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# The Relationship between Culture and Corruption in Nigeria – Prospecting Culture Change in Dealing with this ‘Big Black Hole’

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Babatunde Akanji <sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the interface between the national culture and the realities of corruption in Nigeria. Drawing from Hofstede’s culture theory, a qualitative design was used as a framework to explore views of 40 Nigerians on the extent to which social norms, traditions, values, and personal orientations interplay with the magnitude of corruption in Nigeria. The findings provided empirical support for uncertainty avoidance values, patriarchy, and collectivist practices as influencing levels of corruption that is adversely affecting the nation’s economy and human development. Further results revealed the need for a pragmatic approach that places more emphasis on functional education that can raise cultural consciousness which will promote accountability, transparency and moral adherence to anti-corruption values. By implication, the findings offers valuable insights that unveils corruption in Nigeria as more cultural than political. It is therefore argued in this paper that eradicating corruption in Nigeria will practically necessitate the need for a culture change, which can be a slow and difficult process, but not an impossible one.

*Keywords:* Corruption in Nigeria, Culture theory, Functional education, Cultural consciousness, Anti-corruption values

*JEL Classifications:* N17

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<sup>1</sup> Babatunde Akanji: Department of Human Resource Management, Elizade University, Ondo State, Nigeria, email: babatunde.akanji@elizadeuniversity.edu.ng

## 1. Introduction

One of the vexing problems still bedeviling Nigeria is the high level of corrupt practices ingrained in almost every sphere of our nation's polity. For so many years, concerns about corruption has been about a lack of political legitimacy, credence and the inability to establish a collective action, including both legal and social institutions that can give people long-term confidence and trust in all anti-corruption agendas (Hira, 2016). While there has been enormous national expenditure spent by past and present governments in Nigeria to combat this social menace, prime national issues such as the deteriorating economy, ethno-religious conflicts, terrorism, dark leadership and most especially our cultural orientations that seems to accept corruption as a 'virtue' and not a 'vice' appears to create a vicious circle undermining the effective eradication of corruption in Nigeria (Fagbadebo, 2007). As such, the role of culture, often conceptualised in academic literature as shared beliefs, values, attitudes, norms, customs and tradition established to strongly influence human behaviour and reveals basic assumptions of how things are done by a particular group of people is extremely important when used to assess the prevalence of corruption in any national context.

For instance, Bamidele, Olaniyan and Ayodele, (2016) contends that it is commonplace for the culture of people to abhor corruption, yet, there are other instances where culture has been found to support corrupt practices. Interestingly, there are a swathe of reports attesting to numerous factors adduced as primarily responsible for the many antecedents of corruption in Nigeria while the aspects and role of culture in Nigeria's corruption struggles is yet to be adequately explored in literature. In other words, little empirical research has been conducted to determine whether or not there is a nexus between cultural systems and perceptions of corruption especially in a non-Western contexts. Further empirical evidence is needed to examine this issue. Consequently, this paper seeks to address this gap by focusing on the research question – How do aspects of culture affect the corruption situation in Nigeria? This research seeks to examine how cultural dictates is contributing to the imminence of corrupt practices and how emancipation can decisively occur in dealing with this national stigma.

## 2. Literature Review

In broad terms, corruption can be defined as the misuse and abuse of public power for private and selfish gains (Park, 2003). Misuse or abuse in this sense involves applying unlawful and illegitimate standards to enrich oneself at the expense of others. As earlier stated, the literature on corruption reveals that there are many antecedents of this unethical behaviour at any societal level. More so, there appears

to be a consensus among different scholars in the various fields of behavioural analysis that distinctive societal cultures clouts a wide variety of social actions (Hofstede, 2001; Heals, Cockcroft and Raduescu, 2004). Thus, Seleim and Bontis, (2009) suggests that behavioural studies tends to signify the possible extent to which traditional milieus and cultural dictates strongly influences human behaviours. Obviously, most people from the same culture tend to display the same values. Values here is defined by Hofstede (2001) as “a broad tendency to prefer certain state of affairs over others”. For this reason, cultural instincts can impact an individual’s perception of ethical standards and therefore, national cultural differences is possibly expected to influence issues like corruption. In turn, understanding cultural dimensions that can impact on the level of corruption or misuse of public office for personal aggrandisement is integral in addressing subconscious attitudes, informal practices and belief systems having a clear and veritable impact on corruptive tendencies found to be widespread especially in developing countries. For instance, corruption in third world nations particularly in Africa is perceived as a problem of transparency which is undermining good governance and thereby increasing the gap between the rich and the poor in such nations (Miller, 2006). The extent of human irrationality in these poor countries exemplifies an utter disregards for existing morality, good conscience and ethical codes of conduct in public life.

