



To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.26740/jpsi.v9n2.p106-131>



Bureaucratic Corruption and Service Delivery in Selected Ministries of Edo State: Descriptive Analysis

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Abstract

The study explored how innovative governance mechanisms, particularly digital accountability tools and transparency-driven reforms, can mitigate bureaucratic corruption and enhance service delivery. In the beginning, the study examined how some forms of bureaucratic corruption techniques affect the general service delivery in the Edo State Civil Service. In doing so, the quantitative methodology was adopted using descriptive research design and the survey method of inquiry to elicit information from 188 participants through a structured questionnaire. Thereafter, the results obtained were analysed with frequency and simple percentage. The study revealed that embezzlement of funds negatively impacted on the quality of health care services provided by the Edo State Ministry of Health. The data demonstrated that public service fraud affected the quality of power supply through estimated bills, metering manipulations, high tariffs, and diversion of funds meant for the maintenance of power infrastructure, resulting in poor power transmission, power losses, and epileptic electricity supply. Further, the evidence proved that bribery and corrupt practices affected the quality of road infrastructure in Nigeria, and lastly, the data also validated that nepotism greatly affected the general service delivery in the Edo State Civil Service. The research work closed two empirical research gaps on bureaucratic corruption by critically investigating the effects of nepotism and bribery on general service delivery (health care services, infrastructure, education, and utilities). The study advocated for the implementation of digital innovations, including biometric attendance systems, AI-enhanced auditing, and blockchain technology in financial record-keeping within public offices. These advancements are designed to reduce the potential for malpractice while facilitating precise tracking of personnel, transactions, and government assets. Furthermore, the paper proposed that future inquiries into additional elements such as extortion, favoritism, misuse of subsidies, deliberate waste, bureaucratic corruption, and its effect on service delivery should take into account.

Keywords: Public sector fraud, embezzlement, bribery, nepotism, service delivery

INTRODUCTION

The cardinal objectives of a responsible, efficient and effective government are the maintenance of law and order and provision of basic amenities such as hospital, road, electricity, water

supply, and other services to ensure the upliftment of the living standard of the majority of the citizenry (Okeke, 2022; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). In other words, government existence is premised on the fulfillment of the social contract with the

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Article history: Received, 16 May 2025; Revised, 30 May 2021; Accepted, 31 May 2025.

To cite this article: Daniel, O. I. (2025). Bureaucratic Corruption and Service Delivery in Selected Ministries of Edo State: Descriptive Analysis. *JPSI (Journal of Public Sector Innovations)*, 9(2), 106–131. <https://doi.org/10.26740/jpsi.v9n2.p106-131>

citizenry as this confers legitimacy in government, its activities and strengthens institutions (Gafar, 2017). Unfortunately, the Nigerian government has failed to live up to expectation in regard to the provision of quality public services to the citizenry. Thus, the bureaucracy which is the engine room of government has failed to meet its objectives in terms of delivering quality services and performing other functions. Poor quality services are evident in decrepit and deficit social and physical infrastructures such as epileptic power supply, deplorable roads, frequent protests, medical tourism and brain drain syndrome in Nigeria. In addition, the services provided by the government and the private sector are not qualitative, efficient, satisfactory and standard. Expressively, the services provided by the government and its institutions are untimely, unreliable, inaccessible and at times non-existent. To reverse this trend, innovation in public service delivery, particularly through digital governance platforms, open data initiatives and real-time feedback mechanisms, has been increasingly recognized as a critical tool to increase transparency and efficiency.

Nevertheless, it becomes pertinent to pose two critical (2) questions, why government bureaucracy is ineffective and inefficient in service delivery and why services fail? Okekeocha (2013) identified the politicisation of jobs in the public sector as one of the reasons why public bureaucracy is ineffective and inefficient. This concurs with the view of Nwodim (2021), who argued that recruitment of staff in the Nigerian universities system lacks due process and meritocracy principle. Another reason for its ineffectiveness and inefficiencies is its bloated nature. As it stands today, the government still remains the main employer of labour. Plethora of public service reforms recommendations of merging, scrapping, rationalisation of some ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) speak volumes, as this would reduce the cost of governance. For instance, Udoji's Commission of 1972 and Oronsaye's Civil Service Report of 2012, made some of the above recommendations. More so, the bureaucracy in operation in Nigeria is not modelled after the development oriented British public service, rather it is a colonial service designed to suit the interests and aspirations of the British (Agbodike, Osawe & Igbokwe-Ibeto, 2015; Adewumi, 1988). Incorporating data-driven monitoring systems and automating bureaucratic processes could address the bloated nature of civil service and reduce opportunities for discretion-based corruption.

Furthermore, the widespread nature of corruption in all facets of human endeavours could

explain the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of Nigerian bureaucracy. Reports of Udoji (1972) and several other commissions of inquiry affirm that bureaucrats are deeply entrenched in bureaucratic corruption such as, bribery, public sector fraud, embezzlement and extortion. Gafar (2017, p. 30) rightly observed that, *"the degree and quality of workforce available to deliver public services in Nigeria is inadequate and not sophisticated enough to tackle the new public demands and challenges posed by the 21st century administrative and technological system"*. Inadequate recruitment and selection procedures and practices in the employment of manpower and lack of clear human resource could be responsible for poor service delivery (Onah, 2003, as cited in Asaju & Ayeni, 2021). Given these realities, integrating innovative recruitment platforms that use AI and algorithmic transparency can help reduce nepotism and improve the quality of human resource entering the public service.

