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CORRUPT PRACTICES IN DELIVERY OF PUBLIC PROJECTS IN AKWA IBOM STATE

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: One major hindrance to national development in the developing countries is the cancer of corruption that has eaten deep into the fabrics of the entire society. Therefore, the aim of the study is to evaluate the nature of the prevailing corrupt practices and its effects on public projects delivery.

Design/methodology/approach: Descriptive and survey research method was used to evaluate the perception of respondents involved in delivery of public projects to evaluate the nature and the causal factors of corrupt practices on public projects. Purposive random sampling technique was used to determine the sample size. A total of 60 well-structured questionnaires were distributed and data obtained were analysed using descriptive, mean score and Kruskal-Walis tests.

Findings: The opinion of contractors, procurement officers and enlightened citizens (within project domain) who are deemed to be stakeholders in public project procurement in Akwa Ibom state revealed the nature of corrupt practices prevailing in the study area. The finding of the study reveals that inflation of contract sum by procurement officers, abandonment of project by contractors, certification of substandard work by the consultants and non-implementation of contract according to specification are the nature of corrupt practices prevailing in the study area. Also, the factors of god-fatherism and settlement, public project as political settlement were considered responsible for causing corruption in procurement of public projects.

Research limitations/implications: This study focused on the corrupt practices prevalent in the delivery of public projects in the study area. One major limitation is the sample size as it was restricted to the opinion of 48 respondents who returned their questionnaire. The result of this finding is based on the peculiarity of the study area and hence may not be generalised. The contribution to knowledge is that this study reveals the nature and extent of corrupt practices in procurement of public projects.

Practical implications: Corruption and corrupt practices in the society is as old as creation herself, therefore require change in our national orientation and value system. Until our value system deviate from practice of god-fatherism/settlement in our political system, the spate of infrastructural deficit which is currently being experienced shall continue.

Originality/value: The study x-rayed and established the nature of corruption/corrupt practices prevalent in delivery of public projects only in Akwa Ibom state.

Keywords: Akwa Ibom State; construction; corrupt practices; corruption; public projects.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Construction activities have become a major tool by the third world and even developing countries to drive growth and infrastructural development. This has contributed to the socio-economic well-being of the citizens by creating employment and serves as means of earning livelihood by many. There is subsequently influx of foreign construction companies who want to establish their presence and emergence of indigenous ones who want to maximize the available opportunity for growth. It has also consequently led to increase in revenue generation to the Government by way of direct/indirect taxes. Therefore, construction sector is an important sector that contributes significantly to the economic development of a nation through provision of necessary infrastructure that enhances growth of other sectors. In Nigeria, 8 million people which represent about 25% of the nation's workforce are employees of construction industry, it is regarded as the largest employers of construction labour in Africa (Inuwaet al., 2015).

The industry is home to many stakeholders, among who are Government, private firm/organisation, individuals, academic and others. The industry is open to all, it is a strategic tool to achieving sustainable development as many have identified areas of need and may want to invest in it as a way of solving societal problems. In the opinion of Isa (2013) and Oyewobiet al. (2011), construction industry is heterogeneous in nature and therefore prone to ethical erosions and bedevilled with corrupt practices. The construction projects involve various processes and require the contribution of many different stakeholders because of different phases of work, and a great deal of inputs from both the public and private sectors (Abdul-Aziz and Mohmad, 2010). One of the major challenges confronting the industry is its notoriety for corruption (Jong, Henry and Stansbury, 2009).

Olatunji and Muhammed (2013) submitted that corruption had been defined by previous researcher based on the political, cultural and the extent of civilization of the society. What is considered a corrupt practice in developing world may not be in the Western world and vice-versa. The acceptance of a gift by public official in appreciation of display of competence and performance of duty is not viewed as corruption in Nigeria but rather a motivation to do more, it is against the norm and ethics of public work in the Western world and therefore a corrupt practice. Authority is exercised in Nigeria by using personal discretion to bend rules in favour of certain individuals but high level corruption in other climes. Furthermore, corruption is also any act of inducement intended to force an action to be carried out or committed outside the set rules and procedure. According to Obayelu (2007), corruption was defined by World Bank as abuse of public office for private advantage. Although defining corruption in concise and concrete terms may be difficult due to its complexity but there exists a consensus as to what exactly constitute a corrupt practice. Oxford Advanced Learners dictionary defines corruption as "dishonest or wicked behaviour". It is a process of using one's power in a dishonest, illegal or immoral way to attract an advantage to oneself (Alemika, 2012). Lash (2003) on the other hand said that immoral and dishonest or exploitation of power in economic, financial and political spheres for personal gains is corruption. Any action taken in social economic, political and financial realms which is morally unacceptable, bad or illegal is corruption (Egbu, 2012). A model to illustrate the dynamics of corruption was developed by Klitgaard (1996) where it stated that C = M+D-A: C=corruption; M=monopoly of power; D=discretion and A=accountability.

