

CORRUPTION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ANKPA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KOGI STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the effects of corruption on good governance and sustainable development in Ankpa Local Government Area (LGA) of Kogi State, Nigeria. Corruption at the local government level remains a critical obstacle to democratic governance, effective service delivery, and grassroots development, despite national anti-corruption initiatives. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and drew its population from civil servants, traditional leaders, and residents of Ankpa LGA. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 200 respondents from an estimated population of 350. Data were collected through structured questionnaires while both primary and secondary data sources were utilized. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests. The results revealed a statistically significant relationship between corruption and poor governance outcomes, particularly in terms of transparency, accountability, and public participation. The study further found that corruption adversely affects sustainable development indicators such as infrastructure provision, healthcare delivery, and educational development, with a high incidence of abandoned and poorly executed projects. The study concluded that corruption is a major impediment to good governance and sustainable development in Ankpa LGA and recommended strengthening accountability mechanisms, enhancing institutional oversight, and promoting community participation as measures for sustainable governance and development.

Keywords: Corruption, Good Governance, Sustainable Development, Local Government, Ankpa LGA, Kogi State.

1.0 Introduction

Sustainable development, which involves meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs, remains a major goal of governments worldwide (Brundtland Commission, 1987; Sachs, 2015). It encompasses economic growth, social inclusion, infrastructural development, and improved quality of life. Achieving sustainable development depends largely on

effective governance, transparency, accountability, and efficient management of public resources (UNDP, 2015). However, corruption has emerged as a major obstacle to sustainable development, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria, where public resources intended for development are often diverted or mismanaged (Transparency International, 2023; UNODC, 2021). Corruption broadly defined as the misuse or abuse of public office for private gain continues to undermine governance and development globally (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). In Nigeria, corruption weakens institutional effectiveness, reduces public trust, and hinders the delivery of essential services such as healthcare, education, electricity, and infrastructure, all of which are critical to sustainable development (Mauro, 1995; UNDP, 2022). According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), public officials in Nigeria collected an estimated ₦721 billion in cash bribes in 2023, representing about 0.35% of the country's GDP (NBS, 2023). The report further revealed approximately 87 million bribery incidents nationwide, indicating the persistence of corruption within public institutions. Empirical studies confirm that corruption negatively affects public service delivery and development outcomes. Research by Ojo (2020) and Nwankwo (2018) found that corruption reduces service efficiency, deteriorates infrastructure, and weakens public confidence in government institutions. At the local government level, corruption has been associated with embezzlement of development funds, weak oversight mechanisms, and neglect of basic amenities such as roads, water supply, healthcare, and public buildings (Akinyele, 2019; Ezeani, 2021). These challenges contribute to underdevelopment and socio-economic stagnation. Given this national reality, similar conditions are likely present in Ankpa Local Government Area (LGA) of Kogi State. Although documented statistics on corruption in Ankpa LGA are limited, preliminary observations indicate the existence of fund mismanagement, favoritism, bureaucratic inefficiency, and weak accountability systems, resulting in poor infrastructure and inadequate public services (Afolabi, 2020). Against this backdrop, the present study investigates the extent to which corruption affects good governance and sustainable development in Ankpa LGA. Specifically, the study aims to:

- i. Assess the impact of corruption on governance practices particularly transparency, accountability, and public participation.
- ii. Evaluate the effects of corruption on sustainable development indicators such as infrastructure quality, access to education and healthcare, and overall socio-economic growth

2.0 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Concept of Corruption

Corruption is widely defined as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). This definition, commonly used in academic and policy literature, captures the ethical and functional dimensions of corrupt practices in both public and private sectors (Mauro, 1995; UNODC, 2021). The concept rests on three core elements: entrusted authority, the abuse of that

authority through non-transparent or biased actions, and the pursuit of personal, familial, or partisan benefits at the expense of public interest (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). Some scholars further emphasize public harm as a defining feature, distinguishing corruption from mere inefficiency or administrative errors (Pritchett & Woolcock, 2004).

Corruption manifests in multiple, often interconnected forms. These include bribery, embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds, nepotism and favoritism in appointments and contract awards, extortion and influence-peddling, fraud and money laundering, and abuse of discretion or conflicts of interest (Klitgaard, 1991; Mauro, 1995; U4, 2017; Transparency International, 2023). These practices demonstrate that corruption goes beyond overt financial malfeasance to include systemic manipulation of rules and institutions, posing serious challenges to governance and development (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016).