Therefore, a holistic analysis of tackling corruption in a country like Nigeria becomes admirable by looking at the cultural dimensions within the praxis of our national character. Consequently, in assessing the antecedents of corruption from a cultural perspective, this paper draws from Hofstede’s (1986) multiple dimensional theory of national culture. Hofstede distinguished national cultures in terms of five orientations – social, power, uncertainty, goal and time. His theory is based on the idea that the differences in national cultures are the different values placed upon these conceptual orientations. As such, each of these concepts affects the perceptions, values, motivations, attitudes and behavioural patterns of individuals who live in it. Like the personality assessment, each of the orientations depicts a separate continuum, of which Hofstede contended that each national culture can be positioned somewhere along each one as shown below.

## Hofstede's typologies of cultures

Table 1

<b>INDIVIDUALISTIC CULTURE</b> The interest of the individual takes precedence	<b>SOCIAL ORIENTATION</b> Relative importance of the interests of the individual as against the interest of the group	<b>COLLECTIVIST CULTURE</b> The interest of the group takes precedence
<b>POWER RESPECT</b> Authority is inherent in an individual's position within a hierarchy	<b>POWER ORIENTATION</b> The appropriateness of power or authority within a corporate entity or group of people	<b>POWER TOLERANCE</b> Individuals assess authority in view of its perceived rightness or their own interests
<b>UNCERTAINTY ACCEPTANCE</b> Positive response to change and new opportunities	<b>UNCERTAINTY ORIENTATION</b> An emotional response to uncertainty and change	<b>UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE</b> Prefer structure and a consistent routine
<b>MASCULINITY</b> Value material possessions, money and assertiveness	<b>GOAL ORIENTATION</b> What motivates people to achieve different goals	<b>FEMININITY</b> Value social relevance, quality of life and welfare of others
<b>LONG-TERM OUTLOOK</b> Value dedication, hard work and thrift	<b>TIME ORIENTATION</b> The extent to which members of a culture adopt a long-term or short term outlook to work and life affairs	<b>SHORT-TERM OUTLOOK</b> Value traditions and social obligations

Source: Buchanan, D. A. and Huczynski, A. A. (2010). Organisational behaviour, 7th Edition, England: Pearson Education Ltd.

In essence, the table identified and succinctly presents the findings of Hofstede's national cultural variations measured across five orientations. By identifying these dimensions of culture, Przulj and Kostadinovic (2014) revealed that Hofstede enabled researchers to later make scholarly enquiries on the impact of these cultural dimensions on certain phenomenon such as the 'cultural roots of corruption' found to exist in various societies. Further, Murdoch, (2009) adds that the correlation of cultural dimensions with corruption clearly suggest the need to develop a general theory of the cultural perspective of corruption. Thus, the present study draws from the culture theory of Hofstede in examining the weakening cultural system and corruption in Nigeria where literature is scarce. Historically, Nigeria remains an unsettled political entity since independence from colonial rule in the 1960s. With a

population of almost 190 million and diverse groupings of over 250 ethnicities (Investor Resources, 2012), the expansive turmoil of the political dilemma existing in the country explicitly focuses on leadership failures and most especially corruption that have affected virtually every facet of the country's national character. Regrettably, the political leadership of the country has been riddled with history of military rule entrenched in tyrannical governance that eventually ushered in the downfall of these unpopular regimes. With the extinction of military rule in Nigeria, democratic governance was then established.

