

# **PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF CORRUPTION IN ANAMBRA STATE: A STUDY OF AGUATA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA**

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## **Abstract**

This paper investigated public perception of corruption in Aguata local government area of Anambra state. It is a cross sectional survey and Bandura's social learning theory constituted the theoretical frame for the paper. The multistage sampling technique was applied in choosing the 400 study participants. In this study, it was found that the public perceived corruption as a serious problem which must be stopped. Factors responsible for corruption in Aguata local government area were found to include among others poverty and unemployment, lack of patriotism, weak judicial system, negative value system and lack of social and economic security. It was also found that the effects of corruption in Aguata local government area include retardation of economic growth and development, poor infrastructural development, poverty and unemployment, non provision of basic amenities and reduction of investment potentials of the society. This paper recommended the need for attitudinal change. This involves changing the value system which emphasizes unbridled penchant for materialism.

## **Introduction**

Corruption is ubiquitous. It is a very serious problem which has existed in the human society for a very long-time. It is a problem which confronts both developed and developing economies of the world. Corruption occurs in varying degrees in different countries and with overwhelming consequences on political and socio-economic development (Otite, 1986, Ike, (2009) and Ajie and Wokekoro, 2012). Some countries define corruption in the broadest form while others legislated on the narrow definition of the term. The World Bank cited in Raimi, Suara and Fadipe (2013) defines corruption as:

The abuse of public office for private gains; public office is abused for private gain when an official accepts, solicits, or extorts a bribe. It is also abused when private agents actively offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit. Public office can also be abused for personal benefit even if no bribery occurs, through patronage and nepotism, the theft of state assets or the diversion of state resources. (p. 107).

This definition implies that corruption is not only the exclusive preserve of personnel in the public domain. It involves also private entrepreneurs or persons who fail to abide by the rules governing the conduct of institutionalized process. Furthermore, Khan cited in Lawal and Tobi (2006) argued that corruption is an act which deviates from the formal rules of conduct governing the actions of someone in a position of public authority because of private motives such as wealth, power or status. Khan sees corruption from the point of view of people who mismanage public positions for personal gains. Corruption encourages the distortion of government expenditure. This often results in diversion of public investment on large scale projects, rather than on the provision of necessary public services such as health, roads, housing and education (Ogbeidi cited in Ilechukwu, (2014). This situation makes it inevitable for the limited but valuable fund earmarked for development to disappear into private pockets. Ilechukwu (2014) argued that:

Corruption also undermines efficiency as time and money are wasted through corrupt activities at the expense of productive activities and which altogether discourages prospective investors. Corruption undermines human and capital development in any society or nation. Perhaps the most tragic effect of corruption on Nigeria has been the failure of the country to attain its economic potentials. Corruption generates economic distortion in the public sector by devastating public investment into capital projects where bribes and kickbacks are more painful. It slows down the pace of economic development through manipulation of funds for projects; it destroys or weakens efficiency and effectiveness of public service, it detracts government from giving priority to the areas of income and social inequality, poverty, malnutrition and other areas of need. The net impact of corruption on society is negative. (p. 95).

Corruption has adversely affected Nigeria's economy. There seems to be strong relationship between corruption and economic development of any country and this requires a critical investigation so as to provide appropriate understanding of the problem. The effect of corruption in Anambra state cannot be overemphasized. The state is blessed with both human and natural resources. In spite of this, there seems to be little or no serious developmental activities going on in it. This is most probably a product of corruption.

Corruption is deeply rooted in Nigeria and its manifestation is reflected in the nation's scores in Corruption Perception Index (CIP) published annually by the highly rated Transparency International (TI) (Akpipelu, Ogunseye, Bada & Agbeyangi, 2013). Aluko (2005) stressed that Nigeria was the fifth most corrupt country in 1998. Similarly, Pogoson (2009) stressed that Nigeria was ranked the second most corrupt country in the world in 1999. The country's ranking became worst in 2000 when Nigeria was ranked the most corrupt country in the world. In 2001, 2002 and 2003, Nigeria was ranked the second most corrupt country out of the surveyed countries (Pogoson, 2009). From 2005 to 2007, Nigeria ranked the eight, twenty second, and thirty second most corrupt among the surveyed countries respectively. By 2008, Nigeria significantly improved her rating and ranked 121 out of 180 countries (Pogoson, 2009).

