

연구논문

Analysis of the Impact of Recruitment Style on Bureaucratic Corruption: Evidence from Nigeria*

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< Abstract >

This study examines the influence of recruitment style on corruption among Nigerian public officials and how a well-paid bureaucracy (WPB) moderates this relationship. The findings reveal that merit-based recruitment, as well as political and personal connections, significantly increase corruption. WPB significantly moderates the relationship between personal and political connections and corruption, thereby strengthening the overall link between recruitment style and corrupt behavior. These results suggest that bureaucrats engage in corruption due to expectations of reciprocity rather than financial incentives, deepening our understanding of bureaucratic corruption as a social phenomenon. This highlights the importance of social relations in shaping corrupt behaviors and motives, regardless of merit-based recruitment, and underscores the significant implications for policymakers and bureaucrats in how personnel management influences corruption.

[Key Words: corruption, merit-based recruitment, personal gain,
political connections, Nigeria]

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I . Introduction

Numerous economic, social, and institutional factors have been linked to the career trajectory of public officials. The concept of career separation is a key factor in the study of bureaucracy that has often been overlooked. Literature highlights two spectrums through which corruption can be perpetuated in the bureaucracy: corruption for personal gain (CPERG) and corruption for political gains (CPOLG) tied to how they are recruited to join the public sector (Dahlström et al., 2012; Harris et al., 2022; Meyer-sahling & Schuster, 2021; Oliveros & Schuster, 2018). These different pathways are identities that can influence corrupt behaviors observed among bureaucrats. Thus, it considers both notions as theoretical models representing opposing spectrum positions. Most government officials tend to fall somewhere in between or along the continuum.

However, it remains a mystery regarding how career separation significantly influences public sector corruption in the literature on bureaucracy. Separating careers along the lines of personal, political, and meritocracy within the bureaucracy can lead to heightened accountability among actors and increased exposure to potential corruption (Williams, 2021). Through this study, the researchers unravel a previously overlooked problem: What is the impact of recruitment style on corruption behavior, and how does well-paid bureaucracy¹⁾ moderate the relationship? Thus, we explore the impact of career separation on corruption behaviors and the influence of HRM practices (e.g., well-paid bureaucracy) to enhance our understanding of the interplay among these variables. As a departure from the politicization-merit contradiction of prior studies, these various pathways anticipated to lead to differing personalities and motivations of

1) To clarify, a well-paid bureaucracy is a combination of all remunerations and economic incentives available for public officials, including wages, salaries, pensions, and other compensations. It measures bureaucrats' agreement or disagreement that salaries are satisfactory, pay aligns with their performance, and pensions are guaranteed upon retirement. We use well-paid bureaucracy, income, wages, salary, or compensation. In general, our focus is on any economic incentive that could influence behaviors.

bureaucrats were explored. We argue that these two types do not often align and provide a justification.

Moreover, this approach can prove more effective than relying on one type of workforce in the bureaucracy, e.g., political appointees (Dahlström et al., 2012), such that officials have a shared interest in maintaining the current party in power. As a result, they may choose to disregard any potential corruption. Consequently, the study argued that career separation from MB, PERC, and POLC would influence corruption behaviors. This is significant, considering that military and civilian bureaucracies in developing countries often have more power and weaker political institutions (Robinson & Acemoglu, 2019; Stokes et al., 2012). In contrast, advanced democracies have a strong modern bureaucracy balanced by advanced politics (Haque, 1996). Although colonial rule resulted in installing robust administrative systems in most developing countries, establishing democratic political institutions was unsuccessful (Haque, 1996). Instead, conventional family and ethnic characteristics frequently precede merit, skills, and achievement (Haque, 1996). Despite public service rules, circulars, and other extant rules and ethics of conduct, decadence in public service has been traced to how citizens join the civil service (Adisa et al., 2017; Justine et al., 2015).

We explore the causal relationship between career separation from differing recruitment styles and corruption behavior. While this study does not aim to discriminate between these mechanisms, it offers an extensive empirical analysis of the link between career separation and corruption behaviors moderated by WPB. In light of the negative effect of corrupt behaviors, it is surprising that a precise assessment of who engages in these unethical practices and what motivates them is yet to be empirically investigated.

Corruption typically refers to the exploitation of a public position for personal benefit. This can involve benefits or privileges to official or affiliated groups, like political parties. While several studies have examined the role of different forms of recruitment in determining the level of corruption within bureaucracies (Bardhan, 1997; Court et al., 1999; Dahlström et al., 2012; Evans & Rauch, 1999; Lapuente &

Suzuki, 2020; Oliveros, 2013; Zarkovic-Rakic, 2007), very little information is available regarding the mechanisms of bureaucratic corruption. Traditionally, corruption was predominantly differentiated by the amount of money involved (Meyer-Sahling et al., 2018). However, it is now distinguished by who benefits from it (Nane, 2009). In the continuous fight against corruption, despite bureaucracy reputation of being stiff, hierarchical, and impersonal—has shown itself to be an unsung hero. The relationship between career separation and bureaucratic corruption in government has yet to be explored. Compared to merit-based recruitment (MB) appointments, hiring through connections might result in a distinct career path within the bureaucracy. For instance, it can provide context for explaining the variation between bureaucratic incentives and identities toward corruption. In this study, we distinguished among three potential explanations for bureaucratic corruption, which can be attributed to how individuals join the civil service in the Nigerian context.

The first point is about merit-based recruitment. Since Weber (1978), some literature has highlighted the importance of MB in curbing corruption (Brewer et al., 2021; Dahlström et al., 2012; Evans & Rauch, 1999; Rauch & Evans, 2000). Policymakers frequently highlight the importance of implementing MB (especially civil service entrance examinations, reviewing and screening resumes, and interviews) as an effective policy framework for corruption reduction (Gans-Morse et al., 2018).

The second explanation concerns personal connections (PERC) (Harris et al., 2022). Recruitment based on personal relationships may encourage and influence corruption by shifting bureaucratic incentives and identities for personal benefits. The goals and norms of bureaucrats recruited through personal relationships will probably be more closely aligned with their own and those of their families, friends, and relatives. In many developing nations, individual identity is rooted in kinship and family connections (Smith, 2001; Orjuela, 2014). This aligns with the notion that corruption is not just about self-interest but also considers social and socio-cultural factors that encourage corrupt acts.

The third points to political connections (POLC) (Oliveros, 2013), clientelism,²⁾ or politicization. In this case, bureaucrats engage in corruption by soliciting, coercing, or misappropriating funds and public goods for political reasons. Bureaucrats collect the corrupt rents and transfer them to political actors or parties who use them to achieve their political objectives, enrich themselves, political agents, or buy votes in clientelist networks (Stokes et al., 2012). While the majority of studies on clientelistic networks have been on exchanging goods for vote buying, few studies have been done on exchanging jobs, particularly government jobs, for strategic political support in the bureaucracy (Oliveros, 2013, 2016).

The theoretical framework shows that recruitment style increases bureaucrats' corruption behaviors, especially CPERG. Importantly, the analysis revealed that MB does not reduce corruption behaviors against the Weberian prediction and provided justifications for the results.

