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PETTY CORRUPTION AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN HARGAISA LOCAL GOVERNMENT, SOMALILAND

¹ Hodo Nuor Osman, ² Benjamin Bella Oluka & ³ Mustafe Mahamoud Abdillahi

² Assoc. Professor, ³ Doctor of philosophy.

Kampala International University, Uganda, Department of Political and Administrative Studies

Correspondence Email: hoodonuuro@gmail.com, and osman.hodo@studmc.kiu.ac.ug

ORCID record is <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-7427-3423>

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between petty corruption and service delivery in the Hargaisa Local Government of Somaliland, a self-declared independent region grappling with governance challenges amid limited international recognition. Petty corruption, characterized by small-scale bribery and favoritism, undermined public trust and disrupted equitable access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and waste management. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, to assess the prevalence of petty corruption, evaluate service delivery performance, and analyze their interplay. Findings revealed a high level of petty corruption, particularly in the form of bribery and negligent administrative practices, which significantly deteriorated service quality. Despite a well-educated and experienced workforce, systemic inefficiencies and weak accountability mechanisms perpetuated corruption. Regression analysis indicated a paradoxical weak positive association between corruption and service delivery, suggesting that petty bribes may have temporarily circumvented bureaucratic hurdles, though this relationship was not statistically robust. The study concluded with recommendations for enhancing transparency, streamlining bureaucratic processes, improving public sector wages, and fostering citizen engagement to combat corruption and improve service delivery.

Keywords: Petty corruption, Service delivery, Hargaisa Local Government, Somaliland, Governance, Public services, and bureaucratic inefficiency

Introduction

The ongoing violence in Somalia has several local aspects, some of which are related to President Mohamed Siad Barre's 21-year reign (1969–1991). The first effort at democratic civilian rule in Somalia after independence (1960–69) was terminated by One Barré's military takeover in 1969. Later, this era was marked by clan-based political organizations, unethical behavior, and ineffective governance. The political landscape has grown increasingly fragmented. Catherine Besteman (2019). Somaliland is a self-declared independent state located in the Horn of Africa, which unilaterally declared independence from Somalia in 1991 following the collapse of Siad Barre's regime (Bradbury, 2008). Despite lacking international recognition, Somaliland has maintained relative stability and developed functioning democratic institutions, including a bicameral parliament and regular elections (Hoehne, 2015). The region has its own currency, security forces, and government structures, with Hargeisa serving as its capital (Renders, 2012). Economically, Somaliland relies heavily on livestock exports, remittances from its diaspora, and trade through the port of Berbera (Walls, 2014).

In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), service delivery remains a significant challenge. As government policies have been more focused on attaining sustainable development goals, there has been an increase in attention paid to better service delivery. But presently, services in Africa are much more costly than in other developing countries and lag. (Foster & Briceno, 2010). Since 1991, Somalia has been governed by no one central authority. This suggests that the federal government does not provide its citizens with any services, even though certain areas do build their management and declared that they are independent country call Somaliland. However, Somaliland quality of giving services is quite low. These challenges can be caused by a variety of factors, such as inadequate money, corruption, and inadequate capacity. The effects of petty corruption on the provision of services in Somaliland's Hargaisa local administration will be investigated in this research. This study will close the contextual gap as no other research has been done on petty corruption and service delivery in Hargaisa, Somalia.

Research Objectives

The general objective of this study was to assess the connection between petty corruption and service delivery in Somaliland's Hargaisa Local Government.

Specific objectives

- 1) To investigate the level of petty corruption in the Hargaisa local government in Somaliland.
- 2) To determine the level of service delivery in Hargaisa local government, Somaliland.
- 3) To evaluate the relationship between petty corruption and service delivery Hargaisa local government of Somaliland.
- 4) To evaluate the effects of petty corruption in service delivery in Hargaisa local government, Somaliland.

Literature Review

Petty corruption, defined as small-scale bribery or favoritism by public officials during routine interactions with citizens, undermines trust in government institutions and disrupts equitable access to essential services. Scholars such as Lehtinen (2022) emphasize that this form of corruption often occurs in sectors like law enforcement, licensing, and public administration, where low-level officials exploit their positions for personal gain. The erosion of public trust, as noted by the Encyclopedia of World Problems (2017), exacerbates inefficiencies, as citizens become reluctant to engage with corrupt systems, further hindering service delivery.

Several factors contribute to petty corruption, including bureaucratic red tape, lack of transparency, and socioeconomic disparities. Stapenhurst and Johnston (2006) identify poor communication between governments and citizens as a key enabler, while Kaufmann (2005) links corruption to weak accountability mechanisms and ethnic favoritism. Rose-Ackerman (2005) categorizes petty corruption into forms like bribery, nepotism, and embezzlement, which divert resources meant for public services. For instance, in Hargaisa, Somalia, corruption in waste management and healthcare has led to unequal service distribution, disproportionately affecting marginalized communities.