Construction activities are segmented into various portions with many participants, hence prone to corruption. They sometimes operate in a complex contractual structure that can prop up a variety of psychological human behavior and attitude that may be inclining towards corrupt tendencies (Mohd-Nordin, Takum and Nawawi, 2012; Stansbury 2005). Construction projects comprises many stages that are littered with corrupt practices. This often leads to negative and devastating effects on the quality of built environment, increased cost and schedule overrun and competitive performance of the industry (Sohail and Cavill, 2006; Murray and Meghji, 2009). Park &Blenkinsopp (2011) said corruption isa deviant behaviour of departingfrom normal duties of a public role, pecuniary or status gain, and violates official ethics of public services due to private-regarding influences. Neelankavil (2002) and Otusanya (2011) opined that it is a complex set of personal enrichment processes which involves many types of crime and oftentimes some form of illicit human behaviour too difficult to recognise or measure. Some environmental factors such as distorted or opaque government behaviour and decisions, weak or ineffective anti-corruption institutions, cultures that intertwined gift-giving with bribery, poor quality of public service and inadequate openness in trade wand market access, all lead to corrupt activities (Luo, 2004).

Third world countries (otherwise called developing countries) especially of the sub-Saharan region had been plagued with corruption more than the rest of the world. This has brought serious set-back in terms of socio-economic and infrastructural development, it is due mainly to poor public procurement system according to findings. If the process is not reviewed, x-rayed or urgent reform is not carried out, the cycle of un-development may not abate in spite of huge investment committed to that effect. The process begins with the contract award system. According to global survey on corruption, it was discovered that the volume of bribes exchanging hands through public sector procurement is estimated between $390-400billion per year (Lengwiler and Wolfstetter, 2006). Corruption in Sub-Saharan Africa was estimated to be almost up to 70 per cent of public procurement contracts (Mawenya, 2008).

Nigeria as a whole and Akwa Ibom in particular is not left out in the wind of corruption blowing across the length of Africa. Akwa Ibom is located in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria; the region rich in oil and natural resources thereby enjoying large percentage of revenue accruing to her from the centre. The state ought to be an epitome of steady growth and infrastructural development more than it is currently witnessing. There is a wide spread allegation of corruption in this region as the money received by the individual state Government does not correspond to the physical development on ground. It is also a common knowledge that public projects serve as conduit pipe for siphoning public fund, hence, the need for this study to unravel the nature of prevailing corrupt practices in public projects delivery and the causal factors in the study area.

1.1. Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to unravel the nature of the prevailing corrupt practices and its causal factors in public project delivery in Akwa Ibom state. The following objectives are listed to achieve the aim of the study; they are to:

i. evaluate the nature/extent of various corrupt practices in public projects delivery,
ii. evaluate the causal factors responsible for corruption in public projects,

1.2. Research hypotheses

Two hypotheses were postulated to justify the opinion of respondents on the study.

Ho: There is no significant difference in the perception of respondents on the prevailing corrupt practices in public projects.

Ho: There is no significant difference in the perception of respondents on the causal factors responsible for corruption in public projects.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section focuses on reviewing the extant literature dealing on corruption and corrupt practices, nature and characteristics of construction industry globally and in Nigeria as a whole.

2.1. Attributes and nature of Nigeria construction industry

The construction industry accounts for about one-third of gross capital formation. In Nigeria alone, it accounts for about 70% of the nation's fixed capital formation and 1.4% gross domestic product (GDP). The construction industry in Nigeria employs almost 8million people which is about 25% of the nation's workforce and regarded as the largest employer of construction labour in Africa (Inuwa et al., 2015). Inuwa et al. (2015) enumerated the importance of the sector to the nation's economy and the cardinal role played in nation's development. Isa (2013) and Oyewobi et al. (2011) considered that the heterogeneous nature of the industry made it prone to ethical erosions and is therefore be-devilled with corrupt related practices.