Corruption is worse in countries where institutions, such as the legislature and the judiciary are weak, where rule of law and adherence to formal rules are not rigorously observed, where political patronage is the standard practice, where the independence and professionalism of the public sector has been eroded and where civil society lacks the means to bring public pressure to bear on governance (Lawal, 2007). Obviously, in the case of developing countries like Nigeria, limited resources that are initially allocated for industries, hospitals, road construction, schools and other infrastructure are either outrightly siphoned, embezzled, misappropriated, or otherwise severely depleted through kickbacks and over invoicing by government officials. The situation has become so bad to the extent that as far back as 1993, keeping an average Nigerian from being corrupt is like keeping a goat from eating yam (Achebe, 1988).

Corruption has also led to diversion of developmental resources of the society to private or personal use. This has contributed to capital flight from Nigeria to foreign accounts in Europe, America and other parts of the world. Corruption is a very serious problem in any place it is found. The devastating consequences of the phenomenon are very far reaching. This is against the backdrop that corruption negates any meaningful effort targeted at improving the economic viability of any society. Although studies on effects of corruption in other parts of the world are

widely reported in literature, very few research on the phenomenon exist in Anambra state. Several public infrastructures are either moribund or vandalized in Anambra state. For instance, Anambra state water corruption ceased to function since the inception of the present democratic dispensation in the country. Many public schools in the state are no longer viable as they used to be. Even the state owned hospitals are not spared of this rot. Corruption has impeded the progressive development of the state for a very long time. It is in view of the foregoing that this study is undertaken to investigate the effects of corruption on Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Consequently, the following research questions are expected to guide this study.

1. How do people perceive corruption in Aguata local government area?
2. What are the factors responsible for corruption in Aguata local government area?
3. What are the consequences of corruption in Aguata local government area?
4. What are the ways to curb corruption in Aguata local government area?

### **People's Perception of Corruption in Nigeria**

Corruption Perception Index (CIP) published annually by the highly rated Transparency International (TI) shows that corruption is endemic in Nigeria. The highest index point the nation has ever had is 2.7 out of 10 points which means that for the past sixteen years when the country has been appearing in the roll call she has always been among the worst rated corrupt countries in the world (Akinpelu, Ogunseye, Bada, & Agbeyangi, 2013). Virtually every right thinking Nigerian will tell you that corruption is ubiquitous in Nigeria. Uma and Eboh (2013) maintained that corruption in Nigeria is a contagious disease which everybody in the society aspires to be part of. The authors argued that it is the reason behind over 150 candidates vying for one political post during election in Nigeria. Most people want to be in control of power so as to become rich overnight. This mentality is perhaps responsible for the manner in which corruption occur in Nigeria. Police road-blocks were so rampant that in over ten kilometers in Nigerian highways you see about ten police road blocks with associated corrupt practices and delays in movement (Uma & Eboh, 2013).

Corruption existed in the democratic and non democratic governments in Nigeria. Virtually all aspects of the society have a form of corruption or the other in the country. In fact, even religious organizations are also not exempted from corrupt practices (Uma & Eboh, 2013). Furthermore, Mo cited in Uma and Eboh (2013) points out that corruption is beneficial to a specific group of people, mainly the elites and political affiliates and creates unfairness in opportunities. In a country where those who work more earn less and those who work less earn more, such vices like armed-robbery, kidnapping, cheating, amongst others are likely to be rampant (Uma & Eboh, 2013). Every year, a reasonable allocation is made on power, road network, communication, education, among others, but the expected impact of these expenditures is highly dissatisfactory. This is because the funds are most often diverted for personal use. There is high degree of embezzlement of allocated funds. This is the reason behind the conclusions reached by many that corruption is a deadly disease that has eaten deep into the nucleus of the country and as such has retarded growth in all sectors. Ayobolu cited in Osimen, Adenegan and Balogun (2013) stressed that corruption in Nigeria is one of the many unresolved problems that have critically hobbled and skewed development. It remains a long-term major political and economic challenge for Nigeria (Sachs cited in Osimen et al., 2013). It is a canker worm that has