The importance of the dividends of democracy and good governance cannot be over emphasised because it improves the wellbeing of citizens. This is why bureaucratic corruption at all levels has to be curtailed to ensure the delivery of public services that are accessible, affordable, reliable and timely. This is aptly captured by Ovienloba (2007) cited in Dahida and Akangbe (2013, p. 78) that *"bureaucratic corruption frustrates the flow of administrative provision for development and those who give in to this kinds of corruption forget the ideals of good governance and frustrate the system for their private gain and benefit"*. In line with the position of Dahida and Akangbe (2013), Barse (2000, as cited in Bukar, 2021, p. 10) posited that *"when services become inaccessible as a result of corruption the quantities decline and revenue are lost leading to poor service delivery"*. Lipset and Lenz (2000, as cited in Omede & Ngwube, 2019, p. 894) expressed that:

"A bureaucratic corrupt government would shift government expenditure to areas where they can collect bribes. It increases the cost of governance this underscores the reason why Nigeria spends huge sums of money in her public service yet no meaningful result is anchored. It has reduced public revenue and increased public expenditures. It distorts markets, reduces investments in critical infrastructure, creates monopolies that make goods and services more expensive, and put-off foreign investors. It distorts public choices in favor of the wealthy and powerful, and reduces the state's ability to provide a social safety net. It disembowels the poor beyond

the generally received notion of failure of governance and pinches the pockets of the poor in favor of the rich”.

It is important to clearly articulate that most empirical studies on bureaucratic corruption (Bukar, 2021; Urhoghide & Emuakpeje (2019); Nwobi, Ike Chujwuma & Chukwurah (2021) have not critically investigated the effect of the variables of favouritism, nepotism, subsidy abuse and deliberate waste on general service delivery (health care services, infrastructure, education and utilities). The above suggests the need for sufficient empirical studies to be carried out to enhance the understanding of how the different forms of bureaucratic corruption could impact on the quality of public service delivery. Thus, this research work explored the effect of the variables of bribery, nepotism, embezzlement and public sector fraud on the general public service delivery in the Edo State Civil Service.

However, this study seeks to explore the impact of the various forms of corruption on public service delivery within Edo State, Nigeria. Despite numerous reforms and anti-corruption campaigns, the effectiveness of public service institutions continues to be undermined by persistent unethical practices. Firstly, the research aims to examine the extent to which embezzlement of funds affects health care services within the Edo State Ministry of Health. Secondly, the study investigates how fraud with the public sector influences the provision of electricity power to the residents of Edo State. Thirdly, the research addresses the relationship between bribery and corruption and the deteriorating conditions of roads in Edo State. Lastly, the study seeks to evaluate the extent to which nepotism impacts general service delivery in the Edo State Civil Service. By examining these questions, the research intends to contribute to the understanding of how systemic corruption undermines development and to provide evidence-based recommendations for improving governance and accountability in Edo State.

METHOD

The quantitative methodology was adopted using the descriptive research design to answer the research questions and provide an overview of the characteristics of the population. The survey method of inquiry was used to elicit information from the participants of this study through the use of a structured questionnaire.

The population is the summation of staff strength in the Ministry of Environment and Sustainability, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Roads and Bridges. Thus, the population of the study

was three hundred and seventy five (375). A breakdown of the staff strength of the three (3) ministries was provided below:

Table 1: Population

Ministry	Population (Staff Strength)
Ministry of Environment and Sustainability	97
Ministry of Health	118
Ministry of Roads and Bridges	160
Total	375

Source: Office of the Director of Shared Services of the Edo State Ministry of Environment and Sustainability (2024); Office of the Director of Human Resources and Administration of the Edo State Ministry of Health (2024); Office of the Director of Administration and Supplies of the Edo State Ministry of Roads and Bridges (2024)

To determine the sample size, 50 % of the population of each ministry was utilised for this endeavour. Thus, the sample size of the study was one hundred and eighty eight (188). The sample size determination was informed due to the fact that some staff members were either in outstations or field works or seconded to other ministries. Consequently, some offices were locked and staff members unavailable. A breakdown of how the sample size was derived was tabulated below:

Table 2: Sample Size

Ministry	Population (Staff Strength)	Sample Size (50% of the each ministry’s population)
Ministry of Environment and Sustainability	97	49
Ministry of Health	118	59
Ministry of Roads and Bridges	160	80
Total	375	188

Source: Researcher (2024). Note: The sample size in the Ministry of Environment and Sustainability was approximated to the nearest whole number.

It is instructive to note that the random sampling method was adopted in selecting staff members in the aforementioned ministries to ensure

a fair and adequate representation of samples. With the list of all members of the 3 ministries, a unique number was assigned to each, and then a random number generator was used to select 49, 59 and 80 staff members of each of the ministries.

