

IMPACT OF RELIGION, STATUS, CATEGORY AND REGION OF NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES' STAFF ON MISCONCEIVED VALUES AND CORRUPT PRACTICES TENDENCY

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Abstract

The study investigated the differences in the relationship between misconceived values and tendency to corrupt practices among staff of Nigerian universities. It was carried out with the view to accessing the extent to which predominant misconceived values in the society are correlated of the tendency to be corrupt among staff, especially, how the different sub-groups of the intervening variables of religion, status, category and region of staff will react to the relationship. The correlational type of survey design was adopted for the study. The instrument utilized for generating the needed data was a self-constructed questionnaire. It was administered to 1,076 staff sampled from six universities (a university selected from each of the six geo-political zones) out of the total of 110,272 staff. The data gathered were analyzed. The results revealed that all the seven misconceived values significantly correlated the tendency of staff of Nigerian universities to indulge in corrupt practices. And that, the relationship between misconceived values and tendency to corrupt practices among staff do not differ by religion but differ by status of staff (junior and senior), category of staff (academic and non-academic staff) and by region (North and South) of staff. The study recommended among others that seminars and workshops should be organized regularly for staff of Nigerian universities to educate them on the ills of misconceived values in the society and its tendency to breed corrupt practices and that, pedagogy be re-addressed to give proper attention to the various sub-groups that are highly vulnerable to misconceived values susceptibility.

Key words: Misconceived values, corrupt practices, religion, status, category, region of staff.

Introduction

Corruption is a prevalent worldwide problem that has existed across cultures for centuries. The works on corruption by Heilman and Ndumbaro (2002), Connelly and One (2008) and O'Connor and Fisher (2011) have revealed that cultural values have a significant impact on criminal behaviours in different countries. Values cherished and made dominant in any society have a crucial role in fuelling or abating corruption in that society. The link between the advent and dominance of new sets of values as well as the enthronement of individual corruption and the systemic corruption the Nigerian society has found itself enmeshed in, could be tied to shift in values that are misconceived by members. Misconceived values are values developed as a result of peer influence and wrongly conceived. They are the predominant social values which hitherto were the opposite of acceptable values but now seem to be more expressed by the majority or are fast replacing the cherished values of the society (Aimiyeagbon, Iyamu&Okobia 2019).

Value is a cultural trait, an important element by which we can describe a culture. Values are the embodiment of a people's cultural milieu. Values determine the nature of a people by providing insight into their mode of expression and behaviour. Values are principles and standards that guide behaviour (Okwilague as cited in Odia 2014, p.4). Examples are hard work, respect for elders, honesty, good family name, respect for leadership and authority, respect for human dignity, productivity, and individual enterprise. African Leadership Forum (1993) posits that, "values are beliefs that are largely subjective" (p.2). And maintained that, "values tend to be generally accepted by fairly predominant large number of people either because they are convinced of the correctness of such steps or they are carried away by some peer influence" (p.2). As such, in many societies and in Nigeria many societal values including the examples above are fast losing their pride of place as principles and standards of society. They are fast being replaced by wrong values identified in literature to include, obsession with materialism, shortcut to affluence, and glorification and approbation of ill-gotten wealth (Ndiulor 1999; Dike 2003, 2013; Nnonyelu 2009), institutionalized corruption/personalization of public office (Heilman &Ndumbaro 2002), consumerism (Gulatti& Pant 1989; Bryrne 2015), certification syndrome/paper qualification (Aver 2013), and the culture of impunity (Alemayehu 2002; Starr 2015). In spite of this, values are set by the standards of society. Hence, we talk of societally cherished values, values measured according to the standards of society. So, if individuals' or certain groups' values are conceived in line with these societal standards they are seen as rightly conceived. If not, they are seen as wrongly conceived or misconceived (Aimiyeagbon 2018).

