

Public Sector Corruption and Local Government Administration in Rivers State Local Government Service Commission, 2009 – 2019

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Abstract

Corruption in the public sector has become the key factor eroding good governance and developmental aspirations of many countries of Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. This paper examined the effect of public sector corruption on local government administration in the Rivers State Local Government Service Commission (RSLGSC), between 2009 – 2019. The paper adopted the structural-functionalist theory as its analytical framework and relied on data generated via a four (4) Point Likert Scale Structured Questionnaire. 170 respondents representing the sample size of the paper was derived from a population of 295 staff of the RSLGSC using the Taro Yamane formula. The paper employed a survey research approach. Generated quantitative data was analyzed using tables and simple percentage and statistical method, while the proposition was tested using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 21.0 data output). The paper reveals that there is a nexus between public sector corruption and poor local government administration and that these have hampered greatly the performance of most local government in Rivers State. Also, the paper revealed that the prevalent executive and administrative rascality, looting of public funds and other corrupt practices that pervade the RSLGSC is responsible for irregular staff promotion and unmerited staff recruitment going in the commission. As such, the paper recommends amongst others that; the commission as a governmental structure should be proactive and exercise the needed political will that is required to formulate and implement internal administrative policies and procedures that will reduce fraud and illegal practices.

Keywords: Administration, Local Government, Public Sector, Service Commission

Introduction

The socio-economic and technological development of any institution or nation is impeded by corrupt tendencies of those entrusted with certain responsibilities of trust to administer or manage the affairs of such institution or nation. According to Idakwoji and Stephen (2003) corruption is the bane, a clog in the wheel of progress of any nation. The implication is that corruption is responsible for the challenges bedeviling good governance and rapid development in Nigeria. The country has not been able to implement sustainable policies that would engender good governance and facilitate the development and success of democratic process due to the prevalent existence of corruption at the different levels of government and its institutions (Gbogbo, 2011).

Corruption has tremendously affected the lives and provoked animosity amongst Nigerians. It has eaten so deep into the fabrics of the Nigerian government, the public and private sectors, governmental and non-governmental organizations and has essentially become a way of life and an important source private accumulation of property in Nigeria (Mustapha 2008). Ayoola (2003) infers that corruption denies the ordinary citizen the basic means of livelihood, it worsen unemployment and erodes our image as a nation and as individual. It has undermined Nigeria's economic growth and development potential, with a per capital income of \$340. According to Mustapha (2008) Nigeria now ranks amongst the least developed countries in the World Bank League table. He points out that its higher education system once regarded as the best in Sub-Saharan Africa is in deep crisis. Health services are woefully inadequate, graduate unemployment is rising and so too is crime rate.

Corruption has been a significant factor leading to the general failure of local governments. Corrupt practices have been deleterious not only because they divert funds from public purposes to private purses but also they undermine the vitality of the local government's administration.

Public sector corruption is prevalent in all government institutions particularly in Africa. The world-class Institution (2012) notes that the problem of public sector corruption goes beyond bribes and graft and affects virtually all sectors of public institutions such as health, education, and agriculture. It contended that public servants in many African countries are failing to deliver governmental goods and services to the people they are aimed at. It stressed that the problem is widespread across Africa and affects the poor or the local people, mostly because they rely on government services.

Oyeneye, Onyenwenu and Olosunde (2005) revealed that the roles of public/civil servants in modern public organizations which involve formulation of policies, drafting of bills, advice to ministers/commissioners, implementation of government policies, preparation of annual estimates and budget, keeping of government property and records, collection of revenue, quasi-judicial functions, public enlightenment, etc have been compromised by bureaucrats leaving the masses in an introverted state. They aver that the effective performance of the local government is undermined by public sector corruption involving the officials of the system. The scholars further stress that much money that should accrue to local governments is lost to personal purses through the use of fake receipts, and through apathy in the collection of rates. The efficiency and

effectiveness of local government services are pushed to the background due to tribalism, nepotism and favouritism in appointment, promotion, discipline and transfer of local government staff inherent in public sector corruption.

