



Undergraduates' Perception of Corruption and Materialism among Lecturers and its Implication for Socio-Civic Studies in Nigeria

¹Timothy Opeyemi YAYI Ph. D., ²Lebari Michael,

³Lasbat Omoshalewa AKINSEMOYIN Ph. D.,

⁴Idayat Nike BALOGUN Ph. D.

(¹yayi.to@unilorin.edu.ng, ²michael.l@unilorin.edu.ng,

³akinsemoyin.lo@unilorin.edu.ng, ⁴balogun.in@unilorin.edu.ng)

^{1,2,3&4}Department of Social Sciences Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

Abstract

Corruption, which is a deviation from the acceptable social ideals has extended its tentacle to the educational sector. Several indices today have portrayed the higher institution as a system that needs sanitation. This study, therefore examined the perception of students toward corruption and materialism among university lecturers in Kwara state. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study population consists of all students from the three Universities out of the four Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. The sample was made up of 360 students selected across the three Universities through purposive sampling technique from the Faculties of Education who are pre-service teachers. Data was collected using a structured researcher-designed questionnaire titled "Lecturers Corrupt Practices" Scale (LCPS). The questionnaire was pilot-tested using split-half method and PPMC was used to determine the reliability co-efficient of 0.64. Findings from the study revealed that: corruption among university lecturers in Kwara State is moderate; there was no significant difference in students' perception about University lecturers' corrupt practices on the basis of their gender and religion. The paper, therefore, submits that the panacea to these ills in the university is through socio-civic studies.

Keyword: Corruption; Materialism; University lecturers; Socio-civic studies

Introduction

Cambridge Online Dictionary (2018) defines corruption as illegal, bad, or dishonest behaviour, especially by people in positions of power. Olojede (2024) conceived corruption to mean an improbity or decay in



the decision-making process in which a decision-maker agrees to backslide or demands deviation from the standard which should guide his or her decision-making, in return for a reward or for the promise or expectation of a reward. Cimova (2021) explains that various magnitude of corruption includes grand, petty and political. Forms of corruption include bribery, fraud, blackmail, graft, extortion, preferential treatment, falsification of record, examination practices, illegal salaries to mention a few.

Historically, corruption started at the beginning of time. From the biblical perspective, it all started when man was formed (Gen.2:17 & 3). There was a code of conduct directly given by God but man faulted that and corruption crept into the world. In relation, the Holy Qur'an also allude to the antecedent of corruption in the world as starting from the period of Prophet *Adam* and *Hawwa Iblis's (Shaitan)* revolt from Allah and the subsequent stories of Qabil (Cain) and Habil (Abel). These explains the fact that corruption has been from time immemorial following the genology of the first man. Corruptions conceives materialism. Materialism is closely related because it is an obsession with or emphasis on materials, objects, and leisures, with a disapproval or rejection of ethical, morality, spiritual, intellectual, or cultural values (Liang et al., 2016). The craze for material possession and comfort has led people to do what is at variance with ethics and morality. Gardiner (2017) noted that corruption always show its ugly head based on four factors viz: money, assets, people and power . Under money, kickbacks, skimming larceny, laundering and blackmail are examples. Misappropriation, theft, concealment, chiseling, etc are instances of corrupt practices under assets (Khan, 2018). Under people, forced labour, discrimination, harrassment, nepotism, plagiarism attest to corrupt practices. Impunity, suppression, bullying, hoarding and squandering are instances of power corruption.

Kalienichenko and Slynko (2022) categorized the types of corruption into individual, political and legal. Other types are academic, economics and religious corruption. Every social unit or sphere is always engulfed incorruption. Recently corruption among academia have been so much pronounced. The University which is supposed to be the ultimate and sacred institution where individuals are trained maintained the opposite



partly because of the unethical practices of some lecturers. Arop et al. (2018) observed that lecturers who most times are intellectually bankrupt and who involve themselves in atrocities during their undergraduate days end up transferring this to the system when they become lecturers.

To forestall and stamp corruption out of the University, several measures have to be put in place. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2014) through her Etico database presents research comparing seven projects implemented worldwide, achieving transparency in poor education incentives reveals that measures taken to confront corruption risks-viz: school display boards, local transparency mechanisms, appeal mechanisms, social audits, and informal whistleblowing, among actions taken is key in the battle against corruption in education. Socio-civic studies have been advanced by many scholars as an antidote to societal problems like corruption, kidnapping, oil vandalization to mention a few. It engenders citizenship education, value education and morality. Aksinudin et al. (2022) posited that civic education can use simple methodologies to combat corruption, like billboards with anti-corruption inscriptions, advertising on popular radio-programmes, storylines built into popular television soap operas. If the efforts of socio-civic studies can be intensified, corruption will be tackled and brought to the barest minimum. Bakare (2024) asserted that Social Studies stems corruption for national transformation in Nigeria. Following the objectives of Social Studies, corruption can be tackled. What is required to end this among University lecturers is to incorporate socio-civic studies in teachers education and more so make it compulsory for to-be lecturers to have a workshop on the knitty gritty of how to do things. By so doing, dead values like integrity, honesty, truthfulness and even ethical practices will be instilled in lecturers.