Good Governance and Corruption

Good governance refers to the exercise of authority through transparent, accountable, participatory, equitable, and rule-based processes that ensure effective and efficient management of public resources for societal benefit (Ayuba, 2014; UNDP, 2022). Its core principles include transparency, accountability, rule of law, public participation, responsiveness, effectiveness, and equity (UNDP, 2022). When properly implemented, good governance strengthens institutional performance and promotes inclusive development (El Rufai, 2014; Oji, 2020).

Corruption directly undermines these principles. Weak governance systems create opportunities for corruption, while corrupt practices further erode institutional capacity and governance quality, creating a self-reinforcing cycle (UNODC, 2021; Transparency International, 2023). Specifically, corruption reduces transparency by concealing public decisions and financial flows, thereby weakening accountability mechanisms (OHCHR, 2016). It also compromises the rule of law as legal and judicial processes become subject to bribery and favoritism, encouraging impunity and eroding public trust (MDPI, 2023).

Furthermore, corruption restricts public participation and inclusiveness by privileging elite interests over collective welfare, deepening inequality and social exclusion (IJCRT, 2019). It weakens government responsiveness and service delivery, as misappropriated funds result in abandoned or substandard projects in sectors such as infrastructure, healthcare, and education (RSIS International, 2021). Corruption also reduces administrative efficiency and effectiveness by distorting resource allocation, inflating project costs, and slowing bureaucratic processes (Journals.univ-danubius.ro, 2022).

The consequences of corruption extend beyond governance failures to broader socio-economic and democratic outcomes. Entrenched corruption weakens state capacity, reduces human development outcomes, and erodes citizen trust in democratic institutions (OJS AMH International, 2022; MDPI, 2023). This decline in trust discourages civic engagement and weakens democratic accountability. In

Nigeria, corruption has been consistently identified as a major constraint on good governance and development, undermining service delivery and socio-economic progress (RCMSS Journals, 2020; Direct Research Publisher Journals, 2019). Across Africa, corruption continues to impede political stability, equity, and sustainable development by undermining institutional legitimacy and social justice (EAJournals, 2018). Global development institutions emphasize that combating corruption and strengthening good governance are essential for achieving sustainable development goals, improving service delivery, and restoring public confidence in government (UNDP, 2022).

Corruption and good governance are intrinsically linked. While good governance relies on transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making, corruption subverts these principles by weakening institutions and distorting public resource management. Addressing corruption is therefore fundamental to strengthening governance, promoting democratic accountability, and achieving sustainable development outcomes (UNODC, 2021; Transparency International, 2023).

Corruption and Sustainable Development

Sustainable development refers to meeting present needs without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet theirs, built on the pillars of economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection (Brundtland Commission, 1987; UNDP, 2015). It emphasizes equitable access to resources, opportunities, and services while ensuring ecological balance for long-term human welfare (Sachs, 2015). Corruption is widely recognized as a major barrier to sustainable development, especially in developing countries (Mauro, 1995; Transparency International, 2023). By diverting public resources through embezzlement, bribery, and mismanagement, corruption reduces investment in essential sectors such as infrastructure, healthcare, education, and social welfare areas critical for improving human development outcomes (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). Consequently, vulnerable populations are disproportionately affected when funds intended for roads, schools, or hospitals are stolen or misused (U4, 2017).

Corruption also distorts public policy priorities, encouraging governments to pursue projects that offer corrupt gains rather than those that meet societal needs (Mauro, 1995; Klitgaard, 1991). This misalignment reduces the effectiveness of public spending, widens inequality, and weakens trust in government institutions (OECD, 2018; UNODC, 2021). Furthermore, corruption undermines institutional capacity by promoting favoritism, regulatory capture, and weak enforcement mechanisms, making it difficult for public institutions to implement development policies efficiently (El-Rufai, 2014; Oji, 2020). Empirical evidence in Nigeria and across Africa shows that corruption contributes significantly to infrastructure decay, poor educational outcomes, inadequate healthcare systems, and high poverty levels (Akinyele, 2019; Ezeani, 2021). At the macro level, high corruption rates are linked to lower investment and slower economic growth, which further hinders sustainable development (Mauro, 1995; Transparency International, 2023).

