



International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

The Impact of Culture in Societal Control; An Assessment of Yoruba Traditions and Deities in the Control of Corruption in Nigeria.

Edema Olagoke O Ph. D¹, Enikanselu Adebayo², Oluwatukasi Eyiemi B³

¹Department of Social Sciences, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo Ondo State

²Department of Social Sciences, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo Ondo State

³Department of Social Sciences, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo Ondo State

ABSTRACT

The pervasive nature of corrupt practices and their ramifications is a systemic challenge across the African continent, with Nigeria representing a prominent case. The profound detrimental effects of this phenomenon are inextricably linked to pervasive institutional breakdowns within the nation. Consequently, this investigation explores the role of cultural frameworks in exerting societal regulation, specifically through an evaluation of Yoruba customs and spiritual entities. The Primordialist theoretical framework was employed to provide the foundational explanatory lens for this analysis.

A mixed-methods research design was implemented for this inquiry. Data acquisition was facilitated through the deployment of structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as primary instruments. The study locales were designated through a randomized selection of the Ondo North and Central Senatorial Districts. A purposive sampling technique was utilized to enlist one hundred and fifty (150) participants from the twelve Local Government Areas within these districts. The cohort was composed of 10 Traditional Rulers (Obas), 10 Community Chiefs, 10 Practitioners of Ifa Divination, 10 Public Sector Employees, 10 Representatives from Security Organizations, 10 Skilled Tradespeople, 10 Market Traders, and 5 Agricultural Workers, culminating in a subset of 75 respondents from each senatorial district. The resultant data were subjected to analysis using descriptive statistical methods, primarily percentages.

Traditional rulers were included as participants by virtue of their role as the principal custodians of Yoruba heritage. Perspectives on the enduring resilience, adherence to, and acceptance of these cultural norms were also solicited from all other respondent categories. The investigation yielded affirmative findings regarding the potential application of these cultural values to counteract corruption in modern Nigeria. It was revealed that institutional mechanisms like the Oyomesi council historically held the authority to mandate ritual suicide for monarchs who governed despotically. Furthermore, the research underscored the potent inhibitory influence ascribed to spiritual forces such as Ifa (divination), Ayelala (deity of justice), Ogun (deity of iron and war), Sango (deity of thunder and lightning), and symbolic thunder in mitigating corrupt activities within societal structures.

The study concludes that Yoruba traditional belief systems possess significant potential to be leveraged in the fight against corruption in present-day Nigeria, a efficacy strongly corroborated by the participant responses. It is therefore recommended that a constitutional reappraisal be undertaken to formally integrate and acknowledge the value of these indigenous cultural mechanisms. Such an integration is posited as vital for safeguarding the nation's advancement and ensuring its enduring future prosperity.

Keywords: corrupt practices, contemporary Nigeria, cultural values, moral adherence.

INTRODUCTION

The pervasive nature of corruption and its repercussions is a systemic challenge across Africa, from which Nigeria is not immune. Its profound and deleterious effects are inestimable, fundamentally intertwined with institutional breakdown within the nation. A particularly alarming reality is that the very agencies established to combat this scourge have demonstrated ineffectuality, even as corrupt activities proliferate across all facets of society, permeating both conventional and contemporary establishments. The once-prevalent notion that indigenous cultural tenets inherently discouraged such malfeasance is demonstrably eroding. This research aims to identify and evaluate those enduring traditional customs and value systems that could be leveraged to address corruption in the modern era, notwithstanding its widespread infection of all institutional frameworks. These ancestral practices are rooted within Yorùbá society.

Globally, corrupt activities are unequivocally deemed misconduct. As defined by Transparency International (TI, 2021), corruption manifests in numerous ways, encompassing: public officials soliciting or accepting illicit payments or favors for services, politicians misappropriating state funds or awarding positions and contracts to patrons, associates, and relatives, and private entities offering bribes to secure advantageous agreements. This phenomenon

occurs within commerce, governance, the judiciary, media, and civil society, impacting every sector from healthcare and education to public works and athletics.

Corruption is frequently facilitated by complicit professionals—including bankers, attorneys, accountants, and property agents—as well as by non-transparent financial architectures and anonymous corporate entities that enable illicit schemes to thrive and the proceeds of corruption to be laundered and concealed. Adamolekun (2015) contended that corruption has become so deeply embedded in the social fabric that civilized nations are increasingly preoccupied with its eradication. Former UK Prime Minister David Cameron (2016) asserted that "corruption is a cancer at the heart of so many of our problems in the world today," noting it undermines employment and economic expansion, diverts billions annually from the global economy, perpetuates extreme poverty by allowing funds to be embezzled, and deprives public services like schools and hospitals of vital tax revenue.

TI (2021) cautions that corruption deteriorates public trust, weakens democratic foundations, stifles economic progress, and intensifies inequality, impoverishment, social fragmentation and environmental degradation. As observed by Paul Collier (cited in Cameron, 2016), corruption is often concentrated in specific sectors, societies, and historical periods. Industries such as natural resource extraction and construction are notoriously susceptible. Furthermore, some European nations like Italy and Greece perform worse on corruption indices than certain African and Asian countries, with Afghanistan and Angola representing extreme cases (Collier, 2002).

Regarding Nigeria's experience, Okolo and Raymond (2014) posit that colonialism introduced systemic corruption to Africa, and by extension, Nigeria. Omotola (2006) similarly indicted colonial rule for establishing a governance model predicated on corrupt practices. Conversely, since gaining independence on October 1, 1960, corruption has persistently escalated across all economic sectors, severely impeding development and compromising human and national security. Ukamaka (2010) explained that anti-graft agencies like the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), established in 2000 and 2003 respectively to combat this plague and avert socio-economic collapse, are now widely perceived as tools for targeting political opposition and have consequently lost public credibility.

Consequently, despite myriad governmental initiatives, corruption endures as an inescapable affliction. Like a metastatic cancer, it has crippled national development. Despite being endowed with abundant human and natural capital, Nigeria paradoxically remains one of the world's most underdeveloped nations, primarily due to this menace. It has also severely tarnished the country's international reputation, causing Nigeria to forfeit the respect and prestige it would otherwise command. The damage inflicted upon the Nigerian state is colossal and monumental. This crisis has resulted in bureaucratic inertia, protracted decision-making, police extortion, port congestion, fuel shortages, ghost workers, nepotism, and electoral fraud, among other ills (Dike, 2005; Ibenacho, 2004; Oloja, 2002).

Moreover, corruption in Nigeria constitutes a clear danger to state stability and security, subverting ethical standards, perverting justice, and endangering the rule of law and equity. The nation confronts corruption of such brazen and egregious theft that it is morally and historically indefensible; it has been a principal factor in the mass immoderation of the populace and the profound alienation of the citizenry from its leadership. It is established that pervasive corruption, particularly in contexts of widespread poverty and high unemployment, corrodes trust in governance and fuels criminality and political instability. In extreme cases, the political dominance of unvarnished self-interest exacerbates social stratification, fosters societal division and internal strife, and thrusts a corrupt state into a relentless vortex of institutional chaos and violence. Unchecked corruption culminates in state fragility, fuels destructive conflict, precipitates political instability, and annihilates governmental legitimacy (Okorie, 2018).

