

UNRAVELLING THE NEXUS: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS ON CORRUPTION AND INEQUALITY IN NIGERIA 1999 – 2025

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Abstract

Corruption and inequality are perennial challenges facing Nigeria's development since independence of 1960. Efforts to eliminate the menace remain fruitless as it rather persists, undermining the nation's socio-economic progress. This survey research examines the interconnectivity between corruption and inequality among the people of Nigeria, relatively to overall quality of life, income, poverty and human capital development. It adopts mixed- methods approach by engaging qualitative and quantitative data for analysis and rests majorly on Public Service Delivery Theory (PSDT) as its theoretical framework, so as to provide insights into the dynamics in corruption phenomenon, heightening inequality among majority of Nigerians. Purposive sampling technique aided the determination of four hundred (400) respondents on whom structured close-ended four-point scale Likert questionnaire were administered to generate data. The research utilised simple percentage (%) and chi-square to analyse data and test hypotheses established. It concludes that, corruption is quite antithetical to socio-economic development. It significantly affects the overall quality of life, causing stratification among humans and social groups, individually and collectively. Therefore, it recommends that to achieve the "ideal state", there was need for those in government to adhere strictly with the provisions of the 1999 Constitutions as amended, and the judiciary to maintain ethical standards in the adjudication of justice on corruption cases, mindless of who is/are involved.

Keywords: Corruption, Ethical standards, Ideal state, Inequality and Quantitative analysis.

Introduction

Nigeria is no doubt the longest economy in Africa. National development is yet to be galvanized/achieved despite the commitment of substantial public resources by successive governments. The federation has struggled with the twin challenges of corruption and ever increasing inequality, hindering her socio-economic development. Corruption is a pervasive and complex phenomenon that has permeated virtually every fabrics of the society, while inequality has exacerbated poverty, anxiety, depression and stress including emotional health. Corruption also exacerbates social, economic and political instability, inflation and insecurity. The interplay between corruption and inequality has far-reaching consequences, undermining Nigeria's prospects for sustainable socio-

economic development, and her quests to be identified as one of the greatest economies in the world.

Public policies such as deregulation, privatisation, commercialisation, public-private-partnership (PPP) arrangements so far created as alternative to government monopoly in national economy have also not yielded reasonable results, underscoring dynamics aggravating and sustaining corrupt practices, and broadening inequality space in Nigeria. Corroborating this, Hoffmann (2024) considers corruption challenges are central to the Nigeria's contentions with insecurity, inequality and inadequate provision of public goods and services. This is despite the fact that the central government in particular, since the reemergence of democracy in 1999 to date, has deployed a number of measures to mitigate the

problems of corruption and bad governance in the country (Salihu, 2018:74). This perceptions underpins the need to conduct quantitative analysis on the influence of corruption on inequality in the country.

Statement of Problem

The Nigerian nation is faced with corruption virtually in all sectors of the economy including public institutions. Governments' quests to address corruption have not yielded significant results over the years, hindering significant growth and development. Unfortunately, several studies conducted within this context have not been able to provide empirical insights on the specific influence corruption has on the inequality space in Nigeria, making this quantitative analysis inevitable, and for the purpose of providing policy recommendations.

Objectives

The following objectives guided the study. They are to:

- i. Quantitatively analyse the relationship between corruption and inequality in Nigeria.
- ii. Identify the influence of corruption on socio-economic development of the country.
- iii. Determine specific reasons for persistent corruption in Nigeria.

Research Questions

- i. How does corruption influence inequality among the people of Nigeria?
- ii. What impact does inequality has on socio-economic development of Nigeria?
- iii. Why is corruption a recurring phenomenon in the country?

Hypotheses

The study is guided by the following hypotheses:

- i. Corruption does not influence inequality among the people of Nigeria.
- ii. No significant relationship exist between corruption and inequality among majority of Nigerians.
- iii. Corruption is not a perennial phenomenon in the country.