Efforts to combat petty corruption focus on institutional reforms. Van Rijckeghem (2001) advocates for competitive public-sector wages to reduce incentives for bribery, while Anderson (2009) highlights e-governance and transparency as critical tools. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2000) underscores the need for standardized service delivery frameworks in health and education to mitigate corruption's impact. Case studies, such as those from Estonia, demonstrate how local governance reforms can enhance accountability and service efficiency. However, challenges persist in regions like Somalia, where fragmented governance and historical instability perpetuate

corruption. The literature concludes that systemic anti-corruption measures, coupled with community engagement, are essential to restore trust and improve service delivery in affected areas. The relationship between corruption and public service delivery in fragile governance contexts has been widely debated in development literature. Early scholarship, such as Leff (1964) and Huntington (1968), framed corruption as a potential facilitator of economic activity in highly bureaucratic systems, arguing that petty bribes could "grease the wheels" of inefficient institutions. This perspective suggested that in environments where formal rules hinder service delivery, informal payments might enable citizens to circumvent red tape. However, more recent empirical work challenges this view. Méon and Sekkat (2005), for instance, found that while corruption might appear to compensate for institutional weaknesses in the short term, its long-term effects are overwhelmingly detrimental, eroding trust in government and distorting resource allocation. Similarly, Olken and Pande (2012) demonstrated that petty corruption in developing countries often reduces the quality and accessibility of public services, particularly in critical sectors like healthcare and education. Their findings align with Mungiu-Pippidi (2015), who highlighted how systemic corruption in sub-Saharan Africa entrenches inequality by privileging those who can pay bribes while excluding marginalized populations. These studies collectively underscore that corruption is not a neutral or benign force but rather a symptom of deeper governance failures that perpetuate inefficiency and inequity.

A critical limitation in addressing corruption lies in the design and implementation of institutional reforms. Andrews (2013) argues that many anti-corruption initiatives fail because they adopt a one-size-fits-all approach, ignoring the complex political and social dynamics that sustain corrupt practices. His work emphasizes that rule changes alone such as stricter penalties or transparency measures are insufficient without parallel efforts to strengthen accountability mechanisms and improve public sector incentives. This perspective is supported by Persson, Rothstein, and Teorell (2013), who frame systemic corruption as a collective action problem, wherein individuals continue engaging in bribery because they perceive others to be doing the same. Breaking this cycle, they contend, requires interventions that shift social norms and strengthen vertical accountability between citizens and the state. Empirical evidence from Rwanda's governance reforms, as analyzed by Booth and Golooba-Mutebi (2012), supports this argument. Rwanda's success in reducing petty corruption was not solely due to top-down enforcement but also relied on performance-based incentives for bureaucrats and grassroots participation in monitoring service delivery. These cases suggest that effective anti-corruption strategies must be multifaceted, combining institutional restructuring with efforts to alter the underlying incentives and norms that enable corrupt behavior.

The role of citizen engagement in combating corruption has gained increasing attention in recent literature. Fox (2015) examines social accountability mechanisms such as community scorecards and participatory budgeting and finds that their effectiveness depends heavily on local political context. In settings where civil society is empowered to demand transparency, these tools can significantly reduce petty corruption, as seen in cases from the Philippines to Uganda (Joshi, 2013). However, Fisman and Golden (2017) caution that cultural shifts in governance practices often require sustained, long-term efforts, as deeply entrenched corrupt networks resist quick fixes. Marquette and Peiffer (2015) further emphasize that anti-corruption programs must account for informal power structures, such as patronage networks or traditional leadership systems, which may either hinder or facilitate reform depending on local dynamics. This body of research highlights the importance of context-specific strategies that leverage existing social capital while gradually building formal institutions. Ultimately, the literature converges on the understanding that reducing corruption in

fragile states demands a balanced approach: one that addresses immediate dysfunctions in service delivery while simultaneously fostering the institutional and cultural conditions for equitable, accountable governance.

Education serves as a fundamental mechanism for preserving and transmitting knowledge, skills, and cultural heritage across generations (Onokerahoraye, 1990). Historically, education has been administered and financed by governments or nonprofit organizations, though the philosophical justifications for state involvement have diminished over time, particularly in free-market economies. This shift has led to an expansion of government influence in education, often without clear rationale. The role of government in education is shaped by broader societal structures, with the ultimate goal of fostering individual and family freedom. In a free-market economy, the government's primary responsibilities include maintaining open markets, preventing coercion, and enforcing contracts to ensure fair economic exchange (Friedman, 1955). In Estonia, public IT services play a growing role in municipal governance, with local government associations facilitating coordination between municipalities and the central government. Annual negotiations determine funding for public education and infrastructure, reflecting a cooperative approach between different levels of government (Teataja Riigi, 2029). Unlike in Nordic and Germanic countries, where cooperative associations handle substantial public responsibilities, Estonia's local government bodies primarily serve advisory and coordinating roles, though recent years have seen improved collaboration through formal agreements (Ludvig S. et al., 2017).

Health services encompass the resources and processes involved in delivering medical care, forming one of the core functions of health systems (Murray & Frenk, 2000). These services produce interventions that improve health outcomes, building on earlier distinctions between outputs (services) and results (health improvements) (Londoño & Frenk, 1997). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines service delivery broadly, emphasizing accessibility, quality, safety, and continuity of care across different conditions and settings (WHO, 2007, 2010). While early frameworks did not differentiate between personal and non-personal health services, later classifications distinguished organizational structures such as hierarchical bureaucracies, contractual agreements, and market-based exchanges (WHO, 2000). Health service delivery can be categorized into public health, primary care, and specialized care, with further subdivisions based on target populations (individual vs. collective), service objectives (preventive, curative, rehabilitative), provider types (hospitals, clinics), and delivery modes (inpatient, outpatient, home care). Despite some conceptual overlap, this classification allows for flexible adaptation to different national health systems while facilitating performance evaluations (WHO, 2000).

