

Ethical dilemma in Nigerian public service: A theoretical exposition

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria's public service is beset by numerous ethical dilemmas, undermining the country's development and governance. Ethical dilemma provides a circumstance that requires a choice between competing ideologies in each, usually undesirable or confusing situation among public servants. Methodologically, the study used secondary sources of information like textbooks, journals, government documents etc. and analyzed issues using content analysis. Therefore, through holistic discussion, the study found out that irrespective of the penal actions and punishment in the public service, yet public misconduct is still growing in geometric progression. The study among others recommends that there should be zero tolerance of corruption and other vices in all sectors of the economy for efficient and effective public service delivery in Nigeria. The study concludes by opining that Nigerian public service is entangled in a web of ethical dilemmas. Addressing corruption, nepotism, and bureaucratic inefficiency requires a multifaceted approach. Strengthening institutions, promoting transparency, and fostering a culture of integrity are crucial steps toward reclaiming the public service's integrity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

To talk about noble values like ethics in a country where bribery and corruption are rampant is more of a dream than a reality. Human values, the sense of responsibility to perform a job for which you are paid, and respect for values are deeply undermined in Nigeria today. The younger generation has been indoctrinated into all kinds of relationships based on material gains, but they undoubtedly benefit from them by ignoring everything else that has to do with the "man" and human morality. People often forget the quality of their actions and behaviors. Ake (1981), Balewa (1994), Sorkaa (2003), and Hembe (2006) are of the opinion that Nigeria's independence was made possible by the exploitative means of British colonialism. Thus, the Nigerian civil service exists within a British-created context. Adebayo (2001), Edoh (2005), and Agishi (2007) unanimously noted that the emergence of the ethical dilemma of accountability in the Nigerian civil service is primarily rooted in the country's colonial experience. Even during decades of transitional military rule, the ethical dilemma did not go away. The military, with its self-appointed administrative system, has failed to transform the civil service and eliminate the problem. Over the years, recurrent problems have been treated with sedatives rather than fundamental and real solutions. Starting with the Gorsuch Commission in 1955, the Udoji Commission in 1976, the civil service reforms of the IBB administration in 1988, and the more recent civil service reforms initiated by former President Olusegun Obasanjo (e.g., monetization policies) are all best described as cosmetic approaches that are likely to have no impact on the worsening problems.

When observing the performance of public administration in this long-drawn transition process, it is easy to see that the public image of local or federal governments in Nigeria leaves something to be desired, with poor quality of statutory duty fulfillment, high levels of corruption, etc. Ethics in public administration is a detailed discussion that is usually considered a branch of political ethics. In public administration, ethics deals with the basic premise of the administrator's duties as a "steward" of the public. In other words, it is the moral justification and consideration of decisions and actions taken in the performance of daily tasks in providing general services to government and non-profit organizations. Decisions are made based on ethical principles that reflect the perception of what the public considers to be right. Ensuring ethical behavior in the public sector requires that decisions made from a moral point of view and their impact on the public must always be reflected upon. Such a distinction prevents public managers from acting according to an internal set of ethical principles without first asking themselves whether those principles can withstand public scrutiny. Moreover, this places an additional burden on public administrators in terms of managing their private lives. Ethics in the public sector is an attempt to create a more open atmosphere within government work. Ethics in public administration is a broad field as values and morals vary from culture to culture. Despite differences in ethical values, there is an increasing