Conceptual Review Corruption as a phenomenon

The concept of corruption has been variously defined by scholars, Administrators, Opinion leaders and many non-governmental Organisations across the globe. According to the World Bank (2020) corruption means "abuse of power for private gains". Corruption refers to any behaviour that deviates from an established norm with regards to public trust (Salihu & Bakare, 2018:75). Wei (1999:4) defines corruption as "government officials abusing their power to extract/accept bribes from the private sector for personal gains". Williams (2021) argues that corruption has to do with individual actions that involve the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Similarly, Winters cited in Hobbes (2002) views corruption as a product of the nature of power relations in a country that allows individuals to engage in bribery regardless of laws or agencies designed to halt them, while to Hobbes (2002, p.6), opportunities for corruption occur where the public and private sectors interact.

Corruption is a multifaceted variable that can be perpetuated in different environment, institutions, and trends. As such, it can involve behaviours such as public servants demanding or taking money or favours in exchange for services, politicians misusing public money or granting public jobs or contracts to their sponsors, friends and families, and corporations bribing officials to get lucrative deals (Transparency International, 2024). Corruption is a dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery (Osinbajo, 2026). For Aluko (2009, p.3), It is a technical word or general concept describing any organised, interdependent system in which part of the system is either not performing duties it was originally intended to, or performing them in an improper way, to the detriment of the system's initial aim Aluko, 2009, p.3).

In a nutshell, although the various perspectives on corruption are quite broad, encompassing and comprehensive, but the point of convergence is the fact that the variable represents abuse of offices and mandates, apparently for personal or collective gains in the

society. These perspectives hold that corruption hinders growth and development, threatens and to some extent, totally retard the overall wellbeing of the citizens. Against this background, this study simply defines the phenomenon as, man-made actions and inactions involving systematic circumvention/subversion of established rules for personal or collective interests. Corruption can take different forms, shapes, patterns, or styles, such as economic, political, religious, bureaucratic, social, and gender-based involving sexual harassment and rape cases, among other sexual violations, within public and private institutions specifically in Nigeria.

Democracy

Democracy is an administrative mechanism that is consistently being subjected to critical discussion, analysis, evaluation, and revaluation with the aim of determining its practicability and sustainability in a modern democratic world. Ethmologically, a Greek word 'demos' (the people) and 'kratos' (power), democracy represents the right of commitment and participation of the people of a sovereignty, in public decision making process, through direct and/or indirect representation (The Council of Europe, 2024). It is considered as a modernised governance framework which takes into account, diversities in economic, social as well as political perceptions as well as citizens' participation in the state resources. Democracy is a "channel of governance that rests majorly on the will of the people" (United Nations, undated). The United States Agency for International Development (2024). Democracy serves as key administrative element that is people oriented, participatory in nature, emphasising the rule of law, accountability as well as promoting development and civility in modern states (United States Agency for International Development, 2024). Considering its evolution, Munck (2016, p.1) argues that democracy emerges to address the issue of government decision making institutions and the social environment of politics. Nevertheless, a system can be referred to as democratic despite it was unable to feature perfect equality of power

(Goldman, 2015, p.233).

Chatham House (2022) argues that democracy is upheld in the Western world as a liberal form of administration in which popular sovereignty limited by the constitution guarantees individual freedom and right. The western institution concludes that this system of governance does not necessarily need to be liberal in nature, as some states currently engage in illiberal democracies where voting continue but liberal features such as independent judiciary and press freedom have been compromised. Of course, the practice of democracy in countries such as Russia, China, Iran and many African states aptly captures Chatham House's perspective on democracy. In Nigeria, democracy and its sustenance are increasingly threatened due to election-induced crisis and lack of accountability from elected and appointed representatives, heightening voter apathy among majority of the electorate.

Inequality

Inequality among the people of developing economies including Nigerians, has been one disturbing issue and becoming widespread concern (Dabla-Norris, Kechhar, Suphaphiphat, Ricka & Tsounta, 2015, p.5). The situation has created serious obstacles to the quality of life of many people while stratification among the social groups exacerbates, causing serious challenges to national and global environment. In Nigeria, the gap between the rich and the poor is significantly broadening, and inflation critically affecting the poor and the vulnerable people, while the rich, particularly public office holders, live in affluence. Such inequality situation threatens long term social and economic development, hampers poverty reduction and destroys people's sense of accomplishment and self-worth (United Nations, 2024). For the International Monetary Fund (2024), inequality reflects the state of being unequal or below expectations in economic, social, psychological, gender rights and freedoms, political participation and other opportunities that are abound in a particular society.