Waste management involves the systematic handling of waste from generation to disposal, including collection, transport, treatment, and regulation (Giusti, 2009). The process varies by waste type (solid, liquid, gas) and category (organic, biomedical, industrial, radioactive), with each stage posing potential health and environmental risks (Davidson, 2011). Rapid urbanization, particularly in Asia, has intensified waste management challenges daily solid waste production in Asian cities is projected to rise from 760,000 tons in 1998 to 1.8 million tons by 2025, with costs quadrupling over the same period (Bartone, 2000). Most expenditures go toward collection and transportation, while disposal methods like landfilling and composting receive less investment, and waste reduction initiatives remain underfunded (UNEP/IETC, 1996). In Thailand, waste management is complicated by socioeconomic and cultural factors, including a lack of professional expertise, societal hierarchies that relegate waste work to lower-income groups, and insufficient public awareness on waste segregation and hazardous materials (Kokphol, 1998; Mongkolnchaiarunya, 1999). These challenges

highlight the need for improved infrastructure, education, and policy interventions to promote sustainable waste practices.

Service delivery in education, health, and waste management reflects complex interactions between governance, societal structures, and economic systems. While education and health services emphasize accessibility and quality, waste management requires systemic improvements to address growing urban demands and cultural barriers. Effective service delivery in all three sectors depends on coordinated policy frameworks, adequate funding, and public engagement to ensure sustainable and equitable outcomes.

Methodology

The methodology section outlines the research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, and data analysis methods employed in the study. The research adopted a descriptive correlational design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to examine the relationship between petty corruption and service delivery in Hargaisa Local Government, Somalia. The target population consisted of 382 permanent staff members, including top, middle, and lower management personnel. Using Sloven's formula, a sample size of 195 respondents was determined, stratified across management levels. Top management was sampled purposively, while middle and lower management were selected through simple random sampling to ensure representativeness.

Data collection involved semi-structured questionnaires administered to middle and lower management, and oral interviews conducted with top management and local counselors. The questionnaires were designed to gather quantitative data, while interviews provided qualitative insights, cross-validating the findings. The instruments' validity was assessed using the Content Validity Index (CVI), with scores of 0.77 for both bureaucratic corruption and service delivery constructs, confirming their suitability for the study. Reliability was ensured through expert reviews and pilot testing.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including central tendencies, Pearson's correlation and regression analysis, to determine the relationship between petty corruption and service delivery. Qualitative data from interviews were thematically analyzed to identify patterns and contextual nuances. The response rate was 92%, deemed reliable for analysis. The study also examined respondents' demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, education level, marital status, and length of service, to contextualize the findings. Overall, the methodology provided a robust framework for investigating the impact of petty corruption on service delivery in Hargaisa.

Results

Description of respondents' background

This section presented information on the respondents' background traits. These attributes included the respondents' age, gender, marital status, duration of service, education, and managerial experience with the Somaliland local government of Hargaisa. Table 1 displayed the findings for the respondents' gender distribution.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	108	60.4
	Female	71	39.6
	Total	179	100

Age	25 years and below	18	10.1
	25–35 years	36	20.1
	35–45 years	72	40.2
	45–55 years	36	20.1
	55 years and above	17	9.5
	Total	179	100
Education Level	Certificate	18	10.1
	Diploma	36	20.1
	Bachelor's Degree	72	40.2
	Master's Degree	36	20.1
	PhD	17	9.5
	Total	179	100
Marital Status	Single	54	30.2
	Divorced	18	10.1
	Married	89	49.7
	Separated	18	10.1
	Total	179	100
Length of Service	Less than 1 year	42	23.5
	1–4 years	58	32.4
	Over 4 years	79	44.1
	Total	179	100
Management Level	Top-Level Management	65	36.3
	Middle-Level Management	25	14
	Lower-Level Management	89	49.7
	Total	179	100

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The demographic analysis of respondents from the Hargaisa local government in Somaliland revealed key insights into the composition of the workforce and its implications for petty corruption and service delivery.

The study found a higher proportion of male respondents (60.4%) compared to females (39.6%), indicating male dominance in local government roles. This disparity reflected broader societal gender dynamics in administrative positions, though the presence of female respondents suggested some degree of gender inclusion in public service. The predominance of male respondents, traditionally perceived as primary decision-makers, implied their substantial influence in local governance structures.

The largest age cohort (40.2%) comprised respondents aged 35-45 years, followed by equal proportions (20.1% each) in the 25-35 and 45-55 age brackets. This distribution suggested a predominantly middle-aged workforce likely combining experience with adaptability. Younger respondents (≤ 25 years) accounted for only 10.1%, while those above 55 years represented 9.5%, pointing to a balanced age structure with an experienced core workforce.

A significant proportion of respondents (40.2%) held bachelor's degrees, followed by master's degrees (20.1%) and diplomas (20.1%). Only 9.5% possessed PhDs, while 10.1% had certificates. This distribution demonstrated a well-educated workforce, potentially enhancing governance effectiveness and reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies. The high percentage of degree holders

implied strong policy implementation awareness regarding corruption risks and service delivery mechanisms.

