

CORRUPTION AND ITS EFFECT ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: IMPLEMENTATION FOR COUNSELLING

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Abstract

This investigation was set about to ascertain the effects of corruption on national development. 300 respondents participated in the study. The data collected were analysed using percentages as well as t-test for independent groups. The result indicated that corruption has negative effect on Nigerians. Counseling implication and recommendations were made based on the findings of the study.

Introduction

After a long period of military intervention in the governance of Nigeria, the soldiers have decided to go back to the barracks. The battle to turn to democratic rule was tough as the military administrators were not willing to exchange baton with their civilian counterparts. They kept dribbling our politicians with endless transitional programmes. At last the battle was fought and won with president Olusegun Obasanjo as a democratically elected president.

Nigeria as a country is rich but 70% of her citizens are poor. The standard of living in the country has been rated as being very low by UNO human development (HDI). Many Nigerian citizens cannot lay hands on three square meals in a day. They cannot feed their families and even provide the basic necessities of life to them. Commenting on the issue; Atia and Pawa (2005) observed that some politicians have hijacked our resources and they display (their ill-gotten wealth through huge donations at launchings and have built mansions in so many cities across the nation. In fact, the level of corruption in Nigerian is very high. This could be witnessed through the rating by Transparency international, which ranked Nigeria in October 2005 as the sixth most corrupt nation. This is not desirable position at all.

Corruption in Nigeria has become one of the major obstacles to national development. Okadigbo (1987: P, 139) stated that corruption has become part and parcel of many Nigerians. According to him, before you succeed in doing anything, you have to;

Bribe the messenger, if you may see his boss. Bribe the clerk, if your file may move up. Bribe the chief if you want a farm. Bribe the executive, if you want to be considered for a job or a contract. Bribe the permanent secretary if you may be short-listed for constructing. Bribe the minister when you get the award. Bribe the customs, if your goods may be cleared, bribe the gateman if cleared goods may get out of wharf. Bribe the policemen, if you may ride on the street with your car. Bribe the investigator if he may inquire about goods, when stolen. Bribe the prosecutor to facilitate the trial of the theft. Bribe the mailer to make sure he stays in jail and pays his dues and so on.

Looking at the above statement, it is sad and pathetic to note that corruption in Nigeria has spread to virtually all the nooks and crannies of the nation. This has brought about lack of development in the country even though we are one of the richest oil producing nations in Africa. Gbenda (2002) identifies four types of corruption in Nigeria, which include economic, political, moral and social. He stated that, politically, those that are involve in corruption think of what they are can gain from public office rather than what they can offer to the people. Economic corruption on the hand includes embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds. Also, social corruption, includes issues relating to general lawlessness, examination malpractice, sexual immorality, abortion and illegal use of public amenities. The government of the day sometimes encourages corruption. A situation whereby wages are increased on the other hand and fuel prices are jacked up does not mean anything to a civil servant. When salaries are not well paid to enable people cater for their needs, there is bound to be corruption so

as to make ends meet.

On assumption of office, President Olusegun Obasanjo noticed the high rate of corruption as well as embezzlement and looting of the national treasury through various forms of corrupt practices. It was in recognition of the above predicaments that he launched the national rebirth programme on the 10th of September 1999. The programme was geared towards cleansing the nation from her negative forces. That was why he established the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to handle all forms of corrupt practices among our leaders. Despite the establishment of those commissions, there has been no headway. There has been a public outcry that allocations meant for our local governments are sometimes shared by some governors with their political godfathers. To this end, corruption and indiscipline have been associated with our level of underdevelopment.

Again, there are doubts from most Nigerian whether the country can move forward in terms of development. For instance, huge sums of money have been sunk into the electricity project but nothing tangible has come out of this project whereas, Nigerians are terribly suffering from epileptic power supply. Those are some of the effects of corruption on our national development. It is under this background that the study was set about to ascertain whether corruption has negative or positive effects on Nigerians.

Hypotheses

HOI: Embezzlement of public funds by corrupt individuals has no effect on Nigerians.

HO11: Nigerians do not view corruption in the public and civil service as an impediment to national development.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey method. The target population for this study is made up of politicians, civil servants, secondary school- teachers, university lecturers and students in Makurdi metropolis. Through random sampling, a total of 300 respondents were selected from the population. A self constructed questionnaire known as Corruption and its Effect on National Development Questionnaire (CEN'DQ) was used as an instrument for the collection of data. The first section of the instrument contains personal information while section 'B' contains 20 questions on a four point scale ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree was used to enable respondents indicate their level of agreement. The instrument used for this study was validated by two senior lecturers in the department of Psychology, college of education Katsina-AIa. All their inputs and corrections were affected. A test-retest method was adopted to determine the reliability of instrument. It was administered to 15 respondents initially; the same instrument was again administered to the same group of respondents after a period of two weeks. The two sets of scores were compared using Spear man Rank Order. The correlation coefficient was .82 and was considered desirable for the study. The data collected was analysed using percentages and t-test independent group.

The Result

Hypothesis One:

Null Hypothesis: Embezzlement of public of public funds by corrupt individuals has significant effect on Nigerians.