Ford Foundation (2024) defines inequality

as a mechanism excluding people from full participation in the political, economic and cultural systems that made their lives. It is the unequal and/or unjust distribution of resources and opportunities of resources of certain society (Koh, 2020). From the social clime, Crossman (2018) defines inequality as a reflection society configured by hierarchies or class, race and gender, that provides unequal access to resources and rights in terms of distribution. In summary, inequality as a socio-economic indicator is a reflection of the dichotomies between social classes (rich versus poor, privileged versus deprived, oppressor versus oppressed or protected versus vulnerable) in societies. Inequality pervades significantly in developing economies including Nigeria, occasioned by factors such as bad governance, weak institutions, partisan politics, subversion of public policies, and nepotism, than the developed economies. For instance, in the research survey conducted on the synergy between growth, inequality and poverty on behalf of World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund, Cerra, Lama & Loayza (2021) observed that “while market- based income in equality has significantly heightened in advanced states since the 1980s, inequality has been largely static for emerging market and developing economies”.

Empirical Review

Some Cases of Corruption in Nigeria

Corruption cases in Nigeria is quite dynamic, complex and high-profiling, involving individuals, groups and organisations within and outside the country. Senior public officials in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), high-ranking security personnel, politicians/political leaders, as well as Multinational Corporations (MNCs), have been investigated, prosecuted and found culpable of corrupt practices while in offices. The Malabo Oilfield/Halliburton bribery case, prosecutions of former Governors of Plateau, Bayelsa and Abia states, Chief Joshua Dariye, Chief Diepreye Alamieyeseigha and Senator Orji Uzor Kalu, former Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN),

Chief Godwin Emefiele, former Economic and Financial Crimes Commission's (EFCC) Acting Chairman, Ibrahim Magu, and lots more, were high profile cases of corrupt practices perpetuated by individuals and organisations in the public service and private business sector in the country. Moreso, former National Security Adviser (NSA), Sambo Dasuki has been held accountable and prosecuted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), over the diversion of about \$2 billion Arms Fund. The agency also prosecutes Oliseh Metuh, former Peoples' Democratic Party's (PDP) Publicity Secretary for his involvement in a N400 billion illegally acquired from the office of the National Security Adviser under Sambo Dasuki, while former Chief of Air Staff, Adesola Nunayon Amosu and two others were accused of the diversion of N21billion Nigerian Air force fund (HEDA Resource Centre, 2019, pp. 16-28).

According to Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (undated), ten corruption cases unsettled in the country include those of Abdurasheed Maina, Chairman of Pension Reform Task Team (N195 billion), kerosene subsidy scam involving several billion of the nation's currency under the defunct Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC), Police Pension Scam involving former Director of Police Pension Fund, Bome Esai Dangabar and four others (N32.8 billion), Stella Oduah, former Minister of Aviation (N255million) car fraud, N20 billion missing oil money alerted by former Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria/Emir of Kano, Lamido Sanusi, \$15million private jet/arms scandal transmitted to Johannesburg, South Africa, Abba Moro Immigration scandal and Malabu Oil fraud involving Dan Etete, former Petroleum Minister. These atrocities have robbed the country of opportunities for development in critical sectors (HEDA, 2019, p.7). The legal profession is

crumbling under the weight of corruption, ethical violations, and poor standards making the perception that corruption in the Bar and Bench are quit damaging (Osinbajo, 2025). Osinbajo's observation clearly indicted the judiciary of corruption, consequently affecting justice and

equity in the nation's judicial landscape. For instance, records established by CLEEN Foundation in conjunction with MacArthur Foundation (undated), indicate that corruption cases are spread across the judiciary in Nigeria, ranging from Area courts to Federal court with 1094 cases completed/decided, 42 subsisting and 46 pending in these litigation mechanisms.