Procurement sector in Nigeria bears the risk of corruption more than any other sector (Anigbogu and Shawarka, 2011). It was further submitted that no arm of Government is free from corruption especially when award of contract is involved, this has battered the image of the country. Having said this much about procurement sector in Nigeria and established in other parts of the nation, there is no literature to justify the risk of corruption in this sector in Akwa Ibom state. Therefore, the roles of procurement officers in aiding and abetting corrupt practices in the study area need to be investigated so as to establish the impact on public project delivery.

In the view of Oyedele (2013), construction industry is a segmented sector and are majorly divided into 3 segments based on their activities, they are; building construction by contractors/constructors, civil works construction such as road and highway construction, bridges, tunnel and other civil projects, specialty trade contractors who perform specialized activities relating to construction, these category includes carpentry, tiling, painting, plumbing, mechanical and electrical works, earth moving equipment and machineries leasing. No matter the segment, as long as it is involved in construction activities, there is manifestation of corruption and need to be looked into.

2.2. Corrupt tendencies in Nigeria construction industry

Corrupt tendencies are such actions that enhance, promote, aid and abet corruption in construction. These tendencies in construction industry manifested in many ways due to the segmentation of the industry. Many authors have taken time to look at various avenues through which corrupt tendencies persist. Hawkins (2013) mentioned project size,

uniqueness that inflate cost, Government involvement that enable official indulgent in bribery, while Adeyemo (2015) in corroborating the findings of Anigbogu and Shwarka (2011) stated some features that made Nigeria construction industry prone to corruption to include; complex contractual structure, diversity of skills, different project phases, project size, uniqueness of project, complexity of projects that allows passing of blame to others, concealment of some items of work by other items, lack of transparency, absence of or minimal monitoring by public building professionals. There is need to subject the outcome of these previous researches to further scrutiny or verification in the study area before the generalised statement could be established.

Akinsola and Omolayo (2013) identified some pre contracts activities such as bribe to obtain planning permission, employment of illegal workers, collusion between bidders, over pricing, bribery to obtain contract, leaking of information to preferred bidder, production of fraudulent invoices among others as being responsible for promoting corrupt tendencies in construction industry in Nigeria and the UK. Other corruptible practices that emerge during procurement are; bid shopping, under bidding, cover bidding, bid rigging, undertaking work without adequate qualification/experience/training by individuals or organisation while during tendering stage, there may be agreement by contractor to withdraw an offer he has made in exchange for money or accepting monetary bribes in order not to tender for contract already being invited for (Al-Sweity, 2013; Nawaz & Ikram, 2013). According to Al-Sweity (2013), during construction phase, there are cases of illogical request for time extension, material theft, doctoring of daily report for compensation purposes and others. Although, the corrupt practices mentioned earlier have been established in other parts of the nation, this research effort intend to find out their applicability and manifestation in the study area. Also, are these pre-contract activities obtainable in the study area, or were there measures already in place to curb or prevent some, if not all of them?

2.3. Previous empirical studies on corrupt practices

Extracts from the study conducted by Ayodele, Ogunbode, Ariyo and Alabi (2010) indicated that poverty level, excessive love for money/greed, politics in award of contract/God-fatherism, professional indiscipline, profit maximization by Contractors, quackery, fall-out of endemic societal corruption and favouritism are some of the causes of corruption in the construction industry in Nigeria. The study further recommended some measures that could be taken to tackle the menace. Among others, the study suggested better remuneration in term of wages and salary for government officials/civil servants, proper counselling of contentment to the contractors, elimination of Godfatherism syndrome in the award of contract by observing due process as outlines in public procurement Act put in place by Federal Government of Nigeria (2007), vibrant professional institution to monitor the activities of construction professionals with aim of bringing to book any erring one, public enlightenment and sensitisation to kick out quacks in execution of public projects from inception to completion, avoidance of sub-standard materials and workmanship by contractors.

Though this study was carried out in Nigeria but was done in a different environment from the study area. Most of the practices adjudged to be corrupt here may not be in the study area and vice-versa. It is necessary to determine to what extent are these practices actually perceived to be corrupt in Akwa Ibom state and discover others not stated here.

