

Attitude, Perception and Practices of Male and Female Youth in Regard to Corruption in Nigeria: Implication for Development

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Abstract: Corruption in Nigeria is growing deeper and deeper despite the war against corruption. This study examines the attitude, perception, and practices of youths, male and female in Nigeria in regard to corruption and its effect on development. The objectives of the study include: investigating the view of the youths about corruption in Nigeria, examining the various types of corruption, discovering the practice of the youths in regard to corruption, scrutinizing the implication of corruption on development, and determining ways of eradicating corruption in the society. Quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were used; hence, questionnaire and in-depth interview (IDI) were used to collect information. The data was analyzed using statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Variables were cross tabulated in order to provide association among variables. The qualitative method was analyzed using descriptive analysis to strengthen the quantitative analysis. The finding reveals that corruption is present among the youths. It is recommended that it is only when individuals make decisions about curbing corruption at individual level that development in all ramifications can come to reality in Nigeria.

Key words: Attitude, Perception, Practice, Youth, Male, Female, Corruption

Introduction

There is no doubt corruption is not a recent phenomenon, neither is it peculiar to any nation, region and ethnic group. It cuts across every sphere of the society and institutions such as education, health, family, religion, economy and politics. The practice of corruption has been everywhere in complex societies. As pointed out by Lipset and Lenz (2000), corruption cut across faiths, religious denominations and political system. It exists in all political systems be it democratic, dictatorial politics, feudal, capitalism and socialism. History revealed that during the First Republic in Nigeria corruption was rampant yet it was kept at controllable level and the cases of corruption at the time were occasionally initiated by political squabbling. It is argued by Olufayo (2006) that the practice of corruption in Nigeria came to birth in the 1970s as a result of petroleum industry. Hence, corruption cannot be over flogged in Nigeria academic circle, in view of the fact that there is no sustainable solution to the menace of the problem; it continues to remain a social issue that needs unending effort in making sense of the corrupt practices through constant investigation to proffer a long-term solution.

Regardless of all efforts corruption continues to manifest itself in virtually every sector of Nigeria society. It is pointed out by Adefolaju (2008) that despite the natural and human resources that are abundant in Nigeria society corruption has eaten up so immensely into the foundation of Nigeria. The availability of these natural resources which have not even been explored to full capacity is an indication that Nigeria is not a poor country and that it is possible for Nigeria citizens to live above poverty line. Corruption in the oil sector has deprived millions of Nigerians from benefiting from the wealth that comes from this natural resource. The few individual that enjoys the dividends of oil revenue in Nigeria are the elites and the capitalists. Of recent, the oil subsidy was removed which almost caused a revolution in the country. The removal was spurred out of the desire of the leadership to eradicate corruption in the oil sector. In spite of the revenue that is been gotten from the natural resources in Nigeria, the nation still lag behind in terms of development be it physical or human development. Late Julius Nyerere in Yusuf (2008) defined development as "a process which enables human beings to realize their potential, build self-confidence, and lead lives of dignity and fulfillment. It is a process, which frees people from the fear of want and exploitation". This idea of development is not possible in a country where people struggle to make ends meet through corruption.

It was opined by Agbakoba (1996) that over 20 million Nigerians have no access to potable water. This assertion was also echoed by WHO/UNICEF (2006), that Nigeria is not making a rapid progress towards meeting the MDGs 7 target

which intends to halve the proportion of people who are unable to afford safe drinking water and sanitation as 52 percent of the population of Nigerian has no access to water while 56 percent has no access to basic sanitation facilities. The questions that agitate the mind are why the persistent of corruption in Nigeria? Why is it so difficult to wrestle with this virus of corruption that has infected almost everybody in the society? What is the thinking and practice of the youths about corruption? What kinds of corruption exist in Nigeria society? What is the effect of corruption on development in Nigeria? What is the way forward? These are the issues this study wish to discover. As postulated in Nigeria Survey and Corruption Survey Study, Final Report (2003), the success of the colonists in terms of the flashing cars they used and the houses they lived was desirable by the indigenous people as a result they sought to emulate the colonists in acquiring property. However, during this period these properties were seen as colonist's property; hence, looting, vandalizing public property was not considered a crime. The spirit to accumulate wealth, property and to vandalize still continues to live in modern Nigeria society. For instance to avoid probe of corrupt practice, a government building may inexplicably set on fire. As pointed out in Nigeria Survey and Corruption Survey Study, Final Report (2003), a few federal buildings mysteriously went on fire after investigators started probe on the finances of the officials working in the buildings.