eaten deep into the fabric of the nation. It ranges from petty corruption to political/bureaucratic corruption or systemic corruption (International Centre for Economic Growth cited in Osimen, et al., 2013).

### **Factors Responsible for Corruption in Nigeria**

Very many factors are responsible for corruption in Nigeria. For instance, Ajie and Wokekoro (2012) found among others, that weak institution of government; dysfunctional legal system; lack of transparency; high poverty/unemployment rate and political interference on the operations of anti-corruption agencies constitute the major causes of systemic corruption in Nigeria. Akor (2014) advanced several reasons for the pervasiveness of corruption in Nigeria and by extension; the nation's seemingly recurrent down ward slide on the global corruption perception index. Manzetti and Blake cited in Akor (2014) suggested that corruption is most pervasive in a country like Nigeria where, the institutional mechanisms for combating corruption are weak or not used; extensive governmental control and regulation of economic resources provide opportunity for corrupt exchanges and corruption is so socialized at all societal levels that it is accepted and tolerated.

The Human Rights Watch cited in Akor (2014) posited that Nigeria's political system seemed to have institutionalized corruption by continually rewarding rather than punishing corruption. The body also faulted the delay in attending to corruption cases by the nation's courts. The organization which also picked holes in many areas of the nation's anti-corruption war argued that "corruption is at the heart of many of Nigeria's most serious human rights problems. The body cited in Akor (2014) which scored the courts and the judiciary low succinctly declared thus:

The courts can also be an obstacle to accountability. Most of the EFCC cases against prominent political figures are stalled in the courts for years without the trials even commencing. Nigeria's weak and overburdened judiciary offers seemingly endless opportunities for skilled defense lawyers to secure interminable and sometimes frivolous delays. (p. 42).

Furthermore, Egwemi and Saliu cited in Akor (2014) blamed the country's poor corruption record on lack of transparency, good governance and accountability.

### **Consequences of Corruption in Nigeria**

Umah and Eboh (2013) found a negative correlation between levels of corruption and economic growth thereby making it difficult for Nigeria to develop fast. Corruption in Nigeria has stifled industrialization and infrastructural provision. No meaningful development can be achieved without short, medium and long-term industrialization strategies. The poor state of electricity, transport and communications is a major handicap for doing business in Nigeria. This situation is reflected in deficiency of sufficient power supply, good road net-work, poor school environment, lack of learning facilities, improperly equipped health centers, among others (Umah and Eboh, 2013).

Ilechukwu (2014) stressed that corruption poses a serious development challenge. In the political realm, it undermines democracy and good governance by flouting or even subverting formal process. Corruption in election and in legislative bodies reduces accountability and distorts representations in policy making. Similarly, Findings cited in Ilechukwu (2014) averred that

corruption in Nigeria has largely retarded social development, undermined economic growth, discouraged foreign investment and reduced resources available for infrastructural development, public service and poverty reduction programmes. Further on the effects of corruption in Nigeria, Ilechukwu (2014) maintained that:

Corruption in the judiciary compromises the rule of law; and corruption in the public administration result in the unfair and inefficient provision of services. More generally, corruption erodes the institutional capacity of government as procedures are disregarded, resources are siphoned off, and public offices are bought and sold. Thus corruption undermines the legitimacy of government democratic values of trust and tolerance. Corruption exacerbates poverty and disproportionately affects those of lower income, because it pulls resources from the national treasures, placing the money into the bank accounts of few individuals who are politically powerful. The scourge of corruption leaves the poor perpetually and disproportionately under privileged, even as it renders the development of democracy and the buildings of a society more problematic. By diverting assets away from their intended use, corruption can be said to be the single most important factor responsible for the failure of governance and lack of sustainable socio-economic development in Nigeria. (p. 95).

