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COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**



**ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRITY AND CORRUPTION DECISION-
MAKING
IN THE GHANAIAN PUBLIC SERVICE**

BY

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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,
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DECLARATION

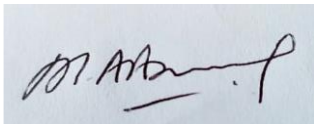
I hereby declare that except for references to other peoples' works which have been duly acknowledged, this research was conducted by me in the Department of Psychology, University of Ghana, Legon, under the supervision of Dr. Maxwell Asumeng, Prof. Charity S. Akotia, and Dr. Kwaku Oppong Asante. I also certify that this thesis is an original piece of research written by me and has never been submitted in whole or part for the award of any Degree in any other University.



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to Mr. George De Souza.
Thank you for believing in me and for your unwavering emotional and financial support.

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This Ph.D. journey has not been easy. It was fraught with challenges, disappointments but also moments of joy. I would not have been able to complete it successfully without support from supervisors, friends, and research participants.

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ABSTRACT

Global effort to fight corruption has become more intense because it is considered one of the most complex societal problems. Corruption in Ghana's public service poses a significant risk to service delivery and national development. The upsurge and deeply rooted nature of corruption in the public service have been attributed to the breakdown of organizational integrity in these institutions. Corruption research in the public service is subsumed mainly under rationalistic assumptions and approached from the premise that corruption is a self-serving behavior of public service workers, therefore organizational integrity management is overly focused on enforcing formal norms. This study argued that the decision to engage in or refute corrupt activities is not solely premised on self-serving rationalistic behavior, but also guided by a multiplicity of complex informal organizational norms. Unfortunately, attention is rarely paid to the role of informal organizational norms in public servants' corruption decision-making. Using qualitative vignettes, this study was designed to explore how public service workers (PSWs) experience and navigate context-specific formal and informal organizational norms in corruption decision making. Three focus group discussions with 22 public service Directors and semi-structured individual interviews with 26 public service Administrative and Technical staff were conducted. Additionally, 8 individual interviews with anti-corruption activists and retired public service workers were integrated with a document review of grey literature to corroborate findings. Formal and informal organizational norms that influenced organizational integrity and PSWs decision-making included rigid bureaucracy, opportunistic staffing, political praise-singing, apathy towards work, and reciprocal appreciation. Informal organizational norms equally influenced PSWs corruption-decision-making as did the formal norms. However, in the vignette scenarios where the perception of the severity of formal sanctions was under-rated, informal organizational norms displaced formal organizational norms, clouded the organizational interest, putting to the fore the interest of the individual and the corrupt partner. An additional noteworthy finding was that context-specific risk preferences were employed by PSWs as heuristics to navigate corruption in the public service. The findings imply that ensuring compliance with formal organizational norms and regulations is

necessary but insufficient to effectively prevent corruption in the Ghanaian public service. To effectively manage organizational integrity to mitigate corruption, there is a need for administrative and structural changes, as well as organizational and social unlearning of dysfunctional formal and informal organizational norms.

Keywords: Ghana, organizational integrity, public service integrity, corruption decision-making, corruption norms.

Table of Content

DECLARATION	II
DEDICATION	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	IV
LIST OF FIGURES	XI
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Background.....	1
1.1 The Research Problem.....	4
1.2 Research Questions.....	7
1.3 Aims and Objectives.....	7
1.4 Significance of the Study.....	8
1.5 Scope of the Research.....	9
1.6 Outline of the Thesis.....	9
CHAPTER 2.....	12
LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.0 Theoretical Perspectives	12
2.0.1 Rational Choice Theory.....	13
2.0.2 Non-Rational Decision Making.....	15
2.0.3 Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT)	17
2.0.4 Summary of Theoretical Perspectives	20
2.1 Review of Related Studies.....	21
2.1.1 Defining Corruption	21
2.1.2 Organizational Enablers of Corruption.....	25
2.1.3 Socio-Cultural Enablers of Corruption.....	26
2.1.4 Corruption in the Ghanaian Public service.....	30
2.1.5 The Organizational Integrity Framework: Formal and Informal Norms.....	37
2.1.5.1 Formal Organizational Norms	39
2.1.5.2 Informal Organizational Norms.....	45
2.2 Summary of Literature Reviewed.....	47
2.3 Definition of Key Terms	49

CHAPTER THREE	51
METHODOLOGY	51
3.0 Introduction	51
3.1 Philosophical Foundation of the Study.....	51
3.2 Qualitative Case Study Design	52
3.3 The Study Context	54
3.4 Pilot study	55
3.5 Selection of Participants	56
3.6 Data Collection Methods	58
3.7 Data Collection Procedure.....	61
3.7.1 Semi-Structured Individual Interviews.....	61
3.7.2 Group interviews	62
3.7.3 Document Review	63
3.8 Data Analysis.....	64
3.9 Trustworthiness of the Study	68
3.9.1 Credibility.....	68
3.9.2 Transferability.....	69
3.9.3 Dependability.....	69
3.10 Ethical Considerations.....	70
3.11 Author’s reflection.....	71
CHAPTER FOUR	73
FINDINGS	73
4.0 Introduction	73
4.1 Biographical Information of Participants	73
4.2 PSWs Constructions of Organizational Integrity	74
4.2.1 PSWs Meaning of Organizational Integrity	75
4.2.1.1 Adherence to codes.....	76
4.2.1.2 Application of work values.....	76
4.2.2 Formal Norms in the Ghanaian Public Service	78
4.2.2.2 Under-resourced offices.....	79
4.2.2.3 Organizational injustice	80
4.2.2.4 Opportunistic staffing	83
4.2.2.5 Lack of Content knowledge of Codes	85
4.2.2.6 Implementation of Codes	86

4.2.3 Informal Norms in the Ghanaian Public Service.....	87
4.2.3.1 Political praise-singing	87
4.2.3.2 Order from above.....	88
4.2.3.3 Apathy towards work.....	89
4.2.3.4 Reciprocal appreciation	90
4.2.3.5 Reciprocal trust.....	91
4.2.3.6 Informal sanctions	92
4.2.4 Corrupt Acts.....	94
4.2.4.1 Fraud.....	94
4.2.4.2 Favoritism/Nepotism	95
4.2.4.3 Extortion/bribery	96
4.2.4.4 Sextortion	98
4.3 Organizational Integrity and PSWs Corruption Decision-Making.....	99
4.3.1 Vignette 1.....	101
4.3.2 Vignette 2.....	106
4.3.3 Vignette 3.....	110
4.4 Additional Findings	111
CHAPTER FIVE	114
DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	114
5.0 Introduction	114
5.1 PSWs Constructions of Organizational Integrity	114
5.2 Organizational Integrity and PSWs Corruption Decision-Making.....	124
5.3 Theoretical Discussion	128
CHAPTER 6.....	132
SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS	132
6.0 Introduction	132
6.1 Brief overview of the Study.....	132
6.2 Implications for Industrial/Organizational Psychology.....	134
6.3 Contribution to Academic Knowledge	135
6.4 Practical Implications for the Ghanaian Public Service	136
6.5 Implications for Anti-Corruption Stakeholders	138
6.6 Limitations of the Study	140
6.7 Recommendations for Future Research.....	140
6.8 Conclusion.....	141

REFERENCES	144
APPENDICES.....	154
Appendix A: PSWs Interview Guide.....	154
Appendix B: Experts' Interview Guide	157
Appendix E: Informed Consent Form	158
Appendix D: Ethical Clearance Certificate	161

List of Figures

Figure 1:	Diagrammatic Representation of the Behavioral Reasoning Theory.....	19
Figure 2:	Conceptual Framework	49
Figure 3:	Diagrammatic Representation of the process of Thematic Analysis	64
Figure 4:	Summary of Superordinate Themes, Main Themes and Sub Themes of PSWs Constructions of Organizational Integrity	75
Figure 5:	Summary of Themes and Subthemes of Organizational Norms Influencing PSWs Corruption Decision-Making in the Vignettes	100
Figure 6:	Summary of Subthemes of PSWs Risk Preferences Influencing Decision-Making.....	111
Figure 7	Modified Conceptual Framework from the Study	130

List of Tables

Table 1:	Details of Public Service Financial Irregularities (2016)	34
Table 2:	Summary of Data Collection Methods and Target Participants	59
Table 3:	Summary of Documents Reviewed	63

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background to the study and outlines the key problem under investigation. It further states the objectives of the study and finally argues out the theoretical, methodological, and practical significance of the study.

1.0 Background

This study focuses on the role of organizational integrity in corruption decision making in the Ghanaian public service. The main thrust of public service administration is to ensure integrity in service delivery by mitigating mal-administrative behaviors like corruption (Huberts, 2018). Corruption is pervasive in the Ghanaian public service, hampering access to efficient and effective service delivery (Kumasey & Hossain, 2020).

Corruption is an age-old phenomenon that stems from the Latin Verb *corrumpere* (to destroy; spoil), given the indication that destruction takes place wherever corruption is endemic. Corruption has been defined as the misuse or abuse of entrusted power for private gain (Transparency International, 2014). A distinction is made between systemic, personalized, grand, and petty corruption. Systemic corruption involves endemic acts of corruption that are mutually accepted in both formal and informal interactions. Personalized corruption relates to rare incidences of corrupt acts seen as few deviations from the norms of integrity in a context, while grand corruption is identified as collusion at the highest layers of government involving major public service projects and procurement among public and private elites. Petty corruption, also known as bureaucratic corruption is defined as small scale administrative transactions that breach existing rules, transpires within the bureaucratic environment, and usually involves the abuse of power by bureaucrats (Pertiwi, 2018).

The existence of figurative language and euphemisms for corruption in various contexts be it “*something small*” in Swahili, “*money for tea*” in Iran, or “*advise yourself*” and “*something for the boys*” in Ghana, indicates that persons who engage in corruption are aware of the illegal implications and yet use these euphemisms to cover up, belittle, and make corrupt acts socially desirable (Ree, 2015).

In Ghana, the inundation of media reports on public service corruption scandals is fundamentally an indication of the breakdown of public service integrity (Aryee, 2018; Asiedu & Deffor, 2017). Strengthening of Ghana’s public service integrity has thus been touted as the panacea for preventing and mitigating corruption. Organizational integrity is defined as organizational conduct compliant with values, norms, and rules accepted by organizational stakeholders in service delivery (Erakovich & Kolthoff, 2016). An organization’s integrity is founded on its core values and expressed through formal codes of conduct. Codes of conduct serve as self-policing documents, and are put in place with the assumption that when the cost of violation is higher than the benefit to be derived, a deterrence effect is created (Michael, 2012; Montfort, 2018; Transparency International, 2014).

Despite the consensus on the important role of organizational integrity in corruption prevention, to date what should be considered the most appropriate and effective elements of an integrity framework remain contested in academic literature. Two major schools of thought have emerged. On the one hand is the request for strict emphasis to be placed on compliance with formal codes of conduct while monitoring and punishing violations (Faruq & Webb, 2013). The other school of thought argues for the adoption and integration of informal codes that reflect the realities of informal organizational behavior in specific contexts (Bawole & Musah-Surugu 2016; Haruna, 2008; Ward & Nkyabonaki, 2019).

Research has shown that in making corruption decisions, the pressure to satisfy social and organizational networks renders corruption decision-making a complex psychological and socio-organizational dilemma (Araral et al., 2019; de Graaf et al., 2018; Köbis et al., 2016; Nyendu, 2017). Corrupt actors are thus faced with the dilemma of how to juggle personal, organizational, and social factors. This complexity of organizational corruption decision making was captured in a statement by Blundo and Saldana (2006, p.149), that in the organizational context, decision-makers sometimes find themselves “*between the hammer and the anvil*”, where the application of formal organizational norms such as codes of conduct and procedural regulations may not be easily feasible as expected.

Corruption decision-making in the organizational context is a cognitive processing of the implications of both formal and informal organizational norms (Baez-camargo et al., 2020). Relying largely on compliance to formal codes of conduct in integrity management is an indication that a rational approach to corruption decision-making is assumed. An overemphasis on rationality assumptions in corruption decision-making blurs scientific understanding of possible roles of informal organizational influences on the decision-making process (Agbota et al., 2017; Tankebe, Boakye, et al., 2019). This may explain why despite the introduction of codes of conduct and other organizational regulations to deter corruption in the respective Ghanaian public services, strides made thus far can best be described as modest. Efforts have been constrained by the overemphasis on formal norms (codes of conduct and regulations), to the neglect of investigating the influence of informal organizational norms in corruption decision-making.

The first empirical task of the present study was therefore to engage with public service workers (PSWs) to explore their understanding of organizational integrity, including acts they consider

as integrity violations, and the formal and informal organizational norms that influence integrity management in the public service. Secondly, to understand how PSWs experience and navigate the formal and informal organizational norms in corruption decision-making. The study further sought to corroborate findings with a document review of grey literature and experiences of experts (civil society organizations, investigative journalists, and retired PSWs) on public service integrity management and anti-corruption efforts.

1.1 The Research Problem

Ghanaians generally perceive the public service and public officials as very corrupt and inept in playing their critical roles in the economic growth and development of the country (Gumah & Aziabah, 2020). Several studies (e.g., Agbota et al., 2017; Asamoah & Ofosu-Mensah, 2018; Asiedu & Deffor, 2017; Haruna, 2008; Yeboah-Assiamah & Alesu-Dordzi, 2016) have confirmed the upsurge and deeply rooted nature of public service corruption and attributed it largely to the breakdown of public service integrity in Ghana. The Auditors General Report buttresses these observations of corruption in the Ghanaian public service. Total cash irregularities reported in the annual report of the Auditor General on the public accounts of Ghana, Ministries, Departments, and other Agencies (MDAs) in the year 2016 amounted to GHC2,053,622,215.68, representing 95% of the total irregularities reported for that year (Auditor-Generals' Report, 2016). Various public service reforms and anti-corruption interventions have been employed to mitigate public service corruption, with a recent focus on managing public service integrity with codes of conduct and regulations (Ohemeng & Kamga, 2020).

The continuous upsurge of corruption in this sector despite the various anti-corruption interventions and public service reforms indicates that there is a need to have an in-depth context-specific understanding of factors sustaining corruption in the Ghanaian public service. To make sense of the increasing upsurge of public service corruption despite the intensified anti-corruption interventions and public administration reforms, research on public service corruption has taken two directions. Firstly, most studies on public service corruption in Ghana (e.g., Agbodohu, 2014; Asiedu & Deffor, 2017; Dartey-Baah, 2016; Foltz & Opoku-Agyemang, 2015) have been approached generally from the rational economic perspective following the reasoning that corruption is a purposive, self-interested and utility maximization behavior typical of bureaucrats. Thus generally, employing quantitative surveys, these studies mainly conclude that by strictly sanctioning violations of formal organizational norms (code of conduct and public service regulations) public service integrity can be improved to deter corrupt behavior.

Secondly, other studies (eg. Haruna, 2008; Kojo Sakyi & Bawole, 2009; Kumasey et al., 2017; Kumasey & Hossain, 2020; Sakyi & Bawole, 2010) have attempted to provide deeper insights into public service corruption by employing a qualitative approach. Albeit, the focus has been on investigating the role of general Ghanaian societal norms as constraints on PSWs adherence to formal organizational norms, to the neglect of investigating and delineating context-specific informal organizational norms influencing corruption in the public service.

It was averred that in corruption decision-making, PSWs are not solely driven by a common desire to amass wealth or enrich themselves. Corrupt organizational behavior is equally influenced by limitations imposed by formal and informal organizational norms, societal norms, and kinship relations with associated rewards and sanctions (Abbink et al., 2018; Baez-

Camargo et al., 2017; Köbis et al., 2018; Nottingham & User, 2016). This may imply that many PSWs who engage in corrupt acts may not be doing so willingly or consciously. The complex socio-organizational nuances associated with corrupt behavior underscore the need for more behavioral research in an attempt to mitigate this phenomenon.

Unfortunately, psychological research on corrupt behavior in Ghana is lacking. A cursory search on the Web of Science portal retrieved 125 articles on corruption in Ghana, in the period (2000) to (2019) published in Environmental, Development, Criminology, Management, and Political Science studies. Scholarship in the field of psychology is needed in the academic reflection on corruption in the Ghana public service, to offer contextualized behavioral perspectives on the role of both formal and informal organizational norms in PSWs corruption decision-making.

The present study argued that an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of corruption among public servants cannot be achieved by the use of quantitative techniques as they largely create awareness of the extent of corruption but are imperfect to capture the experiences of corruption decision-makers and restrictive in explaining the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of corrupt behavior (Bowman & Bowman, 2018; Mungiu-Pippidi & Dadašov, 2016). It is against these backdrops and the clarion call by other researchers (Osafo, 2017; Opong 2019) for theoretical frameworks that adequately provide an understanding of psycho-social phenomena from the Ghanaian point of view, that the present study diversified from the normal search for associations between corruption and its antecedents. As buttressed by Dzokoto (2020) “there is specificity in African experiences that is not best defined as falling short of a Western one – or lumped together with all non -Western experiences” (Dzokoto, 2020., p3). A qualitative case study design was consequently deemed most appropriate to tap this “specificity” in PSWs

experiences of organizational integrity and corruption decision-making.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the statement of the problem the following research questions were posed:

1. How do PSWs understand organizational integrity?
2. What formal organizational norms influence public service integrity?
3. What informal organizational norms influence public service integrity?
4. What behaviors constitute corruption in public service?
5. How do PSWs navigate the formal organizational norms in corruption decision making?
6. How do PSWs navigate the informal organizational norms in corruption decision making?

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The general aim of the study was to investigate the role of organizational integrity in PSWs corruption decision-making with the following guiding objectives:

1. To explore PSWs understanding of organizational integrity.
2. To find out what formal organizational norms influence public service integrity.
3. To find out what informal organizational norms influence public service integrity.
4. To find out what behaviors PSWs classify as corruption.
5. To explore how PSWs experience and navigate the formal organizational norms in corruption decision-making.
6. To explore how PSWs experience and navigate the informal organizational norms in corruption decision-making.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study was undertaken to understand PSWs corruption decision-making in order to contribute to anti-corruption efforts and public service integrity management in Ghana. Overly focusing on formal organizational norms has left unanswered questions on the role of informal organizational norms in PSWs' corruption decision-making.

At the methodological level, by adopting a qualitative approach, the study gives a deeper understanding of why PSWs process corruption decisions as they do, as opposed to how they are ideally expected to decide guided by formal organizational norms. Additionally, research on corruption has largely favored quantitative designs. This study thus contributes to and illuminates the qualitative process with the use of vignettes. The triangulation of methods and sources in gathering the data afforded a richer contextual account of organizational integrity and corruption decision-making than otherwise offered by surveys and experimental studies.

Theoretically, the study contributes to knowledge in the field of organizational psychology and behavioral public administration by adding psychological perspectives to the debate on public service integrity management and anti-corruption efforts. The study positions public sector corruption as a socio-organizational dilemma and addresses organizational norm violation in corruption decision-making. It further stresses on the role of human cooperation and behavioral change in anti-corruption interventions.

Practically, the study lays bare the complexities of PSWs corruption decision-making, by arguing that corrupt actors are not just economic beings but also moral and social beings who are influenced by their environment. Therefore, corruption decision-making is the processing of material gain, social pressure, and personal reasons. The findings provide public service

management and civil society organizations relevant insights into contemporary public service norms fueling corruption. This may enable a re-evaluation of anti-corruption strategies and possibly a redesigning of these strategies.

1.5 Scope of the Research

The study examined organizational integrity and corruption decision making in the Ghana Public Service to find out how PSWs understand organizational integrity, challenges to integrity management, and how they process these perceptions to make decisions when confronted with corrupt situations. The study was limited to the public services in the Greater Accra Region which serves as the seat of government where all public services have their headquarters. Organizational integrity was conceptualized as an alignment of PSWs' behavior to public service formal organizational norms (codes of conduct and regulations) and informal organizational norms. Corruption decision-making was linked to the behavioral reasoning theory, the rational and bounded rationality perspectives to understand factors underpinning PSWs information processing of corrupt situations.

1.6 Outline of the Thesis

The entire thesis is organized into six chapters. **The first chapter** introduced the concept of corruption and organizational integrity, and situated corruption decision-making as a socio-organizational dilemma that is not easily feasible with just the application of formal rules and regulations. The research problem, objectives, research questions were thereafter introduced.

Chapter two focuses on a review of relevant theoretical models to explain the corruption decision-making process, and empirical literature relating to the current study. Firstly, the rational decision-making theory is discussed and limitations that undermine the theory's applicability to corruption decision-making in the Ghanaian context are outlined. Secondly, assumptions of the bounded rationality theory are presented and incorporated to address the limitations of rationality in explaining corruption decision-making. A case is then made for the integration of the behavioral reasoning theory to provide a holistic understanding of corruption decision-making. The socio-cultural and organizational underpinnings of corruption and organizational integrity in the public service are discussed, and literature on the role of organizational integrity in corruption decision-making is reviewed.

The methodology of the study is discussed in **Chapter three**. A multi-method qualitative case study design was adopted to explore the research phenomenon of corruption decision-making. The adopted research design, sampling, data collection, and analysis procedures are described and justified. Data was gathered from PSWs through individual and group interviews. Document reviews and expert interviews were also conducted to corroborate interview data. Procedures followed to establish the credibility and rigor of the research findings are clearly outlined in this chapter.

In **Chapter four**, the findings of the study are presented. Themes generated from data analysis are presented with supporting quotes to bring out the voice of PSWs on the phenomenon under study. The main findings of the study indicated that PSWs employ both formal and informal organizational norms in their decision to either accept or refute a corrupt act.

Chapter five discusses the key findings and links emergent themes to the preceding empirical and theoretical literature discussed in Chapter two. In **Chapter six**, a summary of the thesis is provided, the methodological, psychological, and practical implications of the findings are presented. Followed in conclusion, by a discussion of the limitations and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter introduces concepts and definitions that are essential to understanding organizational integrity and corruption decision-making. It discusses formal codes of conduct and informal organizational norms as components of an organizational integrity framework. It elaborates on the assumptions of the rational decision theory, concerning how potential costs of non-adherence to organizational integrity and expected benefits are weighed in processing corrupt decisions (Bowman & Bowman, 2018; Schwartz, 2016). It further introduces key assumptions of bounded rationality and heuristics as critiques of rationality and expatiates on the role of these concepts in corruption decision-making (Simon, 1959). The study integrated the behavioral reasoning theory to explain the influence of global motives (attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control) and personal reasons in decision-making (Westaby, 2005). A document review of working papers, reports, policy papers was integrated to understand the state of corruption and integrity management in public services. The literature search was based on the terms, organizational integrity, public service integrity, public service ethics, corruption decision-making with permutations of the words Ghana and Africa.

2.0 Theoretical Perspectives

In this section, the rational choice theory, the bounded rationality, and the behavioral reasoning theories are drawn on to explain the corruption decision-making process. The discussion starts with a review of the rational choice theory and explains the basic tenants. It defends the inclusion of the bounded rationality theory by elaborating on the limitations of the rational choice theory in explaining the decision-making process. The behavioral reasoning theory is

reviewed to highlight the central role of subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and context-specific reasons in providing a more holistic understanding of corruption decision-making.

2.0.1 Rational Choice Theory

Tremblay, Martineau, & Pauchant (2017) describe corruption as a rational human behavior with the ultimate goal of maximizing utility by choosing among several right and wrong alternatives or choosing between inaction and action.

The primary assumption of the rational choice theory is that decision-making is a multi-step process in which decision-makers accurately consider all alternatives, make conscious efforts in evaluating cost-benefits before selecting the best satisficing alternative. For example, in the deciding between two alternatives, “X” and, “Y,” evaluating the cost-benefit of the two alternatives, “Y” would be the ultimate choice if the expected benefit of “Y” is greater than “X”. Secondly, it is argued that the availability of perfect information and structure not only enables the satisfactory choice between alternatives in any decision making but also affords the decision-maker the chance to consider consequences upfront. It further posited that decision-makers possess ample time, cognitive ability and resources to identify a problem to carefully analyze each alternative before making the right choice (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier, 2011; Svesson, 2015).

Rational choice assumptions have formed the basis of ethical decision-making frameworks propounded by ethical theorists to explain deviant behavior in organizations. For example, the multistage contingency framework of Ferrell and Gresham (1985), traced the source of

unethical organizational behaviors to a set of interrelated factors and processes. They explained that variations in an ethical decision-making process are contingent on the awareness of the ethical issue intensity, the processing of individual (knowledge, attitudes, values, and intentions) and organizational factors (codes, sanctions, organizational relationships, culture, and opportunity). The ability of the decision-maker to recognize the intensity of the ethical issue at stake will enable the decision-maker to place value on ethical decision outcomes.

Also arguing from a rational choice perspective, Rest (1979) described ethical decision-making in organizations as basically a four-stage cognitive process that includes recognition, judgment, intention, and behavior. This starts with the individual's awareness of an ethical issue and individual ethical sensitivity as necessary preconditions. The second stage is to apply moral judgment to make an ethical decision and thirdly to be determined and motivated to act upon the decision. The final stage is to exhibit behavior appropriate to the ethical choice made.

When relating rational choice theory to corruption decision-making, it would be assumed that PSWs can recognize and weigh both formal and informal organizational norms to choose the appropriate behavior after logically weighing all expected gains against the expected sanctions. As observed by Nottingham & User (2016), the dominance of rational analyses of corrupt decisions has resulted in organizational anti-corruption recommendations that do not mirror the realities of integrity-based decision-making. There is a plethora of studies (e.g. Juraev, 2018; Klitgaard, 2015; Linstead & Griffin, 2014; Persson et al., 2013; Torsello et al., 2015) that perceive corruption from an economic man perspective and thus subscribed to rationality assumptions of corrupt acts. This cost-benefit, step by step approach to corruption decision making could form the sole basis for drafting organizational integrity interventions, assuming decision-makers are normally faced with clearly defined decisions and have complete

information on the pay-offs and sanctions to carefully consider all alternatives. Neuroscientific studies (e.g., Prehen & Heekeren, 2014, Bowman, 2018) reported that beliefs and intuition were more significant in information processing than rationality. Decision making is further bounded within decision environments, and prone to individual emotions, uncertainties, and bias.

It has also been argued that individuals do not live in a vacuum, they operate within a system of complex reciprocal interactions of personal, organizational, and social factors that cannot be predetermined. When faced with ethical dilemmas, behavioral judgment rests on opportunities and sanctions that restrict or give leeway for behaviors to be performed (Agbota et al., 2017; Köbis et al., 2018). As summed up by Carson (2014), “this reduction of human decision-making processes to autonomous calculations of probabilities and outcome appraisals fail to explain why individuals make choices that do not maximize their total expected utility and thus appear irrational” (p.19). A more realistic picture of decision making was therefore proposed by behavioral theorists by extending the decision-making space of rationality approaches to include the social-cultural context of decision-making (Rees et al., 2019; Westaby et al., 2010).