Different scholars have identified various causes of corruption in developing countries Nigeria society inclusive. It was argued by Dike (2005) in Africa Economic analysis that political and cultural system could make people to be prone to corrupt practices. While Bryce, J. (1921) identified the following as some factor responsible for corruption in the developing nations including Nigeria. Such factors include; enormous inequality in the distribution of the nation's wealth, prioritizing the political offices as the principal means of having fast access to wealth, the conflict that occurs between changing moral codes, the weakness of the social and governmental enforcement mechanisms and the absence of a strong sense of national community. Furthermore, Ndiulor (1999) asserted that other factors that keep on aggravating the practice of corruption in Nigeria is the quest for materialism, the urge for a shortcut to privileged circumstances and material accumulation, flamboyant living and eye-catching expenditure. The Nigeria high celebration of positions has effect on the kind of life people live in the society. Lack of honesty in the modern Nigeria society has become a thing of concern as it is affecting not only the old but also the young. As pointed out by Bowman (1991), there is lack of ethical standards in all the agencies of government in Nigeria as well as business organizations. This keeps on causing a serious setback for Nigerians. He further explained that ethic is action, the way values are practiced, a guiding principle expected to be used in making decisions. In Nigeria however, little attention is paid to ethical issues as many of the office holders in Nigeria are not always considering the moral implications of their actions most of the time because self interest and accumulation of property have over clouded their moral reasoning.

In fact people who are involved in this act are no longer disturbed by it but rather see it as being smart to outdo others in exploiting them. It is also an observable fact that political leaders are disgustingly involve in political corruption of which it is having a devastating effect on the socio-economic development of the nation and the welfare of Nigerians. It is difficult to cub the hazard of corruption in Nigeria because the family, the traditional and religious values had been thrown into the thin air as a result of accumulation of wealth that is not control by the individual and even the government through taxation of properties. As pointed out by Lotterman (2002), when there are bad rules and ineffective taxing system in any nation to check the financial activities of the citizens there is bound to be corruption in such society. The persistence of corruption, the fact that majority seems to be involved including the youths become the motivating factors for this research study.

Objectives

The general objective of the study is to investigate the attitude, perception and practice of the youths about corruption in Nigeria. The specific objectives include the following: to find out the practice of the youths in regard to corruption, to examine various types of corruption, to scrutinize the implication of corruption on development and to discover the ways for eradicating corruption in the society.

Hypothesis

Null hypothesis: There is no relationship between corruption and development.

Alternative hypothesis: There is relationship between corruption and development.

Methodology

Sample Procedure/Size

The methods of collecting data were quantitative and qualitative while the target respondents were youths in and out of school. Structured questionnaire and in-depth interview (IDI) were used to collect information. Respondents were randomly selected among the youths, male and female. The choice of these groups of people is to discover their attitude, perception and practices because of the role they will play in the society in future. Hence, knowing their thinking about corruption will help to predict if corruption in Nigeria will eventually be eradicated in the society. The total population sampled was 500 respondents, three institutions were sampled, 100 students from College of Education, 100 respondents from Polytechnic and 100 from University. The remaining 200 were from out of school youth's which were randomly selected from the communities. For the in-depth interview ten respondents were randomly selected from each institution and thirty students were selected altogether. The quantitative data was analyzed using statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Variables were cross tabulated in order to provide association among them. The qualitative method on the other hand was analyzed using descriptive analysis to strengthen the quantitative analysis. The questions asked during the in-depth interview were based on the following, age, marital status, occupation, respondents thinking about corruption in Nigeria, as individual what would be done if to have access to Nigeria wealth, identifying the type of corruption in Nigeria, the practice of Nigeria youths about corruption, what is responsible for the corrupt practices in Nigeria?

Data Presentation and Discussion

Table 1 in section (A), appendix 1, shows the socio-economic characteristics of respondents. The finding revealed that male respondents were 61% of the population while the female respondents were 38.8% of the population. Male respondents were willing to participate more at the time of the research while the female respondents were not readily available in terms of willingness to take part in the research. The age of respondents ranges from 15 – 20 years and 21 – 26 years. The respondents in the age range of 15 -20 years represent 34.4% of the population while those in the age range of 21 – 26 represent 75.6% of the population. This shows that those within this age range participated in the research study in good number. Age 31- 37 years and 37 years and above were not significant because the percentage was less than 1%. In the study, 62.4% of respondents in the population were single, 18.4% were married at the time of this research, 15.0% were divorced while (21) 4.2% were widowed. This shows that many of the youths were either in school or learning a particular trade.