A structured questionnaire was designed which has two sections. Section A has to do with the demographic characteristics of the respondents while section B contains statements to answer the research questions. The options of the statement were expressed in a 5-point Likert scale ranging from agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree and undecided. Content validity was employed to evaluate the research instrument, ensuring that the questionnaire comprehensively addressed all pertinent dimensions of the subject under investigation. To facilitate an objective assessment, once the questionnaire was drafted, it was subjected to review by a panel of research experts who provided critical feedback and constructive suggestions. As a result of their input, modifications were made to the questionnaire to guarantee thorough coverage of all relevant aspects. In terms of reliability, the test-retest method was utilised. A total of 19 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to staff members in one ministry, and several weeks later, the remaining questionnaires were administered to staff across three different ministries.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings derived from the data collected through the questionnaire distribution to respondents, highlighting the response rate and the quality of the returned instruments.

Table 3: Return rate of Questionnaire

Questionnaire	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Retrieved	168	89.36
Not Retrieved	20	10.64
Total Distributed	188	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 3 shows that out of the 188 copies of questionnaire distributed to staff members of the three ministries, 168 copies of the questionnaire representing 89.36% were retrieved while 20 copies of the questionnaire representing 10.64% were not retrieved. Thus, the return rate of the questionnaire was 89.36%. It is worthy of note, that upon processing the questionnaire, 13 copies of the questionnaire were inadequate for data analysis while 155 copies of the questionnaire were adequate and utilized for data analysis.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	93	60
Female	62	40
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4 shows that 93 of the respondents, representing 60% of the participants, were male while 62 of the respondents, representing 40% of the participants, were female. The implication of this is that the majority of the respondents were male.

Table 5: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-27	10	6.45
28-37	65	41.93
38-47	58	37.42
48-57	20	12.90
Above 58	2	1.29
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 5 indicates that 65 of the respondents, representing 41.93% of the participants, belonged to the age bracket of 28-37. 58 of the respondents, representing 37.42% of the participants, belonged to the age bracket of 38-47. 20 of the respondents, representing 12.90% of the participants, belonged to the age bracket of 48-57. 10 of the respondents, representing 6.45% of the participants, belonged to the age bracket of 18-27 while 2 of the respondents, representing 1.29% of the participants, were above 58 years. The implications of this are that the majority of the respondents were in the age bracket of 28-37 and the overall age distribution of the participants was relatively young.

Tables 6: Marital Status Distribution of Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	43	27.74
Married	109	70.32
Divorced	0	0.00
Widowed	0	0.00
Separated	3	1.93
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 6 reveals that 109 of the respondents, representing 70.32% of the participants, were married. 43 of the respondents, representing 27.74%

of the participants, were single while 3 of the respondents, representing 1.93% of the participants, were separated. The implication of this is that the majority of the respondents were married.

Table 7: Class Distribution of Respondents

Classes of the Nigerian Civil Service	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Administrative	23	14.84
Executive	8	5.16
Professional	92	59.35
Clerical	12	7.74
Auxiliary	2	1.29
Others	18	11.61
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 7 shows that 92 of the respondents, representing 59.35% of the participants, were professionals or belonged to the professional class of the Nigerian Civil Service. 23 of the respondents, representing 14.84% of the participants, were administrators or belong to the executive class of the Nigerian Civil Service. 18 of the respondents, representing 11.61% of the participants, did not belong to the classes listed above. 12 of the respondents, representing 7.74% of the participants, belonged to the clerical class of the Nigerian Civil Service. 8 of the respondents, representing 5.16% of the participants, were executives or belonged to the executive class of the Nigerian Civil Service while 2 of the respondents, representing 1.29% of the participants, belonged to the auxiliary class of the Nigerian Civil Service. The implication of this is that the majority of the participants were professionals.

Table 8: Qualification Distribution of Respondents

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
First School Leaving Certificate	4	2.58
SSCE/GCE	8	5.16
ND/NCE	17	10.97
B.Sc/HND	108	69.68
Others	18	11.61
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

As indicated in table 8, 108 respondents, representing 69.68% of the participants, were B.Sc/HND degree holders. 18 of the respondents, representing 11.61% of the participants, possessed other qualifications like the master degree. 17 of the respondents, representing 10.97% of the participants, possessed

ND/NCE degrees. 8 of the respondents, representing 5.16% of the participants, possessed SSCE/GCE certificates while 4 of the respondents, representing 2.58% of the participants, possessed first school leaving certificates. The implication of this is that an overwhelming majority of the respondents were B.Sc/HND holders.

Table 9: Religion Distribution of Respondents

Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Christianity	137	88.38
Islam	5	3.23
Traditional	0	0.00
Others	13	8.39
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

As revealed in table 9, 137 respondents, representing 88.38% of the participants, belonged to the Christian religious faith. 13 of the respondents, representing 8.39% of the participants, were of other religious faith not listed above or were atheist while 5 of the respondents, representing 3.23% of the participants, belonged to the Islamic religious faith. The implication of this is that a great majority of the respondents belonged to the Christian religious faith.