commonality in what is considered good behavior and ethical conduct. Ethics are a standard of accountability through which the public scrutinizes the work of members of these organizations. The subordinate nature of the public sector gives rise to the question of ethics. The term also applies to any system or theory of moral values and principles. How should we live? Should we pursue happiness, or knowledge, virtue, or the creation of beautiful things? If we choose happiness, is it my own happiness or everyone's? And what about the more specific questions we face? Is it right to be disloyal for a cause? Can we justify living in plenty while people elsewhere in the world starve? Is it justifiable to wage war if innocent people are expected to die? Is it wrong to clone humans or destroy human embryos for medical research? What obligations, if any, do we have to the generations of humans that come after us and to the non-human animals with whom we share the earth? Ethics deals with such questions at all levels. Its subject matter is fundamental problems of practical decision-making, and its primary concern is the nature of ultimate values and the criteria by which human actions can be judged as right or wrong. The terms ethics and morality are closely related. Today it is common to speak of ethical judgments or ethical principles, but earlier it was more accurate to speak of moral judgments or moral principles. These applications are an extension of the meaning of ethics. Previously, the term did not refer to morality per se, but to an academic discipline or field of study that has morality as its subject. In this sense, ethics is synonymous with moral philosophy. The field of ethics also includes the branch of philosophy called axiology, since it deals with issues of value along with aesthetics. Ethics attempts to solve the problem of human morality by defining concepts such as good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, justice and crime. As a field of intellectual study, moral philosophy is also related to the fields of moral psychology, descriptive ethics, and value theory.

1.1 Statement of Problem

The interplay of greed, ethics and public service in Nigeria is a complex and ongoing challenge that requires sustained efforts from government and the people. Addressing these issues is critical for the development of the country and to promote a society where public servants are committed to the public interest rather than their own interests. Margaret Smith has stated that "public service is not just about doing the job efficiently and honestly; it must be a total dedication to the people and the nation" (Dakuku, 2024). The greed of political elites and officials has exacerbated the decline of ethical and moral values in government and society. When you arithmetically add up this geometric increase in greed and the devastating decline in ethical values you will get rampant corruption. Here is how far we have gone down this cancerous path and why political leaders, bureaucracies and a submissive and docile civil society are to blame. Greed and excessive desire for wealth, power and material possessions are rampant not just in the public service but in the Nigerian society. This insatiable appetite for personal gain is manifested

clearly as corruption in the civil service. Greed-driven corruption shakes the foundations of public institutions, erodes public confidence and hampers socio-economic progress. The various manifestations of greed and unethical conduct in the Nigerian civil service are so commonplace that they no longer make the news or provoke public disapproval unless very unusual (Dakuku, 2024).

1.2 Ethics

The word ethics comes from the geeky word "ethikos", which means "ethics". The Latin word for this Greek word is "mors," which has the same meaning as morality and morality. This explains why ethics is sometimes called ethics or used as a substitute for morality. Customs or morals refer to the traditional customs of a nation. In this context, morality simply refers to patterns of behavior that are acceptable or unacceptable in a society that are beneficial or harmful for the common good, and these patterns are not open-ended. to an interpretation other than the truth (Aristotle Neanderthals Each Mark).

1.3 Dilemma

A dilemma is defined as a serious problem that cannot provide a good solution, or a situation that involves choosing between different alternatives (Davis, Aroskar, Liaschenko, & Drought, 1997). This concept was reviewed by Sletteboe (1997), who identified three situations that lead to conflict. This includes two or more options to choose from; a good choice leads to a bad outcome; and choices without knowing what the right thing to do is. He proposed five different types of dilemmas, namely, opportunities, unpleasant alternatives, awareness of alternatives, the need to choose, and uncertainty about action.

1.4 Ethical Dilemma

In philosophy, an ethical dilemma, also known as an ethical paradox or moral dilemma, is a situation in which a subject is faced with two (or more) conflicting and irreconcilable demands. in one. A close definition describes an ethical dilemma as a situation where all available options are wrong. The word also has a broader meaning in everyday language, referring to a solvable moral dilemma, a difficult psychological choice, or another type of difficult moral dilemma. This article discusses moral dilemmas in a philosophical sense, which are called realist moral dilemmas. Many examples have been presented, but opinions differ as to whether it is a real moral problem or a moral problem. The main debate surrounding moral dilemmas is the question of whether moral dilemmas even exist. Human rights defenders often point to concrete examples, while their opponents seek to show that their existence violates moral principles. There are many different types of ethical dilemmas. The main distinctions are between epistemic dilemmas, which may leave a false sense of purpose that cannot be resolved in conflict, and practical or ontological dilemmas. It is acknowledged that epistemic dilemmas exist, but the main concern with ethical dilemmas occurs at the ontological level. Historically, philosophers have argued that good moral theory should be free from ethical problems. However, this idea has been rejected in contemporary thought.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Ethics in public service