This study is designed to investigate the role of culture in social regulation through an appraisal of Yorùbá traditions and deities. This inquiry is prompted by the assertion of Anwuoluorah and Asike (2012) that the Yorùbá possess a deeply ingrained cultural framework characterized by religious observance, a premium on ethical conduct, virtue, honesty, fidelity, accountability, diligence, devotion, loyalty, and obedience to communal values. Furthermore, Yorùbá cultural practices are intrinsically linked to traditional worship and a reverential fear of divinities that proscribe and taboo any behavior associated with corruption, thereby shaping conduct.

Statement of Problems

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is endowed with a considerable wealth of natural endowments, profound cultural principles, and a rich historical legacy that, in theory, should catalyze advancement and progress across every segment of its economy. Notwithstanding this plethora of assets, systemic corruption appears to be the primary impediment to realizing beneficial outcomes for national development and citizen safety. As observed by Philip and Moses (2013), the pervasive nature of corrupt practices in Nigeria has cultivated extensive impoverishment and deficient human development metrics. This environment of deprivation has potentially fueled recent countrywide demonstrations and ethnically-driven movements seeking autonomy, stemming from a deep-seated erosion of confidence in governmental institutions. Consequently, a populace resorting to self-preservation by any means is giving rise to ethical decay and deviant conduct. This manifests as premeditated corrupt acts, criminal undertakings like abduction for extortion, occult practices for monetary gain, the pervasive giving and accepting of bribes within all economic spheres, academic fraud, electoral misconduct, judicial manipulation, and infringements on human rights. These phenomena collectively sustain Nigeria's reputation as an underdeveloped nation.

Page (2018) asserted that initiatives aimed at suppressing corruption in Nigeria have produced negligible results, primarily due to a compromised judiciary specifically, the acceptance of bribes and the application of esoteric legal technicalities to quash proceedings by members of the bench. This judicial corruption has likely obstructed the operations of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and analogous bodies. Notably, Nigeria's three principal anti-graft agencies—the EFCC, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), and the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) have themselves been subject to allegations of corruption. Successive administrations have been accused of

weaponizing these entities to target political opponents while simultaneously influencing them to overlook transgressions committed by allies. Page (2018) illustrates that from 2007 to 2011, the then-Attorney General, Michael Aondoakaa, and the then-EFCC Chairperson, Farida Waziri, actively countermanded anti-corruption efforts. Aondoakaa was said to have obstructed British initiatives to reclaim millions embezzled by the convicted former governor, James Ibori. Waziri, conversely, was accused of undermining her own agency's prosecutions and investigations, an action that led to the temporary suspension of U.S. assistance to the EFCC. Similarly, corruption allegations reportedly prompted President Buhari to dismiss Ibrahim Lamorde, who chaired the EFCC from 2011 to 2015.

Yeganeh (2014) posited that in Nigeria, corruption begets further corruption, thereby cementing and perpetuating systemic inequity within everyday existence. This setting debilitates communal ideals of equity and shared civic duty, as the rampant impunity for fraudulent activities and abuses of authority gradually diminish the public's feeling of moral obligation to adhere to regulations for the collective good.

The Nigerian state has attempted to address corruption through juridical systems and governance-oriented strategies, focusing on modernizing public procurement regulations and fiscal management, enacting anti-corruption legislation, and creating multiple agencies dedicated to both preventing graft and penalizing perpetrators. Yeganeh (2014) further contended that while these efforts—including enhanced whistleblower incentives and safeguards, high-level probes into prominent figures for grand public fund embezzlement, and the retrieval of billions of naira—are crucial, they have not yet succeeded in sustainably and holistically reversing corrupt activities.

Beyond these factors, the inability of mainstream religious establishments to deter their adherents from engaging in corruption across various sectors and the nation as a whole collectively underscores the demand for a fundamental transformation in strategy. This necessitates a shift from a strictly legal-formal institutional methodology to one incorporating traditional-cultural systems and spiritual frameworks. This includes leveraging the efficacy of institutions like the Ifá Oracle, the concept of Eewo (taboo), and other indigenous religious prohibitions designed to inculcate ethical conduct within the community (Adedayo, 2017) to eliminate corruption.

Several scholars, including Toyin Falola and Akintunde Akinyemi, have diligently researched Yoruba culture, though their focus has largely been on cultural expressions such as traditional ceremonies, spirituality, attire, and matrimonial customs. In contrast, those examining the role of tradition in societal regulation are relatively scarce. Among them are Adebowale Oluyemisi and Temitope Olumuyiwa, who have championed the conviction that invoking deities like Ogun, Sango, and Orunmila for oath-taking could lead to the comprehensive eradication of societal corruption (Adebowale et al., 2014).

Consequently, this research critically examines the influence of culture on societal regulation through an assessment of Yoruba traditions and deities.

Objectives of the study

The objective of this study is to examine the efficiency of the traditional cultural values of the Yorubas deities in eradicating corruption in the contemporary Nigerian state.

Significance of the study

This research holds considerable import for several key rationales: It will function as a catalyst for innovation and a strategic framework for legislators and institutions across all tiers of governance entrusted with the mandate of combating corrupt practices. The findings will yield critical understanding regarding the role of cultural frameworks in mitigating unethical conduct and behaviors that coalesce into systemic corruption within Nigeria. Furthermore, it will constitute an authoritative reference material for academic investigators and scholars in political science, public policy, educational designers, academic publishers, institutional leaders, and professional associations.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Concepts of Corruption and Culture

Corruption has an ancient root. However, as etymologically traced by Waziri (2010), the term corruption originated from the Greek word *corropius*, meaning aberration or deviation, perversion or change from the generally accepted rules or laws for selfish gain. It has been described as the perversion of integrity or state of affairs through bribery, favour, or moral depravity. It involves acts of dishonesty, unfaithfulness, and improper transaction aimed at changing the normal course of events and altering judgments and positions of trust. It involves the use of informal, extra-legal, or illegal acts to facilitate matters by the doers and receivers (Otite, 1986).

What is culture? Falola and Akinyemi (2017) defined culture as a pattern of human activities and symbols that give these activities significance. It is what people value, belief, and practice. Spencer (2008) conceptualized culture as the totality of life evolved by the people in their attempts to meet the challenges of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic, and religious norms and modes of an organization thus, distinguishing people from their neighbours. This definition exposes a more humanistic view of culture as it is not only about the activities of man, but it also signifies the representations and characters that give these activities meaning or importance.

However, this study adopts the definition of culture by Tylor (1871), that culture is a “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. According to Meade (1953), culture represents operative features of a society, encompassing a pattern of actions, providing a centre for human action, growth, and development. This simply means culture is the total

way of life. Inherent in the traditional Yoruba culture, as Chinweuba (2018) and Idris (2019) explained, include the desire for a good name and good character.