Corruption knows no bound particularly in Nigeria's public sector, it is systemic and pandemic, perturbing and devastating, significantly affecting national development. For instance, former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, under the Buhari's democratic administration, faces corruption charge of over 3trillion naira public funds personally and/or collectively embezzled while in office (Obiezu, 2024). Former Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Limited (NNPC Ltd.), Mele Kyari has been linked to the controversial

\$2.896billion spent on refinery rehabilitation projects under his leadership Akewushola (2015). As noted by Abubakar (2024), the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission said it has recorded the biggest seizure by taking possession of a large housing estate comprising of over 750 properties in the country's capital city, Abuja. Fortunately, the anti-graft agency was able to link ownership of these housing units to the former Governor of the CBN, Godwin Emefiele. Report from the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) shows that the former Governor of Anambra state, Willie Obiano and his spouse, systematically transferred separately, their \$1.8 million properties in Texas, U.S.A. to their proxy family companies and daughter, due to ongoing investigation of the embezzlement of public funds to the tune of \$4.4 million (Unini, 2025). In its 2019 investigation on corruption in Nigeria, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's (2019, p.5) report shows that from the citizens who had at least one contact with a public official specifically within 2018, 30.2% paid a bribe to, or were requested to pay bribe by, a public official. The body concluded that the vast majority of such bribes are paid in cash (foreign or

local currency) representing a whopping 93% in the act (UNODC, 2019 p.7).

Nexus between Corruption and Inequality in Nigeria

Nigeria's socio-economic progress is underscored by the linkages between corruption and inequality. Corruption has the capacity to create unequal access to resources, such as education, healthcare and economic opportunities among the citizens (Akinyaode & Uche, 2018, p.12). It can exacerbate economic inequality by providing more favour to those holding state powers and possessing connections, while marginalising the poor and vulnerable (Ogbuagu, 2016, p.45).

Agbibo (2016, p.102) argues that corruption in the judiciary can limit access to justice for marginalised groups, heightening inequality among the people. It can result in unequal access to public services, such as electricity, water and healthcare, most especially in public service delivery, leading to unequal distribution of infrastructure development, by favouring certain environment or social ethnic groups over others (Ekhatior, 2019, p.78; Okunola, 2018, p.23). Corruption has the capacity to reduce people's economic strength by weakening or leading to closure of income sources such as business or work, perpetuating poverty among certain groups, exacerbating inequality and limiting opportunities for social mobility in the society (Adebanwi & Obadare, 2011, p.23).

Lack of impactful service delivery and inability to be accountable to the citizens by public office holders pose serious threats to national integration and development, broadening the socio-economic space, causing deprivation and poverty among majority of the people. In tune with this assertion, The Whistler (2025) reports that President Bola Tinubu was unable to articulate a clear and comprehensive anti-corruption strategy for his administration, making the fight against corruption a worthless issue under the incumbent government, discouraging good governance and accountability. According to the body, Nigeria's corruption position, from the Transparency

International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) stands at 140 out of 180 countries in the globe, reflecting governance challenge (The Whistler, 2025). This report is significantly appalling and image-damaging to a political system richly endowed with economic resources.

Theoretical Framework

Public Service Delivery Theory (PSDT)

Public Service Delivery Theory provides insights into the criticality of service delivery and accountability to the citizens by elected/appointed public officials. The theory focuses on the mandates of governments towards the people, emphasising the importance of effective, efficient and equitable service delivery in achieving public policy objectives of a state such as Nigeria. This is affirmation to the existence of governments to provide essential services to their citizens (Egugbo, 2020, p.72). Exponents of the theory include Max Weber, Friederich Taylor, Fredrickson, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Denhardt, and Denhardt, among other contributors.