Ethics, also known as the idea of ethics, is concerned with good and bad, right and wrong. Ethics is a branch of philosophy "concerned with formulating, defending, and recommending theories of right and wrong." Ethics is a set of rules for correct behavior that is consistent with the ideals of a society or organization. The culture of public administration is a broad field because values and practices vary from one culture to another. Despite differences in moral values, societies share common ideas about what constitutes good and appropriate behavior. Ethics are accountability standards that serve as a basis for public scrutiny of the actions taken by members of the organization. Empirical facts show that the quality of public services and the role of public administration in providing public services have a direct impact on the lives of citizens. In the reciprocal relationship between public organizations and society, the way in which officials fulfill their duties to society by respecting the law is very important and decisive (Lang 2012). This has been seen in many cases and has tarnished the image of public officials at all levels. Organizations that control and monitor public affairs, including the media, have many cases of the involvement of politicians in various confirmed and proven cases of corruption. Regardless of the country's political climate, this has happened many times. The falsification of currencies and monetary values, thus affecting the fairness, balance and other arrangements of the requests and trades made during this period, and the main purpose of the financial management that follows to improve people's lives, it has become a conversation and everyday talk has

become meaningless. What arguments can be put forward to explain the decline in the power of public administration? We believe that the problem begins with the selection of public administration personnel and the public commitment of those who carry out their duties. In this case, we can say that the determining factor is the political environment, which provides the framework for the management of public services and the work of public administration employees. We believe that the ratio of required organisms in the public sector and true professionals in the field is very worrying. Public administration is in shock whenever the ruling party in Nigeria changes its flag. In many cases, experts are ignored, replaced by real players and left to national policies. This change affected the level of administration and public affairs, paving the way for negative attitudes and bureaucracy in government and day-to-day activities. Rosenbloom and Kravchuk (2005) argue that public service managers must bear a great deal of responsibility because there are many aspects to their work, which can lead to malpractice and corruption. the will of the people. Meanwhile, Bertrand (2004) and Lang (2012) argue that public organizations are different from other forms of government in terms of their capabilities and ultimate goals for the benefit of the people. It is important that the behavior of the public administration is characterized by honesty, respect, responsibility, care and honesty. All actions of public officials must be impartial and humanistic. Employees who manage important aspects of public administration must consider "self" as an unknown factor. He should also take care of the welfare of others and act according to the law. According to Aliaj et al. al., (2003), people must always fight against corruption and other negative symptoms that we face today. It is good that we continue to talk about public administration by keeping an eye on cases like this. This leads us to conclude that we must do more to improve the quality and professional training of the staff assigned to work in the administrative branch. In particular, national universities should offer management ethics courses that contribute to the quality of education of new managers.