These misconceived values manifest in the following ways: the zeal to get everything whether our means can achieve them or not, getting what we want quickly without going through the normal course, being celebrated as financially successful when one cannot explain the source. The values also manifest in living flamboyant and conspicuous lifestyles without any industrial venturing, gaining access to a high cadre public office seen as the opportunity to amass wealth for oneself, bending rules in office to benefit oneself and close associate seen as normal. These new set of values have resulted in corrupt practices of various types perpetrated by staff in the university through bribery (sorting), examination malpractice, preferential treatment, sexual harassment, lawlessness, bending of rules, pervasion of justice, cutting corners in transactions, encouraging crime/ applauding criminals, promoting mediocrity at the expense of excellence, and luxury living that lures

others to crime (AimiyeKagbon 2018). Assessing how the sub-groups of the intervening variables of religion, status, category and region of staff will react to the relationship between misconceived values predominant in the society and tendency of staff of Nigerian universities to indulge in corrupt practices is the emphasis of this research. The research is delimited to staff of federal universities in Nigeria.

From the researchers' previous work on "Predictive Study of Misconceived Values on Tendency to Corrupt Practices in Nigerian Universities", the role, magnitude, direction and level these misconceived values had on the tendency of staff to be corrupt alarming proportion. Outside the surprising results in the relationship between the misconceived values of personalization of public office, tolerance for culture of impunity, craze for materialism, glorification and approbation of criminals, quest for short cut to affluence, certification syndrome, and culture of consumerism and public servants' tendency to indulge in corrupt practices, the researchers are not certain of what the difference will be in terms of the intervening variables under study since no empirical work to the researchers' knowledge has investigated into this. This would have serious implication for Social Studies education, as it is saddled with the responsibility of campaigning against social ills in the society and inculcating right and desirable values in its learners who may eventually become civil/public servants.

Literature Review

Religion of Staff: Corruption is an important variable resulting from social and cultural conditions. The outcome of several researches regarding the causes of corruption, grouped the causes into economic and non-economic (Shadabi 2013). "In the existing literature, one of the non-economic factors causing corruption is religion. Corruption is a social behaviour of human and is important due to its effect on growth, inflation, investment and innovation and is rejected by all religions" (Shadabi, 2013, p.103). Shadabi (2013) asserts that, "religion can influence human behaviour and actions. He notes that, "although the impact of religion on corruption has already been investigated into by many scholars, the results of the studies have not been similar" (p.105). Some studies agreed that religion significantly influenced the level of corrupt practices in society, either in its reduction or increase. The studies of La Porta et al, Sandholtz and Gray, Alesina et al, Paldam (as cited in Shadabi 2013) and Emwanta (2014) have shown that religion affects the level of corrupt practices in society. "Some of these studies concluded that not only the same religion but also the multiplicity of religions is an important factor in the level of corruption" (Shadabi 2013, p.103). But other studies like Treisman, Gerring and Thacker, Samanta, and Shabbir and Anwar (as cited in Shadabi 2013) showed that the level of corruption in the society is not affected by religion. This study's contribution will be of help in shaping the direction of the findings and conclusion; not only on religion and corruption, but more importantly on religion and misconceived values and corrupt practices.

Status of Staff: Public employees in Nigeria are categorized into civil servants and public servants. Public employees in federal and state ministries in Nigeria are known as civil servants. While public employees in federal and state parastatals and agencies are known as public servants. Also, staffs of universities in Nigeria are among the group of public servants in Nigeria. They are majorly divided into two groups, senior and junior staff. So, by status of staff, the emphasis is on whether they are junior or senior staff.

Corruption has been found to be endemic amongst junior staff as well as the senior staff in Nigeria; but that, it seems to be prevalent among the junior staff than the senior staff (Idong, 2012 in Ekhovbiye 2014). The reasons he adduced for this, was that, it could be due to their meagre pay package; and the fact that many have large families to cater for. O'connor and Fisher (2011) found that low income creates challenges for making ends meet and is likely to create incentives for generating supplementary income through corrupt means. The implication of O'connor and Fisher position on income of staff, is that majority of junior staffs' income is very low and can barely sustain them, considering the fact that many of them have many dependents to cater for and the cost of living has skyrocketed because of the galloping inflation in the country.