PSDT emphasises the prioritisation of citizens' needs for equitable and fair service delivery, allowing all of them, irrespective of their status (rich or poor, educated or not), to access the basic needs (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015, p.15; Frederickson, 2010, p.23). It stresses the relevance of providing services in an efficient and effective manner, maximising the use of state's resources and minimising waste (Hettl, 2018, p.12). PSDT lays emphasis on accountability and transparency by making sure that citizens can hold public officials and institutions accountable for their actions (Bovens, Schillenmans & Goodin, 2014). Vigoda- Gadota & Yuval (2018, p.78) uphold that Public Service Delivery Theory is about responsiveness and accountability to the people particularly by those holding state power, representing in different ways, by meeting their changing needs and expectations.

Determination of Sample size

To determine sample size for the distribution of research instrument, Taro Yamani (1967)

determination approach was harnessed. It is represented by formula: = _____

The framework is applicable to this quantitative analysis based on the conviction that significant relationship exists between service delivery and increasing poverty rate in the Nigerian state. Application of PSDT makes it possible to analyse how corruption affects service delivery and causing inequality, identify specific areas it has most significant impact, including determining the consequences of the two variables on socio-economic development of Nigeria. It seeks to provide comprehensive quantitative knowledge on the influence corruption wields in the uneven distribution of the common good, and socio-economic stratification of Nigeria.

However, as a critic, Box (2015, p.102) argues that the theoretical framework emphasises too much on the concepts of efficiency and effectiveness, as such, overlooking relevant variables like equity, fairness and citizen's participation, leading to a narrow focus on streamlining process and reducing costs, critically at the expense of more nuanced and responsive service delivery. The criticism notwithstanding, Public Service Delivery Theory delves into the dynamics undermining efforts towards addressing corruption and gap in socio-economic growth and development of the Nigerian federation.

Methodology Research Design

The research survey utilised mixed-methods approach, involving quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics were analysed, using percentage, and chi- square to test hypotheses raised.

Population

Population of the research survey covers the Nigerian state, with the 2006 population census' computation representing the population size. As such, the study's population size is one hundred and forty million, four hundred and thirty-one thousand, seven hundred and ninety thousand (140,431,790).

$$1 + \left(\frac{e}{N}\right)^2$$

, where

n = Sample size

N = Population size 1 = constant

e = Margin of error (5%) with confidence level of 95%. Therefore, sample size calculated thus;

$$= \frac{140,431,790}{140,431,790}$$

;

$$= \frac{140,431,790}{140,431,790} = 399.9, \quad \text{approximately } 400.$$

$$1 + \left(\frac{140,431,790}{140,431,790} \cdot 0.0025\right)^2$$

$$1 + 351,079.475$$

$$351,080.475$$

Sampling Technique

Using mixed-methods approach, simple random sampling, complemented with purposive sampling were used to identify and generate data from four hundred (400) respondents. Steadfastness, guidance, and patience enabled the retrieval of the whole instrument glitch-free.

Four-point scale Likert structured questionnaire was committed including oral interview conducted among stakeholders.

Method of Data Analysis

The research made use of quantitative method, as such, percentage (%) and chi-square were utilised to analyse data and test hypotheses.

Data Collection Instrument

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table One: Age, Gender, Education, and Employment

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Total %
i.	Gender Female Male Total	104 296 400	26 74	100
ii.	Age: 18 years and above	400	100	100
iii.	Education Primary Secondary Tertiary Total	97 116 187 400	24 29 47	100
iv.	Employment Civil/Public Servant Private Sector Employee Entrepreneurs Total	107 96 197 400	27 24 49	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Data Presentation and Analyses

Question One: How does corruption influence inequality in Nigeria?

Table Two: Response Analysis

S/N	Research Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
i.	Corruption obstructs innovation and productivity, causing brain drain and laxity among the vulnerable in majority.	92 23%	82 20%	120 30%	106 27%
ii.	Corruptions deprives majority of the people basic amenities such as schools, healthcare facility.	82 20%	96 24%	106 27%	116 29%
iii.	Corruption discourages investment in sectors that benefit the poor, increasing unemployment rate, depriving majority of the citizens income/ wealth creation, causing inequality.	68 17%	87 22%	112 28%	133 33%
iv.	Corrupt practices in government institutions worsen business productivity and competitiveness in Nigeria, heightening inequality among the citizens.	72 18%	91 23%	118 29%	119 30%
v.	The phenomenon is used for political manipulation such as vote-buying and bribery, leading to bad governance/representation.	97 24%	92 23%	114 29%	97 24%

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Question two: What impact does corruption has on socio-economic development of Nigeria?

