



**CORRUPTION AS A FACTOR OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN PUBLIC SERVICE:
A STUDY OF MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, OWERRI, IMO STATE**

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ABSTRACT

This work is designed to discuss the impact of corruption as a factor of underdevelopment in public services focusing attention on ministry of education, Owerri, Imo State. As regards the above assertion, the data has been collected from the Ministry, both primary and secondary. This is possible through the questionnaire formulated by the researcher. From the analysis and discussion, necessary findings were made. Corruption as one of the major causes of underdevelopment has causes, consequences and solution. In view of this, it has been observed that major cause of corruption is the inability of the workers to meet up with their financial obligation with their salaries. This is why it has been found in all areas of the nation 's economy as a factor of underdevelopment, be that as it may, certain steps should as well be taken to alleviate and ameliorate the problems associated with corruption. Salaries and welfare packages of workers should be increased so that they can be able to meet up with their financial responsibilities. Though, apart from poor salaries or wages, some members of the public also encourage corruption in public offices for example, mainly due to impatience or greediness, by not waiting for increment of their salary may be by promotion. Also, government should organize seminars and workshops in the nation's economy. Conclusively, I suggest that laws be enacted and made on corruption so that anybody found engaging or partaking in the act should be presented and disciplined.

Keywords: Corruption; Factors; Underdevelopment; Public Service.

Introduction

Corruption remains one of the most persistent challenges confronting public administration in Nigeria. It manifests in various forms such as bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, favoritism, misuse of public funds, and abuse of office for personal gain (Abah, 2000). In the public service, corruption undermines institutional efficiency, weakens service delivery, erodes public trust, and significantly contributes to underdevelopment (Transparency International, 2023).

The public service is expected to function as the engine of national development by implementing government policies, managing public resources, and providing essential services to citizens. However, when corruption permeates public institutions, resources meant for development are diverted, projects are abandoned, and service delivery becomes ineffective (Adebayo, 2019). This situation is particularly critical in ministries responsible for human capital development, such as the Ministry of Education.

Education plays a vital role in national development by enhancing human capacity, promoting innovation, and fostering socio-economic growth (Billy, 1982). The Ministry of Education is



therefore a strategic institution whose effectiveness directly affects societal progress. Unfortunately, corruption within the education sector—such as contract inflation, ghost workers, examination malpractice, misappropriation of funds, and recruitment based on favoritism—has hindered the achievement of educational goals in Nigeria (Uwakwe & Nwankwo, 2020).

In Imo State, the Ministry of Education in Owerri has faced challenges relating to inadequate infrastructure, poor staff motivation, delayed implementation of policies, and ineffective supervision of educational institutions (Wriggler, 2003). These challenges have been linked by scholars and policy analysts to corrupt practices within the public service system (Okoye, 2021). Understanding how corruption contributes to underdevelopment in the Ministry of Education is therefore essential for promoting transparency, accountability, and sustainable development. This study seeks to examine corruption as a factor of underdevelopment in the public service, using the Ministry of Education, Owerri, Imo State as a case study.

Materials and Methods

The study was carried out at the Imo State Ministry of Education, located in Owerri, the capital city of Imo State, Nigeria. The ministry is responsible for the formulation and implementation of educational policies, supervision of public schools, management of educational personnel, and coordination of educational development programmes within the state. Owerri is an urban center with a concentration of government ministries, departments, and agencies. The Ministry of Education is a strategic public institution whose performance directly affects human capital development in the state, making it a suitable location for examining corruption and underdevelopment in the public service.

The population of the study comprises staff of the Imo State Ministry of Education, Owerri, including: Administrative officers, Education officers, Account and finance officers, Procurement and planning officers, Senior and junior staff involved in policy implementation. These categories of staff are relevant because they are directly involved in administrative processes and resource management within the ministry.

A sample size of 80 respondents were selected from the ministry using simple random sampling technique. This method ensures that all staff members have equal chances of being selected, thereby reducing bias and enhancing the reliability of the findings. Data for the study was collected using both primary and secondary sources.