Table 1 : Mean Standard Deviation and t- value of Respondents by Gender

Variable	N	Mean	Sd	Df	P	Cv	t-cal	Remark
Male	160	130.86	3.56	298	.05	1.64	6.31	Rejected
Female	140	28.65	2.46					

The results presented in Table I show the mean and standard deviation for the two groups. The degree of freedom is 298 but the t-table value shows 120 as the highest degree of freedom. Under .05 level of significance, the calculated t-value of 6.31 is higher than the critical value of 1.64. we shall therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept its alternative, which implies that embezzlement of public funds by

corrupt individuals has significant effect on Nigerians.

Hypotheses Two

Null Hypothesis -Nigerians do not view corruption in the public and civil service as an impediment to national development.

Alternative Hypothesis-Nigerians view corruption in the public and civil services as an impediment to national development.

Table 2. Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value of Respondents by Religion.

Variable	N	Mean	Sd	Df	p	Cv	t-cal	Remark
Male	260	31.20	3.45	298	.05	1.64	3.86	Rejected
Female	40	29.85	1.68					

The results presented in Table 2 show both the mean and standard deviation for the two groups. The degree of freedom is 298 but the t-table value shows 120 as the highest degree of freedom. Under .05 level of significance, the calculated t-value of 3.86 is higher than the critical value of 1.64. we shall therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept its alternative, which indicate that Nigerians view corruption in the public and civil service as an impediment to national development.

Discussion of Results

The results indicate that corruption has negative effects on Nigerians. Also the study has established that;

3. Embezzlement of public funds by corrupt individuals has significant effects on Nigerians. 2. Nigerians view corruption in the public and civil service as an impediment to National development

These findings corroborate with the views of Gbenda (2002) Okadigbo (1987) and Achebe (1983) concerning the level of corruption in Nigeria. Most parents have given to their children a wrong impression that the greatest value in life is material wealth. Such corrupt tendencies have been inculcated to our youths right away from the home and when they are finally employed in the public or civil service, they insist on acquiring wealth either by hook or crook.

Again, as a result of corruption the national wealth cannot be distributed evenly to all the citizens. Most Nigerians cannot feed their families well, simply because our resources has been hijacked by some undesirable elements in our society. In a similar vein, corruption has taken a bold step to land even in our churches and mosque. Ehusani (2004), Atia and Pawa (2005) both agree that, nobody usually questions the source of huge sums of money donated to God by corrupt individuals. Our places of worship, which are supposed to inculcate desirable moral values to their believers, are corrupt as well.

Similarly, there has been no rapid development in the country. A situation whereby four of our refineries cannot be maintained clearly shows some elements of corruption. Most of the roads linking the hinterland where most Nigerians reside are death-traps. Some corrupt contractors collect money for project without executing such projects but go ahead and build their own mansions with public funds. This ugly trend must be checked to stamp out corruption in the land.

The study also revealed that corruption has been institutionalized in Nigeria. During admissions, promotions and employment money must exchange hands or else one may not achieve anything. Again, elections are no longer conducted in most of the polling centre across the nation. This has brought about the denial of the rights of the electorates to choose their leaders. The electorate now have no faith in the ballot box as a result of corruption and rigging.

Counseling Implications

The study of corrupt and its effect on national development reveals that corrupt has negative effects on Nigerians. It is a national challenge or problem that is yearning for solution. To this end, there is each and every need for counseling to be introduced to our primary school pupils so as to; impart desirable moral values to them. Such counseling session should dwell extensively on values such as honesty, law abiding and accountability. By so doing, we shall be able to catch them young.

Similarly, citizenship education should be incorporated in the school curriculum to take care of pupils from primary, secondary as well as tertiary levels of our education. Such counseling programme on citizenship education should be geared towards inculcating the ideals of patriotism, tolerance, dedication to duty, justice, fair play, self-sacrifice and hard work. Citizenship education will transform our youths into good leaders and responsible citizens who will be of great benefit to the society. (Sullah 2005). Also, counseling jingles should be made on radio and Nigerian television authority condemning corruption.

Conclusion

Nigeria as a nation is confronted with numerous challenges one of which is corruption. Today, there is every need for the country to be 'born again'. We must restructure our patterns of behaviour and be patriotic in our private and public lives. By so doing, we shall lift Nigeria from the jaws of corruption and take here to greater heights as one of the developed nations in Africa.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Corrupt officers who are in the habit of embezzling public funds under the guise of national cake should be prosecuted and made to cough out such funds.
2. Our houses of worship should inculcate desirable moral values to their members and preach against corruption and illegal acquisition of wealth.
3. Other structures that have been established by government to deal with corrupt officers such as independent corrupt practice and other related offences commission (ICPC) and the economic and financial crimes commission (EFCC) are too slow in carrying out their investigation, they should sit up and dispense justice to offenders to serve as deterrent to others,
4. Citizenship education should be made mandatory at all levels of our educational system.
5. Charity begins at home as such parents should imbibe and practice desirable moral habits for their children to copy.
6. The Nigerian society should desist from conferring honours on people whose wealth is questionable.

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