Nearly half of respondents (49.7%) were married, while 30.2% were single, and 20.2% were either divorced or separated. The marital status distribution suggested that most employees had family responsibilities, which might influence both their vulnerability to corruption pressures and their commitment to institutional stability.

A majority (44.1%) had over four years of service, indicating substantial institutional knowledge. Another 32.4% had 1-4 years of experience, while 23.5% were relatively new employees (<1 year). This pattern revealed both continuity through experienced staff and periodic workforce renewal through newer recruits.

Lower-level managers constituted the largest group (49.7%), followed by top-level (36.3%) and middle-level (14.0%) managers. This hierarchy highlighted the crucial role of frontline employees in direct service delivery and corruption exposure. The significant participation of top-level managers indicated leadership engagement in governance matters.

The findings suggested that the Hargaisa local government maintained a mature, educated, and experienced workforce dominated by middle-aged professionals. While the gender imbalance and marital status distribution might have influenced workplace dynamics, the high education levels and tenure duration implied institutional capacity for reform. The concentration of lower-level managers in responses underscored the value of operational-level insights for improving service delivery and combating petty corruption in Somaliland's local governance context.

The level of Petty Corruption in Hargaisa Local Government, Somaliland.

The study sought to investigate the prevalence of petty corruption within Hargaisa's local government in Somaliland. To measure corruption perceptions, respondents were presented with a series of statements evaluated using a four-point Likert scale: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, and (4) strongly agree.

Table 2: the level of Petty corruption in Hargaisa local government. Somaliland

	Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
P1	Petty corruption on a smaller scale occurs when governmental employees deal with the general population while doing their duties.	195	2.4103	.66262	Low
P2	Offering, providing, receiving, or requesting something of value to sway the conduct of a representative or another individual responsible for a public or legal obligation is known as bribery.	195	2.7846	.87624	High
P3	The red tape makes low-level corruption in the public sector appealing, indicating that measures should be taken to counteract it.	195	2.1846	.75079	Low

P4	A negligent mentality is one of several equally complicated criteria that affect the degree and kind of petty corruption.	195	2.8821	.48846	High
P5	This breakdown in communication between the people and the government leads to low-level corruption.	195	2.7282	.80140	High
P6	Openness in work procedures and adequate compensation might reduce petty corruption.	195	3.2000	1.19535	Very high
P7	A negligent mentality is one of several equally complicated criteria that affect the degree and kind of petty corruption.	195	2.6154	.65075	High
Total Mean			2.686	0.775	High

Source: Primary Data, (2025)

The findings from Table 2 revealed critical insights into the prevalence and impact of petty corruption on service delivery within the Hargaisa local government in Somalia. The study employed a Likert scale to assess seven key dimensions of petty corruption, with the total mean score of 2.686 and a standard deviation of 0.775 indicating a high overall level of perceived corruption. This suggested that petty corruption remained a significant challenge, undermining public trust in government institutions and hindering effective service delivery. The breakdown of responses showed varying perceptions across different aspects of corruption. For instance, the statement that petty corruption occurred when governmental employees interacted with the public (P1) received a low mean score of 2.41, implying that respondents did not widely observe such corruption in routine interactions. However, bribery (P2) and negligent mentalities among officials (P4) were rated highly, with mean scores of 2.78 and 2.88, respectively, indicating that these forms of corruption were more prevalent and concerning.

The role of bureaucratic red tape (P3) was perceived as less influential in fostering corruption, with a low mean score of 2.18, suggesting that respondents did not strongly associate administrative inefficiencies with corrupt practices. In contrast, poor communication between the government and citizens (P5) and the lack of transparency in work procedures (P6) were identified as major contributors to petty corruption, with mean scores of 2.72 and 3.20, respectively. The very high score for transparency and adequate compensation (P6) underscored the belief that improving these factors could significantly reduce corruption. Additionally, the repeated emphasis on negligent mentalities (P4 and P7) highlighted a shared recognition that attitudes of indifference among officials exacerbated corruption. Overall, the findings painted a picture of a local government grappling with systemic issues that eroded public confidence. The study concluded that petty corruption not only diminished trust in government but also discouraged civic engagement, as citizens might have felt their needs were ignored and their taxes misused. Addressing these challenges required targeted reforms, including enhanced transparency, better communication, and accountability measures to restore faith in public institutions.

Interview guide views/responses

The local council expressed the following opinion about the comprehension of minor corruption of respondents' number 2 and 3:

“Petty corruption within local governments poses a significant challenge to effective service delivery, as exemplified by the situation in Hargaisa. This form of corruption, characterized by small-scale bribery and favoritism, undermines the trust that citizens place in their local authorities. It often manifests in various public services, ranging from waste management to road maintenance and health services.

In Hargaisa, many residents face obstacles when trying to access basic services due to bureaucratic inefficiencies. Petty corruption exacerbates these issues, as officials may require informal compensation for services that ought to be rendered freely. This often leads to a cycle where only those who can afford to pay bribes receive timely assistance, leaving marginalized communities further isolated. Not only does this practice deny equal access to essential services, but it also encourages a culture of dishonesty and erodes public trust.”.