II . Literature Review

1. Recruitment and Corruption Behavior

Certain characteristics attract individuals to public sector jobs. Examples may include compensation, job tenure, public service, interest in corruption, etc. Finan et al. (2017) have highlighted the essential characteristics of the public distinct from the private sector, especially in the developing country context to include a long

2) Clientelism is viewed as a complex web of political connections between leaders and their supporters. Bonds are formed through resource exchange and collaboration. The political agent is an influential figure who holds a position of power and controls the distribution of assets. While most agents are not independent entities in modern political systems, they act as intermediaries between the local and national levels (Stokes, 2007). They are part of a wider network and help facilitate exchanges between the two levels. Poverty has traditionally been thought to be a powerful indicator of clientelism. consequently, poor people may value immediate assistance more than future promises or are more risk-averse (Stokes, 2007).

horizon with the absence of significant civil conflict; jobs offered by the state are limited as politicians use such jobs, salaries, promotion as incentives to exert undue influence on bureaucrats and the bureaucracy; goods, and services are mostly subsidized and are targeted at providing public goods and services; and the public sector is self-regulatory by embedding regulatory and monitoring functions within the bureaucracy (Finan et al., 2017). As noted by West (1997), efforts to improve governmental effectiveness often start with recognizing that bureaucracy, while necessary, can also create a crisis of legitimacy for any government. It is a well-established fact that individuals who hold public office and operate within bureaucratic discretion are less prone to engage in corrupt behavior (Lapiente & Suzuki, 2020; Charron et al., 2019, 2017; Meyer-Sahling & Mikkelsen, 2016; Oliveros, 2016b; Dahlström et al., 2012a; Rauch & Evans, 2000). It can be argued that the way government employees behave is influenced by bureaucratic structures, both politically and administratively, which determines their effectiveness. This argument builds upon the conclusions of Weberian bureaucracy (1978), Meritocratization (Dahlström et al., 2012), Tenure (Meyer-Sahling & Schuster, 2021), bureaucratic behavior (Rauch & Evans, 2000), and political clientelism (Oliveros, 2013).

Regarding the context of the developed country, the literature suggests that three dimensions of behaviors have populated the extant literature on bureaucratic structures and their effect on bureaucratic behaviors among civil servants. Corruption (Dahlström et al., 2012; Rauch & Evans, 2000), work motivation (Meyer-Sahling et al., 2018; World Bank, 1993; Zhang et al., 2019), and clientelism (Oliveros, 2013; Stokes et al., 2012). In the last 30 years, two notable expert surveys have extensively studied meritocratic recruitment and bureaucratic corruption in developing countries.

According to Rauch and Evans' (2000) expert analysis of bureaucratic structures, meritocratic recruitment is linked to reduced levels of perceived corruption in 35 developing countries. Similarly, Dahlström et al. (2012) found that MB recruitment reduced corruption while controlling for other explanations in an expert survey sample of 52 developing and developed countries. Nevertheless, the fact that these

analyses depended on expert opinions for the causal and outcome factors raises the possibility that experts' opinions about a nation's level of governance may simultaneously influence how they evaluate corruption and bureaucratic structures. Hence, more investigation is required to rigorously study the validity of these findings and other indicators of the impact of meritocratic hiring on corruption with different data sets.

Although it is still debated, scholars' understanding of bureaucratic behavior in developing countries is still inadequate. What motivates certain government officials to misuse state resources and engage in political campaigns against Weberian predictions while others focus on delivering high-quality public services? Research on bureaucratic corruption has overlooked the diverse types of corruption in government. However, it is essential to note that distinct types of corruption can have varying effects and underlying causes. Therefore, the solutions for each form of corruption may also differ (Bågenholm et al., 2021).

According to Weber's (1978) argument, when bureaucrats are employed based on merit and are adequately assured adequate pay to ensure a stable livelihood, they develop an intense sense of public identity and social responsibility. Consequently, they develop into committed public servants who abstain from corrupt activities that might endanger the public. Similarly, Evans and Rauch (2000) found that career policy and adherence to the merit principle within the civil service have positively affected economic growth (Rauch & Evans, 2000). Recent research indicates that nations with public services that resemble Weberian bureaucracies—especially those with MB hiring and permanent careers—generally have reduced levels of corruption (Dahlström et al., 2012; Van Rijckeghem & Weder, 2001). Regardless, uncertainty exists over the essential qualities for reducing corruption. Hence, it is plausible to hypothesize that:

H1: Merit-based recruitment deters corrupt behaviors.

In line with Weber (1978), this will mainly apply to bureaucrats with stable

incomes. However, in economic instability, bureaucrats may resort to corrupt practices for personal benefit, regardless of how they were appointed. On the other hand, in countries like Nigeria, with weak governing institutions, public officials have significant power to decide when and how to enforce the regulations. In such a scenario, it becomes vital for many people, particularly the underprivileged, to develop and maintain personalized contact with a government official or someone with access to government officials to offer solutions for specific issues or make exceptions when necessary. Thus, bureaucrats recruited based on their connections tend to align themselves with private interests. Hence, distinct bureaucratic identities and motivations resulting from various connections can lead to different forms of corruption. Individuals hired as bureaucrats due to their POLC or PERC often possess distinct identities and motivations. Consequently, they are more liable to participate in corrupt behaviors. This can lead to corruption, as they may prioritize their political or personal gain over their professional duties and responsibilities based on the bureaucrats' ideological position (Oliveros, 2016).

CPERG arises from unethical practices and flaws in the administrative framework often found in the public sector, where a hierarchical structure is not followed, and rules and regulations that ought to govern the functioning of the systems are broken. The underlying causes of CPERG can be traced back to societal pressure from family members, friends, and acquaintances (Smith, 2001). CPERG is motivated by greed, the lure of wealth, a lavish lifestyle, and a desire to help others access public goods or services in exchange for a fee. This is possible in conditions where trust in government is weak, unavailable, or low quality of public goods, election promises are not kept, and the credibility of politicians is in doubt. These are most prevalent in young and emerging democracies (Keefer & Vlaicu, 2005). It manifests as mismanagement of public resources, acts of reciprocity, unfair treatment, and other unethical practices by public officials while carrying out their routine tasks, which may result in increased marginalization. Additionally, there is consistency in the literature that it is rare for politicians to keep all their campaign promises (Keefer, 2007; Keefer & Vlaicu, 2005; Koter, 2016). Consequently, bureaucrats engage in

corrupt behaviors for their benefit to protect themselves, as they do not trust politicians to deliver their initial campaign promises to them.

Bureaucrats recruited through PERC and have backing from friends and relatives in the bureaucracy tend to indulge in more CPERG rather than CPOLG. This is because individuals tend to have a stronger connection with their networks, such as friends and family, than political figures. This could lead to a higher likelihood of engaging in corrupt activities as they may have more support from influential individuals in government. Furthermore, bureaucrats care about their welfare and that of their households; even if employed based on a PERC or POLC, they will lean more toward their welfare and those of their close allies. Consequently, even when POLC or PERC coincide, bureaucrats align more as opportunistic than partisan (Keefer, 2007; Timothy & Persson, 2010; Ujhelyi & Calvo, 2012). This means that while bureaucrats prioritize their well-being and the objectives of the political party they endorse, their primary concern is often their welfare, which sometimes takes precedence over the interests of their supporters (Keefer & Vlaicu, 2005). Hence, we hypothesize that:

H2: Bureaucrats recruited based on PERC are susceptible to engaging in CPERG.