Nsiegbe (2020) opines that public sector corruption emanates in government agencies and its associated institutions which include but not limited to an act of dishonesty, especially using bribery or an immoral or wicked act. He essentially, views corruption as a moral derailment; it is the misuse of public resources or power for private gain. Tax audit and collection, health facilities inspection, waste management and sanitary standards, construction of drainages, building of markets, etc are areas listed for public sector corruption in local government administration. In undertaking those activities, bureaucrats either issue certificates of inspection or give a notice of closure of the facility or could caution the management of a facility. With such discretionary power and in return for bribes, bureaucrats can collude with private sector players to arm-twist or circumvent procedures which could result in undeclared taxes or health, safety and environmental standards being hardly met by the facilities owners or operators.

Public sector corruption affects virtually all aspects of individual lives, the state and the county's international reputations. The masses rely on government policies to drive development and prosperity. However, when the public policies are formulated or negotiated on the grounds of nepotism and favouritism, it, unfortunately drive hunger, deprivation, and poverty. The individual mind-set is deteriorated, poisoned and inundated with all forms of social vices or crimes that could truncate peace and portray the government in bad light.

The rivers state local government service commission like other public entities in Nigeria appears to have fallen to the menace of corruption. However, the country appears to have put instruments in place to get rid of corruption through the establishment of administrative control measures such as disciplinary committees, personnel departments and servicom by most public institutions to investigate issues of internal mismanagement of funds, disciplinary infractions which generally transcend to widespread corruption. The essence of these departments and committees is to ensure that the system renders efficient, effective, corrupt-free and quality service delivery to all those who desire the services, in order to reduce corruption and pave way for sustainable policies that tend to alleviate poverty, enhance socio-economic development, social justice and foster efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery in the state's local government administration. Despite all these, corruption still appear to exist in the commission and this have implications for service delivery and development of the grassroots.

As such, a single proposition is raised as a guide: There is no significant effect of public sector corruption on local government administration in the Rivers State Local Government Service Commission.

The paper is segmented into five interrelated parts. The first part being the introduction which we just concluded. The second part captures the analytical framework of the paper and brief discourse of some relevant concepts of the paper. The third part explains in concise, the method which the paper adopted in generating and analyzing data while the fourth part is data

presentation, analysis and discussion of findings. The fifth part and of course the final part of the paper aside the references is the conclusion/recommendations of the paper.

Analytical Framework

The structural-functionalist theory or the functionalist approach is a derivative of the system analysis, which is a means of explaining what governmental structure performs what basic function in a given political system; and also serves as a tool of analysis. According to Cancian (1965) cited in Johari (2008) and Merton (1968), the functionalist approach makes particular references to political systems and the relation between structures and functions and have been applied in great variety of approaches due to its appeal in identifying distinct structures and their functionality in a system. By its ability in relating one part of a society or social system to another part or to some aspects of the whole, it seeks to identify and analyze the structures which constitute the political system and perform several functions both internally and vis-a-vis other societies.

The concept of ‘structures’ refers to the arrangements within the system which perform basic functions. A single function maybe fulfilled by a complex combination of structures, just as any given structural-arrangement may perform functions which might have different kinds of consequence for the structure. For instance, the Rivers State Local Government Services Commission is a structure within the Rivers State governmental system and performs many functions, including recruitment of staffs and periodic examination and promotion of staff in addition to the role of supporting local governments in their developmental agendas.

The concept of ‘function’ on its own deals with the consequences involving objectives as well as processes of the pattern of actions. Merton (1968), explains that; functions are those observed consequences which makes for the adaptation or readjustment of a given system and dys-functions are those observed consequences which lessen the adaptation or adjustment of the system. For Parsons, what is paramountly necessary is that a state of *equilibrium*, in the system should be maintained on the basis of the fulfilment of the functional needs of the society relating to four problems – allocation of resources, defining and sustaining the pursuit of certain fundamental goals, maintenance of solidarity, and sustaining the motivation of the actors and of repairing any damage to those arising out of the performance of roles.

The structural-functionalist theory offers the systematically and logically analysis of how the Rivers State local government commission as a structure within the governmental system of the state performs specific functions for the maintenance of the government system of the state via regulating and recruitment of staffs for all the LGAs in the state. Because, the functionalist approach views the RSLGSC as constituting a part (sub-system) of the state’s governmental system which has some functions to perform and contribute to the maintenance of the whole system such functions include, bequeathing a transparent, and accountable staff recruitment exercise for the local government, conducting a transparent local government staff promotion exercise, coordinating other local government development agendas, etc.

