INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (IJPADS)

Volume: [3] **| Issue:** [1] **|** Pages: 90 - 108 **| | Date:** [March, 2026]

Open Access Journal. Accessible online via https://ijpads.com

CORRUPTION, GOVERNANCE QUALITY AND NATIONAL SECURITY OUTCOMES IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA, 2015 - 2025

Joseph Ayatse
Department of Public Administration, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio University, Makurdi

Dewua Dooshima
Department of Public Administration, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio University, Makurdi

Utile Barnabas
Department of Public Administration, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio University, Makurdi

Abstract

This study examines the relationship between corruption, governance quality, and national security outcomes in Benue State, Nigeria, between 2015 and 2025. Despite democratic consolidation at the national level, Benue State has experienced persistent security challenges, raising concerns about governance institutions and public resource management. The study is anchored on Institutional Theory and the Human Security paradigm. A quantitative survey design was adopted, with a structured questionnaire administered to 400 respondents selected from ministries, security agencies, and civil society organizations using the Taro Yamane formula. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression. Findings indicate that corruption has a significant negative effect on national security outcomes ($\beta = -0.412$, $p < 0.05$), while governance quality shows a significant positive influence ($\beta = 0.386$, $p < 0.05$). The joint model explains 54.7% of the variation in security outcomes ($R^2 = 0.547$, $p <$

0.001). The study concludes that improving governance quality and strengthening anti-corruption mechanisms are critical to enhancing national security in Benue State.

Keywords: Corruption, Governance Quality, National Security, Benue State, Institutional Theory

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

In contemporary governance discourse, national security has evolved beyond traditional military conceptions to encompass multidimensional human security concerns United Nations Development Programme UNDP, (2022). Modern states are increasingly judged by their capacity to protect lives and property, ensure food security, maintain social stability, and provide effective public services. In democratic systems, these outcomes are strongly mediated by the quality of governance and the level of corruption within public institutions Kaufmann, et al, (2021). Nigeria's Fourth Republic has witnessed sustained democratic rule since 1999; however, the persistence of insecurity across many states raises fundamental questions about institutional effectiveness Ogunleye & Okeke, (2023). While federal-level analyses dominate scholarly discourse, the dynamics of governance and security are often more visible at the sub-national level where policies are implemented and citizens interact directly with the state.

Benue State occupies a unique position in Nigeria's socio-economic landscape. Widely regarded as the "Food Basket of the Nation," the state plays a strategic role in national food security Akor, (2024). Paradoxically, between 2015 and 2025, Benue has experienced recurrent farmer herder conflicts, rural banditry, communal violence, kidnappings, and large-scale internal displacement. A report by SB Morgen Intelligence (2025)

reveals that the conflict has displaced more than 2.2 million Nigerians nationwide, with Benue State alone housing over 300,000 displaced persons in makeshift camps.

During the same period, public discourse in Benue has increasingly highlighted concerns about corruption in public procurement, weak fiscal transparency, politicization of security responses, and limited institutional coordination Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre [CISLAC], (2024). Allegations of mismanagement of security votes, patronage politics, and weak accountability mechanisms have further intensified debates about governance quality Economic and Financial Crimes Commission [EFCC], (2025).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the logical linkage between governance deficits and insecurity, empirical studies that systematically examine the interaction between corruption, governance quality, and national security outcomes at the state level remain scarce Oluwaniyi, (2022). Most Nigerian studies treat insecurity primarily as an ethno-religious or resource conflict issue Adegbulu, (2023), while others examine corruption in isolation from security outcomes Ogbeidi, (2024). Consequently, there is insufficient evidence on whether and how governance variables actually predict security performance within specific states such as Benue.

A UK-based governance performance review by the Good Governance Rating Index GGRI, (2025) recently ranked Benue among Nigeria's poorest managed states, warning that "insecurity, poverty and governance failures have combined to push the state deeper into crisis." This study therefore seeks to bridge this gap by providing a rigorous empirical assessment of the relationship between corruption, governance quality, and national security outcomes in Benue State between 2015 and 2025.

1.3 Research Questions

i. What is the effect of corruption on national security outcomes in Benue State?

ii. What is the effect of governance quality on national security outcomes in Benue State?

iii. What is the joint effect of corruption and governance quality on national security outcomes in Benue State?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

H_{01}: Corruption has no significant effect on national security outcomes in Benue State.

H_{02}: Governance quality has no significant effect on national security outcomes in Benue State.

H_{03}: Corruption and governance quality jointly have no significant effect on national security outcomes in Benue State.

Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Corruption

Corruption broadly refers to the abuse of entrusted authority for private gain Transparency International, (2023). In the public sector, corruption manifests through bribery, embezzlement, procurement fraud, nepotism, and diversion of public funds. According to Obikeze, Abba and Ojiako (2024), the malady known as corruption did not start today, and evidently, the concept 'corruption' is not an African word, indicating that it is a universal concept. Within the security sector, corruption may take more dangerous forms, including diversion of operational funds, compromised intelligence gathering, illegal arms leakage, politicised deployment of security forces, and payroll fraud within security agencies Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, (2016). Scholars distinguish between petty corruption, grand corruption, and systemic corruption Adebayo

& Nwankwo, (2024). In fragile governance environments, systemic corruption becomes embedded in institutional processes, making reform particularly difficult. The EFCC's (2025) investigation into the infamous $2.1 billion arms scam exposed how "resources meant for the procurement of equipment in the fight against terrorism find their way into the pockets of some senior officers."

2.1.2 Governance Quality

Governance quality refers to the effectiveness, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness of public institutions in managing public affairs Kaufmann et al., (2021). Key dimensions include rule of law, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, voice and accountability, control of corruption, and political stability. High governance quality improves policy implementation and citizen trust, while weak governance often correlates with conflict and insecurity World Bank, (2023). In sub-national contexts like Benue State, governance quality is reflected in budget transparency, responsiveness to security threats, coordination among agencies, and delivery of public services Eze & Ibrahim, (2025). Recent assessments indicate that Benue has demonstrated "weak leadership, poor policy choices, and a lack of transparency" across major governance indicators GGRI, (2025).

2.1.3 National Security Outcomes

Contemporary national security outcomes extend beyond military defense to include protection of lives and property, reduction in violent crime, food system stability, community safety, displacement trends, and public perception of safety UNDP, (2022). The human security approach emphasizes that insecurity at the community level is a direct indicator of state performance. In Benue, the security situation has deteriorated to the extent that "attacks have become daily, with

entire families fleeing for safety" James, (2025).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study integrates Institutional Theory and Human Security Theory.

2.2.1 Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory, as articulated by North (1990), posits that the performance of societies depends largely on the strength, credibility, and enforcement capacity of formal and informal institutions. Strong institutions reduce uncertainty, enforce rules, and promote collective welfare. The theory assumes that institutions shape behavior, weak institutions enable corruption, corruption reduces state capacity, and institutional quality determines policy outcomes Acemoglu & Robinson, (2019).

Relevance to this study: In Benue State, weak institutional oversight may allow corruption to flourish, thereby undermining security effectiveness. The theory explains the governance-performance link and emphasizes rule systems, though it underplays political power dynamics and pays less attention to human-centered security.

2.2.2 Human Security Theory

Human Security Theory, introduced by the UNDP (1994), shifts focus from state survival to protection of individuals and communities. Its seven dimensions include economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security UNDP, (2022).

Relevance: Benue's insecurity especially farmer–herder violence directly threatens food and community security. The disruption of agricultural activities has led to rising food prices and widespread food insecurity Akor, (2024). The theory is people-centered, multidimensional, and policy-relevant, though

it faces measurement challenges and conceptual broadness.

2.2.3 Theoretical Integration

Institutional Theory explains how governance structures fail, while Human Security Theory explains how those failures affect people's safety. Together, they provide a robust framework for analyzing Benue State. The security sector reform literature emphasizes that institutional characteristics and political context are critical determinants of reform outcomes Chanaa, (2002); Olonisakin & Oke, (2023).

2.3 Empirical Review

Global studies consistently find a negative relationship between corruption and security effectiveness Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, (2016); Transparency International, (2023). Countries with high corruption often experience weaker policing, poor intelligence coordination, and higher violence rates. In Africa, several studies link governance deficits to internal conflicts Mkandawire, (2022); Aning & Aubyn, (2023). However, Nigerian research remains heavily federal-focused. Sub-national analyses especially longitudinal ones covering 2015–2025 are limited. Within Benue State specifically, most studies focus on farmer–herder conflict drivers rather than governance variables Ikelegbe, (2023); Madueke, (2024).

Recent empirical work in Benue has examined communication strategies and governance outcomes, finding that "only about 35% of citizens perceive government communication as two-way" and that perceived transparency correlates significantly with governance effectiveness Tsegyu & Ogoshi, (2024). However, no existing study has systematically modelled corruption and governance quality as predictors of security outcomes in the state.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative explanatory design supplemented with secondary security trend data covering 2015–2025. This design was appropriate for establishing causal relationships between the independent variables (corruption and governance quality) and the dependent variable (national security outcomes) Creswell & Creswell, (2018).