Perceptions of Respondents on Bureaucratic Corruption and Service Delivery

Table 10: Embezzlement of Funds and Quality of Health Care Services

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	64	41.29
Strongly Agreed	88	56.77
Disagreed	1	0.65
Strongly Disagreed	1	0.65
Undecided	1	0.65
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 10 shows that 88 respondents, representing 56.77% of the participants strongly agreed that embezzlement of funds could negatively impact on the quality of health care services provided by the Edo State Ministry of Health. This was followed by the opinion of 64 respondents, representing 41.29% of the participants, who agreed that embezzlement of funds could negatively impact on the quality of health care services provided by the Edo State Ministry of Health. 1 respondent, representing 0.65% of the participants, disagreed that embezzlement of funds could negatively impact on the quality of health care services provided by the Edo State Ministry of Health. 1 respondent, representing 0.65%

of the participants, strongly disagreed that embezzlement of funds could negatively impact on the quality of health care services provided by the Edo State Ministry of Health while 1 respondent, representing 0.65% of the participants, was undecided on the subject matter. The implication of this is that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that embezzlement of funds could negatively impact on the quality of health care services provided by the Edo State Ministry of Health.

Table 11: Misappropriation of Funds and Provision of Health Care Centers

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	64	41.29
Strongly Agreed	87	56.13
Disagreed	1	0.65
Strongly Disagreed	0	0.00
Undecided	3	1.94
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

As revealed in table 11, 87 of the respondents, representing 56.13% of the participants, strongly agreed that misappropriation of funds would affect the provision of more health care centers. 64 of the respondents, representing 41.29% of the participants, agreed that misappropriation of funds would affect the provision of more health care centers. 3 of the respondents, representing 1.94% of the participants, were uncertain whether misappropriation of funds would affect the provision of more health care centers while 1 of the respondents, representing 0.65 % of the participants, disagreed that misappropriation of funds would affect the provision of more health care centers. The implication of this is that a vast majority of the respondents strongly agreed that misappropriation of funds would affect the provision of more health care centers.

Table 12: Siphoning of Funds and Investments in Rehabilitation Centers

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	60	38.71
Strongly Agreed	86	55.48
Disagreed	3	1.94
Strongly Disagreed	2	1.29
Undecided	4	2.58
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 12 signals that 86 of the respondents, representing 55.48% of the participants, strongly agreed that siphoning of funds could negatively impact investments in rehabilitation centers to cater for patients. 60% of respondents, representing 38.71% of the participants, agreed that siphoning of funds could negatively impact investments in rehabilitation centers to cater for patients. 4 of the respondents, representing 2.58% of the participants, were undecided on the subject matter. 3 of the respondents, representing 1.94% of the participants, disagreed that siphoning of funds could negatively impact on investments in rehabilitation centers to cater for patients while 2 of the respondents, representing 1.29% of the participants, strongly disagreed that siphoning of funds could negatively impact on investments in rehabilitation centers to cater for patients. The implication of this is that a large number of the respondents strongly agreed that siphoning of funds could negatively impact on investments in rehabilitation centers to cater for patients.

Table 13: Theft of Subsidised Drugs and Unavailability of Drugs in Health Care Institutions

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	59	38.06
Strongly Agreed	89	57.42
Disagreed	2	1.29
Strongly Disagreed	2	1.29
Undecided	3	1.94
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table 13 depicts that 89 of the respondents, representing 57.42% of the participants, strongly agreed that theft of subsidized drugs could hinder the availability of drugs in various health institutions. 59 of the respondents, representing 38.06% of the participants, agreed that theft of subsidized drugs could hinder the availability of drugs in various health institutions. 3 of the respondents, representing 1.94% of the participants, were uncertain whether theft of subsidized drugs could hinder the availability of drugs in various health institutions. 2 of the respondents, representing 1.29% of the participants, disagreed that theft of subsidized drugs could hinder the availability of drugs in various health institutions while 2 of the respondents, representing 1.29% of the participants, strongly disagreed that theft of subsidized drugs could hinder the availability of drugs in various health institutions. The implication

of this is that a vast majority of the respondents strongly agreed that theft of subsidized drugs could hinder the availability of drugs in various health institutions.

Table 14: Diversion of Office Equipment and Unavailability of Equipment in Hospitals

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	48	30.97
Strongly Agreed	103	66.45
Disagreed	0	0.00
Strongly Disagreed	1	0.65
Undecided	3	1.94
Total	155	1.94

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 14 shows that 103 of the respondents, representing 66.45% of the participants, strongly agreed that diversion of health equipment would affect the availability of health care equipment in hospitals. 48 of the respondents, representing 30.97% of the participants, agreed that diversion of health equipment would affect the availability of health care equipment in hospitals. 3 of the respondents, representing 1.94% of the participants, were undecided on the subject matter while 1 of the respondents, representing 0.65% of the participants, strongly disagreed that diversion of health equipment would affect the availability of health care equipment in hospitals. The implication of this is that a large majority of the respondents strongly agreed that diversion of health equipment would affect the availability of health care equipment in hospitals.

Table 15: Public Sector Fraud and Epileptic Power Supply

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	62	40.00
Strongly Agreed	54	34.84
Disagreed	28	18.06
Strongly Disagreed	3	1.96
Undecided	8	5.16
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 15 reveals that 62 of the respondents, representing 40% of the participants, agreed that public sector fraud affects electricity power supply to citizens of Edo State. 54 of the respondents, representing 34.84% of the participants, strongly agreed that public sector fraud affects electricity power supply to citizens of Edo State. 28 of the respondents, representing 18.06% of the participants,

disagreed that public sector fraud affects electricity power supply to citizens of Edo State. 8 of the respondents, representing 5.16% of the participants, were uncertain whether that public sector fraud affects electricity power supply to citizens of Edo State while 3 of the respondents, representing 1.96% of the participants strongly disagreed that public sector fraud affects electricity power supply to citizens of Edo State. The implication of this is that the majority of the respondents agreed that public sector fraud affects electricity power supply to citizens of Edo State.