2.0.2 Non-Rational Decision Making

Edwards (1961) and Simon (1959), countered rational choice assumptions and integrated psychological tenets by introducing the concept of bounded rationality. Simon argued that not taking cognizance of intuition and emotions that can reshape and blur decision outcomes makes rational assumptions unrealistic and restricts understanding of the decision-making process. People do not evaluate all alternatives upfront; they sequentially evaluate alternatives and make a decision when the first “satisficing” alternative is found. Tversky & Kahneman (1974) also

elaborated on contextual and individual variances in decision-making and further explained why decisionmakers deviate from rationalistic assumptions. They argued that people are limited by incomplete and inaccurate knowledge in decision-making and thus unable to make the best optimal choice between alternatives. It was further asserted that complex decisions in real-life situations are often time-bound, resulting in the possibility of making irrational decisions and deviating from prescribed decision behaviors. Since consequences of decisions cannot be evaluated upfront, rather than seeking to maximize utility, decision-makers make use of *heuristics*.

Heuristics are mental short cuts that reduce the cognitive burden associated with decision making” (Dietrich, 2010, p.14). Mousavi & Gigerenzer (2014, p.1673) view heuristics as necessary tools for decision making in uncertain and complex situations, “*a strategy that effectively matches the structure of information in the environment*” allowing for ease and speed in choosing the best alternatives. Examples of heuristics include ignoring relevant information, maintaining the status quo, or underestimating future consequences to simplify decision-making. They further emphasized that heuristics are subject to ecological rationality, which may explain why though people decry corruption, yet many find themselves unwittingly rationalizing their corrupt acts, belittling its immediate effects, or denying consequences altogether.

A decision-making process is also prone to *bounded ethicality*, ultimately producing *ethical fading* resulting in a deviation from intended ethical preferences. Ethical fading is a psychological process in which ethical implications of an issue are altered by situational factors (social, cultural, economic, and organizational) that make it seem less unethical, rendering the act and its consequences less relevant to the decision-maker (Rees, Tenbrunsel, & Bazerman,

2019). For example, in highly corrupt organizations formal codes of conduct are less likely to be tapped on in decision-making as corrupt actors may discount the probability of sanctions. Actors may instead use filters and simplifying mechanisms to arrive at ultimate decisions in corruption (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier, 2011; Ruedy, 2013).

As explained in the preceding discussion, both rational and bounded rationality approaches to decision-making have pros and cons. Studies employing the latter tend to ignore the role of factors such as individual intuitions and feelings interacting with the context, while studies using the former (eg. Carson, 2014; Moore et al. 2018) integrate these factors in decision making, resulting in a process prone to biases with relatively irrational outcomes. Thus a dual-process theory of decision-making, integrating both rational and bounded rationality viewpoints was recommended (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier, 2011; Schwartz, 2014).

2.0.3 Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT)

Classical behavioral theories such as the theory of planned behavior (TPB) stress the influence of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in predicting behavioral intentions and ultimately behavior (Ajzen, 2011; Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Attitude towards a behavior is explained as the degree of positive or negative evaluation of salient beliefs towards the said behavior (Ajzen, 2011). The TPB theory further explains that subjective norms (the individual's evaluation of the expectation of friends and family) impact the acceptance or refusal to engage in a behavior. Where the individual feels the need to succumb to the societal pressure, then the behavior will be performed. Finally, perceived behavioral control is related to the individual's evaluation of their own ability to engage in the behavior, and confidence in their ability will influence their final decision.

However, as argued by Westaby et al., (2010), earlier behavioral theories such as the TPB have overly focused on these predictive factors, and failed to also elaborate on the role of reasons in the decision making processes. A more holistic understanding of decision-making processes requires that context-specific reasons for or against a choice are made explicit. The Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT) was thus propounded by Westaby (2005), to include the role of reasons in determining behavior.

In line with the argument of earlier behavioral theories, BRT equally acknowledges that global motives (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control), predict intention and intentions in turn predict behaviors. However, the main argument that differentiates BRT from earlier behavioral theories is that “ *reasons explain differences in intentions over and above that explained by global motives alone.* ” (Westaby et al., 2010, p.2). Reasons influence beliefs, global motives, intentions, and behavior. They further explained that reasons (other-oriented reasons and self-oriented reasons) for or against a behavior can be implicitly or explicitly derived from an individual’s beliefs and value systems. These reasons can be used to justify intended behavior without making use of global motives as assumed by earlier behavioral theories. For example, despite a negative attitude towards nepotism, conflicting social-network pressure to engage or not to engage in nepotism, plus perceived difficulty due to the consequences of doing so; a public service employee may still find justifiable reasons (others-oriented or self-oriented) to employ a relative who does not meet employment requirements. Reasons can thus be used to back, alter, or justify behavior and reinforced through a feedback loop after the behavior has been performed. BRT thus offers an additional cognitive path in addition to that postulated by earlier behavioral theories to better capture behavioral intentions. The BRT theory further makes a conceptual distinction between global motives, beliefs, and

reasons. Global motives are (attitudes and subjective norms) generic, widely accepted determinants of intentions for different behaviors in various contexts; while reasons are “specific *subjective factors people use to explain their anticipated behavior*”. Thus, unlike global motives, reasons are restricted to the behavior being investigated at a point in time (Westaby, 2010., p.100). *Beliefs* are widely interpreted to represent varied thinking patterns and contexts, while reasons are more narrowly applied to thoughts people use to explain their own behavioral set.

Though BRT is a relatively new line of theoretical reasoning, it has been applied to predicting behaviors such as turnover intentions (Hom, Mitchell, Lee & Griffith, 2012), leadership decision-making (Westaby et al., 2010), generosity decisions (Nicholls & Schimmel, 2016), underreporting of organizational accidents (Probst 2015), clothing consumption intention-behavior gap (Diddi et al., 2019) and the influence of cultural values on entrepreneurial behavior (Calza et al., 2020).

Figure 1 depicts the components and interrelationship of the BRT theory.

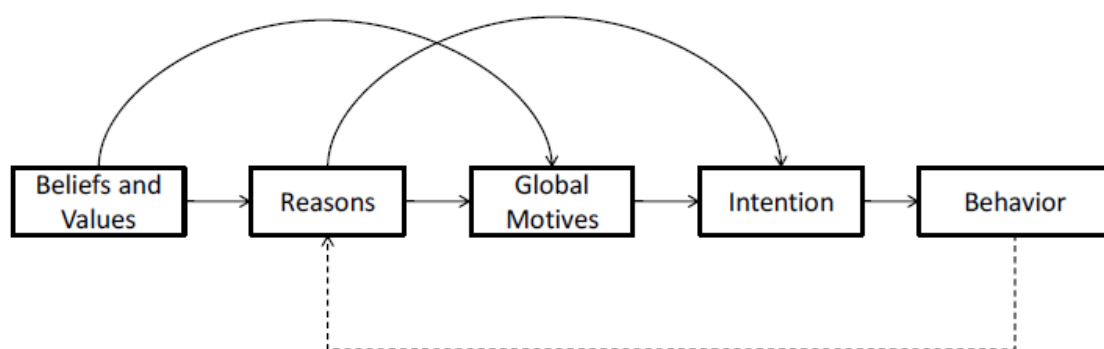


Figure 1: Diagrammatic Representation of the Behavioral Reasoning Theory (Westaby, 2005).

2.0.4 Summary of Theoretical Perspectives

Rational theories suggest that integrity behavior is an outcome of cost-benefit analysis of incentives and sanctions, while bounded rationality proposes intuition and emotions as shortcuts in processing decision information. Although rational theories tend to be restrictive in offering de facto explanations of the complexity of influencing factors and irrationality of corrupt actors, applying rational theory indicates that cost-benefit analysis of corrupt acts could influence PSWs decision making. Therefore, manipulating incentive structures and putting in place mechanisms to increase the risk of acting corruptly could make corruption less appealing in the public service. Bounded rationality assumptions explain how cognitive limitations may tend to make PSWs unaware of the blind spots in decision-making. Furthermore, bounded by time constraints and adequate knowledge of the consequences of decisions, PSWs may employ shortcuts (heuristics) to simplify decisions.

Taking the BRT theory into consideration it can be argued that the average public servant does not analyze cost and benefits in a vacuum. The decision to accept or refute a corrupt act is a cognitive procession of the attitude toward the behavior, social pressure, opportunities to perform the behavior, and the context-specific reasons that justify performance or non-performance of the behavior). BRT therefore, provides additional insight into corruption decision-making by making room for PSWs context-specific reasons that link their global motives to corruption intention and behavior within their context (the public service).

The line of thought in BRT is equally cogent as experimental research suggests that the decision-making process in bribery games is largely influenced by the contextual norms and the presence of others (Abbink et al., 2018; Abraham et al., 2018; Köbis et al., 2015). Generally, though most people decry corruption and disapprove of it as legally and morally unacceptable,

yet many engage in it within an environment where it is generally approved of and practiced. Social norms, therefore, explain why corruption becomes destigmatized and acceptable in different contexts (Gans-Morse et al., 2018; Köbis et al., 2015).

Decision-making can be conceived of as a process involving a logical analysis of all alternatives. It can also be described as a cognitive process of using heuristics to arrive at the best satisfactory alternative. Additionally, it is a psychological process motivated by values and needs. The multiplicity of influencing factors reflects the complexity of corruption decision making, indicating that an integration of both prescriptive and descriptive decision-making perspectives is needed to understand the phenomenon. This study thus integrated the proposition of all three view-points discussed to give a more comprehensive view of PSWs corruption decision-making.

2.1 Review of Related Studies

This section starts with a review of studies relevant in explaining the concept of corruption, including its socio-organizational enablers. The review narrows down to discuss corruption in the Ghanaian public service. The concept of organizational integrity is thereafter explained and linked to related studies on corruption decision-making.

2.1.1 Defining Corruption

The literature on corruption is vast and growing, yet the definition, causes, consequences, and measurement of corruption still present inconsistencies due to the elusive nature of the concept (Asamoah & Ofori-Mensah, 2018; Köbis, Jackson, Iraragorri-Carter, & Mullard, 2018; Nyendu,

2017). Due to the varied conceptualizations of corruption in the research literature, some researchers have asserted that corruption is a *multi-valent* phenomenon, as definitions of corruption are not static (Engels, 2010; Fein & Weibler, 2014). Corruption is socially constructed and may have different meanings based on place and time of group interactions. An act of corruption that is referred to as a bribe (universalist view) may be seen as a gift (realist view) in another context, presenting a thin line between the legal and moral components of the concept. Likewise, in diverse contexts, certain behaviors may not be classified as illegal acts, yet can make room for corruption to thrive. For example, being in the position to employ or give contracts to friends and relations overtly may not be illegal, but can be classified as an illegitimate use of position that gives opportunities for others and violates the right to equal opportunity for others (Igboin, 2017).

Nye (2008) defines corruption as “behavior which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) pecuniary or status gain; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence” (p.284). According to Article 4 of the African Union’s Convention corruption is:

“the soliciting or acceptance, directly or indirectly, by a public official or any other person of any goods, monetary value, or other benefits, such as gift, favor, promise or advantage for himself or herself or for another person or entity, in exchange for any act or omission in the performance of his or her public functions” (African Union, 2003, p.4-5). However, the most widely applied definition of corruption in general discourse is by Transparency International (2017), defined as *“the abuse of entrusted power for private gain*. This definition also aligns with the United Nations Development Program’s (UNDP) definition of corruption as “ the misuse of public power, office or authority for private benefit through bribery, extortion, influence peddling, nepotism, fraud, speed money or embezzlement’ (UNDP, 1997, p.7).

The definition of corruption as an “*abuse of power for private gain*” reflects political science and economic assumptions and projects corruption as a rational choice (*principal-agent*) phenomenon. Where an *agent* (PSW) abuses entrusted authority or power given by the *principal* (the public) to provide public services for their benefit or pleasure. This explanation is also in consonance with Klitgaard (1998., p.4) view of corruption as “monopoly plus discretion minus accountability,” thus when agents are given authority (monopoly and discretion) without the principal’s oversight and sanctions it equals to corruption. Therefore, to combat corruption, organizational and legal frameworks must be well developed to monitor and sanction corruption to prevent it from thriving. Anthropological accounts of corruption present evidence that corruption may be prevalent in a context not necessarily because accountability is lax and corrupt actors are greedy or selfish, but due to pro-corruption social norms. To effectively tackle corruption, the public-private dichotomy of corruption in various societies should be investigated, understood, and considered in drafting anti-corruption policies (Chene, 2009; Köbis et al., 2018).

A classic critique by Von Alemann (2004), may still hold sway against the varied attempts to conceptualize corruption. Von Alemann argued that it will suffice if corruption can just be understood instead of the struggle by scholars to find an acceptable definition. In principle, in non-Western societies where the line between what is public and private is blurred, it may be impossible to easily consider what is public from what is private, as stated in the widely accepted definition of corruption as an abuse of *public power for private gain*. Corruption is thus best treated as “a phenomenon of perception” that can mean different things in different contexts (von Alemann, 2005, p.23).

Common acts of corruption found in the literature include fraud, bribery, favoritism, nepotism and extortion, and in contemporary times sextortion (Kirya, 2020; Transparency International 2020). Bribery is defined as an offer given to induce a public officer to act unprofessionally in line of duty. It involves payments in cash or incentives in exchange for acts of corruption. Bribery involves a *quid pro quo* agreement between a briber (the party offering the bribe) and the bribee (the official receiving the bribe). Both parties are regarded as having committed an offense when bribery takes place (Nurhasanah, 2017). Bribes in certain contexts assume cultural labels as gifts, however as argued by Agbodohu and Churchill (2014), when a gift is given with the intention to induce a corrupt act or create a relationship for future reciprocity, it should be considered as bribery. Favoritism and nepotism occur mostly from the need to consider relationships such as kinship, nationality, ethnicity, and ideology. In acts of favoritism, discretion is abused, rules are bent and normal work procedures are circumvented to favor certain groups of people linked to the public official who may not merit the favor (Mungiu-Pippidi & Dadašov, 2016). Embezzlement and fraud both involve the individual using his or her position to steal property that has been entrusted under his or her care (Transparency International, 2014). Extortion is a form of corruption where coercion for compensation is placed on the transacting individual before rendering a service. Demands placed could be monetary and non-monetary. Sextortion or sexual extortion is the abuse of entrusted power to demand sexual favors from those dependent on that power for a transaction (Kirya, 2020).

The literature presents two conflicting perspectives on the consequences of corruption. Functionalist scholars (e.g. Nye, 1967; Walton 2012) touted corruption as a tool to facilitate bureaucratic transactions to “grease” the wheels of economic growth. Corruption is regarded as a necessary evil to ease transactions in complex bureaucratic systems. Corruption has also been described by moralist scholars as a double-edged sword, a complex disease with no

‘stopping rule’ or definitive solution that “*sands*” (slows down) the wheels of economic growth (Marquette & Pfeiffer, 2015). Therefore, according to the moralists, corruption distorts public expenditures, discourages foreign investors, breeds social instability, inequality, and reduces productivity (Faruq and Webb (2013).

2.1.2 Organizational Enablers of Corruption

As many explanations for causes of corruption exist, just as many definitions of corruption also exist (Agbo & Iwundu, 2015). The prevalence of corruption in organizations has been explained as the actions of a few corrupt workers (bad apples) with differing personal attributes. “Bad apples” take advantage of lapses in the administrative and structural monitoring systems to satisfy selfish desires and financial pressures from family and social networks (Agbo & Iwundu, 2015). Personal attributes such as over-ambition, relativistic morality, overidentification, agreeableness, and low emotional stability increase “bad apples” proclivities for corruption (Vedera & Pratt, 2013). Low organizational incentives have also been found to increase the proneness of certain individuals to corruption (Dimant, 2013; Yogi Prabowo, 2014).

Though Individuals proclivities influence corruption, yet not all individuals set out to engage in corrupt acts. However, organizational cultures that endorse corruption gradually become “Bad barrels” (bad organizations) that perpetuate corruption among staff. The thrust of the argument is that when individuals operate within a system that entraps their freedom to reason and to respond ethically, mental strategies are developed to cope with integrity violations and to rationalize corrupt decisions (Campbell, 2015; Gorsira, Steg, Denkers, & Huisman, 2018).

2.1.3 Socio-Cultural Enablers of Corruption

“They said a man expects you to accept “kola” from him for services rendered, and until you do, his mind is never at rest A man to whom you do a favour will not understand if you say nothing, make no noise, just walk away. You may cause more trouble by refusing a bribe than by accepting it” (Okwonkwo, in Achebe, 1987., p80).

The above quote by Achebe (1987), is supported by the assertion of Nicolaidis & Tornam Duho (2019) that humans are products of their communities and derive their identities from participation in community culture and beliefs. Therefore, to discuss corruption in the African context devoid of African beliefs on morality and ethicality would be tantamount to trying to solve a complex problem without understanding it. African social ethics is related to Africa’s “historical-social existence” and reflects in African issues of corruption, nepotism, and anti-bureaucratic behaviors (Wariboko & Falola, 2020, p.316). Culture encompasses the unique spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features delineating what are desirable and undesirable ways of relating within a society or social group. Beliefs as part of a people’s culture are the perceptions shared by that social group on how things *are done* within the group, whereas values are the assumptions the group hold on how things *should be done* within the group (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2010).

Anthropological studies suggest that corruption may be fueled in ongoing systems of social relations and continues not only because of ineffective legal and organizational structures but also as a result of particular social norms and values. Relationships between transacting agents within a social context bring about a felt obligation to reciprocate and give favors (Igboin, 2017). Pertiwi (2018) cited factors outside the organization, such as industry culture, network

relationships, societal beliefs, and values as responsible for corruption. Norms of reciprocity have also been found to exert considerable influence on proneness to corruption (Silitonga, 2018).

The theory of African personhood gives insight into the socio-cultural foundations of corrupt acts such as nepotism, reciprocity, and favoritism in African contexts (Gyekye 2015, 1996). Gyekye argued that moral beliefs and their interpretation by an African guide his humanness and decision making. Ghana is a multi-ethnic and multicultural country with traditional values that instill communalism and allegiance to the extended family system. In Ghanaian Akan philosophy, Personhood is conceptualized in moral terms, and an individual is regarded as “a person” “onipa”: when what he or she does aligns with the community view as useful and ethical. A person who falls short of making good choices deemed as acceptable by the community is seen as “less human”. Thus, the moral basis of persons in African society is tied to actions and interactions that seek the ideals and well-being of the community. Personal individuality is not denied, but it is through “others” that one gains that humaneness. Therefore, behaving ethically is communalism, and considered a duty, not a right.

This psychosocial conviction that a well-bred African must have the ability to live for others, is also known as the spirit of *Ubuntu*. *Ubuntu* is expressed in a cultural system that expects a commitment to satisfying familial and tribal needs. Indirect sanctions are meted out when such expectations are not met by the individual. For example, an individual who refuses a request to help a relative may be considered an outcast and branded as inhuman. In this vein, what is termed as nepotism may be an attempt to satisfy the notion of *Ubuntu*. Such beliefs and expectations exert a strong pressure on individuals to flaunt organizational codes and regulations especially when the risk of legal and organizational sanctions is low (Nwoye, 2015)

It has also been posited that African principles of social ethics present the average public servant with two communities (publics) to satisfy, the “primordial” and the “civic” publics. The average public service worker may strive to sustain and satisfy the moral requirements of the primordial public (kinship networks) to which they owe their allegiance and from which they gain their social and psychological identities. In contrast, the bond and identification with the “civic” public (state organizational codes and laws), may be weaker than the attachment and sense of belonging showed to kinship networks, thus, may distort the ethical compass of well-meaning public servants, unbalance them and prevent them from acting with integrity in corrupt situations (Ekeh, 1975). In the non-western African environment such as the Ghana public service, the boundaries between private and public life are blurred. The average public servant has challenges navigating formal norms and informal organizational norms in corruption decision-making because drawing the lines between these boundaries presents a nested socio-organizational dilemma (Akosa et al., 2019). Yet varied definitions of corruption still draw a line between the private and the public life (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2014).

Igboin (2017) asserted that corruption is not embedded in African beliefs, but it is a conceptualization of the colonial ruler. African social ethics espouse philosophies of communal sharing and humanness, amply guided by religious and moral values that emphasize social responsibility and integrity ensuring that communities do not exploit each other. Antwi-Danso (2005) also reiterated that contemporary explanations attributing communal sharing and gift-giving within the African context to the presence of corruption in pre-colonial African society are erroneous because in the precolonial era fear of punishment from the ancestors served as a deterrent to prevent wrongdoing. Gift giving and communal support signified generosity with no amoral expectations attached.

The connotation of gift-giving and communal help as self-interested behavior (corruption) started with colonialism, was nurtured, and has remained with post-colonial states in Africa. These submissions are supported by Arowolo (2020) that the maltreatment of workers in the colonial government introduced vandalism and looting of public property with the perception that the colonial government property was not public workers' property. Arowolo further argued that this pre-independence perception has persisted and now defines the present attitude of apathy that public servants have to public service work and the handling of the collective national property.

A counter-argument is raised by Fein & Weibler, (2014) that corruption is not a product of colonialism. The shared community life of giving and caring in premodern colonial societies did not mean the absence of selfish interests and abuse of peoples' rights. Public and private spheres were linked and privileges were given to those in positions of authority like kings to enrich themselves. Other researchers aver that deconstructing certain African proverbs show that immoral acts of corruption existed, and proverbs served as a self-reflexive discourse for moral judgments to correct wrong acts. Pre-colonial kingship was based on the traditional and personal authority of community rulers who in addition to fostering the wellbeing of the community are permitted to enrich themselves without question. The respect for traditional authority preservers in public administration and exploited through neopatrimonialism, a system where patrimonial relations override the formal rules of relating and decision-making in the public service, and legitimizes personal enrichment and in-group benefit (Agbota et al., 2017, Hopper 2017; Lassou 2017).

Attempting to justify claims of whether the concept "corruption" is a product of colonization or existed in the leadership of Africans kingship before colonization, has always been a

controversial debate among scholars (Ali et al., 2020). However, what cannot be ruled out is that corruption has long been an endemic phenomenon in the African context and the Ghanaian society (Armah, 2020). As stated in a report by the Justice Anin led bribery and corruption inquiry in the year 1974, “*corrupt practices ranged from the collusion of police with offenders to close dockets, granting privileges to prisoners and even mortuary attendants demanding payments before releasing dead bodies to relatives*” (Republic of Ghana, 1974, p104-11). Undeniably, if corruption is tantamount to the abuse of power, then one can opine that such abuse of power may have existed in pre-colonial African kingship and chieftaincy systems. Therefore, any attempt at alleviating corruption in the Ghanaian context must tackle its socio-cultural roots as well as the negative colonial legacy.

2.1.4 Corruption in the Ghanaian Public service

The history of corruption in the Ghana public service is linked to the history of the country’s colonization and independence. Ghana is located in West Africa and bordered by the Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, and the Gulf of Guinea. Ghana regained independence from the British colony in 1957 and became a republic in the British Commonwealth of Nations in 1960 (Ohemeng & Anebo, 2012). Before independence, the Ghana civil service was responsible for public administration and was structured after the British civil service. British expatriates occupied senior positions within the civil service, drafted and implemented all policies, while indigenous civil servants occupied junior positions and were required to strictly follow routine bureaucratic procedures. The “Africanization of the Ghana Civil Service” was initiated after independence to gradually train and replace expatriates in top positions with indigenous people. During this period, the Ghana civil service existed alongside an interim Public Services Commission which was set up in 1948 to advise the then British Governor on administrative

matters. However, based on recommendations from administrative reform commissions for personnel in both the Civil Service and Public Service to be governed by the same salary structure, the same procedures, and organizational reporting lines; the Civil Service was included under the Public Service of Ghana in the Fourth Republican Constitution of 1993 (Lidbury, Mills-Odoi Commission, 1967, Okoh Commission, 1974). The Public Service Commission Act of 1994 of the Republic of Ghana, Section (17) captured the public service as including “ service in any civil office of Government; the emoluments attached to which are paid directly from the Consolidated Fund or directly out of monies provided by Parliament.

The Ghana Public Service as classified by Boachie-Danquah (2004) comprises the following sectors:

- The civil service which is made up of ministries, departments, and agencies structured after the typical Weberian bureaucratic system. They are in charge of day-to-day administrative running of government services.
- The state-owned-enterprises (SOE) are autonomous government institutions that engage in profit-making activities.
- The hybrid sector, these are institutions that have the characteristics of both the civil service and the state-owned enterprises. They engage in economic activities and have autonomy in operations but also receive government budgetary allocations to operate.

The Ghana public service thus includes government sectors (for example, Judicial, Audit, Education, Prisons, Parliamentary, Health and Statistical Services, Ghana Revenue Authority) charged with making economic and social policies, designing and implementing public programs, raising revenue, and managing accountability. The public service as a bureaucratic institution has a hierarchical structure with a top-down chain of command.

Power is concentrated in the top echelons with very limited power vested in junior staff. Bureaucracy further suggests that the public service operates with stringent formal rules and regulations (Ohemeng & Anebo, 2012).

Unfortunately, the Ghana public service is plagued with mal-administrative constraints that encourage corruption. Efforts to institutionalize the professional values of probity, integrity, accountability, and efficiency in the public service have been ongoing, yet the sector still projects a tarnished image and diminished trust of citizens (Agbota et al., 2017). Various public service reform programs such as salary increments have been implemented to address the poor working culture of the service. The Civil Service Reform Program (CSRP) was implemented in 1987 to improve efficiency in service delivery. This reform program also recommended downsizing of the civil service and adjustment in pay and grading structures. The Civil Service Performance Improvement Program (CSPIP) was thereafter introduced in 1995 to improve upon the earlier reform program, and to garner public servants commitment to transparency and accountability. However, due to poor implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, these reforms seem to have failed to reduce integrity violations and to ultimately ensure effectiveness and efficiency in public service (Ayee, 2013).

As buttressed by Agbota et al. (2017) these reforms have failed to curtail integrity violations because they were predominately concerned with prescriptive rationalistic interventions focusing on the civil service structure, decentralization, compensation, and remunerations without attempting to address the cultural norms of the public service. They also reasoned that the lack of commitment could be explained by the perception that stakeholders will lose if the loopholes allowing maladministration and corruption to thrive were eliminated. Appiah-Thompson (2020) argued that failure of these reforms stems rather from the overemphasis on

politico-administrative structures, to the neglect of investigating the influence of the socio-political environment on the implementation of these reforms.