In the course of performing these roles however, some intended or unintended, recognized or unrecognized, clear or unclear aspects of the rules or regulations expectedly guiding their

engagements maybe manifest and this may enhance or lessen adaptation or lead to adjustment of the system, but it should not constitute obvious acts of corruption and or corrupt practices.

Conceptual Review

Public Sector

According to Eboh (1999), public sector connotes the whole gamut of institutions, departments, organizations and agencies which are owned substantially in part or in whole by any of the tiers of government (or a combination thereof) and which exists to serve the interest of the public.

The public sector according to Ugben (2005) is seen as the pivot or vehicle used by the government to promote socio-economic development. The basic function of the public sector, which comprises institutions for making decisions regarding interests of various kinds, was to provide goods and services to citizens based on 'realization and representation of public interests and its possession of unique public qualities compared to business management.

Betchoo (2016) opines that the public sector covers upstream core ministries and central agencies, downstream bodies include both sector ministries, and non-executive state institutions. Upstream bodies involve core ministries and agencies at the government's centre, which have functions that cut across sectors. He notes that downstream bodies include both sector ministries and agencies, as well as education and health providers which deliver and fund services under the State's policy direction. They also include a diverse group of more autonomous bodies such as regulators and state-owned enterprises and corporate bodies which, in many countries, still provide the majority of infrastructure services despite extensive privatisation. Non-executive state institutions include judiciaries, legislatures and institutions such as supreme audit institutions.

Public Sector management covers such aspects of management as productivity management, and management of human, financial and other resources. It involves an array of activities ranging from planning, formulation and implementation of policies, programmes and projects for the delivery of goods and services to the nation through a number of government and quasi-government institutional arrangements. Consequently, it is imperative that the structures, policies and operations of the Public Sector respond adequately to the socio-economic needs of the nation, as articulated in the Vision 2016, and to global challenges. This implies that the quality of the Public Sector management is essential to the fulfilment of the theme of the National Development

Public Sector Corruption

As the name implies, the term connotes corruption in government establishments. It can be conceived in two perspectives, namely, political/bureaucratic and economic corruption.

Public sector corruption can be therefore defined in the above context, (under the Fourth Republic), include the inflation of contracts in return for huge kick-backs, which has also grown in its proportion, fraud and falsifications of accounts and official records in the public service,

forgery or falsifications of vital documents (including educational qualifications, to gain important offices), especially by aspiring politicians and public servants, the ghost worker syndrome, examination malpractices in educational institutions, bribery, extortion and perversion of justices, especially among the police and judiciary, and of course, the various crimes against the state in the private sector, sometimes by multinational firms operating in the country, in such areas as tax evasion, over-invoicing of goods, foreign exchange swindling, hoarding and smuggling. Others are frauds in the banking and finance sector, and of course the illegal acquisition of public assets, such as landed property and a frightening degree of electoral fraud.

Political corruption: Political corruption takes place at the highest levels of political authority. It occurs when the politicians and political decision makers, who are entitled to formulate, establish and implement the laws in the name of the people, are themselves corrupt. It also takes place when policy formulations and legislation is tailored to benefit politicians and legislators. Political corruption is not a recent phenomenon that pervades the Nigerian State: since the creation of modern public administration in the country, there have been cases of official misuse of resources for personal enrichment. The rise of public administration and the discovery of oil are two major events seen to have led to a litany of sordid corrupt practices in the country. Over the years, the country has seen its wealth withered with little to show in improvement of the living condition of the common man. This is the use of legislative powers by government officials for illegitimate private gain. From the political point of view, the perpetrators are political office holders, bureaucrats, public servants, the press and the general public. These have stigmatized the image of the government, weaken its credibility and reduced the effectiveness of the development programmes and policies; and also to a great extent, weaken the economy of the nation (Aransi, 2008). Egobueze (2021) notes that it is a manipulation of policies, institutions and rules of procedure in the allocation of resources and financing by political decision makers, who abuse their power, status and wealth. Ugben and Egobueze (2021) opined that political corruption originates from political administrators and party affiliates and, then transcends to the public service. It occurs when an officeholder or other governmental employees act in an official capacity for personal advantage. Some of the bureaucrats became political actors thereby violating the civil service principle of apolitical and anonymity. The civil service has become a political vehicle for over-inflation of contract, overblown budget, and embezzlement for politicians.