However, growing concerns about corruption and materialism among lecturers, such as bribery, favoritism, grade-for-cash practices, and the prioritization of personal gain over academic integrity, pose serious threats to the moral and civic foundations of undergraduate education. Undergraduates' perceptions of these practices not only shape their trust in academic institutions but also influence their values, attitudes, and understanding of citizenship, justice, and social responsibility, which are



core objectives of socio-civic studies. Ariya (2020) stated that when students perceive lecturers as engaging in unethical behavior, it risks normalizing corruption, weakening ethical consciousness, and undermining the credibility of civic education efforts aimed at promoting integrity, accountability, and democratic participation. Despite the societal importance of this issue, there is limited empirical evidence examining how undergraduates interpret and respond to such behaviors and how these perceptions specifically affect the teaching and learning of socio-civic studies in Nigerian universities. This study therefore addresses a critical gap by investigating undergraduates' perceptions of corruption and materialism among lecturers and its implications for socio-civic education in Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined:

1. Undergraduates' perception of the corrupt and materialistic practices prevalent among university lecturers in Ilorin.
2. undergraduate' perception about university lecturers' corrupt and material practices base on gender
3. undergraduate' perception about University lecturers' corrupt and material practices base on religion

Research Questions

1. What are the undergraduates' perception of the corrupt and materialistic practices prevalent among university lecturers in Ilorin?

Research Hypotheses

H0₁: There is no significant difference in undergraduate' perception about University lecturers' corrupt and material practices based on gender

H0₂: There is no significant difference in students' perception about university lecturers' corrupt and materialistic practices based on religion

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of study consists of all undergraduates in universities in Ilorin, Kwara State, there are three main universities and 135,023 undergraduates in Ilorin, Kwara State (Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). the target population consists of



undergraduates in the Faculty of Education in the only Federal University in Ilorin. Convenience sampling technique was used to sample 360 students who participated in the study. Structured questionnaire titled Lecturers Corrupt and Materialistic Practices Scale was used to collect the research data. The instrument was divided into two sections. Section A requires respondents bio-data while section B contained 20 items on Lecturers Corrupt and Materialistic Practices. Responses were placed on modified four-point Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (4) Agree (3) Disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). A maximum score of 80 indicated high level of corrupt practices while the minimum score of 20 reflected low level or absence of corrupt practices among lecturers. Items of the instrument were validated by experts in Educational Evaluation and Social Studies. A split-half reliability method was conducted on 60 students outside the sampled subjects and the PPMC Coefficient reliability estimate was employed to establish the reliability of the instrument. A reliability index of 0.64 was derived. The research question was answered using mean analysis while the hypotheses were tested using independent t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	186	51.7
Female	174	48.3
Total	360	100.0

Table 1, showed that the male respondents are 51.7% (186) while the female respondents are 48.3% (174) which makes the total number of respondents to be 360. The result implied that the male respondents who participated in this study are more than the female respondents.

**Table 2: Religion of the Respondents**

Religion	Frequenc y	Percent
Islam	159	44.2
Christianity	171	47.5
Traditional	30	8.3
Total	360	100.0

Table 2 showed that respondents who are Muslims are 44.2% (159), respondents who are Christians are 47.5% (171) and respondents who are traditional worshippers are 8.3% (30). This indicated that majority of the respondents are Christians.

Research Question One: *What are the undergraduates' perception of the corrupt and materialistic practices prevalent among university lecturers in Ilorin?*

Table 3: Mean Rating on the Undergraduates' Perception of corrupt and materialistic practices among university lecturers in Ilorin

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1	Aid and abet examination malpractice	2.47	Not Prevalent
2	Is absent for lectures without justification	2.70	Prevalent
3	Takes bribery/gratification	2.38	Not Prevalent
4	Take improper advantage of their position	2.77	Prevalent
5	Force students to buy irrelevant materials	2.76	Prevalent
6	Take school equipment home	2.16	Not Prevalent
7	Trade during school hours	2.10	Not Prevalent
8	Impart wrong knowledge to students	2.13	Not Prevalent
9	Give unmerited scores to students	2.42	Not Prevalent
10	Come late for lectures	2.47	Not Prevalent
11	Harass female/male students	2.26	Not Prevalent



12	Lies about qualification	2.42	Not Prevalent
13	Do not complete course outline	2.85	Prevalent
14	Request for expensive gift	3.03	Prevalent
15	Directly/indirectly collect money in exchange of project	2.37	Not Prevalent
16	Have poor attitude to work	2.27	Not Prevalent
17	Lobby for promotion	2.14	Not Prevalent
19	Extort money from students	2.39	Not Prevalent
20	Process admission for unqualified students	2.28	Not Prevalent

Table 3 showed that undergraduates generally perceived most corrupt and materialistic practices among university lecturers in Ilorin as not prevalent, as reflected by mean scores below the decision threshold (2.5). However, a few practices are perceived as prevalent, notably lecturers being absent from lectures without justification (M = 2.70), taking improper advantage of their position (M = 2.77), forcing students to buy irrelevant materials (M = 2.76), failing to complete course outlines (M = 2.85), and requesting expensive gifts (M = 3.03). this implies that undergraduates perceived neglect of duty, abuse of authority, and subtle materialistic behaviors as prevalent among lecturers in Ilorin.