There are many unresolved problems in Nigeria, but the issue of the upsurge of corruption is particularly troubling. The damages it has done to the polity are astronomical. The menace of corruption leads to slow movement of files in offices, police extortion on highways and slow traffics on the highways, port congestion, queues at passport offices and gas stations, ghost workers syndrome, election irregularities, among others (Osimen et al., 2013).

Agbu cited in Raimi, Suara and Fadipe (2013) highlighted four serious implications of corruption as follows:

One, corruption affects adversely the quality of governance and social structure in Nigeria. Two, corruption has eroded government's ability to provide the needed social amenities like water, sanitation, healthcare, education et cetera. Three, it retards economic development and precipitates deterioration of public infrastructure and amenities (roads, refineries, dams, plants, telecommunication networks). Four, at the political level, untamed corruption in the polity entrenches bad governance in Nigeria despite the various legislations promulgated to check this despicable phenomenon. (p. 109).

Corruption has therefore affected the socio economic, political and other related institutions in Nigeria in adverse proportion. It therefore becomes imperative that something must be done to stop it.

### **Ways of Curbing Corruption in Nigeria**

The menace of corruption in Nigeria has become so much so that if allowed unchecked may bring the Nigerian nation to its knees. Akor (2014) argued that by far the greatest antidote to corruption is good governance. He further stressed that whatever policies that are put in place by government must be those that promote good governance, accountability and transparency. The political will to fight corruption is also a necessary ingredient in curbing corruption in Nigeria. Another way of curbing corruption in Nigeria is by having an independent and selfless judiciary. An independent and vibrant judiciary is a sine qua non for combating corruption. The manner in

which people clinch political power also plays a significant role on how to curb corruption in the country. Elections are not only flawed but warped. The political parties are dominated by money bags and ex-military leaders and their party primaries are mostly selective, non-participatory and undemocratic, thus resulting in the corruption of the leadership, loyalty to god-fathers and patrons, and indifference to the electorate and citizens in their style of governance. Ojukwu and Shopeju (2010) argued that:

Political will is a critical starting point for sustainable and effective anti-corruption strategy and programme. Without it, governments' statements to reform or systemic change would be futile. Political Will refers to the demonstrated credible intent of political actors (elected or appointed leaders, civil society) to attack perceived causes or effects of corruption at a systemic level. It is manifest in the degree to which reform initiatives are participative and incorporate a range of political actors and civil society. It also emphasizes commitment, dogged determination to enforce policies, rules without reservation. Studies have shown or proven that many Nigerian past and present leaders lack political will, and that is why corruption has been on the increase in the society. (p. 23).

Finally, corruption could be stemmed in Nigeria if the average Nigerian is willing to change the contemporary value system in the country which emphasizes unbridled penchant for materialism. Most people want to become rich overnight without working for it (Ugwuoke, 2005). There is a very serious need for change in the present value system which encourages inordinate desire for wealth acquisition.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Social Learning Theory**

Social learning theory is a social psychological theory which states that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation or direct instruction (Bandura, 1963). Albert Bandura propounded this theory. He studied learning processes that occurred in interpersonal contexts and were not adequately explained by theories of operant conditioning or existing models of social learning. His theory added a social element, arguing that people can learn new information and behaviours by watching other people. Known as observational learning (or modelling), this type of learning can be used to explain a wide variety of behaviours. In addition to the observation of behaviour, learning also occurs through the observation of rewards and punishments, a process known as vicarious reinforcement. The theory expands on traditional behavioural theories, in which behaviour is governed solely by reinforcements, by placing emphasis on the important roles of various internal processes in the individual (Bandura, 1971).