CPOLG arises from individuals who obtain bureaucratic positions through their affiliations with politicians, with the backing of politicians and political parties. As a result, they are prone to engage in CPOLG. Politicians employ an effective and cheap strategy to maintain and retain power for themselves by recruiting individuals for state employment based on POLC (Ujhelyi & Calvo, 2012). Citizens create networks with bureaucrats to obtain benefits from the state. Once such networks are created, they can be incentivized to uphold the current situation and retain the current officials. Voting for a different politician or party that may dismiss, transfer, or repost a contact is not an option for someone who has developed such personal relationships or frequent access to the public sector and who may help when needed. Additionally, the immediate and clear link between POLC and

administration significantly simplifies credit claiming. These services can affect access to the state because they are explicitly linked to public administration. Conventional wisdom among scholars and practitioners has shown evidence that Africa readily engages in CPOLG (Stokes et al., 2012).

Prominent figures in Africa, such as local religious, traditional, and political elites, frequently serve as middlemen in clientelistic networks that link the political class with the populace (Keefer, 2007; Keefer & Vlaicu, 2005; Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007; Stokes et al., 2012). The few influential persons at the top control most resources, with fewer trickling down through patronage networks (Curry et al., 2015). These influential members of society are critical in facilitating communication and coordination between those in power and their constituents (Stokes et al., 2012). By leveraging their social capital and networks, they can serve as a crucial link between the various stakeholders in the political ecosystem, thereby enabling the smooth functioning of clientelistic networks. The influence wielded by these intermediaries underscores their significance in political affairs and highlights their ability to shape policies and impact the lives of everyday people (Koter, 2016). In areas with weak state capacity, brokers distribute government resources and provide essential services to citizens (Stokes et al., 2012). Their significance allows policymakers to constructively work with them to develop effective policies that address citizens' welfare needs. Citizens often seek out brokers to address problems due to their possession of POLC that are not typically accessible to the general public. Bureaucrats³⁾ are usually responsible for providing citizens with access to government resources. Even though political influences significantly impact their communities, only some people can access them. Because resources are limited and devoted supporters are highly valued, brokers closely watch residents to guarantee that only people who have built and sustained solid relationships are eligible for special treatment (Stokes et al., 2012).

The collective consensus in the literature on patronage⁴⁾ is that public sector

3) Politically connected bureaucrats act as middlemen between marginalized citizens and politically influential bureaucrats who are in a position to provide the required support.

positions are mainly allocated to loyalists of the incumbent when effective civil service rules are absent (Oliveros, 2013). While there is not always reliable systematic proof of political bias in recruitment and selection outcomes, it is commonly believed that bureaucrats recruited for political benefits will support their bosses (Ujhelyi & Calvo, 2012). In employment based on POLC, it is assumed that activities such as organizing rallies, mobilizing voters, and campaigning are part of the arrangement (Calvo & Ujhelyi, 2012). Employees who obtain their positions through POLC tend to have a more robust identification, a sense of obligation towards their patrons, and wage effects (Ujhelyi & Calvo, 2012). This loyalty may lead to corrupt behavior, especially if the politician remains relevant in office (Oliveros, 2013). Similarly, changing the identity of a political servant can prove to be a challenging task. This is because individuals hesitate to alter their self-conceptions, and their fellow bureaucrats may view them as an outgroup separate from those dedicated to achieving the public good (Romero, 2011; McDonnell, 2020). Existing studies assume that political bias in hiring leads to diverse types of political services; however, this assumption is based mainly on ethnographic work (Auyero, 2014). It is necessary to gather systematic data on the scope of the phenomenon or the kind of services that workers offer.

Exposing CPERG or CPOLG can be difficult, and the apparent negative consequences discourage people from actively fighting against corrupt behaviors. This could ultimately hinder the effectiveness of accountability reforms aimed at preventing corruption. However, many studies suggest that personal circumstances, social norms, and expectations determine bureaucrats' participation in political, personal, and other societal matters (Gans-Morse et al., 2018; George & Pandey,

4) In a self-enforcing theory, Oliveros (2013) argues that if the ideals of an employee align with those of their patron, they are more likely to uphold their part of the deal (providing political services). Moreover, the bureaucrats can be monitored. Nevertheless, just because these networks are watchable does not imply that they are monitored. They are not being watched, but because their values coincide with those of their clients, employees who provide patronage services do so. Monitoring is unnecessary as long as customers and clients have similar interests.

2017; Meyer-Sahling et al., 2018).

Furthermore, diverting state funds for political activities requires having supporters of the incumbent in vital administrative positions (Gingerich, 2013). Given the high cost of government employment, public sector employment requires significantly more political backing than just casting a ballot. Patronage bureaucrats participate in political activities necessary to attract and sustain political support. Specifically, in a country like Nigeria with weak civil service rules, discretionary appointment into public services is quite common and most frequently requires them to provide politicians with useful machinery that can be used for CPOLG (Adisa et al., 2017; Cobblah, 2020; Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2015; Onimisi et al., 2018).

Problem-solving is not something everyone can benefit from; it is a benefit that is reserved for those who are loyal to a particular group or individual and those who are willing to engage in corrupt exchanges. Individuals are expected to support the group or individual that provided them with benefits during elections. As Herbert and Steven (2007) explained, it is not simply the act of targeting goods itself but the contingency of targeted benefits that constitutes clientelistic exchange (Herbert & Steven, 2007). As evidenced by the high prevalence of problem-solving politics in African nations, political brokers give preference to their core supporters when offering problem-solving services (Stokes et al., 2012). However, the significance of bureaucrats in public sectors and how POLC and affiliations capture the complexity of bureaucratic corruption have yet to be extensively studied. For low-income individuals, having regular access to government representatives or someone with that access is crucial to getting targeted answers to their issues (Chiekezie et al., 2017). In line with this, it is plausible to hypothesize that:

H3: Bureaucrats recruited through POLC are more susceptible to engaging in CPOLG.

2. Recruitment and Corruption Behavior

Public sector officials are usually employed based on a rigid and formalized

salary structure (Sundell, 2020). While several factors draw individuals towards public sector employment, salary remains significant in a world where prices and cost of living are increasing (Khan, 2018). Many individuals, especially in the public sector, face an overwhelming challenge to make ends meet with their salaries. Individuals are sensitive to the incentives they face, and this influences their behaviors (Foltz & Opoku-Agyemang, 2015). As a result, the structure for which an institution functions is important in determining bureaucrats' behaviors (Sundell, 2020). Development studies have shown that politicians use public sector jobs and their associated salaries to influence and gather political support from their cronies and associates by exerting pressure on the bureaucracy through promotion and other incentives (Sundström, 2016).

