

## IMPACT OF CORRUPTION ON CIVIL SERVICE DELIVERY IN KANO STATE, NIGERIA (2019–2023)

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### Abstract

Corruption is currently the major obstacle to effective civil service delivery, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. This study examines the impact of corruption on civil service delivery in Kano State between 2019 and 2023. Specifically, it investigates the prevalence of corruption, its effects on essential service delivery in the education and healthcare sectors, and the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures within the period. The study adopts a descriptive survey design and employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative data from structured questionnaires with qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews. A sample of 300 respondents was drawn from civil servants, anti-corruption agencies, and service beneficiaries using simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were used for data analysis. The study found a high prevalence of corruption in the civil service, with a majority of respondents perceiving corruption as widespread. Regression results indicate that corruption has a statistically significant negative effect on service delivery, leading to poor quality of services, delays, and limited access to education and healthcare. Furthermore, the study finds that anti-corruption measures implemented during the period were not significantly effective, largely due to weak institutional capacity, limited autonomy, and inadequate enforcement mechanisms. The study concludes that corruption substantially undermines civil service delivery in Kano State and poses a serious threat to socio-economic development. It recommends strengthening anti-corruption institutions, enhancing transparency and accountability mechanisms, promoting ethical reorientation among public officials, and encouraging community participation in monitoring public service delivery.

**Keywords:** Corruption, Civil Service, Essential Service Delivery, Kano State

### Introduction

Corruption is a global phenomenon that undermines governance and weakens the foundations of society. It erodes public trust in institutions, diminishes the efficiency of government services, and hinders social and economic development. In developing nations like Nigeria, corruption is particularly detrimental, as it compounds existing challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and

inadequate infrastructure. Corruption in civil service has become pervasive, with far-reaching consequences for citizens' welfare. It manifests in various forms, including embezzlement, bribery, nepotism, and the misuse of public resources for private gain. These corrupt practices often lead to the misallocation of resources, poor project execution, and a general decline in the quality of civil services.

In Nigeria, civil service delivery is an essential aspect of governance, covering a broad spectrum of sectors including education, healthcare, agriculture, transportation, and infrastructure development. Effective service delivery is key to improving the quality of life for citizens and fostering economic growth. However, corruption has significantly impeded the ability of government institutions to provide these essential services effectively. The funds meant for improving public welfare are often diverted for personal gain, leaving essential services unfunded, underfunded or poorly managed. The consequences of corruption are felt most acutely by vulnerable populations, who rely heavily on government-provided services.

Kano State, Nigeria's most populous state and a significant hub for economic activities, is not free from the impact of corruption that is widespread in Nigeria. Despite various reforms and anti-corruption initiatives, the state continues to face challenges in civil service delivery. Between 2019 and 2023, numerous instances of corruption were reported across different sectors of the civil service in Kano State. For instance, in early 2019, the former Governor of the State, Abdullahi Umar Ganduje was accused of collecting bribes in US Dollars from several companies undertaking contracts in the state, in the early months of 2023. Also, the state ministry for Local Government was accused of fraudulently diverting the sum of N440m (N10m from each of the 44 LGs in the State) (The Guardian Nigeria, 2024). These resulted in the ICPC and the state anti-corruption commission making several arrests. This has resulted in inefficient service delivery, a decline in infrastructure quality, and a general lack of public confidence in government institutions. The education and healthcare sectors have been particularly affected, with widespread reports of fund mismanagement and bureaucratic inefficiencies.

Given the gravity of the situation, there is an urgent need to assess the extent to which corruption has impacted civil service delivery in Kano State. This study sought to examine the nature of corruption within the public sector, analyze its effects on essential services, and evaluate the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures implemented between 2019 and 2023. By providing a thorough analysis of the situation, the research aimed to contribute to ongoing discussions on how to combat corruption and improve governance, particularly in the context of civil service delivery. Despite the growing body of literature on corruption and public sector performance in Nigeria, significant gaps remain, particularly at the subnational level. Existing studies have largely focused on national trends or broad sectoral analyses, with limited empirical attention to how corruption specifically affects civil service delivery within individual states such as Kano State. Furthermore,

while prior research often examines corruption in isolated sectors like healthcare or education, there is a lack of integrated analysis that captures its cross-sectoral impact on overall service delivery. There is also insufficient recent, evidence-based assessment of corruption dynamics within the 2019–2023 period, especially in relation to the effectiveness of anti-corruption institutions such as the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission and state-level bodies. This study therefore, fills these gaps by providing a comprehensive, time-bound, and context-specific analysis of how corruption influences civil service delivery in Kano State, offering insights that are both empirically grounded and policy-relevant.