Cultural institutions and structure of the Yoruba traditional setting

While existing scholarship has documented various traditional institutions and values of the Yoruba people, a significant research gap remains concerning the specific role of culture as a mechanism for societal control. Dipo (2020) outlines a sophisticated pre-colonial Yoruba governance structure that was centralized yet operated on a robust system of checks and balances, comprised of the following key institutions:

- a) **The Oba (King):** Serving as the paramount political and spiritual leader (often titled *Alaafin*), the Oba is not an absolute monarch. Though his authority is supreme and unchallenged in title (signified by the honorific *Kabiyesi*), his power is exercised in consultation with a council of chiefs (*Ijoye*) and is constitutionally checked by other bodies. This structure, requiring the Oba to respect societal views, fostered a democratic ethos. The Oba's executive, judicial, and legislative powers, particularly over grave matters, were thus shared rather than autocratic.
- b) **The Ogboni Cult:** This group functioned as a regulatory and spiritual institution. Its private rituals served public purposes, and it held a critical mandate to curb excesses by both the Oba and the kingmakers, operating under the leadership of the Oluawo.
- c) **The Aare Ona Kakanfo (Warlord):** As the head of the military (*Esos*), the Aare was responsible for state security and defense against all threats. His significant power was balanced by his physical distance from the capital and an extreme accountability measure: the expectation to commit suicide following a military defeat. His ability to withdraw military support served as a potent check on other institutions.
- e) **The Oyomesi (Kingmakers):** This council of seven high chiefs, led by the Bashorun, was vested with the authority to appoint the Oba. Their consent was mandatory for major royal decisions. Most critically, the Oyomesi embodied the principle of accountability, possessing the authority to compel a despotic Oba to commit suicide ("open the calabash"), thereby preventing autocratic rule.

This intricate system demonstrates how cultural institutions were explicitly designed for societal control, ensuring balance, accountability, and order within the centralized Yoruba empire.

In addition, Abiola (2019) further highlighted and described the functions of the Oyomesi in the pre-colonial traditional Yoruba society to include:

- *Select a new Alaafin:* One of the functions of the Oyomesi was to take part in the selection and replacement of the Alaafin or king when he died or abdicated his throne.
- *Installation of a new Alaafin:* Another function of the Oyomesi is to take part in the installation of a new king after a candidate is found. The installation of kings was one of the high points in the administration of the empire, and the Oyomesi made sure they partook in all its activities.
- *Initiate laws:* The Oyomesi had the power to initiate laws for consideration and subsequent adoption if deemed necessary for the efficient administration of the empire.
- *Checks on the powers of the Oba:* The Oyomesi served as a check on the powers of the Alaafin or king. Led by the Bashorun, the Oyomesi could dethrone the Alaafin if the people lost confidence in his administration.
- *Ensured policies were implemented:* The Oyomesi was tasked with making sure that the policy decisions taken by the state were implemented throughout the empire. This was to ensure that there was full compliance.
- *Religious functions:* It was the duty of the head of the council of Oyomesi, the Bashorun, to consult the Ifa oracle for the approval of the gods. Though the appointment of a new king was the duty of the Oyomesi, the new Alaafin was seen as an appointment by the gods.
- *Advised Alaafin on good governance:* It was the duty of the Oyomesi to advise the Alaafin on matters of good governance.

Summarily, Dipo (2020) enumerated the features of the traditional political system of the Yoruba society to, include: (1) Succession to the throne can be described as semi-hereditary as a king was not succeeded by his son, but by someone in another royal family, following a selection process conducted by the kingmakers. (2) The monarchical system was not absolute but constitutional. (3) Elements of checks and balances existed in the system. (4) There existed a standing army in the system. (5) The Oba and the council of chiefs meet regularly to discuss governance and the success of the empire. (6) There existed the office of the chief priest who performed rituals to appease gods or conduct traditional ceremonies. (7) There were secret societies such as Ogboni. (8) There were a number of kingdoms in the Yoruba political system, each of which was headed by Obas with distinct titles. For instance, the Oba of Ife kingdom was designated as Ooni; the Oba of the Yoruba kingdom was designated as Alaafin, and so on.

Role of the 'Ogboni' cult in enforcing law and order in traditional Yoruba society

The Ogboni secret cult was part of the checks and balance system of the Yoruba kingdom. They were kingmakers and performed both a religious as well as a judicial function. They also had the power to dethrone the Oba (the king) and could order him to kill himself (or would give him poison). The ethnographic work on their role and function in the 19th and early 20th centuries dates back to the 1930s revealed that they exercised considerable local influence, forming part of the traditional power network to regulate societies and control resources (Abiola, 2019).

Dipo (2020) explained the elements of checks and balances in the Yoruba political system, that the Oba was not an absolute monarch because there existed a number of political institutions carrying out various constitutional public functions which engendered a balance of power. The hierarchy of power in the polity and administration under the monarch performed certain functions which served as significant checks on the Oba's power. For instance, the kingmakers, in conjunction with the Ogboni, can dethrone the Oba by sending him an occult calabash or suicide emblem. The chiefs may stage a boycott by not attending the palace meeting. The provincial governors might revolt or rebel by not paying tribute and homage to the king; they could instigate the occult to send the Oba into exile, if he was found to have acted unconstitutionally. The head of the army must not show up in the empire if they lose a battle. He must commit suicide or exile himself. Consulting the Ifa oracle before major decisions were taken was also an element of checks and balances. Swearing of oaths with occult powers worked to commit individuals to keep their promises or curtail abuse of power.

According to Onadeko (2008), the Ogboni were largely a political organization established for the purpose of maintaining law and order in Yoruba towns. Its political power was extensive. Members often met to settle civil disputes, deal with criminal cases, and discuss general matters that concerned the well-being of the community. They were also the kingmakers who monitored and curbed the excesses of Oba, who might otherwise become tyrannical. Onadeko (2008) explained that the Ogboni constituted the Town Council or the Council of State in the latter part of the 19th century. Its executive body or cabinet consisted of six Ogboni chiefs known as Iwarefa (the just six). They were the Oluwo, Lisa, Aro, Odofin, Iya Abiye (mother), and Apena (the secretary of the cult).

Consequently, what could be considered a court in Yorubaland was the Osugbo/Ogboni council. The Osugbo/Ogboni cult was a fraternity of chiefs and elders that was also the judicial arm of government. It also had a religious character in the symbol of a male and a female brass image known as Edan. Osugbo/Ogboni is the highest cult group in Yorubaland, and it commands the respect and obedience of all. It had officials, titles, and ordered processes of investigation and judgment. Some members of the cult served as investigators. They performed functions similar to that of the Western police force. In the late 19th century, the Ogboni constituted the highest tribunal in Yorubaland. Thus, the Ogboni/Osugbo can be viewed as having served a number of judicial, religious, and political functions, among others, in Yorubaland. Although these functions were performed within the secrecy of their conclave, and it operated as a cult, it was not, in fact, a secret cult because its members and the place and time of meetings were known to all. But non-initiates could not take part in their deliberations.

Although, according to Olasunkanmi (2016), the Yorubas in pre-colonial times believed in the sovereignty of their traditional rulers in their respective domains, they also believed that each Oba (traditional ruler) would ensure that the incidence of any punishment was directly on the offender that is, as a Yoruba proverb puts it, *ika tí ó sè ní o ba n gé*, meaning "The finger that offends is that which the king cuts."