People learn through observing others' behaviour, attitudes, and outcomes of those behaviours. Most human behaviours are learned observationally through modelling. From observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action. There are three core concepts at the heart of social learning theory. First is the idea that people can learn through observation. Next is the idea that internal mental states are an essential part of this process. Finally, this theory recognizes that just because something has been learned, it does not mean that it will result in a change in behaviour.

Bandura's observational learning theory can be used to explain the prevalence of corruption in Nigeria. People see one form of corruption or the other on daily basis in Nigeria. In both public and private organizations, employees are daily stared in the face with the realities of 'kick backs' from contracts awarded. We often see public servants who, by every standard, live above their salaries, own expensive cars, live in palatable mansions of their own and send their wards to highly expensive schools within and outside the country. These individuals are revered and worshipped as the high and mighty. Most importantly because humans are essentially pleasure-seeking, we tend to learn and internalize behaviours of people who live in affluence and opulence and they invariably serve as our models. This phenomenon is most apparent where even persons that have been indicted of corrupt practices are celebrated rather than punished. This therefore made many Nigerians to develop tendency to corruption because those who enriched themselves through corrupt tendencies were not prosecuted. Even those who were unfortunate to be caught and prosecuted were eventually acquitted. This is by every standard a catalyst for people to emulate the corrupt practices of others who were able to misappropriate public funds.

It is necessary to state that corruption thrives in Nigeria because those who corruptly enriched themselves were almost worshipped for doing so. As people continue to observe that highly placed people especially politicians acquire their wealth/affluence through one corrupt means or the other without being punished, they are forced to do even worse because it appears to be the norm. The Social Learning theory is therefore very useful in explaining why corruption has continued to exist in Nigeria. The theory argues that when an action is reinforced, it is likely to be repeated again. It appears that corruption is rewarded in Nigeria in spite of government's anti corruption campaign against it. This therefore made it difficult for most people to conduct their affairs without being corrupt. This could explain why many people in Nigeria will be willing to involve in one form of corrupt practice or the other. The theory was adopted because it explains the social-psychological factor responsible for prevalence of corruption in Nigeria which has unprecedented negative implications on the economic development of the country in general and Anambra state in particular.

### **Methodology**

This paper adopted the cross sectional survey design. Primary data were collated using the structured questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The population of the study was drawn from Aguata local government area of Anambra state in Nigeria. It has a population of 369972 constituting of 187262 males and 182710 females (NPC, 2006). Aguata local government area is made up of fourteen communities - Akpo, Achina, Uga, Igbo-ukwu, Isuofia, Umuchu, Aguluezechukwu, Ezinifite, Ikenga, Amesi, Oraeri, Umuona, Nkpologwu and Ekwulobia. The multistage sampling technique was adopted in choosing the study participants for the study. This involves the application of several sampling techniques at one point or the other. Uga, Igbo-ukwu, Ezinifite and Ekwulobia communities were selected for this study through the application of the balloting method of the simple random sampling technique. The researcher also applied the simple random sampling technique in selecting villages from the selected communities. Two villages were selected from each community. A total of eight villages were selected for this study. In each village, the researcher applied the systematic random sampling technique in selecting the households that will participate in the survey. 50 households were selected in each village using the systematic random sampling technique. The

researcher selected only an adult who is eighteen years or above in each household. It then implies that fifty participants were selected from fifty households in each village. This gives a total of 400 participants chosen from the eight villages. A sample size of 400 participants was chosen for this study by adopting Yamane (1967) sample size determination formula. Collated data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages while relationship between variables was determined using multiple regression analysis.

### Data Analysis

Age distribution of respondents has a mean age of 37.32 years, a standard error of mean of .559, a median age of 36 and a modal age of 34. The distribution also has a standard deviation of 10.943, a minimum age of 19 and a maximum age of 67.