Table 16: Estimated Billings and High Electricity Bill

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	49	31.61
Strongly Agreed	90	58.06
Disagreed	7	4.52
Strongly Disagreed	5	3.23
Undecided	4	2.58
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

As indicated in table 16, 90 of the respondents, representing 58.06% of the participants, strongly agreed that estimated billings have not only led to high electricity bills but also there is no reliable electricity power supply to justify the increment. 49 of the respondents, representing 31.61% of the participants, agreed that estimated billings have not only led to high electricity bills but also there is no reliable electricity power supply to justify the increment. 7 of the respondents, representing 4.52% of the participants, disagreed that estimated billings have not only led to high electricity bills but also there is no reliable electricity power supply to justify the increment. 5 of the respondents, representing 3.23% of the respondents, strongly disagreed that estimated billings have not only led to high electricity bills but also there is no reliable electricity power supply to justify the increment while 4 of the respondents, representing 2.58% of the participants, were uncertain whether estimated billings have not only led to high electricity bills but also there is no reliable electricity power supply to justify the increment. The implication of this is that a preponderance of the respondents strongly agreed that estimated billings have not only led to high electricity bills but also there is no reliable electricity power supply to justify the increment.

Table 17: Metering Manipulations and Power Losses in the Electricity Energy Sector

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	65	41.93
Strongly Agreed	44	28.39
Disagreed	24	15.48
Strongly Disagreed	5	3.22
Undecided	17	10.97
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 17 signals that 65 of the respondents, representing 41.93% of the participants, agreed that metering manipulations have resulted in power losses in the electricity power sector. 44 of the respondents, representing 28.39% of the participants, strongly agreed that metering manipulations have resulted in power losses in the electricity power sector. 24 of the respondents, representing 15.48% of the participants, disagreed that metering manipulations have resulted in power losses in the electricity power sector. 17 of the respondents, representing 10.97% of the participants, were undecided on the subject matter while 5 of the respondents, representing 3.22% of the participants, strongly disagreed that metering manipulations have resulted in power losses in the electricity power sector. The implication of this is that the majority of the respondents agreed that metering manipulations have resulted in power losses in the electricity power sector.

Table 18: Imposing High Tariffs and poor Power Generation Capacity

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	45	29.03
Strongly Agreed	109	70.32
Disagreed	0	0.00
Strongly Disagreed	1	0.65
Undecided	0	0.00
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

As depicted in Table 18, 109 respondents, representing 70.32% of the participants, strongly agreed that imposed high tariffs, with no significant improvement in power generation capacity, have left citizens frustrated. 45 of the respondents, representing 29.03% of the participants, agreed that imposed high tariffs, with no significant improvement in power generation capacity have left citizens frustrated while 1 of the respondent, representing 0.65% of the participants, strongly disagreed that imposed high tariffs, with no significant improvement in power generation

capacity has left citizens frustrated. The implication of this is that a substantial majority of the respondents strongly agreed that imposed high tariffs, with no significant improvement in power generation capacity have left citizens frustrated.

Table 19: Diversion of Funds and Power Transmission of Electricity

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	51	32.90
Strongly Agreed	95	61.29
Disagreed	4	2.58
Strongly Disagreed	1	0.65
Undecided	4	2.58
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 19 shows that 95 of the respondents, representing 61.29% of the participants, strongly agreed that diversion of public funds meant for the maintenance of power infrastructure has contributed to poor transmission of electricity. 51 of the respondents, representing 32.90% of the participants, agreed that diversion of public funds meant for the maintenance of power infrastructure has contributed to poor transmission of electricity. 4 of the respondents, representing 2.58% of the participants, disagreed that diversion of public funds meant for the maintenance of power infrastructure has contributed to poor transmission of electricity. 4 of the respondents, representing 2.58% of the participants, were uncertain whether diversion of public funds meant for the maintenance of power infrastructure has contributed to poor transmission of electricity while 1 of the respondent, representing 0.65% of the participants, strongly disagreed that diversion of public funds meant for the maintenance of power infrastructure has contributed to poor transmission of electricity. The implication of this is that a great majority of the respondents strongly agreed that diversion of public funds meant for the maintenance of power infrastructure has contributed to poor transmission of electricity.

Table 20: Bribery and Corruption and Deplorable State of Roads

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	59	38.06
Strongly Agreed	66	42.58
Disagreed	18	11.61
Strongly Disagreed	2	1.29
Undecided	10	6.45
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 20 reveals that 66 of the respondents, representing 42.58% of the participants, strongly agreed that bribery and corruption has contributed to the deplorable state of roads in Edo State. 59 of the respondents, representing 38.06 % of the participants, agreed that bribery and corruption has contributed to the deplorable state of roads in Edo State. 18 of the respondents, representing 11.61% of the participants, disagreed that bribery and corruption has contributed to the deplorable state of roads in Edo State. 10 of the respondents, representing 6.45% of the participants, were undecided on the subject matter while 2 of the respondents, representing 1.29% of the participants, strongly disagreed that bribery and corruption has contributed to the deplorable state of roads in Edo State. The implication of this is that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that bribery and corruption has contributed to the deplorable state of roads in Edo State.