2.2 Code of Conduct

An ethical code is a set of rules that describe the responsibilities or proper actions of a person, group, or organization. Related concepts include ethics, honor and moral laws, including Sharia and religious law. The International Federation of Accountants provides a working definition of ethics as principles, values, standards or rules of conduct that guide the decisions, processes and systems of an organization to promote sustainability of key stakeholders and respect the wishes of all voters affected by its jurisdiction. Public services are the machinery used by the government to provide services to the community, so public servants should consider continuous improvement and comfort themselves in order to provide better services (Bellow & Murtala, 2015). The process of providing these services must adhere to the ethical principles set out in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Therefore, the constitution sets thresholds or standards to guide civil servants in carrying out their duties. Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Constitution Act 1999 sets out general rules for the conduct and working attitudes of civil servants. Article 1 states that "no public official shall place himself in a situation where his interests conflict with his duties." This article states that public officials should not place themselves in a position where their interests conflict with their duties and responsibilities. This obligation is an aspect of the obligation of good faith under customary law. It is said that the law requires public officials to exercise good judgment in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities. This law is strong and reasonable because when a public official has a conflict between his personal interests and his official duties, he will prioritize his duties. Therefore, the law says that he should not be tried like that. From time to time, public officials may encounter situations where their interests conflict with their duties while performing their duties. In this case, if a public official agrees on his own interests, he should be responsible for violating the meaning of the rules (Marshall & Murtala, 2015). Clause 2(a) states that "a public officer cannot receive or pay the salary of another public officer at the same time as he receives or pays the salary of another other public officials". This section restricts a public officer from receiving or paying the salary of a public officer at the same time that he receives or is paid the salary of another public office. This law is closely related to the law prohibiting conflicts of interest explained above. It is designed to prevent public officials from receiving or receiving compensation from two public agencies. Payment under section 19 of the Fifth Schedule to the Constitution Act 1999 (as amended); wages, salaries, overtime or vacation pay, commissions, wages, bonuses, wages, allowances, benefits (whether or not such benefits can be converted into money), or the payment of money), allowances, pensions and annuities paid, received or awarded for a job or position. Subsection (b) of this section continues to prohibit public officials from engaging in or participating in the management of any private enterprise, business, or trade unless the employee is engaged in -place. However, this requirement does not prevent public officials from carrying out agricultural activities.

Article 3 prohibits the President of the Federation, the Vice-President, the Governor-General, the Lieutenant-Governor, government ministers and federal government commissions, and other public officials or individuals, from holding or managing foreign bank accounts. Article 4 prohibits public officials from accepting positions of higher pay than managers, directors or employees of companies owned or controlled by the government; or after retiring from public service in a public institution and receiving a pension from public funds (Marshall & Murtala, 2015). However, Article 14(a) exempts members of the Legislative Yuan from the provisions of this article. Paragraph (2) of this article prohibits retired civil servants from receiving other benefits from government funds other than pensions and severance benefits. This means that public officials cannot benefit from public money twice, while other officials cannot benefit from it once.

2.3 Systemic Failures of Nigerian Public Service

2.3.1 Bribery and Corruption

Bribery, corruption, favouritism, nepotism and embezzlement have eaten deep into the management of public institutions in Nigeria; thus, preventing them from functioning effectively. Indeed, one of the major challenges of public service is bribery and corruption. There are allegations of public officers engaging in fraudulent act. To the extent that members of the public have to give money before they can be attended to. Also, money meant for public projects are mismanaged and embezzled by greedy public officers. Corruption has reached an alarming proportion in Nigeria to the extent of keeping an average Nigerian from being corrupt is like keeping a hungry goat from eating grass (Achebe, 2000). Former President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, cited in Hassan and Musa (2014, p.198) in his inaugural address to the National Assembly observed vividly that public offices are the shopping floors of government businesses. Regrettably, Nigerians have far too long been feeling short-changed by the quality of public service delivery by which decisions are not made without undue outside influence, and files do not move without being pushed with inducements. Our public offices have far too long been showcases for the combined evils of inefficiency and corruption, whilst being impediments to effective implementation of government policies, Nigerians deserve better. And we will ensure they get what is better. As such cases of stolen funds by public servants are being reported almost on daily basis in the country due to corruption and corrupt practices of doing things. For example, between 1960 and 2005, about \$20 trillion was stolen from the Nigeria's treasury by public office holders. Most instructive was the ₦32.8 billion police pension fund theft trial, where John Yakubu Yusufu who admitted to fraud, walked out of court free after paying a paltry ₦750,000 in fines (EFCC-<http://www.vanguardngr.com>).

