, and redistribute wealth and power to those who do not deserve it (Kayode, 2000). The pervasiveness of bureaucratic corruption has been explained in several ways. For instance, the Nigerian bureaucracies were accused of nepotism, ethnic loyalty, sectionalism, and, most crucially, corruption, according to the Udoji report of 1974. The investigation also found that the bureaucracy as a whole is not only crooked, but also results-

oriented. As a result, when the Murtala/Obasanjo administration assumed control in 1975, one of the first things it did was purge the government. Over ten thousand top-level bureaucrats were fired for reasons ranging from inefficiency, decreased productivity, intoxication, behavior not in the public interest, and, most crucially, corruption (Anise, 1986). Furthermore, it should be noted that when Nigeria got independence in 1960, the bureaucracy was spared the pain of corruption. In fact, when the first military coup occurred in 1966, the troops were particularly irritated by the extent of corruption perpetrated by the political elite, which may legitimately be called political corruption. It is claimed that the height of bureaucratic corruption occurred when public servants who were not raised in the traditions of political professionalism witnessed how politicians who had previously been nothing became wealthy overnight through patronages, gifts, bribes, and outright embezzlement of public funds. As a result, it was only a matter of time until bureaucrats joined politicians, and political corruption gave birth to bureaucratic corruption (Akpan, 2011)

Nigerians keep focusing on the politicians and other political office holders as the conduit pipe that drains government resources through corruption whereas the civil servants are enmeshed in bureaucratic corruption with a higher intensity (Akpan and Onya (2018). The abuse of the procurement and public contracting processes is pervasive in the country's government. Government contracts are frequently poorly handled or abandoned because public employees who are supposed to manage the deal become collaborators of the defaulting contractor after being rewarded. Those that award contracts after obtaining remuneration are unable to ensure that projects are carried out properly (Obaro, 2004).

### **Measurement of corruption in the civil service**

On the construct and measurement of corruption in Civil Service, several theoretical and empirical investigations have been reported (Navot, 2014; Rose-Ackerman, 2016; Treisman, 2007). The main challenge is frequently related to the phenomenon's "knowability," with each data generation strategy having its own set of strengths and drawbacks. Corruption is a covert transaction by nature, making it difficult to detect and quantify. Several organizations, including the World Bank, Transparency International (TI), and Price Waterhouse Coopers Foundation, have attempted to develop corruption indicators; however, all of them rely on aggregate surveys of citizens, businesses, or experts, and thus their findings are based on subjective perceptions rather than objective data. It is emphasized that quantifying corruption is riddled with methodological difficulties (for more on measurement issues see Kaufmann et al., 2006;

Sampford et al., 2006). Despite the widespread nature of the problem, calculating the amount of money wasted each year due to corruption is extremely difficult. While the major international financial institutions (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) are cautious of attempts to establish a baseline figure for "grand corruption" (funds stolen by government officials), a fascinating World Bank working paper published in February 2020 provided a glimpse behind the curtain, revealing that World Bank aid disbursements to the most

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aid-dependent countries coincided with significant increases in deposits held in offshore financial centers. The amount of missing foreign aid, "suggests a leakage rate of roughly 7.5% for the average highly aid-dependent country". Transparency International is a leader in assessing perceived levels of corruption across countries with its annual Corruption Perception Index (CPI). The CPI is based on thousands of surveys conducted each year on the perceived degree of corruption in governments, with an annual ranking and scoring system from zero ("highly corrupt") to 100 ("very clean"). Likewise, the World Bank's Control of Corruption Index (CCI) scores (number six within its set of Worldwide Governance Indicators) rank countries according to their perceived levels of corruption. Similar to the CPI, the CCI is based on thousands of surveys conducted each year on the perceived degree of corruption in governments, with an annual ranking and score system from 0 to 1, with higher values corresponding to better outcomes. Despite the subjective limitations of the survey method for ranking government performance, these indices are still considered the best available approximations of shifts in degrees of international corruption in the world from year to year.