Table 21: Kickbacks and Impassable Roads

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	61	39.35
Strongly Agreed	52	33.55
Disagreed	24	15.48
Strongly Disagreed	9	5.81
Undecided	9	5.81
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 21 signals that 61 of the respondents, representing 39.35% of the participants, agreed that kickbacks collected by officials from contractors could be responsible for some passable roads in Edo State. 52 of the respondents, representing 33.55% of the participants, strongly agreed that kickbacks collected by officials from contractors could be responsible for some passable roads in Edo State. 24 of the respondents, representing 15.48% of the participants, disagreed that kickbacks collected by officials from contractors could be responsible for some passable roads in Edo State. 9 of the respondents, representing 5.81% of the participants, strongly disagreed that kickbacks collected by officials from contractors could be responsible for some passable roads in Edo State while 9 of the respondents, representing 5.81% of the participants, were uncertain whether kickbacks collected by officials from contractors could be responsible for some passable roads in Edo State. The implication of this is that the majority of the respondents agreed that kickbacks collected by officials from contractors

could be responsible for some passable roads in Edo State.

Table 22: Diversion of Allocated Funds and Dilapidated Roads

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	56	36.13
Strongly Agreed	80	51.61
Disagreed	8	5.16
Strongly Disagreed	3	1.94
Undecided	8	5.16
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

As indicated in Table 22, 80 of the respondents, representing 51.61% of the participants, strongly agreed that diverting allocated funds meant for road maintenance and rehabilitation has led to dilapidated roads in some parts of Edo State. 56 of the respondents, representing 36.13% of the participants, agreed that diverting allocated funds meant for road maintenance and rehabilitations has led to dilapidated roads in some parts of Edo State. 8 of the respondents, representing 5.16% of the participants, disagreed that diverting allocated funds meant for road maintenance and rehabilitations has led to dilapidated roads in some parts of Edo State. 8 of the respondents, representing 5.16% of the participants, were undecided on the subject matter while 3 of the respondents, representing 1.94% of the participants, strongly disagreed that diverting allocated funds meant for road maintenance and rehabilitations has led to dilapidated roads in some parts of Edo State. The implication of this is that a large number of the respondents strongly agreed that diverting allocated funds meant for road maintenance and rehabilitations has led to dilapidated roads in some parts of Edo State.

Table 23: Diversion of Allocated Funds and Road Project Abandonment

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	58	37.42
Strongly Agreed	79	50.97
Disagreed	6	3.87
Strongly Disagreed	2	1.29
Undecided	10	6.45
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 23 depicts that 79 of the respondents, representing 50.97% of the participants, strongly agreed that diversion of allocated funds for road constructions has led to several road projects

abandonment. 58 of the respondents, representing 37.42% of the participants, agreed that diversion of allocated funds for road construction has led to the abandonment of several road projects. 10 of the respondents, representing 6.45% of the participants, were uncertain whether diversion of allocated funds for road constructions has led to several road projects abandonment. 6 respondents, representing 3.87% of the participants, disagreed that diversion of allocated funds for road constructions has led to several road projects abandonment while 2 of the respondents, representing 1.29% of the participants, strongly disagreed that diversion of allocated funds for road constructions has led to several road projects abandonment. The implication of this is that a vast majority of the respondents strongly agreed that diversion of allocated funds for road constructions has led to several road projects abandonment.

Table 24: Procurement of Low Quality Construction Materials and Standard Roads

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	46	29.68
Strongly Agreed	101	65.16
Disagreed	2	1.29
Strongly Disagreed	4	2.58
Undecided	2	1.29
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 24 shows that 101 of the respondents, representing 65.16% of the participants, strongly agreed that the use of low quality construction materials could negatively impact on the construction of standard roads in Edo State. 46 of the respondents, representing 29.68% of the participants, agreed that the use of low quality construction materials could negatively impact on the construction of standard roads in Edo State. 4 of the respondents, representing 2.58% of the participants, strongly disagreed that the use of low quality construction materials could negatively impact on the construction of standard roads in Edo State while 2 of the respondents, representing 1.29% of the participants, were undecided on the subject matter. The implication of this is that an overwhelming majority strongly agreed that the use of low quality construction materials could negatively impact on the construction of standard roads in Edo State.

Table 25: Nepotism and General Service Delivery

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	86	55.48
Strongly Agreed	54	34.84
Disagreed	8	5.16
Strongly Disagreed	0	0.00
Undecided	7	4.52
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

As revealed in Table 25, 86 of the respondents, representing 55.48% of the participants, agreed that nepotism could affect the general service delivery provided by the Edo State Civil Service. 54 of the respondents, representing 34.84% of the participants, strongly agreed that nepotism could affect the general service delivery provided by the Edo State Civil Service. 8 of the respondents, representing 5.16% of the participants, disagreed that nepotism could affect the general service delivery provided by the Edo State Civil Service while 7 of the respondents, representing 4.52% of the participants, were uncertain whether nepotism could affect the general service delivery provided by the Edo State Civil Service. The implication of this is that a large majority of the respondents agreed that nepotism could affect the general service delivery provided by the Edo State Civil Service.