The study also explored the broader implications of corruption for Kano State's social and economic development. As civil service delivery is a cornerstone of any functional government, understanding how corruption affects this process is crucial for creating effective solutions. The findings of this research will not only inform policy changes in Kano State but may also serve as a reference point for other regions in Nigeria facing similar challenges in governance and service delivery.

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

Despite numerous anti-corruption policies and agencies in Nigeria, corruption continues to thrive, particularly in the public sector. In Kano State, civil services such as education, healthcare, and social welfare programs have been heavily affected by corrupt practices. Public officials frequently misappropriate funds, inflate contracts, and engage in nepotism, which undermines efficient service delivery. For instance, the alleged collection of a dollar bribe, the N440m scandals and host of other cases like the alleged illicit withdrawal of over N20m from the protocol directorate immediately after Ganduje administration lost 2023 elections have resulted in the ICPC and the state anti-corruption commission to have made several arrests. However, these actions did not significantly reduce corruption in the state. In 2023, the commissioner for rural and community development and the director of protocol to the State Governor were accused of fraud and money laundering to the tune of over 6.5 billion naira (Yusuf, 2025). Although there are numerous research works that focus on the impact of corruption on civil service delivery in Africa and beyond, the case of Nigeria and specifically that of Kano State has not been adequately studied. This research seeks to assess the extent to which corruption has impacted the delivery of civil services in Kano State from 2019 to 2023 and to identify key areas for reform. To achieve this, the study has answered the following questions: (i) What is the nature of corruption in civil service in Kano State? (ii) How has corruption affected the delivery of essential civil services between 2019 and 2023 in Kano State? (iii) How effective were the anti-corruption measures implemented during the period under review? Consequently, the study sought to: (i) examine the nature and prevalence of corruption in civil service in Kano State from 2019-2023, (ii) analyze how corruption affected civil service delivery in Kano State from 2019-2023,

and (iii) assess the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures in Kano State between 2019 and 2023. To do justice to the aforementioned objectives, the study formulated and tested the following hypotheses:

Ho1: Corruption has not significantly affected civil service delivery in Kano State between 2019-2023,

Ho2: The anti-corruption measures were not significantly effective in tackling corruption in the Kano State civil service between 2019 and 2023.

## **Literature Review**

### **Concept of Corruption**

Corruption has been widely defined as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain, typically involving public officials in positions of authority. Transparency International (2021) defines corruption as the misuse of public office for personal benefit, which can manifest in various forms such as bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, and favoritism. While this definition is widely accepted, the scope of the concept is broader. The act of corruption for instance, cannot be restricted to abuse of public office. When power and influence of any nature are abused, the act of corruption can be said to have taken place. Furthermore, corruption does not only lead to personal or financial gains. The gains can also be nonfinancial, such as material or even awarding a favour or privilege not in tandem with the provisions of the law.

Corruption can be categorized into two major types: grand corruption and petty corruption. Grand corruption involves large-scale misappropriation of resources by high-level officials, while petty corruption typically occurs at the lower levels of government and affects day-to-day transactions with civil services (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). This study focuses on both types. Corruption is particularly prevalent in developing countries, where weak institutions, inadequate enforcement of laws, and a lack of accountability mechanisms create an environment conducive to corrupt practices. According to Kaufmann and Vicente (2011), countries with high levels of corruption tend to experience economic inefficiencies, slow development, and a reduction in foreign investment, all of which impede their ability to deliver quality civil services.

### **Civil Service Delivery**

Civil service delivery refers to the mechanisms through which the government provides essential services to its citizens, including education, healthcare, water supply, sanitation, and infrastructure development. The process through which government services are made accessible to the general public is called civil service delivery. These services are crucial for the well-being and development of a society. Effective civil service delivery depends on the efficient allocation of resources, transparency in governance, and accountability among public officials (Grindle, 2010).

However, when corruption infiltrates these systems, the result is misallocation of resources, lower-quality services, and inefficiencies in public institutions.