The issue of corruption is not an infrequent practice by a few public officials but an embedded pattern of thought and action in most public services (Tankebe, Karstedt, et al., 2019). Although some researchers (e.g., Dreher & Grassebner, 2013) argue that corruption acts as a “lubricant” to facilitate economic activity in an otherwise rigid bureaucratic public service organization, others (Adams & Klobodu, 2016) observed that there are detrimental effects on economic growth and quality of life of citizens in corruption endemic public services. Rothstein and Torsello (2013) denounced any positive function of corruption and consider acts of corruption as an abuse of basic human rights because it puts a price on deserved public services to which all citizen has rights. The latter is true in the Ghanaian context. Acts of corruption have become common, relatively destigmatized resulting in cumulative detrimental effects on Ghana’s education, health, sanitation, utilities, and legal systems (Agbota et al., 2017). The United Nations Development Program reported that approximately \$148 billion is lost yearly by African countries due to corruption (UNDP, 2014).

Under the Criminal Offences Act, (2012) acts of corruption are punishable by at least five years in prison in Ghana. Although the general public condemns corruption in the public service, this “wicked problem” is engrained in the everyday life, inadvertently encouraged by the general public, and often deemed as a necessary evil to gain effective and fast public service (Gyekye, 2013). As confirmed by Global Corruption Barometer (2015) and the Human Rights Reports (2015), corruption has taken on more complex forms in Ghana, and also appears to be a norm in some public services in Ghana. Citizens who obstruct the activities of organized corrupt networks are stigmatized and victimized. Past Ghanaian governments have tried strengthening

legal frameworks and reducing administrative bottlenecks to curb the canker, yet newspapers and other information media are daily inundated with reports of corrupt acts perpetrated by the very leaders entrusted to protect the collective interest of Ghana (Asamoah & Ofosu-Mensah, 2018).

Some notable cases of corruption of public officials made public in Ghana include the case of the Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency (GYEEDA) where officials were alleged to have granted interest-free loans to the tune of \$100 million to companies without legal backing. Anas Amereyaw Anas, an Investigative journalist reported an extortion and bribery scandal of 180 judicial officials and 34 judges, a case that further supports arguments that corruption has deprived citizens of justice, and many Ghanaians are unable to access other needed public services without facilitation payments and “tips” (Batelsmann Stiftung, 2016).

The Auditors-General Report (2016) indicated that actions accounting for irregularities include mal-administrative behaviors such as unauthorized transfers, payments of public funds into personal bank accounts, unsupported payment vouchers among others (Table 1). In the same vein, the Auditor-Generals Report (2017) indicated that 13 MDAs out of 16 MDAs showed significant discrepancies in financial balances. Payments made without using the Ghana Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS), the procedural framework intended to ensure integrity in payments amounted to GHc 66,387,161.08.

Table 1:

Details of Public Service Financial Irregularities

Irregularity	GH¢	US\$ (GH¢ 4.17760)	EURO (GH¢ 4.3405)	UAE ARD (GH¢ 1,1544)	NAIRA (GH¢ 72.93)	SAUDI RYLS (GH¢ 3.60)	JAPAN (GH¢ 0.0355)	TOTAL (GH¢)
Tax	42,478,111.05	92,110.00	825.00					42,866,490.70
Cash	1,986,825,425.57	1,024,711.80	30,544.74	1,075.00	855,370.00			2,053,622,215.68
Loans	1,823,656.70	675,651.50				4,825.00	59,502,706.00	6,775,974.47
Payroll	4,378,233.86		866.41					4,281,994.51
Stores/Pro- curement	35,940,445.43							35,940,445.43
Rent	7,147,108.08	455,312.00						9,049,219.49
Contract	13,006,034.86							13,006,034.86
Total	2,091,599,015.55	2,247,785.30	32,236.15	1,075.00	855,370.00	4,825.00	59,502,706.00	2,165,542,375.14

Source: Auditor Generals' Report on Public Accounts of Ghana (2016)

The police in Ghana is considered the most corrupt public institution. The Transparency International Global Corruption barometer results stated that Ghana police corruption is perceived to have increased from 59 percent between 2009-2010, to 79 percent in the year 2013 (Ghana Integrity Initiative, 2011; Transparency international 2013a).

Researchers have argued that facilitation payments demanded by police officers are a way to achieve equity for low salaries and thus what may be perceived as corruption in one context can be regarded as fees for underpriced services. Cross-country differences in levels of prosperity dictate differences in levels of corruption, thus the probable way of mitigating corruption in a society with low salaries and ineffective legal systems is by ensuring equity in income (Tankebe, Boakye, et al., 2019) The advent of a new single spine structure in the year (2010), did not seem to have decreased extortion and bribery from the Ghanaian police but rather increased the value of bribes demanded by police at roadblocks (Asiedu & Deffor, 2017; Foltz & Opoku-Agyemang, 2015; Tankebe, Karstedt, et al., 2019).

Another institution where Ghanaians experience hurdles with bureaucratic corruption is the agency in charge of issuing vehicle licenses and permits, that is, the Drivers and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA). Without giving informal payments or harassment bribes one may spend hours and months contrary to the official allotted time to obtain this public service (Tankebe, Boakye, et al., 2019). This organizational behaviour supports the argument that in certain contexts, bribery helps citizens to circumvent inefficient and slow bureaucratic decision making (Ward & Nkyabonaki, 2019).

Ghanaian anti-corruption laws include the Public Procurement Act, 2003 (Act 663), the Whistle-Blowers Act, 2006 (Act 720), the Financial Administration Act, the Internal Audit Agency Act, 2003 (Act 658), as well as the Right to Information Law (Act 989). Constitutional and statutory organizations in charge of investigating corruption in Ghana include the Bureau of National Investigations, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), the Economic and Organized Crime Office (EOCO), Ghana Integrity Initiative, and the Financial Intelligence Centre (Asamoah & Ofori-Mensah, 2018).

The office of the Special Prosecutor was also established in 2017 under the Criminal and Other Offences (Act 29) with the mandate of investigating corruption-related allegations. The three main anti-corruption roles of these agencies are investigation and enforcement, prevention, awareness, and education. Unfortunately, conventional anti-corruption efforts by the various anti-corruption bodies and governments have seemingly failed to fulfill their intended purposes due to implementation gaps and anti-corruption strategies that are poorly aligned to the country-specific collective assumptions (Asiedu & Deffor, 2017). The ineffectiveness of these institutions in Ghana has also been attributed to exogenous factors including lack of political will, public trust, and financial restraints (Christopher et al., 2014).

2.1.5 The Organizational Integrity Framework: Formal and Informal Norms

Organizational integrity in the public service, also termed public service integrity in research literature is regarded as a key requirement for effective public service delivery. An organization's integrity framework represents the link between formal norms, that is, codes of conducts and complementary regulations put in place to monitor and enforce integrity; and, the informal mechanisms as well as external factors that impact actors' integrity (Huberts, 2018).

The word integrity originates from the Latin expression *in-tagere* connoting virtue, purity, and incorruptibility. The concept of integrity has benefitted from years of research, yet it is still characterized by inconsistencies in operationalization (Grebe & Woermann, 2011). Arguing from a methodological individualism perspective, researchers aver that a cogent explanation of organizational integrity should firstly focus on understanding individual integrity motivations (de Graaf et al., 2018; Grebe & Woermann, 2011; Huberts, 2018; Montfort, 2018). When the concept of integrity is studied from the individual perspective two lines of thought emerge. Integrity is either conceptualized as a quality associated with honesty and fairness (character) or as a state of being that shows a link between an individual's words and actions (conduct). Thus, the debate is on whether integrity is a personal characteristic or a behavioral outcome. In other words, "does an individual have integrity or does an individual behave with integrity"?

de Graaf et al., (2018) explained this conduct-character distinction of individual integrity with Kurt Lewin's (1946) conception of behavior *as a function of the interaction of both person and environment* ($B=f(P, E)$). In Lewin's equation, integrity as a "character trait" will represent the "P" and integrity as a "conduct" will represent the "B". This implies that within the organizational setting, a leader's integrity violation becomes endemic in environments where non-integrity behavior is rewarded and condoned.

For example, the fear of social network sanctions within an organizational environment can influence a leader with high integrity to flaunt organizational rules to favor peers. This gives the indication that having integrity “P” does not necessarily equal to behaving with integrity “B”. Leadership integrity behavior is dependent on “E” the environment or context within which the behavior is being enacted. One can therefore surmise that the integrity of public service workers is dependent on public service organizational integrity and vice-versa. It is therefore important that psychological research on integrity investigates both the attitudes and attributes of individuals, and the integrity of contexts in which behaviors are produced.

Any organizational integrity framework should encompass clearly defined codes of conduct, rules, and regulations that scope processes and expected behavior in alignment with stakeholder expectations. It must also include channels to report wrongdoing with a clear commitment to investigating and sanctioning integrity violations. Codes are the fundamental framework upon which public service integrity is built, codes clearly articulate unacceptable integrity violations in daily service delivery. Apart from the codes of conduct, there are complementary regulations (e.g. financial procedures, recruitment policies, compensation and reward systems, procurement and contract management procedures) that support efforts to mitigate corruption. Arguing from a systemic perspective, this implies that all the components of an integrity framework are interdependent and function in consonance with the context in which they are implemented (Rezal Rasli et al., 2020; Rose, 2018).

The International Federation of Accountants defined codes of conduct as “principles, values, standards or rules of behavior that guide decisions, procedures and systems of an organization” (IFA, 2007, p.6). It must be noted that the integrity of an organization is displayed not only by its commitment to formal organizational codes of conduct, regulations (espoused values) but

also to informal organizational norms and beliefs (embedded values) shared by members including monitoring and evaluations arrangement. Coherently, both the espoused values (formal codes of conduct) and the embedded values (informal organizational norms and beliefs) evolve into an organizational culture that forms part of its relatively entrenched ways of doing things. As informal organizational norms and beliefs are articulated in interactions, new members are socialized into these norms which they later draw on to anticipate other group members' behavior and expectations (Wan et al., 2020).

Though it is generally accepted that public service organizational integrity is a pivotal constituent in anti-corruption efforts, there is still a raging debate among public service scholars on whether to emphasize compliance-based integrity or value-based integrity in anti-corruption interventions. The arguments in favor of compliance-based integrity, focus on deterring corruption using formal codes of conduct and regulations, with sanctions for non-compliance. In contrast, proponents of the value-based integrity approach argue for the need to consider context-specific informal organizational norms in drafting integrity policies derived from these norms to instill socially responsible behavior in public servants (Campbell & Göritz, 2014; Gorsira et al., 2018).

2.1.5.1 Formal Organizational Norms

This argument surrounding a rule-based versus a value-based approach to integrity management reflects the broader theoretical debate of rationality and bounded rationality approaches to corruption decision-making discussed earlier in this study. It is buttressed that the effectiveness of an organization's integrity system does not depend on a choice between compliance or value-based integrity as it cannot be concretized that when public servants find themselves under social and political conditions where compliance to codes is actively

espoused and sanctioned they could be relied upon to remain trustworthy. On the contrary, de Graaf et al., (2018) posited that the effectiveness of organizational integrity depends on the *completeness* of the code of conduct in regulating employee behavior. *completeness* is achieved when the codes of conduct contain standards to be attained as well as values that inculcate a sense of responsibility in organizational actors. Organizations act with integrity when both embedded and espoused values complement each other and are thoroughly acted upon in decision-making.

The break-down of organizational integrity signals a deviation from the codes of conduct, regulations, and the procedures that govern implementation, monitoring, and sanctioning. This deviation presents a gap between behavior expected of employees, and how they actually act when confronted with corrupt tendencies (Kumasey & Hossain, 2020). As argued by Meza & Zizumbo-Colunga (2020) most public institutions experience divergence between formal norms and the actual behavior of public servants. Therefore, to address these divergences from the formal organizational norms, the opportunities that frame non-compliance within varied contexts should be investigated. Codes of conduct are employed as pivotal formal norms that set standards of official behavior to guide public servants' corruption decision-making. Though the institution of codes of conduct in the organization signal stakeholders' commitment to organizational integrity, albeit, without proper implementation, supervision, and evaluation, codes remain inept bureaucratic standards (Transparency International, 2014).

The United Nations (UN) international code of conduct for public officials (1996), for example, delineates standards considered as professional conduct for public officials in the performance of duties. According to UN standards, public officials are to abide by laws, administrative policies, and to perform duties with integrity. They are further charged to render public service without discrimination or partiality ensuring that they do not abuse the public power entrusted

to them (United Nations, 1996).

The Ghana civil service code of conduct (1999) specifies that

1. *Civil servants are required to align their culture/psyche to the norms and standards of behavior laid out in the code of conduct/work ethics in work relationships with all stakeholders.*
2. *The standards and norms delineated in the codes should form the basis for ensuring good governance to project the civil service image both locally and internationally.*
3. *Appropriate administrative sanctions are to be applied where public servants' conduct is inconsistent with the code (p.4)*

Thus, the expectation is that successful implementation of the codes of conduct will introduce a paradigm shift in the working culture of the Ghana public service, to ultimately mitigate integrity violations in this sector. The codes equally stipulate guidelines on conflict of interests, asset declaration, gifts, and favors (Ghana Civil Service, 2018). For example, a guideline on receiving gifts specifies that:

“a public official shall not accept gifts-tangible or intangible, that may appear to have the potential to influence the exercise of his/her official functions, proper discharge of his/her duties or his/her judgment, indirectly from a person with whom he/she comes into contact with concerning official duties (p. 9).

It also lays out the conduct expected of public officials in service delivery;

“a public officer shall not put himself in a position where his personal interest conflicts or is likely to conflict with the performance of the functions of the office” (p.9)

The code describes acting with personal interest as

“any financial or other interest of the public officer and those of family members, relative,

personal friends, clubs and associations and persons to whom the public officer owes a favor or is obligated (p.9).

Administrative sanctions for misconduct are also clearly stated in the codes. Sanctions for violation of the civil service codes of conduct and the civil service act range from warnings and disciplinary transfers to outright dismissal depending on the nature of violations. Misconduct (or non-compliance) is defined in Section 76 of the Civil Service Law 1993 (PNDCL 327) as “*Any act done by a civil servant without reasonable cause which amounts to a failure to perform in a proper manner any duty imposed on him or contravenes any enactment relating to the civil service... which tends to bring the civil service into disrepute.*”

Using an experimental design, Meza & Zizumbo-Colunga (2020) sought to find out how public servants gradually slip into the zone of non-compliance in making corrupt decisions. They experimentally manipulated hypothetical scenarios to alter participants' information processing. They observed that rigid bureaucratic requirements to comply with codes of conduct in corruption decision-making may present a dilemma to corrupt actors. Employee non-compliance to codes of conduct in decision making could also result from the conflict between personal values, organizational rules, and the guilt of denying the interest of co-workers. Furthermore, public servants easily enter the zone of non-compliance with rigid official rules when they had to exhibit benevolence towards the state, than when the benevolence is towards an individual. Desta (2019), also reported that weak institutions for enforcing the excessive and rigid rules encourage public service corruption in Africa.

Researchers reported that though Ghanaian public servants are aware of the civil service codes of conduct, content knowledge of the specifics is lacking. Public servants therefore

inadvertently violate the codes in decision-making (Kumasey & Hossain, 2020; Sakyi & Bawole, 2010).

Akosa et al., (2019) also examined internal and external challenges to the implementation of codes of conduct in the Ghana civil service and posited that tackling corruption in the Ghanaian public service is dependent on how public services implement and enforce the codes of conduct. In their study, 28 out of the 30 respondents (93%) were aware of the civil service codes of conduct. However, they narrated that although administrative sanctions are in place to ensure adherence to public service codes of conduct, challenges such as cherry-picking in sanctions, political interferences, and lack of strict enforcement motivate corrupt behavior among public servants.

Yeboah-Assiamah, Asamoah, & Osei-kojo (2014) approached their investigation of corruption in the Ghana public service from the rational economic viewpoint, conceiving of corruption as a transactional process involving fundamentally egoistic and self-seeking public servants. They confirmed that the implementation of codes of conduct is constrained by weak bureaucratic institutions making the perceived opportunity to violate codes easier and less challenging than the perceived opportunity to comply. They also concluded that organizational systems should be strengthened to enforce strict compliance with the codes of conduct and to punish violations without discrimination.

The role of codes of conduct and regulations in guiding public service integrity has been acknowledged and investigated in Ghana. However, with a few exceptions (e.g., Akosa et al., 2019; Sakyi & Bawole, 2010), much research has concentrated on prescribing and describing core elements that should comprise codes of conduct, to the neglect of providing deeper insight

into how PSWs experience and navigate these codes in decision-making.

A causal relationship between public service integrity violations and ineffectiveness of codes of conduct cannot casually be assumed, as a host of factors that can contribute to violations and need to be isolated. Firstly, solely relying on codes of conduct to discourage corruption will have been apt if economic incentives were the sole explanations for corruption decision-making. Corruption decisions are motivated not only by economic gains but by non-monetary motivations (Köbis et al., 2016). Additionally, corruption decisions do not only border on choices between right and wrong alternatives but can also involve a choice between right versus right, this further complicates decision-making (Grebe & Woermann, 2011; McCandless & Ronquillo, 2019; Transparency International, 2014).

Also, putting in place codes is an indication of the commitment to integrity but does not automatically produce integrity-based decisions (Yogi Prabowo, 2014). Organizational decisions have to be processed and enacted by human agents who are constrained by multiple rules and standards of behavior within a bureaucratic context shrouded in uncertainty. It should be noted that when making corrupt decisions within a corrupt system, guilt is shared therefore rationalization and justification of the corrupt behavior blurs perceptions of integrity risk in corruption decision making (Kominis & Dudau, 2018).

Using experimental games, Köbis et al., (2018) investigated the correlation between perceived descriptive norms of corruption and corrupt behavior with a student sample. Descriptive norms are held beliefs about what is mostly done by all others in similar situations, while injunctive norms refer to perceptions of what is expected as appropriate in a particular scenario. They reported that the perceived frequency of corruption significantly influenced participants'

decisions to engage in corrupt behavior. Specifically, when the perceived frequency of corruption increased by one standard deviation the probability of engaging in the corrupt act increased by a factor of 1.89. They averred that in making a corrupt decision, the slippery slope takes effect, and past ways of behaving become the yardstick used in further judgments as corrupt acts produce positive outcomes. Ethical sliding then becomes difficult to decipher, and the unethical may become the preferred way of doing things instead of the application of codes of conduct.

Decision-making in organizations is significantly influenced by a wide range of complex mechanisms apart from codes of conduct, this calls for the inclusion of varied socio-cultural and contextual factors to provide a holistic understanding of corruption decision-making. The present study thus sought to extend the body of work on organizational integrity by finding out how PSWs in Ghana experience and navigate both formal and informal organizational norms in corruption decision-making.

2.1.5.2 Informal Organizational Norms

The present study argued that socio-cultural norms and practices can be imported into the organizational context and gradually evolve into context-specific informal norms that drive corrupt organizational cultures. This assertion is supported by the submission of Arowolo (2020) who bemoaned that despite this possibility, literature lacks systematic empirical evidence on how informal organizational norms influence corruption in various organizational sectors. It has been argued that research will contribute much better to controlling organizational corruption when attempts are made to understand informal norms peculiar to organizational contexts (Mungiu-Pippidi & Dadašov, 2016; Tankebe et al., 2019).

Though there is a dearth of literature on the influence of context-specific informal organizational norms on corrupt behavior, the impact of social-cultural norms on corrupt behavior has been reported in several empirical studies. (e.g., Abbink et al., 2018; Agbota et al., 2017; Baez-Camargo et al., 2017; Campbell & Göritz, 2014; Köbis et al., 2018; Kumasey & Hossain, 2020). Albeit, while some researchers (e.g., Abbink et al., 2018; Banerjee, 2015; Travits, 2010) reported an association between cultural norms and corrupt tendencies, others (e.g., Eckel, 2015; Barr & Serra, 2010) observed insignificant differences.

Corruption in Africa's public services has been attributed largely to the continent's varied socio-cultural norms and practices. The pitfall is that these socio-cultural lenses have been applied in a generic way to public service corruption research without the recognition that there may be informal organizational norms operating within the public service culture that is distinct from the already known socio-cultural norms. Informal organizational norms articulate standards and boundaries of behavior enforceable through informal sanctions. They communicate shared understanding concerning acceptable and unacceptable working relationships within the context, thus tend to dictate the acceptability of practices in organizations. Informal norms regulate organizational behavior when formal norms fail to regulate behavior (Abraham et al., 2018; de Graaf et al., 2018).

Organizations are made up of groups bounded by shared meanings which are transmitted through the use of a common language in interactions. These shared meanings evolve into cognitive maps which guide deviant group behavior, and can be used to understand deviant behavior when the language used by the group is examined (Köbis et al., 2018). This observation aligns with arguments of researchers (e.g., Agbota et al., 2017; Hasty, 2005; Yeboah-Assiamah et al., 2016) who drew on Ghanaian proverbial sayings as shared meaning

and beliefs to explain corruption. They averred that proverbial sayings have gradually developed into informal organizational norms that reinforce mal-administrative behavior in Ghana's public service. Some Ghanaian proverbs and wise sayings that project allegiance to kinship networks, respect for elders, hospitality, gift-giving, and reciprocity can influence the adherence to public service codes and regulations. For example, the proverb '*Yemfa nsa pan nko ahenfie*' literally translated, "*we do not go to the chief's palace empty-handed*" can imply that going with gifts to people in authority is a sign of respect. Inadvertently, this notion can blur the distinction between social gift-giving and bureaucratic gift-giving in the public service. Bureaucratic gift giving ought to be regulated by codes of conduct in order to guard against conflict of interest. Gifts can also initiate reciprocity in future relationships and influence meritocracy in public services (Graycar, 2020).

Another example was cited by Hasty (2005) that the traditional notion and perception of public service work in Ghana as "*Aban Adwuma*" literally translated "*a job without owners*" has become a norm transmitted verbally to new entrants of the public service through socialization. This perception makes integrity violations seem like victimless crimes in the public service.

2.2 Summary of Literature Reviewed

The preceding literature reviewed suggests that corruption is perceived and understood differently in different contexts, societies, and countries. Historical, cultural, social, political, and economic factors shape the context-specific understanding of corruption. However, despite the lack of consensus on an acceptable definition of corruption, it is generally agreed that corruption is a multifaceted, endemic phenomenon with debilitating effects. Drawing on the rational, bounded rationality and behavioral reasoning theories, the present study argued that

corruption decision-making is a complex cognitive processing of a multiplicity of factors. In processing corrupt decisions, individuals do not always have complete information to decide and are unable to weigh all outcomes of the decision, thus heuristics are sometimes employed to simplify decision-making. Additionally, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control of corrupt behavior also influences final decision outcomes. Corrupt actors may also be guided by context-specific reasons that can be employed to justify decision-making.

Corruption in the Ghanaian public service is generally conceived as self-interest intentions of corrupt actors aimed at enriching themselves. Consequently, to mitigate corruption, the majority of the studies on public sector corruption in Ghana have recommended strengthening state and institutional capacity to enforce and sanction violations of codes of conduct and other public service regulations. Unfortunately, codes of conduct put in place to regulate organizational integrity seem to be ineffective due to implementation challenges and selective administrative sanctioning.

Organizational integrity is exercised within the remits of both formal norms (codes of conduct and other public service procedural regulations) and informal organizational norms. Studies acknowledge that pressure and threat of informal sanctions from social and organizational networks force corrupt actors to engage in corrupt acts. Therefore, corruption decision making though ought to be guided by codes and regulations is equally influenced by the informal environment. This implies that corrupt actors may not voluntarily set out to flaunt organizational codes of conduct and engage in corruption due to selfish behavior. Thus in-depth insights into how corrupt actors process information outside of rationalistic assumptions, is needed.

These arguments presented gaps that the present research sought to address to provide a richer understanding of how formal and informal organizational norms are experienced in corruption decision making in the Ghanaian public service. A diagram illustrating the conceptual framework of the thesis is depicted in Figure 2

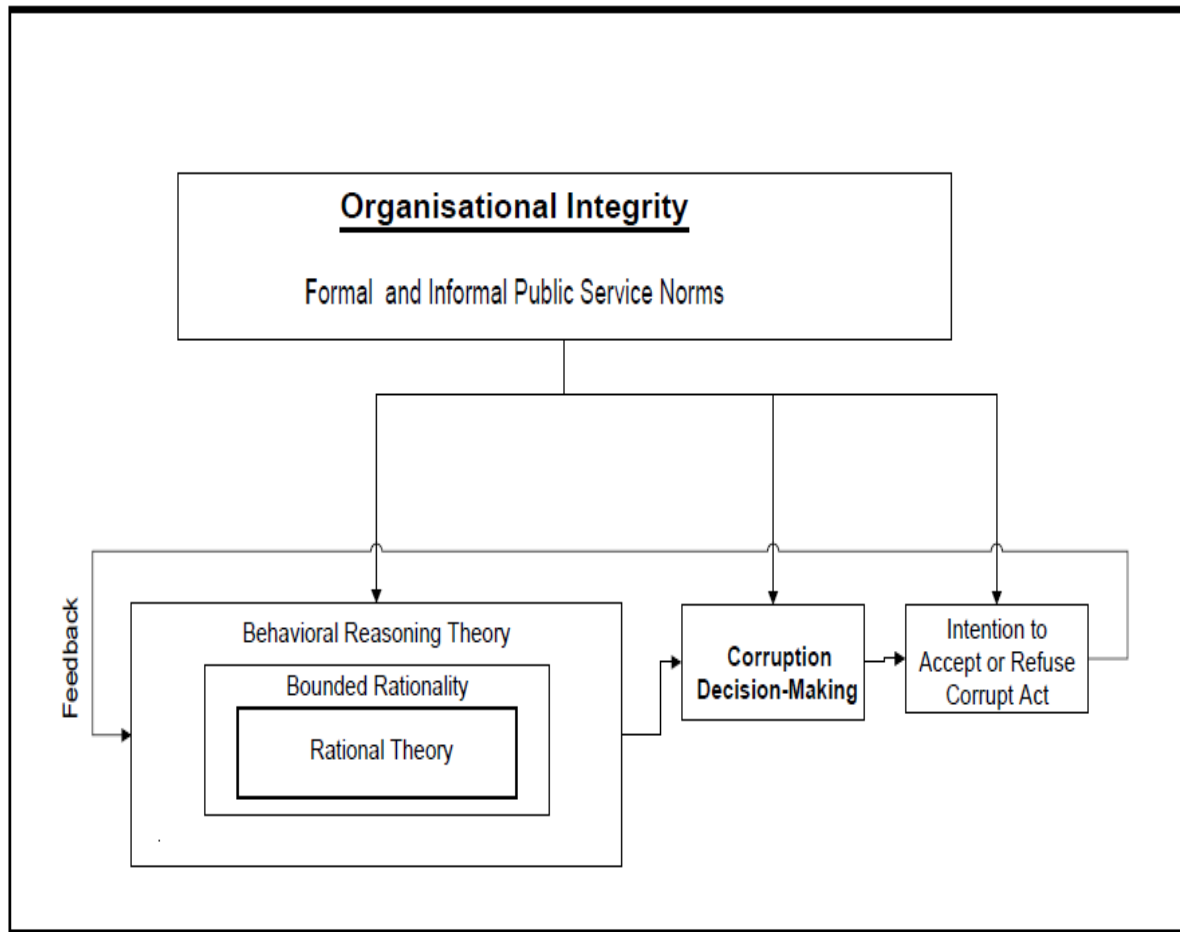


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

2.3 Definition of Key Terms

The Public Service – refers to all publicly controlled or publicly funded agencies, enterprises, and other entities that deliver public programs, goods, or services.