The significance of Ifa in the traditional Yoruba society

Before the advent of colonialism, the Yoruba people had their traditional religious practice that guided people's moral behaviours in society. Olawale (2020) explained that one of the traditional institutions and practices of the Yoruba people is Ifa worship. It is a practice that originated thousands of years ago. It is a very ancient religion of the mysteries and messages of Olodumare revealed to man by Orunmila. Ifa is a system of divination and religion of the Yoruba people. Ifa, as Yoruba religion, is practiced not just among the Yorubas in Nigeria but also throughout West Africa. The Grand Priest of Ifa is known as Orunmila.

The belief is that Orunmila was sent to the earth by Olodumare (the creator of the universe) to bring the Laws of Olodumare into this world. Ifa oracle was founded by Orunmila in Ile-Ife (the city believed to be the source of the Yorubas Orirun Ile Yoruba) after Orunmila had initiated himself and his students Aseda and Akoda. Another mythology suggests that the Ifa religion was brought to Ile-Ife by Setiu, a Nupe man who settled in Ile-Ife. Another history book titled *The History of the Yorubas from the Earliest of Times to the British Protectorate*, written by two Nigerian historians, Obadijah Johnson and Samuel Johnson, tells us that Ifa was introduced to Oyo by Arugba, who was the mother of the 8th Alaafin of Oyo, Onibogi. She initiated the Alado of Ado and gave the rites to initiate others to him. The Alado then initiated priests in Oyo Empire (Olawale, 2020).

According to Shotunde, Okoro, and Azenabor (2016), the nature of the spirit in Ifa is a compendium of knowledge and wisdom. The mystical figure Ifa or Orunmila or Orisa is regarded by the Yorubas as the deity of wisdom and intellectual development. In Ifa, the spirit has primacy but not superiority over matter. The nature of the spirit, in turn, determines how the mind relates to the external world. In Ifa, the external world is not just an appearance but co-exists with spirit. Meer (2017) argued that the traditional Yorùbá Ifá/Òrìṣà practice instils a sense of spiritual discipline, which means that the spirit has knowledge of whatever is happening in the society.

It lays the foundation and confidence that society can achieve whatever they set its mind to achieve. The occurrences, events, and activities are revealed to humans through the elaborate divination process of Ifa. Through Ifa, the role of the diviner (known as Babalawo) is to help an individual or community to see what is in store for them in their day-to-day lives. Ifa plays significant role in exposing and punishing people who engage in evil, crimes, and abominations (taboos) in society. It has the power to know and inform the priest of any taboos committed by any members of the society and expose the person who commits the taboo.

Adedayo (2017) discussed the derivable value of the Ifa oracle as a means of social transformation. While Adedayo lamented that it is quite unfortunate and shocking to realise that the moral values that are derived from Ifa that were of great benefit and importance in those days are no longer being valued, especially on the issues of 'Eewo' - taboos due to factors like western education, modernity, and foreign religions, among other.

Interestingly, Akanle and Adejare (2015) explained that traditional Yoruba religious were full of religious doctrines that forbade tyrannical leadership, corruption, and oppression. For instance, rituals were performed at certain intervals to either celebrate or appease these deities. Generally, in leadership

terms, the gods of traditional Yoruba religions were also mechanisms against bad leadership in society. Hence, most leaders were forced to rule because of the fear of the gods, who may kill them or strike them with strange diseases if they ruled against the interest of the people/subjects. This is why there has been agitation in many traditional quarters that current political leaders should be sworn into office through traditional processes like swearing with guns, cutlasses, charms, and the god of thunder.

The efficacy of 'Eewo' in the Yoruba Traditional Society

Adedayo (2017) explained that 'Eewo' - taboo is a custom or religious custom that does not allow or prevent people from doing certain things or talk about something in a particular way. The tendency that human beings can do certain things that society does not like calls for such prohibitions called 'Eewo.' Afe (2013:105) confirmed that some taboos were devised significantly to prohibit or control crimes against humanity and community properties in order to promote the economy and productivity at personal and communal levels. Among these was the cutting of forbidden trees without the permission of the leadership of the community. It was a belief of the people that some trees were sacred that the divinities or gods acquired them. So, if those trees were to be cut down, they believed that libations must be poured out to appease the spirits of the gods. Anybody who cut a sacred tree without appeasement would bring calamity to the community, most especially drought that would eventually snowball into low economy productivity and sicknesses.

Also, stealing community properties, destroying and farming in the grove and sacred bushes, and eating totem animals such as tortoises, parrots, eagles, sacred fish, and so on were forbidden. All these were viewed as taboos, a violation of which they believed would affect the economic growth of the community. However, most of what formed part of our culture such as one, that an elder brother or sister should not inherit the properties of his or her younger ones; two, that one must not be rude to the elders; and three, that husbands should not maltreat their wives, these could be regarded as taboos, for enduring peace, understanding and unity among the people.

However, taboos enabled people to be careful not to offend the gods and do something that could bring the name of the family and the community to disrepute. To break a taboo, according to Aderibigbe (1993), is to bring disorder not only to oneself but the whole community, which may entail several penalties. Taboos are also important to the Africans in the sense that they inculcate spirituals and more values which are the hallmark of Yoruba religion. Their observance goes a long way in promoting the needed sense of mutual responsibilities and communalism on which the Yoruba culture and religion are solidly built.

As Adedayo (2017) explains, to a certain level, Africans, and, in particular, the Yorubas, generally make use of taboos to teach the younger ones different manner of behaviours at home, outside the home, in the society or country, and in religious worships. 'Eewo' originated as a result of some factors: One, as result of the fact that human beings have the tendency to misbehave in society, as said earlier. Two, in the olden days, there was no form of writing; therefore, the elders then devised some means to imprint some rules into the heart of the Youths. One such means is the use of taboos to evade people from doing bad things that society frowns at. Thus, to certain levels, taboos are unwritten laws that are useful to guide conduct, especially youths, from going against the wish of society. Three, taboos can be linked to the modern day police force. Once elders imprint taboos on the youths repeatedly, and this impression is established, it becomes an invisible police officer that would be guiding the youths to maturity.

According to Adedayo (2017), the explanation made above reflects the social aspect of taboo with no serious consequence, but the other type of taboo, which is the religious taboos, always has serious consequences, particularly those related to Ifa Divination as highlighted below:

<i>Yoruba Taboos</i>	English meaning and implication
	This is based on the cultural condition that,
<i>Bomode kan njeewo</i>	If a child eats what is forbidden.
<i>Benikan o bii</i>	Even though nobody cautions the child.
<i>To ba pe titi ti</i>	No matter how long it might take.
<i>Oun ti yo bini a ma bini</i>	What will ask the child, will ask.
<i>Eewo a si beere</i>	Taboo will ask

The Yoruba religious taboos are to ensure that the conduct of societal members aligns with legal norms and standards. It is a traditional belief system that helps to produce omoluwabi in the traditional Yoruba society. That is moral, sound, and upright persons (Akanbi and Jekayinfa, 2016). Akanbi and Jekayinfa (2016) examined how some of those virtues that make an 'Omoluabi' got gradually deemphasised as western education spread while other practically 'strange' ones are being emphasised, especially as technology advances and how this neglect, in part, is responsible for various challenges facing Africa, especially Nigeria; such as ethnic and religious violence, terrorism, kidnapping, rape, political mugging, corruption and other social vices which are making education irrelevant in terms of moral values. Akanbi and Jekayinfa advocated in their writings that 'Omoluabi' stands for moral, sound, and upright persons and also as the standard which determines the morality and the immorality of an act in Yoruba society and recommends that values held in high esteem as a Nation should be spelt out and encouraged to be internalized by students, and teachers should be role models.