### **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

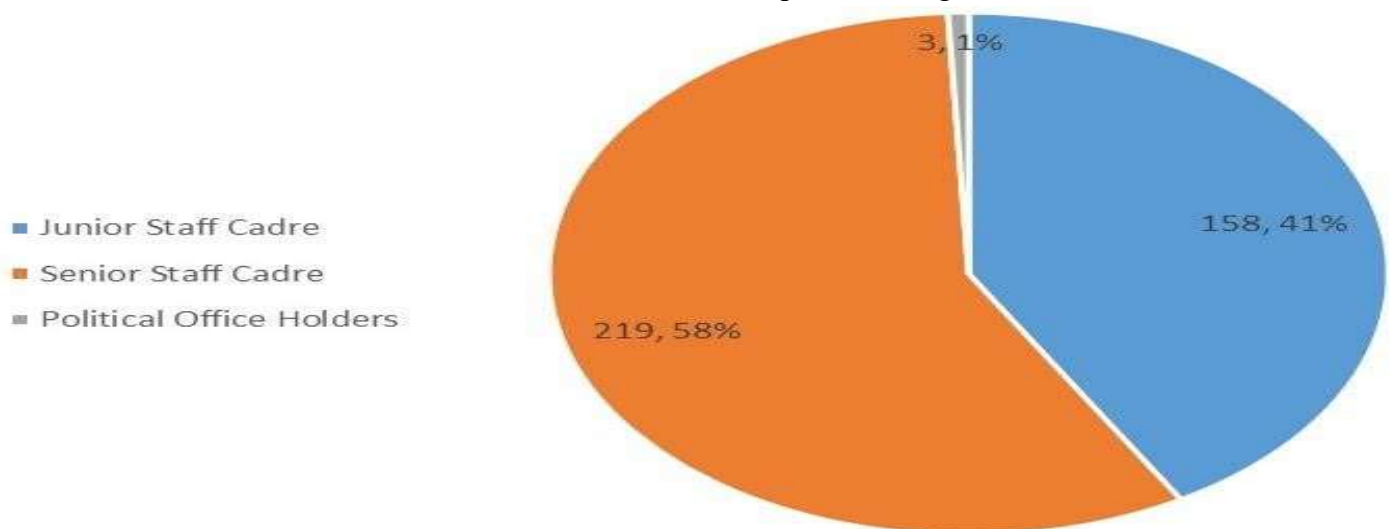
This is basically a quantitative study which aimed at examining the relationship between low wages and corruption. The study adopted the survey research design. Survey research design was considered most appropriate because the sample size for the study was large. The unit of analysis of this study is the civil servant. The population of this study consists of all the civil servants in Sokoto State totaling twenty-nine thousand five hundred and eighty-three (29,583) (Vanguard Newspaper, June 12 2020). The sample size for the study was three hundred and eighty (380). The sample size was determined using the online Raosoft sample size calculator which was set at a margin error of 5 and 95% confidence level. This cross-sectional study sampled three hundred and eighty (380) respondents from the three groups of employees: junior staff cadre, senior staff cadre and public or political office holders in Sokoto State ministries (Figure 1). A semi structured questionnaire was administered on the three hundred and eighty (380) respondents who were purposively selected from each of the staff cadre as shown on the **Table 1**.

The questionnaire which was the instrument for the data collection contained two sections the first section, which was the demographic section contained six items while the second section contained twelve items that were used to measure the rate corruption in the civil service. In all, there were eighteen (18) questions in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was self-administered on the respondents. It was administered with the aid of four research assistants. The data collected was analyzed using simple percentage, chi square and linear regression. These methods of data analysis were contained in Statistical Package for Social Science (version 22) which was used in this study.

### **RESULTS**

Out of all the three hundred and eighty questionnaires (380) that were administered, thirty-nine (39) were missing while forty-five (45) were not filled appropriately. Therefore, only Two hundred and ninety-six (296)