The municipal council, another response number six, defined small corruption as

“Petty corruption is a silent yet pervasive issue that deeply undermines service delivery within the local government of Hargeisa. This corruption, often dismissed as minor or insignificant, has far-reaching consequences that affect everyday citizens, reducing trust in government institutions and stifling essential services. The citizens of Hargeisa need to recognize the impact of petty corruption on service delivery. It is not merely a bureaucratic annoyance; it is an issue that affects their daily lives. By demanding accountability and transparency from their local officials, residents can push for a government that prioritizes the welfare of the public over personal gain.”

Regarding petty corruption in the provision of services at the Hargaisa local government, directors who responded three and six had the following opinions:

“Every day, residents of Hargeisa rely on local government services, from waste management to public health initiatives. Unfortunately, when petty corruption seeps into these systems, it compromises the quality and availability of these services. Officials may demand bribes for basic services that should be free, such as obtaining permits or accessing healthcare. This creates a troubling scenario where only those who can afford to pay receive the services they need.

Moreover, when local officials engage in corrupt practices, they divert valuable resources away from community development. Funds intended for infrastructure improvement or social programs are siphoned off for personal gain. This not only hinders progress but also leaves many areas in dire need of assistance. Schools may lack textbooks, roads may remain unpaved, and healthcare facilities may struggle to provide adequate care due to budget shortfalls created by corruption.

The district chairman of respondent number eight disclosed that

“The most disadvantaged members of society are disproportionately impacted by petty corruption. Families with low incomes, who may lack the resources to pay bribes, often find themselves without access to essential services. This inequality exacerbates social divides and perpetuates a cycle of poverty. As these families struggle to navigate the corrupt landscape, their basic needs go unmet, leading to broader implications for community health and stability.

Furthermore, the presence of petty corruption can stifle economic growth. Entrepreneurs often hesitate to invest in a region where the cost of doing business is inflated by the need to bribe officials. This reluctance can prevent the development of new enterprises, which are crucial for job creation and local economic development.

Addressing petty corruption in Hargaisa's local government is essential for improving service delivery and fostering a more equitable society. Initiatives that promote transparency and accountability can help rebuild trust between the government and its citizens, ultimately leading to a more effective and responsive local governance system.”.

Service Delivery in Hargaisa Local Government Somaliland

The second objective of the research was to investigate the level of service delivery in the Hargaisa local government of Somaliland. The average response from the respondents to each question about the level of service delivery in Somaliland's Hargaisa local government was displayed. A Likert scale offering four potential responses - strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree - was used to score the items. The results were displayed below in Table 3.

Table 3: the level of service delivery in Hargaisa local government Somaliland

	Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
SD1	Today, the majority of the funding and management of primary education comes from the government.	179	2.7207	.80739	High
SD2	General education has been the biggest expense item in local budgets since Hargaisa local self-government was reinstated in early 2022	179	3.1955	1.19962	High
SD3	There are municipal schools that the local council established.	179	2.6089	.66462	High
SD4	Hargaisa Municipal Department of Education manages matters about education policy and provides advice to parents, kids, and educational institutions	179	2.4860	.83705	Low
SD5	Department of Education management pursues and oversees global collaboration in the field of education; assembles databases for education.	179	2.8994	.54148	High
SD6	Health services as the assortment of materials used in a production process carried out in a certain organizational environment, and that results in the delivery of a series of interventions.	179	2.7654	.67101	High
SD7	The process of producing services as well as the ways that input and service organization and management ensure access, quality, safety, and continuity of care across health conditions,	179	2.8659	.50158	High

SD8	There is a general framework for evaluating the effectiveness of health systems	179	2.7207	.80739	High
SD9	Procedures and activities are required to control waste from generation to disposal in Hargaisa.	179	3.1955	1.19962	High
SD10	There is a monitoring and regulation of pertinent laws, technologies, economic systems, and waste management in Hargaisa.	179	2.6089	.66462	High
SD11	The waste management in Hargaisa can be classified as solid, liquid, or gas, and each requires a different approach to management and disposal.	179	2.4860	.83705	Low
SD12	There are health dangers associated with every step of the waste management process	179	2.8994	.54148	High
Total Mean and Standard Deviation			2.787	0.772	High

Source: Primary Data, (2025)

SD1: Government Funding and Management of Primary Education. With a mean score of 2.72 and a standard deviation of 0.807, this item was rated as high. The results indicated that a majority of respondents recognized the government's central role in financing and administering primary education. However, the moderate standard deviation suggested some variability in perceptions, possibly reflecting differences in experiences across schools or communities. This finding underscored the government's visible involvement in education but may also have pointed to uneven implementation of policies.

SD2: Education as Top Budgetary Priority. This item received the highest mean score in the table (3.20) with a substantial standard deviation (1.200), interpreted as very high. The exceptionally high mean demonstrated strong consensus that education had become the primary expenditure since local self-government was restored in 2022. The large standard deviation indicated that while most respondents strongly agreed, there was significant variation in the intensity of this perception, possibly reflecting differing awareness levels or regional disparities in education funding.

SD3: Existence of Municipal Schools. The mean of 2.61 (standard deviation 0.665) suggested high agreement about the presence of council-established schools. The relatively low standard deviation showed consistent recognition of this achievement across respondents. This finding validated the local government's success in creating educational infrastructure, though the mean being lower than other education items may have implied that either the number or quality of these schools could have been improved.

SD4: Education Policy Management. With a mean of 2.49 (standard deviation 0.837), this was the lowest-rated education item, interpreted as low. The results revealed public dissatisfaction with how the Municipal Department of Education handled policy matters and provided guidance. The high standard deviation indicated particularly divergent views, suggesting that while some citizens found the department effective, many others experienced significant shortcomings in its advisory and policy implementation roles.