Research on how wages affect corruption has relied on some theoretical explanations to investigate corruption. One of these theories is the compensation theory (Becker & Stigler, 1974). The theory suggests that paying wages/salaries above the market and periodically monitoring public officials' activities can help control bureaucratic corruption. This implies that raising salaries is a possible solution to diminish the probability of corrupt individuals (Treisman, 2007). In addition to decreasing corruption, higher pay and the possibility of termination might motivate public service (Akerlof & Yellen, 1990). High salaries are expensive, though, and it can be challenging to fire bureaucrats because corruption is frequently difficult to prove and because anti-corruption agents might also be corrupt (Chiekezie et al., 2017; Kwon, 2012). Honest bureaucrats face the severe challenge of low self-esteem and morale due to their inadequate compensation, hindering them from maintaining a decent standard of living (Sundström, 2016).

Poor salary levels have been associated with the origins of corruption, especially in developing countries, and are an important civil service policy reform in developing countries (Foltz & Opoku-Agyemang, 2015). On the one hand, corruption may be a manifestation of low income and may be reduced if income levels are increased substantially. On the other hand, corruption behaviors might occur independently of income levels and may be increased by a higher appetite that

higher income would bring (Foltz & Opoku-Agyemang, 2015). Kőszegi & Rabin (2006) show the broader application of reference-dependent theory by positing that behaviors following a personal equilibrium maximize the individual utility given rational expectations about the course of event where these expectations are contingent upon perceived intentions and that an individual reference point is their expectations about outcomes (rather than the status quo) (Foltz & Opoku-Agyemang, 2015).

Literature on state capacity has accounted for incentives and the type of recruitment as a determinant for state capacity (weakness or strongness of institutions) (Savoia & Sen, 2015; Williams, 2021). The argument suggests that the effectiveness of bureaucracies is influenced by the wages offered in public organizations. As the need for specialization in a variety of professions grows, compensation can be based on qualifications and professionalization (Hall & Soskice, 2001). To cultivate a motivating work environment, compensation should be based on job performance, even for employees with lower grades. Thus, compensation packages like pensions, gratuities, and allowances boost salary satisfaction as they compensate for lower job income. Rewarding honest behavior with deferred benefits (e.g., pension) can be beneficial (Salisu et al., 2016). Since providing competitive salaries and benefits for public sector jobs is challenging, tenure and pensions can be used in place of a competitive salary in the public. However, a significant challenge governments face is sustaining pension benefits with more people retiring from active service (Bruce & Alastair, 2019; Meyer-Sahling et al., 2018; World Bank, 1993).

The governments of most semi-industrialized countries believe that a WPB might deter officials from accepting bribes, making it a more efficient system. For example, Taylor and Taylor (2010) observed that certain nations pay efficiency wages to government employees. The policy discussion commonly acknowledges that sufficient compensation is necessary to ensure a transparent civil service. However, recent research in Nigeria suggests that paying employees more does not necessarily result in greater satisfaction with their pay (Ewool et al., 2021; Salisu et

al., 2016). This is because employees typically have higher income expectations with salary increments. Caligiuri (2006) stressed the importance of a cross-national understanding of performance measurement (Caligiuri, 2006). Fischer and Smith (2015) supported the role of cultural differences in reward allocation (Fischer & Smith, 2015). According to Llorens (2015), governments could face a persistent challenge with human resources because they focus on implementing compensation reforms prioritizing competitive pay rates (Llorens, 2015). It is widely acknowledged in policy debates that fair compensation plays a crucial role in promoting integrity within the civil service.

Consequently, testing the theoretical underpinnings of the relationship between perceived well-paid bureaucracy, recruitment style, and corruption behavior is essential. Analyzing the moderating role of well-paid bureaucracy, particularly in public sectors where the services are primarily for public goods, is relevant for understanding how to improve bureaucrats' motivations. Literature has stressed the importance of ensuring fair compensation with less support for reducing the pay of public employees (Belman & Heywood, 2004; Elling et al., 2014; Knies & Leisink, 2017; O'Reilly & Reed, 2011; Thom & Reilly, 2015). The argument for incentive payments is straightforward, yet the relationship between public compensation policy and corruption is undeniably complex (Bardhan, 1997).

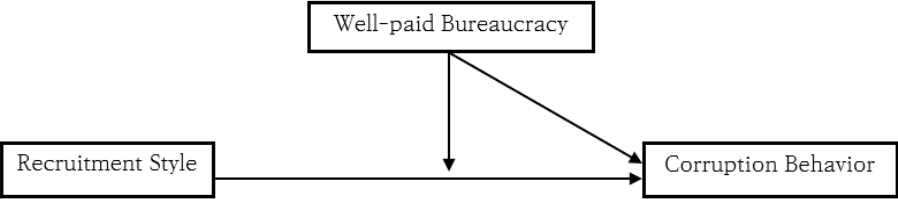
Becker & Stigler (1974) argue that honest behavior can be rewarded with deferred benefits, like pensions or the opportunity to seek employment in the private sector after retiring from public service (Becker & Stigler, 1974). This eliminates the obligation to provide high salaries during the years of service. In a similar account by Tanzi (1994), he showed that the likelihood of corruption being detected and punished might rise with public sector pay levels since higher wages encourage society to refrain from corrupt behavior, increasing the efficacy of wage policy (Tanzi, 1994). Van Rijckeghem & Weder (2001) found that the impact of WPB is greater in nations with higher-quality governance (Van Rijckeghem & Weder, 2001). Weibel et al. (2009) provide evidence emphasizing the need to incorporate performance measures in payment packages (Weibel et al., 2009).

Previous literature indicates that maintaining an honest civil service may be expensive (Bardhan, 1997). Some studies have used data on the bribing of public employees in Uganda and China to demonstrate the relationship between corruption behavior and salary (Fjeldstad, 2005; Gong & Wu, 2018); nonetheless, the empirical results are conflicting and inconsistent. For example, there are mixed opinions on whether the wealthy are more likely to bribe, with some suggesting that income negatively affects tolerance for corruption (Oliveros & Gingerich, 2020). Contrary to this, Winters and Weitz-Shapiro (2013) observed that wealthier respondents tend to tolerate corrupt behaviors more. Fried, Lagunes, and Venkataramani (2010) conducted a field study in Mexico City and found that traffic police on road patrol had a higher propensity to solicit bribes from motorists who were considered to be in poorer driving conditions (Fried et al., 2010). Similarly, Foltz and Opoku-Agyemang (2015) found that the recent salary increments among Ghanaian police officers led to increased time spent soliciting bribes and higher amounts. This implies that an increase in the pay of civil servants drives up the demand for bribes (Foltz & Opoku-Agyemang, 2015).

Consequently, WPB has two drawbacks. On the one hand, bureaucrats who are paid well will engage in corruption for personal gains. On the other hand, bureaucrats who are not well paid will engage in corruption for political gains. This relationship will be stronger for those recruited on connections (personal or political) than those on merit. Despite the contradictions in the empirical data and inconsistencies in previous studies across disciplines on the influence of salary on corruption motivation, there is a conviction suggesting that wage level is related to behavior. Thus, it is plausible to hypothesize that:

- H4: WPB moderates the relationship between recruitment style and corrupt behavior such that WPB has a negative relationship with CPOLG, albeit a positive relationship with CPERG.
- H5: The moderation effect on the relationship between WPB and recruitment style is stronger for CPERG than CPOLG.