3.2 Population of the Study

The target population comprised officials and stakeholders directly involved in governance and security matters in Benue State, totaling 12,846 individuals.

Table 1: Population Distribution

Category	Description	Estimated Population
MDA Officials	Directors/Deputy Directors in relevant ministries	1,250
Security Personnel	Officers commanding and above in security agencies	2,450
Local Government Administrators	Council chairpersons, supervisory councilors	368
Civil Society Organizations	Executive directors, programme officers	180
Traditional/Community Leaders	Council of chiefs, youth/women leaders	8,598
Total		12,846

Source: Benue State Government Statistical Digest (2024)

3.3 Sample Size Determination

The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula Yamane, 1967;

$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$

Where:

· n = sample size

· N = total population (12,846)

· e = margin of error (0.05)

Calculation:

$n = 12,846 / (1 + 12,846 \times 0.0025)$

$n = 12,846 / 33.115$

$n = 387.9 \approx 400$ respondents

3.4 Sampling Technique

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed. First, stratification into the five categories shown in Table 1. Second, proportional allocation of the 400 respondents across strata. Third, purposive sampling within each stratum to select respondents with direct knowledge of governance and security issues.

Table 2: Proportional Sample Allocation

Category	**Population**	**Proportion (%)**	**Sample Allocated**
MDA Officials	1,250	9.7	93
Security Personnel	2,450	19.1	76
Local Government Administrators	368	2.9	12
Civil Society Organizations	180	1.4	6
Traditional/Community Leaders	8,598	66.9	267
Total	12,846	100	400

3.5 Instrumentation

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed on a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree = 4 to Strongly Disagree = 1). The instrument was divided into four sections: demographic characteristics, corruption indicators (12 items), governance quality measures (15 items), and national security outcome indicators (12 items).

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established through expert review by three academics in political science, public administration, and security

studies. Reliability was tested through a pilot study with 40 respondents, yielding Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.84 for corruption, 0.79 for governance quality, and 0.81 for national security outcomes, all exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 Taber, (2018).

3.7 Model Specification

The study specified the following regression model:

$$NSO = \beta_0 + \beta_1 COR + \beta_2 GQ + \varepsilon$$

Where:

· NSO = National Security Outcome (composite index)

· COR = Corruption (composite index)

· GQ = Governance Quality (composite index)

· β_0 = Constant term

· β_1, β_2 = Regression coefficients

· ε = Error term

3.8 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26. Analytical techniques included descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, multiple regression, and ANOVA for model significance. Hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 significance level.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate

Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 368 were completed and returned, representing a response rate of 92%.

4.2 Descriptive Findings

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Corruption	368	3.24	0.62	Moderately High
Governance Quality	368	2.41	0.58	Low
National Security Outcomes	368	2.18	0.71	Poor

Scale: 1.00-1.74=Very Low/Poor; 1.75-2.49=Low/Poor; 2.50-3.24=Moderate/Moderately High; 3.25-4.00=High/Good

Respondents perceived corruption levels as moderately high (mean = 3.24), with highest indicators in security funding (mean = 3.48) and procurement processes (mean = 3.41). Governance quality showed low performance (mean = 2.41), particularly in transparency (mean = 2.18) and inter-agency coordination (mean = 2.23). Security outcomes reflected poor performance (mean = 2.18), with persistent concerns about rural violence (mean = 2.03) and displacement (mean = 1.98).

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	NSO	COR	GQ
NSO	1.000		
COR	-0.612**	1.000	

GQ	0.587**	-0.543**	1.000

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Correlation analysis revealed a strong negative relationship between corruption and security outcomes ($r = -0.612$, $p < 0.01$), a strong positive relationship between governance quality and security outcomes ($r = 0.587$, $p < 0.01$), and a moderate negative relationship between corruption and governance quality ($r = -0.543$, $p < 0.01$).

4.4 Regression Analysis

Table 5: Multiple Regression Results

Model	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	T	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	2.847	0.324		8.787	0.000		
Corruption	-0.471	0.089	-0.412	-5.292	0.000	0.705	1.418
Governance Quality	0.463	0.094	0.386	4.926	0.000	0.705	1.418

Dependent Variable: National Security Outcomes

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	Sig.

1	0.740	0.547	0.542	84.62	0.000

4.5 Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One

H_{01}: Corruption has no significant effect on national security outcomes.

