PERCEPTION OF CORRUPT PRACTICES AMONG EXTENSION AGENTS OF OYO STATE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (OYSADEP)

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ABSTRACT

Corruption has been a perennial clog in the wheel of development of all the sectors of Nigeria economy, agriculture inclusive. Staffers of different establishments engage in some conducts tantamount to corruption advertently and in some instances, inadvertently. This study focused on the perception of some practices; that were considered corrupt, by agricultural Extension Agents (EA) of Oyo State Agricultural Development Programme (OYSADEP). Simple random sampling was used to select 85 EAs (out of the total of 170) representing the sample size. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents on their personal characteristics, awareness and perception of the different forms of corrupt practices. Descriptive statistics, (frequency counts, percentages and mean) were used to summarize the data. More (35.3%, 64.7% and 29.4%) were between 32and 36 years of age, male, and had crop production as their area of specialization, respectively. Most (88. 2%) of the respondents knew abuse of office as corrupt practice, while the least known (9.4%) corrupt practice was bureaucratic conflict of interest. So also, patronage was known by just 17.6% as a corrupt practice. Majority (55%) of the respondents perceived corruption as impeding development. There was no significant relationship between awareness of various forms of corruption and perception of different corruption related statements. Therefore, it could be inferred that there exist a fair virtue within staffers of EAs of OYSADEP, but they were not aware of the semantics used in describing the different forms of corrupt practices. Many of the different forms of corrupt practices were not known to be such, while those that were known were not so derided. Hence, high toleration for those practices was implied. The current war against corruption by the present administration in the country should be holistic in covering public officers in the agricultural sector, as well as ensure mass media orientation to enhance attitudinal change.
Keywords: Bureaucratic conflict, Corrupt Practices, Extension Agents.

INTRODUCTION

Corruption as a topical issue is a monster against development and in-fact human survival and existence, which cannot be over flogged and must be tackled head long. It is more devastating than any deadliest disease on earth not even ebola or leukaemia, because these only affect individuals or few people in close proximity bear the consequence.

The ravaging scourge of corruption is not ordinarily borne by the vast majority of Nigerians, but it is being acknowledged and documented by international reputable bodies. The 2010 corruption perception index (CPI) released by the transparency international (TI) shows that corruption has increased in Nigeria with the country currently ranking 134th out of 180 countries surveyed in 2010, ranking below Ghana, Cameroon, Niger and Benin. (Daily Trust, 2010; Online Nigeria, 2010).

Oyejide (2008) argued that the associated types and level of corruption in Nigeria may have been influenced and heightened by the direct access of government to oil windfall income in an environment of weak public institutions, capture or near capture of the state powerful vested interest and inability of the citizens to effectively assert their rights.

The number of international conventions and domestic laws against corruption, as well as the emergence of the transparency international with over 100 chapters around the world, confirms the global trend of significant increase in the attention being given to overcome the problem of corruption as observed by UNDP (2008).

Fadairo and Ladele (2014) opine that, corruption is not a new phenomenon, but the magnitude and the different forms of its manifestation is most worrisome. They assert further that, it has spread its tentacles to every sphere of our national life. Ades and Di Tella, (1996) see corruption as the biggest threat to development. Fadairo and Ladele observe further that corruption benefits the rich and the well-to-do. It enriches the rich and disproportionally affects the poor, unprotected and the under priviledge there-by worsening their circumstance. In this light, the case of the rural poor could be seen to be more precarious since poverty is more entrenched in the rural community than urban.

Anand (2006) states that most disturbing today is the growing tolerance and Nigerians' acceptance of corruption as an in-evitable and integral part of our civil society. Corruption impacts severely on social, political and economic development, culminating in crippled democracy. In the bid to get out of the endemic quagmire inherent in corruption, no effort should be spared at fighting and subduing the malaise. In realization of this, the present administration in the country has made the curtailing and eradication of corruption as one of its cardinal programmes in order to bring the much required positive change.

The process of solving a problem starts with the proper identification of the different forms in which it exists. Against this backdrop, UNDP (2008) lists the following as elements of corruption and thus examples of corrupt practices; bribery, fraud, money laundering, extortion, kickback, peddling influence, cronyism/clientellism, nepotism, patronage, inside trading, speed money, embezzlement and abuse of public property.