In a paper entitled “Fraud and corruption in construction contracts in Nigeria” by Adetola (2017), the author x-rayed the ingredients of fraud and corruption in Nigeria public

system. Most public works are procured through a contract system. Contract is defined as a legally binding relationship with specific details of a mutual agreement made between two or more parties. Fraud occurs when at least one party intentionally misrepresents the terms listed in the contract, inflicting damage on one or more of the other parties to the contract.

Among others, it began by public office holder dipping their hands in public fund because we run a government without institutionalized adequate financial control system. There were cases of corruption reported in recent times of senior public servant found in possession of money meant for other purposes, of particular interest were those reported in the Punch Newspaper of November 13th, 2015 and The Nation Newspaper of 1st October 2015. According to the author, corruption is a global phenomenon as cases of United Kingdom Government (National Audit Office) who found that not less than 10% of the 65billion pounds spent in the construction industry annually is lost to fraud. Same goes to Netherlands and United State of America where money expended on infrastructural developments ends up private official's pockets. The author highlighted three major areas targeted for fraud and corruption as; payment method, quantity verification and quantity specification and execution.

The paper concluded that the level of fraud and corruption in Nigeria system had reached an epidemic state and surpassed those of foreign counterparts with construction contracts responsible for lion share of it. The author suggested that concerted effort is required from all citizens to curb the menace of corruption. Government agencies should recognise the roles and responsibility of professionals in their establishment and allow them to function accordingly instead of allotting these roles to just one particular directorate or division which will not promote checks and balances. Also, Government should find a way of dealing with method of advance payment in contract as it is a major attraction to fraud and corruption.

From the forgoing, it is necessary to determine the roles of professional (if any) in the procurement sector of the study area. The method of payment either through advance payment or bond payment guarantee should be investigated. Transparency International (TI, 2011) asserts that majority of construction businesses around the globe "are vulnerable to corruption ... and the industry is one of the most corrupt sectors in which to do business". Also, reports from Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB, 2013) publication 'Exploring corruption in the UK Construction Industry' seem to corroborate the aphorism that the construction sector is corrupt.

Arewa and Farell (2015) opined that the way and manner construction organisation operates tends to make them prone to corrupt practices, the attributes and traits of fraud and corruption reveals the close relationship with culture, organisation values and belief of the people. The involvement of lengthy chains of supply, complex contractual agreement, deployment of multiple sub-contractors are all customary cultural practices of most organisation that open doors to corruption (Arewa and Farell, 2015).Among others, factors that may support fraud and corruption in an institutionalised manner as revealed by study conducted by Arewa and Farell (2015) are the pervasive use of subcontractors and consultants, the lack of transparency in tendering processes, lobbying for contracts, cover pricing and cartels. Ernst and Young (2012) argued that these provide opportunity for clients, consultants, contractors and suppliers to leverage payments or other benefits for private gains.

Osei-Tutu, Badu and Owusu-Manu (2010) submitted based on their findings that, among others, what constitute major corruption practices in Ghana infrastructure projects delivery are conflict of interest, bribery, embezzlement, kickbacks, tender manipulation and fraud.

Though, the research was purely review and explanatory without any empirical analysis to support the discussions and thus could not be generalised in a wider context to capture the entire public procurement practice in Ghana public infrastructure delivery, the paper suggested that implementation of sound procurement performance measurements would be imperative in the bid to curb corruption practices. It also proposed that creative and logical introduction of monitoring systems when planning, executing and completing projects were as important as having knowledge about and debating issues related to corruption by the society.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted exploratory and descriptive survey approach, questionnaire was used as an instrument of gathering data for this research. The study population consists of government procurement officers (in Ministries and Departmental Agencies/other establishments of both state/federal governments in Akwa Ibom), established contractors with government (both state and federal) and enlightened citizens. Only contractors who are known to have handled or still handling construction projects were considered. The enlightened citizens were such people in the project environment who are learned and conversant with workings/activities of government as it regards project execution and were carefully chosen to fulfil research objectives. The sample size is judgmental as it was difficult to assess the list of registered contractors and unfriendliness of government procurement officers. The projects considered were majorly roads, hospitals, hostels and any such building construction by the government for public utilities. The data obtained were analysed using descriptive, mean score and Kruskal-Walis tests.