However, since May 29, 1999 when the nation began preliminary experiment of seeking a lasting democratisation experience (after decades of military rule), it is still a matter of concern that Nigeria remains bewildered with a series of political crises caused a legacy of corruption, violence, thuggery, terrorism and other plethora of reverses that characterises our political culture (Osoba, 1996; Lawal and Oladunjoye, 2010; Oreoluwa and Oludele, 2010). One traceable element for this is that almost all existing national political parties are made up of people with incompatible political ideologies and seems to embark on a self-accumulation of wealth mission at the expense of those who voted them into power (Ampratwum, 2008). This unhealthy political climate have also infiltrated into the Nigerian economy which has equally been plagued with such political volatility and 'poor macroeconomic management' (Okpara and Wynn, 2007). Nigeria's natural endowment is crude oil. The nation is ranked the eleventh largest oil producing nation in the world, with 90% of foreign exchange earnings and 80% of Federal Government revenue generated from oil and gas (Investor Resources, 2012). However, the over-reliance on oil and gas that produces 20% of the country's GDP with the associated challenges of lack of accountability for the huge profits from the oil sector, stakeholder's deadlock between these oil multinationals and their host oil communities, rampant violent outbreaks at these oil regions and the government's lack of political will to introduce the much-needed economic and legal reforms are factors contributing to the economic downfall in Nigeria (Fajana, 2008). More so, corruption at all levels of government is the common element that is magnifying these diverse national challenges and causing economic stagnation that Nigeria is still experiencing. Although over the years, considerable efforts have been made by past and present democratic governments to fight corruption by the establishment of institutions such as the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practice Commission (ICPC). Despite some of the landmark efforts by these statutory bodies to cleanse the vicious legacy of corruption infecting the nation, criticism abound on how these anti-graft agencies are used by the ruling political party to witch hunt political opponents and even found to be nothing than another extension of corrupt

bureaucracy (Abiodun, 2007). This is why Bamidele et al., (2016) reiterated the need for a holistic diagnosis of the corruption problem by looking at the cultural dimensions that constitute ethical issues, social orientations and moral inclinations causing the menace. Hence, the present study intends to explore these perspectives and also prospect culture revolution as a possible developmental agenda in dealing with these daunting and challenging realities bewildering Nigeria.

### 3. Methodology

The methodological approach of this study draws from an interpretive – social constructivist tradition that emphasizes the notion of the social world being constructed from richly detailed narratives of peoples’ lived experiences (Cassell and Symon, 2004). From this perspective, reality is assessed as an on-going, revolving and repeatedly reproduced by peoples’ views. As part of a wider study, 40 semi-structured interviews were conducted with Nigerians who were very much interested in this topic area when approached. Participants included those in government, the civil service and other various industry sectors. This involved 23 men and 15 women with an age composition ranging from 35-69 years. The demographic characteristics of (gender, age, marital status etc.) of the sample are specified in the Table as follows:

**Demographics of the study participants**

**Table 2**

Age (years)	35-39 3 M, 2 F	40-44 M 6, 1 F	45to 49 4 M 1 F	50-54 1 M, 5 F	55-59 2 M, 3 F	60-64 4 M, 2 F	65-69 3 M, 1 F
Marital status	27 Married 22 M, 9 F	13 Single 5 M, 4 F					
Those in government					1 Worker	1 Worker	
Those in civil service		3 Ministry of Commerce		2 Ministry of Agric.			
Industry background of other participants	6 oil & gas	3 banking	4 ICT	4 education	2 medical	1 insurance	3 manufacturing

Note: M: Male, F: Female, LGC: local government councillor

From the table, it shows that the participants were drawn from those that have served in the government, those working the civil service and various professional sectors in the Nigerian industry. Participants were solicited through existing personal contacts, referrals and snowball sampling. Although a non-purposive sampling method was used to screen for eligibility purposes, all the respondents were deemed eligible to participate by reason of the nature of the topic which has been an area of great concern to Nigerian for many years. The justification for selecting 40 Nigerians for interview was because of the exploratory nature of the study. This selected number of interviewees may not be exhaustive views of the Nigerian society since the study adopted a qualitative approach. In deciding a suitable non-probability sample size, many textbooks on research methods suggested some certain number of interviewees that can be considered enough for a qualitative research. For example, Bryman (2008) suggested that 30 interviewees may be enough for qualitative data analysis. But Saunders et al., (2012, p. 283) lowered the number and recommended a minimum sample size of 5 to 25 respondents for semi structures and in-depth interviews with 4 to 12 interviews suitable when considering a homogeneous setting while 12-30 was deemed a sizeable figure for heterogeneous populations. It is needful to mention that there is no standardised rule on how many interviews, observations and narrative texts can suffice for interpretative data to be valid. However, the objective and reason for selecting participants for this study is because of their involvement in government, the Nigerian civil service and industry sectors where corruption appears prominent in Nigeria. More so, the purpose of all interviews was to expose beliefs, mind-sets and reported practices of cultural dimensions linked with the high level of corruption in Nigeria. This forms the main research premise of the study.