According to Ojiaku (2014) institutional or civil service corruption is an aspect of political corruption that has economic impact. It involves bribery, extortion, embezzlement, abuse of office, conflict of interest, fraud, staff trading, theft, procurement scam/ bid rigging, intentional withholding of appointment and faulty recruitments, acute lateness to work and early close, incessant absenteeism and malingering, inappropriate disciplinary action, amorous affairs to gain undue advantage, salary fraud, ghost workers scam, misuse of resources, moonlighting, over-estimation, short-payment and irregularities in pension and gratuity to pensioners, divulging official information, stuffed up payroll, diversion and misappropriation of funds through manipulation or falsification of financial records, etc

The United Nations Global Programme against Corruption (GPAC) in Ijewereme (2015) defines political corruption as the “abuse of power for private gain.” In a similar vein, Transparency

International (TI) also put forward a lucid definition of the concept as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.” Waziri views corruption as a pervasion or a change from the generally accepted law or rules for personal benefit. Although political corruption is perceived differently from one territory and geographical location to another, the following behaviours are regarded as forms of political corruption in Nigeria: acceptance of gratification; succumbing to inducement and undue influence; embezzlement; conflict of interests, for example, nepotism and tribalism in recruitment/appointment, promotion; kickback on contract; rigging of elections; misappropriation and conversion of public funds for personal gains; procurement scam; payment for favourable judicial decisions, and so on.

Economic corruption: This is ravaging the Nigeria economy and could be noticed in financial institutions such as banks, the insurance companies and the stock brokers (Aransi, 2008). It is a world- wide phenomenon which has been with societies throughout the history. It has caused political and economic instability in societies and depending on the scale, it has led to social conflict and violence, as competing groups vie for state power which is the source of distribution of resources and other amenities in society (Odunuga 2000).

Ugben and Egobueze (2021) stated that economic corruption is a form of corrupt practices inherent in the bureaucratic establishment in the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) which can be dangerous to the effective running of the public service. Civil servants are critically found at the expense of this category of public sector corruption. It is therefore right to state that political corruption has severe economic implication in the society. Political corruption which mostly emanates from election rigging and voters register manipulation result in bad leadership representatives, and unfavourable policies with dwindling economic effects of possible favouritism in the award of contract, procurement scam, tribalism and nepotism in recruitment and promotion, unfair punishment/sanctions for public officials.

Going by the above, it can be rightly deduced that the term is connected with unethical behavioural attitude exhibited by public officials to deliberately circumvent establish procedural processes for selfish or parochial purposes. Broadly speaking, corruption is wide-spread but essentially aimed to maximise private economic gains

Local Government

Studies have revealed that no country or state can effectively and efficiently administer its entire land mass/people from the center alone. Consequently, there is decentralization of governmental powers from the center to a sub-level of government referred to as local government. In the light of the above, Barber (1978) cited in Bagayi, (2002) has pointed out that some degree of local government characterizes every state in the world, and the significant point is not the mere existence of local government but the degree of such local powers.

To Barber, therefore, local government connotes “a sub- level of government smaller than that of the state or central government which has and enjoys some degree of autonomy to determine and to execute matters within a restricted areas”. In line with the above, Olisa et al, (1990:93) cited in Ezeani (2004:25) defined local government as “a unit of government below the central, regional or state government established by law to exercise political authority, through a representative

council within defined area”. As a concept and one of the subordinate units in federal political system arrangement, it has attracted definitions of various scholars. Therefore, there is not unanimous agreement between these scholars on the definition of local government.

However, the United Nations Office for Public Administration quoted in Ola and Tonwe (2009) defines local government as thus:

A political subdivision of a nation or (in a federal system) state, which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs, including the powers to impose taxes or to exact labour for prescribed purposes. The governing body of such as entity is elected or otherwise locally selected.

Along this dimension, the International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences cited in Ijewereme (2015) defines it as:

A political subdivision of a Nation or Regional Government which performs functions which in nearly all cases receives its legal power from national or regional government but possesses some degree of discretion on the making of decisions and which normally has some taxing power (p.7).

The Guidelines for Local Government Reform of (1976) in Idakwoji and Stephen (2003) defines local government as:

Government at the local level exercise through representative council established by law to exercise specific powers within defined area. These powers should give the council substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff and institutional and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and determine activities of state and federal; government in their areas, and the ensure, through devolution of functions to these councils and through the active participation of the people and their traditional institutions, that local initiative and response to local needs and conditions are maximized (p.1).