Table Three: Response Analysis

S/N	Research Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
i.	Corruption hinders human capital development, as it limits investment in educational infrastructure, affecting socio-economic development.	93 23%	78 20%	110 27%	119 30%

ii.	It significantly affect overall quality of life of majority of people, increasing stress, anxiety and emotions, including weakening social status of the people.	82 21%	73 18%	102 26%	143 36%
iii.	Corruption exacerbates insecurity, obstructing food security and shelter needs of majority of the people.	79 20%	82 21%	118 30%	121 30%
iv.	Corruption enhances/sustains social status of the few, weakens socio-economic progress of the majority, increasing vices, such as armed robbery, whoredom, kidnapping, as well as terrorism, hampering national integration/ national security.	65 16%	76 19%	123 31%	136 34%
v.	Corruption complicates health challenges, increasing mortality rate among the vulnerable majority.	71 18%	85 21%	116 29%	128 32%

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Question three: Why is corruption a recurring phenomenon in Nigeria? Table Four: Response Analysis

S/N	Research Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
i.	Corruption persists among the elites in Nigeria to maximise state powers and resources.	74 18%	79 20%	103 26%	144 36%
ii.	Corruption persists for individuals / groups' material gains	83 21%	88 22%	121 30%	108 27%
iii.	Corruption persists due to weak public institutions, depriving the citizens of accountability from government / representatives and other public officials.	72 18%	78 19%	108 27%	142 36%
iv.	External collaboration strengthens corruption in Nigeria, causing loss of public resources, threatening socio-economic growth and development.	88 22%	69 17%	121 30%	122 31%

v.	Corruption persists in the country due to politicisation of anti-graft agencies, obstructing them from operating independently and effectively.	89 22%	57 15%	109 27%	145 36%
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Source: Survey Data, 2025

Interpretation of Results Demographic Representation

From the analyses, the following interpretations were provided.

First and foremost, the first table captures the demographic features of respondents and indicates that on **gender**, 107 female, representing 26% and 296 male of 74% constitute the respondents. On **education**, 97 respondents of 24% attended primary school, 116 representing 29% response, completed secondary education, while, 187 constituting 47% response passed through tertiary education. On **employment status**, the table indicates that 107 respondents, representing 27% response were civil/public servants, 96 of them, representing 24% engaged in the private employment sector, while, 197 (49%) were businessmen and women respectively.

Interpretation of Research Questions' Responses

Table two handling question one's five items shows the following response from respondents. **Item one** indicates that 92 (23%) respondents, strongly disagree, 82 (20%) disagree, 120 (30%) agree and 106 (27%) strongly agree, that corruption obstructs innovation and productivity, causing brain drain and laxity among the vulnerable in majority. **Item two** shows that 82 (20%) strongly disagree, 96 (24%) disagree, 106 (27%) agree and 116 (29%) strongly agree, that corruption deprives majority of the people basic amenities such as education, healthcare service, among others. **Item three** reveals that 68 respondents, representing 17% response strongly disagree, 87 respondent of 22% response disagree, 112 of them representing 28% response agree, and 133 representing 33% of their response, strongly agree, that corruption discourages investment in important sectors that

tend to benefit the poor, heightening unemployment rate and depriving majority of the people income and wealth creation, leading to inequality. **Item four** sub-question indicates that while 72 respondents of 18% response, strongly disagree, 91 of 23% disagree, 118 representing 29% agree, and 119 of 30% strongly agree, that corrupt practices in government institutions worsen business productivity and competitiveness in Nigeria, increasing inequality among the citizens usually in their majority. **Item five** shows that 97 respondents representing 24% response, strongly disagree, 92 of 23% response, disagree, 114 of 29% response agree, and 97 representing 24%, strongly agree, that corruption is increasingly used for political manipulations such as vote-buying and bribery, eluding the people of good representation in governments.