Informal Norms - unwritten yet entrenched normalized and reciprocal ways of relating in the public service.

Formal Norms - written codes of conduct and procedural regulations of the public service.

Organizational Integrity - represents the link between the organization's adherence to policies and codes put in place to monitor and enforce integrity and the informal norms within the system.

Corruption Decision-Making- the processing of information to either refute or accept a corrupt act.

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the underlying philosophical paradigm, the associated assumptions of ontology, epistemology, and the axiology that guided the study. The research setting, sample, data gathering, and analysis procedures are discussed. The chapter concludes with an explanation of procedures followed to ensure rigor and trustworthiness, including the ethical considerations subsumed in managing the fieldwork.

3.1 Philosophical Foundation of the Study

Auerbach & Silverstein (2003) described a paradigm as the foundation of a belief system and the associated assumptions regarding ontology, epistemology, methodology, and methods. Research paradigms, therefore, inform how reality is understood and studied.

To understand and articulate the beliefs and realities of PSWs' corruption decision-making, this study was guided by the interpretivist paradigm and takes the ontological position that there are multiple subjective realities. While positivists argue that knowledge is objective and exists independently of social actors, from the interpretivist perspective, reality is subjective and socially constructed. Knowledge construction according to interpretivists, is context-specific and time-bound. This implies that any phenomenon under investigation is largely grounded in the diverse physical, social, and cultural space of participants (Creswell, 2013). The interpretivist paradigm was deemed most appropriate in understanding the subjective individual and organizational processes and experiences that shape corruption decision-making the Ghanaian public service.

The social constructivism epistemology underpinned the study. Epistemological assumptions clarify the nature of knowledge, how that knowledge is acquired and validated within a specific research paradigm. Key to constructivism is the notion that knowledge is a spontaneous construction of reality of persons in their context. Thoughts and ideas within a social system form the basis for interactions as individuals within their environment are not just passive actors but they shape and are also shaped by their environment. The behavior of participants cannot be fully grasped outside of the context within which the experience is taking place. The search for knowledge is also assumed to be reliant on the intimate discourse between informants and the researcher as a co-producer and interpreter of the knowledge (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). From this perspective, the knowledge generated in this study on organizational integrity and corruption decision making was actively constructed with PSWs and Experts.

A value-bond axiological stance was assumed in this investigation. The researcher was part of co-constructing the knowledge generated and therefore subjectivity was not ruled out. However, the researcher acknowledged that the phenomenon must be understood from the perspective of participants, therefore, reflexivity and trustworthiness techniques were applied to reduce any subjectivity that might bias the collection and interpretation of research data.

3.2 Qualitative Case Study Design

The decision to adopt the qualitative methodology centered on the researcher's constructivist/interpretivist worldview on the nature of knowledge and the creation of such knowledge. The choice of a qualitative case study design was guided mainly by the nature of the main research question, which was to find out in detail, the "how" and "why" of the case (*organizational integrity and corruption decision-making*) in the context (*the Ghanaian public*

service) where it is experienced (Creswell, 2013; Yin 2018). A case study is defined by Yin, (2006) as an approach to investigation in which the researcher explores in detail, a program, a process, or an individual. Contrary to criticisms that adopting the qualitative approach restricts generalization, lacks transparency, and is laden with personal values and biases of researchers, this study contends that qualitative research is more amenable in generating richer data in sensitive and complex phenomena (Tracy, 2010). The present study was more concerned with interpretations rather than quantification and generalization, and with providing in-depth knowledge of this sensitive process (corruption decision-making).

Additionally, the study design enabled a holistic exploration of the case by using multiple data sources and experiences of different stakeholders. Data in this study was collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, allowing participants to share their experiences unfettered (Yin, 2018). Additionally, a document review of reports, manuals, and policy guidelines was employed to compliment interview findings and interpretation. The multiple case study method was deemed most appropriate because it helped to strengthen and validate results by replicating pattern matching of direct quotations of participants from all six public service organizations.

Given the diverse constraints of corruption research and the risk inherent in divulging potentially harmful information, using a quantitative approach could result in participants giving socially desirable answers. This complexity associated with investigation corruption with quantitative research has led to a recommendation by scholars on the appropriateness of using qualitative methods in researching corruption (de Graaf and Huberts, 2008; Doig 2011; Menzel, 2003, Von Alemann, 2004).

Building initial rapport with participants, before each interview imbued trust for most interviewees to willingly share their experiences, thus social desirability bias may have been considerably reduced. Quantitative investigations of corruption are best suited in demonstrating levels of corruption but are imperfect to capture the processes, emotional circumstances, complexities associated with corruption decision (Mungiu-Pippidi & Dadašov, 2016). It is therefore reiterated that a qualitative case study research methodology was more amenable to investigating the behavioral processes of corruption decision making.

3.3 The Study Context

The study identified the Ghanaian public service as the setting where the case (corruption decision making) could best be investigated. Public service institutions within the Accra metropolitan authority in the Greater Accra region were targeted for the study. The Greater Accra region was chosen to enable the researcher to carry out the research within the allotted schedule, paying attention to financial and logistical constraints. The Ghanaian Public service is classified under Section (17) of the Public Service Commission Act, 1994 of the Republic of Ghana and Article 190 of the 1992 constitution as comprising service in any civil office of Government; the emoluments attached to which are paid directly from the consolidated fund or directly by parliament and service in a public corporation (Article 190, 2). The Public Service is made up of 32 Ministries responsible for the implementation of Government policies. The organizational structure of a Ministry generally comprises a General Administration and Finance Department, Human Resource Management, Planning, Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Research, Statistics, and Information department.

Despite the various laws and codes of conduct put in place to ensure that the public service renders its much-needed support in implementing Government policies, corruption is rife in the Ghanaian public service retarding development and making the public service a subject of debate and mistrust (Sakyi & Bawole, 2010). There was thus a need to investigate the phenomenon of corruption and lack of organizational integrity in this setting to add to academic knowledge and public service reform interventions.

3.4 Pilot study

Five graduate students working in the public service were recruited from a University for the pilot interview to confirm that the vocabulary used in the interview guides was relevant and effective in gathering data. It was noticed during interviews that the use of the word “ corrupt acts” made some participants hesitant in engaging with the researcher. The researcher took a cue from this and replaced this word with the use of “ integrity violations,” and gradually allowed the word “corrupt acts” to emerge as the interview progressed pilot interviews were audiotaped and feedback from participants were solicited after each interview concerning the content and clarity of the interview guide and the demographic questionnaire. Some minor vocabulary modifications were made to the guide. For example, the phrase “ encourage corruption” was changed to “influence corruption” as participants mentioned that it had a negative connotation. These processes were undertaken to address any issues that will have been posed by a poorly structured interview guide. A final interview guide was drafted with the insights and information gained from the pilot interview participants and the researcher’s thesis advisors.

3.5 Selection of Participants

The first stage of selection employed intensity sampling to select ten (10) public service organizations (providing Identity Documents and Utilities Services) based on perceived levels of corruption reported in the citizens' perception Afro Barometer Report (2019) and the Auditors Generals Report (2016). To ensure that individual interview participants have experienced some dilemmas of corruption decision-making, interviews concentrated on public services providing identity documents and utility services because it was assumed that they are more exposed and vulnerable to corruption due to the frequency of interaction with citizens in their line of duty.

The researcher's master's level thesis was carried out in the public service. This provided professional and social contacts that facilitated re-entry. However, enlisting the organizations on the study of corruption was very challenging and many public services were outright self-protective. Some rejected the letter requesting permission to conduct the study in their organization, with the excuse that any information leakage could be detrimental to their organization, even though the research assured them of anonymity. Requests for face to face meetings were turned down several times, but the researcher was able to meet some Directors to explain the purpose of the research with the help of gatekeepers. Approval was finally obtained from six public service institutions.

Participants selection was the second stage and snowball sampling was used. Already interviewed participants were asked to recommend willing colleagues to participate in the study, and to endorse the researcher to counter any suspicions. As suggested by Creswell (2014), it is appropriate to use snowball sampling when participants are difficult to recruit. This chain referral method proved very appropriate. Though the focus was on sample availability

and willingness, an attempt was also made to maximize gender diversity in the sample for both individual and group interviews. Additionally, using both the chain referral method and graduate students who were involved in the earlier pilot study as gatekeepers, may have helped to reduce self-selection bias in the main study.

Onweugbuzie and Collins (2007) recommended that sample sizes in qualitative research should not be too large to prevent the generation of thick rich data but should also be adequate to ensure saturation. The sample size recommendation of between 20-30 participants made by Corbin and Strauss (2015) guided sample size decision.

Four-eight (48) PSWs were selected for both individual and focus group interviews. These included twenty-six (26) Directors and Deputy Directors (categories A1 to A5) who participated in individual interviews, and twenty-two (22) middle level management staff (categories B5 to F), who formed the three (3) focused group discussions. This sample size was considered appropriate as other qualitative researchers (Jackson et al., 2015; Stravakou & Lozgka, 2018) used smaller sample sizes to achieve saturation and adequacy. In recruiting participants, importance was equally attached to gender, public service grade, and frequency of contact with clientele in their daily job roles.

Expert interviews were conducted with eight (8) participants from the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition, Star Ghana, IMANI Ghana, a Retired Public Servant's Association, and a Media House. Expert interviewees were chosen from these organizations because of their knowledge and experience of public service corruption, integrity management, and active involvement with anti-corruption interventions in Ghana. The majority of expert interviews took place before fieldwork and the rest were carried out after the main data had been collected. Expert

interviews were employed to corroborate document reviews on anti-corruption, to guide the drafting of the interview guide, and to enrich the discussion of findings and recommendations as presented in chapters five and six respectively.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Three data collection methods were employed, these included individual interviews, focus group interviews, and document reviews. The individual interview method was adopted to reconstruct the process of participants' corruption decision-making since the phenomenon cannot be factually observed by the researcher. Samples of the interview guides are presented in Appendix 1. Interview guides were developed guided by preliminary literature reviewed, and discussions with experts in the field of anti-corruption (King 2010). The interview guide for expert interviews differed from that used for PSWs, due to the differences in the nature of their experience with the phenomenon under study.

The first part of the interview guide tapped on PSWs constructions of organizational integrity. The second part included three (3) vignettes which were used to tap corruption decision-making of PSWs. The vignettes were designed to reflect hypothetical scenarios of corruption dilemmas, with probing questions intended to tease out both formal and informal norms prioritized by participants in decision-making. Kaptein & Van Reenen (2001) classification of organizational dilemmas guided the drafting of vignettes. Kaptein and Van Reenen (2001) cited three dilemmas that can present in organizational decision-making, these were: the “entangled hands” dilemma, the “many hands dilemma”, and the “dirty hands dilemma”.

The *entangled hands* dilemma involved scenarios that bother on the relationship between the individual and the organization which presents as a tug of war between the personal interest of the employee and the organizational interest (e.g. conflicts of interest). Scenarios depicting relationships between the employee, the organization, and the network of other employees were classified as a dilemma involving *many hands* (e.g. discrimination, favoritism, inappropriate or illegal orders). The dirty hands dilemma involved relationships between employees and external stakeholders of the organization. (eg. suppliers, citizens).

All three vignettes were situated within the public service environment and one-character name (DB) was maintained in all vignettes for consistency. To reduce social desirability responses, the vignettes were approached firstly from a third-party perspective. Participants were asked to advise the vignette character on steps to take to solve the dilemma, after which they were asked to give perceptions and reasons that guided their recommendations from a personal perspective. Any distinctions between recommendations for the vignette character and personal perspectives were noted and used as probing questions (Jenkins et al. 2010).

It is acknowledged that a challenge of vignettes is the gap between the hypothetical story and social reality. Thus participants' reaction to the vignette may not be what they may actually do in reality. However, it is argued that the essence of using the vignette was not so much about the outcome of the process but about tapping the internal dialogue and experiences of participants, and the use of a non-intrusive channel to jumpstart their corruption information processing (Crafter, Abreu, Cline & O'Dell, 2014, p.85). Table 2 outlines the data collection methods for the study and justification for their use as discussed in the preceding section.

Table 2

Data Collection Methods and Target Participants

Data source	Method	Justification
Public Service Directors Anti-Corruption Experts	In-depth Individual interviews (n=26) In-depth Individual interviews (n=8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiences of organizational integrity and corruption decision-making Knowledge of public service integrity and corruption Challenges of anti-corruption interventions Recommendations
Public Service Administrative and Technical Staff	Focus Group Discussions (n=22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared experiences on organizational integrity and corruption decision making
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ghana Civil Service Code of Conduct, Human Resource Policy Manual for the Ghana Public Services (2015) National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (2011) Ghana Anti-Corruption Manual (2009) Report of the Auditor General (2016, 2017) 	Document Review (n=5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarification of Public Service Terms Corroborate research findings Enrich discussion of findings

Source: Author (2020)

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Actual fieldwork was conducted between May and October 2019. Individual interviews were conducted either in offices of participants according to their schedule or at locations where they were comfortable. Even after some directors and deputies had agreed to participate in the study, several failed attempts were made, and some interviews were turned down at the last minute. Though envisaged, the difficulty in getting acceptance for interviews was troubling. Most directors who agreed to speak to the researcher requested not to be linked to their organizations.

3.7.1 Semi-Structured Individual Interviews

An information packet (introductory letter, a questionnaire requesting demographic details, and copies of the vignettes) was presented to each participant before the interviews.

Two interviewees requested to see the interview agenda before approving the interviews. The information packet was therefore sent to them via email. Prior to each interview, permission was sought to record the discussion, and this was granted by all participants. Participants were informed upfront before each interview of their right to voluntary participation and written or verbal informed consent was also taken.

Interviews were conducted in English and lasted between 60 to 110mins, with an average interview time of 90mins. Vignettes were read aloud to participants and they could also follow from the copies of the vignettes provided earlier with the information packet. Interviews were audiotaped and field notes were made to help with reflexive engagement during later data analysis.

In some instances, to develop rapport, the interviews started with asking participants about personal anecdotes of corruption, and in the process, the researcher guided the conversation to the structured interview guide. At the end of each interview, the researcher always enquired if participants felt they have said something that they would like the researcher to withhold from the final analysis. Logistics for member checking was also discussed with participants after each interview for future feedback.

The sensitivity of the study and the possibility of disclosing personal and professional information in case of future dissemination of this study meant interviews had to be kept strictly confidential. This was strictly adhered to and identification codes (e.g. DM1, for Director Male 1 or DF 1 for Director Female 1) were used in storing all interview transcripts. The Raw data was logged onto an excel sheet, before being uploaded in the qualitative data analysis software, MAXQDA 2020. Each interview transcribed was listed with the participant code, source of the interview, interview date, and venue.

3.7.2 Group interviews

In all, three focus group interviews were conducted. The emergent systematic focus group design was employed. The first group (n=8) was used for exploratory purposes. The second group (n=8) was used for verification, and the third group (n=6) was to ensure data saturation and to further explore dissenting views against the consensus in the earlier groups. The use of focus group interaction is recommended when researchers intend to conduct discussions that mimic socio-cultural settings and interaction patterns of participants.

The atmosphere created for interpersonal communication within focus groups elicited attitudinal patterns, values, and norms to explain how the phenomenon under discussion was processed and understood by the group (Charmaz, 2014). The study took into consideration possible limitations that could be posed by the use of focus groups. To ensure that all members felt comfortable sharing their views the researcher made sure that participants did not identify their respective public service organizations. A relaxed setting was chosen to enable discussions to be made in a non-threatening manner. Focus group discussions lasted approximately 120 minutes. The researcher was aided by a research assistant. Before focus group discussions, participants balloted for identification codes (A1-7) and were asked to mention the codes when making individual contributions. They were also given personal information forms to fill using the selected identification codes.

3.7.3 Document Review

Key public service documents were reviewed in addition to the individual and focus group interviews. The documents helped to provide clarification of terms and concepts in line with the first objective of the study, which sought to explore the PSWs constructions of organizational integrity. Documents were systematically analyzed to provide further insight on themes generated from PSWs interview data and on experts' views on the state of anti-corruption interventions in the public service. Table 3 outlines the documents and corresponding sections reviewed.

Table 3
Summary of Documents Reviewed

Key Documents Reviewed	Sections	Content Summary
Code of Conduct for the Ghana Civil Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guiding Principles • Application/ Definition of Conduct and Misconduct • Reporting Procedure • Disciplinary Procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards, norms and, guiding principles for the Civil Service including Reporting Procedures and Administrative Sanctions
Auditors Generals Report (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance and Financial Procedures • Financial Irregularities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on Public Service Financial losses resulting from actions and decisions of public officers
National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP) (2012-2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of Corruption in Ghana • Control Measures • Role of Public Service Organization • Public Service Reforms • Role of Civil Society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies, measures, and Institutional mechanisms to tackle corruption in public institutions
Human Resource Management Policy Framework and Manual for the Ghana Public Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment • Transfers • Sanctions • Promotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resource Management Policies and Procedures
Ghana Anti-Corruption Manual (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-paid Bribes • Post-paid Bribes • Extortion • Whistle Blowers Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Corruption Legislation

3.8 Data Analysis

A hybrid approach (inductive and deductive) to thematic analysis was adopted. Coding was thus driven by data and guided by a coding framework. Six research questions guided the study. Questions explored PSWs constructions of organizational integrity and corruption and their

experiences on corruption decision-making. Data transcription was done concurrently with data collection (Braun & Clarke 2006; Attride-Stirling, 2000).

Thematic analysis was chosen because of its flexibility of not being tied to any epistemological or theoretical perspective. The coding process followed the recommendation of Braun and Clark's (2006) recursive approach as illustrated in Figure 3. This form of analysis has been recommended as an appropriate method for garnering the varied perspectives of different participants and generating unexpected findings (Nowell et al., 2017)

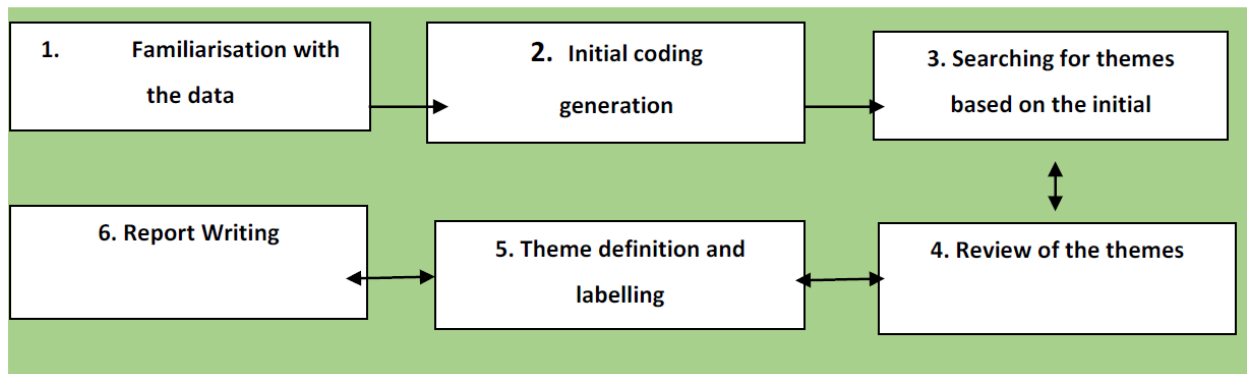


Figure 3: Diagrammatic Representation of the Process of Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clark 2006).

Initial stage: transcripts were read at least 2 times, making notes on content (responses to questions and prompts), context language (notable euphemisms), and checking for accuracy with the original interview recording. Transcripts were then uploaded into MAXQDA 2020. Field journal notes were included with accompanying transcripts.

Second stage: coding was done (using a coding framework) paying attention to content that aligned with the research questions and the conceptual framework of the study (see Figure 2).

Consensus (shared perceptions across codes), contradictions (conflicting perceptions) between the individual and focus group transcripts were noted. Though analysis was guided by the coding framework it was not restricted to the coding framework. Where the researcher came across segments of data that meant something related to the phenomenon but not part of the predetermined codes it was immediately coded. In vivo codes using exact words of participants were captured as narrated by participants. For example, themes on risk preference employed as heuristics in corruption decision making were generated from data-driven codes.

Third stage: codes were checked for similarity and overlap, and codes that seem to cluster around particular research questions were put into themes. A miscellaneous category was created and codes that do not fit into any of the themes were put in there. A thematic table was created with the list of candidate themes and interview extracts. These themes were reviewed to ensure they fitted the original data extract. Some themes were joined to other themes and others were separated where overlaps were noticed. Final themes were discussed with the second coder, academic supervisors, and 2 retired public servants who agreed to post analysis member-checking.

After interviewing 24 individual participants and analyzing the data, it was noticed that codes were recurring thus the likelihood that more interviewing may not yield novel insights. However, to confirm that saturation has been achieved 2 additional interviews were conducted. The data set was approximately 600 pages of transcripts for the individual interviews and 100 pages for the group interviews.

The step by step yet iterative process of data analysis further enabled a well-structured approach to analysis. Conversely, it has been cautioned that the flexibility of thematic analysis if not guided by methodological consistency and coherence can result in the haphazard generation of

themes. The following steps were systematically applied in the present study to ensure coherence and consistency in data analysis.

- An ongoing process of familiarizing oneself with each interview transcribed helped to continuously refine interview probing questions and further enhanced the richness of data collected. This allowed the researcher to go back to interviewees who agreed to member checking to authenticate the transcript and fill in the gaps.
- Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim with the help of a Psychology Master student. A final reliability check of each transcript was however completed by the researcher to fill in gaps.
- In analyzing the data, the constructivist – interpretative nature of the study was taken into consideration, with the awareness that the researcher's experiences and background as a research instrument can affect both the information received and what is chosen for analysis. To guard against restricting analyses to the researcher's own biases and predispositions, coding was done paying attention to coding divergent patterns and rival explanations of participants.
- Field notes were incorporated as comments with the associated transcripts in the qualitative data analysis software, MAXQDA 2020. Field notes made comprised observational notes (eg. describing participants' emotions and interview context), methodological notes (interviewer's methodological lapses and ideas to improve upon in subsequent interviewing), Personal notes (reflections on the researcher's feelings, and new experiences on the topic).
- Inter coder reliability was done after the first 10 individual interviews and one focus group interview had been completed by the researcher. The 10 individual interviews and one focus group transcript were re-coded guided by a coding framework. Though the second coder was also a Ph.D. psychology student, the coder was not involved in

either the data collection or in drafting the coding framework. The MAXQDA intercoder agreement function was employed to calculate the percentage of agreement versus disagreement in the coding of selected transcripts. The average percentage agreement was 88.23. This was considered acceptable (Silverman, 2001).

3.9 Trustworthiness of the Study

As suggested by Guba (1985) qualitative researchers need to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability in the investigative process to guarantee trustworthiness. This means that there is a need to imbue confidence in the truth of the findings, and to clearly state the extent to which findings have usefulness in other contexts. It is further important to establish the degree to which findings are determined by participants and not biased by the researcher.

3.9.1 Credibility

Recommendations on how to ensure credibility by Guba and Lincoln (1989) and Tracy (2017) were applied in this study. Credibility was promoted by triangulating data sources and multiple data collection methods (document reviews, individual interviews, and focus groups and field notes). Prolonged engagement and rapport building were also made to imbue trust and to ensure that rich data was given by participants. Both inter and intra coding were employed and the researcher's reflexivity provided an awareness of preconceptions that were considered throughout the study.

Repetitive and confirmatory questioning was used during the interviews and focus group discussions to ensure that the researcher gets participants meaning accurately.

Additionally, member-checking was employed where transcripts, findings, and interpretations were presented to some participants to test the accuracy of findings and interpretations. Member checking as a way of promoting credibility has been criticized as problematic as discrepancies such as time-lapse between interview dates and later dates chosen for member-checking could make interviewees second-guess their experiences in case of forgetfulness (Carlson, 2010). The researcher, however, found it prudent to include member checking to augment the credibility of the research. PSWs involved in the member checking admitted that the findings resonated with their experiences.

3.9.2 Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research refers to how the research case can be reflected on similar research cases (Nowell et al., 2017). In line with this argument, the present study employed techniques to provide an in-depth description of the PSWs perceptions on organizational integrity and corruption decision making, to contribute to similar qualitative studies, and to initiate a critical appraisal of the findings on the phenomenon of corruption decision making in the Ghanaian public service.

3.9.3 Dependability

To ensure dependability the researcher has documented the research process by providing an audit trail and detailing reasons for methodological and theoretical decisions made in this study. Records of field notes, transcripts, and raw recordings are available and securely stored. The same semi-structured interview guide was used for both focus group and individual interviews to ensure that PSWs responded to similar questions to maintain consistency throughout the data collection process. Additionally, all PSWs interviews were carried out solely by the researcher.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee for the Humanities of the University of Ghana, and the study was conducted under the guidance of the Department of Psychology, University of Ghana. The American Psychological Association (APA) Guidelines were employed to address ethical issues in the study. The APA principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity guided ethical considerations to protect the rights of participants involved in the research.

Participants' informed consent, both written and oral was sought before their enrolment into the study and they were briefed on the study, including the possible risks and benefits associated with their participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were a major concern to the researcher because some PSWs were skeptical that even their voices could be recognized and did not want to be linked in any way to the interviews or their organizations. Participants shared sensitive information about themselves and third parties. With this in mind, participants were assured that all identities that could link their narrations to them will be concealed. Steps to conceal their identities were taken right from the point of soliciting participants for interviews through analyzing the study results. Participants were also alerted about the limitations of the anonymity assured, as the snowball sampling technique used could mean that participants can be recognized by other participants of the study. Data was collected during a period where investigative journalism unearthing corruption was rife in the public service, and various name and shame investigations by the ace investigative Journalist Anas Amereyaw Anas was still being discussed in the electronic and print media in Ghana (BBC, 2019; Ghana Web, 2019). Most participants made it clear they could only give verbal permission and would not like to be linked in any way to their organizations.