Table 26: Allocation of Portfolios to Family Members and Quality of Education

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	69	44.52
Strongly Agreed	57	36.77
Disagreed	17	10.97
Strongly Disagreed	5	3.23
Undecided	7	4.52
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 26 signals that 69 of the respondents, representing 44.52% of the participants, agreed that allocation of portfolios to family members could negatively impact the quality of education in Edo State. 57 of the respondents, representing 36.77% of the participants, strongly agreed that allocation of portfolios to family members could negatively impact the quality of education in Edo State. 17 of the respondents, representing 10.97% of the participants, disagreed that allocation of portfolios to family members could negatively impact the quality of education in Edo State. 7 of the respondents, representing 4.52% of the participants, were undecided on the subject matter, while 5 of the

respondents, representing 3.23% of the participants, strongly disagreed that allocation of portfolios to family members could negatively impact the quality of education in Edo State. The implication of this is that a vast majority agreed that allocation of portfolios to family members could negatively impact on the quality of education in Edo State.

Table 27: Assigning Desirable Project Assignments to Relatives and Provision of Quality Housing

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	66	42.58
Strongly Agreed	59	38.06
Disagreed	19	12.26
Strongly Disagreed	5	3.23
Undecided	6	3.87
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

As indicated in table 27, 66 of the respondents, representing 42.58% of the participants, agreed that assigning desirable project assignments to relatives could affect the provision of quality housing to citizens. 59 of the respondents, representing 38.06% of the participants, strongly agreed that assigning desirable project assignments to relatives could affect the provision of quality housing to citizens. 19 of the respondents, representing 12.26% of the participants, disagreed that assigning desirable project assignments to relatives could affect the provision of quality housing to citizens. 6 of the respondents, representing 3.87% of the participants, were uncertain whether assigning of desirable project assignments to relatives could affect the provision of quality housing to citizens while 5 of the respondents, representing 3.23% of the participants, strongly disagreed that assigning of desirable project assignments to relatives could affect the provision of quality housing to citizens. The implication of this is that the majority of the respondents agreed that assigning desirable project assignments to relatives could affect the provision of quality housing to citizens.

Table 28: Nepotistic Promotion and Impact on the Provision of Utilities

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	58	37.42
Strongly Agreed	73	47.10
Disagreed	13	8.39
Strongly Disagreed	6	3.87
Undecided	5	3.23
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 28 shows that 73 of the respondents, representing 47.10% of the participants, strongly agreed that promotion based on nepotism could negatively impact on the provision of utilities to the citizens. 58 of the respondents, representing 37.42% of the participants, agreed that promotion based on nepotism could negatively impact the provision of utilities to the citizens. 13 of the respondents, representing 8.39% of the participants, disagreed that promotion based on nepotism could negatively impact the provision of utilities to the citizens. 6 of the respondents, representing 3.87% of the participants, strongly disagreed that promotion based on nepotism could negatively impact on the provision of utilities to the citizens while 5 of the respondents, representing 3.23% of the participants, were uncertain that promotion based on nepotism could negatively impact on the provision of utilities to the citizens. The implication of this is that a great number of the respondents strongly agreed that promotion based on nepotism could negatively impact on the provision of utilities to the citizens.

Table 29: Nepotistic Recruitment and Quality of Infrastructure

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	56	36.13
Strongly Agreed	72	46.45
Disagreed	13	8.39
Strongly Disagreed	7	4.52
Undecided	7	4.52
Total	155	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 29 signals that 72 of the respondents, representing 46.45% of the participants, strongly agreed that recruitment based on nepotism could affect the quality of infrastructure in Edo State. 56 of the respondents, representing 36.13% of the participants, agreed that recruitment based on nepotism could affect the quality of infrastructure in Edo State. 13 of the respondents, representing 8.39% of the participants, disagreed that recruitment based on nepotism could affect the quality of infrastructure in Edo State. 7 of the respondents, representing 4.52% of the participants, strongly disagreed that recruitment based on nepotism could affect the quality of infrastructure in Edo State while 7 of the respondents, representing 4.52% of the participants, were undecided on the subject matter. The implication of this is that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that recruitment based on nepotism could affect the quality of infrastructure in Edo State.

The descriptive analysis of frequency distribution tables revealed that embezzlement of funds negatively impacted on the quality of healthcare services provided by the Edo State Ministry of Health. This was revealed in table 10, where a vast majority of participants (56.77%) strongly agreed that embezzlement of funds could negatively impact on the quality of health care services provided by the Edo State Ministry of Health. More so, findings from tables 11, 12, 13 and 14 buttressed the negative impacts the different forms of embezzlement could have on health care services. This confirmed Bukar (2021) submission that embezzlement and misappropriation of funds among other vices significantly affected service delivery in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, Borno State, Nigeria.