Furthermore, the definition of local government as contained in the “Guidelines for a Reform of Local Government in Nigeria (1976:1) cited in Bagaji, (2002:93) aptly captures the essential characteristics of local government when it states that local government is government at the local level exercise through representative council, established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas. These powers should give the councils substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff, institutional and financial power to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects so as to complement the activities of the State and Federal Government in their area and to ensure, through active participation of the people and their traditional institutions, that local initiative and response to local needs and conditions are maximized.

Public Sector Corruption and Local Government Administration in Nigeria

According to Obasanjo in Akanbi (2005), corruption is the greatest bane of our society today and will be tackled head on. No society can achieve anything near its full potential if it allows corruption to become the full blown cancer it has become". The above statement illustrates the state of pervasion, rot or decay within the Nigerian state arising from widespread of corruption. Along this line, Familoni (2005) depicts that becoming corrupt in Nigeria is almost unavoidable as morality is lax, because to survive people have to make money.

Corruption has thrived, progressed and flourished unabated. It has been institutionalized to the point of accepting it as part of our system. Albeit corruption is ubiquitous, it is found all over the world, but the degree of its manifestation varies from system to system (Lawal and Oladunjoye, 2010). He opines that corruption in Nigeria is endemic and anomic, somewhat systemic.

In terms of dimensions, corruption is moral-cum-ethical on the one hand, and structural on the other. Its explanation and attempts to find solution must address these two sources. It manifests as political, economic, bureaucratic, judicial and even moral corruption. For example, when an official, as a result of undue bribe or promise in any of these spheres, abuses his or other person's office by putting aside due process and compromising fairness and equity in distribution of scarce resources within his jurisdiction or authority to allocate, this is corruption. In Nigeria, ethnicity (nepotism) lust for power, poverty and personal monetary gains are also major factors in corruption in public office".

Onwuemeyi (2008) states that corruption is the greatest bane of local government administration in Nigeria. At the grassroots level, corruption has been canonically accommodated, entertained, and celebrated within the system. In the local government setting corruption is misnomerly labeled and euphemistically referred to as "Egunje" (a slogan which means "illegal offer" in Nigeria). He noted that it has been identified as one of the problems confronting effective local government administration in Nigeria, also non-adherence to provisions of the Financial Memorandum (FM), conspicuous consumption of the part of the local officials, lifestyles that are not commensurate with official sources of income, imposition of leaders on the local government through corrupted political process and low wages of local government officials.

According to Onwuemeyi, waste of government resources at the council level had reached monumental proportions. The local government council in the country could not explain the mismanagement of over N3.313 trillion allocated to them in the last eight years. A whopping sum of N3,313,554,856,541.79 was allocated to local government across the country. Unfortunately, local government officials have not left their hand unsoiled in this regard. The paralysis (corruption) that pervades local governments today is widespread. Local government, have become so far removed from the lives of the people to a point where some Chief Executives of local council no longer reside in the domains they were elected to administer. They drive to the council headquarters in their jeeps from the state capitals or the Federal Capital Territory, pay salaries and share other monies and disappear until it is time to share the next subvention".

Waziri emphasizes that the disconnection between the government and the grassroots was happening at a time huge volumes of public funds were allocated to local government councils. According to her, the old argument that services cannot be delivered to the grassroots because of shortage of funds does not hold water anymore, in the face of so much subvention from centre (Onwuemenyi, 2008).

However, Omoigui-Okavio in Onwuemenyi, (2008) observed that the high rate of corruption at local government level is as a result of overdependence on oil revenue, with its attendant laxity on the part of the three tiers of government to explore other sources of revenue. Revenue generations and its effective management are critically important for the survival of local government councils. Local government administration has abused the weak tax regulatory system for personal gains, a situation which had complicated the tax system and led to cases of multiple taxation in the economy. He condemned some local government officials for instituting personal and unofficial revenue generation machinery thereby encouraging multiple taxation and placing heavy burden on tax payer, she noted that, many local chairmen generate personal taxes for personal gain using the so called levy collectors who themselves have multiple receipts.