Results show corruption has a significant negative coefficient ($\beta = -0.412$, $t = -5.292$, $p < 0.001$). The null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that for every one-unit increase in corruption, national security outcomes decrease by 0.412 units, holding governance quality constant.

Interpretation: Diversion of security resources and weakened institutional integrity reduce the effectiveness of security operations. This finding validates concerns expressed by CISLAC (2024) that corruption in security funding hampers Nigeria's security efforts, and supports the EFCC Chairman's assertion that stolen security funds are diverted rather than invested in security architecture EFCC, (2025).

Hypothesis Two

H_{02}: Governance quality has no significant effect on national security outcomes.

Results show governance quality has a significant positive coefficient ($\beta = 0.386$, $t = 4.926$, $p < 0.001$). The null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that for every one-unit improvement in governance quality, national security outcomes increase by 0.386 units, holding corruption constant.

Interpretation: States with better accountability, coordination, and service delivery experience improved security performance. This finding aligns with security sector reform literature emphasizing that

political context and institutional characteristics are critical for effective security outcomes Olonisakin & Oke, (2023); Chanaa, (2002).

Hypothesis Three

H_{03}: Corruption and governance quality jointly have no significant effect on national security outcomes.

The joint model is statistically significant ($F = 84.62$, $p < 0.001$), with corruption and governance quality explaining 54.7% of the variation in security outcomes ($R^2 = 0.547$). The null hypothesis is rejected.

Implication: Security challenges in Benue cannot be fully understood without considering governance variables. The combined effect of corruption and governance quality accounts for more than half of the variance in security outcomes, underscoring the centrality of institutional factors.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

The findings strongly support Institutional Theory's proposition that weak institutional integrity undermines state performance North, 1990; Acemoglu & Robinson, (2019). In the Benue context, corruption and weak governance have created conditions conducive to persistent insecurity. The results also validate the Human Security perspective that governance failures translate into real human insecurity UNDP, (2022). The displacement of over 300,000 persons in Benue SB Morgen Intelligence, (2025), the destruction of agricultural livelihoods, and the daily fear of attacks represent the human cost of institutional deficiencies.

The significant negative relationship between corruption and security outcomes is consistent with global evidence Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, (2016); Transparency International, (2023). In Nigeria, the $2.1 billion arms scam exemplified how resources meant for security procurement were diverted EFCC, (2025). The positive relationship between governance

quality and security outcomes reinforces the importance of transparency, accountability, and institutional effectiveness Kaufmann et al., (2021); World Bank, (2023). The GGRI's (2025) assessment that Benue suffers from weak leadership and poor transparency is empirically supported by this study's findings.

The Benue case demonstrates that kinetic security responses alone are insufficient without governance reforms. Despite the enactment of the Open Grazing Prohibition Law in 2017 and various federal interventions, insecurity has persisted because underlying governance deficits remain unaddressed James, (2025); Akor, (2024). Persistent farmer–herder conflicts and rural violence are partly symptoms of deeper institutional weaknesses requiring comprehensive governance reforms.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study establishes that corruption and governance quality are critical determinants of national security outcomes in Benue State between 2015 and 2025. Corruption significantly undermines security effectiveness through resource diversion, compromised intelligence, and weakened institutional integrity. Governance quality, manifested in transparency, accountability, effective service delivery, and inter-agency coordination, significantly improves security outcomes by enabling coherent policy implementation and building citizen trust. The joint model demonstrates that corruption and governance quality together explain 54.7% of the variation in security outcomes, confirming that security challenges cannot be adequately understood without reference to governance variables.

5.2 Recommendations

Strengthen Transparency in Security Funding: The Benue State Government

should publish quarterly reports on security expenditures, detailing allocations, disbursements, and outcomes. This addresses CISLAC's (2024) call for stronger civilian oversight across the defense and security governance system.

Enhance Anti-Corruption Enforcement: State-level anti-corruption agencies should be strengthened and granted operational autonomy to investigate and prosecute corruption cases within MDAs and security agencies EFCC, (2025).

Improve Inter-Agency Coordination: An integrated security governance platform should be established to coordinate activities of all security agencies operating in Benue State, addressing coordination deficits identified in this study Olonisakin & Oke, (2023).

Institutionalize Performance Audits: The Benue State Auditor-General should conduct annual performance audits of security-related expenditures, assessing financial compliance and outcome effectiveness.

Promote Community Participation: Community security committees should be established at local government and ward levels, involving traditional rulers, youth leaders, women's groups, and civil society organizations in security governance UNDP, (2022).

