

ASSESSMENT OF CORRUPT INTENTION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ILORIN SOUTH, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Corruption has been a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the Nigerian society. It affects every aspect of the society to the extent of wagging intention of children at early formation of life. What has been the concern of different stakeholders in education is how to curb the spread of these diseases in children at the tender age. This study, however, investigated the level of corrupt intention and the factors responsible for it among secondary school students. Descriptive research design of survey type was adopted in the study. The population of the study comprised all secondary school students in Kwara State, while the target population consisted of Senior Secondary III students in Ilorin South Local Government Area. The study sample size comprised 500 (30 students from each school) respondents drawn from 2,289 secondary school students that were drawn from 17 secondary schools in Ilorin South, Kwara State out of 28 available schools using proportionate sampling technique. A researcher-designed questionnaire titled Assessment of Corrupt Intention Questionnaire (ACIQ) was used to collect data from the respondents. The instrument was validated by experts in Sociology of Education and Social Studies Education in the University of Ilorin and test re-test method of reliability was applied for the reliability of the instrument, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics. The coefficient value of 0.75 was obtained. The data collected were analysed using percentage indices, mean and standard deviation. The findings of the study showed that majority (59.2%) of secondary school students had the intention to engage in corrupt practices. Findings also revealed that low self-esteem, societal acceptance of corrupt practices, syndrome of desire for accumulation of wealth, ineffectiveness of judicial system and corruption agencies were identified as major factors promoting corrupt intention among secondary school students. This study, therefore, concluded that corruption is the bane of development in Nigeria that if not curbed at tender age could likely affect the lives of many youths who are potential leaders of tomorrow. This study recommended among others that, secondary school students need to be re-orientated on the democratic values such as honesty, transparency, accountability, respect for elders and so on as enshrined in the national policy document.

Keywords: Corruption, Corrupt intention, Value re-orientation

Introduction

Corruption has been seen as a global issue which is not peculiar to a nation or race. It is a common saying among the various groups in the society that it is a garment that is worn every day by the people. It is a disease that may be harmful to the existence of any particular society. Corruption defined as irregular behaviour that purposefully disrupts permissible or moral standards and misuses of community authority or resources for individual advantage (He, 2000; Lindgreen, 2004; Rabl and Kuhlmann, 2008). Similarly, Fullerton cited in Akindele (2005) that corruption is harmful to the existence of any country of the world to the extent that it can cripple the future success of that country. Aluko (2002) synthesized the analysis made by the anti-corruption agencies, he observed that corruption

will still dance and wine in the Nigeria society despite the anti-graft laws; those who are involved in the practice do not necessarily consider the aftermath effects. This has aroused the interest of school going age children to the extent of neutralizing its dangerous effects. This may be as a result of ineffective of the institutions constituted to combat the problem. Akindede (1996) was of the opinion that the menace should be discouraged because if it affects one aspect of the economy it can easily spread to other subsystems just like the spread of a bushfire.

Works in the literature have demonstrated and identified various factors responsible for corruption. Researcher such as Ajzen (1991), Aluko (2002) and Obuah (2010) posited that corrupt practices among people in the society are as a result of the quest for material resources, desire to involve in risky behaviour, cultural orientation and people socioeconomic status. In a bid to explain the causes of corruption in Nigeria, Asiyai (2015) asserted that the major causes of corruption in Nigeria most especially in educational sector are: moral decadence of the society, get rich quick syndrome, lack of fear of God, poor management of available resources and the quest to pass examination at all cost. Obuah (2010) said that corruption can occur in developing countries of the world due to the alteration in the implementation of the existing rules and regulations for private benefits. This has greatly suffered the masses who supposed to have used laws of the country as a protective measure to combat injustice. Bamidele (2010) was of the opinion that corruption in many countries of the world, most especially in developing countries Nigeria inclusive, is a product of low wages and salaries and poor working conditions. This invariably escalates the tendency of a person to be involved in any corrupt practices.