The sample frame of sixty structured cross-sectional questionnaires were administered to three respondents namely; contractors, procurement officers and enlightened citizens where public projects are domiciled. The questionnaires were distributed among the three senatorial district of Uyo, Eket and Ikot-ekpene in the order 30:15:15. The respondents were given in the ratio 20:5:5 for Uyo:Eket:Ikot-ekpene respectively for contractors, 9:3:3 in the same order for procurement officers and 9:3:3 following the same order for enlightened citizens. Uyo senatorial district receive more attention because of the concentration of public projects in the state capitals. Also, few procurement officers were considered in the other 2 senatorial district due to scarce concentration of projects except higher institution projects.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section one captured the respondent's characteristics such as sex, educational qualification, stake in the projects, professional affiliations, membership status of professional body (if any), years of experience, senatorial districts, project owner type, type of construction and contract type. The second parts sought the respondent's opinion on the nature of corrupt practices prevailing in public projects delivery in the study area, the third section extracted opinions of respondents on causal factors responsible for corrupt practices in public projects.

The measurements were on a five Point-Likert scales of 5-strongly agree; 4-agree; 3-moderate; 2-disagree; 1-strongly disagree for section 2 and 3. Kruskal-Walis test was used to analyse the respondent perceptions and variations, while mean score was used to rank the opinions.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of data analysis are presented in this section.

4.1. Questionnaire distribution and rate of return

The questionnaires were distributed among the respondents and rate of return shown in Table 1.A total of 60 copies of questionnaire were distributed across the three senatorial districts of the state. Only 48 copies were duly completed and return, which represent 80% return rate and was adjudged good for analysis.

Table 1: Questionnaire distributions for respondents in the study area.

Group of respondents	Location of Study			Total Distributed	Total Returned (% Returned)	Percentage Returned (%)
	Uyo	Eket	Ikot-Ekpene			
Contractors	20	5	5	30	27 (90%)	56.3
Procurement officers	15	3	3	15	10 (67%)	28.8
Enlightened Citizens	9	3	3	15	11 (73%)	22.9
TOTAL				60	48 (80%)	80

4.2. Characteristics of respondents used for the study

Characteristics of the respondents whose perception were investigated such as sex, educational qualification, stake in the projects, professional affiliation, membership status and experience are presented on Table2.

According to the result shown in Table 2, most respondents were male and possessed mostly BSc and the least HND (about 8 respondents), this educational qualification is adequate for proper understanding of the research purpose. Majority of the respondents are construction professionals except4 who are procurement officers belonging to management professionals, with membership status ranging from graduate to corporate as the highest, this indicate the level of proficiency in construction work, in terms of work experience, only 8 respondents could be said not to have acquired the necessary experience but majority are having between or more than 10 years' experience, hence were conversant with happenings in the industry. The result also revealed that the project handled by the respondents were mostly government owned, constituting building projects and road construction and were awarded either in lump sum for buildings and unit price for roads, though few direct labour and labour-only contracts were also considered.

4.3. Evaluation of nature of corrupt practices in public project delivery

The first objective is to evaluate the nature of corrupt practices and the extent of its occurrence in the study area. For this purpose, fourteen acts or conducts that constituted corrupt practices in the procurement of public projects in the study area were selected and presented to the participants. Table 3a shows a display of result with their mean scores and rank based on the perception of respondents.

Table 2: Descriptive results of respondents' characteristics

Features	Sub features	N	%
Sex	Male	45	93.8
	Female	3	6.3
	TOTAL	48	100.0
Educational qualification	HND	8	16.7
	BSc	27	56.3
	PGD	4	8.3
	MSc	8	16.7
	PhD	1	2.1
	TOTAL	48	100.0
Stake in the project	Contractor	27	56.3
	Procurement officer	10	20.8
	Enlightened citizen	11	22.9
	TOTAL	48	100.0
Professional affiliation	NIA	5	10.4
	NIOB	19	39.6
	NSE	15	31.3
	NIQS	5	10.4
	Others	4	8.3
	TOTAL	48	100.0
Membership status	Technician	3	6.3
	Licenciate	1	2.1
	Associate	3	6.3
	Graduate	17	35.4
	Corporate	23	47.9
	Fellow	1	2.1
	TOTAL	48	100.0
Years of experience	1-5yrs	8	16.7
	6-10yrs	22	45.8
	11-15yrs	12	25.0
	16-20yrs	2	4.2
	Above 20yrs	4	8.3
	TOTAL	48	100.0
Senatorial district of operation	Uyo	29	60.4
	Eket	7	14.6
	Ikot-ekpene	12	25.0
	TOTAL	48	100.0
Project owner type	Higher institution/school	14	29.2
	Government	25	52.1
	NGOs	9	18.8
	TOTAL	48	100.0
Type of construction	Building	36	75.0
	Road	10	20.8
	Hospitals	1	2.1
	Sport complex	1	2.1
	TOAL	48	100.0
Contract type	Unit price	17	35.4
	Lump sum	16	33.3
	Cost reimbursable	2	4.2
	Labour only	6	12.5
	Direct labour	7	14.6
	TOTAL	48	100.0