Table three taking care of research question two with five items reveals thus: **Item one** indicates that 93 respondents covering 23% response, strongly disagree, 78 representing 20% of the responses, disagree, 110 of 27% response, agree, and 119 representing 30% response, strongly agree, that corruption obstructs human development, since it limits investment in educational infrastructure, affecting socio-economic development of Nigeria. **Item two** reveals that 82 respondents representing 21% response, strongly disagree, 73 of 18% response, disagree, 102 representing 26% response, agree, and 143 of them representing 36 % response, strongly agree, that corruption significantly affect the overall quality of life majority of the people in Nigeria, causing increase in stress, anxiety and emotions, as well as weakening their social statuses. **Item three** shows that 79 respondents of 20% response, strongly disagree, 82 of them representing 21% response, disagree, 118 respondents of 30% response, agree and 121

representing 30% response, strongly agree, that corruption exacerbates insecurity, causing obstruction to food security and shelter need of majority of the people in the country. **Item four** shows that 65 respondents of 16% response, strongly disagree, 76 of them representing 19% response, disagree, 123 of 31% agree, and 136 representing 34% response, strongly agree, that corruption enhances and/or sustains social status of the few, weakens socio-economic progress of the majority, causing increase in vices such as armed robbery, whoredom, kidnapping, including perpetuating terrorism, hampering national security and national integration in the country. **Item five** indicates that 71 respondents representing 18% response, strongly disagree, 85 of them representing 21% response, disagree, 116 of 29% response, agree and 128 representing 32% response, strongly agree, that corruption complicates health challenges, increasing mortality rate among the vulnerable majority.

Table four handling research question three and its five items reveals the following: **Item one** indicates that 74 respondents representing 18% response, strongly disagree, 79 of 20% response, disagree, 103 representing 26% response, agree, and 144 of them representing 36% response, strongly agree, that corruption persists among the elites in Nigeria for selfish personal interests, maximising state's powers and resources. **Item two** reveals that 83 respondents of 21% response, strongly disagree, 88 of them representing 22% response, disagree,

121 respondents of 30% response, agree, and 108 representing 27% response, strongly agree, that corruption persists for individuals and groups' material gains. **Item three** indicates that 72 respondents of 18% response, strongly disagree, 78 of them representing 19% response, disagree, 108 respondents of 27%, agree, and 142 respondents representing 36% response, strongly agree, that corruption is perennial in the country as a result of weak public institutions, depriving majority of the citizens accountability from governments, representatives and other

public officials. **Item four** shows that 88 respondents representing 22% response, strongly disagree, 69 of them representing 17% response, disagree, 121 of 17% response, agree, and 122 representing 31% response strongly agree, that external collaboration strengthens corruption in Nigeria, causing loss of public wealth and threatening socio-economic growth and development. **Item five** indicates that 89 respondents representing 22% response, strongly disagree, 57 of them representing 15% response, disagree, 109 respondents representing 27% response, agree, and 145 representing 36% response, strongly agree, that corruption persists in Nigeria due to politicisation of anti-graft agencies, hindering their independence and effectiveness.

Testing of Hypotheses

Chi-square was used to statistically test the three hypotheses raised, in tandem with the research questions and their responses.

Hypothesis one: Corruption does not influence inequality among the vulnerable in majority. Table five: Statistical Computation

F _o	F _e	F _o - F _e	(F _o - F _e) ²	(F _o - F _e) ²
				F _e
859	1000	-141	19881	19.881
1141	1000	141	19881	19.881
2000	2000	0	39762	39.76

Calculated value = 39.76 Source: Survey Data, 2025

Degrees of freedom (df) = $k - 1$, = $2 - 1 = 1df$

Decision

Calculated value of 39.76 is $>$ critical value of 3.84 at 1df (degree of freedom) of 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis (H_0) is duly rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_R) is

accepted accordingly.

Hypothesis two: No significant relationship exist between corruption and inequality, and majority of Nigerians.