Corrupt practices are visible everywhere in Nigeria. It manifests itself in form of misuse of public offices, bribery, favouritism and nepotism. It also feature in the staff promotion exercise, embezzlement of funds, denial of access to democratic government, an impediment to flow of foreign direct investment etc. The problem is not only limited to people holding the power in the Federal, State and Local Government Areas, it also spreads to the fabric of educational institutions right from primary, secondary schools to the institutions of higher learning. Oyinlola (2011) explained that corruption in education can be inform of parents aiding students to engage in examination malpractices. Lecturers and the security agents are not left out in aiding furtherance of these odd acts. It is quite unfortunate that Nigerian educational sector that supposes to be the builder of the great leaders of tomorrow has been besieged with the act of corruption to the tune that its product (students) had it mind at the tender age to involve in the corrupt practices and see the act as worthy of celebration. Asiyai (2015) submitted that education that supposes to be an agent of cleansing the thoughts of the individual student and seriously engage in the character formation has now been the abode of illegal activities and unacceptable and immoral behaviours.

The prevalence of these activities in Nigeria had gingered different stakeholders in education on how to eradicate or prevent its spread. Obuah (2010) pointed out that over the years, the federal government under various leaders made frantic effort to eradicate corruption and thereby set up various anti-corruption agencies. For instance, Late General Muritala in 1976 advocated for the confiscation of the properties of perpetrators who are found of dubious characters. In the era of late Sheu Shagari in 1983, he introduced the code of conduct for public servants in order to assist in combating corruption. In the same vein, General Muhammad Buhari in 1984 introduced War Against Indiscipline (WAI). General Ibrahim Babangida in 1987 in his own effort introduced ethical and social mobilization

campaign. The return of President Obasanjo in 1999 took a new dimension in dealing with corrupt practices in the country.

In order to meet up with global best practices and improve the attraction of international investors into Nigerian economy, he established Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). The commission is saddled with the responsibilities of discovering, investigating, preventing and prosecuting any corrupt practices in Nigeria. Despite all the measures put in place to forestall the corrupt practices in the society, it is rather on the high tune. This is denting the image of Nigeria outside the country and awakening the corrupt intention of the school going age children. It is on this note that the researchers consider it necessary to investigate the levels and the various factors that promote corruption tendency among secondary school students in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to carry out assessment on corrupt intention among secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined:

- (i) The level of corruption intent of secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Nigeria.
- (ii) Factors responsible for corrupt intention among secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to pave way for this study:

- (i) What is the level of corruption intention of secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Nigeria?
- (ii) What are the factors responsible for corrupt intention of secondary school students in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Nigeria?

Research Method

The research design employed in this study was descriptive of survey type. Two thousand, two hundred and eighty-nine (2,289) students in twenty-eight (28) Senior Secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Nigeria constitute the study population. The target population comprised all Senior Secondary School students III in the Ilorin South Local Government of Area, Nigeria. The choice of this target population (SSS III) was borne out of the fact that, the researchers want respondents (students) that have been exposed to the school activities and they are at the verge of completing secondary education which prepare them for the admission into higher learning and the placement into job opportunities in the labour market.

Out of 28 Senior Secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, 60.00% of the schools were randomly selected using simple random sampling technique, making a total of 16.80 schools (approximately 17 schools). In each of the school sampled, 30 students were randomly selected using simple random sampling technique. Hence, the sample size consisted of 510 students. In the course of data collation and entry into the SPSS version 25, researchers discovered that 10 of questionnaires were not properly filled and were discarded. Therefore, 500 students (questionnaires) were used as the sample size.

The instrument used for this study was researchers-designed questionnaire titled "Assessment of Corrupt Intention Questionnaire" (ACIQ) used to collect data from the students. The instrument has three sections. Section 'A' was designed to gather respondents' demographic information. Section "B" has 10 items that are researchers' self-designed which addressed causes of corrupt intention while section 'C' also has ten (10)

items adapted from the work of Obuah (2010) that addressed factors promoting corruption intention among Senior Secondary Schools. The items in section "B" and "C" of the questionnaire were prepared and scored based on a 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Disagree (SD) 1, Disagree (D) 2, Agree 3 (A) and Strongly Agree (SA) 4. The questionnaire (ACIQ) was administered to the students when they were writing 2017/2018 academic session Joint Mock Examinations in the State.