Table1: Respondents perception of corruption

Response	Frequency	Percent
It is serious problem which must be stopped	279	72.8
It is a common phenomenon and should be handled with caution	50	13.1
Corruption is necessary to some extent	33	8.6
It can never be stopped	21	5.5
Total	383	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Almost three quarter of the respondents maintained that corruption is a serious problem which must be stopped, 13.1% of the respondents believe that corruption is a common phenomenon while 8.6% and 5.5% of the respondents stressed that corruption is necessary to some extent and can never be stopped respectively.

Table 2: Respondents assessment of corruption

Response	Frequency	Percent
It is very high	320	83.6
It is moderately high	41	10.7
It is very low	10	2.6
It is normal	12	3.1
Total	383	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Almost all the respondents affirmed that corruption is very high in their communities. However, 10.7%, 2.6% and 3.1% of the respondents are of the views that corruption is moderately high, very low, and normal respectively.

Table 3: Factors responsible for corruption

Response	Frequency	Percent
Poverty and unemployment	105	27.4
Lack of patriotism	65	17.0
Weak judicial system	53	13.8
Negative value system	97	25.3
Lack of social and economic security	63	16.4
Total	383	100.0

Source: Field Survey: 2015



In table 3, 27.4% of the respondents are of the view that poverty and unemployment are responsible for corruption. The table also shows that 17% and 13.8% of the respondents see lack of patriotism and weak judicial system as factors responsible for corruption in their community respectively. Negative value system and lack of social and economic security were adduced as being responsible for corruption by 25.3 and 16.4% of the respondents respectively.

Table 4: Consequences of corruption on economic development

Response	Frequency	Percent
Corruption retards economic growth and development	81	21.1
Corruption leads to poor infrastructural development	95	24.8
Corruption leads to poverty and unemployment	68	17.8
It leads to non provision of basic amenities	78	20.4
Corruption reduces investment potentials of a society	61	15.9
Total	383	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2015

In table 4, 21.1% and 24.8% of the respondents opined that corruption retards economic growth/development and leads to poor infrastructural development respectively. The table also shows that 17.8% of the respondents are of the view that corruption leads to poverty and unemployment. Finally, 20.4% and 15.9% of the respondents stressed that corruption leads to non provision of basic amenities and reduces investment potentials of a society respectively.

Table 5: Ways of curbing corruption

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strengthening the criminal justice system	86	22.5
Sources of wealth must be questioned	86	22.5
Changing of negative value system	86	22.5
Provision of social/economic security	75	19.6
Creating enabling environment for commerce and industry	50	13.1
Total	383	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2015

It could be seen from table 5 that 67.5% of the respondents agreed that corruption could be curbed by strengthening the criminal justice system, questioning people's sources of wealth and changing negative value system. However, 19.6% and 13.1% of the respondent maintained that corruption could be stemmed by providing social and economic security and by creating enabling environment for commerce and industry respectively.

Furthermore, multivariate analysis involving the use of multiple regression analysis was done. The researcher cross tabulated some socio demographic variables with perception of corruption and the details of the cross tabulation could be seen in table 6.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis involving perception of corruption and few personal data of respondent

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.273	.336		3.790	.000
What is your educational attainment?	-.012	.045	-.014	-.272	.786

What is your occupation?	-.025	.066	-.020	-.381	.704
What is your annual income?	-.086	.043	-.111	-2.004	.046
What is your marital status?	.169	.081	.120	2.094	.037

a. Dependent Variable: How would you describe corruption in your community?

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table 6 shows that income and marital status are good predictors of corruption in Aguata local government area of Anambra state.

### Discussion of Findings

This paper found that corruption is a serious problem which must be stopped and that corruption is a common phenomenon in Aguata local government area of Anambra State. The paper also found that corruption is very high in Aguata local government area. This is consistent with (Oтите (1986); Ike (2009) and Ajie and Wokekoro (2012)'s argument that corruption occurs in varying degrees in different countries and with overwhelming consequences on political and socio-economic development.