Punishment of Offenders in the traditional Yoruba society

In the traditional Yoruba society, the institution of punishment is very important, and its central purpose is to reduce or avoid crime in the society. Offender is the person who has broken the laws, customs, and traditions of society. In bringing punishment to bear on the offenders, it is assumed that the offenders are well-grounded and well-educated in the laws, customs, traditions, and taboos of the society (Oduwale, 2011).

However, breaking the law is not the only criterion for punishment; there are other things to consider. Punishment in Yoruba society also assumes that one is a rational human being that has a choice of action(s) and can be held responsible for this choice of action. Man is expected to be morally responsible for an action which he has control over. So, Punishment is meted out on people who broke the law and can be held responsible for their actions. In other words, there must be a law, whether moral, legal, religious, or social, to which offenders must violate. Laws and punishments are made available through town criers, so ignorance is not an excuse in law (Olaoba, 2002).

It may be necessary to ask where we place imbeciles, idiots, and madmen. Oduwale (2011), in discussing moral values among the Yorubas, asserts that: Every human being who is not clearly an imbecile has knowledge of right and wrong... everyone knows that right is not the same thing as wrong. Thus we may argue that imbeciles, mad people, the insane or mentally ill, that is, people who have lost their rationality fully or partially, are not in control of their actions and do not belong to the category of those who can be punished. Only those who have broken the law.

Olasunkanmi (2016), who interrogated capital punishment in the indigenous Yoruba African culture in Nigeria, explained that in Yoruba society, the nature of the offence is proportional to the type of punishment meted out to the offender without discrimination or favouritism. "Obviously, in management of crimes in Yoruba traditional society, no offender escapes punishment in Yoruba society while this is true, no one was made a scapegoat for the offence he has not committed; doing so amounts to incurring the wrath of the ancestors". The traditional Yoruba society classifies crime into two: social and spiritual crimes. Social crimes include; adultery, fighting, lying, stealing, ego-centrism, and many more. Spiritual crimes have to do with individual relationships with the unseen, i.e., gods and goddesses. It is an invitation to the wrath of both the gods and goddesses. And the consequences are often visited on the individuals as well as the entire community. Spiritual crimes include; incest, murder, suicide, killing sacred animals, unmasking the masquerade, speaking evil of elders, and so on. These are viewed with more seriousness than social crimes among the Yorubas because their commission is believed to have serious consequences on the entire community.

However, this work did not address how social crimes such as corruption, stealing, or bribery are handled traditionally but can be handled spiritually as well, as Akindele et al. (2020) acknowledged due to the regulatory power of communal spirit to exposes both spiritual and social crimes, it was hard to find leaders in the traditional Yoruba society, engaging in corrupt practices, citizen are also careful as both leaders and their citizen knew that the gods or the 'spirit' will expose them and death punishment would follow.

Ojo (2014) explains the efficacy of Ayelala, a popular deity, in exposing and punishing offenders of law and order when invoked. He describes Ayelala as a powerful and widely respected goddess. Ikale and Ilaje people worship Ayelala in Ondo State, but it is a deity that is widely worshiped by Yoruba people. The deity is considered to have an extensive uninterrupted power in the traditional administration of social justice. Ayelala is capable of exposing both spiritual and social crimes. Ayelala is a powerful and widely respected goddess because of her capacity, and wizards caught up in the clutches of Ayelala are known to confess their sins in the open.

Njokede (2010) exemplifies that Ayelala could be invoked to unravel the cause of diabolical cause of mysteries as he revealed that in 2005, when the Oba market in Benin city went up in flames, many shops not affected by the fire were emptied by looters. That when the service of Ayelala was employed, the announcement was made that the looters should return the goods they had stolen or face the wrath of Ayelala. The goods earlier carted away resurfaced in the market the following day. Those that refused to return the goods were killed by Ayelala. Ayelala infests thieves and trespassers with a disease that causes terrible swelling of the body. The offender would not get any relief until he confesses and brings back all items stolen. Ayelala was a time placed in some Yoruba indigenous compounds and farms.

Oviasuyi *et al.* (2011) confirmed that Ayelala could be invoked to sanction an oath made between two parties. Oath-taking in the traditional sense is a condition where total loyalty or adherence to certain agreements and conditionality is prescribed and administered to the beneficiaries of the agreement. Oath-taking is usually done at the Ayelala's shrine, and anyone who has taken such an oath will not escape the punishment or sanction if the oath is broken. To invoke the Ayelala deity, Larr (2013) added that there must be a cock duck, white cloth, seven needles, seven parrot feathers, seven alligator peppers, and seven native chalks. All these ingredients will be concealed in the stomach of the cock or duck and wrapped with white cloth. The cock will be eventually soaked in the Ayelala water, and a curse will be pronounced on the evil-doer. When the evil-doer is caught by the deity, he or she will swell as the cock or duck swells in the water.

Moreover, According to Adebawale *et al.* (2014), the Yorubas concretely believed that idols were regarded as representatives of God on earth. Idols were sent on to God by the people whenever they wanted something tangible from Him. The deities were much closed to the people, contacting each other every day by day. They served as intermediaries between God and men, as a result of the fact that the Yorubas believed deities are known as the servants of God. There are various idols functioning in Yoruba land, such as Ogun, Sango, Orunmila, and Obatala, among others, having their various roles, worshippers, location, time of worship, and so on, for purposes of obtaining favour. Every worshipper believed that idols were greater than them. Nevertheless, they believed as well that the supreme God is greater than both of them (Adebawale *et al.*, 2014).

Few of these idols and their roles shall briefly be elucidated one after the others.

1. Ogun

Ogun is regarded as the head among the deities of the Yorubas. It is generally accepted in Yoruba land as a result of being the owner of the iron, used by the people for manufacturing all instruments of agricultural jobs, welders, and other activities concerning iron. The Yorubas believed that Ogun (god of iron) hate sworn of deceit and gossiping. Likewise, he is not interested in unfaithfulness and other corrupt attitudes. These are the reasons why his worshipers are singing that:

Ogun rinu:	god of iron sees man's heart
Bi mo ba seke:	If I'm lying
Bi mo ba dale:	If I rebel
Ogun rinu:	god of iron sees man's heart.

Meaning that if people rebel against one another, the god of iron sees his heart, and such a person would be instantaneously punished (Adebowale, *et al.*, 2014).

Moreover, the Yorubas believed that he that does what the god of iron (Ogun) hated, would see his wrath. People, therefore, consequently refuses to use (Ogun) god of iron to date, for making an oath, so that they would not encounter his wrath. Showing that the believe of the Yorubas that Ogun will judge whosoever disobeys his taboo remains unchanged in our current civilised society. As a result of this, the Yorubas always says that:

If the little child rebel	Bomode dale,
He should not rebel against the god of iron	Ko mase dale Ogun,
the god of iron, had a taboo.	Ogun leewo.