〈Figure 1〉 Conceptual Framework



〈Table 1〉 Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Relationship	Effect on CPOLG (1)	Effect on CPERG (2)
H1	Merit-Based recruitment	-	-
H2	Personal Connection	-	+
H3	Political Connection	+	+
H4	Well-Paid Bureaucracy	-	+
H5a	Well-Paid Bureaucracy * Merit-Based recruitment	-	-
H5b	Well-Paid Bureaucracy * Personal Connection	-/+	-/+
H5c	Well-Paid Bureaucracy * Political Connection	-/+	-/+

3. Nigerian Context

Before describing the data, it will be fruitful to situate Nigeria’s context of corruption and corruption behaviors. The concept of Nigeria is a “penkelemes,” signifying that the customs, laws, and behaviors are entangled within a network of favoritism, kinship, and corruption (Ejiogu et al., 2021). This has resulted in a culture that tolerates unethical behaviors. The cost of corruption has devastated Nigeria as a nation (Abu & Staniewski, 2019). For most Nigerians, it is now common in all facets of life (Smith, 2001). While most Nigerians publicly condemn corruption, they acknowledge that it is a necessary means of survival, and thus, it remains ingrained in their culture (Tanzi, 1994). This means that despite widespread corruption and its deeply ingrained culture in their daily routine and societal conventions, most Nigerians vehemently oppose it (Ejiogu et al., 2021). Citizens often criticize the corrupt practices they partake in and regret the consequences of a system they are

compelled to be involved in (Obomanu & Kelvin, 2019). Corruption is better comprehended as a collection of politically determined conversations and practices that are historically ingrained and culturally reliant (Mustapha et al., 2018).

Widespread corruption in Nigeria stems from weak institutions and frail civil service systems that encourage using and abusing sociocultural values such as kinship, family ties, and political affiliations (Akuva & Dimas, 2022; Nane, 2009; Smith, 2001). According to certain observers, the rise of the public sector and the exploration of oil and gas in post-colonial Nigeria are significant events that have added to a lengthy catalog of atrocious corruption and poor governance within the country (Abu & Staniewski, 2019; Akuva & Dimas, 2022; Atelhe & Egwu, 2014). Nonetheless, corruption is a complex sociocultural phenomenon, especially in Nigeria. A culture of corruption can progressively emerge over time and potentially erode a cultural system, which is also evident in Nigeria. Aluko (2012) alludes that when corruption is embedded in a society, it percolates into the value system, normalizes as part of the culture, and eventually influences behavior. She correctly points out that corruption has regrettably established itself as a constant component of the political system in Nigeria. It is now commonplace for this behavior to occur rather than being viewed as aberrant because it has been deeply embedded in the culture, values, normative framework, and social norms for generations. Thus, there is a transfer of culture and the emergence of corrupt behavioral patterns (Aluko, 2012). While these issues have been extensively studied, important research questions remain, especially as corruption deters any system for which weak institutions—like developing countries (in this context, Nigeria)—are more adversely affected. Hence, this study aims to determine the impact of recruitment style on corruption behaviors. In doing so, the study turns to the perception of street-level and middle-tier bureaucrats to determine how it motivates their decision to be corrupt and how well-paid bureaucracy moderates this relationship.

III. Research Methods and Results

To recruit participants, the researcher first contacted the HRM heads of the relevant ministries, departments, and agencies via email. This was followed by a phone call to discuss the significance of their personnel participation and the study's purpose. The researcher then requested the contact email and phone numbers of employees. Of the 849 – email addresses and phone numbers received, 723 were valid, and emails were sent to a random sample of 614 bureaucrats via email and a popular social media platform (WhatsApp). The survey participants included public sector officials who are street-level and middle-tier bureaucrats with administrative functions across five sectors. The participants differed in years of experience, hierarchy, job function, role, etc. Participation was voluntary, and only those who agreed to participate were included, and no personal information that could link the responses to a respondent was collected. The Google Forms surveys were submitted directly online. By the end of the data collection phase (between August and October 2023), 415 questionnaires were completed online by participants aged 25 or above. Statistical Package for Social Science version 27 and AMOS 26 software were utilized to analyze the data. The data were usable in the data analysis with 256 (61.7%) women and 159 (38.3%) men.

1. Measurement

The study employed previously designed and tested measures of indirect inquiry to assess the impact of recruitment style on corruption behaviors. Specifically, corrupt behaviors are unethical practices exhibited by bureaucrats who abuse their positions for private benefits and were adopted from Harris et al. (2022), recruitment style measurement was adopted from Dahlstrom & Lapuente (2012), and Teorell et al. (2015), and well-paid bureaucracy measures bureaucrats' agreement or disagreement that salaries are satisfactory, pay aligns with their performance, and guarantees pensions upon retirement and was measured using items adapted from

Evans & Rauch (1999). Specifically, four items were used to access CPERG, four items for CPOLG, two items each to access the dimensions of recruitment style (MB, PERC, POLC), and well-paid bureaucracy were accessed using three items. All the survey questions were assessed on a five-point Likert scale. Table in Appendix presents the measurement items for the variables. Drawing on a sample of low and middle-tier bureaucrats in Nigeria, where weak civil service systems allow opportunities for bureaucratic corruption, this study shows the influencing bureaucratic outcomes of recruiting bureaucrats to crucial bureaucratic positions through different mechanisms.

2. Reliability and Validity Test

The reliability of the multiple measurement items of the variables was assessed by conducting a principal component analysis using varimax rotation to test the validity and reliability of the adopted measurement constructs in the Nigerian context. Table 2 reveals that the measurement items explained 84.7% of the variance. In total, 17 items were tested for their reliability and validity. All the item measures fell above the minimum acceptable factor loading, with the lowest as .728 and .935 as the highest, which fall within the threshold for the presence of internal consistency and high internal consistency, respectively (Surucu & Maslakci, 2020)). Specifically, the Cronbach alpha of the dependent variables' CPERG ($\alpha = .871$), CPOLG ($\alpha = .832$) while that of the independent variables MB recruitment ($\alpha = .969$), POLC ($\alpha = .952$), PERC ($\alpha = .935$), and the moderating variable WPB ($\alpha = .946$) indicating that that the construct is all within the acceptable range of threshold (Surucu & Maslakci, 2020). As such, each internal consistency resulted in a satisfactory Cronbach alpha coefficient, and there is no significant problem with reliability in this regard. Regardless, Creswell (1998) argued that reliability is a necessary but insufficient criterion for validity, as such, suggests that researchers should understand that Whichever method is employed, it is necessary to assess the degree to which the study findings are credible, accurate, and valuable (Creswell,

1998). CFA was conducted using AMOS 23 to examine the construct validity; the result indicated a good fit ($\chi^2 = 264.000$ ($p=0.023$), $DF = 104$, $TLI = 0.965$, $RMSEA = 0.061$, $CFI = 0.973$, $NFI = 0.956$, and $SRMR = 0.0373$) met the required indices cutoffs, indicating that all the values fall under the threshold and asserting a good model fit. Thus, both reliability and construct validity were achieved.