All interviews were conducted in preferred locations of participants (e.g. homes, offices) and each semi-structured interview lasted for 30 and 45 minutes and tape recorded with consent of interviewees. Some of the interview questions asked were as follows: Why is corruption so prominent in Nigeria? Is corruption a culture problem? Is corruption a moral issue in Nigeria? How can we deal decisively with corrupt practices in our country? After interviewing 31 people and analysing data done simultaneously, it was perceived that the remaining interviews were just mere confirmations of the existing data which meant saturation point was reached. Thereafter, a verbatim transcription of data was done to begin the analysis process. The data was analysed using a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This started by reviewing all the applicable comments from the transcribed data and grouping those that were similar in interpretation into emerging themes. Thereafter a re-categorisation of themes occurred especially when similarities were spotted

from all the initial themes listed. This coding process continued until the relevant theory grounded in the data emerged.

#### 4. Results and discussions

The findings revealed views of a multifaceted interface between the national cultural dimensions and the state of corruption in Nigeria. Significantly, most of the participants believe that corruption in Nigeria is endemic with cultural phenomena. Thus, the following concepts emerged as the relationship between cultural dimensions and corruption in Nigeria.

##### Uncertainty avoidance values

As earlier highlighted, Hofstede defined uncertainty avoidance (UA) as “the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations”. Thus, UA indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to respond to vagueness and uncertain conditions and circumstances. So according to the two study participants who have held political positions in Government, Nigeria has well defined anti-corruption institutions like the EFCC and ICPC with very strict rules and policy frameworks for decisively dealing with the infectious corruption levels giving Nigeria an extremely bad image both nationally and internationally. However, the lack of a political will to make all these legal systems to function independently void of external influence by a few powerful politicians is one of the dominant reasons why corruption is prevalent in Nigeria. This anti-graft institutions were even perceived as nothing more than further layers of corrupt bureaucracy. The following quotation typify the shared views of the participants:

*“Corruption is so pervasive in this country that it would be nearly correct to say that it is a way of life. Though past and present Government have set up well-structured and precise institutions like the EFCC and ICPC mandated to employ all available legal means to rid Nigeria of all vestige of corruption, yet, the culture of nepotism whereby few high-profiled politicians in Government use this institutions to witch-hunt rivals and opponents is one of the major reasons why corruption is still prevalent in our system” (Worker).*

*“The reason why bribery, embezzlement and looting of public funds is so common in Nigeria is because corruption is a moral problem in Nigeria despite our preference for complex anti-corruption set of rules, matrixes and blueprints...the volatility of the Nigerian economy and fear of the unknown due to lack of jobs, social amenities, public security and a largely impotent Government is giving everybody the feeling of – ‘if you can’t beat them, then you join them’ mentality” (Ex-Worker).*

*‘It’s so sad that our culture breeds corruption despite our stringent anti-corruption approach but the seeming failure of convicting the ‘big fishes’ show how toothless our legal institutions are because perverting justice in Nigeria is no big deal to some’ (Participant, Min. of Commerce).*