The scale of measurement in this study is an interval scale. Because of four-point Likert scale, the minimum score an individual respondent can obtain is 10 while the maximum score is 40. The range of score is $40 - 10 = 30$. To obtain the cut off and categorize respondents into 3 levels (High, Moderate and Low). The range of score (30) is obtained by dividing 30 by $3 = 10$. Any respondent whose score fell between 10 and 20 will be adjudged having low level of corruption intent. Also, whoever scored 21 to 30 will be termed having moderate level corruption intent and the score fell within the range of 31 and 40 will be regarded as having high level of corruption intent.

The instrument was validated by 3 lecturers in the Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria (One lecturer from Sociology of Education, one from Social Studies Education and one from Educational, Research Measurement and Evaluation in the University). The observations made were taken into consideration. Some of the items were retained, restructured and deleted completely so as to make the worth using for this study.

Test re-test method of reliability was employed to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was administered twice on the subset of the population in another Local Government Area different from Ilorin South Local Government Area at the interval of three weeks. The two set of data obtained were subjected to correlation statistic using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic and the coefficient value of 0.75 was obtained.

Ethical Consideration

Research ethical issues were considered. Permission was sought from the school administrators of the selected schools so that the targeted population can be reached and questionnaire administered. After which consents of the students were sought to participate through a consent form filled. The form contained information which gave the respondents that assurance on the confidentiality of their responses to the questionnaire.

Results

The data collected from the study was analysed. Percentage indices was used to describe demographic information of the respondents and answer research question one. Research questions 2 and 3 were answered using mean and standard deviation.

Research Question One: What is the level of corruption intent of secondary school students in Ilorin South, Kwara State, Nigeria?

In order to answer research question 1, data collected were turned and categorized into High, Moderate and Low. For instance, whoever scored between 10 and 20, were regarded as having low level of corruption intent, the score fell between 21 and 30 were regarded as having moderate level of corruption intent and the score within the range of 31 and 40 were regarded as having high level of corruption intent as reflected in table 1.

Table 1: Table Showing the Corrupt Intent among Secondary School Students

Level of Corruption Intent	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	10-20	76	15.2
Moderate	21-30	128	25.6
High	31-40	296	59.2
Total		500	100

Table 1 reveals that out of 500 students sampled, 296 (59.2%) had high corruption intent, 128 (25.6%) had moderate corruption intent and 76 (15.2%) had low corruption intent. This implies that majority of Senior Secondary School students 296 (59.2%) sampled had high corrupt intention.

Research Question Two: What are the various factors capable of promoting corruption intent among secondary school students?

In order to answer this research question 3, data collected were subjected to mean and standard deviation and the output is reported in table 2.

Table 2: Table showing factors promoting corruption intent among secondary school students

S/N	Factors capable of promoting corrupt intention in secondary school students	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	Low self-esteem promotes students engaging in corrupt behaviour	500	15.12	0.41	7
2	Imitation of lifestyles of people believed to have achieved important things in the society makes students to be involved in corrupt practices	500	15.16	0.40	4
3	Desire for good grades motivate students in the involvement of corrupt practices	500	15.0	0.42	8
4	Low salary and burden of the extended family system aiding corruption involvement of students	500	15.0	0.42	8
5	Poverty enhances involvement of students in corrupt behaviour	500	15.16	0.40	4
6	Societal acceptance of corruption encourages students involvement in corrupt practices	500	15.2	0.40	3
7	Weak government institutions in curbing corruption ginger students' involvement in corrupt practices	500	12.64	1.18	10
8	Ineffectiveness of school system in combating corruption promote corrupt practices in the school	500	15.76	0.23	2
9	Desire for accumulation of wealth makes students to be involved in illegal activities	500	15.8	0.20	1
10	Desire for political power or post promotes students involvement in	500	15.16	0.40	4