The impact of corruption also extends to environmental sustainability. Regulatory evasion, bribery, and illegal exploitation of natural resources such as unauthorized mining, logging, and pollution

accelerate environmental degradation and diminish ecosystem resilience (Sachs, 2015; UNODC, 2021). This compromises the ability of ecosystems to support both current and future generations, contradicting the core principles of sustainable development (Brundtland Commission, 1987). In sum, corruption undermines sustainable development by diverting resources, weakening institutions, distorting policy choices, reducing social trust, and contributing to environmental harm (Mauro, 1995; Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). Strengthening governance systems and combating corruption are therefore essential conditions for achieving equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development, particularly in resource-constrained developing contexts (UNDP, 2015; OECD, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the Principal-Agent Theory and Institutional Theory, which together provide a comprehensive understanding of corruption, governance, and sustainable development in Ankpa LGA. According to Jensen and Meckling (1976) and Klitgaard (1991), the Principal-Agent Theory assumes that public officials (agents) are entrusted with authority and resources by citizens (principals), but may act opportunistically to maximize personal gain if proper oversight is absent. Empirical evidence suggests that corruption often arises from information asymmetry, weak accountability, and inadequate monitoring mechanisms, which allow agents to divert public resources and compromise service delivery (Mauro, 1995; Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). The theory highlights that such opportunistic behavior negatively affects infrastructural development, economic growth, and overall societal welfare. It further recommends the strengthening of oversight mechanisms, promotion of transparency and accountability, and alignment of public officials' incentives with public interests (Klitgaard, 1991; Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). Supported by the institutional theory, as proposed by North (1990) and Scott (2004), assumes that organizations operate within formal and informal frameworks, and that institutional structures significantly influence individual and organizational behavior. Weak or poorly enforced institutions facilitate corruption by allowing discretionary power without accountability. Empirical studies indicate that in Nigerian local governments, inadequate institutional capacity, regulatory failure, and bureaucratic inefficiency are major factors enabling corruption, which in turn undermines good governance and sustainable development (El-Rufai, 2014; UNDP, 2022). The theory emphasizes that institutional reforms, strict enforcement of the rule of law, independent oversight, and the strengthening of governance structures are crucial for reducing corruption and promoting sustainable development (North, 1990; Scott, 2004; UNDP, 2022).

Applying these theories, the study conceptualizes corruption in Ankpa LGA as a function of both individual opportunism and systemic institutional weaknesses. The Principal-Agent Theory provides insight into individual-level corrupt behaviors among civil servants, while Institutional Theory explains the systemic and structural factors that enable these practices. Together, these theoretical perspectives justify the focus on how corruption impedes transparency, accountability, public participation, and sustainable development

Empirical Review

Several empirical studies have examined the effects of corruption on governance and sustainable development in Nigeria. Peter Ojo (2020), in a study titled “Mismanagement of Local Government Funds and Access to Basic Services in Nigeria,” investigated how corruption affects service delivery at the local government level. Using a survey research design and questionnaires administered to residents and public officials, the study found that mismanagement of public funds significantly reduced access to healthcare, water supply, and road infrastructure.

Similarly, Chinedu Nwankwo (2018), in “Corruption and Infrastructural Development in Rural Communities of Nigeria,” examined the relationship between corruption and infrastructural development in rural communities. Adopting a correlational research design and analyzing data collected through questionnaires, the study found a strong negative relationship between corruption and infrastructural development.

Tunde Adedayo and Adebayo Akinwale (2025), in their study titled “Impact of Corruption on Public Service Delivery in Nigeria: Implications for Political Leadership and Economic Development,” assessed the impact of corruption on sectors such as education, healthcare, agriculture, and transport. Using a mixed-method approach involving questionnaires and interviews, the study found that corruption through fund diversion, bribery, and weak sanctions significantly undermined service delivery, reduced public trust, and hindered economic development.

Likewise, Kehinde Afolabi, Lekan Adeyemi, and Sulaiman Bello (2022), in “Effects of Corruption on Service Delivery in Nigeria: A Study of Osun State Public Service,” examined how corruption affects public institutions in Osun State. Using a descriptive survey design and questionnaire data, the study found that corruption weakened the delivery of essential services such as education, healthcare, water supply, and electricity.

Furthermore, Tunde Oladipo and Mohammed Yusuf (2025), in “Effect of Corruption on Infrastructural Development in Tertiary Institutions in South-Western Nigeria,” investigated the impact of corruption on educational infrastructure. Using survey data collected from staff and students, the study found that corruption, poor accountability, and lack of transparency negatively affected infrastructural development and the quality of education.

Overall, these studies show that corruption significantly undermines governance, service delivery, infrastructural development, and socio-economic progress in Nigeria. The findings provide empirical support for examining the effects of corruption on good governance and sustainable development in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State.