In the view of Oviawe (1997), poor incentives and poor pay pack are the most leading causes of sharp practices among public servants in Nigerian universities. This position maintains that staffs of Nigeria universities are poorly motivated because of lack of incentives, emoluments and poor salary package. But the study of Ekhovbiye (2014) maintained that though corruption among the junior workers, the rank and file is the most common or rampant but the total number involved is miniature when compared to corruption involving high public officials and senior public servants. What this portends is that the sum total of the effect of corrupt practices among senior staff is by far more colossal than that of junior staff. Be that as it may, both have a devastating effect on the moral values of the Nigerian society. Their implication in breeding misconceived values in society is the same.

Category of Staff: Staff of Nigeria universities is made up of academic and non-academic staff. The academic staff is made up of teaching staff, whose status ranges from Graduate Assistant, Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer 11, Lecturer 1, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor to Professor. Their primary duties are teaching, supervision, course advising and research. The non-academic staff is made up of all the non-teaching staffs in the universities which include staffs in Registry, Vice Chancellor's Office, Exams and Records, Bursary, Student Affairs, Academic Planning, Physical Planning, Library, Health Centres, Maintenance Units and Security Department. Their duties are mainly administrative duties, and provision of other essential services needed for universities to function well.

From reports and observation, it would appear that many academic and non-academic staffs are grossly involved in corrupt practices in Nigerian universities. The studies of Idong (as cited in Ekhovbiye 2014) and Ekhovbiye (2014), found out that, corrupt practices are lower for academic staff than for non-academic staff. Both studies corroborated the earlier one carried out by Udin (1989), that non-teaching staff is more prone to corrupt practices than academic staff in tertiary institutions. On the contrary, Obaro (2013) posited that, corruption is higher among academic staff than the non-academic staff because they are in a vantage position to enforce it on its victims who can hardly escape being punished. Logically, his position/argument looks intelligent; common reason will agree with him. But do empirical facts agree?

Region of Staff: Sandholtz and Taagepera (2005) found that perceived corruption is lower in developed economies with established liberal democracies than developing economies. This is not strange because the environment provides a good platform for corruption to be controlled. That, in such countries rules and regulation is highly obeyed by both the rulers

and the ruled. "In some countries corruption feature significantly, while in others corruption levels are low and have been so for some time" (p.112). In the same vein, corruption levels differ amongst various regions of the same country. The study of Mielger et al (2009) found that, "the place of residence should be another determinant of corruption because it implies a different culture and traditions, judicial system types, geographic regions, institutional development, etc" The current study will help to unravel the position between southern and northern regions of Nigeria.

From the foregoing, it could be deduced that moral lapses have crept into the Nigeria's cultural practices and value system. These moral lapses occur irrespective of the religion, status, category and region of staff of Nigerian universities. That is, whether the staffs are Christians or Muslims, of senior or junior cadre, academic or non-academic category and whether they are from the southern, eastern, western or northern part of the country. The influence of these moral lapses (misconceived values) seems to be strong and has spared no group just as it seems to appear in the larger society. The concern is, will there be a difference in how the various sub-groups of the intervening variables correlate between misconceived values and corrupt practices tendency?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were drawn to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between misconceived values and tendency to corrupt practices among staff of Nigerian universities.
2. There is no significant difference in the correlate of misconceived values and tendency to corrupt practices among Christian and Muslim staff of Nigerian universities.
3. There is no significant difference in the correlate of misconceived values and tendency to corrupt practices among junior and senior staff of Nigerian universities.
4. There is no significant difference in the correlate of misconceived values and tendency to corrupt practices among academic and non-academic staff of Nigerian universities.
5. There is no significant difference in the correlate of misconceived values and tendency to corrupt practices among staff of Nigerian universities from the North and those from the Southern region.