Thus, it became necessary to not only obscure officials' job positions but also refrain from including names of public service organizations who participated in this study. In expressing their perceptions on the topic, participants could incriminate themselves, feelings of embarrassment may also arise from exposing attitudes towards corruption. Data transcribed was edited to remove names and contexts that will lead to the identification or implication of any individual. Most expert interviewees were however comfortable with the interviews and some permitted the researcher to acknowledge them in the final report.

3.11 Author's reflection

The researcher's role as the primary research instrument in a qualitative study demands that the researcher reflects on personal motivations and experiences that could interfere with interviewing, transcription, and consequently stifle the voices of participants (Creswell, 2014). Two major life events motivated the research interest in corruption. Firstly, while working with an international non-governmental organization collaborating with a public service in Ghana to eradicate an endemic disease, I experienced instances of extortion and demands for facilitation payments from PSWs. There were times when one wondered why PSWs in charge of approving documents for the release of logistics meant for the NGO project expected to be bribed before due service was rendered? These questions birthed the initial motivation to research on public service integrity and corruption decision-making, not with an abysmal intent but in a bid to understand perceptions of corruption in the public service and the process of corruption decision making, to be able to contribute to scholarship and policy interventions.

A second encounter with a corruption situation during a bereavement heightened the curiosity to understand PSWs corruption decision-making.

One wondered why a public official will demand facilitation payment to render a service to a bereaved person. Covert requests for “Koko” porridge or “something for the boys” (bribes) were made at every stage of the preparation for burial, from the death bed right down to the morgue and into the grave. A cursory literature review on corruption decision-making and the dearth of psychological scholarship on the behavioral aspect of the phenomenon finally deepened the motivation to add to the academic discourse in Ghana, from a psychosocial perspective.

Reflecting on these experiences as well as my values and beliefs on the onset of the study, heightened my consciousness of the effect of these influences on the conceptualization of ideas, data collection, analysis, and reporting. It further brought an awareness of the need to be unobtrusive and sensitive to participants' narratives to achieve the aim of collecting rich and meaningful data.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter details the findings of the study. In instances where both individual and focus group data yielded similar perceptions, quotes from either individual or group data that best-captured participants consensus were used to support the findings. However, where the views of focus group participants conflicted with individual interview data, quotes that reflect the dissenting views were also presented.

4.1 Biographical Information of Participants

48 PSWs and 8 Experts participated in the study. The majority of these participants were male (n=35); were within the ages of 46 to 55 years (n=21) and had tertiary level qualification (n=44). The majority of participants (n=33) had over 11 years of working experience as public servants and 30 participants self-reported to be Christians. The number of Christian participants is not surprising as Ghana has about 71.2% Christians as against other religions (Addai et al., 2013). A description of the research participants is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Demographics Details of Participants

Item	Category	Number
Sex	Male	35
	Female	21
Age	25 – 35	15
	36-45	14
	46 – 55	21
	56 – 65	6
Education	Tertiary	44
	Secondary/Diploma	12
Years of Work	1-10	29
	11-20	25
	21 -30	8
	31 – 40	2
Religion	Muslim/Islam	9
	Christian	30
	Other	17
Marital Status	Single	13
	Married	37
	Other	6

Source: Field Work Data (2020)

4.2 PSWs Constructions of Organizational Integrity

In exploring participants' constructions of organizational integrity, five main themes were generated. These were adherence to codes of conduct, application of work values, formal organizational norms, informal organizational norms and corrupt acts. Figure 4 shows the superordinate themes, main themes, and subthemes.

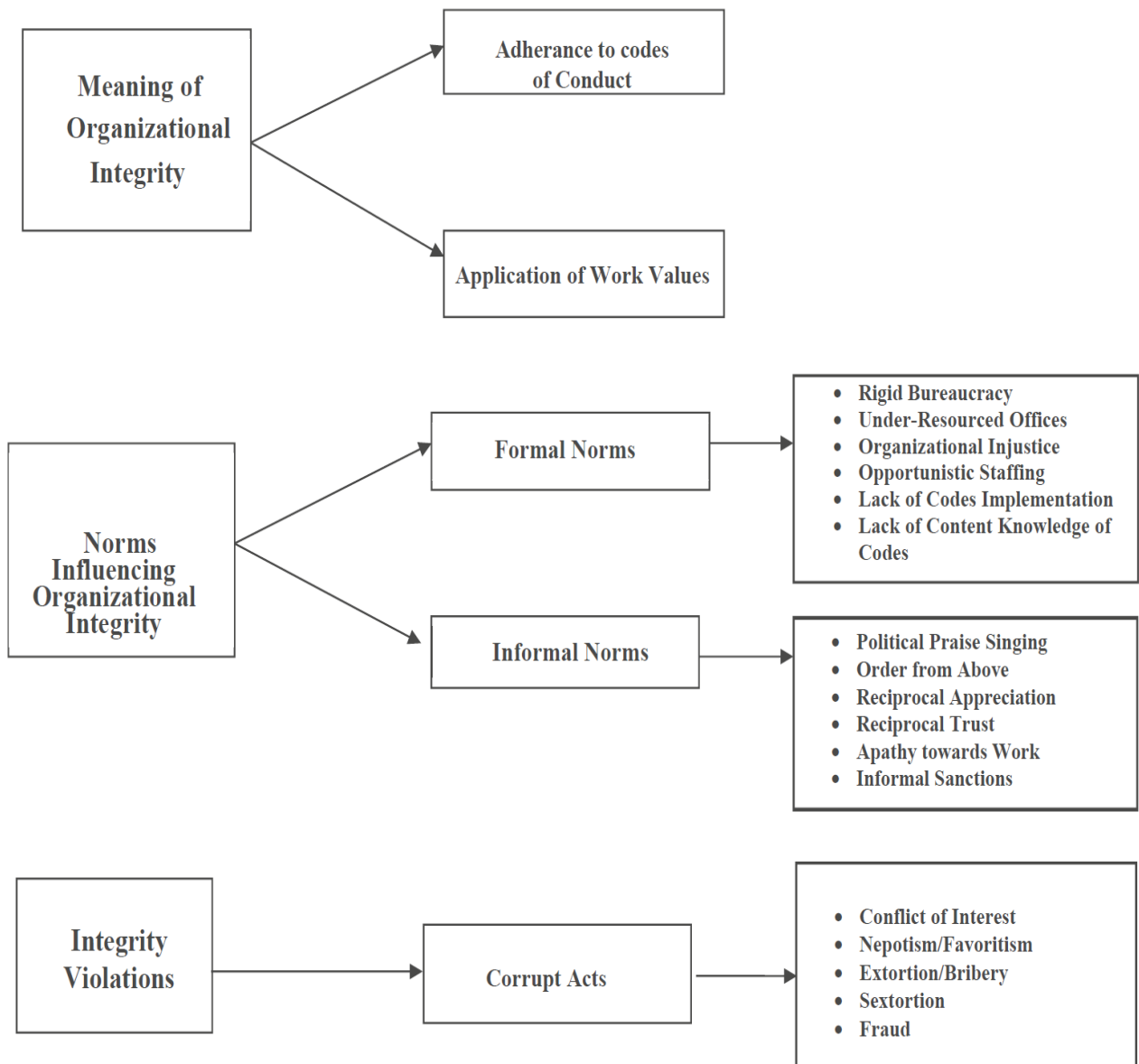


Figure 4 Summary of Superordinate Themes, Main Themes and Sub Themes of PSWs Constructions of Organizational Integrity

4.2.1 PSWs Meaning of Organizational Integrity

Two main concepts underlie their participants understanding of organizational integrity: 1) adherence to codes and 2) application of work values.

4.2.1.1 Adherence to codes

In this study, individual participants described organizational integrity as an organization-wide alignment with codes of conduct and procedures of the public service. This perception was also a shared consensus in the 3 focus groups.

The public service has integrity when the majority of its public servants are known to work within the rules and regulations of their Ministry. Look at the organization XYZ [name of organization anonymized]. It is seen as corrupt because the majority is lawless. Many of the big men are put there by politicians who control their integrity. We don't have neutral professionalism. (DM5. male 49 years, 19 years of service).

.... guidelines are there to show everyone how to behave as a public servant, so if people step out of that directive it means they are not working with integrity,..... I agree the government sector lacks integrity, the laid down guidelines tend to be a human face, so as a public servant you have to read the lips of the one above you, that is your guideline. (FG2, A1, male, 27yrs, 2yrs of service).

These participants acknowledged that PSWs are required to obey public service working rules. PSWs' inability to adhere to these directives was ascribed to restrictions imposed on their professionalism by political interference. These narrations also suggest that sometimes PSWs are required by superiors to follow directives that are contrary to the public service guidelines.

4.2.1.2 Application of work values

More than half of the individual participants (n=19) described organizational integrity as working with **impartiality, transparency, and authenticity**. *Impartiality* was described in this context as a situation in which rewards and sanctions are meted out to PSWs equally

irrespective of an individual's position. Transparency was described as openly working according to the regulations of the public service while authenticity denoted being honest in interpersonal working relationships and service delivery.

...even a whole organization can be corrupt. When the whole organization does not have integrity, everyone lies to everyone, there is no open and honest communication. This lack of openness and honesty breeds corruption. (DM6, 48yrs, 12yrs of service)

.. The lack of integrity is not only in the public service but in all the three arms of government. The Ministers and Directors up there will lie to you and put you in a tight spot to do their bids, without even letting you in on the bad aspects. (DM25, 47yrs, 13 years of service)

The integrity we are talking about suffers when you are afraid to punish a subordinate because you know that officer was brought in by a politician. Even when you sanction, there will always be someone who is sent to beg for the wrongdoer. In the end, the person will just be relocated to another Ministry. (FG1, A4, 44yrs 13yrs of service)

Interestingly, focus group participants were of the perception that organizational integrity depended largely on the public service Directors' unwavering commitment to the public service values. The notion that organizational integrity rested on public service leadership was justified by focus group participants with the explanation that staff in the administrative public service grade have very little to contribute to organizational integrity, as they have to act according to the dictates of Directors. They further shared experiences of helplessness in exercising their duty of adhering to organizational codes and regulations. They described themselves as victims

of integrity violations.

The whole organization's integrity rests on you the public service Director. If you are professional and principled in everything you do, and you do not have any hidden agendas then you will have the courage to abide by the rules of the job no matter what. You will further apply these rules without fear and in fairness to everyone no matter what these politicians say. (FG2, A7, female 33yrs, 4 yrs of service)

I can say my Ministry has integrity when the Directors live with integrity to set an example. It is not about us we are just down there. Our integrity is not what Ghanaians are seeing when they say the Ministry of XYZ has no integrity. The bosses collect the bribes, they don't follow the rules and we are just asked to follow orders. On my desk, I always have backlogs, because bosses want to satisfy friends and relatives and then I have to work with their long protocol lists instead of following due procedure. (FG3, A1 male, 28yrs, 3 years of service).

The narratives indicate that PSWs consider the role and actions of Directors as very critical for ensuring organizational integrity, especially where their actions may influence subordinates' commitment to these public service values. It can also be inferred that public service Directors' overbearing administrative requests trigger feelings of unfairness in these subordinates.

4.2.2 Formal Norms in the Ghanaian Public Service

Rigid bureaucracy, under-resourced offices, organizational Injustice, opportunistic staffing, the lack of implementation of codes, and the lack of content knowledge of codes emerged as formal norm deviations in the public service.

4.2.2.1 Rigid Bureaucracy

There was a majority consensus in both individual and group interviews that working procedures and authority relationships in the public service are overly regulated and routinized. This allows integrity violations to thrive.

....the system itself is slow, it contributes to giving the public service a bad name. this file you see in front of me has passed through many channels of authorization. It gives the bad nuts the chance to demand facilitation payments. They will intentionally delay because they know without their approval the process cannot move to the next stage. The frustration citizens feel, we also feel it. (DM 17, male, 50yrs, 19yrs of service)

I supervise the capturing of biometric data in [XYZ] (name of organization withheld). This is the scenario: Now they say computerized, but the process is still rigid and manual. because if the system becomes fully automated someone will lose their "goro". There is no efficiency at the endpoint of this tedious workflow where clients can check the status of their xxx. So they have to pay along the process to get information or make the process faster. (FG1, A4, 44yrs, 13yrs of service)

The illustrations given by participants imply that the bureaucratic system in the public service is bringing unintended consequences. The narration suggests that the time-consuming procedures are emotionally exhausting for participants and affect teamwork.

4.2.2.2 Under-resourced offices

The majority of the participants in this study indicated that the public service is highly under-resourced in terms of office equipment and stationery. For example, a female director explained

that the lack of office space, stationery, and equipment, coupled with political interference in recruitment processes increase PSWs proclivities to corruption.

There is a lot of unqualified staff on one job because of this “job for the boys” issue created by politicians. Sometimes even office spaces are lacking, not to talk about computers and other equipment. This means the average worker has to go the extra mile, some even work with their personal calculators and pens. How can you blame such workers for collecting bribes? I am not saying it is okay, but I am saying the system is not helping its officers to act right. (DF4, 57 female, 19 yrs of service)

....very soon we have to buy office furniture from our meager salary. Either subventions are delayed, inadequate, or embezzled. We use our salary to buy bathroom soap, toilet rolls, even A4 sheets. These small tokens fill up the holes such purchases put in our salary; they are not bribes. Clients are not forced. (FG2, A1, 27yrs, 2years of service)

It can be deduced from participants' accounts that some recipients of bribes consider such exchanges between them and clients as compensable gifts. The notion that they deserve these small bribes because they use their resources to purchase some office supplies, may offset any guilt likely to be associated with corrupt intentions. Gradually, this self-justification may cause these PSWs to engage in more serious corrupt acts.

4.2.2.3 Organizational injustice

This theme captured PSWs perceptions of fairness of organizational procedures, rewards, and sanctions. The theme was a majority concern in all focus groups and the dominant view of individual participants (n= 20), that *godfatherism* has introduced a high level of organizational

injustice. Participants reported that both rewards and sanctions are applied arbitrarily and depend on “*who you know*” or “*who is a favorite*”. Decision-making processes are flawed as laid down organizational procedures are not applied, thus for a similar offense, someone may receive a warning or a query while another person will be meted demotion or termination of appointment.

..the office is inhuman and not responsive to individual performance because of favoritism. The links you have are the glue to keep you in the service and up the ladder. If you want to wait for due process to move you up the ladder, you will stay down there. You have to lobby your way up. (DF 8, 53yrs 20yrs of service)

There is an avalanche of rules, and more rules are being added, but they apply only to some people. The inner core don't obey the rules and they do not get punished either. There is a saying that “the stick used in beating a wild animal should not be used for a domestic animal”. If the bad name will stop in the public service, the stick (rules) must be applied to everyone equally as a deterrent. (FG3, A2, 34yrs, 3 years of service)

Correspondingly, participants surmised that since working according to the rules was not rewarded, working honestly cannot be sacrificed over the discomfort of being punished with a punitive transfer for not “*playing the game*”. There was also an indication that the need to avoid the negative spillover of organizational injustice to their families coerces them to accept corrupt acts. A focus group participant framed it as follows:

Meritocracy doesn't reflect these days in promotions and hiring. You can be pushed aside if you don't play the game. You cannot be fired but you can be reduced to nothing just because someone doesn't like your moral stance. Imagine you have your

whole family in Accra, your children are schooling, will you think about honesty and disrupt your family life to be taken to a village somewhere with no proper school or electricity? (FG1 A7, Female, 40yrs, 5 yrs of service)

Participants also highlighted that corrupt networks sustain organizational injustice in the public service. These corrupt networks comprise tribal, political, old students, and even church affiliations. Belonging to such networks in the office meant one could get away with unacceptable work behavior or favored with promotions, while those in the outgroups get punished undeservedly sometimes for reporting wrongdoing or refusing to join in corrupt networks.

People are unfairly punished with vindictive transfers for rather working according to the rules. When I was a Deputy Director I was not in charge of my integrity. You are willing to sign an overinflated invoice just to belong. Because others will do it anyway and you will be treated as an outcast. Some even belong to the same church group, but they are helping each other to steal. (DM11, Male 55 years, 20 years of service)

Also worthy of attention is that some PSWs narrated that navigating the corrupt network and processes harms their mental health. In the words of a participant, it is *disturbing to go against your will* and join the corrupt networks to keep your daily bread.

I feel divided and unhappy when I think I have to come to work every day and go against my will and work on xxx forms that these “goro boys” (middlemen) bring. But I have no choice because that is the system. Even if other people like myself do not want to do it, we cannot fight the system, we will be defeated. It disturbs me a lot, but I have to keep my job. (FG1 A7, female, 5yrs of service)

Some focus group participants emphasized that depending on the Directors in charge of certain Ministries procedural justice is not compromised. There is strict impartiality in administering sanctions and rewards. The following quote supports this contrary view.

We have the codes of conduct in a book form for each staff you take it and you sign and monthly we do knowledge updates. You are consistently told that don't do this or that. For the past 2 or 3 years at my organization, we have been educated on our conduct. We even have a Compliance Unit. If you fall foul you are invited to a committee and asked to bring a lawyer to come and explain yourself first, no matter your grade you will be sanctioned. (FG22 A4 Male 35year, 3 years of service)

Participants' perceptions of procedural and distributive injustice may increase dishonesty and apathy towards work, especially in situations where such employees feel they have not been treated with respect and sensitivity. From participant DM 11's narrations, it can be deduced that the ill-effect of organizational injustice could result in feelings of helplessness and possibly affect PSWs psychological health. Some PSWs see themselves as victims of the corrupt system. Although these PSWs experience inconsistencies between their values and corrupt behavior, yet they compromise to avoid victimization.

4.2.2.4 Opportunistic staffing

According to individual participants (n=9) and focus groups 1 and 2, some public services are regarded as privileged postings. A Public Servant can only be sent there if the person is in the good books of "certain big people". The perception is that PSWs can make money when sent to these public services. Other colleagues will therefore mock any public servant in a privileged post who wants to eschew corruption and work according to the organizational procedures.

In most instances some PSWs are posted there to work for the “*godfathers*” not necessarily to render public service but for personal gains. As narrated by a participant:

It has become a habit that if you don't have a godfather you will not be sent to or survive in some particular public services. For example, public servants posted to (XYZ) [name of organizational withheld] are favorite children. Over there you can make a lot of money, if you are slow in doing connections, you will be asked: “if you came there to look at the sea”. Even in the same organization, some will be pushed into a corner and others will be put at locations where they can get gifts and bribes. (DF12, 55years, 22 years of service).

When we were employed as public servants, we just took forms from the head of civil service and were objectively selected and posted. In our day, we could even choose which public sector we want to serve in. Now it is different. The adverts you will see in the newspapers are for public services no one wants to work in. The other ones the politicians and directors have personalized them. Only their children and relatives work there. (FG2 A2, 35yrs, 6yrs of service)

The primary concern in the quotes above is that having a godfather may imply that public servants posted to the supposed privileged public sectors may feel they cannot be easily sanctioned or dismissed. This warped self-perception may increase their propensity for corruption. The claim that their actions are backed by godfathers will prevent other colleagues from blowing the whistle on corrupt acts in such public sectors.

4.2.2.5 Lack of Content knowledge of Codes

More than half of the individual interviewees (n=16) were unable to remember or paraphrase portions of the public service codes of conduct when probed by the researcher. These participants acknowledged the existence of the general public service code of conduct and codes of conduct for their respective organizations, however content knowledge of the codes of conduct was lacking. Some focus group participants made references to portions of their respective ministries codes of conduct, but their narratives suggested that they do not go out of their way to search for and scrutinize these codes and regulations. In the words of one participant “*one only hears of portions of these codes when someone violates them*”

Errm. I will not be able to say them of the head. ...frankly speaking, you are not oriented as a public servant, there is no consistent orientation. ...for something to become a part and parcel of you, you must be trained. When someone gets into trouble then you hear of the particular rule they have violated. (DM25, 47 years, 13 years of service)

A lot of Ministries, Departments, and other Agencies (MDAs) have their own set of codes of conduct but we all draw from the Civil Service Code. Measures must be put in place to bring our minds to the codes if they are still applicable. I know as a public servant I cannot do my private job, but I do not remember if I read this or someone told me. I don't know where to find the code but I think they will be on the internet. (DF20, 42yrs, 12yrs of service)

Participants above shifted the responsibility of familiarizing themselves with the Civil Service Code of Conduct to public service Management and blamed their ignorance of tenets of the codes to lack of orientation and training.

This implies that for these codes to be effective, implementation could be supported by ongoing integrity training and nudges to serve as constant reminders. It further suggests that the codes may not be of value to public service integrity management if public servants are not aware of, or interested in knowing the behavior standards required of them.

4.2.2.6 Implementation of Codes

PSWs stated that there was laxity in the implementation and sanctioning of the Code. For example, some participants described the Code of Conduct as *a retiree and a window dressing*. A participant indicated that as a Director she had no control over sanctioning of staff misconduct. At best, one can query the perpetrator but most often they *get off the hook* depending on “*whom you know*”

These guidelines are just sentences, officers read them and ignore them. No one goes strictly by them. The Codes are on retirement they are there but not working. Implementation is passive, you have no control of sanctions if officers break the rules. At best you can only query, many who misbehave a lot do so because of this “whom you know” thing in the public service. It will get them off your hook. (DF9, 52 years, 20 years of service)

At (XYZ) the implementation is a window dressing, it depends on your grade. For example, we have a clean desk policy. But we are sometimes flippant with this rule. Two people left sensitive documents, the junior officer was taken to the disciplinary committee and sanctioned. The person with the higher grade left a document classified as more sensitive but the man wasn't sanctioned. (FG2, A5, 31yrs, 5yrs of service)

Participants' description of the public service codes suggests that the attempt to instill integrity through the introduction of these standards of behavior is failing due to supervisory negligence. There seems to be a culture of impunity and preferential treatment in terms of punishment of misconduct. This may explain the redundancy of the public service code of conduct in positively influencing PSWs attitudes and behaviors.

4.2.3 Informal Norms in the Ghanaian Public Service

Informal norms are described as acceptable social behaviors that govern working relationships in the public service. Varied phrases were used by PSWs to signify public service norms that influence organizational integrity. These were clustered under the subthemes; political praise-singing, order from above, reciprocal appreciation, apathy towards work, and informal sanctions.

4.2.3.1 Political praise-singing

Participants expressed concern that many public service leaders are unable to work with integrity because of political praise-singing, which they described as hypocritically agreeing to instructions of politicians because of expected favors and lack of courage. They explained that interruptions and counter orders by politicians to do the bid of the political party in power has rendered most public service Directors powerless.

... you will get contracts and travel per diems if you do dummy respect. Honorable you are right oooo...yes boss you are an expert oo.. you are the best person for this position. It is normal to do this even if the Minister is clearly wrong. Our Directors do not dare to say no to politicians. (FG 1, A5 Male 35 years, 7 years of service).

Another participant narrated that:

The influence of Politicians and government-appointed Ministers is too much. ... they are always behind the scenes controlling the Directors. It is not only our Directors who are afraid, but we also fear to disobey. They have relatives in the ministries who will bypass the Directors and report to politicians. To keep my post if something is wrong I just shut up and agree with everything. (FG2, A6, 28yrs, 3yrs of service).

One can glean from the above account that self-interest and the fear of victimization make participants overlook the corrupt activities of politicians. Especially when such public servants expect rewards from politicians, they may connive with them to disrupt the chain of command and rules of the public service. Working with such fear and uncertainty can induce job anxiety in some PSWs, and ultimately affect their service delivery.

4.2.3.2 Order from above

Individual participants (n=17) and all three focus groups linked this theme to the issue of unquestionable obedience to authority in the Ghanaian culture. This theme was described as an entrenched tradition in the public service. Participants explained that it is regarded as disrespectful to openly question superiors' instructions in the public service, especially in the presence of other colleagues. The "order from above," as described by participants simply means *obey without complaining*.

Sometimes it is not as if public servants sit down and plan to be corrupt. Disobeying the order from above can land you into a web of trouble that whatever you do you may not be able to disentangle yourself, once your boss tells you "order from above," it means the boss himself is now a puppet so he cannot do anything for you. He is already kowtowing. How do you then the subordinate remain standing (FG 2 A6, male, 28years,

3 years of service)

A male deputy director framed it as follows

It is a silent rule that “yes sir, master” (unquestionable obedience) will not spoil anything, so you just have to obey, most often without argument. This is what we inherited from colonialism. The whole thing is about approvals. If the paper is signed and you have to just do what the signed paper says, who are you to question them about anything on the paper? (DM 17, 50yrs, 19yrs of service)

The feeling of being coerced to follow instructions without questioning implies that even when participants recognize corrupt acts, they may find it difficult to refrain for fear of displeasing superiors and being seen as disobedient. This may influence PSWs adherence to formal procedures and increase their tolerance for corruption.

4.2.3.3 Apathy towards work

This theme was a dominant discourse in all interviews (both individual and group). Participants lamented that the public service work is perceived as working for a “*faceless employer*” also expressed in the popular public service phrase *aban edzuma* (work of the government). Due to this perception, most public servants adopt a lackadaisical approach to work. It is frowned upon when a worker wants to do things differently and in the words of a participant you will be asked if “*the work is for your father*” Two respondents expressed this as follows

People believe they are working for a faceless employer so there is no one to be accountable to. You will see that by 4 o'clock the parking is full of people already going home. And it is normal so sometimes when you want to stay on and work to the best of your ability, someone will ask you if the work belongs to your father. Same way if you

try saving the public service from financial loss you will be asked if the money will be added to your salary. (FG 3 A5, Female, 31 years, 4 years of service)

Once you say you are a public servant you are tagged as corrupt, not time conscious, lazy, “always not on seat” (always absent).. this tag is not totally true, salaries are low and conditions of service do not permit public servant to retire honorably. Even if we love our jobs, we have to do other things to make money. Some are also in school. We juggle the time to make ends meet (DF20, 42yrs, 12yrs of service)

It can be deduced from these participants’ explanations that other non-work related reasons explain PSWs apathy towards work. The genesis of the mal-administrative behaviors such as presenteeism and absenteeism cited by the participants above seems to be from the breakdown of effective supervision and perceptions of income inequity. Consequently, workers take undue advantage of the lack of oversight to do their personal businesses during official working hours.

4.2.3.4 Reciprocal appreciation

This theme was a dominant narration in focus group 1 and the views of individual participants (n=7). They stated that it is expected PSWs thank their bosses even for deserved promotions and other formal rewards. Co-workers expect appreciation either in cash or in-kind for fulfilling their daily duties. As reported by a participant:

Someone scratches your back for you to scratch theirs another time. After you pass a promotion interview you go and thank your Boss even if by word of mouth. If in future you step on her toes she will remind you she promoted you. Or if she wants a favor she will remind you, she promoted you (FG1 1 A7 Female, 40 years, 5 years of service).