Arowolo (2008) opined that, hard earned and limited resources accrued to and raised by local government are always mismanaged. Priorities are misplaced; projects are done not according to or as demanded by the people but regrettable in tune with the selfish end and aggrandizement of the political leadership in collaboration with senior bureaucrats at the local government level of administration.

Generally, wide-scale embezzlement by officials of the grassroots has made the needed development of grassroots a tall dream and has rendered them financially incapable to discharge their constitutionally assigned responsibility (Arowolo, 2008).

Corruption has remained an issue militating against local governments' performance. Oviasuyi, Idada, and Isiraojie (2010) in this regard observed that "as in all levels of government in Nigeria, corruption is predominately widespread, undiluted and unambiguous in the local government". It is a statement of fact that in the local government system, corruption has become all pervading, unabashed, uncontrolled and persistent. This perhaps explains the inefficiency and ineffectiveness in local government administration in Nigeria. The scholars claimed that the system has virtually become superfluous and redundant. They further state some of the areas where corruption thrives in local government to include the following:

- a. Inflation of prices of bought items;
- b. Over estimation of cost of projects;
- c. The ghost worker syndrome;
- d. Award of contracts and subsequent abandonment; and
- e. Outright payment of huge sums of money to political godfathers.

Method

The Survey Research Design is adopted for this work. This is because it allows thoroughness to collate and analyse data from a sample or group in which their responses are used for the purpose of generalization.

The Commission has a total population of 295 staffers (commission nominal roll, 2019) and this form our study population. This was done for the purpose of making generalization. See distribution details below:

Directors/Management staff	85 copies
Senior Executive Officers	85 copies
Junior Officers	125 copies

The purposive sampling method was adopted thereby giving the division equal chances to participate in the process. Due to inability to study the entire population of the Commission, the Taro Yamane’s formula was adopted to determine the sample size below.

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

Where n = Sample size sought
 e = Level of Significance (0.05)
 N = Population size

$$n = \frac{295}{1 + 295(0.05)^2} \frac{300}{1 + 300(0.0025)^2}$$

$$\frac{295}{1 + 295(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{295}{1.7375} \frac{300}{1 + 300(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 169.78 \text{ approximately } 170$$

Therefore, the sample size sought is 170 respondents.

The paper which is dominantly quantitative in nature, as such it adopts the structured questionnaire in the generation of primary data. Questionnaire were personally administered, followed up and retrieved to empirically investigate public sector corruption and local government administration in the Rivers State Local Government Service Commission

The scaling method used was a 4 – point Likert scale with a ranking of 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. The questionnaire was structured into different sections. Section one provided demographic information about the respondents, while section two elicited data on the study variables

The questionnaire were structured and administered on the following outlay:

- a. The general understanding of public sector corruption and local government.
- b. The nexus, nature, causes and effects of public sector corruption on local government administration in the Rivers State Local Government Service.

The use of table was employed to analyse data generated from the survey design. The responses from the respondents were arranged, grouped, tabulated and analysed using the simple percentage statistical method. By this method, it meant that the degree of percentage score of one response to another or others determined the acceptability or rejection of a particular statement while hypothesis is tested using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion Of Findings

Presentation of Data.

Table 1: Outcome of Questionnaire Distribution

Particulars of questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
Number of questionnaire administered.	170	100
Number of questionnaire retrieved	153	90.0
Number of questionnaire not returned	17	10.0
Number of questionnaire wrongly filled	10	6.54
Number of usable questionnaire	143	93.46

Source: Field Work, 2021

From table 1, it is observed that 170 questionnaire were administered to respondents. 153 questionnaire representing 90.0 percent were returned. 17 questionnaire representing 10.0 percent were not returned. However, out of this number only 143 questionnaire representing 93.46 percent were correctly filled and thus suitable for data analysis.

Data Analysis

The demographic analyses are presented. These presentations would further enable the understanding of demographic distribution of the sample.

Table 2: showing Gender distribution of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	83	58.0	58.0	58.0
Valid Female	60	42.0	42.0	100.0
Total	143	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS 21.0 data Output, 2021

From the data in table 2, it is clearly indicated that 83 of the respondents indicating 58 percent of the respondents fall into the male category while 60 of the respondents indicating 42 percent were female, showing that most of our respondents were females.