〈Table 2〉 Reliability Testing

Dimension (Cronbach's α)	Measurement Items	Mean	SD	Rotated Factor Loading
CPERG (0.871)	If an official were offered a better-paid job in exchange for taking on broader responsibilities at work, they would accept it.	4.21	.64	.89
	If an official were offered money or a personal present in exchange for helping someone through my position, they would accept it.	4.08	.82	.76
	If an official were offered a public sector job in a region they do not know well, they would accept it.	4.09	.63	.88
	If an official were offered the opportunity to teach evening classes at university about their field of work, they would accept it.	4.15	.59	.92
CPOLG (0.832)	An official could help a colleague with the completion of a task.	4.26	.64	.89
	An official could help write a report for an international organization.	4.18	.68	.92
	An official could help divert government resources to a party or person with political links.	3.88	1.13	.73
	An official could help their manager with an important assignment for their organization	4.24	.71	.85
MB (0.969)	When recruiting public sector employees, the skills and merits of the applicants decide who gets the job.	3.31	1.29	.86
	Senior public officials are recruited from within the ranks of the public sector.	3.33	1.28	.82
POLC (0.952)	When recruiting public sector employees, the political connections of the applicants decide who gets the job.	3.74	1.23	.88
	The top political leadership hires and fires senior public officials.	3.66	1.22	.85
PERC (0.935)	When recruiting public sector employees, the personal connections of the applicants decide who gets the job	4.08	1.05	.86
	The family/friends/associates in top leadership positions determine who hires and fires senior public officials.	3.99	1.08	.91
WPB (0.946)	Public sector employees are paid salaries on which they can sustain themselves.	1.64	1.15	.94
	Public sector employees' salaries are linked to appraisals of their performance.	1.67	1.14	.93
	Retired public sector employees can sustain themselves on a public old-age pension.	1.79	1.19	.90

Note: N=415, Source: Field Data, 2023

3. Findings

1) Correlation Analysis

The bivariate correlation analysis was performed using Pearson correlation to ascertain how one variable is correlated with the others. The study adopted Hemphill's (2003) empirical criteria for interpreting the correlation coefficient magnitudes in this investigation (Hemphill, 2003). These guidelines establish cutoffs for correlation coefficients of $<.20$ to represent the lower quartile, $.20$ to $.30$ to represent the middle high, and $>.30$ to represent the upper higher. From the result, CPOLG, PERC, and POLC had an upper higher correlation while MB and WPB had a lower correlation with CPERG. MB and POLC had a middle high correlation with CPOLG, POLC had a low correlation with MB, and an upper higher correlation with PERC. Additionally, we found that CPERG had a strong positive association with gender, education, and funds but a negative significance with contact with citizens and professional norms. CPOLG had a significant negative relationship with the supervisor role. PERC was positively related to handling funds, POLC was negatively significant in contacting citizens, and WPB was significant regarding educational levels.

2) Regression Analysis

Table 3 shows the regression analysis for corruption behavior and recruitment style as the predictors. All measures, except the individual characteristics, were standardized before the regression analyses to avoid multicollinearity. The individual characteristics were included in the first step, institutional characteristic (professional norms) was added in step two, and the three main predictor variables—recruitment type (MB, PERC, POLC)—were added to the third step of the analysis. This was repeated for the two dimensions of corruption behavior (CPOLG and CPERG). The results show that F statistics $F(8, 406) = 1.747$, $F(2, 405) = 1.782$ and F

Merit-Based (MB)			.246***			.116**
Personal Connection (PERC)			.102			.193***
Political Connection (POLC)			.138*			.242***
R2	.033	.038	.155	.128	.141	.309
Adj. R2	.014	.017	.130	.111	.122	.288
F	1.747	1.782	6.160***	7.429***	7.401***	14.988***

Note: N=415. Age =1-3; 1=25-35, 2=35-44, 3=45 or above; Gender =1=male, 2=female; Education = 1 = technical / vocational or less 2=university degree or more; Grade Level =1=grade 7 or below, 2=8-12, 3= 13-14, 4=15 or above; Tenure = 1=less than 10 years, 2=10years or more; Handles Fund =1=yes;2=no; Contact with Citizens =1=yes, 2=no; Position =1=supervisor, 2=not supervisor; *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001. Source: Field Data, 2023

3) Moderating Effect of Well-Paid Bureaucracy

Table 4 shows the moderating effect of WPB. To test the hypotheses of the moderating variable, we followed Dawson's (2014) procedure by entering the main effect of WPB as well as the interaction effect on CPOLG for the first case and CPERG in the second case (WPB x MB; WPB x PERC and WPB x POLC) (Dawson, 2014). If the interaction paths are significant, moderator hypotheses are supported. A significant t-value for each interaction term or value of the incremental F-statistics indicates that the moderator variable (WPB) acts as a moderator. I entered the main effects of independent variables in Model 1 and the interaction effects in Model 2 for CPOLG. These steps were repeated for CPERG in Models 3 and 4, respectively.

When the main effects were added in Model 1, the variance observed was $R^2 = 0.13$, $F(4, 410) = 15.13$, $p < 0.001$. MB and POLC were related positively and significantly ($t = 5.32$, $p < 0.001$; $t = 2.70$, $p < 0.01$), while WPB was related negatively and significantly ($t = -2.22$, $p < 0.05$) to CPOLG. The main effects accounted for approximately 13% variance in bureaucrats' CPOLG. Next, Model 2 accounted for 3% additional variance in bureaucrats CPOLG, indicating an increase in variance explained over Model 1 for the interaction of WPB on the independent variables. Additionally, the result provided a significant $R^2 = 0.158$, $\Delta R^2 = .030$, $F(3, 407) = 11.00$, $p < 0.01$. MB and POLC were related positively and significantly ($t = 4.96$, p

<0.001 ; $t = 2.80$, $p < 0.01$), while WPB was related negatively and significantly ($t = -2.06$, $p < 0.05$) to CPOLG. However, the interaction terms were statistically insignificant for the relationship with CPOLG. Hence, no significant moderation effect was found in the relationship between WPB and CPOLG.

For the relationship between WPB and CPERG, when the main effects were added in model 3, the variance observed was $R^2 = 0.21$, $F(4, 410) = 26.40$, $p < 0.001$; MB, PERC, POLC, and WPB were related positively and significantly ($t = 2.81$, $p < 0.01$; $t = 3.25$, $p < 0.001$; $t = 4.59$, $p < 0.001$; $t = 3.89$, $p < 0.001$) to CPERG. This implied that including the main effects accounted for approximately 21% variance in bureaucrats CPERG. In Model 4, an additional 4% variance in bureaucrats CPERG, indicating a significant increase in variance explained over Model 3 for the interaction of WPB on the independent variables. Additionally, a significant $R^2 = 0.243$, $\Delta R^2 = .038$, $F(3, 407) = 18.62$, $p < 0.001$; the effect of MB, PERC, POLC, and WPB slightly changed but remained positively and significantly ($t = 2.42$, $p < 0.05$; $t = 3.43$, $p < 0.001$; $t = 4.75$, $p < 0.001$; $t = 4.20$, $p < 0.001$) to CPERG. The interaction terms were negatively and statistically significant for the relationship WPB * PERC and WPB * POLC ($t = -2.22$, $p < 0.05$; $t = -2.09$, $p < 0.05$) to CPERG. Taken together, the interaction between recruitment style and WPB accounted for 25% of the total variance in CPERG. Thus, Model 4 proved that WPB moderates the relationship between recruitment style and corruption for personal gain. Thereby providing support for H4b.