As indicated in the study, the number of people who attained higher level of education increases from primary to secondary level and picked up again in tertiary level. 21.2% of respondents had primary education, 25.0% had secondary education, 4.8% had vocational training and 34.4% had tertiary education. This shows that Nigerians value education as it remains a sustainable industry that is opened to majority of Nigerian youths. Nigerians are accommodative they live comfortably and peacefully with each ethnic group. It is only of recent that the Boko Haram phenomenon is becoming a problem for Nigerians especially in the northern part of the country. In areas where this research took place, 8.6% of the respondents were Hausa, 26.8% of the respondents were Igbo, and 62.8% of the respondents were Yoruba, while 0.8% was from other ethnic group the Ibira precisely.

Religion is one of the cultural values in Nigeria, before the advent of other religions; the traditional religion was seriously practiced and the virtue of honesty was valued and respected for the fear of the gods who was believed to give judgment on offenders without delay. However, with the advent of other religion, many people have been converted to Christianity or Islamic religion in the country. It is indicated in the research study as 74.7% claimed to be Christian, 20.6% claimed to be Muslim and 4.6% practiced other religion. However, one will think that the new religions would influence the behavior of Nigeria people and reduce the level of corruption in the country nevertheless the opposite is the case. People relaxed in the practice of their religion and what it takes to be a good and honest Christians and Muslims. Religion has little effect on Nigerians involvement in corrupt practices. In this research study, students have the highest percentage when it comes to occupation as 84.3% were students and 15.3% were self employed at the time of this research.

TABLE 2: Section B in appendix 2 (Variables and Responses)

This section discusses the interpretation of respondents to the questionnaire. Majority of Nigerians are aware that there is corruption in the society as 84.3% of the population made this claim while 5.0% were of contrary opinion. This corroborates the assertion of many scholars that opined corruption in Nigeria is endemic in nature and is found in almost every sector of the society be it private or public. As pointed out by Adefolaju (2008) corruption in Nigeria has become

embedded in the consciousness of Nigerians to the extent that people do not see it as morally wrong any longer, but is seen as a way of life. Yusuf (2008), considered Nigeria as a corrupt nation in the sense that it has pervaded every sphere of human activities. In every endeavor be it economic, social, political, private and public organizations, corruption is claimed to be the determining factor in the relationship between the people involved. Respondents identified various types of corruption in Nigeria as 14.2% revealed money laundry which is common among the politicians, 34.7% of the respondents revealed misappropriation of funds, while 14.2% divulged diversion of fund meant for projects for personal use, requesting bribe before giving an applicant job was revealed as 12.0%, taking of bribe by police on high way was revealed as 13.8%, students who deceived their parents to collect additional money was revealed as 10.6% and requesting for sexual relationship from women before rendering help was less than 1%. These opinions substantiate the observation of some scholars for example; Dike (2005) asserted that corruption involves bribery, fraud, embezzlement, extortion, favoritism, and nepotism.

People's opinion to the question about their thinking as regard corruption, 58.2% revealed that corruption was present in all sectors, 22.4% of respondents made the claim that corruption is common among leaders, while 16.2% were of the opinion that every Nigerians have inclination to corrupt practices. Corruption was traced to almost every administration in Nigeria, from Azikiwe, Gowon, Shagari, Buhari, Babangida, to Abacha. As pointed out by Kew (2006) the political sphere is controlled by the Nigeria bureaucrat who during the military had invested vast networks and today using these networks to expand their political office for their personal gain and self interest. In involvement of the youths in corruption, 12.8% revealed that the youths were not free from corruption, 22.6% said youths were involved in examination malpractices which is a form of corruption, 26.0% made it known that youths were involved in embezzlement of student's union money, 23.0% said involvement in cultism is a form of corruption as some of the youths were members, and 15.6% said youths have inclination to corrupt practices.

To have access to Nigeria wealth is something desirable by majority of Nigerian because it is an opportunity to amass wealth for oneself. 11.0% said they would take care of themselves at the expense of others if they have access, 4.6% divulged they would embezzled some money, 20.0% claimed they would be involved in money laundry, 57.6% revealed they would embezzled first before development, while 0.8% said they would not commit fraud. This is an indication that only few youths in Nigeria are not willing to partake in corrupt practices. The above data is an indication that Nigerians see nothing wrong in corruption. It is pointed out by Yusuf, (2008) that in Nigeria, "hardly an uncorrupt person will be anything in the scheme of things in running the government. If you were not corrupt, you would be marginalized if not got rid of. And if you are corrupt, you must be prepared to follow anything without personal initiative or ideas of an alternative policy.