2.3.2 Indiscipline and Inefficiency of the Staff

Most public servants approach their work with indifference, lack work ethics and are not committed to their work. The prevalence of the general indiscipline in public institutions have made workers to come to work and do not attend to issues on time. On several occasion the administration's vital decision ends in stalemate. Hence, staff of most public institutions due to their nonchalant attitude to work, do not adhere to the principles required to run the institutions. Therefore, they do not focus on achieving the goal of such an establishment. In fact, this attitude occurred in most public establishments, due to little or no supervision, by leaving the staff to do what they like. Mismanagement of Resources: It is a common knowledge in public institutions that management officers and staff do not handle public resources with care and concern. For example, resources that are supposed to be used for a month are wastefully used within a week. At times, money meant to be used in carrying out three or four projects is spent on one inconclusive or imperfect project (Gambo & Rufai, 2023).

2.3.3 Bureaucratic bottleneck

This has to with delay in decision –making as files must pass through many officers and tables before actions could be taken. Others are disrespect to rules, poor professionalism and intermingling of public interests with politics.

2.3.4 Reform in Public Service

Olaleye (2001) sees reforms in public service as an attempt to reconstruct administrative structure and revamp operational machinery and techniques capable of improving organizational effectiveness and efficiency.. Adewumi (1988) state that civil service reform is embarked on the assumption that it is feasible to reach the optional level in the working of a given organization if the administrative process is equipped to provide such support. Civil service reform is purposeful or goal oriented changes designed to improve the skills as well as the preparedness of members to satisfy the

organizational set goals or objectives. Summarily, civil service reform involves identifying an existing problem and attempting to solve it, this has to do with policies formulated to restructure and transform an organization from bad to a better condition in analyzing the civil service reforms and national development in Nigeria.

2.3.5 Post independence reforms in Nigeria

Morgan Commission 1963, Eldwood Commission 1966, Adebo Commission 1971, Udoji Commission 1972, Dotun Philips Commission 1985, Decree No. 43 1988 known as the 1988 Civil Service Reform, Ayida Review Panel 1994, Obasanjo Civil Service Reform 1999-2007. Most of these reforms failed due to non political will to implement the reforms on the side of political office holders, sentiments and mediocrity undermined the recommendations of several committees, government attempt to reform civil service out of the way of its capitalistic foundation without taking a break from the status quo, and conscious attempt to ignore democratic practice in managing civil service. The ongoing civil service reform is not going to achieve desire result unless the problem associated with lack of democratic practice in the administration of civil service is addressed, this will curb weak governance structure, red-tapism, weak accountability, low professional standards, wastage corruption, poor productivity and redundancy that characterize the affairs in civil service.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Theory of Consequentialism

Consequentialism is an ethical theory that looks at the consequences of something to determine whether it is right. For example, most people agree that lying is wrong. But if telling a lie helps save someone's life, consequentialism says it's the right thing to do. Consequentialism, as the name suggests, is the idea that moral actions depend on consequences. This ancient and still popular theory holds the basic idea that the best or right thing to do is that which will make the world a better place in the future. Since we cannot change the past, worrying about the past is no more important than worrying about the past. Crying milk is better. This general approach can be applied at different levels to different situations of different kinds of things, but perhaps the most famous example is the rationale for the right of actions, which says that whether an action is right depends on the only person. either it works or it doesn't. result of. Consequentialism is a moral philosophy that argues the morality of an action should be determined by its consequences.

2.5 Key Principles

- Moral rightness or wrongness is determined solely by the consequences of an action.
- The moral value of an action is measured by its overall utility or happiness.
- Actions are right if they promote the greatest happiness for the greatest number.

2.6 Types of Consequentialism

- Utilitarianism: Classic form, maximizing overall happiness or utility.
- Egoism: Focuses on individual happiness or self-interest.
- Altruism: Prioritizes the happiness of others.
- Rule Consequentialism: Evaluates actions based on moral rules.