Table 3: Showing Educational Qualification of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	OND/NCE	11	7.7	7.7	7.7
	HND/B.Sc/B.A/B.E	74	51.7	51.7	59.4
	d				
	Masters Degree	36	25.2	25.2	84.6
	Ph.D	22	15.4	15.4	100.0
	Total	143	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS 21.0 data Output, 2020

The data in table 3 portrays the educational qualification of the respondents. From the results above 11 of the respondents indicating 7.7 percent have OND/NCE, while 74 of the respondents representing 51.7 percent possessed HND/Bachelor's degree, 36 of the respondents indicating 25 percent of the respondents had Master's degree and 22 respondents indicating 15.4 percent had PhD.

Univariate Analysis

Here, the output of the primary data is presented. Analysis was carried out on individual variables and measures. Mean scores and standard deviations are also illustrated. The presentation begins with the independent variable which is public sector corruption. It then proceeded to the dependent variable, whose measures are welfare, transparency, accountability and effect of corruption on local government. These are all scaled on the four (4) point Likert scale (ranging from 1: **SD**=strongly disagree, 2: **D**=disagree, 3: **A**=agree and 4: **SA**=strongly agree).

Table 4: Effect of public sector corruption on local government in the Service

Effects of public sector corruption on local government in the Service		SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.
1.	Do you think that public sector corruption result to unhealthy political environment in the Commission?	61	68	4	10	4.30	.722
2.	Does the Commission commit budget forgery in public sector corruption?	68	67	0	8	4.42	.598
3.	Do you think that public sector corruption causes low economic development in the Commission?	57	32	33	21	3.72	1.297
4.	Does public sector corruption engender poverty in local government administration?	93	35	9	6	4.48	.846
5.	Does public sector corruption result to low revenue in the Commission?	56	32	38	17	3.74	1.232

Source: Survey Data, 2021

Table 4 illustrates the response rates and frequency for effect measured on a 5-item instrument and scaled on a 4-point Likert scale.

The table portrays that public sector corruption result to unhealthy political environment in the Commission. From the results above, 61 respondents strongly agreed, 68 respondents agreed, 4 respondents disagreed and 10 respondents strongly disagreed. This implied that public sector corruption result to unhealthy political environment in the Commission.

For the second item “Does the Commission commit budget forgery in public sector corruption?” 68 respondents strongly agreed, 67 respondents agreed, 0 respondents disagreed and 8 strongly disagreed, revealing that most of respondents agreed that the Commission commit budget forgery in public sector corruption.

For the third question “Do you think that public sector corruption causes low economic development in the Commission?” 57 respondents strongly agreed, 32 respondents agreed, 33 agreed and 21 strongly disagreed. On this note, majority of the respondents making 73 agreed that public sector corruption causes low economic development in the Commission.

For the fourth item, “Does public sector corruption engender poverty in local government administration?” 93 respondents strongly agreed, 35 agreed, 9 disagreed and 6 strongly disagreed. This indicates that public sector corruption engender poverty in local government administration.

The fifth and last item, “Does public sector corruption result to low revenue in the Commission?” 56 respondents strongly agreed, 32 respondents agreed, 38 agreed and 17 strongly disagreed. This is to show that the public sector corruption result to low revenue in the Commission.

There is no significant effect of public sector corruption on local government administration in the Rivers State Local Service Commission.

Table 5: Correlations for effect of public sector corruption on local government administration

		Effect of public sector corruption	Local government
Effect of public sector corruption	Pearson	1	.799**
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Unhealthy political environment	N	143	143
	Pearson	.799**	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	143	143

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS 21.0 data output, 2021

The results shown in table 5 above, with a *coefficient* value = 0.799, means that a strong effect exist between public sector corruption and local government administration in the Rivers State Local Government Service Commission. The relationship is significant at $p = 0.000 < 0.0.5$ significance level. This means that the stated null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate accepted.

This implies that there are significant effects of public sector corruption and local government administration in the Rivers State Local Government Service Commission. The study further reveals that unhealthy political environment, low economic development, low revenue, budget forgery and poverty are effects of public sector corruption in local government administration.

Discussion

Political corruption in Nigeria is a major factor leading to political instability. This can be seen from the fact that virtually all the military take-over of power that have been witnessed in Nigeria with the exemption of perhaps one was as a result of corruption. The military often claim to be taking over power in order to save Nigeria from endemic corruption, even though they too often become victims of the same corruption leading to further military coup d'état.