questionnaires were used for this analysis. Figure 2 revealed that majority (90.6%) of the respondents perceive the use of office facilities (such as paper, vehicles, etc.) to meet their urgent personal needs as corruption. Recruitment based on family ties, friendship networks, and party loyalty was perceived as corrupt by 86.5%, and waiving certain standard rules and procedures was perceived as corrupt by 82.2%. 75.0% indicated that lobbying to influence transfer and promotion is corruption. 67.7% indicated that taking tasks with financial gains more seriously than other tasks is corruption. 57.3% indicated that influencing their transfer due to marital status is corruption and 29.2% indicated that asking people for favor in order to speeding up their applications and requests is corruption. 21.9% indicated that they make friends with the police, road safety, PHCN, etc. to avoid being penalized for corruption. 20.8% come late to work due to family demand. 14.6% of respondents indicated that demanding money to facilitate an application is corrupt; 12.5% indicated that paying money to be recruited into the civil service is corrupt; and 10.4% indicated that asking colleagues to sign in for you if you are late or do not come to the office at all is corrupt. From these results, civil servants in Sokoto state feel the use of office facilities (such as paper, vehicles, etc.) to meet their urgent personal needs is corruption. The most commonly practiced corruption in the Sokoto State Civil Service was recruitment based on family ties, friendship networks, and party loyalty, waiver of certain standard rules and procedures, lobbying to influence transfer and promotion, taking tasks with financial gains more seriously than other tasks, and influencing their transfer due to marital status. This is because when placed on the 50% scale they were more than 50% meaning that they were high while other variable was less than 50% which means that their occurrence in the civil service was low. In all the result more than 50% indicates that the rate of corruption was high with 76.7%.



**Figure 1.** Percentage of civil servants of three cadre in Sokoto. Source: Field Survey, 2022.

**Table 1.** Proportionate sample table.

| Staff cadre              | Population         | Proportionate sample |        |     |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------|-----|
|                          | Junior staff cadre | 12,303               |        | 158 |
|                          | Senior staff cadre | 17,085               |        | 219 |
| Political office holders | 195                | 3 Total              | 29,583 | 380 |

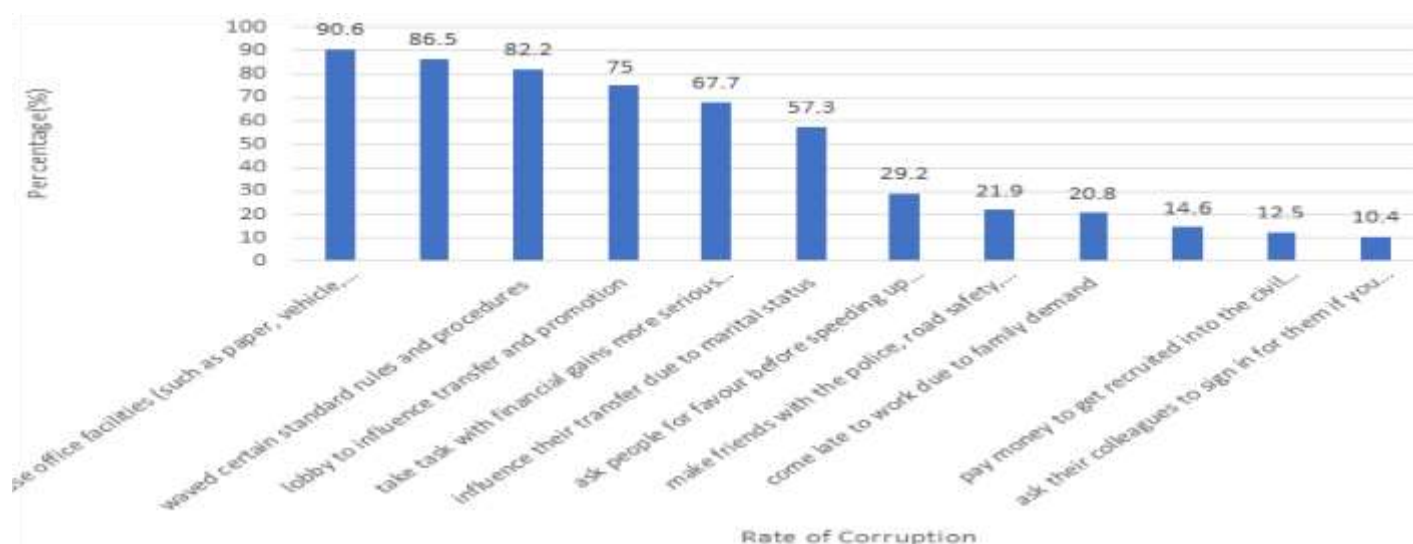
Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 2 shows the statistical relationship between the demographic variables of the respondents and the rate of corruption in the ministry. The table shows that corruption was low among 21.6% of the male civil servants, high among 48.3% of the male civil servants; corruption was low among 1.7% of the female civil servants and high among 28.4% of the female civil servants. There is statistically significant relationship between sex and rate of corruption using the chi-square test tool because the calculated value (X-Cal), which was 22.85, was more than the table value (X-tab), which was 3.841 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the sex of civil servants is associated with the rate of corruption in the Sokoto State Civil Service. This result shows that corruption among the civil servants is influenced by their sex. Male civil servants are more likely to be corrupt compared with female civil servants in Sokoto state. The table also showed that corruption was low among 3.0% and high among 15.9% of the civil servants that were between the ages of 18 and 27, corruption was low among 10.5% and high among 18.2% of the civil servants that were between the ages of 28 and 37, corruption was low among 3.0% and high among 22.6% of the civil servants that were between the ages of 38 and 47, corruption was low among 6.1% and high among 19.3% of the civil servants that were between the ages of 48 and 57, corruption was low among 0.7% and high among 0.7% of the civil servants that were between the ages of 58 and 65. There is statistically significant relationship between age and rate of corruption using the chi-square test tool because the calculated value (X-Cal), which was 17.082, was more than the table value (X-tab), which was 9.49 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the age of civil servants is associated with the rate of corruption in the Sokoto State Civil Service. This result shows that corruption among the civil servants is influenced by their age. Civil servants between the ages of 30 and 47 in Sokoto state are more likely to be corrupt compared with those in other age groups. The table also showed that corruption was low among 1.0% and high among 11.8% of the single civil servants, corruption was low among 22.0% and high among 62.5% of the married civil servants, corruption was high among 0.7% and 1.7% of the divorced and widowed civil servants. There is statistically significant relationship between marital status and rate of corruption using the chi-square test tool because the calculated value (X-Cal), which was 8.430, was more than the table value (X-tab), which was 7.81 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the marital status of civil servants is associated with the rate of corruption