3. DISCUSSION: THE CENTRAL THESIS

Theoretical studies have shown that ethical dilemmas arise from situations that require a choice between conflicting principles. Thus, an ethical dilemma can be a situation that requires a decision between competing ideologies in a specific, usually undesirable or confusing, situation (Liaschenko & Drought, 1997). Conflicts of interest are perhaps the most obvious example that can cause ethical dilemmas for public sector leaders. Other types of ethical dilemmas that public servants can find themselves in include conflicts between: administrative values and administrative justifications; aspects of the code of conduct; personal values and directives from superiors or the government; professional ethics and directives from superiors or the government; personal values and professional ethics and directives from the government; unclear or competing responsibilities; and aspects of ethical behavior (Cranston, Ehrich, & Kimber 2002). Ellis and Hartley (2001) pointed out that there are no perfect solutions to ethical dilemmas and decision makers may find themselves in situations where they have to defend their decisions. Beauchamp and Childress (2001) clearly state that an ethical dilemma is a situation in which a moral obligation appears to require a person to perform two or more alternative actions, but the person

is unable to perform all of the required alternative actions. In general, however, ethical dilemmas come in at least two forms: either the evidence or arguments indicate that an action is morally right and the evidence or arguments of either side are inconclusive, or the agent believes that he or she has a moral obligation to perform two or more mutually exclusive actions. For public officials attempting to function as professionals, the requirements of law, duty, fairness, and due process provide the fertile ground for ethical dilemmas to arise. Whistleblowers face this problem because disclosure of ongoing misconduct may be criminal if it is serious. As ethical standards are not codified, there is always the possibility of dilemmas arising and disagreements over appropriate behaviour. Other studies have shown that ethical dilemmas arise in situations where decisions or actions are undesirable and have ethically harmful consequences (Ellis and Hartley, 2001). Nepotism and favouritism are rampant in the Nigerian public service (Aiyedogbon, 2018). Appointments and promotions often prioritise loyalty and relationships over performance, perpetuating mediocrity and undermining organisational effectiveness. The government of former President Goodluck Jonathan was criticized for appointing cronies to key positions (The Guardian, 2015).

Nigeria's bureaucracy is notoriously inefficient (Ojo, 2016). Red tape, unnecessary protocols, and lack of accountability hinder service delivery. In the Ease of Doing Business Report 2020, Nigeria ranks 131st out of 190 countries (World Bank, 2020). Inefficiency fosters corruption as officials exploit weaknesses in the system for personal gain. Civil servants are not just arbiters of public policy. They make decisions that affect the lives of citizens, such as taxes, survival, and firing. In doing so, they act with caution. The main concern is that they make decisions that avoid ethical dilemmas. In other words, the promotion of the common good depends on the exercise or utilization of administrative discretion. In fact, public officials are given ample opportunity to exercise their discretionary powers within the bounds of rules and regulations laid down by the legislature and prescribed procedures. Considering the alternatives, the decision of the authorities raises ethical questions, since the decision of the authorities may be acceptable only to a small section of society. The problem is that the choice of a course of action among several options is often made on the basis of personal preferences, political or other connections, or even personal euphemisms, ignoring known facts and therefore the possibility of rational decision-making. It is quite possible that all laid down rules, regulations and procedures have been followed, but the discretionary decision is still perceived as unprincipled or even fraudulent.

Corruption as a hydra headed monster is a pervasive ethical dilemma in Nigerian public service (Ogundiya, 2017). The 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Nigeria 149th out of 180 countries (Transparency International, 2020). Corruption manifests in various forms, including bribery, embezzlement, and cronyism. For instance, the Niger Delta Development Commission's (NDDC) 2019 audit report revealed staggering corruption, with ₦1.5 trillion unaccounted for (Premium Times, 2020). In government offices, corruption has risen so astronomical that it has become a national convention. Majority of bureaucrats maintain the high standards required by public office and are enthusiastic to promoting the general welfare. The moral standards of public officials are, however, directly related to society as a whole. If the public accepts that in order to secure a quick response from a public official some monetary or other incentive is necessary, and the official accepts the incentive, then the standards of ethical conduct of officials and the public are in fact in harmony from the point of view of the public. The corruption of public officials by private interests is usually indirect, for example, favours by the public to the official under obligation and he gradually substitutes his public loyalties to those doing him favours. The ethical dilemma that faces the public officer with regard to corrupt practices as result of private interests primarily concerns his reaction to the situation. If a corrupt practice or an attempt to corruption is exposed, it is quite possible that the official's personal loyalties or party-political relationships may be in conflict with his official responsibilities.