Respondents were also asked if corruption has relationship with development, 68.0% revealed that relationship exist while 20.8% said there is no relationship. Furthermore, the kind of association was identified as 20.4% said it has effect on every aspect of the society, 23.2% said many social institutions suffer, 9.4% said there is no progressive growth, 9.0% revealed that the economy suffers, 4.2% said it encourages poverty, while 10.8% made claim that it makes majority wish to work in places where there would be access to money and 6.0% opined that it encourages people to fight for their own interest at the expense of the society. It is pointed out by Fagbadebo, (2007) that corruption impacts negatively on economic growth and it also destabilized the country politically. Once the economy and political life of any nation is challenged negatively there would be no sustainable development. From all these different perceptions of the respondents it is clear that corruption is endemic in Nigeria among politicians, leaders, men and women, old and young, the family, private and public organizations. All these were also corroborated during the in-depth interview. As pointed out by a respondent during the in-depth interview, he said those youths that were involved in cultism used various means to exploit others for their own personal gain. For instance, he said; they threatened the life of lecturers who refused to pass them when they failed a course; youths have inclination to corrupt practices in various ways, they called it smartness.

Section C (Appendix 2)

Cross Tabulation Analysis

This section shows the Cross Tabulation between Socio-Demographic Features of Respondents and Relationship of Corruption to Development. Male respondents who believed that corruption has relationship with development was 72.1% percent while 27.1% percent had a contrary opinion, female on the other hand was 86.0% percent while 14.0% percent had a contrary opinion. Based on the hypothesis tested, the basic assumption is that corruption has effect on development. The level of significance in testing the hypothesis is 0.05, if the calculated value is equal to or less than the level of significance, then the H_0 hypothesis is rejected while the H_1 hypothesis is accepted. Since the level of

significance is greater than the table calculated (0.05 is greater than .001) this means the alternative hypothesis is accepted which says there is relationship between corruption and development.

Education was again used to explain if corruption has relationship with development, those with primary education who said yes were 89.0% whereas those who said no were 11.0% , those with vocational education who agreed by saying yes were 37.5% and those with contrary opinion who said no were 62.5%, still respondents with secondary education who said yes were 93.3% while respondents who said no were 6.7%, those who had post secondary education and said yes were 72.2% whereas those who said no were 27.8%. The level of significance in testing the hypothesis is 0.05, if the calculated value is equal to or less than the level of significance, then the H_0 hypothesis is rejected while the H_1 hypothesis is accepted. Since the level of significance is greater than the table calculated (0.05 is greater than .001) this means the alternative hypothesis is accepted which says there is relationship between corruption and development. To corroborate this finding Yaru (2009) identified various consequences of corruption in the society as civil unrest, bad governance, incompetent rulers and bad international image and electoral violence. He further explained that poor or non implementation of public contracts, poor service delivery, loss of public revenue through tax aversion and avoidance, employment of incompetent hands as public officials and poor service delivery, desperation to acquire wealth, arm robbery, civil disorder, and decadence of rule of law. In any society where all these vices exist, development is not achievable because developmental projects will always be sub-standard and the life span of such projects cannot be enduring.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, corruption has been internalized by majority of Nigerians as if it is a way of life or a value that is culturally accepted in the society. Individual who tried not to participate in corrupt practices in Nigeria is regarded as nobody. In Tell, November (2003), it was stated that "in Nigeria, life without corruption is a disease because corruption is the right thing to do in which only fools do not indulge. It is a country where honesty is a serious crime punishable by ridicule and exclusion from public limelight". People are influenced to have inclination to corrupt practices. Corruption is thus found not only among the leaders but include men and women, old and young. The attitude, perception and practice of the youths as regard corruption are not different from those of the elders. According to Soyombo, (2008) the youths who are anticipated to be future leaders are beset to out-do their elders in corrupt practices.

Recommendations

The fight or war against corrupt practices should not be left for the leaders because nothing substantial would be achieved by living it for them to fight, but every Nigerian should have that self-determination not to be involved in corrupt activities either small or big. It is only with self-determination of the individual that the war against corruption in Nigeria can be achieved. It is not enough to take back what has been stolen through corrupt practices, but a law should be enforced in such a way that the offenders either politicians or private individuals paid more than what was gained through corruption. This in a way will check the activities of those who privatize the fund and property through corrupt practices or those intending to be involved in corrupt practice.