The interpretation of these is that if anybody rebels against another person, he should not demonstrate such a rebellious attitude against the god of iron. Otherwise, instantaneous judgement would be unleashed on him (Adebowale *et al.*, 2014).

ii. Sango

Sango is one of the deities, an important god in Yoruba land. As we have heard in history, he was a human being at the initial stage before making him an idol after his death. We heard that he was the fourth Alaafin of Oyo Ile. He was a hero and warrior as well. We also heard that his power of administration expanded to Benin, Popo, and Dahomin areas, currently known as Benin-Republic. He had a multitude of charms to the extent that fire would be coming out of his mouth while speaking. It was recorded that he had a charm he was using to draw the attention of thunder on the house of his enemies. Sango did not love stealing at all. Therefore, if anything got lost in the society and if people contacted Sango to search it out, it would be quickly found. The Yorubas believed that Sango would kill the person that stole it and put what he stole on his chest. In those days, things like these were accommodated.

However, we do not any longer contact Sango again to search out anything that gets lost as a result of policemen and other modern security agencies due to the fact that it is not constitutionally permitted in our current civilized society. Therefore, if peradventure, these Yoruba cultural traditional values and religious can be adopted in our contemporary society, corruption would be totally eradicated (Adebowale *et al.* 2014).

Finally, in traditional Yoruba settings, cleansing ceremonies are performed by the deceased's family so that such an evil will not happen again. The elders would offer sacrifices for peace in the land and for the extinction of such murderous thoughts from the land. It is seen as the most evil thing that can happen to a person. However, just as law is referred to as *ofin* in the Yoruba etymological model, "Ijiya" is the Yoruba translation of punishment. The intentional infliction of pains or deprivation on an offender, according to the Yorubas, is premised on the saying that "Ilu ti o si ofin, ese o si nibe" meaning "any society without laws, ceases to have the notion of sin," a sine-qua-non to punishment. Law in traditional Yoruba society are norms agreed upon by the people, and this has been transferred from generation to generation, so a typical Yoruba man or woman knows that any attempt by anybody to contravene the laid down laws and ethics would be sanctioned (Olasunkanmi, 2016).

Punishment, which involves the infliction of pain or deprivation on an offender based on the wrongfulness of his action, is a machinery for facilitating the collective conscience of the Yoruba through frowning at the impropriety of manners, which are capable of being inimical to the developments of legal norms and disrupting the social equilibrium. If Ijiya (punishment) is understood in this sense, then it is meted out only to offenders or criminals who have breached the law and certainly not to the innocent. Confirming the saying by the Yorubas, 'elese kan ko ni lo lai jiya', meaning no offender shall go unpunished (Olasunkanmi, 2016). How the traditional cultural institutions of the Yorubas can serve as a paradigm for eradicating corruption in Nigeria is of paramount interest in this study therefore, subsequent related literature is reviewed on corruption to identify the gap in literature, which add empirical value to this study.

Literature Review on Corruption in Nigeria

Hoffmann and Patel (2017) explained that corruption is a destructive and complex practice openly acknowledged in Nigeria, yet it remains ever-present in the functioning of society and economic life as the acts of diversion of federal and state revenue, business and investment capital, and foreign aid, as well as the personal incomes of Nigerian citizens, contribute to a hollowing out of the country's public institutions and the degradation of basic services in Nigeria. Hoffmann and Patel revealed that close to \$400 billion was stolen from Nigeria's public accounts from 1960 to 1999 and that between 2005

and 2014, some \$182 billion was lost through illicit financial flows from the country. Hoffmann and Patel (2017) state that ongoing anti-corruption efforts in Nigeria must now be reinforced by a systematic understanding of why people engage in or refrain from corrupt activity and full consideration of the societal factors that may contribute to normalizing corrupt behaviour and desensitizing citizens to its impacts. This holistic approach would better position public institutions to engage Nigerian society in anti-corruption efforts.

Mustapha (2010) identified the implication of 'corruption' within the prism of the Nigerian political culture. Whilst acknowledging the importance of the 'grand narrative' in the conceptual interpretation of the term and as going beyond the state-centric analysis by invoking 'spoilization of the system' approach to explain how informalized nature of corruption and other acts of societal impropriety such as financial fraud tagged '419', 'oil bunkering' etc. operating at the micro and indeed an unofficial level of the state impact negatively on state-society relations. He examined the manifestations of the 'spoilization of the system'. He explored the neglected conceptual relevance and context peculiarities that fit into the dynamics of unofficial corruption of the state as an additional discourse to the on-going debate on corruption in the Nigerian state.

Importantly, Akanji (2017) examined the interface between the national culture and the realities of corruption in Nigeria using qualitative design to explore the 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 value, patriarchy, and collectivist practices as influencing levels of corruption that are adversely affecting the nation's economy and human development. The work 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.

Theoretical Framework

Primordial theory was adopted as an explanatory theory of this research work. This research is hinged on primordial theory as exposed philosophically by the ideas of German Romanticism, particularly in the work of Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Johann Gottfried Herder cited in (Lattin, 1998). The primordial theory is suitable for this work because of the havoc or destruction corruption have caused to Nigerian development. Philip and Moses (2013) identified that problems of corruption in Nigeria seem to have nurtured wide spread poverty and low human development indices, which may have inspired the recent nationwide protest and ethnocentric agitations for self-governance due to the distrust towards the government (Philip and Moses, 2013). Dominique, (2002) cited in Primordialism, (w.en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki), that for Herder, the nation was synonymous with thought, and as each language was learnt in the community, then each community must think differently (Dominique, 2002).

Primordial theory is a systemic approach or study that emphasizes the bedrock of morality, which the citizens displays while demonstrating their communal obligations in order to enhance the developmental projects of their immediate communities (Ekeh, 1975). Under the concept of primordialism, citizens derives little or no material benefits, but to which they are expected to give generously and materially (Ekeh, 1975). People generally relates among themselves within the templates of brotherhood and togetherness without welcoming stinginess while advancing the courses of their areas. Citizens make themselves available always to render one another assistance concretely, irrespective of their tribes, religions, and traditions.

Yoruba, as one of the three major ethnic groups that produced Nigeria, and cut across the western country that consists of Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Ogun, Lagos, and Ekiti, respectively is considered as a cultural setting, where people cherish their past through the influence of primordial theory in order to keep their indigenous culture intact. The bottom line within the purview of primordial theory is morality (Ekeh, 1975) which is highly embraced by the Yoruba cultural setting, with a high sense of appreciating their cultural heritage and repudiating corrupt attitudes. For instance, one of the deities among the Yorubas (known as Sango) did not love stealing. If anything get lost in the society and if people contact Sango to search it out, it would be quickly found. The Yorubas believed that Sango would kill the person that stole it and put what he stole on his chest in those days (Adebowale *et al.*, 2014).