In sum, the statements above coupled with similar views of one of the civil servants working in the Ministry of Commerce suggest that Nigeria is a high uncertainty avoidance society where people prefer rigid rules, norms, policies and procedures for combating corruption. From the analysis, about 20% of the participants also shared similar views with regards the level of uncertainty avoidance in Nigeria. However, the above assertions suggests that this efforts are been sabotaged also. Arguably, Seleim and Bontis (2009) viewed bureaucratic systems can encourage those in authority to behave unethically. Impliedly, the study participants pointed out that while it is recognised that cultural regulations coded in constitutional guidelines set-up institutions vested with legal powers to deal with the daunting and challenging venture of corruption in Nigeria, some influential people in the country use the same institutions to propagate their personal agenda. This is why Lawal and Oladunjoye (2010) expressed major concerns of how our anticorruption agencies are not completely insulated from political influences. This could further perpetuate corruption by inducing people in ruling political parties to offer bribes and may even breed anti-corruption officials demanding and accepting bribes. This is an established pattern of practice in Nigeria that tends to almost immortalise corruption in the country and thereby creating uncertainty (Osoba, 1996). Though previous findings scored Nigeria an intermediate score of 55 on UA (Hofstede, 1980), which means Nigerians do not show a clear preference for this dimension, however, this study found a high level of UA from the data. The justification for this is not far-fetched from the fact that the present study shows Nigerians talking from existing realities facing the nation which has become different from the past Nigeria when was still given a neutral score (i.e. 55) for UA. The relevance of these findings is that since corruption is now more pronounced in Nigeria than the past, there is now a gravitation to more awareness for rigid codes of conduct that increases anti-corruption regulations to tackle the social menace of corrupt lifestyle in Nigeria.

### **Inequitable distribution of power**

About 15% of the participants shared similar views of the corruption situation afflicting the country as caused by the degree to which her culture allows the distribution and reactions to the application of authority, power, prestige and status. Evidences gathered suggest that the power distance is significantly high in Nigeria as most public institutions (such as government hospitals, schools, parastatals, etc.)

favour a highly hierarchical structure. It is widely declared that subordinates and lower class group of society are expected to aspire to be ranked positions in public offices. However, the unimaginable level of favouritism, bribery and abuse of discretion by those responsible for staff work reviews and promotions show the extent at which the nation's culture disallows fairness and equal rights to all. Further, participant responses in this category bordered on how our society tends to segment people into classes comprising of first – those known as rich and powerful, second – the ones in the middle-class and third – the poor masses.

*“Our value system allows so much nepotism in the civil service. Those without connections to those at the higher cadre of the civil service will always suffer and remain at one spot almost for a lifetime” (Participant).*

The excerpts above reveals a common tradition in Nigeria is to use ones connections with top government officials to manipulate an individual's way to the top in the Nigerian civil service. A number of participants explained how these high-level public officials believe that it is a rightful privilege of their class to obtain personal benefits because of their official positions. Furthermore, the middle and lower class employees who are also part of the civil service bureaucracy will also try to break into the ranks of those at the top through extortions and bribery. In a similar vein, it was also mentioned by of one the participants that those seeking employment into the civil service may indulge in bribing their way into the civil service as long they have access to the rights contacts. This is exemplified in statements such as – *“those who qualify for jobs in the civil service are rarely given the job but those who have inside contacts and know how to give kickbacks in order to unlawfully influence the selection and recruitment process eventually get the job”*

Consequently, some interviewees felt Nigerians have being socialised to accept inequality as a norm. This was said to be the major factor creating the huge gap between the rich and the poor. The rich and powerful are often perceived as corrupt individuals because of their potency in oppressing the poor and needy in the society. This is why a few of those participants with industry background reiterated how power distance in Nigeria reflects in the relationship between those who have political power and those who do not and how those who do not have are subject to those who abuse entrusted public power for private gains. One of the participants working at the Ministry of Agriculture specifically mentioned how government officials divert public funds with utter disregard to political codes of conduct prescribing honesty and transparency as moral values which should be upheld by serving officials.

Further narratives exposed how anti-corruption values are often stymied by ethnicity, kinship and religious sentiments. Therefore, of significance is the role and ascendancy of corruption in Nigeria. This is because corruption was commonly figured out as the problematic issue facing the country since our culture allows autocratic and paternalistic behaviours. So when individuals are appointed or elected into political office, the expectations from their so called 'Godfathers' are always extremely high in terms of what the office will offer. These few powerful people known as 'kingmakers' are ready to teach the appointees and elected officers how to steal, loot the public treasury and trample on the rights of people who voted them into power. Hence, corruption was said to know no bounds, irrespective of ethnic and cultural affiliations.