In order to evaluate the two-way interaction hypotheses, the incremental variance explained by model 4 over model 3 in Table 4 was observed. The inclusion of the interaction between WPB * MB, WPB * PERC, and WPB * POLC is 3% and 4% more variance for CPOLG and CPERG in Model 2 and Model 4, respectively. The R^2 change suggests that including the interaction terms broadly increases the explanatory power of the corruption behavior, further strengthening the association between recruitment style and WPB (Murphy & Russell, 2017). More specifically, the study found that the interaction between WPB and PERC was negatively and statistically significant and reduced the effect of WPB on CPERG ($t = -2.22$, $p < 0.05$).

Hence, H5e was supported. Figure 2 shows that WPB dampens the positive relationship between PERC and CPERG. Thus, WPB weakens when the relationship between PERC and CPERG dissipates (i.e., the slope becomes flatter) and produces a reversing effect from positive to negative as WPB increases. In other words, the effect of PERC on CPERG was significantly larger when WPB was considered high (i.e., mean + 1 SD) than when WPB was considered low (i.e., mean + 1 SD). Similarly, the interaction between WPB and POLC was related negatively and statistically significantly, such that it reduced the effect of WPB on CPERG ($t = -2.09$, $p < 0.05$). Hence, H5f was supported. Figure 3 illustrates that WPB dampens the positive relationship between POLC and CPERG, i.e., POLC had a significantly greater influence on CPERG when WPB was considered high (i.e., mean + 1 SD) than when WPB was considered low (i.e., mean + 1 SD). Overall, the results supported the moderation hypotheses.

〈Figure 2 & 3〉 The Moderating Effect of Well-Paid bureaucracy

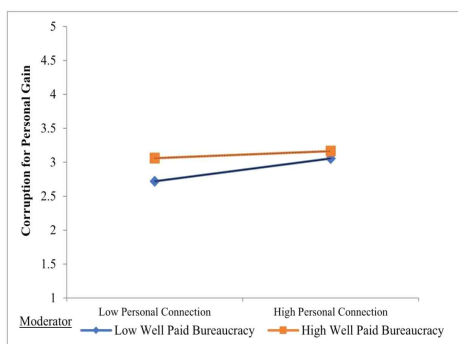


Figure 2

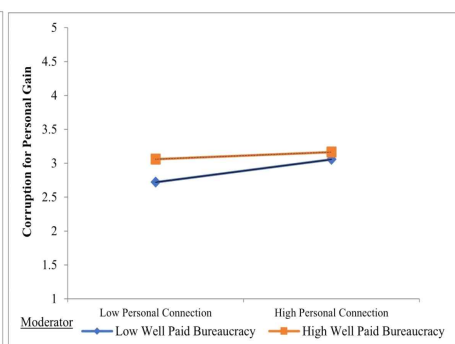


Figure 3

〈Table 4〉 Regression Analysis: Moderation Effect of Well–Paid Bureaucracy

Variable	CPOLG				CPERG			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value
Main Effect								
Merit-based (MB)	0.25	5.32***	0.23	4.96***	0.13	2.81**	0.11	2.42*
Personal Connection (PERC)	0.09	1.55	0.09	1.68	0.17	3.25***	0.18	3.43***
Political connection (POLC)	0.15	2.70**	0.16	2.80**	0.25	4.59***	0.25	4.75***
Well-paid Bureaucracy (WPB)	-0.10	-2.22*	-0.09	-2.06*	0.17	3.89***	0.18	4.20***
Interactions								
WPB x MB			0.08	1.68			0.07	1.53
WPB x PERC			-0.10	-1.93			-0.11	-2.22*
WPB x POLC			-0.09	-1.60			-0.11	-2.09*
R2	0.129		0.158		0.205		0.243	
Adj. R2	0.120		0.144		0.197		0.230	
F	15.125***		10.949**		26.383***		18.619***	

Note: N=415.*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Source: Field Data, 2023

IV. Discussion

This study investigates the impact of recruitment style on corruption behavior and the moderating role of well-paid bureaucracy by surveying government officials in Nigeria. The study aimed to (a) examine the impact of recruitment style on corruption behavior, (b) examine the influence of well-paid bureaucracy on recruitment style and corruption behaviors, (c) determine the moderating effect of well-paid bureaucracy on the relationship between recruitment style and corruption behavior and (d) provide policy suggestions and recommendations.

The two dimensions of the corruption behaviors were examined (CPOLG and CPERG) through five hypotheses. The analysis results in Table 3 revealed that recruitment style influenced the corruption behavior observed. The results show that MB is positively and significantly associated with both dimensions of corruption behaviors, i.e., CPOLG and CPERG. In other words, the failure to institute

meritocratic processes and procedures in the public sector is tantamount to the failures of other bureaucratic procedures. Consequently, bureaucrats recruited on MB failed to refrain from corrupt behaviors. The causal interpretation of the result is that MB significantly increased the influence of CPOLG and CPERG. This finding is similar to those of Dahlström et al. (2012) and Rauch & Evans (2000) on the significance of MB as a predictor of corruption behavior in the bureaucracy even when controlling for several socioeconomic and institutional factors (Klitgaard, 1989), thus supporting H1. Similarly, POLC influences bureaucrats to engage in CPOLG and CPERG, thus supporting H3. PERC was positive and statistically significant for the relationship with CPERG, thus supporting H2.

Also, the study supports the separation of interest hypothesis of Dahlström et al. (2012). Thus, separating bureaucrats into MB, PERC, and POLC provided support for corrupt behaviors. This was profound in Model 3 of Table 3, whereby bureaucrats recruited on PERC showed no significant influence on CPOLG but were a significant predictor for CPERG. In contrast, POLC showed a significant influence on both CPOLG and CPERG. By implication, the study confirms that POLC and PERC do not always align. Finally, the study revealed that the potential of MB recruitment to curb bureaucratic corruption is not absolute and should not be exaggerated but ought to be viewed separately depending on the preconditions of such institutional settings. The empirical result is interpreted as an argument against MB and connection-based recruitment to curb corruption. Professional norms were significant and negatively correlated to CPERG in terms of professionalism. This means that bureaucrats who reported engaging in CPERG also reported that they do not perceive professional norms as an important bureaucratic feature. i.e., bureaucrats do not follow professional norms when performing routine government functions but exhibit corrupt behaviors. This finding aligns closely with Dahlström et al.'s (2012) findings, which suggested that civil service traditions in Sub-Saharan African countries are highly politicized.