Research Method

Correlational survey design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 110,272 staff of federal universities in Nigeria. It is made up of 33,602 academic staff and 76,670 non-academic staff. Out of this population, 1,076 staff was sampled for the study using the disproportionate stratified random sampling technique in a multi-stage sampling process. Firstly, the simple random sampling technique was employed to select one university from each of the six geo-political Zones. Based on that, University A from South-South Zone, University B from South-East Zone, University C from South-West Zone, University D from North-Central zone, University E from North-West Zone and University F from North-East Zone were sampled. Their population amounted to a total of **21,513** staff, made up of **6,290** academic staff and **15,223** non-academic staff. The breakdown institution by institution is presented in Table I:

Table I
Staff Strength of Six Sampled Federal Universities in Nigeria by Institution

S/N	University	Geo-political Zone	Academic Staff	Non-academic Staff	Total
1	A	South-South Zone	1,884	5,614	7,498
2	B	South East Zone	1,300	2,864	4,164
3	C	South West Zone	2,010	4,014	6,024
4	D	North Central Zone	514	1,623	2,137
5	E	North West Zone	228	403	631
6	F	North East Zone	354	705	1,059
				Grand Total	21,513

Sources:

- i. Academic Planning - Staff monthly confirmation data of University A as at January, 2017.
- ii. Academic Planning Unit-- University B,2016.
- iii. Academic Planning Unit – University C, 2016.
- iv. University D Staff Strength as at 2015:
www.thescooping.com/2015/10/25/the-top-10-most-populated-universities-in-nigeria
- v. University F Staff Strength as at 2016:
University E.edu.ng/site/index.php/design-and-features/his.
- vi. University E Staff Strength as at 2016: www.dailytrust.com.ng14662.

Secondly, 5% of the total population of each institution was taken using proportionate sampling technique. Thirdly, the proportionate and simple random sampling technique was used to select the number of academic and non-academic staff from the universities. That is the proportion of academic staff to the non-academic staff in each institution determined the ratio that was used in selecting academic and non-academic staff for the study. Table 2 presents the total subjects sampled institution by institution for academic and non-academic staff:

Table 2
Summary of the Total Subjects Sampled Institution by Institution for Academic and Non-academic Staff

S/N	University	Geo-political Zone	Number of Academic Staff	Number of Non-academic Staff	Total
1	A	South-South Zone	125	250	375

2	B	South-East Zone	69	139	208
3	C	South-West Zone	100	201	301
4	D	North-Central Zone	36	71	107
5	E	North-West Zone	11	21	32

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A validated and reliable questionnaire that consisted of three sections was designed to collect data for the study. It was designed by the researcher and tagged, Misconceived Values in Society Questionnaire (MVISQ). It consisted of three sections. Section 'A' elicited information on the demographic variables of the respondents. Section 'B' contained items designed to elicit information about misconceived values so as to ascertain the susceptibility of respondents to value under consideration. Section 'C' of the instrument, contained items on tendency of respondents to be corrupt. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient derived from linear regression and Fisher z statistic. The hypotheses were tested at Alpha level of 0.05; and decisions were significant when P-value<0.05, and not significant when P-value >0.05.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between misconceived values and tendency to corrupt practices among staff of Nigerian universities.