The in-depth incursion of corruption into all facets of our lives calls for both individual and collective efforts of all and sundry towards stamping out the endemic corruption in the different sector of our economy. Spector (2005) argued that while comprehensive government reforms to address endemic corruption may be needed, sector specific solutions can be pursued as an approach for more systemic reforms. It is sequel to these that this study has been carried out with the following specific objectives:

- To identify the personal characteristics of the respondents.
- To examine the different forms of corruption practices engaged in by respondents or aware of by respondent.
- To determine the awareness of the respondents to different forms of corrupt practices.
- To determine the perception of staff of Oyo State Agricultural Development Programme (OYSADEP) to corruption.

The hypothesis was stated in null form was stated thus;

There is no significant relationship between the awareness and perception of different forms of corruption by the respondents.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Oyo State, which has a gentle land topography in the south, rising to a Plateau of 40 metres and above in the North. The vegetation pattern of the state is that of the rainforest in the South and guinea savannah to the North. The climate is equatorial, notably with dry and wet seasons with relatively high humidity. Based on prevailing climate and soil characteristics, the following crops are cultivated; maize, cassava, yam, sorghum, vegetable, cowpea and tree crops such as cocoa, oil palm, kolanut, coffee and citrus. In addition, some people rear livestock such as goat, swine and poultry.

The state has 33 local government areas and is divided into four Agricultural zones by OYSDEP; namely Ibadan/Ibarapa, Oyo/Ogbomoso, and Saki. All Extension Agents of OYSADEP are the target of the study.

There are 170 extension agents with the OYSADEP spread across the four zones viz, Ibadan/Ibarapa 56 EAs, Shaki has 42, Oyo has 40 and Ogbomoso has 32EAs. Fifty percent (50%) these EAs were randomly selected, making 85 EAs which formed the sample size.

Data was collected through the use of structured questionnaires. UNDP (2008) guide on various ways in which corruption manifests and could be measured were applied in dichotomy of ''Known as Corruption'' and ''Not known as Corruption''. Different measures (in percentages) were taken of each of the various forms of corrupt practices. 'Known as Corruption'' was assigned a score of 1, while 'Not known as Corruption'' was assigned 0. Mean of each of the different forms of corrupt practices were calculated as well as the overall mean. Items with mean below the overall mean were categorized as low Awareness, while those equal to and above were taken as High Awareness level. Descriptive statistics means and ranking were used to compare responses to various forms of corruption. This is quite significant as it evaluates different cases of corruption and which form is more prevalent in OYSADEP.

Perception of the respondents about corruption was measured by generating a list of 20 perception statements which were responded to on a 3-point scale of Agree, Uncertain and Disagree. Scores of 3, 2, and 1 were awarded to positive statements and the reverse for negative statements respectively (adapted from Fadairo and Ladele, 2014). Respondents with scores of mean and above were regarded as having favourable perception, while those with scores below mean were categorized as having unfavourable perception.

Table 1: Sample Selection of Respondents

Zone	No. of Extension Agents	Number Selected (50%)
Ibadan/Ibarapa	56	28
Shaki	42	21
Oyo	40	20
Ogbomosho	32	16
Total	**170**	**85**

PPMC was used in testing the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 2 reveals that majority (35.1%) were between 32 and 36 years of age with a mean age of 38years and standard deviation of 15.85. This is in line with the observation of Adeola and Ayoade (2011). It is a direct indication that majority of the respondents were young and active which may positively influence their active performance on the field. A large percentage (64.7%) were male while 35.3% were female. This implies that OYSADEP Extension Service was male dominated.