According to Table 3a, inflation of contract sum (with the aim of collecting excess sum later) has the highest mean score of 4.18 and 4.20 by both contractor and procurement officers respectively. It was adjudged by both contractor and procurement officer as being the most prevalent. On the other hand, abandonment of project (by the contractor after collecting reasonable amount of the contract sum) has a MIS value of 3.545 based on the

perception of the enlightened citizen. This was believed to be the most prevalent corrupt practice in the study area.

Table 3a: Perception of respondents on nature of corrupt practices in public project delivery

List of Variables	Contractors N=27		Procurement officer N=10		Enlightened Citizens N=11	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Inflation of contract sum	4.1481	1	4.2000	1	3.3636	5
Collection of kick-back	3.9259	2	3.4000	10	3.3636	6
Abandonment of project	3.5926	3	3.8000	4	3.5455	1
Certification of substandard work by consultant	3.5926	4	4.0000	3	3.0909	13
Non implementation of contract according to specification	3.5556	5	4.0000	2	3.2727	7
Award of contract to ghost company/firm	3.4444	6	3.4000	11	3.1818	12
diversion of fund meant for project	3.4074	7	3.5000	6	3.4545	3
unauthorised sale of material	3.4074	8	3.4000	8	3.4545	4
double payment for same work already done	3.3333	9	2.9000	14	3.1818	11
short-changing of government project as individual	3.2963	10	3.3000	13	3.1818	8
use of substandard material for construction	3.2593	11	3.5000	7	3.1818	9
doctoring of design to reduce expenditure	3.1481	12	3.4000	9	3.1818	10
substitution of material	3.0741	13	3.8000	5	2.7273	14
diversion of material	3.0741	14	3.3000	12	3.5455	2

Table 3b shows the corrupt practices in descending order for each respondent (contractors, procurement officers and enlightened citizens). All the respondents agreed to inflation of contract sum and abandonment of projects as two common corrupt practices among the top five in the study area.

Table 3b: Top five nature of corrupt practices by each participants

Contractors	Procurement officers	Enlightened citizens
Inflation of contract sum	Inflation of contract sum	abandonment of project
collection of kick-back	non implementation of contract according to specification	diversion of material
abandonment of project	certification of substandard work by consultant	diversion of fund meant for project
certification of substandard work by consultant	abandonment of project	Unauthorised sale of material
non implementation of contract according to specification	substitution of material	Inflation of contract sum

The information in Table 3b was directly extracted from Table 3a. It shows the perception of each respondent on the nature of corrupt practices prevailing in the study area.

While to the contractors and the procurement officers, inflation of contract sum was adjudged to be rampant, the enlightened citizen believed it was abandonment of project (by the contractor).

4.3.1. Test of hypothesis one on nature of corrupt practices prevailing in the study area

The hypothesis earlier postulated need to be tested to be able to make any definite statement on the perception of participants (contractors, procurement officers and enlightened citizens) on the nature of prevailing corrupt practices in public projects. If the p-value is less than or equal to 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, otherwise the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3c: Kruskal-Walis test for testing perception of respondents on prevailing corrupt practices in public project delivery

Prevailing corrupt practices in public project delivery	Mean Rank
Contractors	22.29
Procurement officers	26.57
Enlightened citizens	15.64
Chi-Square	5.660
Df	2
P-value	.059
	0.05
Significance level	Accept
Decision	

Kruskal Wallis test was conducted to determine whether or not there is variation in the perception of respondents on the nature of prevailing corrupt practices in public projects in the study area. The result is presented in Table 3c. As shown in the table, the p-value is 0.059 which is slightly higher than the significant level of 0.05, therefore the null hypothesis is accepted, that is, there is no variation in the opinion of respondents on the prevailing corrupt practices in public projects delivery in the study area. The result by implication means the respondents agreed to the existence of the prevalence of corrupt practices in the delivery of public projects in the study area.