Table 1
Pearson Correlation Coefficient of the Relationship between Misconceived Values and Tendency to Corrupt Practices

Variables	N	R	Sig.
1. Personalization of public offices and tendency to corrupt practices	1076	.383	.000
2. Tolerance for culture of impunity and tendency to corrupt practices	1076	.495	.000
3. Glorification and appr. of criminals and tendency to corrupt practices	1076	.412	.000
4. Craze for materialism and tendency to corrupt practices	1076	.499	.000
5. Quest for short cut to affluence and tendency to corrupt practices	1076	.503	.000
6. Certification syndrome and tendency to corrupt practices	1076	.538	.000

7. Culture of consumerism and tendency to corrupt practices	1076	.557	.000
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Table 1 shows the levels of the significance of the misconceived values to the tendency of staff of Nigerian universities to corrupt practices. The table shows that all the seven misconceived values were significant at the p-value of <.001. From the result, the misconceived values, personalization of public offices, tolerance for culture of impunity, glorification and approbation of criminals, craze for materialism, and quest for short cut to affluence, certification syndrome and culture of consumerism significantly correlated the tendency of staff of Nigerian universities to be corrupt as their p values were all .000.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the correlate of misconceived values and tendency to corrupt practices among Christian and Muslim staff of Nigerian universities.

Table 2
Fisher's Z Statistics on Differences in the Correlate of Misconceived Values and Tendency to Corrupt Practices among Christian and Muslim Staff of Nigerian Universities

Religion	N	r	Zr	Z-critical	Z-calculated
Christian	946	.604	.693		
Islam	130	.522	.576	-1.96	-1.417

Table 2 show that the calculated Z-value of -1.42 falls within the acceptance region; therefore, the null hypothesis is retained. It is therefore concluded that, there is no significant difference between the correlation coefficients computed for staff of Nigerian universities of the two dominant religions (Christianity and Muslim). Misconceived values have no differential influence on the tendency of staff of Nigerian universities to indulge in corrupt practices. That is, misconceived values influence the tendency of both Christian and Muslim public servants to corrupt practices the same way.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the correlate of misconceived values and tendency to corrupt practices among junior and senior staff in Nigerian universities.

Table 3
Fisher's Z Statistics on Differences in the Correlate of Misconceived Values and Tendency to Corrupt Practices among Junior and Senior Staff of Nigerian Universities

Status of staff	N	R	Zr	Z-critical	Z-calculated
Junior staff	201	.652	.775		
Senior staff	875	.534	.590	1.96	2.961

Table 3 shows that the calculated Z-value of 2.96 is higher than the critical Z-value of 1.96 at .05 Alpha level; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is therefore concluded that, there is significant difference between the correlation coefficients computed for junior and senior staff of Nigerian universities. Since the r value of the junior staff (.652) is more than that of the senior staff (.534). It shows therefore that junior staff are more influenced by misconceived values to the tendency to corrupt practices than senior staffs.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the correlate of misconceived values and tendency to corrupt practices among academic and non-academic staff in Nigerian universities.

Table 4

Fisher's Z Statistics on Differences in the Correlate of Misconceived Values and Tendency to Corrupt Practices among Academic and Non-academic Staff of Nigerian Universities

Category of staff	N	R	Zr	Z-critical	Z-calculated
Academic	358	.508	.563		
Non-academic	718	.617	.720	-1.96	-4.169

Table 4 show that the calculated Z-value of - 4.17 falls outside the acceptance region; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is therefore concluded that, there is significant difference between the correlation coefficients computed for academic and non-academic staff of Nigerian universities. Since the r value of the non-academic staff (.617) is more than that of the academic staff (.508). This implies that non-academic staff are more influenced by misconceived values to the tendency to corrupt practices than academic staff.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant difference in the correlate of misconceived values and tendency to corrupt practices among staff in Nigerian universities from the North and those from the Southern region.