The data demonstrated that the use of estimated bills, metering manipulations, high tariffs and diversion of funds meant for the maintenance of power infrastructure had resulted in poor power transmission, power losses and epileptic electricity supply. Table 16 for instance, revealed that a preponderance of respondents (58.06%) strongly agreed that estimated billings have not only led to outrageous electricity bills but also no reliable power supply to justify the increment. Tables 17, 18 and 19 showed the perceptions of respondents on the metering manipulations, impact of high tariffs and funds diversion allocated for maintenance of power infrastructure. The above showed some forms of public sector fraud in the Nigerian power sector. The study conducted by Edet, Ogah, and Solomon (2022) elucidates the adverse relationship between corruption and development in Nigeria's power sector.

The evidence proved that kickbacks collected by public officials could result in reduced allocations to execute projects. Thus, this could be responsible for some impassable roads in Edo State. Table 21 proved this point, where the majority of the respondents (39.35%) agreed that kickbacks collected by officials could be responsible for some impassable roads in Edo State. Diversion of allocated funds meant for road maintenance and rehabilitation has contributed to the dilapidated roads in some parts of Edo State. Table 22 confirmed this view, where a vast majority of the respondents (51.61%) strongly agreed that diversion of allocated funds meant for road maintenance and rehabilitation could be responsible for the dilapidated roads in some parts of Edo State. Diversion of allocated funds for road constructions by public officials and contractors has contributed to abandonment of road projects. Table

23 showed that a vast majority of respondents (50.97%) strongly agreed that diversion of allocated funds for road constructions has led to several road projects abandonment. The procurement of low quality construction materials by contractors could greatly affect the quality of constructed roads. Table 24 confirmed this position, where an overwhelming 65.16% of the respondents strongly agreed that the use of low quality construction materials negatively impacted on the construction of standard road infrastructure. The above are some of the ways bribery and corrupt practices affect the quality of road infrastructure in Nigeria. This is consistent with the findings of Adeyemo and Amade (2016), which indicated that bribery, particularly in the context of securing contracts, is notably more pervasive within the construction industry compared to other sectors.

Lastly, the data validated that nepotism greatly affected the general service delivery in the Edo State Civil Service. Table 25 showed that a large majority of the respondents (55.48%) agreed that nepotism could affect the general service delivery provided by the Edo State Civil Service. This position was also supported by the findings in tables 26, 27, 28 and 29 which showed how different nepotistic practices affected the general service delivery rendered by the Edo State Civil Service. This confirmed Nwodim (2021) assertions that bureaucratic corruption is evident in staff recruitment in the Nigerian university system. Nwodim's study revealed that due process and meritocracy were downplayed for favouritism and other opportunistic tendencies in staff recruitment.

To mitigate the negative impacts of corruption and nepotism identified in this study, there is a pressing need to introduce innovation in public service management. Innovations such as e-governance platforms, digital procurement systems and block chain for financial transparency can significantly reduce opportunities for embezzlement, kickbacks and funds diversion. By automating critical processes and enabling real time public access to government transactions, these technologies can enhance accountability and service. Moreover, adopting data-driven recruitment and performance evaluation systems can help eliminate nepotism and ensure that merit-based appointments avail. This will not only improve human capital utilization but also foster trust and competence in public institutions. Innovation, therefore, stands as a strategic response to systemic inefficiencies and a vital tool in reforming public service practices for the betterment of infrastructure and citizen welfare. The findings highlight the need for policy reforms that go

hand-in-hand with technological innovation. Investing in smart governance solutions will not only curb malpractice but also ensure that public resources are effectively translated into tangible benefits for the people of Edo State.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study revealed that bureaucratic corruption in the form of embezzlement of funds, public sector fraud, bribery and nepotism greatly affected the service delivery rendered by the Edo State Civil Service. The implication of this finding is that Edo State Civil Service and other institutions of government must strongly address all forms of abuses and corrupt practices, block loopholes and ensure that they deliver effective, efficient, standard and qualitative services to members of the public.

One key pathway to achieving these reforms lies in the adoption of innovation and digital transformation in public administration. The implementation of e-governance platforms, open budget portals, and automated procurement systems can significantly reduce human discretion and enhance transparency. These digital tools can help detect anomalies, prevent fund diversion, and track service delivery in real time, thus fostering greater public trust.

The following recommendations were made to tackle bureaucratic corruption in governmental institutions:

- 1) The entrenchment of transparency and accountability in all governmental institutions is critical for good governance. Government should strengthen whistleblower protection, have a robust auditing system and public information should be made readily accessible to citizens as enshrined in the 2011 Freedom of Information Act.
- 2) There should be proper investigations and adequate sanctions for corrupt public/civil servants to act as a deterrent to others. Thus, agencies of government such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission and Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal (ICPC), the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) and judiciary must be independent, well funded, compensated and supported by all and sundry.
- 3) Strong emphasis should be made on the reduction of regulations and use of discretion in government business which will not only reduce

bureaucratic corruption but also improves service delivery.

- 4) Value re-orientation driven by the government and its agencies like the National Orientation Agency (NOA) and other institutions such as educational establishments, religious establishments and families all have critical roles to play in fighting corruption at all levels of government.
- 5) The deployment of digital innovations such as biometric attendance systems, AI-assisted auditing, and blockchain in financial records should be encouraged across public offices. These technologies limit opportunities for malpractice while ensuring accurate tracking of personnel, transactions, and government assets.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the anonymous reviewers and the editorial team for their constructive feedback and guidance, which helped improve the clarity and alignment of this manuscript with the journal's focus and scope.

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