There is a false consensus that the left hand baths the right and the right hand baths the left (appreciation), we have come to believe it is a good thing to do. So, everyone expects something from everyone. Even to do their official duties colleagues expect to be cajoled and thanked as if they are doing you a personal favor (D10, 50yrs, 18yrs of service).

The expressions above indicate that the working relationship in the public sector is based on mutual benefit and exchange. This seems to have created negative expectations of appreciation that has transcended the informal work environment into the official environment. The expectation that co-workers must be *cajoled* to do their job could disrupt effective teamwork as co-workers' conceptions of how they are appreciated may dictate the effort they put into personal performance.

4.2.3.5 Reciprocal trust

Participants (n=19) reported that there is an unspoken agreement of reciprocal trust among public servants when it comes to reporting unacceptable work behavior or violations of work principles. It is trusted that when a colleague gets into trouble they will be *covered up*, and considered inappropriate to blow the whistle on colleagues. Consequently, integrity violations are hardly reported to the appropriate channels. Such an attempt would be considered an attack on group cohesion and existence. Any integrity violation would rather be resolved quietly with an informal warning, than with formal sanctions.

..... they will tell you if you hang your friend in his low moment the same rope that you used to hang your colleague can be used to hang you one day. "Bone bata onipa biara

ho” (everyone is prone to sin) So. forgive and cover your colleague., maybe the devil caused the person to behave badly. People trust that others will protect them even in wrongdoing and indeed no one wants to be the one to go and report a colleague (DM2, Male 57 years, 21 years of service)

....., we watch each other’s back. When people see trouble coming they will warn you..... to see someone lose their daily bread is a painful thing. You only see people reporting someone or leaving the person to suffer shame when that person is always reporting others or behaving like a saint.

Another participant buttressed this point.

There is the positive side of what xxx (name withheld) is saying, which I really like. A sick colleague exhausted all her sick leave but colleagues did her work for a long time so she can receive her salary. Even the Director helped so that her salary will not be stopped. We were together on this till the lady passed on.

Comments of participants on the issue of reciprocal trust revealed that on the interpersonal level this norm is considered important. The norm is also backed by religiosity which may make it more acceptable. However, this informal norm can also sustain integrity violations such as nepotism in the public service, as directors may want to employ people they can trust in certain positions to cover their vulnerabilities and strengthen corrupt networks.

4.2.3.6 Informal sanctions

All focus group participants and six individual participants described this theme as a key driver of corruption in the public service. PSWs mentioned that they conform to the expectations of

corrupt colleagues to avoid being ostracized and victimized.

If you attempt to bring imbalance in the “goro” (corruption) system you will be dealt with, you have put yourself in the opposition and they will torment you, victimize you, isolate you, and set traps for you until you conform or ask for a transfer. It is better you watch them quietly or join them. Here in the XYZ [name of organization anonymized], it is very difficult to say no. I just oblige because there is no way out. I need them to also do my work. I am even afraid they will juju (cast a spell) me so I shut up. (FG2, A5, male, 31yrs, 5 yrs of service)

It is very uncomfortable to be tagged as “kokonsa” (a gossip) as soon as they see you coming everyone will stop talking. It is as if you are a plague. What is your crime?, you don’t conform to the shady deals(FG1, A1 35yrs, 7 years of service).

I fell into a problem like that....., colleagues walked into my office and openly scolded me for speaking the truth. Until I got transferred, to drink water in the office was a problem. To sit on my chair in the office I was always afraid (FG3, A2, 34yrs, 3 years of service).

The narrations above suggest that informal sanctions could include social rejection, verbal confrontations, and physical harm. These perceived threats may also undermine employee health and safety, constrain organizational whistleblowing and consequently affect PSWs adherence to formal work rules and regulations.

4.2.4 Corrupt Acts

A typology of corrupt acts generated from both individual and focus group were themed under fraud, bribery, extortion, sextortion, nepotism, and conflict of interest. Some Participants explained that opportunities and constraints such as, slowing down work processes or sabotaging procedures are deliberately created to facilitate integrity violations. As illustrated by a participant:

.... there was a request to systematize things to reduce control of the human factor so the Ghana accounting payment system GIFMIS was introduced. But some accountants said the system wasn't working, maybe it was a genuine concern but still after the issue was addressed with their feedback, some still sabotaged the operation in certain areas to create fraudulent loopholes. Some Public Servants can intentionally create an artificial shortage of forms to put clients in a tight spot to pay bribes for quick services.

(DF7, female, 51yrs 15rs of service)

4.2.4.1 Fraud

A substantial proportion of individual participants (n=21) mentioned that figures are manipulated and overinflated on documents by PSWs who want to enrich themselves at the expense of government. Participants from all 3 focus groups expressed similar views on fraud in the public service. They also mentioned that some PSWs tamper with their biographical data to delay retirement and others present false academic certificates to get promotions. In the words of an individual interviewee.

....several wrong things are going on, changing figures everywhere and on everything. From birth certificates to academic records, procurement frauds, and mismanagement of public funds. The rule is that to get a fair deal you have to provide three invoices.

For purchases, you find people who over-inflate invoices just to get something back.
(DF21, Female, 45 years, 10 years of service).

I was put on a committee to scrutinize and approve a bid. My recommendation excluded certain bids that did not meet the standard. The head of the committee who was a close friend called me to advise me to include the bids I had excluded and gave me an envelope with cash. When I refused he was bold to tell me that it can be dangerous, people go all out to make sure no one stands in their way in such matters. My recommendation was completely ignored and some of the unqualified persons got the bid (DF15, 55yrs, 25yrs of service)

4.2.4.2 Favoritism/Nepotism

There was a majority consensus that favouritism and nepotism are used in the public service to build impermeable corrupt networks. Friends and families of public servants get favours and opportunities over better-qualified persons. Interestingly, some participants insisted that there is nothing wrong with favouring relatives and friends so long as there are laws to ensure everyone works within the regulations. The negative perception of nepotism is expressed below:

...for contracts, the procedures are there. People must tender but you are asked to give the contract to a particular person, all the others are a charade. So for example, the person is to receive an ECG (Electricity Corporations of Ghana) contract, they know the person doesn't even have a ladder to work with but you are tasked to go ahead and give the contract to the person (DM23, Male 57 years, 25 years of service).

Some focus group participants vehemently defended and touted nepotism as a buffer for an unjust and already corrupt system. In the words of a participant

How can you look in your uncle or sister's face and refuse to employ their child because of meritocracy?. In Ghana educating an individual sometimes is the task of the whole family so if now you are in a good position you cannot turn your face when your relatives need help. Everyone is doing it. Look at the medical school, look at the law school. Isn't it mostly children of lawyers and judges?. The system wants us to use nepotism, it is not nepotism that is destroying the system. Chances are few, the whole system is already corrupt, so it has become survival of relations. (FG1, A7, male, 26yrs, 1 yr of service)

I always say that if you want to punish nepotism with imprisonment then the whole of Ghana will be a prison. Some of these things cannot be punished. We all help friends and relatives. Without that our society will come to a halt (FG2, A1, 32yrs, 5yrs of service)

4.2.4.3 Extortion/bribery

This theme appeared in all individual and group interviews. Participants narrated that most public servants are confronted daily with extortion and bribery decisions. PSWs who want to make extra monies collude with other colleagues to extract additional payments from clients. Participants explained that extortion and bribery thrive on networking. Monies extorted from clients, which was described as “*the brown envelop or weight*” is used to facilitate service delivery either down or up the working hierarchy in offices.

Sometimes PSWs are required to put *a brown envelope or weight* on an official document to get quick approvals or signatures even from their colleague PSWs.

..... I was told by colleagues up the line to encourage clients who want prompt service to add money to the forms. These monies are collected and shared at the end of the day. I refused and now the xxx forms that came through me are always delayed because they took forms with weights from other officers and worked on them and refused to work promptly on mine. (FG3, A4, female, 27yrs, 3 yrs of service)

Bribery has come to stay, it is the way business runs in the public sector. We understand each other. If you are generous the system helps you, if not the system is against you. Things are very slow so if you want things to move faster you have to put something "on the table" (bribe). Now they say on "on the table" because it is no secret. Formerly it was "under the table (DM26, 53yrs, 22yrs of service)

Some participants in focus groups 1 and 2 and a few individual participants (n =4) attributed the endemic nature of bribery and extortion to the attitude of some clients. These participants stated that not all PSWs demand and accept bribes, some willingly render services but are confronted with the dilemma of offending clients who insist on giving them gifts.

Some colleagues shamelessly ask for bribes indirectly, either before they give you a service or after the service, they will look at you like, "respect yourself" do what is needful. But I want to quickly add that others are also genuinely helpful, and then people will force to secretly give them something after they render the service. If you refuse, some get offended or say you are proud. (DF 7, Female 51 years, 15 years of service)

The quotes above indicate that the lines between the required integrity behavior and bribery is blurred. Solicitation from colleagues may make PSWs who do not want to engage in extortion succumb easily to the act to satisfy colleagues. These narrations also suggest that facilitation bribes benefit PSWs and clients, indicating that the interests of the PSW and the briber is considered, ignoring the overall interest and reputation of the Public Service. Facilitation bribes may deprive clients who are unable to make such payments urgent services.

4.2.4.4 Sextortion

The act of extracting sexual favors from clients or fellow PSWs for service was mentioned by group participants and was also confirmed by individual interviewees (n=7). Participants mentioned that females are mostly the victims of this gendered form of corruption in the public service. They are coerced to give sexual favors for needed services, and some females willingly give sexual *entertainment* to get these services.

I think that many people will not discuss this, I call it “entertainment corruption”. Have you heard about the (xxx Galamsay) [name of person withheld] issue, some public servants are perverts, when they can’t get money from you they will not mind asking you for sex. This thing is now rampant but not seen as corruption. In most public services it is happening. Ladies freely exchange sex, for promotions, to cover queries, to get contracts. (DM3, Male 56 years, 27 years of service)

A focus group participant framed it as follows

... is either fa sika be dzi (bring money for service) or fa wu tu be dzi (or give sexual favors). Why are we focused on the money part of the corruption and when sex is asked for a service, or for positions that are your rightful place we say it is sexual harassment.

These perverts don't care if you are married or not. It is so disturbing and disgraceful, but you cannot expose them. (FG3, female, 25yrs, 2yrs of service)

Participants' quotes above suggest that this gendered form of abuse of official power to gain sexual favors has been overlooked and not sanctioned in the public sector. The narrations also imply that this form of corruption can be detrimental to victims' mental health, yet victims consider it embarrassing to blow the whistle on perpetrators.

4.3 Organizational Integrity and PSWs Corruption Decision-Making

This section addresses the findings of the second objective relating to the role of organizational integrity in corruption decision making. PSWs' corruption decision-making was tapped using vignettes. Participants were asked to advise a vignette character (DB) in making decisions to either refute or accept a corrupt act in three different scenarios. Participants were also asked to identify any potential corrupt acts inherent in the scenarios and to further give their perceptions on how best to resolve the vignette scenario. The vignettes were successful in delineating informal and formal organizational norms tapped on by PSWs in advising the vignette character. Participants' engagement with the vignette exercise provided further insights into challenges, opportunities, and threats associated with corruption decision-making in the public service. Comparisons made by some participants between the vignette scenarios and their personal experiences suggest that for some participants, the advice they gave to the main vignette character (DB) reflected their behavioral intention. For example, a focus group participant backed up his recommendation on how DB should resolve **vignette 1** by citing a personal experience.

I have personally been given a preordered list for job incumbents even before the

interviews were done. It is called the protocol list. We had to compulsorily employ those on the protocol list whether they pass the interviews or not before other people are considered. This case is normal especially in the public services that can employ directly. This is no secret, that is the reality in the public service. DB should just do it if he doesn't want trouble. (FG1, Male, 35yrs, 7 years of service)

Three formal organizational norms, content knowledge of codes, implementation of codes, and organizational injustice influenced participants' corruption decision-making in the three vignette scenarios. PSWs also drew on informal organizational norms in advising the vignette character. Informal sanctions, order from above, reciprocal appreciation, apathy towards work, were the informal organizational norms generated from vignette data. The formal and informal organizational norms that influenced PSWs corruption decision-making in the three vignettes are summarized in figure 5.

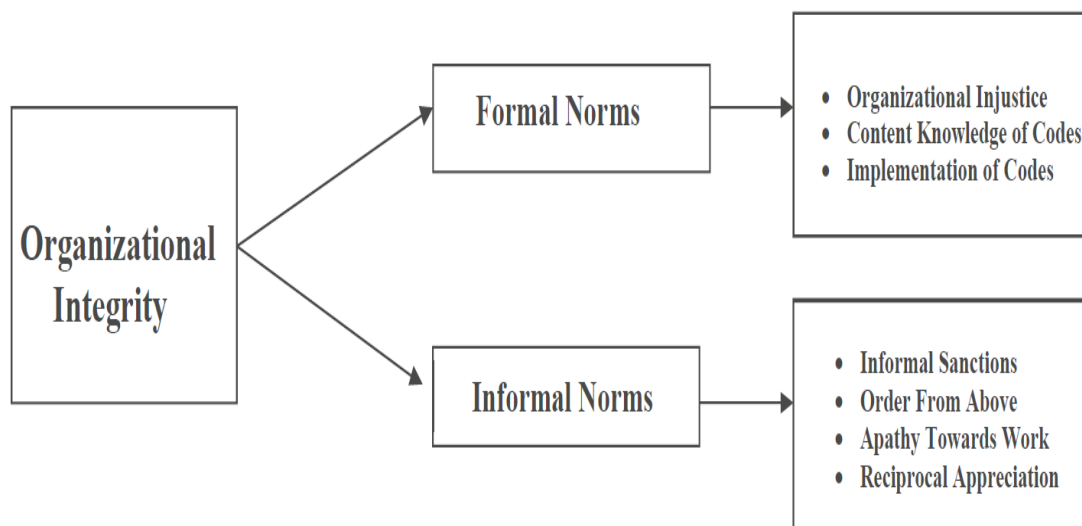


Figure 5: Summary of Themes and Subthemes of Organizational Norms Influencing PSWs Corruption Decision-Making in the Vignettes.

4.3.1 Vignette 1

Vignette 1 depicted an interpersonal corruption scenario involving a request by a superior for a relation to be employed in the same organization he works in, although the relative was not selected after an interview. The implementation of codes of conduct, content knowledge of codes, organizational injustice, and informal sanctions were identified as the norms that influenced PSWs corruption decision-making in this vignette. The vignette scenario was described by individual participants (n=25) and all 3 focus groups as a clear case of nepotism. However, some of these participants (n=9) were of the view that nepotism should not be directly classified as corruption.

I agree meritocracy must work. In the Public Service, it is easier to hire but difficult to terminate even if the person is not performing. This case is nepotism, we can say all the ...isms..., but in Ghana, we are all related to each other. It is not really corruption, this issue of meritocracy versus favoritism and nepotism, look, it is dicey. It is not as if once you employ a relation of yours you are condoning a wrong?. (DM10, male, 50yrs, 18yrs of service)

Individual participants (n=17) advised the vignette character to accept the corrupt act of nepotism instead of **implementing the codes of conduct** and working procedures of the public service. The majority of focus groups interviewees also shared this view.

I think the guy should just agree and employ the oga's (director's) daughter. What difference can he make to the situation by being strict on going according to the procedures of employment? If he doesn't do it he will be removed from the post and someone else will be put in his place to do it. (FG1, A8, 32yrs, 1yr of service)

Going around to tell the other panel members will not solve the issue because you never know who is a player in what is going on. I think there are guidelines on how to deal with relations, once you declare as a Boss, it absolves you. The Boss has declared so he should employ the daughter. This will not bring anyone harm. (DM2, 57yrs, 21yrs of service)

This is a situation of unduly favoring someone who doesn't deserve so it is equal to nepotism and favoritism, but DB should just help by changing the recordings of the interview with the consent of the other panel members. (FG3, A5, 31yrs, 4 yrs of service)

However, there were a few dissenting views recognizing nepotism as a corrupt act, with the advice that the vignette character should apply the right working principles. Two participants views support this claim:

...my advice is based on the fact that this is clearly nepotism and it is also an integrity issue. For me integrity is supreme. I know a lot of people will just agree to have their peace of mind, but I don't agree. I think DB should inform the other panel members and do the right thing. I would not care about the bad blood that will ensue so long as I know I am doing the right thing. (DF14 female, 48yrs 15 years of service)

You cannot be in the public service and appropriate to yourself the authority to recruit family members. It is a public service, not a private entity. The Boss is flaunting the rules. DB should follow the rules. (DM1, 46yrs, 15yrs of service)

Participants' **content knowledge of the codes of conduct** also influenced decision-making. The majority of participants were unable to identify specific tenets of the codes of conduct that the scenario is violating, and the associating sanctions to support the recommendation they gave to the vignette character.

.... to specifically quote portions of the code of conduct... that I will be unable to do. But whatever it is, some of the rules cannot be applied to the letter. We have to use our discretion sometimes as public servants. The rule can say he should blow the whistle but as soon as he does that it means he should be ready for a transfer. (FG3, A6, 40yrs, 6yrs of service)

I don't know what the codes say about this situation, but I know recruitment in the public service is based on meritocracy. This can also pass as discrimination and dishonesty. But in reality, it is not about what the employment regulations say or how he is to behave as a public servant. It is about what to do exactly in this situation to save his job (FG3, A4, 27yrs, 3yrs of service).

Individual participants (n = 18) were concerned that the vignette character will suffer **organizational injustice** by refusing the corrupt act. As pointed out by a focus group participant DB should accept the corrupt act to avoid being denied promotions, training, or being given a punitive transfer.

...., also he may be facing some challenges at work, the possible thing will be a transfer or indirect demotion, in (XYZ) [name of ministry withheld] we have grades in the branches, someone who refused to accept the director's relative for national service was transferred from a branch and demoted from number one to the bottom in another

branch, by being failed at a promotion interview more than once, if DB doesn't want trouble he should just pick the boss's daughter. (FG 2, A1, male, 27yrs, 2 yrs of service)

... in his shoes, I will be thinking about my job and my promotions. He will be taken off and someone who will be more malleable will be put in his place, so he will rather suffer if he refuses (DM3, Male 56 years, 27 years of service).

Most participants were concerned about the **informal sanctions** that could be meted out for refusing to engage in nepotism, and the complexity of the social relationships within which the vignette character had to take the decision. Participants (n=18) stated that DBs decision should be guided by the work and social relationships between himself and the boss to avoid being tagged as a bad person. The following narratives capture two participants reflection:

This is a difficult situation, if I didn't know the boss, as also my mate and a church member, I would have considered saying the truth and terminating the appointment, but a friend and a mate and a church member there is that unseeing hand binding me to do him the favor. If I don't do it I would have to face the person in all these relationships. There will be cold shoulders. (DM1 male, 46yrs, 15 years of service)

We are a society that believes in helping others so if you don't help you are seen as a bad person. DB will lose his friendship with the boss. In the work setting, you get fast favors for things naturally due to you if you have some form of protection from superiors So to deny such a boss a small favor like this will go against DB terribly, he will be badmouthed and ostracized. (DM24, male, 60years, 32 years of service)

Some participants adopted the position of DB and cited reciprocity as a reason to readily accept the corrupt act of nepotism because one day it will be their turn to need employment for someone.

...., next time it might be me needing help for a friend or relative, so I will just do it if I were DB. These things are normal in the public service, what will be worrying is to have people seeing me as a bad person, a wicked person because I don't want to help. There are no jobs and you can only have the chance as an employee to put in a word for your children and relatives in your Ministry. (DM 19, male, 60years, 28years of service)

It can be deduced from participants' quotes and information processing in Vignette 1 that their classification of corruption excludes acts of nepotism. This classification of nepotism as “not real corruption” may have distorted such participants' perceptions and ability to recognize nepotism as a denial of meritocracy, and a violation of the principles of integrity and fairness in the code of conduct. Their assumption of the prevalence and acceptability of nepotism in the public service could also have swayed their decisions and justification for advising the vignette character to succumb to the corrupt act. Participants' narrations further elucidate how ignorance of the sanctions in the code of conduct may influence corruption decision making. The lack of content knowledge of these formal behavioral rules focused their decision making on self-interest, and the interest of the corrupt partners (The boss and the daughter). The organizational interest as outlined in the Ghana Civil Service Code of Conduct (1999), requiring public servants to faithfully implement working procedures impartially and transparently was ignored by the majority of the participants, because they weighed the informal sanctions and organizational injustice as more punitive than the unknown formal sanctions.

4.3.2 Vignette 2

Vignette (2) depicted a scenario involving the violation of administrative rules for fuel allocation. The scenario was described by most participants as fraudulent. Three norms guided participants' resolution of the vignette. These were implementation of the codes, organizational injustice, and order from above.

Individual participants (n = 21) advised that DB should follow administrative procedures and refute the corrupt act. In the words of a participant, “*money matters*” (financial discrepancies) are serious offenses in the public service, so DB should refute the corrupt act.

... You must insist in cases like this. He should keep his integrity and apply the administrative procedure as laid down. Money matters are serious matters in the Public Service. (FG3, A3 male, 32 yrs, 4 yrs of service)

*This time DB is benefitting..., this is how the game of rubbing each - others back is played in the public service. I will say 30 percent of public servants will go by the books if they were in this position. For the 70 percent, it will be a complex decision. You have to think about so many things before you decide to act right. But I say “*kokonte anim gu ase a na nkruma wre ho*” (if you don't guard your integrity and you ran into trouble it affects others). He should think about future shame and follow the official protocol. (DF 12, 55yrs, 22 years of service)*

Contrary to the majority consensus that DB should refute the corrupt act, individual participants (n=4) and the majority of focus group participants indicated that DB would be forced to accept the corrupt act because the order came from the Boss. Participants explained that working with “*the order from above*” shifts the moral responsibility of the decision to the Boss who gave

the order, thus makes the acceptance of the act less accusatory for subordinates. Participants further explained that it is considered inappropriate to question superiors in the public service or to argue with them on instructions. Group participants lamented that in most instances superiors are not willing to take responsibility for repercussions of corrupt acts though they issue the verbal orders. Subordinates thus become victims of the “*order from above*” norm while superiors become the beneficiaries. Therefore, the vignette character needs to insist on a written authorization from the Boss.

...I will just ask the Boss to endorse it if he doesn't I will endorse it and write a memo to attach. For example, “paid under duress”. That way the blame is not on me. The phrase “it has always been like that” is used a lot in the public service. Even where there are written instructions, they want you to go by the “it has always been like that.” I had a situation like that with my boss. I was working on something and the boss was like oh do it this way, when I queried he was annoyed. I said ok and I will do it. When I wrote my memo I said, as discussed with my head who said: “so so and so”. We are recommending that....When I sent the memo, he did not sign. He knew it will incriminate him, so he backtracked. (FG1, A1,35yrs, 7yrs of service)

.... the order from above, they will push you to do it knowing very well you have nothing to gain but a lot to lose. They get the appointments and travels with perks and we suffer the sleepless nights praying the deed will not be discovered by auditors. This is how they mentally torture us... he should insist on a written authorization. (FG3 A6 female, 40yrs, 6yrs of service)

A notable argument was also, raised by some individual interviewees (n=7) that bureaucracy in the public service has left many procedures outdated hence the scenario could be a case of an outdated administrative procedure. Such outdated procedures are difficult to revise because of the rigid bureaucratic processes involved. Additionally, since DB was put in the position on the recommendation of the director he owes the director some allegiance. DB should, therefore, obey the word of mouth instructions of the Boss.

As a Director; I will say that these lapses are there, sometimes the administrative procedures have not been changed. It could be a genuine case and the bureaucracy to change them is so tedious. For example, look around, to buy furniture for this office I have to wait months so what if I insist the accountant should just sign. Am I wrong?

I think DB may have to just allow the director to have his due, he can refuse his share of the allocation if he is uncomfortable. (DM 18, Male, 55 yrs, 22 yrs of service).

Because of friendship, he was put there. Now he wants to complicate issues for the one who recommended him. If he doesn't want his own he should give the Boss his fuel. The money he is saving will not be given to him as a reward so why is he courting immediate trouble for everyone. (DM5, 49yrs, 19yrs of service)

Individual participants (N=19) were also of the inclination that DB will suffer **organizational injustice** if he refuses to participate in the fraudulent act. This was also the unanimous concern in all focus groups. Participants acknowledged that an optimal solution to the scenario was difficult because DB has to weigh the cost of suffering vindictive sanctions for not yielding to the corruption, and the cost of formal disciplinary sanctions if the fraudulent act is detected later.

... he will pay a price for going according to the books. Things that should come to DB

as the administrator that requires the approval of the Boss will be delayed unnecessarily. He will make DB's life miserable. For example, if there is an official trip or staff training he will not nominate DB, it may be given to someone who may not even need it. (FG3, A2, 25yrs, 2yrs of service)

Hmm.. taking this decision is complicated, to me, he has to think carefully, he should ignore the boss but he will suffer indirectly. If he doesn't follow the accounting rules he will get into trouble. So, he should find out which one will give him less wahala (trouble) and protect his chop-chop (salary). From where I stand, I will just ignore the boss. Because in my office these things can attract even dismissal. But in other Ministries, it is not so. (FG 1, A1 Male, 35 yrs, 7 yrs of service)

The decision-making dynamics of the fraudulent scenario in vignette 2 may suggest that participants evaluated sanctions that have been applied in similar fraudulent scandals they have experienced to advise the vignette character to eschew the corrupt act. Participants' quotes suggest that corrupt acts of fraud and embezzlement are treated as serious misconduct in the public service, therefore PSWs are wary of violating the codes of conduct in such instances. This implies that perception of the severity of punishment, and fear of the fraudulent act being detected by another person apart from the corrupt partner, were processed by participants to estimate the control they have over the performance and success of the act. Additionally, it can be inferred from the narrations that when superiors misuse their authority and require subordinates to unwillingly perform corrupt acts, such employees may experience emotional "torture", because of the fear that the act could be detected in the future.

4.3.3 Vignette 3

Vignette 3 described a scenario involving a corrupt partner external to DBs organization. The corrupt partner had on occasion given gifts to DB and now requires DB to return the favor by offering him a contract he is not qualified to bid for. In vignette 3, it was the majority view that the informal relationship has initiated a conflict of interest situation as the corrupt partner now expects reciprocity from DB. Participants stressed that receiving gifts and favors from clients is a normal practice in the public service. Gifts received are considered as appreciation.

You come to my office at Christmas and you will see a lot of hampers. Gifts cannot corrupt someone if you are principled. I do not see those things as corruption, you remember our late president xxx who abolished Xmas hampers during his tenure as president?. Right after his demise, it is back in all public services. How can you punish someone for receiving a gift? It is part of what makes us Ghanaians. We appreciate each other. (DM22, male, 47yrs, 7 years of service)

If there are codes of conduct guiding gift-giving in the public service, then obviously, the laws are not working. The system is not punishing the culprits and we also do not know what the codes say. Education is important. (FG1, A1,35yrs, 7yrs of service).