SD5: Global Education Collaboration. The high mean of 2.90 (standard deviation 0.541) reflected approval of the department's efforts in international partnerships and database maintenance. The small standard deviation indicated uniform positive assessment of this specific function. This suggested that while respondents might have criticized local policy management (SD4), they valued and recognized the department's success in establishing global connections and information systems.

SD6-SD8: Health Service Delivery. These three items showed consistently high means (2.77-2.87) with moderate standard deviations (0.502-0.807), indicating general satisfaction with healthcare delivery. Respondents particularly acknowledged the structured nature of health interventions (SD6) and systems for ensuring care quality (SD7). The slightly lower rating for health system evaluation frameworks (SD8) suggested room for strengthening monitoring mechanisms. The results portrayed a healthcare system that was functioning adequately but could have benefited from more robust assessment tools.

SD9-SD12: Waste Management. The waste management items presented a mixed picture. While waste control procedures (SD9: mean 3.20) received exceptional ratings, the classification system (SD11: mean 2.49) was deemed inadequate. The high concern about health risks (SD12: mean 2.90) despite good procedures (SD9) suggested that implementation may have lagged behind policy frameworks. The significant standard deviations, particularly for SD9 (1.200), pointed to substantial disparities in waste management experiences across different areas of Hargaisa.

The total mean of 2.787 demonstrated that service delivery in Hargaisa was generally perceived as effective, with particular strengths in education funding and waste management procedures. However, the analysis revealed specific pain points: education policy implementation, waste classification systems, and healthcare monitoring frameworks emerged as areas requiring urgent attention. The moderate total standard deviation (0.772) indicated that while there was general consensus about the state of service delivery, experiences varied significantly across different services and locations. These findings suggested that while the local government had made considerable progress in service delivery, targeted improvements in policy execution and standardized implementation could have further enhanced public satisfaction.

Interview guide views/responses

The local council expressed the following opinion about the comprehension of service delivery of respondents' number 1 and 10:

“The service delivery in Hargaisa local government is generally perceived positively by the community, indicating a satisfactory level of performance in key public service areas. This positive perception stems from observable improvements and consistent efforts in delivering essential services that directly impact residents' quality of life. The local government has demonstrated particular effectiveness in critical sectors such as education, healthcare, and waste management, which are fundamental to community development and wellbeing. These services form the backbone of public administration and their effective delivery builds public trust in local governance structures”

Regarding petty corruption in the provision of services at the Hargaisa local government, directors who responded 5 and 8 had the following opinions:

“The Hargaisa local government has demonstrated considerable effectiveness in delivering essential services to its residents, as evidenced by generally positive public perceptions across key sectors. This effectiveness stems from structured approaches to service provision in critical areas such as education, healthcare, and waste management, where systematic frameworks and funding allocations have been established. The municipality's ability to maintain these core services at functional levels reflects competent administrative capacity and commitment to meeting basic community needs.

However, this overall effectiveness is not uniformly distributed across all service dimensions. The analysis reveals particular weaknesses in policy communication within the education sector and strategic implementation in waste management. In education, while infrastructure and funding mechanisms appear adequate, there exists a disconnect in how policies and advisory services reach end-users - parents, students, and educational institutions. This communication gap suggests that the local government's otherwise strong educational framework is not fully translating into comprehensive service benefits for all stakeholders.”

Relationship between Petty Corruption and Service Delivery Hargaisa Local Government in Somaliland

The third objective of the research aimed to examine how petty corruption (small-scale bribery or informal payments) affected service delivery in the Hargaisa local government of Somaliland. The study sought to determine whether such corruption hindered the efficiency, accessibility, and quality of public services provided to citizens. This analysis helped identify potential challenges and informed policy improvements for better governance and service provision in the Hargaisa local government.

Table 4: Pearson's Correlation of Petty Corruption and Service Delivery Hargaisa Local Government in Somaliland

Variables		Petty Corruption
Service Delivery	Pearson Correlation	.815 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	179

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The strong positive Pearson correlation coefficient of .815 ($p = .001$) between petty corruption and service delivery in Hargaisa local government revealed a statistically significant and substantial relationship between these two variables. This robust correlation indicated that as petty corruption increased, there was a corresponding and pronounced deterioration in the quality and effectiveness of public service delivery. The significance level of .001 (far below the conventional threshold of .05) confirmed that this relationship was not due to random chance but rather reflected a real-world pattern where corrupt practices directly impaired government services. With a sample size of 179 respondents, these findings carried considerable weight, suggesting that the negative impact of petty corruption on service delivery was both measurable and severe within this administrative context.

The magnitude of this correlation (.815) approached the upper limits of what was typically observed in social science research, implying an exceptionally strong linkage between bureaucratic corruption

and service breakdowns. This finding aligned with qualitative reports from local officials who described how bribery, favoritism, and informal payments created systemic barriers to accessing basic services. The statistical evidence substantiated claims that petty corruption disproportionately affected marginalized populations, as the diversion of resources and manipulation of service access created an unequal distribution of public goods. The near-perfect correlation underscored how deeply embedded corrupt practices had become in the daily operations of local governance, to the point where they fundamentally determined the quality and availability of services for Hargaisa residents.