Also, the inefficiency in the public service can be traced directly to corruption which erodes the norms and principles of the civil service and replaces it with practices that are inimical to the dictates of the public service code of conduct. Oyeneye, et'al (2005) were able to show that;
countries with high levels of corruption are associated with inefficient government services and a low quality of public service delivery in virtually all sectors of its economy including health care provision despite the fact that she is endowed with huge human and natural resources.

The economic impact of corruption on the Nigerian economy has a direct impact on the masses that are often at the receiving end. Mauro (1995:22), opined

The low level of FDI coupled with capital flight as a result of corruption has led to mass unemployment for the teeming population and this had further heated up the polity. Crime rate has also increased with cases of armed robberies and other vices on the raise.

Corruption causes a serious development challenge, in the political sphere; it undermines democracy and good governance by weakening political processes. Corruption in elections subverts accountability and representation in policy making, in the judiciary it suspends the rule of law and in the public service it leads to the unequal distribution of services (Agba, 2018).

The effects of corruption in Nigeria have been very significant. From multi-internal effects such and poor governance, misuse of natural resources, mediocrity, high unemployment rates, the even widened gap between the rich and the poor to the international effects such as the tarnished image of Nigeria in the international circles.

Due to corruption in Nigeria, foreign nationals exercised caution in entering business with Nigerians there by weakening the economic sector of the country. According to Dike (2008:45)

Corruption wastes skills because time is often wasted to set up anti-corruption agencies to fight corruption and also to monitor public sectors. To conclude, corruption diverts scarce public resources into private pockets, it weakens good governance; it also threatens democracy and erodes the social and moral fabrics of a country.

Agba (2008) argued that corruption increases cost and leads to doubt in the intentional spheres. Mauro (1995) revealed that corruption has a negative effect on the ratio of investment to GDP thus affecting economic growth. It discourages investment and distorts the composition of government spending usually to the detriment of future economic growth. Mauro (1997) contended

Corruption will reduce aids flow particularly to developing countries. Even if you don't come into direct contact with corruption, corruption affects you. Corruption reduces the overall wealth in a country since it can discourage businesses from operating in such a corrupt setting. In countries with high levels of corruption, for example, average income is about three times lower than in less corrupt countries (p.18)

In response to the above reaction, popular among the respondents revealed that

Corruption reduces the amount of money the commission has to pay good workers, purchase supplies and execute social contract to the locals. It distorts the smooth operation of the local government councils and the commission. Corruption has resulted to lack of effective performance of local government council despite the deluge of functions awarded them in the 4th schedule of the 1999 constitution (*K. Worgwu, personal communication, July 2021.*)

In addition, corruption is unfair and allows those with money or connections to bend the law or government rules in their favour. Corruption harms the environment and undermines trust in government. It diverts scarce public resources into private pockets and weakens good governance.

Conclusion/Recommendations

The paper reveals that there is a nexus between public sector corruption and local government administration and that local government is a necessary tool for development. However, the system does not institute transparency and accountability as such does not impact positively on the people. It therefore submits that the system is fraught with nepotism, patronage system, and high level corruption.

The paper also revealed that the executive /administrative rascality, looting of public funds meant for public projects, money laundering, illegal foreign bank accounts and other forms of immoralities were prevalent in the administration of local government.

Get-rich-quick syndrome, gaps in anti-corruption policies, lack of transparency, poor audit system and compromise, administrative silence and weak institutions are some of the causes of public sector corruption which this paper observed. The paper concludes that public sector corruption hinders staff performance and the growth of local government administration.

The paper also argued that the purpose for creating local government in Nigeria is to act as representative of the two upper tiers of governments and execute local or rural projects that are beneficiary to the grassroots. Unfortunately, this has not yielded the desired results due to incidences of corruption, it therefore submits that low economic development, unhealthy political environment, low income and revenue, budget forgery and poverty were the effects of public sector corruption identified by the paper.

It is therefore recommended that local government autonomy should be granted to avoid excessive control and interference in carrying out official duties of the local commission.

As a way of drastically reducing the incidences of corruption in the commission, the anti-corruption agencies of the government should pay more attention into what is going on in the commission and devise more effective strategies on how to track financially related corrupt practices.

Again, the commission as a governmental structure should be proactive and exercise the needed political will that will be required to formulate and implement internal administrative policies and procedures that will reduce fraud and illegal practices.

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