corrupt behaviour

Table 2 indicates that item 9 (Desire for accumulation of wealth makes people to be involved in illegal activities) with mean score 15.9 and item 8 (Ineffectiveness of legal system in combating corruption promote corrupt practices in the society) with mean score 15.76, item 6 (Societal acceptance of corruption encourages people involved in corrupt practices) with mean score of 15.2, item 2 (Imitation of lifestyles of people believed to have achieved important things in the society makes people to be involved in corrupt practices) and item 10 (Desire for political power or post promotes people involved in corrupt behaviour) with the mean score of 15.16 each had been identified as the factor that mostly promote corrupt practices among secondary school students. Other factors include items 5 (Poverty enhances the involvement of people in corrupt behaviour) with the mean value of 15.16. However, item 7 (Weak government institutions in curbing corruption ginger people's involvement in corrupt practices) with the mean value of 3.16 was considered the least factor capable of promoting corruption intent among secondary school students. This implies that the items listed tend to increase the probability of people engaging in corruption.

Discussion

This study investigated corrupt intention and factors promoting corrupt intention among secondary school students in Nigeria. The results of the findings were as well discussed. One of the results of the findings revealed that majority of secondary school students sampled had high corruption intent. That is, they were possessed with the probability traits of high corruption intent. The outcome of the study signifies that they had it in mind that with every available opportunity they tend to engage in corrupt practices. This may be as a result of life experiences and the desire of people to acquire material things in life without necessarily being checked. This result is in line with the assertion of Ajzen (1991) who asserted people are much more likely to intend to enact certain behaviours when they feel that they can enact them successfully. That is, that the more they have to believe in their own ability to be successful in that act could trigger their intention of indulging in the behaviour. Another reason may also be as results of the actual believe that they personally have supreme power over the performance of their behaviour. That is, the higher the self-efficacy and perceived behavioural control, the higher would be their behavioural intention.

Another result of the finding showed that desire for accumulation of wealth, ineffectiveness of legal system in combating corruption, societal acceptance of corruption, imitation of lifestyles of people, desire for political power or post and poverty had been identified as the factors that mostly promote corrupt intention among secondary school students. It was observed among others that desire for accumulation of wealth, ineffectiveness of legal system in combating corruption, societal acceptance of corruption and imitation of lifestyles of people were the major factors that influence people to engage in corrupt practices in Nigeria. The outcome of this study supports the assertion of Obuah (2010) who opined that corruption is a product of greed, low self-esteem and imitation of the lifestyles of some people whom they believe to have accomplished good things in the society. The result also confirms the observation made by Moyosore (2015) who observed and concluded that corruption is prevalent in Nigeria purposely because of the syndrome of emulation of the way of life and the behavioural traits of the people who are in the corridor of power.

Conclusion

This study was conducted on the levels and factors that promote corrupt intention among secondary school students in Nigeria, using Ilorin South in Kwara State as a case study. It critically examined and raised concerns about corruption intent and what factor could have

been the motivator of their corrupt intention. It was discovered in the study that majority of the students sampled were of high corruption intent. That is, they had in notion to indulge in any corrupt practices if they are actually opportune. The following factors among others were identified as principal motivator of their own intention; desire for accumulation of wealth, the ineffectiveness of legal system in combating corruption, societal acceptance of corruption and imitation of lifestyles. It is therefore, concluded that corruption is the bane of development in Nigeria that if not curbed at tender age could likely affect the lives of many youths who are potential leaders of tomorrow.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

1. Secondary school students should be re-orientated on the core democratic values of the country (such as honesty, transparency, accountability, trustworthiness, cooperation, dignity of labour, hard-work and sanctity of life), this will reduce the spirit of emulation of people's life, lessen their desire for accumulation of wealth and boost their good moral character which will lessen their corrupt intention.
2. Government should do more in sanitizing the judicial system and make it more effective in combating corruption and bring the perpetrator of corrupt act to justice. This will serve as deterrence to others, and hence reduce the intention of many others who had it in mind to be perpetrators of corrupt practices.
3. Students should be properly counselled against corrupt intention, in order to prepare them for future responsibilities.
4. Parents, teachers and government officials should lead by example, by shunning all acts of corruption.

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