Table 5

Fisher's Z Statistics on Differences in the Correlate of Misconceived Values and Tendency to Corrupt Practices among Staff of Nigerian Universities from the North and Those from the South

Region of staff	N	R	Zr	Z-critical	Z-calculated
North	187	.509	.563		
South	889	.607	.709	-1.96	-2.225

Table 5 show that the calculated Z-value of -2.23 falls outside the acceptance region; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is therefore concluded that, there is significant difference between the correlation coefficients computed for staff of Nigerian universities

from the North and staff of Nigerian universities from the south. Since the r value of staffs from the southern region (.607) is more than that of the staffs from the northern region (.558); it means therefore that staff from the southern region are more influenced by

Discussion of Results

The result indicated that the relationship is the same for both Christian and Muslim staff of Nigerian universities in their tendency to indulge in corrupt practices. The finding aligns with Treisman, Gerring and Thacker, Samanta, and Shabbir and Anwar (as cited in Shadabi 2013) who reported that the level of corruption in a country is not affected by religion; that although embezzlement and bribery are forbidden in Christianity and Islam, corruption is found in Islamic and Christian regions of the countries alike. But this finding disagrees with that of La Porta et al, Sandholtz and Gray, Alesina et al, Paldam (as cited in Shadabi 2013) and Emwanta (2014) that, religion affect the level of corrupt practices in society.

The result indicated that the relationship is lower for senior staff than for junior staff of Nigerian universities. The reason for this could be adduced to their meagre pay package; and the fact that many have large families to cater for. The finding aligns with the position of 'O' Connor and Fisher (2011) that, "low income creates challenges for making ends meet and is likely to create incentives for generating supplementary income through corrupt means" (p.9) and that of Oviawe (1997) that, poor incentives and poor pay pack are the most leading causes of sharp practices among staff in Nigerian universities. But it negates that of Ekhovbiye (2014) who found out that, though corruption among the junior workers, rank and file is the most common or rampant.

The result indicated that the relationship is lower for academic staff than for non-academic staff. The reasons that can be adduced for this are that most of the non-academic staff are junior staff and in most cases have many dependents. The finding aligns with that of Ekhovbiye (2014) and Udim (1989) that, non-teaching staff is more prone to corruption than teaching staff in tertiary institutions. But this research finding negates the position of Obaro (2013) that, corruption is higher among the academic staffs than the non-academic staff because they are in a position to enforce their authority on victims who can hardly escape without been punished.

The result indicated that the relationship is lower for staff of Nigerian universities in the North than those from the South. The finding aligned with Mielger et al (2009) that the place of residence should be another determinant of corruption because it implies a different culture and tradition, judicial system types, geographic regions, institutional development.

Conclusion and Implications for Social Studies Education

Misconceived values predominant in society actually relate to the tendency of staff of Nigerian universities to indulge in corrupt practices. The research concludes that all the seven misconceived values significantly correlated the tendency of staff of Nigerian universities to indulge in corrupt practices. Also, that, there are significant differences in the relationship between misconceived values and tendency to corrupt practices among staff of Nigerian universities by status of staff, category of staff and region of staff. But that, it revealed that there is no significant difference in the relationship between misconceived values and tendency to corrupt practices among staff of Nigerian universities by religion.

Arising from the findings and conclusion of the research, Social Studies and the disciplines need as a matter of national importance and urgency to rise up to the occasion and teach the values responsible for the susceptibility of staff of Nigerian universities to tendency to corrupt practices and stem their ugly trend in the society. Corruption should not be allowed to flourish in the society, otherwise the goal for introducing morals and values into Social Studies curriculum for pre-primary, primary, junior secondary and post-basic education would be defeated. There is nothing wrong if 99 % freedom from misconceived values susceptibility is achieved. The discipline need to intensify its effort and salvage the country from the mess of systemic corruption that is fast brewing up as a result of misconceived values' influence. Social Studies needs to demonstrate its capability and readiness as society's only hope among the disciplines to cure its social ills by stemming the trend of misconceived values in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings and conclusion, the study therefore recommended as follows:

1. Overhauling of curriculum content and value teaching that should spread along all the levels of our education system should be carried out.
2. Orientation programmes in form of seminars and workshops should be organized for staff to make them unlearn misconceived values.
3. The pedagogy for teaching should be re-addressed to give proper attention to the various sub-groups that is highly vulnerable to misconceived values susceptibility in Nigeria.

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