It is clear from the table that more (45.9%) of the respondents' Educational qualifications was

BSc degrees; followed by HND with 25.9%; M.Sc with 22.3% and OND constituted 5.9%. However, none of the respondents was holder of NCE certificate. It is also clear from the table that majority (29.4%) of the respondents specialized in Crops, followed by those with Extension bias who were; 27.1% . Proportion of respondents that studied Livestocks, and Agricultural Economics were 20% and 17.6% respectively. However, those who graduated in Environmental Management and Protection were the least (5.9%). This is in absolute agreement with the findings of Adeola and Ayoade (2011). This indicates that Extension Agents of OYSADEP have diverse areas of specialization which could help the practice of unified system of extension. However, extension work may not be very effective since there are more non-extension specialists in the system.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to their personal characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age (in year)		
27-31	**12**	**14.1**
30-36	30	35.3
37-41	19	22.4
42-46	16	18.8
>46	8	9.4
Sex		
Male	55	64.7
Female	30	35.3
Educational Level		
M.Sc	19	22.3
B.Sc	39	45.9
HND	22	25.9
OND	5	5.9

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
NCE	0	0.0
Area of Specialize		
Crops production	25	29.4
Livestock production	17	20
Agric Economics	15	17.6
Agric Extension	23	27.1
Environmental mgt & Protein	5	5.9
Total	**85**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2015

Awareness of respondents about different forms of corrupt practices

As shown in Table 3, the well known forms of corrupt practices in descending order were bribery (100%), abuse of office (88.2%), private use of public resources (84.7%) and impropriety (76.5%). The least known form of corrupt practice was bureaucratic conflict of interest (9.4%). The overall mean of 1.53 was used to categorize respondents to low awareness and high awareness levels. Consequently, it was discovered that out of the nine corrupt practices, only four had their means above the benchmark. Hence, low level of awareness of the different forms of corrupt practices were observed among the respondents.

This implies that majority of the respondents had very high tendency to engage in corrupt practices particularly unwittingly because of ignorance. The finding is in agreement with the position of Nyantakiyi (2002) who posited that the simplistic reasoning that corruption is the malignant hobby of politicians is fallacious.

Table 3: Awareness of Respondents about different forms of corrupt practices, n = 85

Forms of Corrupt Practice	Known as Corruption		Not Known as Corruption		Mean
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
Nepotism	40	47	45	53	1.47
Patronage	15	17.6	70	82.4	1.18
Pork barrelling	22	25.9	63	74.1	1.26
Bribery	85	100	0	0	2.0
Influence peddling	20	23.5	65	76.5	1.24
Bureaucratic conflict of interest	8	9.4	77	90.6	1.09
Impropriety	65	76.5	20	23.5	1.76
Private use of public resources	72	84.7	13	15.3	1.85
Abuse of office	75	88.2	10	11.8	1.88
Total					**1.53**

Source: Field survey, 2015

Perception of corruption

Table 4 reveals that most (95.3%) of the respondents agreed that making loyalty a condition for assigning position of responsibility to sub-ordinate is good. The same trend is obtained for tradition of 'man knows man to get things done' is normal, indicated by 82.4% of the respondents. Also 82.4% of the respondents agreed that looking for short cut helps wealth redistribution. This is in line with the argument of Ladele (2010) who observed that corruptions is fast becoming a cultural problem in our national system in Nigeria.

It was also observed that 77.6% and 70.6% of the respondents agreed that immorality grows out of stress and imbalances in the society; and that the poor who complain against corrupt practices by public officials would do worse if given the opportunities, respectively. These observations were buttressed by Nyantakoyi (2002) who established a nexus between poverty, inequality and corruption. Nyatankoyi (2002) explained further that poverty provides the propitious environment for corruption to thrive.

It can be inferred from the foregone that corruption by public officials has many root causes and that they have various reasons to believe that corruption is inescapable.

The current mantra of war against corruption will triumph only with integrated approach of measures. It will require proactive and holistic actions engaging the impeccable rule of law to prosecute and punish culprits appropriately.