4.4. Evaluation of causal factors responsible for corrupt practices in public projects

The second objective evaluated the causal factors responsible for corrupt practices. There are twenty-nine of these factors identified from literature and were presented to respondents for their opinion. The result in Table 4a shows the perception of each respondent.

As shown in Table 4a, godfatherism and settlement was ranked highest with MIS of 4.370 by the contractor. It was adjudged as the leading factor causing corruption in the delivery of public projects according to the opinion of contractors. This is closely followed by public project as political settlement because it was ranked next. On the other hand, procurement officers submitted that public project as political settlement with the highest rank and MIS value of 4.800 is the leading factor. It was also followed by godfatherism and settlement. The enlightened citizen agreed with procurement officer in their opinion. It was submitted that public project as political settlement with MIS of

4.550 is the leading causal factor but mentioned low salary of public administration employees as the next.

Table 4a.: Perception of respondents on the causal factors responsible for corrupt practices in public projects delivery

List of Variables	Contractors N=27		Procurement officer N=10		Enlightened Citizens N=11	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
godfatherism and settlement	4.3704	1	4.6000	2	4.3636	4
public project as political settlement	4.2963	2	4.8000	1	4.5455	1
infiltration of professional ranks by quacks	4.1481	3	3.9000	16	3.9091	14
community agressive demand	4.1111	4	3.9000	17	4.0000	10
gratification expectation	4.0370	5	4.1000	6	4.0000	13
expectation of loyalty from superior official	3.9259	6	4.0000	10	3.3636	27
community leadership antecedents	3.8889	7	4.0000	13	3.5455	23
informal social security i.e project as part of national cake	3.8519	8	3.8000	18	4.1818	7
Lack of transparency in procurement system	3.8148	9	4.3000	4	4.3636	3
low salary of public administration employees	3.8148	10	4.0000	11	4.4545	2
corrupt tolerant society/community	3.7778	11	3.7000	21	4.1818	8
lack of transparency in execution process	3.7778	12	4.0000	7	3.7273	16
lack of control by supervisory institution	3.7037	13	4.0000	7	3.5455	24
outright theft or diversion of fund	3.6667	14	4.0000	8	3.4545	26
imposition of unqualified workforce	3.5556	15	3.6000	22	3.6364	19
contract purchase and resale by influential people	3.5556	16	4.1000	5	3.6364	18
non observation of ethics and professional standard	3.5556	17	3.8000	19	4.0000	12
slow bureaucratic procedure	3.5556	18	4.0000	12	4.2727	6
Un-coordinated financial sector()	3.5185	19	4.4000	3	3.6364	22
inappropriate sanctioning method	3.5185	20	4.0000	14	3.7273	17
artificially created superiority of government official	3.4815	21	3.8000	20	3.6364	21
lack of control by supervisory agency	3.4815	22	3.9000	15	3.8182	15
lack of competence by contracting firm	3.4815	23	3.4000	27	3.6364	20
non job satisfaction of government official	3.4815	24	3.5000	25	4.0000	11
socio-economic condition of government officials	3.4815	25	3.3000	29	4.1818	9
secret or lack of bidding process	3.4444	26	4.0000	9	3.3636	28
poor state of public administration	3.3704	27	3.3000	28	4.3636	5
weak or compromised professional institute	3.2593	28	3.6000	23	3.5455	25
Inter-tribal/ethnic conflicts	3.1852	29	3.5000	24	3.2727	29

Table 4b shows the top five causal factors responsible for corrupt practices in public project delivery in the study area and there seem to be an agreement on two factors that appear in the top five of each respondent. All the respondents agreed that godfatherism and settlement with public project as political settlement rank among the five topmost factor causing corrupt practices in the study area.

Table 4b: Top five causal factors responsible for corrupt practices in public projects delivery

Contractors	Procurement officers	Enlightened citizens
godfatherism and settlement	public project as political settlement	public project as political settlement
public project as political settlement	godfatherism and settlement	low salary of public administration employees
infiltration of professional ranks by quacks	Un-coordinated financial sector	Lack of transparency in procurement system
community aggressive demand	Lack of transparency in procurement system	godfatherism and settlement
gratification expectation	contract purchase and resale by influential people	poor state of public administration