According to the survey analysis result in Table 4, WPB is negatively and significantly associated with CPOLG H4(1) ($t = -2.22$, $p < 0.05$) and positively and

significantly associated with CPERG H4(2) ($t = 3.89$, $p < 0.001$) thereby H4(1-2) was supported. Specifically, the interaction of WPB * PERC and the interaction of WPB * POLC had a negative and significant association with both PERC and POLC and CPERG. Thereby, H5b(2) and H5c(2) were supported, respectively. In contrast, the interaction of WPB * MB on CPOLG H5a(1) and WPB * MB on CPERG H5a(2) revealed a positive but insignificant association. This finding is similar to those of Evans & Rauch (2000) and Dahlström et al. (2012), who did not find any significance in the importance of income to corruption reduction. Furthermore, the findings suggest that individuals employed through non-meritocratic processes are more motivated to engage in dishonest acts to advance their interests, careers, and financial benefits, or they seem to consider providing benefits for their friends, family, and networks than those of the public good. This is in support of Finan et al. (2017) assertion that recruiting individuals on patronage and not for their merit can undo any positive outcome higher wages might produce. This implies that, as Treisman (2007) and Akerlof & Yellen (1990) suggest, higher salaries are probably important but not necessary conditions to diminish the probability of corrupt individuals or the possibility of termination.

Alternatively, this result can be explained in terms of the bureaucracy attracting prosocial individuals (Finan et al., 2017). Prosocial motivations entail individuals caring about benefiting others (Hasnain et al., 2015; Mansoor, 2021; Sheeran, 2005; Zhang et al., 2019). Consequently, the bureaucrats in the sample have incentives to be corrupt, depending on their motivation. Personal gain motivation was more prominent in explaining the incentive. By providing public goods and services to their family, friends, and close associates, they can satisfy their prosocial motivation characteristics, which are directly linked to their intrinsic motivations (Cowley & Smith, 2014; Banuri & Keefer, 2013). Moreover, public service performance is measured in terms of public value for services provided rather than the monetary revenues and benefits earned. As a result, the findings explain intrinsic motivations such as a sense of obligation, a desire to help, or an act of reciprocity (Kim, 2009; Perry & Hondeghe, 2008).

Furthermore, the study found significant moderation effects between the causal and outcome variables. Specifically, two of the six moderation effects (WPB * PERC → CPERG and WPB * POLC → CPERG) were significant. Hence, H5b(2) and H5c(2) were supported. Owing to these significances, the association of WPB * PERC and CPERG influenced the direction of the relationship between PERC and CPERG, from positive to negative. This means that WPB had a negative significance that weakened the degree to which PERC and CPERG were positively related (Figure 1). Similarly, the association of WPB * POLC and CPERG influenced the direction of the relationship. This means that WPB had a negative significance that weakened the degree to which POLC and CPERG had a positive relationship (Figure 2). Consequently, PERC and POLC were associated with strong CPERG intentions, especially when WPB was perceived to be high. This outcome is similar to Foltz and Opoku's (2015) study on petty corruption in West Africa, which found that higher salary reforms increased corruption (Foltz & Opoku-Agyemang, 2015). The complementary behavioral model provides a good explanation for this, as it shows that corrupt officials make decisions based on points of orientation that can be used to compare material outcomes to alternative points of view (e.g. Ball & Chernova, 2005; Foxall et al., 2017; Lee & Venkataraman, 2022; Polese, 2008) (Kőszegi and Rabin 2006). In clientelistic networks, bureaucrats recruited based on connections are considered unethical reference points. Thus, it can be assumed that they may use their position to benefit themselves, loyalists, and close associates. Furthermore, because public sector jobs in general, and particularly because the bureaucrats we surveyed are engaged in non-profit public services rather than profit-making, it is easy to divert such services to persons or groups with whom the bureaucrats have personal relationships. Contrary to this, H5a(1), H5b(1), H5c(1), and H5d(1) were statistically insignificant and rejected.

V. Conclusion

This study demonstrates the influence of WPB on the relationship between recruitment style and corruption behavior in the Nigerian civil service. Through empirical analysis, we found that MB recruitment and POLC significantly increased the influence of CPOLG and CPERG, whereas PERC was a significant predictor for CPERG but not CPOLG. By implication, the study revealed that the potential of MB recruitment to curb bureaucratic corruption is not absolute and should not be exaggerated; rather, it should be viewed separately. Furthermore, the study confirms that POLC and PERC do not always align and supports the separation of interest hypothesis of Dahlström et al. (2012). Finally, we found a significant relationship between WPB and corruption behavior. WPB had a negative significant relationship with CPOLG and a positive relationship with CPERG. Regarding the moderating effect, WPB generally influences increased corruption behavior outcomes when bureaucrats are recruited through connections. Because public sector jobs in general, particularly because the bureaucrats we surveyed are engaged in non-profit public services rather than profit making, it is easy to divert such services to persons or groups with whom the bureaucrats have personal relationships. Consequently, the empirical results demonstrate that, although necessary, WPB is insufficient to prevent corruption behaviors, thereby calling into question the applicability of cross-country and experimental research that has provided contrary evidence. The observed lack of consistency in bureaucrats' behaviors suggests that, in addition to WPB, future studies should consider investigating other situational, organizational, and behavioral variables that might be at play. Such behavioral perspectives may be beneficial for controlling corruption behaviors. Furthermore, to tackle the underlying causes of corruption, the social reproduction of reciprocity in developing countries must be studied. Public sector reforms must prioritize professionalism and meritocratization over other non-meritocratic practices to prevent bureaucrats from engaging in corrupt behaviors and welcome a new wave of development. Due to the failures of the recruitment and selection processes, the bureaucracy is filled with

individuals with less desirable personality traits. The public sector is seen as an organization that is frequently overlooked, offers low incentives, and cannot hold its employees accountable. This can easily attract illicit individuals with low aspirations for quality work and low work ethics. This increases corrupt behaviors in the system and the nation in general. Furthermore, the recruitment and selection process can easily undo the positive outcome a WPB might have produced, as is the Nigeria case where weak institutions create opportunities for non-meritocratic, clientelist, and patronage networks. The government of developing economies is charged with the great responsibility of designing a personnel management policy that can attract the best individuals. Besides selecting and recruiting individuals with intrinsic motivations, those with high ethical values, prosocial motivations, and quality, sufficient campaigns that trigger attention from political leaders, technocrats, and political will are needed to drive anti-corruption policies should be sought. In the long run, this will improve governance by effectively fostering transparency, participation, and accountability measures and developing a strong and reliable institutional framework that political leadership cannot alter within the public service.

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요약 및 주제어

채용형태가 관료부패에 미치는 영향 분석: 나이지리아를 중심으로

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이 연구는 나이지리아 공직자를 대상으로 한 설문조사를 통해 채용 유형이 이들의 부패행태에 미치는 영향을 살펴보고, 높은 보수를 받는 관료제가 이 관계를 어떻게 조절하는지를 분석한다. 연구 결과는 실적기반 임용일수록, 정치적, 개인적 연줄이 많을수록 부패가 유의미하게 증가한다는 것을 보여주었다. 높은 보수를 받는 관료제는 개인적 연줄과 부패행태의 관계, 정치적 연줄과 부패행태의 관계를 조절하며, 결과적으로 채용 유형과 부패의 전체적인 관계를 강화하는 것으로 나타났다. 이 결과는 관료들이 부패를 저지르는 이유가 재정적 인센티브보다는 상호 호혜의 기대에 기인한다는 것을 시사하며, 부패 발생에 대한 사회적 관계의 맥락을 강조한다는 점에서 정책 입안자와 관료에게 중요한 시사점을 제공한다.

[주제어: 관료부패, 실적기반임용, 경제적 이득, 정치적 연줄, 나이지리아]