in the Sokoto State Civil Service. This result shows that corruption among the civil servants is influenced by their marital status. Civil servants that are married in Sokoto state are more likely to be corrupt compared with those with other marital status. Also, corruption was low among 21.6% and high among 32.1% of the civil servants with a family size of between 1-5, corruption was low among 7.8% and high among 35.1% of the civil servants with a family size of between 6-12, corruption was high among 3.4 and 6.1% of the civil servants with family size between 11-15 and 16 and above respectively. There is statistically significant relationship between family size and rate of corruption using the chi-square test tool because the calculated value (X-Cal), which was 17.274, was more than the table value (X-tab), which was 7.81 at 0.05 level of significance.

Therefore, the family size of civil servants is associated with the rate of corruption in the Sokoto State Civil Service. This result shows that corruption among the civil servants is influenced by their family size. Civil servants with a family size of between 6 and 12 are more likely to be corrupt compared with others servants in Sokoto state. Table 3 shows that corruption was high among 1.0% of the civil servants with primary education, high among 4.4% of the civil servants with secondary

education, corruption was low among 21.3% and high among 67.9% of the civil servants with tertiary education, corruption was low among 2.0% and high among 3.4% of the civil servants with other educational attainment. This result shows that corruption among the civil servants is influenced by their educational attainment. Civil servants with tertiary education attainment are more likely to be corrupt compared with others servants in Sokoto state. Also,  $\rho = 0.146$  shows that there is statistically significant relationship between education attainment and rate of corruption using the rho test tool. The result means that the relationship between the two variables is weak and the direction of the relationship is positive. Also, that corruption was high among 10.5% of the civil servants that earn less than N32,222, corruption was low among 9.5% and high among 26.7% of the civil servants that earn N32,223 - N62,222, corruption was low among 3.0% and high among 23.6% of the civil servants that earn N62,223 - N92,222, corruption was low among 10.8% and high among 15.9% of the civil servants that earn from N92,223 and above. This result shows that corruption among the civil servants is influenced by their income per month. Civil servants that earn between N32,223 - N62,222 are more likely to be corrupt compared with others civil servants in Sokoto state. Also,  $\rho = -.192^{**}$  shows that there is statistically significant relationship between income per month and rate of corruption using the rho test tool. The result means that the relationship between the two variables is weak and the direction of the relationship is negative.