Table six: Statistical Computation

F_o	F_e	$F_o - F_e$	$(F_o - F_e)^2$	$\frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e}$
784	1000	-216	46656	46.656
1216	1000	216	46656	46.656
2000	2000	0	93312	93.31

Calculated Value = 93.31 Source: Survey Data, 2025

Degrees of freedom (df) = $k - 1$ df = $2 - 1 = 1df$

Decision

With a total calculated value of 39.76 $>$ critical value of 3.84 at 1df of 0.05 level of significance, the

alternative hypothesis (H_R) is wholly accepted against the null hypothesis (H_0) rejected accordingly.

Hypothesis three: Corruption is not a perennial phenomenon in Nigeria. Table Seven: Statistical Computation

F_o	F_e	$F_o - F_e$	$(F_o - F_e)^2$	$\frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e}$
777	1000	-223	49729	49.729
1223	1000	223	49729	49.729
2000	2000	0	99458	99.46

Calculated value; 99.46 Source: Survey Data, 2025

Degrees of freedom (df) = $k - 1$ = $2 - 1 = 1df$

Decision

Since overall calculated value of 99.46 is $>$ critical value of 3.84 at 1df or 0.05 level of significance, the study's null hypothesis (H_0) is also rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is duly accepted.

Discussion of Findings

From the analyses, major findings include:

1 .Majority opinions indicate that corruption

neither enhances progress nor sustains growth, but rather, constrains socio-economic development in political systems including Nigeria, where it pervades. This findings is in tandem with Hoffman's (2020) position that, Nigeria's corruption challenges are central to her contentious insecurity, inequality and inadequate provision of public goods and services.
2. The research equally revealed that corruption

has significantly broadened the gap between the minority rich and the majority poor, skyrocketing the living standards of some people into what was considered the balanced homes, and the abject poverty infested households in the country. This observation is unarguably corroborated by Akinyade and Uche's (2018, p.12) perception that corruption has the capacity to create unequal access to resources, such as education, healthcare and economic opportunities among the citizens.

3 The study also found that corruption is hydra-headed and human-made (particularly by the elites) with the aim to perpetuate themselves in public offices for personal or collective gains. This finding is clearly in line with responses obtained in question three's item one, where 103 respondents, representing 26% response and 144 respondents of 36% response (247 of 62%), agree and strongly agree that corruption persists in Nigeria for selfish personal interest, and maximising state's resources.

4 The research observed that corruption has significant negative impact on majority of the citizens. The finding is authenticated by the chi-square's 93.31 calculated value nullifying hypothesis two's statement that there is no significant relationship between corruption and inequality in the Nigeria,

5 Last but not the least, it was observed that corruption hinders socio-economic development, exacerbates poor living standards, and affecting overall quality of life of majority of the people. This finding is authenticated by response to question two, item one, where overwhelming majority of 219 respondents, representing significant 57% response, agree and strongly agree that, corruption hinders human capital development as it limits investment in educational infrastructure, affecting socio-economic development in the country.

Conclusion

Corruption constitutes major hindrance to national growth and development of the Nigerian federation. It obstructs individual and/or collective efforts aimed at raising standards of living and

overall quality of life of majority, due to lack of basic social facilities such as education, healthcare services and economic activities. The human-propelled cankerworm has created gap in the socio-economic development space, spurring vices such as, kidnapping for ransom, increasing whoredom particularly among the female, heightening civil disobedience among the nation's male, particularly the nation's energetic youth, as well as exposing the citizens to high risks.

Recommendations

Therefore, the following recommendations towards addressing corruption issues in the country are proffered. They are:

1. Transparency and accountability be strictly upheld by public office holders and their proxies in the application of constitutional and other statutory provisions meant to achieve national growth and development.

2 Federal Government should endeavor to address security challenges in the country, so as to reinvigorate majority's participation in agriculture, to create employment opportunity and income generation, as well as reduce food insecurity in the country.

3 The provisions of Freedom of Information (FOI) law should be strictly implemented, allowing individuals or groups to have access to information for academic or non-academic purpose, aimed to enhance governance, or cause growth and development in the country. As such, all public office holders (politicians and civil servants) including the private sector, be mandated to without delay or refusal, attend to citizen(s) seeking information in such direction.

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