A good citizen of the community gives out willingly and deliberately; however, asks for nothing in return. Corruption was almost absent in the primordial public. However, diligence and commitment to duty were fundamental and inseparable (Ekeh, 1975). According to Ekeh (1975), strange is the Nigerian who demands bribes from individuals or who engages in embezzlement in the performance of his duties to his primordial public. Africans are extremely hardworking in the primordial public (Ekeh, 1975). The doctrine of primordialism in Yoruba land does not accommodate ravaging corruption that tailors along with excessive love of money, which has intoxicated Nigerian political and public officials to embark on the diversion of public funds for private use, monetization of politics that produces buying and selling of vote, election rigging, among others.

Primordialism is the idea that nations or ethnic identities are fixed, natural and ancient. According to Jack, Brian, and Archie (2003), cited in Primordialism (w.en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki), that individual has a single ethnic identity that is not subject to change and which is exogenous to the historical process. Consequently, the theory helps us to understand how Nigerian citizens will be strongly united by accommodating generosity, assistance to one another, and other moral behaviours, irrespective of tribes, religions, and traditions. Nevertheless, Dominique (2002) posited that primordialism encountered enormous criticism after the second world war, with many scholars of nationalism coming to treat the nation as a community constructed by the technology and politics of modernization (Dominique, 2002). Nigerian society had been transformed from an ancient style to a modern system that produced modernization/civilization as a result of the rapid development of technology, which jeopardized the ancient traditions.

In conclusion, the recognition we give to the two major religious known as Christianity and Islam can also be given to the traditional deities by accommodating them as instruments for taking an oath of office while swearing in the Nigeria political and public officials. This will go a long way in eradicating corruption in our society.

Population of the Study

The population of this work are the traditional rulers, i.e., the (Obas and Chiefs) as well as othepulation clusters including market women, civil servants, security agencies, artisans (e.g., carpenters, bricklayers, tailors, etc.), farmers and other unskilled laborers within the Ondo State

Sample Techniques and Sample Size

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic society having 36 different states or regions with their various geo-political zones in which the south-west region is included. The south-western part of Nigeria comprises six states, namely: Ondo, Lagos, Osun, Oyo, Ogun, and Ekiti, respectively. As far as this research work is concerned, Ondo State was selected as a case study that produced eighteen local governments. Moreover, three different senatorial districts were brought about, which include: Ondo South, Ondo North, and Ondo Central. However, this research was highly centred on Ondo North and Ondo Central senatorial districts.

There are prominent Obas dominating Ondo North and Ondo Central. Ondo North comprises 18 kings, while Ondo central comprises 12 Obas with their subordinates known as the chiefs, performing their traditional collective responsibilities aimed at moving their territories forward.

The lottery method was used to determine who was to be part of the sample frame. In using this method, 10 Obas, 10 chiefs, 10 market women, 10 civil servants, 10 Ifa worshippers, 10 artisans (e.g., tailors, bricklayers, furniture, etc.), 10 security agencies and 5 farmers were selected from the senatorial district of Ondo North and Ondo Central of Ondo State respectively. Which means 75 samples each from the two Ondo North and Ondo Central. Therefore, a total of 150 sample sizes were selected for this study.

Moreover, focus group discussion/interview was carried out with Obas, the Chiefs, Traditional Priests (Babalawo), and Ifa Worshipers as well across the Ondo North and Ondo Central Senatorial Districts of Ondo State, which provided insight into how some of the traditional cultural institutions and ethnographical values were harnessed to eradicate corruption in Nigeria

Methods of Data Collection

Researcher critically examined official documents, textbooks, journals and engaged on focus group discussion, known as the qualitative method of data collection. During the focus group discussion, questionnaire was used, which enabled the researcher to generate details opinions in connection with this study. Therefore, all questions were clearly stated closed-endedly.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected using a questionnaire was analyzed electronically. The result from the electronic analysis was thematically presented, which showed the position of the respondents, the statistical mean, the standard deviation, and the discussion in line with the research questions. The data derived from the focus group was used to support the discussion in this study

Field work

Demographic Data of Respondents

Table 1: Sex Distribution of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	102	68.0
Female	48	32.0
Total	150	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 1 shows the sex distribution of the respondents. The table shows that 102(68.0%) of the respondents were male, and 48 representing 32.0%, were female. This result showed that more of the respondents were male.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Residence

Residence	Frequency	Percentage
Ondo North	55	36.7
Ondo Central	95	63.3
Total	150	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 2 shows the distribution of the respondents by residence. The table shows that 55, which represent (36.7%) of the respondents, were residents in Ondo North, while the remaining 95(63.3%) were residents of the Ondo central, which implies that members of the population from these selected areas for the study are well represented, but more are from the Ondo Central.

Table 3: Harnessing Yoruba's traditional deities (Ogun, Sango, Ayelala, etc.) is good as instrument of the oath of office for Nigerian political leaders.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	10	6.7	6.7	6.7
	Disagreed	0	0.0	0.0	6.7
	Undecided	20	13.3	13.3	20.0
	Agreed	100	66.7	66.7	86.7
	Strongly Agreed	20	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2025

From Table 3, it shows that out of the 150 respondents, 10(6.7%) of them strongly disagreed, and 0(0.0%) also disagreed that harnessing Yoruba traditional deities (Ogun, Sango, Ayelala, etc.) is good as instruments of the oath of office for Nigerian political leaders. While 20(13.3%) were undecided, 100(66.7%) agreed and 20(13.3%) strongly agreed with the position. This result shows 66.7% agreed and 13.3% strongly agreed with the position, which is equal to 80.0%, implying the opinion that harnessing Yoruba traditional deities is good as instruments of the oath of office for Nigerian political leaders among respondents is high. This finding shows that 80.0% were of the opinion that harnessing Yoruba traditional deities is good as instrument of the oath of office for Nigerian political leaders. Adebowale, *et al.*, (2014) believed that using Ogun, Sango among others, is good as instruments of the oath of office for Nigerian political leaders aimed at eradicating corruption in Nigeria.

Table 4: Traditional cultural values of the Yorubas can be harnessed to eradicate corruption in contemporary Nigerian State.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	8	5.3	5.3	5.3
	Disagreed	0	0.0	0.0	5.3
	Undecided	22	14.7	14.7	20.0
	Agreed	60	40.0	40.0	60.0
	Strongly Agreed	60	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2025

From Table 4 it shows that out of the 150 respondents, 8(5.3%) of them strongly disagreed, 0(0.0%) disagreed respectively that the traditional cultural values of the Yorubas can be harnessed to eradicate corruption in the contemporary Nigerian state. 22(14.7%) were undecided, but 60(40.0%) agreed, while 60(40.0%) strongly agreed with the position. This result shows 40% agreed and 40% strongly agreed with the position, which is equal to 80%, implying that opinions that the traditional cultural values of the Yorubas can be harnessed to eradicate corruption in the contemporary Nigerian state is high. The findings show 80% were of the opinion that the traditional cultural values of the Yorubas can be harnessed to eradicate corruption in the contemporary Nigerian State

Table 5: The Oyomesi (Kingsmakers) traditional power that ordered the kings to commit suicide, if it is arbitrary in Yoruba land, can be utilised to eradicate corruption in the contemporary Nigerian State.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	10	6.7	6.7	6.7
	Disagreed	0	0.0	0.0	6.7
	Undecided	30	20.0	20.0	26.7
	Agreed	80	53.3	53.3	80.0