3.0 Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which is appropriate for investigating the prevailing conditions, perceptions, and relationships among variables without manipulating them (Creswell, 2014). The descriptive survey design enables researchers to collect data from a representative sample of respondents to describe patterns, trends, and correlations between variables in this case, the impact of corruption on good governance and sustainable development in Ankpa Local Government Area (LGA).

Population of the Study: The target population for this study comprised a total of 350 individuals, including civil servants, traditional leaders, and residents of Ankpa LGA. Civil servants were selected because they are directly involved in the management of public resources and service delivery, making them key informants on bureaucratic corruption. Traditional leaders were included due to their influence on local governance and community-level decision-making, while residents were involved to capture the perceptions and experiences of those directly affected by governance outcomes.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique: A sample of 200 respondents was drawn from the population using a stratified random sampling technique. This approach was employed to ensure that each subgroup (civil servants, traditional leaders, and residents) was adequately represented, thereby improving the generalizability of the findings (Etikan et al., 2016). The stratification ensured that variations in responses across different social, occupational, and demographic groups could be captured accurately. Within each stratum, respondents were selected randomly to minimize selection bias.

Data for this study were collected using a quantitative method through the administration of structured questionnaires to respondents. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended items designed to obtain information on respondents' perceptions of corruption, the prevalence of corrupt practices, and their effects on governance and sustainable development in Ankpa Local Government Area. The use of questionnaires enabled the researcher to collect standardized data from a large number of respondents for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis: Quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics (such as percentages, frequencies, and means) to summarize the characteristics of respondents and the extent of corruption. In addition, chi-square tests of independence were employed to examine the relationship between levels of corruption and governance outcomes, including transparency, accountability, public participation, and development indicators. This inferential analysis allowed the study to determine whether observed associations were statistically significant.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the study, ethical principles were strictly observed. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Informed consent was obtained prior to data collection, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Data were stored securely and used solely for the purposes of this research.

4.0 Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This section presents the analysis of data collected from respondents in Ankpa LGA on the effects of corruption on good governance and sustainable development. The results are presented using descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and qualitative insights from key informant interviews. The findings are discussed in light of previous research to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Corruption and Good Governance

The study examined the impact of corruption on key principles of good governance, including transparency, accountability, and public participation. Descriptive analysis revealed that the majority of respondents perceive corruption as a major hindrance to governance quality. Specifically, 80 respondents strongly agreed and 60 agreed that corruption undermines transparency, while 75 strongly agreed and 65 agreed that it reduces accountability. Similarly, 70 respondents strongly agreed and 55 agreed that corruption limits public participation in governance decisions.

Table 1: *Respondents' Perception of the Impact of Corruption on Good Governance in Ankpa LGA*

Governance Aspect	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total (%)
Corruption undermines transparency	80	60	30	30	100
Corruption reduces accountability	75	65	35	25	100
Corruption limits public participation	70	55	40	35	100

Note. Data obtained from Field Survey (2025)

A chi-square test of independence was carried out to examine the relationship between corruption and governance outcomes. The findings presented in Table 2 revealed a statistically significant relationship between the variables ($\chi^2 = 27.45$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that increased levels of corruption are significantly associated with poor governance structures.

Table 2: Chi-Square Test of Corruption and Governance Outcomes

Variables	χ^2 Value	df	p-value	Decision
Corruption vs. Good Governance	27.45	2	0.001	Significant

Interpretation: The chi-square result indicates that corruption significantly undermines good governance in Ankpa LGA, corroborating prior findings that mismanagement of public funds and unethical practices reduce accountability, transparency, and citizen participation (Ojo, 2020; Nwankwo, 2018).

Corruption and Sustainable Development

The impact of corruption on sustainable development indicators was also examined, focusing on infrastructural development, healthcare delivery, and educational facilities. Descriptive results reveal that community development projects are frequently abandoned or poorly executed due to corrupt practices, with 72% of respondents reporting delays. Additionally, 85 respondents agreed that corruption negatively affects healthcare delivery, while 80 respondents indicated that educational facilities are undermined.

Table 3: Respondents' Perception of the Impact of Corruption on Sustainable Development in Ankpa LGA

Development Aspect	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total (%)
Corruption delays community projects	90	54	36	20	100
Corruption affects healthcare delivery	85	55	35	25	100
Corruption undermines educational facilities	80	60	30	30	100

Note. Data obtained from Field Survey (2025).