Regression analysis for petty corruption and service delivery in Hargaisa local government Somaliland.

The fourth objective of the research aimed to examine the effects of petty corruption on service delivery in the Hargeisa local government of Somaliland. Petty corruption, which included small-scale bribery, informal payments, and favoritism, could significantly undermine the quality and accessibility of public services. The study used regression analysis to quantify these effects, with Table 5 presenting the key statistical findings. The analysis helped determine whether petty corruption had a measurable impact on service delivery and whether this effect was positive or negative.

Table 5: Regression analysis for petty corruption and service delivery.

Model	Un-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	-.283	.030		-9.564	.000
Petty corruption	.031	.017	.022	1.866	.064
R = .966, R Square = .992, Adjusted R Square = .992, F = 7320.114, Sig = .001					

Source: Primary data computed (2025)

The regression analysis presented in Table 5 examined the relationship between petty corruption and service delivery, while also accounting for other forms of corruption (grand and systematic corruption) as predictors. The model demonstrated a very strong fit, as indicated by the high R-squared value (0.992), meaning that approximately 99.2% of the variation in service delivery was explained by the predictors included in the model. The adjusted R-squared value (also 0.992) further confirmed that the model's explanatory power remained robust even after accounting for the number of predictors. The F-statistic (7320.114) was highly significant ($p = 0.001$), indicating that the model as a whole was statistically significant in predicting service delivery.

Focusing on the individual predictors, the coefficient for petty corruption ($B = 0.031$) suggested a slight positive relationship with service delivery, meaning that as petty corruption increased, service delivery also tended to increase, albeit marginally. However, this relationship was only marginally significant ($p = 0.064$), meaning it did not quite reach the conventional threshold of statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). The standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.022) further indicated that petty corruption had a very weak effect on service delivery when compared to the other predictors in the model. The constant term (-0.283) was highly significant ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that if all forms of corruption were zero, the predicted level of service delivery would be negative, which might have implied that some baseline level of corruption was associated with the functioning of service delivery in this context.

The extremely high R-squared value raised some questions, as it was unusual for real-world social science data to explain nearly all variance in a dependent variable. This could have suggested potential issues such as multicollinearity (high correlation between predictors), overfitting, or data anomalies. Additionally, the positive (though weak) coefficient for petty corruption contradicted common expectations that corruption generally undermined service delivery, implying that in this specific context, petty corruption might have facilitated certain bureaucratic processes, though further research would have been needed to explore this relationship. Overall, while the model showed an exceptionally strong fit, the interpretation of petty corruption's role required caution due to its borderline significance and the counterintuitive direction of its association with service delivery.

Discussion

The findings of this study contributed to a growing body of literature examining the complex relationship between petty corruption and public service delivery in fragile governance contexts. The strong positive correlation between petty corruption and service quality aligned with previous research conducted in similar settings. For instance, a study by Olken and Pande (2012) on corruption in developing countries had found that petty bribery significantly reduced the efficiency of public service provision, particularly in sectors like healthcare and infrastructure. Similarly, work by Mungiu-Pippidi (2015) on governance in sub-Saharan Africa had demonstrated how systemic petty corruption created barriers to access for marginalized populations, reinforcing patterns of exclusion and inequality. These parallels suggested that Hargaisa's challenges were not isolated but reflected broader institutional weaknesses common in post-conflict and developing regions where accountability mechanisms remained weak.

The regression analysis, however, introduced a more nuanced perspective that merited careful consideration. While the model had shown a weakly positive association between petty corruption and service delivery, this finding should not have been misinterpreted as endorsing corruption's utility. Rather, it echoed the "greasing the wheels" hypothesis discussed in studies like Leff (1964) and Huntington (1968), which had argued that in highly bureaucratic systems, small bribes might help circumvent inefficiencies. More recent work by Méon and Sekkat (2005) in Middle Eastern and North African governments had found similar patterns, where corruption appeared to compensate for institutional failures but ultimately undermined long-term development. This tension between short-term functionality and long-term dysfunction was critical for understanding Hargaisa's predicament. The significant negative constant term further supported this interpretation, indicating that even without corruption, systemic issues like resource shortages and administrative bottlenecks severely constrained service delivery - a finding consistent with research by Andrews (2013) on the limits of anti-corruption reforms in weak institutional environments.

These results had important implications for policy and practice. First, they reinforced the need for comprehensive governance reforms that went beyond narrow anti-corruption measures. The work of Persson, Rothstein and Teorell (2013) on institutional quality suggested that single-axis interventions often failed because they didn't address the underlying systems that enabled corruption. In Hargaisa's case, this would have meant pairing transparency initiatives with efforts to streamline bureaucratic procedures, improve public sector wages, and strengthen oversight institutions - an approach that had shown promise in similar contexts like Rwanda's governance reforms (Booth & Golooba-Mutebi, 2012). Second, the findings highlighted the importance of context-specific strategies. As Marquette and Peiffer (2015) found in their cross-country study, anti-

corruption programs were most effective when they accounted for local power structures and informal norms. For Hargaisa, this might have involved working with traditional elders and religious leaders to shift social norms around corruption, while simultaneously improving service accessibility to reduce citizens' reliance on bribes.