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agreed	30	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2025

From Table 5 it shows that out of the 150 respondents, 10(6.7%) of them strongly disagreed, 0(0.0%) disagreed that the Oyomesi/ Kingsmaker's traditional power that ordered the kings to commit suicide if is arbitrary in Yoruba land can be utilised to eradicate corruption in the contemporary Nigerian state. But 30(20.0%) were undecided, while 80(53.3%) agreed and 30(20.0%) strongly agreed with the position. This result shows 53.3% agreed and 20% strongly agreed with the position, which is equals to 73.3%, implying that support for the Oyomesi/Kings-maker's traditional power that ordered the kings to commit suicide if is arbitrary in Yoruba land can be utilised to eradicate corruption in contemporary Nigerian state is high. The findings show that 73.3% accepted that the Oyomesi/Kingsmaker's traditional power that ordered the Kings to commit suicide if it is arbitrary in Yoruba land, can be utilised to eradicate corruption in the contemporary Nigerian State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINS

Findings shows that the Yoruba's cultural intuitions/values can be harnessed to eradicate corruption in the contemporary Nigerian State, which implies that the traditional cultural values of the Yorubas, such as the Oyomesi (Kingsmakers) traditional power that ordered the Kings to commit suicide if is arbitrary in Yoruba land can be utilized to eradicate corruption in contemporary Nigerian state; Ifa traditional effective power of knowing, exposing and punishing people who engage in crimes and taboos/abomination among the Yorubas; Ayelala and its effective power that exposes and punishes offenders who commit social and economic crime among the Yorubas; Ayelala, cutlasses, guns, Sango and thunder as instruments for an oath of office can all be harnessed to eradicate corrupt practises in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Research findings shows that the effectiveness of Yorubas' traditional cultural valued powers or spirits or gods such as; Ayelala, Guns, Sango, Ogun, Ifa, and Thunder, among others, can be harnessed as instruments to remove corrupt activities in Nigeria. This is married to the evident that predictably, these cultural institutions, valued powers of deities, can efficiently order Nigerian leaders ruling arbitrarily to commit suicide when adopted; expose and punish corrupt political appointee/heads who commit a social crime; eradicate corrupt attitude in Nigeria when used as instruments or procedure for the oath of office; can remove judgments perversion and social indiscipline; can abolish misappropriation of public finance in Nigeria; can obliterate unconstitutional use of power for individual enrichment in Nigeria; can annihilate manipulations, and outright stealing of Nigeria properties; can eradicate the use of federal resources by political office holders to enrich ethnic/party loyalties in Nigeria and promote accountability, transparency and moral adherence to anti-corruption values in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on findings, the following are suggested if the traditional cultural values must be able to eliminate corruption in Nigeria societies.

1. There is a need for constitutional review to also accommodate and recognize the values that the traditional cultural instruments demonstrated for the progress and posterity of Nigeria to be secured.
2. There should be a merged of the traditional cultural values of various ethnic segments across Nigeria as this will limit ethnic bias from impeding the application and enjoying a corruption-free-political system in Nigeria.

REFERENCES

- Njokede, S. (2010). Ayelala: God Killed Looters of Oba Market Fire in Benin City. www.sharereporters.com.
- Oduwale, E. O, (2011). Punishment as a form of legal order in an African society. *International Research Journals Review*. <https://www.interesjournals.org/articles/punishment-as-a-form-of-legal-order-in-an-african-society.pdf>.
- Ojo, M.O.D. (2014). Incorporation of Ayelala traditional religion into Nigerian criminal justice system: An opinion survey of Igbesa community people in Ogun State, Nigeria. *Issues in Ethnology and Anthropology*, Vol. 9(4) (2014). 1-20.
- Okolo, P. O. and Raymond, A. O. (2014). Corruption in Nigeria: The Possible Way Out. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science and Political Science*, Volume 14 Issue 7 Version 1.0. https://globaljournals.org/GJHSS_Volume14/4-Corruption-in-Nigeria-The-Possible.pdf.
- Okorie, H. (2018) Evaluation of the Effects of Corruption in the Armed Conflict in Northeast and other Situations of Violence in Nigeria. *Beijing Law Review*, 9,623-660.doi: 10.4236/b/r.2018.95036.

Olaoba, O. B. (2002). Yoruba Legal Culture Ibadan: FOP Press.

Olasunkanmi A. (2016). Interrogating Capital Punishment and Indigenous Yoruba African Culture. *International Journal of History and Philosophical Research*, 4(2), 23-29. <https://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Interrogating-Capital-unishment-and-Indigenous-Yoruba-African-Culture.pdf>

Olawale, J. (2020) Yoruba religion Ifa history and interesting facts. Monday, July 27. <https://www.legit.ng/1176322-yoruba-religion-ifa-history-interesting-facts.html>

Oloja, M. (2002), "How Civil Servants Engage in Corruption by Experts", The Guardian Online, April 12.

Omotola, J. S. (2006). "Through a Glass Darkly". Assessing the New War against Corruption in Nigeria, *African Insight*, Vol. 36 (3-4), pp. 214-229.

Onadeko, T. (2008). Yoruba Traditional Adjudicatory Systems. *African Study Monographs*, 29(1): 15-28. https://repository.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2433/66225/1/ASM_29_15.pdf

Otite, O. (1986). "On the Sociological Study of Corruption" in Odekunle, F (ed.) Nigeria: *Corruption in Development*, Ibadan, Ibadan University Press.

Oviasuyi, P.O., Ajagun, S.O. and Lawrence I. (2011). Fetish Oath Taking in Nigerian Politics and Administration: Bane of Development. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 27(3): 193-200.

Page, M.T. (2018). A New Taxonomy for Corruption in Nigeria. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, July 17 Paper*, 1-110. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/07/17/new-taxonomy-for-corruption-in-nigeria-pub-76811>

Shotunde, A. Okoro, C. & Azenabor, G. (2016). An Analysis of the Nature of Spirit in Ifa Literary Corpus. *A Journal of African Studies* 8: 2 December 2016, 77-107. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf>

Spencer, O.H. (2008). Culturally Speaking, Culture, Communication, and Politeness theory, 2nd (ed.) London. Continuum, U.K/New York.

Tylor, E.B. (1871). *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Eds.) by Brian Vincent Street, 1-16. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Edward-Burnett-Tylor>

Ukamaka, M.J. (2010). The Role and Challenges of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Enhancing Prudent Financial Management in Nigeria: The Case of ICPC and EFCC. *Master Research Thesis*. <https://oer.unn.edu.ng/read/the-role-and-challenges-of-anti-corruption-agencies-in-enhancing-prudent-financial-management-in-nigeria-the-case-of-icpc-and-efcc/file.doc>.

Waziri, F. (2010): In corruption and Governance challenges in Nigeria Conference proceedings, CLEEN Foundation, Monographi series, No 7, Abuja: CLEEN foundation.

Yeganah, H. (2014) Culture and Corruption: A concurrent Application of Hofstede's, Schwartz's and Inglehant's framework. *International Journal of Development Issues*, 13 (1): 2 – 24.