Primary data was obtained through: Structured questionnaires administered to selected staff of the ministry, Oral interviews with a few senior officers to obtain in-depth information on corruption practices and their effects and the questionnaire contained close-ended and few open-ended questions designed to address the objectives of the study. Secondary data will be sourced from: Textbooks on public administration, Academic journals, Government publications, Reports from anti-corruption agencies and Internet materials relevant to corruption and public service development.

Data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as: Frequencies, Percentages and Tables. Qualitative data obtained from interviews were analyzed using content and thematic analysis, where responses were summarized and interpreted based on



emerging themes. The analyzed data was used to draw conclusions on the extent to which corruption contributes to underdevelopment in the Ministry of Education.

Results

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data Presentation: deals with the presentation and analysis of responses gotten from the questionnaires. As earlier stated in the previous chapter, this analysis is made using simple percentage.

Section A

Table 1: Personal Data of Respondents

Sex	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	80	40.2%
Female	119	59.8%
Total	199	100%

Source: Field Survey (2026)

The above shows that 80 respondents which is 40.29% of the total respondents were male while 119 representing 59.8% were females.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage
20 – 30	35	17.6%
31 – 40	55	27.6%
41 – 46	40	20.1%
47 – 54	34	17.1%
55 and above	35	17.6%
Total	199	100%

Source: Field Survey (2026)

From the table above, results show that within the ages of 20 - 30 which is 17.6% were 35 respondents while those whose age ranges from 31 - 40 (27.6%) were 55 respondents. Those whose age falls within 41 - 46 were 40 with percentage of 20.1%. Respondents whose ages also falls within 47 - 54 were 34 that is 17.1% and those whose age ranges from 55 and above were 35 respondents that is 17.6% out of the total respondents.

Table 3: Educational Qualifications of Respondents

Level of Education	No. of Respondents	Percentage
SSCE	35	17.6%
OND/ NCE	40	20.1%
HND/B.Sc	64	32.2%
M.Sc	35	17.6%
Phd	25	12.5%
Total	199	100%

Source: Field Survey (2026)

From the above result of the table above, 35 staff respondents (17.6%) possesses SSCE certificate, 40 respondents (20.1%) have either OND or NCE degree. 64 respondents (32.2%) have HND/B.Sc degree. 35 respondents (17.6%) have M.Sc degree while 25 respondents (12.5%) were PHD degree holders.



Analysis of Research Questions

The following questions were asked, responded and interpreted.

Question 1: Has there been cases of corruption in Ministry of education, Owerri?

Table 1: Cases of corruption in Ministry of Education, Owerri

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	175	87.94%
No	24	12.06%
Total	199	100%

Source: Field Survey (2026)

From the above table, 87.94% of the respondents said that there has been cases of corruption in the ministry; 12.06% said no to the question.

Question 2: What are the major causes of corruption in the public service?

Table 2: Causes of corruption in the public service response

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Poor condition of salaries	43	21.6%
Individual performance	32	16.1%
Low salary	55	27.6%
Poor welfare packages	40	20.1%
Poor facilities	29	14.6%
Total	199	100%

Source: Field Survey (2026)

Question 3: Do you agree that due to corruption some public institutions are underdeveloped?

Table 3: Corruption and under-development.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	165	82.91%
No	34	17.09%
Total	199	100%

Source: Field Survey (2026)

From the table above, 82.91% of the respondents agree that some public institutions are underdeveloped due to the corruption while 17.09% said No, that corruption does not contribute to underdevelopment.

Question 4: Does corruption in the public service affect workers performance?

Table 4: Corruption and workers' performance

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	170	85.43%
No	29	14.57%
Total	199	100%

Source: Field Survey (2026)

From the table above, 85.43% of the respondents said that corruption in the public service affects workers' performance while 14.57% said that corruption on workers is negative.



Question 5: How would you rate the effect of corruption on the staff of Ministry of Education, Owerri?

Table 5: Effects of corruption

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
High	100	50.25%
Average	54	27.14%
Low	45	22.61%
Total	199	100%

Source: Field Survey (2026)

From the above table, 50.25% of the respondents' rates of the effects of corruption on the performance of the staff of Ministry of Education is high, while 27.14% rate the effects of corruption to be average while 22.61% said low.