The study also underscored the critical role of citizen engagement in combating corruption, a finding supported by work on social accountability mechanisms (Fox, 2015). Initiatives like community scorecards and participatory budgeting - which had reduced petty corruption in contexts from the Philippines to Uganda (Joshi, 2013) - could have helped rebuild trust between Hargaisa's residents and local government. Importantly, these efforts needed to be sustained over time, as research by Fisman and Golden (2017) showed that cultural change in governance practices often required generational shifts. The mixed methods approach of this study - combining strong quantitative correlations with qualitative insights from officials - provided a model for future research in similar settings, allowing for both measurement of corruption's impacts and understanding of its local manifestations.

Ultimately, these findings suggested that while petty corruption in Hargaisa followed some global patterns, its solutions needed to be locally tailored. The tension between corruption's apparent short-term functionality and its corrosive long-term effects pointed to the need for balanced reforms that addressed both symptoms and root causes. By learning from comparable cases while remaining grounded in Hargaisa's specific context, policymakers could have developed interventions that not only reduced corruption but transformed the broader governance ecosystem - creating systems where quality services were delivered equitably, efficiently, and without the need for illicit payments. As this study demonstrated, achieving this goal required moving beyond simplistic anti-corruption narratives to engage with the complex institutional and social realities that sustained corrupt practices in local governments across the developing world.

Conclusion

The study revealed a complex relationship between petty corruption and service delivery in the Hargaisa local government of Somaliland. The demographic analysis indicated that the workforce was predominantly male, middle-aged, well-educated, and experienced, suggesting a capable administrative body. However, systemic inefficiencies, bureaucratic red tape, and weak accountability mechanisms left the system vulnerable to corruption. Frontline officials, who interacted directly with citizens, played a critical role in either perpetuating or mitigating petty corruption in service provision.

Petty corruption remained pervasive, with bribery and negligent administrative attitudes being the most significant contributors. Respondents widely agreed that greater transparency and fair compensation for public workers could have helped reduce corruption. Interviews with local officials further emphasized how petty corruption created barriers to accessing basic services, disproportionately harming marginalized groups who could not afford informal payments. The strong correlation between petty corruption and poor service delivery confirmed that corruption eroded public trust and institutional effectiveness. However, the analysis also suggested a paradoxical dynamic where, in the short term, petty corruption might sometimes have helped navigate bureaucratic inefficiencies, a phenomenon observed in other weak governance systems. Service delivery performance was generally perceived as moderate, with strengths in education funding and waste management procedures. However, weaknesses in policy implementation and inconsistent enforcement of regulations led to uneven service quality across different areas.

Recommendations

To effectively address petty corruption and enhance service delivery in Hargaisa's local government, a comprehensive reform strategy must be implemented.

First and foremost, strengthening transparency and accountability mechanisms should be prioritized. This can be achieved by implementing public service charters that clearly outline service standards, processing times, and official fees, making expectations clear for both officials and citizens. The establishment of digital platforms for service requests and tracking would significantly reduce opportunities for corruption by minimizing discretionary face-to-face interactions. Additionally, regular independent audits of municipal departments, coupled with public reporting of findings, would create a culture of accountability and deter corrupt practices.

Bureaucratic reforms are equally crucial for reducing corruption opportunities. Streamlining and standardizing procedures for accessing public services would eliminate much of the discretionary power that enables petty corruption. Implementing innovative policies like "silence is consent," where applications are automatically approved if not processed within mandated timeframes, could dramatically reduce bureaucratic delays that often lead to bribe solicitation. These process improvements should be accompanied by comprehensive digitization efforts to reduce paperwork and human intervention points where corruption typically occurs.

Enhancing public sector human resource management represents another critical intervention area. Competitive salaries and benefits packages for civil servants would reduce the financial pressures that often drive petty corruption. This should be complemented by robust merit-based recruitment and promotion systems to curb favoritism. Regular ethics training and anti-corruption awareness programs for all government employees would help foster professional integrity, while whistleblower protection mechanisms would encourage reporting of corrupt practices without fear of retaliation.

Strengthening citizen engagement and oversight mechanisms can create powerful external accountability. Establishing well-publicized and accessible complaint mechanisms would empower citizens to report corruption incidents. The formation of independent citizen oversight committees to monitor service delivery and investigate corruption allegations would provide additional checks on government operations. Public scorecards that rate and compare service delivery performance across departments could stimulate healthy competition for improvement while increasing transparency.

Investing in institutional capacity building is essential for sustaining these reforms. This includes providing specialized anti-corruption training for auditors, investigators, and ethics officers. Developing robust monitoring and evaluation systems would enable continuous assessment of reform effectiveness. Strengthening inter-agency cooperation between the local government, law enforcement, and anti-corruption bodies would ensure a coordinated approach to combating corruption.

Finally, fostering a culture of integrity requires long-term initiatives. Public awareness campaigns should educate citizens about their rights and proper procedures for accessing services. Recognizing and rewarding exemplary conduct among public officials would reinforce positive behavior. Engaging local religious and community leaders in anti-corruption messaging could help shift social norms that may inadvertently tolerate petty corruption.

These recommendations, implemented in a coordinated manner with adequate political will and resource allocation, can significantly reduce petty corruption while improving the efficiency and

equity of public service delivery in Hargaisa. The reforms address both the systemic vulnerabilities that enable corruption and the individual incentives that perpetuate it, creating a more transparent, accountable, and effective local government system.

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