In government offices, another major ethical dilemma is the secret conduct of public business. This is especially so because confidentiality can provide an opportunity to cover up unethical behaviour. Secrecy is an ally of corruption and corruption is always practiced in secret way. It is generally recognized that in a democracy, the people have a right to discern the working of the government and it would be in the interest of the public for the administration of public affairs to be conducted openly. It has been seen that government official are so careless that there are cases of information leak. Official information is often a sensitive nature such a pending tax increases, rezoning land, cost-cutting of staff that disclosure of the information can lead to turmoil, corrupt practices or, for some individuals, improper financial gains. Leaking official information at a date prior to the public announcement thereof is a defilement of procedural prescriptions and can result in an ethical dilemma. Public officials have great responsibility to implement key public

policies. They ought to be accountable for their official actions to their superiors, the courts and the public. It is however, possible for them to hide behind prescribed procedures, the cloak of competence and even political office-bearers.

Policy makers in government bodies are often challenged by conflicting responsibilities. They have definite loyalties to their bosses, but also to society. They have liberty to act on behalf and in the interest of others, but they must be answerable to others, their superiors and society for their actions. The official's obligation to respect the political process may conflict with his view on how the objects of policy making are treated. It can be understood that the dilemma of the public official is the clash between his opinion of the public interest and the requirements of law.

From the above discussion, the study found the following:

1. A large proportion of public servants are not completely aware of the provisions of the code of code in spite of its impact.
2. Public servants who are acquainted with the code of conduct do not apply its provisions in their bureaucratic practices.
3. Corruption has risen so astronomical that it has become a convention in the public service.
4. Despite the penal actions and punishment in the public service, yet, public misconduct is still growing in geometric progression

3.1 Recommendations

1. Public servants should be given the code of conduct handbook so that they can thoroughly read and adhere to it to avoid unnecessary violation of rules and regulations.
2. Tribunals in the public service should be stringent in passing judgment against violators of the code of conduct so that every public servant will strive to apply the provisions of code of conduct in their bureaucratic practices.
3. There should be zero tolerance of corruption and other vices in all sectors of the economy for efficient and effective public service in Nigeria.
4. Penal sanctions and punishment should not be the only yardstick of controlling public misconduct. There should be flagrant display of patriotism, honesty and integrity, dedication to work and above all fear of God on the part of the public servants.

3.2 Conclusion

The ethical dilemmas plaguing Nigerian public service pose significant challenges to the country's development, governance, and legitimacy. Corruption, nepotism, bureaucratic inefficiency, and lack of transparency and accountability have become entrenched in the system, undermining public trust and hindering economic progress. The analysis has highlighted the complex interplay of factors contributing to these ethical dilemmas, including weak institutions, poor leadership, cultural and social norms, economic pressures, and inadequate regulations. To address these challenges, it is imperative that Nigeria adopts a multifaceted approach that prioritizes institutional strengthening, cultural transformation, and citizen engagement. This includes strengthening regulatory frameworks and oversight mechanisms, promoting transparency and accountability in decision-making and actions, fostering a culture of integrity and ethical leadership, enhancing citizen participation and whistleblower protection and implementing effective regulations and laws. Ultimately, resolving ethical dilemmas in Nigerian public service requires a collective commitment from policymakers, public officials, civil society, and citizens. By working together to address these challenges, Nigeria can build a more just, equitable, and prosperous society.

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