Nigeria's civil service delivery has historically been hampered by various factors, including corruption, political interference, and inadequate funding. Several studies have pointed to the strong correlation between corruption and inefficiency in civil services, particularly in sectors such as healthcare and education (Adebayo, 2021). The inability of public institutions to effectively deliver services undermines the trust of the populace and exacerbates poverty, inequality, and social unrest.

### **Healthcare Services:**

Healthcare services can be defined as a set of organized activities and interventions delivered through health systems to provide preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic, and supportive care aimed at improving patient outcomes and system efficiency. "Healthcare services are organized, evidence-based interventions delivered by health systems and professionals to individuals and populations, encompassing preventive, promotive, curative, rehabilitative, and palliative care, with the aim of improving health outcomes and ensuring quality and efficiency in care delivery" (World Health Organization, 2025).

A good healthcare system is critical for social and economic development in the society as the latter cannot take place without a health workforce. Despite its importance, however, the healthcare sector in Kano State has been severely affected by corruption, particularly in the allocation of resources for public hospitals and health programs. During the 2019–2023 period, several healthcare projects were stalled or even abandoned due to corruption-related reasons, leading to inadequate medical facilities and limited access to essential medications (Muhammad, 2021). Prominent cases include the construction of Dandaji Medical Centre in Dala LGA, Rangaza Medical Centre type C2 Project in Ungogo LGA, Dariya Health Post in Tudun Wada LGA (Yusuf, 2024). These challenges disproportionately affected rural communities, where healthcare access was already limited.

### **Concept of Education**

Education is a fundamental pillar of human development and social transformation. According to UNESCO, (2015), education is a process of facilitating learning, knowledge acquisition, skills development, values formation, and social integration. It extends beyond formal schooling to include informal and non-formal learning systems.

Education is typically analyzed across three major dimensions: (i) Access: The extent to which individuals can enroll in and attend school, (ii) Quality: The effectiveness of teaching, curriculum,

and learning outcomes and (iii) Equity: Fair distribution of educational opportunities across gender, class, and geography.

In Nigeria, particularly in northern regions such as Kano State, challenges persist across all three dimensions, especially in terms of access and equity.

Education systems are commonly categorized into three: (i) Formal Education: Structured learning within schools and institutions, (ii) Non-formal Education: Organized learning outside formal systems (e.g., adult literacy programs and Almajiri schools) and (iii) Informal Education: Lifelong learning acquired through daily experiences. The focus of this study is formal education. The Universal Basic Education Commission emphasizes formal basic education as a critical driver of national development, aiming to provide free and compulsory education at the primary and junior secondary levels.

Education is widely regarded as a public good because of its positive externalities, such as improved productivity, reduced poverty, and enhanced civic participation. The World Bank (2013) highlights that investment in education contributes significantly to economic growth and human capital development.

However, effective delivery depends on: Adequate funding, transparent governance, Qualified teachers and functional infrastructure. Weaknesses in these areas, often linked to corruption, undermine educational outcomes.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical foundation for this study is built on two key theories: The Principal-Agent Theory and the Rent-Seeking Theory. These theories provide a basis for understanding the dynamics of corruption in civil service delivery and offer insights into the mechanisms through which corruption manifests in public institutions.

### **Principal-Agent Theory**

The principal-Agent Theory was propounded by Jensen and Meckling (1976). The theory posits that corruption arises when there is a misalignment between the interests of public officials (agents) and the general public (principals). In a civil service context, the government (the principal) entrusts public officials (the agents) to manage resources and deliver services to the populace. However, when there is inadequate oversight and accountability, public officials may exploit their positions for personal gain at the expense of public interest (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). In Kano State, the absence of robust monitoring systems and the weak enforcement of anti-corruption laws have allowed public officials to engage in corrupt practices without facing significant consequences.

### **Rent-Seeking Theory**

Rent-Seeking Theory was developed by Gordon Tullock (1967) and popularized by Anne Krueger in 1974. The theory explains how individuals or groups seek to increase their wealth without contributing to productivity by manipulating the political and regulatory environment (Krueger, 1974). In the context of civil service delivery, rent-seeking behavior manifests when public officials use their positions to extract rents through bribery, kickbacks, or the diversion of public funds. This behavior distorts resource allocation and reduces the efficiency of civil service delivery, as seen in Kano State, where corruption has led to the misallocation of funds and the abandonment of critical public projects.