It was found in this study that several factors are responsible for corruption in Aguata local area. These include poverty and unemployment, lack of patriotism, weak judicial system, negative value system and lack of social and economic security. This finding is corroborated by Manzetti and Blake cited in Akor (2014) who argued that corruption is most pervasive in a country like Nigeria where, the institutional mechanisms for combating corruption are weak or not used; extensive governmental control and regulation of economic resources provide opportunity for corrupt exchanges and corruption is so socialized at all societal levels that it is accepted and tolerated. The finding is further supported by Ajie and Wokekoro (2012) who found among others, that weak institution of government; dysfunctional legal system; lack of transparency; high poverty/unemployment rate and political interference on the operations of anti-corruption agencies constitute the major causes of systemic corruption in Nigeria.

This paper found the consequences of corruption in Aguata local government area to include retarded economic growth/development, poor infrastructural development, poverty and unemployment. It was further observed that the consequences of corruption in Aguata local government area include non provision of basic amenities and reduction in investment potentials of the area. These findings are consistent with Findings cited in Ilechukwu (2014) that corruption in Nigeria has largely retarded social development, undermined economic growth, discouraged foreign investment and reduced resources available for infrastructural development, public service and poverty reduction programmes.

It was found in this paper that corruption could be curbed in Aguata local government area by strengthening the criminal justice system in the area, questioning of people's sources of wealth and changing negative value system. It was also found that corruption could be stemmed by providing social and economic security and by creating enabling environment for commerce and industry. These findings are corroborated by Akor (2014) who argued that by far the greatest antidote to corruption is good governance. He further stressed that whatever policies that are put in place by government must be those that promote good governance, accountability and transparency. The political will to fight corruption is also a necessary ingredient in curbing corruption in Aguata in particular and Nigeria in general. This finding is also supported by

Ugwuoke (2005) who advocated for change in value system which emphasizes inordinate desire for material acquisition. This is why Bandura's social learning theory posited that people learn from each other especially when the behaviour is rewarded positively. Corruption is a serious problem and it appears that perpetrators of the crime are not often punished as supposed. This eventually motivates others to become corrupt. When corrupt officials are adequately punished, it will deter others from becoming corrupt. Finally, income and marital status were found to be good predictors of corruption in Aguata local government area of Anambra state. It implies that high income earners and married people have more negative perception of corruption in Aguata local government area than their counterparts.

### **Conclusion**

Corruption is a monster which has continued to exist in our society and has become a common phenomenon in both public and private settings in the country. The public in Aguata perceived corruption as a serious problem which must be stopped. Several factors were observed as being responsible for the continued existence of corruption in Aguata local government area. These factors must be addressed so that corruption could be stemmed in the area. The consequences of corruption in the study area are numerous. These have caused untold hardship on the people in the area. In spite of government efforts geared towards curtailing corruption in Aguata in particular and Nigeria in general, the monster has continued to spread almost without control. It appears that the fight against corruption by the different tiers of government is not yielding positive results. It is incontrovertible that no society is corrupt free. However, the nature and magnitude of corruption in some societies especially the developing ones like Nigeria is not only a source of concern rather it has become necessary that the malaise is checkmated to avoid pronging the country into more devastating complications associated with corruption. This paper found that corruption could be controlled in Aguata local government area by questioning the source of people's wealth and also through value reorientation. The desire to acquire wealth by all means should not be encouraged at all levels of the Nigerian society.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this paper, the following recommendations are made. There is the need for good governance, transparency and accountability in Aguata local government area in particular and Nigeria in general. People occupying positions of responsibilities should be transparent in their dealings and accountable to the people. The criminal justice system and the anti corruption agencies should be strengthened and empowered to effectively execute their mandates. There is the need for strong political will on the part of the political office holders. This could be in the area of leading by example in the fight against corruption. Furthermore, there is a very serious need for attitudinal change. This involves the changing of value system which emphasizes unbridled penchant for materialism. Everybody should be the next person watchdog. People's sources of wealth should be questioned. Conspicuous and flamboyant display of wealth should not only be discouraged but be penalized where necessary to minimize the tendency of wanting to become rich overnight.

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