Chi-square analysis confirmed a statistically significant relationship between corruption and sustainable development outcomes ($\chi^2 = 31.22$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.000$), as shown in Table 6.4.

Table 4: Chi-Square Test of Corruption and Sustainable Development

Variables	χ^2 Value	df	p-value	Decision
Corruption vs. Sustainable Development	31.22	2	0.000	Significant

Interpretation: The findings indicate that corruption significantly impedes sustainable development in Ankpa LGA. Misappropriation of funds, project abandonment, and delayed execution of

development initiatives reduce access to essential services and infrastructure, corroborating prior research linking corruption with poor socio-economic outcomes (Mauro, 1995; Ojo, 2020).

Findings and Discussion

The study examined the effects of corruption on good governance and sustainable development in Ankpa LGA. The findings reveal a strong and statistically significant relationship between corruption, governance deficits, and poor development outcomes, consistent with both the theoretical and empirical literature.

Corruption and Governance

The results show that corruption significantly erodes key principles of good governance, including transparency, accountability, and public participation. This aligns with the conceptual understanding of corruption, which defines it as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). Conceptually, corruption directly undermines governance structures by creating avenues for mismanagement, favoritism, and opacity in decision-making processes. The findings also corroborate the Principal-Agent Theory, which posits that public officials (agents) may act opportunistically when oversight mechanisms are weak or absent, thereby failing to act in the best interest of the principals (citizens) (Jensen & Meckling, 1976; Klitgaard, 1991). The observed erosion of transparency and accountability in Ankpa LGA demonstrates that the misalignment of interests between agents and principals facilitates corrupt practices. The chi-square analysis ($\chi^2 = 27.45$, $p < 0.05$) confirms that these relationships are statistically significant, indicating that governance outcomes deteriorate as corruption increases.

Empirical evidence supports this conclusion. Ojo (2020) and Nwankwo (2018) found that corruption in local governments reduces access to essential services and undermines the execution of development projects. Similarly, Adedayo and Akinwale (2025) reported that corruption erodes public trust in political leadership and hinders economic development by compromising service delivery. These empirical findings resonate with the present study, indicating that corruption in Ankpa LGA significantly limits citizens' participation in governance and weakens accountability mechanisms.

The study further revealed that corruption negatively impacts sustainable development, particularly infrastructural development, healthcare, and education. Conceptually, sustainable development emphasizes meeting current needs without compromising future generations' capacity to meet theirs (Brundtland Commission, 1987). Corruption contradicts this principle by diverting resources, delaying projects, and reducing institutional capacity to deliver development initiatives effectively (Mauro, 1995). The results are consistent with Institutional Theory, which asserts that weak institutional frameworks, poor regulatory enforcement, and systemic inefficiencies create environments where corruption thrives, thereby impeding development (North, 1990; Scott, 2004). In Ankpa LGA, the frequent abandonment and delay of community development projects, as reported by 72% of respondents, illustrate how institutional weaknesses facilitate corruption and

hinder sustainable development outcomes. Empirical studies reinforce these findings. Afolabi et al. (2022) observed that corruption significantly impaired public service delivery in Osun State, while Oladipo and Yusuf (2025) found that misappropriation of funds and poor accountability in tertiary institutions compromised infrastructural growth and educational quality. Collectively, these findings indicate that corruption constitutes a structural barrier to achieving sustainable development in Ankpa LGA.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Corruption in Ankpa LGA significantly undermines both good governance and sustainable development. Practices such as mismanagement of public resources, favoritism, and lack of accountability weaken transparency, equity, and public participation, reducing citizen trust in government institutions. Corruption also hampers development by delaying, abandoning, or poorly executing infrastructural, healthcare, and educational projects, restricting socio-economic progress. Systemic institutional weaknesses, including inadequate oversight and weak regulatory frameworks, exacerbate the problem, allowing corrupt practices to persist. Addressing corruption in Ankpa LGA requires strengthening institutions, enforcing accountability, promoting transparency, and engaging citizens to ensure effective governance and sustainable development.

Recommendations

- i. The Ankpa LGA government should establish and strengthen transparent governance mechanisms. This includes implementing regular audits, publicly disclosing budgets and expenditures, and institutionalizing citizen oversight committees to enhance accountability, reduce opportunistic behavior, and improve public participation in decision-making.
- ii. The Ankpa LGA government should enforce strict regulatory and monitoring frameworks for development projects. This involves adopting robust project management systems, conducting periodic project audits, and engaging local communities in planning and monitoring to ensure timely execution, prevent fund diversion, and promote sustainable development outcomes.

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