### **Research Methodology**

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the impact of corruption on service delivery in Kano State. A mixed-method approach was employed to enhance the depth, validity, and reliability of the findings through triangulation.

The population of the study comprised civil servants in Kano State, officials of main anti-corruption agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), and the Kano State Public Complaints and Anti-Corruption Commission, as well as beneficiaries of public services in the education and healthcare sectors. A sample size of 300 respondents was selected, which is considered adequate for a heterogeneous population, as supported by Taro Yamane (1967) and Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The study used both simple random and purposive sampling techniques to ensure equal chances of selection and include knowledgeable respondents such as senior officials and anti-corruption experts.

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through structured questionnaires administered to junior civil servants and service beneficiaries, and semi-structured interviews conducted with senior officials to generate qualitative perceptions. Secondary data were sourced from academic journals, government reports, and publications from anti-corruption agencies to provide background information. The reliability of the research instrument was ensured using Cronbach's Alpha, as developed by Lee Cronbach (1951), with a minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70. A pilot study was also conducted to refine the instrument and improve clarity. Validity was established through content, construct, and face validity by aligning the instrument with relevant literature and theoretical frameworks, and through expert review. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods further enhanced validity via triangulation.

Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics. Simple percentages were used to analyze the first research objective, while multiple regression analysis was used to test Hypotheses

1 and 2 by testing the relationship between corruption-related variables and service delivery. The regression model is specified as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 C + \beta_2 T + \beta_3 A + \epsilon$$

Where:

- Y = service delivery
- C = Curreption
- T = Transparency
- A = Accountability

The coefficients measure the direction and magnitude of the relationships, while the error term captures unexplained variation. This analytical approach is appropriate for assessing the impact and statistical significance of corruption on service delivery.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

#### Impact of Corruption on Civil Service Delivery

**Table 1:**

***Perceived level of Corruption in Kano State Civil service***

Perception Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Very High	165	55.0
High	90	30.0
Moderate	30	10.0
Low	15	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents (55%) perceive corruption in civil services as very high, while 30% consider it high. Only 10% view it as moderate, and 5% see it as low. This reflects the widespread belief that corruption is rampant in the civil services in Kano State.

### Summary of Regression Analysis/Results

The table below summarizes the results of the regression analysis on hypotheses 3 and 4.

**Table 2:**

***Summary of Regression Analysis/Results***

Hypotheses	Statement of Hypotheses/Results	Decision
H0 <sub>3</sub>	Corruption has not significantly affected the provision of essential services such as education and health (R-value of 0.541, R-square of 0.292 and <i>P-value of 0.000</i> , less than 0.05)	Rejected
H0 <sub>4</sub>	The anti-corruption measures were not significantly effective to tackle corruption in Kano State civil	Failed to reject

service between 2019 and 2023 (R-value of 0.398  
and *P-value* of 0.148, greater than 0.05)

**Source:** Field Survey and Regression Analysis, 2025

### **Summary of Major Findings**

The findings from the analysis indicate that:

- There is a general perception of high levels of corruption in Kano State's civil services. A significant majority of respondents perceive corruption in civil service as very high (55%), indicating a widespread and pervasive corruption within the civil service.
- The second hypothesis aims at investigating whether corruption has a significant impact on provision of social services such as education and healthcare in Kano State between 2019-2023. The regression results show a strong relationship between the independent variable (I.V.) and the dependent variable (D.V.) as indicated by the value of R (0.379). While the explanatory power of the I.V. as indicated by R-square stood at 0.244, and the p-value of 0.000, which is less than 5% level of significance, shows a failure of the null hypothesis to be accepted. This implies that corruption has significantly affected the provision of essential services like education and healthcare in Kano State within the period under study. In more elaborate terms, corruption in Kano State has led to funds diversion, reduced quality of services, delays and limited access to essential services like education and healthcare. These maladies resulted in an increased rate of school dropouts from approximately 989,234 to over 1,000,000 primary school pupils in Kano State. This increased the challenges of completing primary school to 24% in the nation, with northern states like Kano recording the highest rate, according to UNICEF (Nigeriaeye, 2025). This, according to UNICEF, was caused by poverty, limited educational infrastructure and failure of the School Feeding Programme, which was another hub of corruption and bribery in Kano State. This implies that the impact of corruption on the delivery of educational services in Kano State includes: inflated contracts for school infrastructure, diversion of education funds, ghost workers on payroll and so forth. These issues contribute to overcrowded classrooms and inadequate learning facilities.
- On the part of healthcare services, corruption is linked to reduced public expenditure on health, which gives rise to limited access to quality healthcare services, reduced provision of healthcare infrastructure, excessive labor turnover in the sector and so on. These findings are in consonance with the findings of Chei, Suman and Gaston, (2024). That means the health sector in Kano State is characterized by: Poorly equipped primary healthcare centers, delays in implementation of health policies, misallocation of funds intended for free maternal and child healthcare, informal payments force patients to pay for supposedly free services, and bribery leads to preferential treatment (queue jumping). Evidence shows that informal payments directly influence health-seeking behaviour, reducing utilization of public facilities.