Address Structural Disconnect: Given that state governors are designated as chief security officers but do not control security apparatus James, (2025), there is need for constitutional reform to clarify sub-national security governance.

Implement IDP Resettlement Programme: The over 300,000 displaced persons require a well-funded, transparent resettlement programme addressing shelter, education, livelihoods, and psychological healing SB Morgen Intelligence, (2025).

References

Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2019). The narrow corridor: States, societies, and the fate of liberty. Penguin Press.

Adebayo, A. A., & Nwankwo, C. (2024). Systemic corruption and governance failure in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. African Journal of Political Science, 12(2), 45–67.

Adegbulu, F. (2023). Farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria: Beyond resource competition. Journal of Contemporary African Studies, 41(3), 312–329.

Akor, G. (2024). Benue State at 48: The paradox of the food basket. The Guardian Nigeria. https://guardian.ng/opinion/benue-state-at-48-the-paradox-of-the-food-basket/

Aning, K., & Aubyn, F. (2023). Governance deficits and security sector reform in West Africa. African Security Review, 32(1), 18–35.

Benue State Government. (2024). Benue State statistical digest 2024. Government Printer.

Chanaa, J. (2002). Security sector reform: Issues, challenges and prospects (Adelphi Paper No. 344). Oxford University Press.

Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre. (2024). Security sector governance in Nigeria: Challenges and opportunities. CISLAC Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission. (2025). Annual report 2024: Tracking corruption in Nigeria. EFCC.

Eze, T. C., & Ibrahim, M. (2025). Sub-national governance and security outcomes in Nigeria's Middle Belt. Journal of African Governance, 8(1), 78–96.

Good Governance Rating Index. (2025). Nigeria state governance performance report 2024. GGRI UK.

Ikelegbe, A. (2023). The political economy of farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria. African Affairs, 122(487), 234–258.

James, S. (2025, April 27). Benue at the crossroads: Faith, politics, and the crisis of insecurity in Nigeria's middle belt. TheCable. https://www.thecable.ng/benue-at-the-crossroads/

Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., & Mastruzzi, M. (2021). The worldwide governance indicators: Methodology and analytical issues. World Bank.

Madueke, K. L. (2024). Territoriality and violence: Farmer-herder conflicts in Benue State. Journal of Modern African Studies, 62(2), 189–211.

Mkandawire, T. (2022). Governance, development, and security in Africa. Development and Change, 53(4), 723–748.

North, D. C. (1990). Institutions, institutional change and economic performance. Cambridge University Press.

Obikeze, O. S. A., Abba, U. E., & Ojiako, C. I. (2024). Political corruption and sustainability of democracy in Nigeria. *International Journal of Public Administration and Development Studies, 1*(2), 1–23. https://ijpads.com/index.php/ijpads/article/view/14?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Ogbeidi, M. M. (2024). Political corruption and underdevelopment in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Journal of African Political Economy, 29(1), 56–78.

Ogunleye, F., Adewale, S., & Okeke, C. (2023). Democratic consolidation and security challenges in Nigeria, 1999–2023. African Journal of Democracy, 15(3), 112–134.

Olonisakin, F., & Oke, Y. (2023). Security sector reform in Nigeria: Progress, pitfalls, and prospects. Conflict, Security & Development, 23(4), 345–368.

Oluwaniyi, O. O. (2022). Corruption and insecurity in Nigeria: A governance perspective. Journal of Asian and African Studies, 57(5), 987–1005.

Ratthachatranond, W. (2018). Determining an appropriate sample size for social science research. SSRN Electronic Journal. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3222775

Rose-Ackerman, S., & Palifka, B. J. (2016). Corruption and government: Causes, consequences, and reform (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

SB Morgen Intelligence. (2025). Terror in the food basket: A look into the violence in North-Central Nigeria. SBM Intel.

Taber, K. S. (2018). The use of Cronbach's alpha when developing and reporting research instruments in science

education. Research in Science Education, 48(6), 1273–1296.

Transparency International. (2023). Corruption perceptions index 2023. Transparency International.

Tsegyu, S., & Ogoshi, J. O. (2024). Communication strategies and governance outcomes in Benue State, Nigeria. African Journal of Public Affairs, 14(2), 98–118.

United Nations Development Programme. (1994). Human development report 1994: New dimensions of human security. Oxford University Press.

United Nations Development Programme. (2022). Human security approach and sustainable development. UNDP.

World Bank. (2023). World development report 2023: Governance for development. World Bank.

Yamane, T. (1967). Statistics: An introductory analysis (2nd ed.). Harper & Row.