A focus group participant echoed the act of gift-giving and favors as normal and jokingly linked it to both the cultural upbringing and the religious nature of Ghanaians.

... when you even receive such favors it is considered a blessing from God. In fact, some people will even go to church and testify when they receive bribes. We have been brought up to say Medaase, (thank you) so people feel obliged to say thank you for everything and the elderly will even query you if you do not say thanks after receiving

something. It will be difficult for DB to refuse, but he has to do the right thing, it will be difficult to tell a public servant gift-giving is corruption. (FG3, A4, 27yrs, 3yrs of service)

Interestingly, individual participants (n=24) advised that DB should ignore the contractor's request and follow the laid down regulations in awarding the contract. All focus group participants also agreed that DB should disqualify the contractor because there is no guarantee that the contractor will not betray him by divulging the information.

noo, no, I won't agree with it, there are guidelines making it open to all competitors. DB should just ignore and follow the rules, he should be transparent. It is the same man who may go "running his mouth" (divulge information). It takes such small favors like this for one to suffer disgrace. Especially in this story, it will easily be noticed in the future or "Anas" (an investigative journalist) will catch up with him. (FG 2, A6, female, 38yrs, 7 years of service)

It can be deduced from participant quotes in vignette 3 that they were wary of corrupt transactions involving external stakeholders. Lack of trust was used as a justification for refuting the corrupt act, indicating that interpersonal trust could be an essential driver of corrupt transactions in the public service.

4.4 Additional Findings

The expectation from using the vignettes was not necessarily to determine whether PSWs will make the right decisions or not, but to help capture the nuances in PSWs information processing and to delineate organizational norms they drew on to resolve the corruption dilemmas in the

vignettes. This aim was achieved, and the vignettes unpacked an additional theme, “risk preferences”. PSWs consistently used various euphemisms to describe risk preferences as they advised the vignette character. As illustrated in Figure 6, three subthemes on risk preferences (corruption police, silent observer, and game player) were generated from data-driven codes.

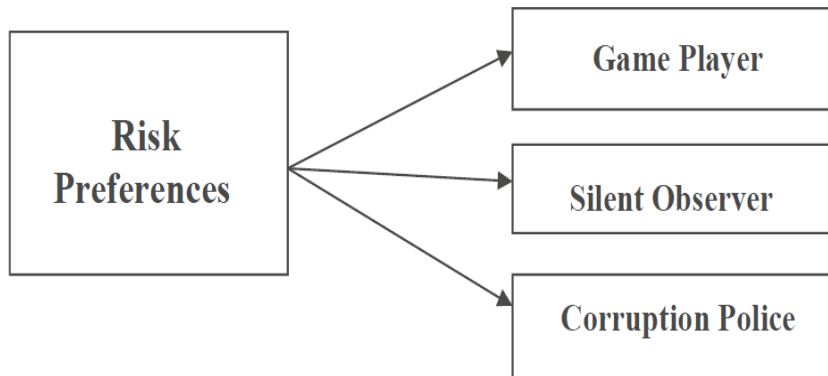


Figure 6: Summary of subthemes of PSWs risk preferences influencing decision-making.

Participants spoke about the tendency for traps to be set for PSWs who took the role of *corruption police*. In the words of PSWs, to avoid *trouble* and protect *your chop-chop* one has to take the role of a *silent observer* or a *game player* depending on the public service involved.

This young lady was posted here, and she tried to disrupt the goro boys cartel, instead of observing silently and going about her business. Someone reported she had several xxx in her bag. They teamed up to disgrace her. So at the close of the day, she was searched on the way out and about 5 family xxx were found. She was sanctioned and immediately transferred. Meanwhile, people go everyday home with xxx in their bags no one has been searched and disgraced like that. (DM11, male, 55yrs, 20 years of service)

In the scenario you read, if I should decide to do the right thing, no one will reward me. Rather, I get a relationship break up as punishment from my working colleagues and friends, but when I do the wrong thing, I have some fulfillment because I get to keep my friends. Why would I want to be a corruption police the next time?. (FG 1, A1 Male, 35 yrs, 7 yrs of service)

Another participant framed it as follows

Sometimes you have to study the system to know how to behave. Experience is the best teacher. You should not act smart on your boss. You will pay for it. DB should know what works in his organization. If it was in my office, I will just put my hand under my chin, comply, and watch. That is how to survive there.

This additional finding provides a contextually-relevant understanding of the use of heuristics in PSWs' corruption decision-making. The quotes above suggest that these participants estimate the rewards and sanctions involved in either refuting or accepting a corrupt transaction within a context. The estimation serves as the future yardstick for measuring the risk involved in refuting or joining corruption in that environment.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the research findings in line with the theoretical framework, related studies, and documents reviewed. The key themes derived from the analysis of data reveal that informal organizational norms equally influenced PSWs corruption-decision-making as did the formal norms. An additional noteworthy finding was the risk preferences employed by PSWs as heuristics to navigate the public service corrupt setting. The discussion is structured according to the research questions that guided the study. The first section elaborates on the findings generated from PSWs constructions of organizational integrity. The second section expounds on PSWs application of formal and informal organizational norms in corruption information processing and intention formation. The last section drew on the rational, bounded rationality and behavioral reasoning theories to link the findings of the two research objectives.

5.1 PSWs Constructions of Organizational Integrity

PSWs constructions of organizational integrity focused on four key themes: the meaning of organizational integrity, integrity violations, formal and informal organizational norms.

Organizational integrity is vital for the effective performance of public service organizations (Wan et al., 2020). In this study, organizational integrity was described by public service workers (PSWs) as a commitment to the codes of conduct, regulations, and procedures of the public service.

PSWs alluded the lack of public service integrity to the control of public service directors by politicians, which affects neutral professionalism and adherence to public service codes and regulations. PSWs perception that the politicization of public service organizations affects the effective performance of duties aligned with other research findings (Appiah & Abdulai, 2017; Kumasey & Hossain, 2020; Zaloznaya, 2014).

PSWs were of the view that to adopt a culture of integrity, public service leaders should be committed to working with the values of *impartiality, transparency, and authenticity*. *Impartiality* was defined in this context as a situation in which the required rewards and sanctions are meted out to PSWs irrespective of who the person is. Transparency was described as working genuinely according to the regulations of the public service, and not hiding to flaunt the regulations; while authenticity signified being honest in interpersonal working relationships and service delivery. As evident in the codes of conduct, the Ghanaian public service espouses similar values of integrity, objectivity, meritocracy, and political neutrality with the expectation that PSWs professional behavior will align with these values. This expectation was supported by the argument that values are central qualities of public service integrity, when regulations and rules espoused by public servants align with the values of any public service, the organization's integrity is preserved (de Graaf et al., 2018).

Unfortunately, PSWs acknowledged that there seems to be a mismatch between the espoused values and the values endorsed by public servants. In other words, a subculture seems to be in place in the public service with values that are out of synchrony with espoused public service values. Similar results (e.g., de Graaf et al., 2018; Tankebe, Boakye, et al., 2019; Wachs et al., 2019) confirmed that the extent of corruption and ineffectiveness in public services is due to the discrepancy between public service leadership words and actions.

Some public service directors willingly flaunt the public service codes and regulations, as such, they are unable to sanction subordinates who do the same. Exemplary leadership in public services seem to be at loggerheads with the public service values, presenting a negative impression of such public service institutions to the populace.

Integrity Violations

It has been argued that a primary yardstick for measuring the effectiveness of an organization's integrity is the capability of the integrity system to limit violations in actions, functions, and work processes as subscribed by its codes of conduct and regulations (Okafor et al., 2020; Transparency International, 2014). There was a consensus among PSWs that institutional arrangements in place to prevent integrity violations in the Ghanaian public service are ineffective. PSWs expressed a general feeling of helplessness in adhering to organizational codes and regulations, with the view *“that that there is an abiding presence of lawlessness and undue political influence that makes it difficult to observe protocols of public service”*. Interestingly, PSWs in administrative and technical grades evaded accountability for integrity violations, and indicated that they see themselves as victims instead of perpetrators of integrity violations. They further highlighted that they have very little to contribute to organizational integrity as they are forced to kowtow to the dictates of public service Directors.

On the other hand, public service Directors in this study also blamed laxity in adhering to work rules and regulations on constraints imposed on their neutral professionalism by political interference and the rigidity of the bureaucratic processes. Brierly (2020), confirmed that political interference in the career of Ghanaian bureaucrats encourages corruption and renders them incapable of exercising their supervisory roles as custodians of the codes of conduct.

According to the Civil Service Act (1993), *misconduct is stated as “any act done by a civil/public servant which contravenes any enactment relating to the civil service... which tends to bring the civil service into disrepute.* This description of misconduct according to the Act relates to integrity violations which lead to behavior contrary to the formal organizational norm and dents the reputation of the public service. Acts of misconduct are sanctioned variably depending on their classification as either major or minor offenses. Major offenses could attract penalties ranging from queries, withholding the public servant's salary, demotions, and forfeiture of certain end of service benefits. Although sanctions are laid out in the codes of conduct and section 77 of the Civil Service Act (1993), PSWs narrated that they shy away from reporting integrity violations for fear of being victimized. Earlier research (Akosa et al., 2019; Asiedu & Deffor, 2017) postulated similar perspectives of lack of reporting wrongdoing in the public service. The extent of these integrity violations has tainted the reputation of the Ghanaian public service and the sector has been described as inept and ineffective in playing its role in national development (Kumasey & Hossain, 2020).

Corruption was described by PSWs as a network process, and PSWs further underscored that sometimes opportunities and constraints are deliberately created by slowing down work processes or sabotaging procedures in order to facilitate integrity violations. Integrity violations relating to corrupt acts garnered from PSWs were fraud, bribery, extortion, sextortion, favoritism, and nepotism. These violations align with the findings of Ertas (2020) and de Graaf et al., (2018), who reported similar violations of fraud, bribery, discrimination, cronyism, nepotism, intimidation, and conflict of interest in the Dutch and United States public services respectively.

Fraudulent deals described by PSWs included falsification of figures on purchase vouchers, accounts records, and even biographical information to get promotions and delay retirement. Procurement irregularities were mentioned as rife. Participants narrated that most public servants are confronted daily with extortion and bribery decisions. PSWs who want to make extra monies collude with other colleagues to extract additional payments from clients before due services are rendered. Kumasey & Hossain (2020) confirmed that such practices of extortion and bribery are rationalized in the Ghanaian public service and new entrants are socialized into accepting these corrupt practices. These extra payments described as the “*brown envelop or weight*” are used to facilitate approval and to request signatures of colleagues on official documents. As quoted by a PSW, formerly most bribes were received *under the table*, but in contemporary times, they are received “*on the table*”.

The lack of secrecy surrounding bribery, indicates that tolerance for bribery by the corrupt actors, corrupt organizational partners and bribers contributes to the normalization of this activity in Ghana’s public sector. In addressing corruption, it is imperative to not only target corrupt actors but also the *silent observers* since their tolerance of corrupt acts, by choosing not to blow the whistle, may additionally escalate the normalization of bribery as suggested in other research (Fleming et al., 2020).

Nepotism and favoritism were explained as socially acceptable as these acts provided avenues for PSWs to help family and friends. PSWs did not regard these acts as misconduct. They described nepotism as “*not real corruption*”. According to PSWs, sexual extortion, a gendered form of corruption has also infiltrated the Ghanaian public service. Females are mostly coerced into giving sexual favors for needed services, while other females willingly offer sex as entertainment or payback for promotions or to cover queries. This finding concurs with other

studies that identified sextortion as a form of psychological coercion and corruption where sexual practices are exchanged for rewards (Mumporeze et al., 2019). It should be noted that the psychological and physical well-being of victims can be affected by this practice. Victims could ultimately exhibit absenteeism, low job productivity and commitment (Ertas, 2020; Lyrio et al., 2018). The fear of reporting sextortion as indicated by PSWs in this study points to a structural lapse in ensuring the safety and security of victims who may choose to report this form of corruption.

Formal Norms in Ghana's Public Service

As argued by a PSW in this study, most well-meaning public servants do not just sit down and decide they are going to be corrupt, there are powerful and subtle influences that make them veer off the road of integrity. PSWs lamented that “*godfatherism*” and “*politicization of the public service*” have introduced a norm of procedural and distributive injustice, resulting in rewards and sanctions being applied on “who you know” or “who is a favorite” basis. Procedural guidelines are not objectively followed, for a similar offense someone may receive a warning or a query while another person will be meted demotion or termination of appointment. Correspondingly, participants surmised that working according to the rules was not rewarded, so working honestly cannot be sacrificed over the discomfort of being punished with a transfer for not playing the game of the corrupt networks. Consistent with the views of PSWs, it has been observed that procedural injustice had implications for deviant behavior. Accordingly, it was advised that public service directors demonstrate fairness and justice in the implementation of codes of conduct and regulations to imbue trust in subordinates (Campbell & Göritz, 2014; Tankebe, Boakye, et al., 2019).

Another formal norm influencing public service integrity mentioned by PSWs is the lack of office resources to effectively provide services. They mentioned instances in which the lengthy waiting period for approvals for office stationery, furniture, and other logistics becomes very frustrating and forces PSWs to use their resources to further their work. These lapses encourage extortion and bribery as workers feel they have the right to be bribed to do their job. As buttressed by Campbell and Göritz (2014), when employees are not given adequate resources to execute their roles, they may circumvent laid down processes and yet rationalize such behavior, by realigning their perceptions to conform to their behavioral intentions.

Lack of in-depth content knowledge of codes of conduct and regulations was observed among PSWs. Though PSWs were aware of the existence of the public service codes of conduct and regulations, in-depth content knowledge of the codes including appropriate disciplinary action and whistleblowing procedures was generally lacking. This indicates that the codes of conduct have not been internalized by many PSWs. Ghana's public service integrity is guided by Civil Service Codes of Conduct (1999), the Civil Service Act (1993) as well as human resource policies and processes. The Civil service code of conduct is expected to serve as a reference document guiding PSWs service delivery and integrity in all public service organizations. Besides, each government ministry is required to draw up their professional code of conduct. The Public Service Code of Conduct (1999) and the Civil Service Act (1993) both delineate disciplinary procedures and sanctions for misconduct. For minor offenses, the public servant will be requested to answer an initial query letter to explain why disciplinary action should not be taken against him or her. Actions of public servants categorized as gross misconduct can result in disciplinary transfers, demotions, or outright dismissals.

PSWs stated that what interests them is the Human Resource Manual where they will get information on promotions and benefits and not the codes of conduct. The Human Resource Management Policy Framework and Manual for The Ghana Public Services (2015) states that all public servants upon recruitment are to be given an orientation on the codes of conduct, regulations, and organizational policies of the civil service. Additionally, during training and refresher courses, staff are to be reoriented on the policies. Unfortunately, PSWs stated that occasional public service durbars hardly included re-orientation on codes of conduct and regulations. PSWs were of the perception that there was laxity in implementation of the codes, and unfairness in sanctioning of violations. Codes have indeed been described as rigid documents that are inept in guiding employee behavior unless the codes are willingly internalized and interpreted into behavior by the employees (Kumasey et al., 2017; McCandless & Ronquillo, 2019).

Informal Norms in Ghana's Public Service

Informal organizational norms were defined in this study as the unwritten rules shared by PSWs of what is commonly done and what is approved of in the public service. Both descriptive and injunctive norms were cited by participants. Descriptive norms are described as beliefs about what is mostly done by all other working colleagues within an establishment. Injunctive norms refer to employees' perceptions of what is expected of them as appropriate in a particular scenario (Zhao et al., 2019).

The *fear of informal sanctions* was a concern raised by most PSWs. PSWs highlighted that social ties made up of tribal, political, old students, and church affiliation use the threat of informal sanctions to sustain corrupt networks and corrupt acts in the public service.

Group cohesion among corrupt networks is high and ingroup members are expected to support actions and behavior that protect and sustain the groups. As indicated by PSWs, one can be ostracized, victimized, or even be put under (*juju*) a spell for attempting to infiltrate such corrupt networks. Belonging to such networks in the workplace means one can get away with wrongdoing or favored with promotions while those in the outgroups get punished undeservedly sometimes for reporting wrongdoing or refusing to join in corrupt networks. This finding is in tandem with observations that support for ingroup members strengthens corrupt networks, while intimidation of outgroup members prevents them from blowing the whistle on integrity violations (Okafor et al., 2020). Similar findings suggest that the considerations of kinship and other network pressures intercept the adherence to the values and regulations of the public service as more emphasis is placed on cementing social bonds (Kumasey & Hossain, 2020).

PSWs were of the view that public service integrity is undermined by *political praise-singing*, described as flattering and hypocritically agreeing to instructions of politicians because of expected favors and lack of courage. This narration was further linked to the norm of unquestionable obedience that brings fear because disobeying the order from above could result in undesirable sanctions. The Ghanaian society places importance on the respect for the elderly. It is considered disrespectful to reprimand an elderly person even if the individual is at fault (Sakyi & Bawole, 2010). PSWs averred that this norm of unquestionable obedience has crept into the public service environment. Subordinates are unable to question the actions of superiors likewise public service directors succumb to the dictates of politicians without questioning for fear of being transferred to undesirable locations that could interfere with their career progression and quality of life. Other researchers have reported that “*political party loyalty*” and “*job for the boys*”, that is, placing loyalists in public service positions to fulfill

political promises, renders public servants powerless in questioning and boldly speaking against integrity violations (Aryee, 2018, Brierley, 2020).

The Ghana public service was described as “a faceless employer”, as expressed in the old phrase known in the public service as *aban edzuma* (work of the government). Due to this perception, PSWs acknowledged that there is a diffused sense of responsibility and a lackadaisical approach to public service work. Going the extra mile or working according to the rules and codes is frowned upon and in the words of a participant you will be asked by other colleagues if “*the work is for your father*”. This indifference and lack of accountability with no expectation of sanctions were reported in similar findings as major enablers of integrity violations in Ghana’s public service (Akosa et al., 2019).

PSWs indicated that reciprocal appreciation is viewed as a good practice in the public service. This norm seems to have become a manipulative device, as superiors expect the reciprocal exchange of favors and loyalty from subordinates for approving formal rewards such as promotions. This norm obliges PSWs to cover up integrity violations of colleagues with the expectation that the same treatment will be given to them in the future. Consequently, blowing the whistle on misconduct in the public service was described as inappropriate, and viewed as an attack on group cohesion and existence. Integrity violations are generally resolved quietly with verbal warnings, than with formal sanctions as laid out in the Human Resource Policy Manual. The perceptions of the appropriateness of this norm may be strengthened by religious beliefs, as according to PSWs the notion that such misconduct could result from evil temptations is employed to justify integrity violations.

According to PSWs, there is selective posting to certain public institutions which are generally seen as money-making public institutions. Officers posted to these organizations are those in the good books of politicians. In such public institutions, one is posted there to enrich themselves and their “godfathers”, not necessarily to render public service. Evidence of this dual hiring strategy was confirmed by Brierly's (2020) findings that politicians engage bureaucrats into administrative positions to manipulate them to control state resources or to reward them for political loyalty. Existing literature also confirms that work design and hiring procedures are utilized to institutionalize corruption in organizations. Socialization is subsequently employed to reinforce corruption by ostracizing and victimizing non-conformers. Such group sanctions gradually reshape non-conforming employees perceptions, and forces them to accept corruption (Campbell & Göritz, 2014; Ohemeng & Kamga, 2020).

5.2 Organizational Integrity and PSWs Corruption Decision-Making

The integrity of the public service was assumed to be subject to the effectiveness of the implementation of the public service formal norms which when done efficiently, should ultimately regulate PSWs decision-making and behavior in service delivery. When faced with the decision to accept or refute the corrupt acts in the vignettes, PSWs processed the decision-making with both the formal and informal organizational norms depending on the corruption scenario. For example, in **vignette 1** which represented a case of interpersonal corruption involving nepotism and favoritism in recruitment, the vignette character was advised to ignore meritocracy and accept the corrupt act, as nepotism was described as not “*real corruption*”. Conflict of interest was also recognized in vignette 3, yet still, it was argued by PSWs that gift-giving is appreciated in the public service.

The relevant conclusion to be drawn from such classification of integrity violations by PSWs is that corruption for the PSWs in this study constituted actions involving fraud and theft. Actions such as nepotism, favoritism, and conflict of interest were not directly classified as corruption. As argued by de Graaf et al., (2018) typologies of public service corruption should not be regarded as universal, since what public servants interpret and experience as corrupt acts may differ between contexts.

The fear of organizational injustice formed the basis of decision-making in **vignette 1 and 2**. PSWs mentioned that unjust treatment (e.g. a punitive transfer) may be given to the vignette character and therefore advised the vignette character to play along with the corrupt act of nepotism in vignette 1. It was noted that where PSWs did not classify nepotism as corruption it affected their ability to consider the application of the code of conduct. However, in vignette 2, the fraudulent scenario was labeled as *real corruption* by PSWs, and the risk involved in the fraudulent act was estimated to be higher than the perceived cost of suffering organizational injustice. As a result, the vignette character was advised to apply the formal norms and refute the fraudulent act. Research confirms the above finding that in the absence or ineffectiveness of formal sanctions, informal norms can be internalized, resulting in neutralized morality which further forms the pathway to unethical decision-making. The fear of vindictive sanctions was described as a trap that keeps public servants from backing out of the web of commonly practiced corrupt transactions in the public service (Legros & Cislighi, 2020).

The theme of reciprocal appreciation emerged as an informal norm in PSWs narrations in advising all the three vignette characters, however, the pressure to apply this theme was more evident in vignette 1, the case of nepotism.

PSWs were of the impression that in Ghana it is required of beneficiaries to say thank you, even for things rightfully due them. The average Ghanaian is required to repeat the *thank you* the next morning after having said it the day before. PSWs stated that one good turn deserves another, therefore, the vignette character should seize the opportunity for reciprocation and agree to the nepotistic act. It has been averred that corruption is a social process that is sustained by social ties, hence the norm of reciprocity plays a significant role in many corrupt practices (Rose, 2018; Torsello et al., 2015).

Dealing with the issue of fraud in vignette 2 was described as challenging. Though PSWs are not formally obliged to obey the *order from above*, it was surmised that the vignette character may be forced to obey the instructions of the superior. Culturally, it is considered disrespectful for younger persons to question the actions of older persons or superiors. The Ghanaian public service seems to have inherited the colonial administrative principle of *command and control* which was present with the pre-independence public service. This principle of unquestionable obedience to superiors' command was confirmed by PSWs to be still present in the Ghanaian public service today. PSWs also reiterated that sometimes in pursuit of organizational goals, the order from above has to be obeyed because the rigid bureaucratic structures within the public service have made it impossible to update some of the procedural ways of doing things. As a result, there is often the need to use hierarchical discretion to effectively and quickly achieve public service goals. This line of thought as buttressed by other studies, brings the codes of conduct into disrepute and puts the discretion of the public service directors above the adherence to organizational codes (Baez-Camargo et al., 2017).

In vignette 3, the lack of reciprocal trust between the contracting parties was cited as the reason why the vignette character should refute the conflict of interest. This implies that the norm of reciprocal trust between PSWs serves as a bond that perpetuates corruption in this sector. In instances where corrupt partners do not perceive reciprocal trust, it undermines the ability to negotiate any corrupt deal (Köbis et al., 2016).

Apathy towards work was identified by PSWs as an informal norm that discourages selflessness and organizational altruism in the public service. In vignette 2, a few PSWs were of the opinion that by preventing the fraudulent deal to risk being subjected to victimization from superiors was not tenable. This assertion was linked to the idea that the *public service work was not for the vignette character's father* therefore, there was no justification to be committed to saving the public service from financial loss. Other researchers also reported evidence of apathy towards work in the Ghanaian public service, characterized by the popular phrase of “aban eduzuma” (work of the state). It has been argued that this informal norm discourages proprietary attitudes that influence integrity violations in this sector (Agbodohu, 2014; Dartey-Baah, 2016).

One can infer that organizational codes of conduct and regulations possess limited ability to constrain corrupt behavior, especially in situations where corrupt actors have little or no information on the risk of acting corruptly or the severity of formal sanctions. Informal organizational norms equally dictate unwritten rules of behavior that influence PSWs corruption decision-making. Corruption decision-making is contingent on the type of corrupt scenario. For example, non-monetary forms of corruption (eg nepotism) were categorized as grey corruption and therefore less moral evaluations were attached to such integrity violations.

Additionally, in processing the corruption scenarios, generally, PSWs considered their personal interest and the interest of the corrupt partner to the neglect of the organizational interest, giving credence to the long-standing perception of apathy towards public service work and organizational interest.

5.3 Theoretical Discussion

In the preceding literature reviewed in chapter two, it was argued that public service integrity management has been touted as the panacea to corruption in this sector. However, the focus of integrity management was skewed to enforcing compliance with codes of conduct and other regulatory procedures while sanctioning violations. This implied that a rational decision-making approach to corruption decision-making is assumed, further suggesting that, when the risk of indulging in corruption is higher than the benefit to be derived, PSWs will shun corrupt acts.

The findings of this study suggest that the corruption decision-making process is a nested socio-organizational dilemma, entangled with complex relationships and reciprocities. Both formal and informal norms of behavior were applied by PSWs to either accept or refute a corrupt act. These findings contradict rationality assumptions of decision-making, that decision-makers possess finite information of all decision alternatives to make rational choices based on calculated benefits and losses. Applying informal norms to corruption decision making reflected PSWs considerations of subjective utility and subjective probability. Objective criteria were not applied across all vignettes and the weighting of future sanctions was mostly guesswork. Therefore, some decisions were not based on objective calculations of risks and sanctions.

Accordingly, one can surmise that corruption decision making is much more complex to be understood in its totality than rationality assumptions propounded.

In consonance with the theory of bounded rationality, risk preferences (corruption police, game player, silent observer) served as mental shortcuts in corruption decision-making. Taking on the role of corruption police was linked to victimization in the public service. PSWs mentioned that sometimes taking on a particular survival role is not to derive material benefits from the corrupt act, but they unconsciously surrender to derive psychological benefits, especially *peace of mind* and *the need to belong*. The application of these themes confirms the assumptions of bounded rationality and the use of heuristics as fast, effortless, and yet frugal means of decision-making. In advising the vignette character, in line with similar arguments, PSWs drew on experience with corrupt scenarios, and adopted risk preferences that have worked in their environment, to simplify their decision-making. Other researchers confirm that rational decision theories are restricted in explaining decision-making, as they ignore the influence of innate psychological responses on the decision-making process (Bowman & Bowman, 2018; Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier, 2011; Rees et al., 2019).