Corruption in the healthcare sector also contributes to: absenteeism of medical staff, leading to closed or understaffed facilities, over-prescription and unnecessary tests for profit motives, diversion of drugs and medical supplies and so on. These practices reduce service quality and increase mortality risks, especially in maternal and child health.

- The third hypothesis states that the anti-corruption measures were not significantly effective to tackle corruption in Kano State. When the I.V. (anti-corruption measures) was regressed against the D.V. (tackling corruption in Kano State), the result was a p-value of 0.082, which was greater than 5% level of significance. This means the null hypothesis was accepted. It therefore implies that the anti-corruption measures that were in place between 2019-2023 in Kano State were not significantly effective in tackling corruption. In other words, the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the current anti-corruption measures and efforts in place. The qualitative data from the interview also corroborated this view by indicating that the ICPC, EFCC and even the state public complaints and anti-corruption commission lack the strength, expertise, freedom or adequate corrupt-free personnel to tackle corruption in the state.

These findings are in line with the findings of Isiaq and Lawal (2022), who found that anti-corruption agencies in Osun State have failed to tackle corruption due to a lack of autonomy.

## **Conclusion**

The study concludes that corruption significantly undermined civil service delivery in Kano State between 2019 and 2023. This conclusion is strongly supported by the rejection of Ho1, as findings reveal that corruption is both widespread and perceived as very high by the majority of respondents, indicating its deep-rooted presence within the civil service system.

Similarly, Ho2 was rejected, demonstrating that corruption has a statistically significant negative impact on essential service delivery, particularly in the education and healthcare sectors. Evidence from the study shows that corrupt practices such as fund diversion, contract inflation, and administrative inefficiencies have led to poor service quality, limited access, and declining outcomes in these critical sectors.

However, the study failed to reject Ho3, indicating that anti-corruption measures implemented during the study period were not significantly effective. This suggests that institutions responsible for combating corruption lack the autonomy, capacity, and enforcement strength required to produce meaningful results.

Generally, the findings show a clear relationship between high corruption levels, poor service delivery outcomes, and weak institutional responses. The study, therefore, concludes that without

considerable reforms in accountability systems and anti-corruption measures, improvements in civil service delivery in Kano State will remain inadequate.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations were made:

- ✓ **Strengthening Anti-Corruption Agencies:** Agencies like the EFCC and ICPC should be empowered and equipped with adequate resources and authority to investigate and prosecute corruption cases effectively. This will enhance their ability to combat corruption at all levels of government.
- ✓ **Promoting Transparency and Accountability:** Implement transparent processes in civil service delivery, including regular audits and public reporting of service outcomes. Establishing citizen engagement platforms will enable the public to hold service providers accountable.
- ✓ **Capacity Building and Training:** Conduct training programs for civil servants that focus on ethics, integrity, and the consequences of corruption. Building a culture of integrity within public institutions is crucial for sustainable change.
- ✓ **Community Involvement:** Engage communities in monitoring and evaluation processes for civil services. Community watchdogs can help report corruption and ensure that civil services meet the needs of citizens.
- ✓ **Legislative Reforms:** Advocate for legislative changes that strengthen anti-corruption laws and ensure strict penalties for corrupt practices. This will serve as a deterrent to potential offenders.
- ✓ **Enhancing Public Awareness:** Raise awareness about the negative impacts of corruption through public campaigns and education programs. Empowering citizens with knowledge will encourage them to demand accountability and transparency in civil service delivery.

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