### **Patriarchy**

Interestingly, some of the participants especially the females conceptualised the strong interface between culture and corruption as drawn from the culture of patriarchy characterising the Nigerian society. A few of the female participants shared their sentiments on so much dishonesty perpetuated by male politicians. They felt that corruption thrives based on preconceived gender prejudices reducing womanhood to mere second-class citizens. Hence, there is the commonality of general belief system that the best place for women are to actively involve themselves in home and family affairs while the men are seen as 'breadwinners'. As a result, some the interviewees exposed how the masculine values of aggressiveness, assertiveness and materialism tends to be associated with a higher degree of corruption than those of the feminine value of caring dispositions.

*"My take on the reason why corruption is so prominent in Nigeria is because of the greed and indiscretion of most of our men in position of authority and power" (Female Banker).*

*"Although I think the prevalence of corruption is not a gender issue because anyone irrespective of sex can be corrupt but going by recorded cases involving men in corridors of power in the past shows the extent at which men who feel they have what it takes to always be in control perpetuate more corrupt practices than women in government" (Female ICT consultant).*

From the above statements, the perceptions of male domination was blamed as the reason why corruption is more pronounced in Nigeria. These female interviewees perceived that corruption is always manifesting an intent to give some advantage inconsistent with official duties and the rights of others while men in political offices were judged as more corrupt than a minority portion of women in government. This is because for many years in Nigeria, tradition and norms allowed gender

stereotypes by dictating gender relations that entrenches male dominance into our structure of social organisations and institutions at all levels of leadership. As such, there appears to be more men than women in all tiers of government (i.e. legislative, executive and judiciary). One of the female interviewee who works as a university lecturer particularly felt that until the end of the administration of former Government of Nigeria, women remained romanticised as exclusively belonging to a gender categorised as incorruptible. It was re-counted as an era in which when the citizens excoriated the extent of depravity, brazen theft and litany of the other excesses of Nigerian leaders, as such, the study participant easily thought of the possibility of women's intervention in politics of Nigeria could stem the raging tide of corruption.

Although a handful of these female participants gave impressions that the exclusion of their female counterparts from sharing public money is another way of political leaders solidifying an oppressive patriarchal society that makes females victim. However, one of the participants maintained a balanced view about the notion of the incorruptibility of women which was unravelled as a myth and exploded by the revelations of alleged complicities in the perpetration of the financial misdeeds that besmeared the former administration. For instance, the four or five women in his cabinet were alleged to be the overbearing chaperons of corruption upon which the administration was hoisted. Yet, one intriguing aspect of the revelations of corruption in Nigeria, particularly as regards the botched procurement of military weapons, is that no woman's name was mentioned as benefiting from the official sleaze. Thus, one of the female participants latched on this sentiment as a reification of the reality of their incorruptibility despite the excesses of the four women in past Government. But evidence still emerged narrating how women must avoid such haste in so far as their absence from the arms corruption list ironically does not offer much cheer as it is a validation of their real place in the Nigerian society.

This above findings is related to the Masculinity/Femininity dimension of Hofstede's theory that found Nigeria to incur a high score because of the patriarchal nature of the society. Nigeria was scored (60) in Hofstede's findings (Hofstede, 1980) and this justifies the present study's findings that reveals the extent of masculine dominance in Nigeria and the tendencies for excessive drive for competition, achievement and success to fuel corruption perpetuated by more men than women.

## Collectivism and corruption interface

Interestingly, evidence emerged to demonstrate the notion of increased collectivism being linked to rampant bribery and corrupt tendencies. For instance, three of the participants with industry background were of the opinion that giving and receiving bribes is said to be in tandem with the level of collective feelings of Nigerians. These participants narrated how daily occurrences of police collecting bribes at road checkpoints, giving of kickbacks to custom officers, offering tips to waiters and other forms of inducements ranging from extortions, facilitation payment, collusions, embezzlement, fraud, misappropriation and obstruction of justice are unethical behaviours that are seen as normal and inevitable realities in Nigeria. One of the participants reiterated that:

*“Corruption is everywhere in this country and at all times an evil wind that does no one any good but it has been accepted by almost everyone in Nigeria as a social norms” (Male medical doctor).*

With regards the cultural composition in the country, most interviewees believed that Nigeria is best described as a collectivist society (Hofstede, 2001). This was credited to the overall social framework that portrays a general interdependence within various social groups ranging from family structures, work units and ethnic tribes. Despite the diversity of Nigeria’s ethnicities, there is still a sense of integrated cohesion among her citizenry which sometimes gives priority in considering the collective rights of families, ethnic groups, work associates and community interests above individual initiatives and achievements (Aluko, 2003). Consequently, a related argument of one of the participants linked the prevalence of corruption to ethnic polarisation in Nigeria. There were references of one member of a given ethnic group feeling that the need to demand favours from a co-ethnic member in office is one the main reasons they voted such member into political office. At the same time, the provision of the concept of servicing such demands may be increased by the social leverage that ethnic leaders have over people of their ethnicity as the fear of been ostracised may make them always ready to oblige co-ethnic demands. This shows the extent to which the Nigerian society is so bedevilled with corrupt practices, such that expectations from a person elected or appointed into political is extremely high in terms of what the office have to offer. Therefore, people that this political holder represents are ready to teach them how to steal. Thus, corruption in Nigeria knows no bounds, irrespective of ethnicity or cultural affiliations.

Conclusively, most of the participants were of candid views that Nigeria can not only cure the systemic malady of corrupt practices not by a dose of more tough

anti-corruption laws and melancholic prosecutions but rather a focus on a cultural and institutional change in attitudes and behaviours. So it was suggested by some study participants that one crucial way to fight corruption is to first carry out a good national diagnosis of the problem of corruption and why it is so rampant and thriving in Nigeria. Subsequently, there were views for Nigeria to look at all the countries in the world that are least corrupt and how their systems imbibe a culture that discourages corruption and rewards integrity. As such, there was a concession that winning the war against corruption starts with realism about corruption and ensuring the failing standards of culture that tolerates entrenched secrecy, privilege and impunity for corruption will no longer be entertained throughout the society.

## 5. Conclusions

To sum up, all the evidence from the interviews exposed how corruption is so pervasive in the country to the extent that it would be nearly correct to suggest it is a way of life in Nigeria. To this extent, the data sets revealed a common perspective of a nation that is morally bankrupt because corruption is deeply entrenched in the Nigerian mind-set and collective psyche. Sadly, most of the interviews unveiled that it is not just the formal institutions of government and their personnel that are most corrupt but the whole society is afflicted with the disease. So corruption is more cultural than political in Nigeria. In addition, almost all participants were of the view that having made such a sing-song of eradicating corruption from our culture, it does not appear that any meaningful effort has been made to address the real causes of corruption. Subsequently, the study participants believed that if corrupt practices are to be tackled in Nigeria, then the social, business and bureaucratic environment in the country must be corruption-hostile rather than friendly. On this note, one of the respondents profoundly said:

*“This means there must be well funded comprehensive public enlightenment and education agendas on the nature of corruption as well as the negative impact it will have on the national polity perpetually. This is obviously the work of the National Orientation Agency (NOA) with the Federal and States Ministries of Education”.*

Other views support the need for the Ministries of Information in each of the thirty States of Nigeria to undertake a form of well tested public enlightenment techniques such as the use of public posters, handbills, print media advertisement, radio and television jingles in making the citizenry aware of the stiff sanctions awaiting those engaged in any form of corrupt practices. Furthermore, there was a more desperate cry for a culture change to eradicate corruption at every level in Nigeria. In as much as the establishment of ICPC and EFCC are laudable efforts in the fight against corruption, it was also suggested that it may be near impossible to cleanse Nigeria

of pervasive corruption if stakeholders do not expand the current war against corrupt practices to include strategic change management initiatives. So success in the war against corruption is not measured by only institutional path-dependency structure set in motion to deal with offenders only. Evidence emerged to show that the fight can successfully be measured by how much lost territory we have recovered as a country from the social pathology of corruption. It can also be measured by the degree to which Nigerians have rewired society to encourage and enable efficient, honest and public spirited transactions in all facets of the nation's endeavours.

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