The strength of informal organizational norms in PSWs information processing, provided evidence for the assumptions of the behavioral reasoning theory (BRT) that subjective norms influence behavioral intentions and subsequently actual behavior. Through socialization, informal norms are assimilated by PSWs and employed to ensure group conformity to corrupt networks. PSWs perceived behavioral control was also influenced by their content knowledge of the probability and severity of formal sanctions, vis-à-vis their perceptions of the severity of informal sanctions. This finding gives credence to argument of the BRT theory that perceived behavioral control influences behavioral intentions.

The research findings further aligned with the tenets of the BRT theory that an individual's context-specific reasons can influence decision making irrespective of the global motives. However, very few PSWs (n=3), cited benevolent reasons in addition to the formal and informal norms in processing the scenario in vignette 1. Though these participants disapproved of nepotism and also acknowledged that is it generally not acceptable, yet they justified their acceptance of the corrupt act with the lack of unemployment in Ghana (Westaby et al., 2010). Figure 7 illustrates the modified conceptual framework which evolved after the findings.

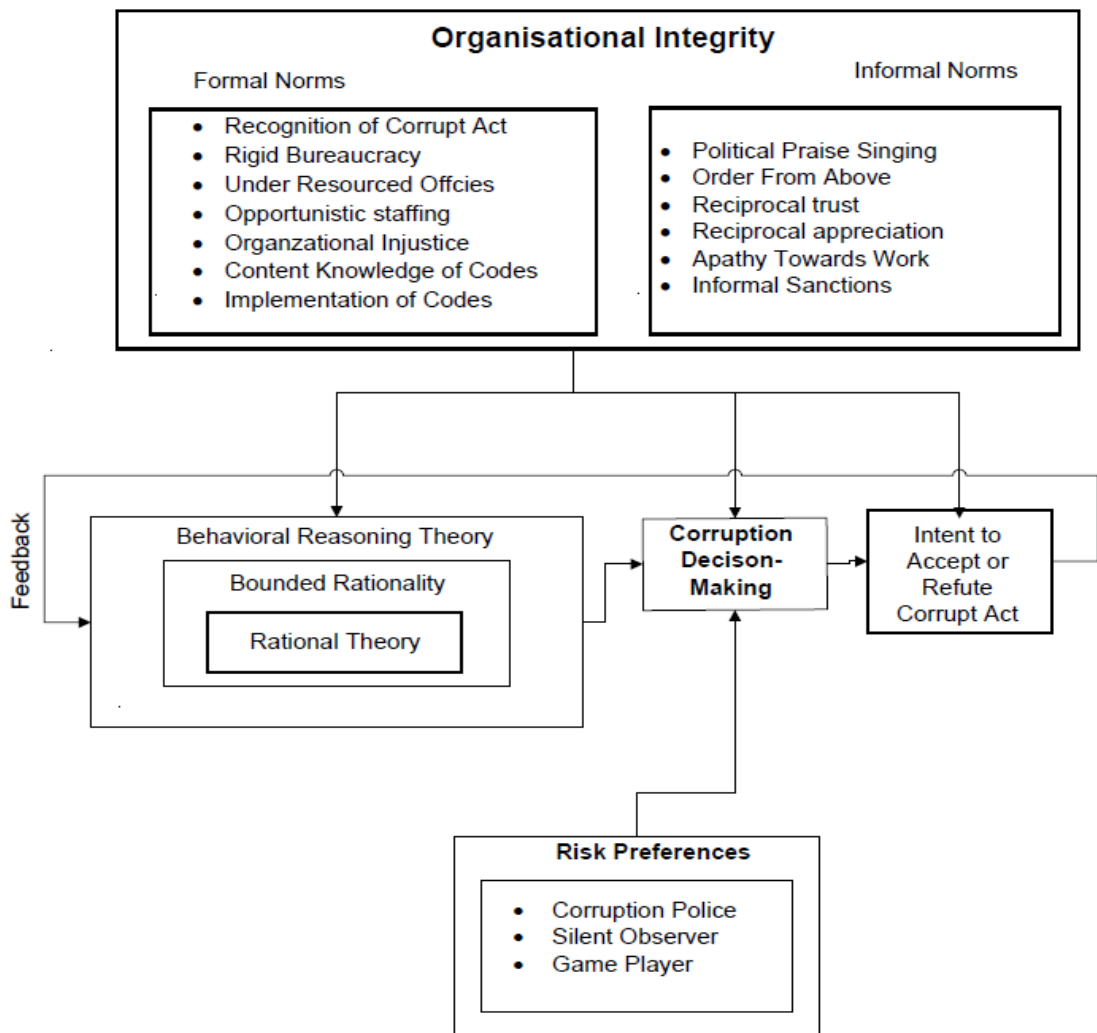


Figure 7: Modified Conceptual Framework From The Study

The illustration depicts the confirmed influence of context-specific formal and informal organizational norms in corruption decision-making in the Ghanaian public service. Findings provided further evidence of the use of risk preferences as heuristics in PSWs information processing. The outcomes of employing these norms in decision-making form the basis of feedback which dictates their application in future decision-making within the context.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.0 Introduction

This final chapter provides a summary of the thesis and discusses the implication of findings for policy and practice. It sums up the discussion with the limitations of the study and direction for future research.

6.1 Brief overview of the Study

The burgeoning literature on corruption has offered multiple reasons for festering of corruption in public service organizations. From the *bad apples*, and the bad *barrels* explanations, through to sociocultural explanations. Corruption is an endemic problem in the Ghanaian public service. Ongoing attempts to encourage public service integrity to mitigate corruption, via various public service reforms have been largely unsuccessful. In contemporary times, public service integrity management with the application of codes of conduct and other administrative regulatory processes have been pursued in the anti-corruption fight. This thesis sought to include a behavioral psychology perspective to existing explanations on the prevalence of corruption in the public sector. The main objective of the present study was to examine the role of both formal and informal norms as components of organizational integrity in PSWs corruption decision making. Recognizing that corruption decision making is a complex socio-organizational dilemma, the rationality, bounded rationality, and behavioral reasoning theories were integrated in analyzing PSWs corruption decision-making.

In addition to individual interviews (n=26), three focus group discussions (n=22) were undertaken.

Three Vignettes were used to tap informal and formal norms PSWs employed to either refute or accept the corrupt act. Eight experts made up of retired PSWs, anti-corruption crusaders, and investigative journalists provided the last set of data to corroborate findings and to make recommendations. Experts were described as individuals with specialized knowledge and experiences gained from actions, responsibilities, obligations of specific functional status (Littig, 2013.,p13). Thus, participants recruited for the interviews were enforcement stakeholders or individuals in fields of activity related to anti-corruption, who were further engaged in influencing the implementation of integrity and anti-corruption interventions in the public service. Experts provided further insights based on the administrative and socio-cultural challenges they have experienced in their advocacy roles as anti-corruption stakeholders. Data was analyzed in line with the qualitative data analysis recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2006).

Findings indicated that prescribing formal norms to mitigate corruption in the public service does not necessarily change corrupt behaviour, but captures only partially how PSWs navigate corruption decision-making. Informal norms were equally referenced in decision making. However, PSWs are more likely to use informal norms in decision making when they do not categorize the act as corruption, perceive organizational injustice, and underestimate the risk of formal sanctions associated with the violation of the act. In corruption decision-making, the personal interest and that of the corrupt partner were considered above the interest of the organization.

An important addition to the study's pre-conceptual framework was the theme of risk preferences which consistently influenced PSWs information processing of the vignettes.

PSWs risk preferences (game player, corruption police, and silent observer) served as heuristics in making corrupt decisions. The implication of the findings are synthesized below with expert interview data and document analysis to recommend practical interventions for policy and research.

6.2 Implications for Industrial/Organizational Psychology

The detrimental effects of public service corruption point to the importance of identifying novel ways in which the Ghanaian public service can manage organizational integrity to mitigate corruption. Unfortunately, the psychological contribution to the academic discourse on the behavioral aspect of corruption in Ghana is scanty. Situational, normative, and cognitive processes underly corrupt decision-making. The onus is thus placed on Industrial/organizational (I-O) psychologists to contribute to anti-corruption policies from a behavioral perspective.

Findings revealed that some PSWs engage in corrupt behavior unwillingly and sometimes unconsciously. Succumbing to corrupt decisions under threats of organizational injustice, victimizations, conflicting directives, and informal requirements for social cohesion could present mental challenges for PSWs; signifying a need for psychological support in Ghanaian public institutions. This recommendation is important to the effect that such stressful situations could affect PSWs physical health, quality of work-life, and their overall work performance. The study found context-specific informal norms and risk preferences that were instrumental in PSWs corruption decision making. This has important implications for I-O Psychology in the recruitment and selection of public servants.

Employee integrity measures could be developed using the informal norms and the risk preferences to assess PSWs predisposition to integrity violations, and their job-role fit for sensitive executive positions in the Ghanaian Public Service. Participants in this study emphasized the role of leadership impartiality, transparency, and authenticity in modeling organizational integrity. Competency training modules can be designed based on these work values to boost public sector Directors' integrity.

The experiences shared by PSWs on the dysfunctional formal norms inherent in the public sector presents opportunities for psychological interventions. For example, job rotation can be enforced especially in the public services mentioned as "*opportunistic posts*" to diffuse the norm of reciprocal trust and to discourage interpersonal corruption. By applying these organizational development interventions, psychologists can liaise with stakeholders to improve upon and reinforce the proper implementation of public sector work processes and principles.

6.3 Contribution to Academic Knowledge

The study has revealed the potential of the qualitative vignettes to contribute to understanding corruption decision-making particularly in the Ghanaian public service. Findings challenged the assumptions of the theory of rationality that has dominated investigation on corruption in the Ghanaian public service, by providing evidence that it is problematic to assume that corruption decision-making is a cost-benefit analysis of economic incentives and selfish motives. The study demonstrated the applicability of the behavioral reasoning theory to corruption decision making and showed how attitudes towards corrupt acts and subjective norms (informal organizational norms) apply in corruption decision making.

It further provided evidence of the behavioral reasoning theory's argument that personal reasons are important influencers on decision-making. The BRT theory can therefore provide a sound theoretical rationale for future corruption studies in Ghana. This study further provided evidence of bounded rationality in corruption decision making as PSWs risk preferences served as short cuts in processing the corruption vignettes. The study demonstrates the usefulness of integrating the rationality, bounded rationality, and behavioral reasoning theory in explaining the corruption decision-making process, as none of the theoretical approaches uniquely offers a coherent and adequate explanation.

The implication is that a deeper explanation of corruption decision-making in the Ghana public service may best be provided by linking formal norms, informal organizational norms, and risk preferences of PSWs. Notably, findings make a unique contribution to the literature on public service corruption by delineating context-specific formal and informal organizational norms and risk preferences that contribute to corruption in the public service.

6.4 Practical Implications for the Ghanaian Public Service

Though the vignettes employed to explore PSWs' corruption information processing were hypothetical, participants acknowledged that all three vignettes resonated with real happenings in the Ghanaian Public service. In processing the vignettes neither the formal nor the informal norms were given a clear priority in decision-making, as both norms were interchangeably employed to define case by case rules that guided PSWs recommendations for the vignette character. Policymakers can incorporate the informal organizational norms in the existing formal norms to craft public service integrity frameworks, and anti-corruption interventions that reflect the realities of decision-making in the public sector.

It was reported that reciprocal trust and procedural injustice have implications for PSWs propensity for whistleblowing and can stifle channels of reporting. It is therefore important that internal and external channels for reporting a violation of the codes imbue confidentiality and trust. Frequent evaluation of the appropriateness of the public service integrity controls, and monitoring of the system is necessary to ensure that sanctions are followed through with zero tolerance for injustice. Especially, the monitoring must target public services and departments more prone to corruption and put in place measures to instill both bottom-up and top-down integrity.

The findings highlight the need for public service management to find the balance between hard and soft controls to integrity management. The informal norms of organizational integrity cited by the participants could form the basis for drafting training programs and nudges, to instill internal motivation and to encourage socially constructive behaviors. Rigid bureaucracy was cited as one of the main drivers of integrity violations by participants. It is therefore imperative for public service administrators to make procedural changes to speed up working procedures. The public service was also described as under-resourced. The use of private resources was employed by some PSWs to justify extortion and facilitation payments. PSWs need to be given the equipment and disposables to facilitate and enhance their work.

Although some of these informal norms may not necessarily align with some PSWs values and beliefs, pluralistic ignorance could motivate PSWs to conform to these norms. Hence, to reduce compliance with some of these entrenched and anticipated ways of behaving, interventions should aim at correcting misconceptions about the acceptability of such norms in the public service.

Finally, there seems to be a general apathy to change and some PSWs are comfortable with the corrupt status quo, due to the learned helplessness that corruption cannot be mitigated. It is recommended that integrity training should target the collective mind of both public servants and politicians, as it was evident from this study that political appointees antagonize the effective implementation of formal public service regulations and processes. Organizational integrity frameworks (e.g. OECD, 2014; Transparency International, 2014) have focused on providing national-level generic prescriptions recommended for use in guiding public service integrity. This study has provided organizational-level data to extend these prescriptions, and further offers recommendations to manage integrity in the Ghanaian public service.

6.5 Implications for Anti-Corruption Stakeholders

Decreasing public service corruption can reduce local government-related costs and expenses, thereby increase resources to support national development (Yanga & Amoako, 2013). Mitigating corruption to accelerate national development in Ghana, may be dependent on the success of anti-corruption interventions in the public service. Civil Society Organizations involved in anti-corruption employ the three-pronged approach, that is law enforcement, prevention, and education. Anti-corruption efforts in Ghana have targeted these three elements simultaneously. However, of the three, according to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UN UNCAC) steer reviews, enforcement of the laws is lacking in Ghana.

In awareness creation, anti-corruption actors should therefore call on duty bearers to enforce the rules and laws. When integrity violators are not punished because of *godfatherism* and laxity, the awareness being created for the younger generation and new entrants into the public

service is that working with integrity is not recognized and appreciated. Anti-corruption stakeholders could initiate awards to recognize public officials who uphold organizational integrity, to project the contrary view to the younger generation that, working with integrity is appreciated and rewarded.

Participants in this study mentioned the current active involvement of investigative journalism in exposing corruption as a constrain on network corruption. This implies that investigative journalism and reporting can bridge the gap left by the lack of whistleblowing and political will to address corruption in the public service (Asomah, 2020). When the naming and shaming by investigative journalists is judiciously done at the public sector level, it can help to discourage corruption because the average Ghanaian would not want their family name to be dragged into the mud.

This study reported that informal organizational norms like reciprocity and gift-giving that influence corruption are grounded in Ghanaian socio-cultural norms and religion. Anti-corruption stakeholders should therefore pay attention to the fact that tangible improvements in public sector integrity management, may only be achieved when anti-corruption campaigns are targeted at positive social change in the broader Ghanaian society. Society implements laws, the upsurge of more laws without a paradigm shift, and the willingness to implement the laws make the laws of no use. There is a need to rethink the typology of corruption with input from PSWs, and to conscientize PSWs on what constitutes corruption in the public service. This will enable a redrafting of appropriate anti-corruption interventions to target variations of corruption as perceived by PSWs.

6.6 Limitations of the Study

Limitations are assumed to be factors that are not under the control of the researcher. The following limitations should be taken into consideration when applying the results of this study.

The public service institutions recruited for the study may be different from other public services, additionally, the perceptions of PSWs in other regions of Ghana were not included.

Therefore, the study may not be a representation of all public services in Ghana.

Due to the sensitive nature of the subject of corruption, the study was unable to publish full details of the research participants and public institutions, in order not to endanger their job security. However, to forestall the limitation imposed by the issue of anonymity from downgrading the integrity of the findings, a detailed audit trail was provided in Chapter 3.

The accuracy of responses from participants may have limited the results of the study as due to the sensitive nature of the phenomenon, some PSWs may have hidden pertinent information that might be detrimental to their organizations. Additionally, it should be noted that findings represent participants' corrupt behavioral intentions and not actual corrupt behavior. Though behavioral intentions are regarded as antecedents of actual behavior, care should be taken when interpreting these findings (Westaby et al., 2010). Though there is the probability that the researcher's background and opinion could influence the study, this may have been mitigated by the measures put in place to ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

6.7 Recommendations for Future Research

Methodologically, the study adopted the qualitative case study design in answering the research questions. The approach brought to the fore salient contextual norms influencing PSWs corruption decision-making. The formal and informal norms captured by this study are worth

investigating in future research, especially from a theory-driven perspective.

Furthermore, irrespective of the perceived severity of the informal organizational sanctions, some PSWs were clearly of the view that corruption should be avoided and were ready to suffer vindictive transfers or victimization for their decisions to refuse corrupt acts. It will be interesting to further explore this positive anomaly in terms of what personal factors (personal morality and values) will make such a group of PSWs ignore vertical, horizontal, and social pressures from corrupt networks to refute corruption.

This study attempted to predict corrupt behavioral intentions using vignette interviews, future research could attempt using non-participant observation to explore behavioral cues in corruption decision-making in real-world corrupt scenarios. Future research could also make a distinction between real corruption and indirect corruption and further explore the corruption information processing between these two forms of corruption identified by PSWs in this study. The study provided evidence of the use of risk preferences in corruption decision-making, suggesting that this concept may be important in PSWs corruption decision-making tendencies. Future research could elaborate on the influence of these risk preferences to enhance explanations and understanding of the corruption decision-making process. Interviewing private-sector employees is also recommended to determine if the findings of this study could also apply in private sector corruption.

6.8 Conclusion

Corruption research in Ghana is subsumed mainly under rationalistic assumptions. The majority of studies begin from the premise that corruption is the self-interested behavior of public servants. Drawing on the Rational, Bounded Rationality and Behavioral Reasoning Theories, the study sought to investigate the role of organizational integrity on corruption

decision-making in the Ghana public service. Findings proffered that laxity in the Ghanaian public service integrity management system breeds corruption, and this is further compounded by the informal organizational norms identified in this study. Informal organizational norms displaces formal organizational norms, and clouds organizational interests, putting to the fore individual and the corrupt partner's interest. It was further underscored that ensuring compliance with formal organizational norms and regulations is necessary but insufficient to effectively prevent corruption in the Ghanaian public service. In effect, public service Directors should note that two types of integrity controls exist in the Ghanaian public service, the mandatory, that are codes, rules, and regulations, and the non-mandatory, informal organizational norms. To effectively manage public service integrity more attention must be paid to both. One would agree that controlling public service integrity is a balance between compliance and value-based approaches and the effective implementation and monitoring of procedures, and processes to foster integrity among organizational members (Tremblay, Martineau & Pauchant 2017).

Ghanaian public service leaders are to effectively execute their role as enforcers of the codes, policies, and processes of the public service with transparency to imbue trust and model integrity to subordinates. To be effective, any organizational integrity framework for the Ghana public service has to take care of both the legal, institutional, and leadership responsibility dimensions.

The study concludes that while the establishment of codes of conduct and regulations to ensure integrity compliance is necessary, there are constraints in relying largely on such strategies. Using such external controls only sets out the boundaries of organizational conduct and associated sanctions, but they are restrictive in addressing the complexity of informal issues faced by PSWs in exercising organizational integrity. The influence and nuances of

organizational relationships and networks on integrity behavior are ignored when integrity management frameworks focus overly on ensuring compliance to formal norms.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: PSWs Interview Guide

Preamble: a short summary of the aims of the study, role of interviewer and participant, outline ethical procedures (informed consent, confidentiality, right to withdraw)

1. Demographics

- Gender
- Age
- Marital status
- Highest level of education
- Religious affiliation
- Civil service Grade
- Years of service

2. Organizational Integrity

- a. Help me understand what it means to say an organization has integrity? What is organizational integrity?
- b. Are you aware of any public service codes of conduct or regulations guiding your work as a public servant?
- c. Do you know where to find the codes?
- d. Can you explain any contents of the codes/regulations that stand out for you? (probe for responsibilities and sanctions concerning implementation)?
- e. In general, how would you describe the implementation of the codes in your organization (probe: highly monitored, laissez faire, passive implementation). Please give examples to provide reasons for the description.
- f. How will you explain the term corruption?
- g. Can you give me an example of integrity violations prevalent in the public service? (probe for types of **acts** that constitutes corruption in the public service)

- a. Can you tell me about formal organizational norms (probe for codes of conduct, public service regulations, and working procedures) that encourage these acts of corruption in the Public Service.
- h. can you tell me about informal norms (probe for typical behavioral rules) applied widely in public servants working relationships, that are not found in the codes of conduct or regulations (please provide work situation examples, consequences)

Corruption Decision Making

3a. Vignette 1

Interpersonal corruption – Nepotism/Favoritism

DB is the section head of a department in the public service. DBs overall Boss, who is also DBs church member and a school mate wants to employ his newly graduated daughter in DBs department, denying the first 5 better-qualified applicants after the intake interviews. DB is the only interview panel member aware of the situation. He has the administrative authority to ignore the issue and employ the lady or to terminate the daughter's appointment. The Boss has asked DB to employ his daughter.

1. Are there any integrity violations of concern to you in this case (probe for corrupt acts, code, and working principles)?
2. Please think for DB. How should DB resolve this case? (probe for codes/regulations, informal norms)
3. Why do you think DB should solve the case this way?

3b. Vignette 2

Interpersonal-Fraud

On the recommendation of the Chief Director, DB has been assigned to his office as the new administrator. As part of DBs duties, DB allocates the monthly fuel coupons. The outgoing administrator verbally told DB to give 50 percent of the fuel coupons to the chief director for personal use, DB is to take 20 percent. 30 percent is reserved for the official fleet of the Ministry.

DB went through the administrative procedures and noticed the chief director should get only 20 percent for official use, DB as the administrator is not entitled to any fuel coupons at all. DB is uncomfortable with the situation but the Director insists that is how it has been for years. No one goes by the books. So DB should just obey.

3c. Vignette 3

Conflict of Interest and Bribery

DB is in charge of facility management in a government establishment, DB has cordial relations with a private company contracted to service the establishment's air-conditioning. This company installed and has also been servicing DBs home air conditioners for free for the past 4 years. The company also donates occasionally to DBs personal philanthropic projects. It is time for another 4-year contract and other bidders have applied. No company is allowed to remain in a contract with the ministry for more than 6 years but the former company has reapplied using another name. DB is aware of this and he can disqualify this old applicant or allow him to also compete for the bid with the change of name.

Appendix B: Experts' Interview Guide

Preamble: a short summary of the aims of the study and outline ethical procedures (informed consent, confidentiality, right to withdraw).

Demographics

- Gender
- Age
- Marital status
- Highest level of education
- Organization
- Work Role in Organization
- Religion

I am interested in learning about organizational integrity and corruption decision making in the public sector.

- b. How will you explain the term corruption?
- c. What types of **acts** would you say constitute corruption in the public sector?
- d. Can you tell me about administrative factors that you think encourage these acts of corruption in the public sector (roots, causes, and consequences)?
- e. What actions do you know of being employed to encourage public service integrity and anti-corruption in Ghana (**probe according to the expertise of the interviewee: role of media, NGOs, general and public service regulatory frameworks**)
- f. Can you comment on the effectiveness of the actions you have mentioned (probe recommendations for anti-corruption controls)
- i. Are you aware of any codes of conduct/laws aimed at promoting integrity in the public sector?
- j. How would you rate the effectiveness of the (code (s)/laws you mentioned in fostering public sector workers' integrity.

Appendix E: Informed Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



Official Use only
Protocol number

Ethics Committee for Humanities (ECH)

PROTOCOL CONSENT FORM

Section A- BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Title of Study:	Organizational Integrity and Corruption Decision - Making in the Ghanaian Public Service
Principal Investigator:	Mercy Naa Merley DeSouza
Certified Protocol Number	

Section B- CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

General Information about Research

- The purpose of this interview is to understand how organizational integrity is applied in corruption decision making. The interview will take approximately 45minutes. The interview will require that you answer some questions and three short vignettes saying how you will resolve the scenarios presented. Your frank and candid responses will be appreciated.

Benefits/Risks of the study

- There are no risks associated with this study. Your frank and honest responses will help to add knowledge to organizational integrity management and anti-corruption policies in the Ghanaian Public service.

Confidentiality

Please note that your participation in this study is voluntary. All information will be treated confidentially. Your name will not be mentioned in any record. The researcher is under a code of ethics that forbids the information gathered in this interview to be used for any other reason than for academic purposes.

Compensation

- Five Ghana Cedis phone credit will be given to you as a token of appreciation for your active participation in this study.

Withdrawal from Study

- Though your full participation will be highly appreciated, You are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Contact for Additional Information

- Please contact me with the following details if you have any further questions concerning this research.

Mercy Naa Merley DeSouza

mnmdesouza@st.ug.edu.gh

If you need further clarification about your rights as a research participant in this study you may contact the Administrator of the Ethics Committee for Humanities, ISSER, University of Ghana at ech@isser.edu.gh or ech@ug.edu.gh

Tel: 0233 303 933-866

Section C- PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT

"I have read or have had someone read all of the above, asked questions, received answers regarding participation in this study, and am willing to give consent for me, my child/ward to participate in this study. I will not have waived any of my rights by signing this consent form. Upon signing this consent form, I will receive a copy for my personal records."

Name of Participant

Signature or mark of Participant

Date

If participant cannot read and or understand the form themselves, a witness must sign here:

I was present while the benefits, risks and procedures were read to the volunteer. All

questions were answered and the volunteer has agreed to take part in the research.

Name of witness

Signature of witness / Mark

Date

I certify that the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research have been explained to the above individual.

Name of Person who Obtained Consent

Signature of Person Who Obtained Consent

Date

Appendix D: Ethical Clearance Certificate



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR THE HUMANITIES (ECH)

P. O. Box LG 571, Legon, Accra, Ghana

My Ref. No.....

1st March, 2019

Ms. Mercy Naa Amerley DeSouza
Department of Psychology
University of Ghana
P.O. Box LG84
Legon

Dear Ms. DeSouza,

ECH 040/18-19: WORKPLACE INTEGRITY AND CORRUPTION DECISION- MAKING IN THE GHANAIAN PUBLIC SECTOR

This is to advise you that the above reference study has been presented to the Ethics Committee for the Humanities for a full board review and the following actions taken subject to the conditions and explanation provided below:

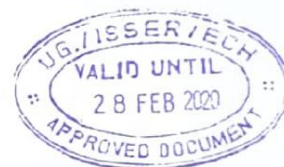
Expiry Date: 28/02/20
On Agenda for: Initial Submission
Date of Submission: 19/11/18
ECH Action: Approved
Reporting: Bi-annually

Please accept my congratulations.

Yours Sincerely,

Prof. C. Charles Mate-Kole
ECH Vice Chair

Cc: Dr. Maxwell Asumeng, Department of Psychology, UG
Prof. Charity Akotia, Department of Psychology, UG
Dr. Kwaku Oppong Asante, Department of Psychology, UG



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