**Figure 2.** Rate of corruption in Sokoto civil service. Source: Field Survey, 2022.

**Table 2.** Demographic variables and corruption rating.

| Sex        | Rate of corruption |           |            | df | X-Cal  | X-Tab | Sig   |
|------------|--------------------|-----------|------------|----|--------|-------|-------|
|            | High (%)           | Total (%) |            |    |        |       |       |
| (%)        |                    |           |            |    |        |       |       |
| Male       | 64(21.6)           | 143(48.3) | 207(69.9)  | 1  | 22.285 | 3.84  | 0.000 |
| Female     | 5(1.7)             | 84(28.4)  | 89(30.1)   |    |        |       |       |
| Total      | 69(23.3)           | 227(76.7) | 296(100.0) |    |        |       |       |
| <b>Age</b> |                    |           |            |    |        |       |       |
| 18-27      | 9(3.0)             | 47(15.9)  | 56(18.9)   | 4  | 17.082 | 9.49  | 0.002 |
| 28-37      | 31(10.5)           | 54(18.2)  | 85(28.7)   |    |        |       |       |
| 38-47      | 9(3.0)             | 67(22.6)  | 76(25.7)   |    |        |       |       |
| 48-57      | 18(6.1)            | 57(19.3)  | 75(25.3)   |    |        |       |       |
| 58-65      | 2(0.7)             | 2(0.7)    | 4(1.4)     |    |        |       |       |
| Total      | 69(23.3)           | 227(76.7) | 296(100.0) |    |        |       |       |

### Marital status

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|         |          |           |            |   |       |      |       |
|---------|----------|-----------|------------|---|-------|------|-------|
| Single  | 3(1.0)   | 35(11.8)  | 38(12.8)   |   |       |      |       |
| Married | 66(22.3) | 185(62.5) | 251(84.8)  | 3 | 8.430 | 7.81 | 0.038 |
| Divorce | 0(0.0)   | 2(0.7)    | 2(0.7)     |   |       |      |       |
| Widow   | 0(0.0)   | 5(1.7)    | 5(1.7)     |   |       |      |       |
| Total   | 69(23.3) | 227(76.7) | 296(100.0) |   |       |      |       |

#### Family size

|              |          |           |            |   |        |      |       |
|--------------|----------|-----------|------------|---|--------|------|-------|
| 1-5          | 46(15.5) | 95(32.1)  | 141(47.6)  |   |        |      |       |
| 6-12         | 23(7.8)  | 104(35.1) | 127(42.9)  | 3 | 17.274 | 7.81 | 0.001 |
| 11-15        | 0(0.0)   | 10(3.4)   | 10(3.4)    |   |        |      |       |
| 16 and above | 0(0.0)   | 18(6.1)   | 18(6.1)    |   |        |      |       |
| Total        | 69(23.3) | 227(76.7) | 296(100.0) |   |        |      |       |

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

**Table 3.** Demographic variables and corruption rating.

#### Educational attainment

|                     | Rate of corruption |           |            | rho    | Sig   |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------|--------|-------|
|                     | Low (%)            | High (%)  | Total (%)  |        |       |
| primary education   | 0(0.0)             | 3(1.0)    | 3(1.0)     |        |       |
| secondary education | 0(0.0)             | 13(4.4)   | 13(4.4)    |        |       |
| tertiary education  | 63(21.3)           | 201(67.9) | 264(89.2)  | 0.146* | 0.012 |
| other specify       | 6(2.0)             | 10(3.4)   | 16(5.4)    |        |       |
| Total               | 69(23.3)           | 227(76.7) | 296(100.0) |        |       |