Question 6: How would you describe the nature of the effect of corruption on workers of Ministry of Education, Owerri?

Table 6: Nature of the effect of corruption

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Negative	95	47.73%
Positive	54	27.14%
No idea	50	25.13%
Total	199	100%

Source: Field Survey (2026)

From the table above, 47.73% of the respondents said that the nature of the effect of corruption on workers is negative, while 27.14% said that it is positive and 25.13% said no idea.

Question 7: Do you believe corruption in the public service could be reduced?

Table 7: Possibility of reducing corruption

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	199	100%
No	-	-
Total	199	100%

Source: Field Survey (2026)

From the above table, the entire respondents agree that corruption in the public service could be reduced.

Question 8: How do you think corruption could be eliminated in the public service?

Table 8: Ways of corruption reduction

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Increase of salary	199	100%
Improved welfare packages	-	-
Total	199	100%

Source: Field Survey (2026)

The above table shows that corruption can be eradicated through the increase of salary.



Discussion and Analysis of Findings

From the study, the researcher made the following findings:

1. There has been incidence of corruption in the Ministry of Education, Owerri.
2. The study also revealed that some public institutions because of underdevelopment
3. It was also discovered that corruption in the Ministry
4. The study shows that corruption in the service is reduced
5. It was revealed that increase in worker's salary in the public service will go a long way in reducing corruption in public service.
6. The study also revealed that some public institutions became underdeveloped as a result of corruption.
7. Finally, corruption in the public service has high effect on the performance of the Ministry of Education, Owerri.

Summary of Findings

From the data analysis, it is observed that corruption is one of the major problems facing enterprises (both public and private) particularly in public services. Also, good plans and policies that would enhance and facilitate development are either not implemented or done badly as a result of corruption. More so, from the analysis, it is noted that corruption has its causes, consequences as well as remedies. Among the causes of corruption are low salary and poor welfare package. When workers are not well paid, they will indulge themselves in some sharp practice in order to make their ends meet. It was also found out that corruption contributed to the underdevelopment of the nation and Ministry of Education, Owerri, which perform below standard and expectation due to some sharp practices. As a result of this, the organization has not enough funds to meet not been fully maintained, obsolete and outdated equipment are bought in view or ones. This is why they have not been able to render account throughout the federation.

Conclusion

In an organizational setting, both the management and the staff are the key component of development system. They must maintain a good and very cordial relationship with order, none of them should relegate each other. They should see themselves as partners in progress and by so doing, the organizational goals will be achieved and corruption will be eradicated. It is true that the two may have diverse interest for instance, the management may be emphasizing on the increase of the salaries, bonuses and allocation accepting on what is to be done while the workers will be the worker once doing the work, and they will be played small, and also the management should try as much possible to maintain a good relationship with the worker so as to make them to be dedicated to their duty. This can be achieved through motivation, by way of promoting prompt payment of salary and allowance granting of suggestion.

Furthermore, it is therefore very important for any reasonable management to give prior attention to the welfare of its workers so that they can work harmoniously. The management should have a good communication gap with their workers and they should strive at all times to ensure prompt response to any genuine demand of workers. Finally, they should ensure regular payment of workers and other entitlement things.



Recommendations

Having seen causes, consequences and problem of corruption in our public service, the researcher makes the following recommendations.

- i. There should be a sound management practice which will help to avert bribery and corruption. High standard or moral behaviours should be prescribed for all people in management position and this standard should also be assimilated by them and where the cadre of management prescribed in Nigeria constitution for public offices should be vigorously enforced.
- ii. The organizational structure should be explicitly and clearly stated. This will help to expose the authority and responsibility of the manager. More so, this will be outstanding link upon which objectives can be achieved.
- iii. The Independence Corruption Practice Commission (ICPC) and the Economic Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) should always be at alert to see that all those who engage in corrupt practice should as well be given commensurable disciplinary measures to avert corruption and entity.
- iv. Furthermore, on the underdevelopment public service, central management should try to make the rule of development challenging. Here, managers in many firms will try to conceive sufficiently ambitious objectives. If not, it will fail to fully harness the energies of the people co-ordination of objectives also lead to effective development.

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