4.4.1. Test of hypothesis two on causal factors responsible for corrupt practices in public projects

In order to ascertain the level of significance of the variation of opinion expressed and to be able to make a categorical statement on the perception of respondents, the second hypothesis postulated must be tested. In testing the hypothesis, the confidence level is set at 95% with significance level at 0.05. The decision rule is that if p-value < 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative is accepted. Otherwise the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative rejected. Kruskal Wallis test was conducted to ascertain the difference in the perception of respondents on the causal factors responsible for corrupt practices in public projects delivery in the study area. According to the result presented in Table 4c, the p-value is 0.066, therefore the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4c: Kruskal-Walis test for testing perception of respondents on causal factors responsible for corrupt practices in public project delivery

Causal factors responsible for corrupt practices in public projects	Mean rank
Contractors	35.10
Procurement officers	48.76
Enlightened citizens	48.14
Chi-Square	5.423
Df	2
P-value	.066
Significance level	0.05
Decision	Accept

Accepting the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the perception of respondents on the causal factors responsible for corruption in public projects indicate that those factors are here with us. It is a statement of fact as shown in Table 4b that godfatherism and public projects as political settlement are two major syndromes responsible for corruption in our society, this is supported by Ayodele et.al. (2010). The result by implication indicate a congruence of opinion among the stakeholders of major causes of corruption in public works. Though other factors do exist but the opinion of respondents in the study area pin pointed god fatherism/settlement and public project as political settlement as the major factors responsible for corrupt practices.

4.5. Discussion of findings

The result of the study revealed a level of agreement among the stakeholders of the prevalence of corrupt practices in the delivery of public projects in the study area. Unless these practices are nipped in the board, it may cripple infrastructural and economic development of the people living in the area. The finding from this study is at variance with previous studies especially that of Adetola (2017) that only stated fraud through payment method as the most common corrupt practices. This finding had been able to establish the key roles of each stakeholder as corruption in procurement of public projects begins with procurement officers.

Other findings of the study indicated God fatherism/settlement and public project as political settlement as major cause of corrupt practices in the delivery of public projects. This study agreed with the earlier work done by Ayodele et al. (2010). According to Ayodele et al. (2010), godfatherism/politics in award of contract, excessive love for money/greed, poverty level and others were among the causes mentioned though in no particular order. Adeyemo (2015) listed many factors that induced corruption in construction but did not mention our political principle and ideology, while Akinsola and Omolayo (2013) identified some pre-contracts activities such as bribe to obtain planning permission, employment of illegal workers, collusion between bidders etc. as some factors but the finding of this study has added another dimension to these pre-contract activities. Most corrupt practices according to the study findings are pre-contract activities as less is witnessed and easily curbed at construction stages. Almost all the respondents agreed to this fact as revealed in Table 4b, the five topmost factors responsible for corrupt practices in public works are pre-contract based activities except for community aggressive demand and gratification, as submitted by contractor.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study x-rayed the corruption in construction sector or industry with emphasis on public project. Insight has been provided into what constitute corrupt practices in Akwa Ibom state with many revelations from the participants. The opinion of respondents who are deemed to be stakeholders in public project procurement in Akwa Ibom state revealed the nature of corrupt practices prevailing in the study area. Among others, the top five frequent practices are: inflation of contract sum; abandonment of project; collection of kick back; certification of substandard work by consultant and non-implementation of contracts according to specifications. There is an overwhelming agreement by contractors and procurement officers in this but the enlightened citizens slightly differ.

The study also concludes that only two factors were considered responsible for causing corruption in procurement of public projects, they are: god-fatherism and settlement; public project as political settlement. The top five causal factors of each respondent have only these two as common to all. This result by implication means for socio economic development of the area, the menace of god-fatherism and settlement (a brother to man-know-man), the idea of using public infrastructural project as political settlement must be dealt with decisively.

Going by these conclusions and unless Government agencies responsible for the award of contracts are alive to their responsibilities, the trend will continue. Therefore, the study recommends the use of private consultants in tendering/bidding process to remove all forms

of excesses and also appointment of independent consultants to monitor progress of work/certification.

It is also recommended that the public, through civil society and human rights groups should take the responsibility of leading the campaign against the political class in this direction otherwise the future of un-born generation may have been sacrificed without knowing. Government must set in motion a high powered reorientation campaign and lead by example. The campaign and compliance should begin from the top that is, it must be seen as top-bottom approach so as to convey a strong message to the populace. Our eroded value system must be re-galvanised to lay a better foundation for our tomorrow.

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