#### Income per month

|                   |          |           |            |          |       |
|-------------------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|-------|
| less than ₦32,222 | 0(0.0)   | 31(10.5)  | 31(10.5)   |          |       |
| ₦32,223 - ₦62,222 | 28(9.5)  | 79(26.7)  | 107(36.1)  | -0.192** | 0.001 |
| ₦62,223 - ₦92,222 | 9(3.0)   | 70(23.6)  | 79(26.7)   |          |       |
| ₦92,223 and above | 32(10.8) | 47(15.9)  | 79(26.7)   |          |       |
| Total             | 69(23.3) | 227(76.7) | 296(100.0) |          |       |

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

#### Hypothesis one

$H_0$ : Income per month does not have a negative effect on corruption

$H_1$ : Income per month has a negative effect on corruption

Table 4 shows the simple correlation between income per month and rate of corruption (rho) of -0.204<sup>a</sup>. The simple correlation result shows that the strength of the relationship between the two variables is weak and the direction of their relationship is negative. An adjusted R square of 0.031 in the result means that 3.1% of the negative change in the rate of corruption in Sokoto State Civil service was accounted for by the increase in income per month. Table 5 shows that the effect of the independent variable (income per month) on the dependent variable (rate of corruption) was significant at  $F = (1, 294) = 12.800$ ;  $p < 0.05$ , which also means that our regression model effectively predicted the outcome. Table 6 reveals the contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable, which is expressed in Beta weights and t-test. Income per month ( $B = -0.472$ ,  $t = -3.578(296)$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) negatively affects the rate of corruption. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected which state that income per month does not have a negative effect on corruption while the alternative hypothesis is accepted which state that income per month has a negative effect on corruption.

**Table 4.** Model summary.

| <b>Model</b> | <b>R</b>            | <b>R Square</b> | <b>Adjusted R Square</b> | <b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b> |
|--------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1            | -0.204 <sup>a</sup> | 0.042           | 0.038                    | 0.960                             |

a. Predictors: (Constant), rate of corruption

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

**Table 5.** ANOVA<sup>a</sup>.

| <b>Model</b> |            | <b>Sum of squares</b> | <b>Df</b> | <b>Mean square</b> | <b>F</b> | <b>Sig.</b>        |
|--------------|------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|--------------------|
| 1            | Regression | 11.792                | 1 294     | 11.792             | 12.800   | 0.000 <sup>b</sup> |
|              | Residual   | 270.843               |           | 0.921              |          |                    |
|              | Total      | 282.635               | 295       |                    |          |                    |

a. Dependent Variable: rate of corruption

b. Predictors: (Constant), Income per month

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

**Table 6.** Coefficients<sup>a</sup>.

| Model                                     | Unstandardized coefficients |            | Standardized coefficients | t      | Sig.  |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
|                                           | B                           | Std. error | Beta                      |        |       |
| (Constant)                                | 3.530                       | 0.240      |                           | 14.726 | 0.000 |
| 1                                         | -0.472                      | 0.132      | -0.204                    | 3.578  | 0.000 |
| Income per month                          |                             |            |                           |        |       |
| a. Dependent Variable: rate of corruption |                             |            |                           |        |       |

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

## DISCUSSION

The study found that using office facilities such as paper, vehicles, etc. to meet urgent personal needs is corruption and this is the most common form of corruption in the Sokoto State Civil Service. This is a betrayal of the office's trust and, according to Hallak and Poisson (2007), is regarded as corruption. This finding is contrary to many studies that have identified bribery and salary fraud as the most common types of corruption in the civil service. For example, Dominik and Christina (2017) maintained that salaries of public officials may also be a factor to consider while analyzing the reasons of corruption. While others argued that variation of the efficiency-wage theory claims that higher public-sector wages deter corruption because of the high personal costs of arrest and expulsion from government employment or administration (Kligaard, 1997; Mookherjee, 1995; van Rijckeghem and Weder, 2001). Higher public-sector wages have also been recommended as a way to combat corruption by attracting more honest people to work for the government (Bond 2008). This form of corruption, which is prevalent in the Sokoto state civil service, is described by Johnston (2005) as "Grand Corruption." According to Hellman et al. (2000), this form of corruption is often an instrument for personal gain, which can lead to terribly distorted policies, thereby rendering them ineffective. This study found that corruption among civil servants is influenced by their sex.