The categorization of respondents using the overall mean of 1.76 showed that majority (55%) had unfavourable perception of corruption, while 45% had favourable perception of corruption. This negates Fadairo and Ladele (2014) assertion in a similar study, which indicated a reversed order. It can therefore be said that there exists a fair culture of virtue amongst the extension agents in OYSADEP. This is in congruence with the report of the survey conducted by Centre for Democracy and Development-Ghana (CDD-Ghana;2000) on a like study in Ghana which also showed unfavourable attitude and perception of corruption among majority (76.0%) of their respondents. Although, the observations of this study and that of CDD- Ghana (2000) might appear to follow similar trend, however, the degrees of unfavourable perception of corruption (55% for the formal, and 76% for the latter) shows a very wide margin against extension Agent of OYSADEP. Hence, more still needs to be done in ridding off corruption out of OYSADEP.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents to Statements on Perception of Corruption

Statements	Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Mean
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
Bribe taking and giving is a form of dishonesty	46	54.1	28	32.9	11	13	2.41
Fraud has been made a way of life in Nig. So it impossible to eradicate	52	61.2	9	10.6	24	28.2	1.57
Dishonesty does not impede development	15	17.6	30	35.3	40	47.1	2.29
Indulgence encourages removal of entrepreneurship clog of bureaucracy	60	70.6	5	5.9	20	23.5	1.53
Dishonesty subverts public interest to favour private interest	30	35.3	16	18.8	39	45.9	1.89
Bribes are ways of earning additional income to boost take home and better living	50	58.8	05	5.9	30	35.3	1.77
Fraudulent acts shutout best hands	40	47.1	17	20	28	32.9	2.14
Looking for short cuts helps wealth redistribution equitably	70	82.4	02	2.4	13	15.3	1.33
Inequality is promoted by gratification	06	7.1	04	4.8	75	88.2	1.19
Making loyalty a condition for assigning position of responsibilities is good	81	95.3	01	1.2	3	3.5	1.08
Dishonesty in public service is a disincentive to few honest staff	38	44.7	12	14.1	35	41.2	2.04
Due process emboldens illegitimate groups of people at the corridor of power	48	56.5	02	2.4	35	41.2	1.85
Immorality grows out of stress and imbalances in society	66	77.6	04	4.8	15	17.6	2.60
Financial probity and accountability are known with only experts, rich and influential people	55	64.7	10	11.8	20	23.5	1.59
The poor who complains against corrupt practices by public officials would do worse he giving the opportunities	60	70.6	03	3.5	22	25.9	1.55
The tradition of man knows man to get things done is normal	70	82.4	02	2.4	13	15.3	1.33
The process of taking maximum advantages (due and undue) of occupied public office is abnormal	52	61.2	03	3.5	30	35.3	1.74
No matter how bad the financial circumstance of a public official is, he must not be dishonest	27	31.8	03	3.5	55	64.7	1.67

Statements	Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Mean
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
The belief of illegal sharing of national cake should be discouraged	06	7.1	04	4.8	75	88.2	1.19
Application of quota system in distributing opportunities leads to inefficiency	57	67.1	03	3.5	25	29.4	2.38

Source: Field survey, 2015

Hypothesis testing

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis on Table 5 tested the relationship between awareness of different forms of corruption and perception of the forms of corruption by the respondents.

The result shows that there was no significant relationship between their Awareness and Perception of the corrupt practices, with p-value of 0.064, indicating that the null hypothesis should be accepted.

This shows that although the respondents could perceive some of the perceptional statements as being unethical but some of the semantics used in capturing the different forms of corrupt practices were unknown to the respondents.

Table 5: Correlation between Awareness and perception of different forms of corrupt practices by the Respondents

Variable	r-value	p-value	Decision
Awareness Vs Perception	0.086	0.064	NS

Correlation is significant at 0.05

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear from the study that there was low level of awareness of corrupt practices amongst the respondents and hence they may engage in some of the corruption practices inadvertently. However, they have unfavourable perception of corruption, although, the unfavourable perceptions are not so strong. In essence, policy against corruption calls for pro-activeness in its implementation to substantially achieve success.

Sequel to the foregone observations, the following recommendations are considered germane;

1. There is a very prompt need for orientation seminar on forms of corrupt practices, implication and consequences for public officials generally, and extension agents in particulars.
2. Intensive media awareness campaign against all forms of corruption should be embarked upon by government to achieve attitudinal change in Extension Agents.
3. The existing media campaign programmes based solely on bribery as corruption, should have content redesigning to contain all the different forms of corrupt practices.
4. Finally, after sensitization and enlightenment programmes have been done, the power of the law on corruption should be invoked to punish offenders. This will make Extension Agents, and Public officials key properly into the anti corruption agenda of the present administration.

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