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant difference in undergraduates' perception about lecturers' corrupt and materialistic practices based on gender*

Table 4: t-test analysis on the difference in undergraduates' perception of lecturers' corrupt practices on the basis of their gender

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig (2 tailed)	Remark
Male	186	57.3	13.5	.408	358	0.684	Not Sig
Female	174	58.2	11.9				

P>0.05



Table 4 showed that the mean score for female undergraduates ($M = 58.2, SD = 11.9$) was slightly higher than that of male undergraduates ($M = 57.3, SD = 13.5$); however, this difference was not statistically significant ($t = 0.408, df = 358, p = 0.684 > 0.05$). since the p value (0.684) is greater than p value 0.05, this means that the null hypothesis one was accepted, indicating that there was no significant difference in undergraduates' perception of lecturers corrupt and materialistic practices in Ilorin based on gender.

Hypothesis Two: *There is no significant difference in undergraduates' perception about lecturers' corrupt and materialistic practices based on religion*

Table 5: A table of ANOVA analysis on the difference in students' opinion about university lecturers' corrupt practices based on religion

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	150.005	2	75.002			
Within Groups	57593.770	357	161.327	.465	.629	Not Sig
Total	57743.775	359				

$P > 0.05$

Table 5 showed that there was no statistically significant difference in undergraduates' perception of lecturers' corrupt and materialistic practices based on religion ($F = 0.465, p = 0.629 > 0.05$). Since the p-value exceeded the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted, indicating that students' perceptions did not significantly differ across religious groups.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that undergraduates generally perceived most corrupt and materialistic practices among lecturers in Ilorin as not prevalent, although certain behaviors such as absenteeism, failure to complete course outlines, abuse of office, forcing students to buy irrelevant materials, and requesting expensive gifts were perceived as common. This finding aligns with earlier studies such as Okoye et al., (2024), who reported that while overt corruption like bribery and sexual harassment is less frequently admitted or observed, subtle forms of unethical conduct, particularly neglect of duty and materialistic tendencies, remain widespread in Nigerian universities. Similarly,



Harrad et al., (2024) found that students were more likely to report administrative misconduct and exploitation through academic materials than direct financial extortion, suggesting a pattern of “soft corruption” that undermines educational quality rather than public scandal.

The findings of the study also discovered that there is no significant difference between male and female undergraduates in their perception of lecturers corrupt and materialistic practices. This result is consistent with the findings of Ugwuozor (2020), who observed that gender does not significantly influence students’ assessment of ethical behavior in higher education settings, as both male and female students are exposed to similar institutional structures and academic experiences. Likewise, Tierney and Sabharwal (2017) reported that perceptions of academic corruption are shaped more by shared classroom realities and institutional culture than by gender differences, reinforcing the present study’s conclusion that gender does not significantly mediate students’ views on lecturers’ misconduct.

The findings of the study also revealed no significant difference in undergraduates’ perception of lecturers corrupt and materialistic practices based on religion. This finding supports earlier studies such as Ekwukoma and Osagiobare (2021) and Ofojebe (2018) who found that religious affiliation did not significantly influence students’ judgments of unethical practices in Nigerian universities. These studies argue that institutional norms, systemic challenges, and academic power relations exert a stronger influence on students’ perceptions than personal or moral affiliations. The findings of the present study thus reinforces the view that corruption in higher education is perceived as a structural problem rather than one shaped by individual religious orientation.

Conclusion

The study concluded that undergraduates’ perceptions of corruption and materialism among university lecturers reflect deeper concerns about the ethical climate and institutional integrity of higher education in Ilorin. These perceptions have significant implications for socio-civic studies, as they shape students’ moral development, civic attitudes, and trust in educational institutions as agents of social transformation. The absence of perceptual differences across gender and religious groups further suggests that these issues are systemic rather than individual or



demographic in nature. Consequently, addressing unethical practices in universities requires comprehensive institutional reforms, strengthened accountability mechanisms, and deliberate integration of ethical values into teaching and learning processes to restore confidence, promote academic integrity, and reinforce the civic mission of higher education in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. University management should strengthen monitoring and accountability mechanisms such as regular lecture audits, anonymous student reporting systems, and strict enforcement of professional ethics, to reduce subtle but harmful unethical practices
2. Institutions should implement uniform ethics education and professional conduct training for all lecturers, ensuring that standards of behavior are consistently upheld regardless of gender-related perceptions.
3. Universities should promote institution-wide ethical culture through codes of conduct and civic responsibility programs that transcend religious affiliations, reinforcing shared professional values.

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