In Sokoto state, male civil servants are more likely to be corrupt compared with female civil servants. This finding is supported by the findings of Šumah (2018) that women are less susceptible to corruption than men. The study also found that corruption among civil servants is influenced by their age and that civil servants between the ages of 30 and 47 in Sokoto state are more likely to be corrupt compared with those in other age groups. The study found that corruption among civil servants is influenced by their marital status and that married civil servants in Sokoto state are more likely to be corrupt compared with those with other marital statuses. Also, the study found that corruption among civil servants is influenced by their family size. Civil

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servants with a family size of between 6 and 12 are more likely to be corrupt compared with other civil servants in Sokoto state. The study found that corruption among civil servants is influenced by their educational attainment and that most civil servants with tertiary education are more likely to be corrupt. The study found that corruption among civil servants is influenced by their income per month and that civil servants that earn between ₦32,223 - ₦62,222 are more likely to be corrupt compared with others. This is corroborated Dominik and Christina (2017) Salaries of public officials may also be a factor to consider while analyzing the reasons for corruption.

The study found that there is a statistically significant relationship between income per month and the rate of corruption, and that the higher the income, the lower the level of corruption in the state ministries. This finding is in line with the variation of the efficiency-wage theory that claims that higher public-sector wages deter corruption (van Rijckeghem and Weder, 2001) in the same way Becker and Stigler's (1974) model supports the findings that greater incomes are associated with less corruption due to the consequences of wrongdoing. The value of many people lies in getting rich and driving exotic cars, which may be one of the reasons why many of them prefer to use the office car for personal use. Hence, if the value of the members of society or even civil servants is money and is given more priority than honesty and accountability, then corruption will be on the increase. However, if the salaries are substantially reviewed and increased to be on par with their counterparts in other countries of the world, the rate of corruption will be reduced.

### **Conclusion**

Based on these findings, as discussed in the previous section, the study concludes that low wages have a strong negative effect on the level of corruption that is perpetrated in the Sokoto state civil service because it was discovered that those civil servants at the bottom of the salary scale are the most corrupt, and that the rate of corruption falls as they rise up the ladder, which means that the lower the wages, the higher the level of corruption and vice versa. This is so because the salary is not sufficient to cater for their large family sizes.

### **Recommendations**

Since civil servants often engage in corruption by using office facilities (such as paper, vehicles, etc.) to meet their urgent personal needs, it is important to set up a system that will ensure accountability. It is against this background that the ministry needs to install CCTV cameras within and outside the offices and its premises to ensure that all activities of the civil servants are covered, captured, monitored and reported to an ethics committee that will be set up by the government independent of the ministry so that the civil servants will not be able to influence them and their decisions. Also, trackers should be put on some of the office equipment and even vehicles in just the same way many private organizations do so that there can be restrictions. Since the ministries are dominated by males, who are the main perpetrators of corruption in the civil service, the government therefore needs to strive to achieve gender balance by giving more preference to women during

recruitment. In their surveillance, the ethics committee that is set up by the government needs to focus more on civil servants between the ages of 30 and 47 years old since civil servants within these age groups tend to be more corrupt due to the financial demands and responsibilities that set in at this stage of their lives. Since there are religious and ethnic grounds that permit marrying up to two wives, the state civil service needs to set a standard for the maximum and minimum numbers of wives that a civil servant at a certain level must have since it has been established that their marital status also influences them to perpetrate corruption. Political leaders should implement effective anticorruption strategies that include providing adequate salaries for civil servants, cutting red tape and unnecessary regulation, monitoring civil servants in vulnerable positions, and increasing the likelihood of detecting and punishing corrupt individuals. In the same vein, the civil service needs to review its rules of engagement and stipulate the maximum facility that a civil servant should have. Given the country's current economic hardship and inflation rate, this would go a long way toward preventing them from having large families that their salaries cannot effectively support, leading them to perpetuate corruption. Also, since the income that the civil servants are paid is commensurate with their educational status, and those civil servants that are less paid are the most corrupt, the state ministries need to review the salary scale of the civil servants upward given the current level of inflation and the current economic downturn so that those who earn low may earn almost the same thing as their counterparts in other countries.

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**CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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