The traditional value of honesty, transparency, discipline and high moral standard that was appreciated in the traditional society of old in Nigeria should be brought back to life since that moral and traditional values had sneaked out from the way of life of Nigerians. Again these values should re-instituted into Nigeria school curriculum and make it a guiding principle for all Nigeria citizens. Nigeria leaders are to live by example in controlling their desire to accumulate property and embezzle the public fund. If they are able to control their self interest corruption will be a thing of the past in Nigeria. It is by controlling their self interest that corruption can gradually be controlled. It is then that whatever law that is promulgated can be effective. The attitude of the government, the law enforcement agencies needs to change coupled with the understanding of Nigeria youths in regard to corruption. Good and honest accountability among Nigerians must be encouraged.

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Table 1 (Section A) Appendix 1
Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents.

SEX	Male	Female
	(305) 61.0%	(194) 38.8%
AGE	15-20 years	(122) 24.4%
	21-26 years	(378) 75.6%
	31-36 Years	(0) 0.0%
	37 years and above	(0) 0.0%
MARITAL STATUS	Single	(312) 62.4%
	Married	(92) 18.4%
	Divorced	(74) 15.0%
	Widowed	(21) 4.2%
EDUCATION	Primary	(210) 25.2%
	Secondary	(30) 21.0%
	Vocational	(24) 4.8%
	Tertiary	(172) 34.4%
ETHNICITY	Hausa	(43) 8.6%
	Igbo	(134) 26.8%
	Yoruba	(314) 62.8%
	Others	(4) .8%
RELIGION	Christianity	(373) 74.7%
	Islam	(103) 20.6%
	Others	(23) 4.6%
OCCUPATION	Student	(418) 84.3%
	Housewife	(1) .4%
	Self employed	(76) 15.3%

Survey 2 Survey 2012:012:

**Table 2: (Section B) Appendix 2
Variables And Responses**

VARIABLES	Yes	No
Is there corruption in Nigeria	468 (84.3%)	25 (5.0%)
If yes what type of corruption	No	Percentage
1. money laundry by politicians	71	14.2%
2. misappropriation of funds	174	34.7%
3. diversion of project money for personal use	71	14.2%
4. Requesting bribe before giving an applicant job.	60	12.0%
5. police taken bribe	69	13.8%
6. students deceiving their parent to collect money	53	10.6%
7. requesting for sexual relationship from women before rendering help	2	.4%
8. Total	500	100.0%
What is the practice of youths as regard to corruption		
The youths are not free from corruption	64	12.8%
Examination malpractices	113	22.6%
Embezzling that belong to students union	130	26.0%
Involvement in cultism supported by elite in the society	115	23.0%
Have inclination to corruption	78	15.6%
Total	500	100.0%
What will you do if you have access to Nigeria wealth?		
Take care of myself	55	11.0%
Embezzle some money	23	4.6%
Involve in money laundry	100	20.0%
Embezzle first before development	288	57.6%
Will not commit fraud	4	.8%
No response	30	6.0%
Total	500	100.0%
Do you think corruption has relationship with development		
Yes	340	68.0%
No	104	20.8%
No response	55	11.0%
Total	499	99.8%
System	1	.2%
Total	500	100.0%
If yes, what kind of association		
It has effect on every aspect of the society	102	20.4%
Many social institutions suffered	116	23.2%
No progressive growth	47	9.4%
The economy suffers	45	9.0%
It encourages poverty	21	4.2%
Make majority wish to work in places where that will be access to money	54	10.8%
Encourage people to fight for their own interest at expense of the society	30	6.0%
No response	85	17.0%
Total	500	100.0%

Survey 2012:

Table 3 (Section C) Appendix 3. Cross Tabulation Analysis

This shows the Cross Tabulation between Socio-Demographic Features of Respondents and Relationship of Corruption to Development.

Socio-Demographic	Do you think corruption has relationship with development		P-Value	Degree of Freedom
	Male	Female		
Sex				
Yes	(199) 72.1%	(77) 27.1%	.001	1
No	(147) 86.0%	(24) 14.0%		
Education				
Primary	(153) 89.0%	(19) 11.0%	.000	3
Vocational	(9) 37.5%	(15) 62.5%		
Secondary	(28) 93.3%	(2) 6.7%		
Post secondary	(109) 72.2%	(42) 27.8%		

Survey 2012:

Level of significance at 0.05