

The Concept of Omoluabi and Political Development in Nigeria: The Missing Gap

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Abstract: This paper examines political leaders from the perspectives of Omoluabi (individual with good virtue) due to the level of corruption and abuses of offices among political leaders in the country. The study adopted the use of survey questionnaire based on Omoluabi perspective and political leaders in the country, data were collected from individuals at newspaper vendor stands. The findings include the following; Omoluabi is highly important to political development in Nigeria, majorly, voters contribute to the corrupt practices that political leaders exhibit. This implies that citizenry have roles to play in curbing the corruption among political leaders in the country by electing good people (Omoluabi). The study finds out that the role of citizenry encourages corruption among political leaders by selling their votes. The study recommends that citizens should use their vote as their right in electing good leaders for the country instead of selling their votes. Non-governmental organisation as well as concerned organisation should embark on sensitization programme to educate the citizenry on the use of their vote as their power to choose rightful leaders for peaceful and corruption free society.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria as a country remained stagnant as a developing country despite her witnessed of different forms of political rules (military and democracy). The country stagnation has been reported to be in tandem between corruption and bad leadership in the country. Corruption according to CLEEN, (2010) is being described as self-inflicted monster that summits, conferences, seminars, workshops and even prayers are being organised for but yielded poor result. This shows that despites the country's independence since 1960s, she is struggling to ensure national development.

The definition of The United Nations Global Programme against Corruption (GPAC) on corruption which defines it as "abuse of power for private gain" it can be deduced that corruption has to do with leaders. Nigeria is a country blessed with natural resources unlike many other countries yet she is still witnessing rising tide of poverty, decaying public utilities and infrastructures, social tensions and political turmoil, and now, premonition of inevitable drive into conflict and violence. This is the reason why researchers (Joseph, Taylor, Agbaje, 1996; Kew, 2006) as an "unfinished state" and "a truculent African tragedy" because they recognised abundant human and material resources the country is endowed with yet she is propelling in the vicious cycle of poverty and autocracy.

The term corruption is not new in Nigeria, Owolabi (2007) states that corruption had been a reality in Nigeria since the colonial era, when Nigerians were appointed by the colonial lords in prosecution of the indirect rule of the colonialists, the appointees grossly abused their offices by involving themselves in all manner of corrupt practices. He further states that upon the independence of Nigeria in 1960, the national leaders of the country also engaged in large-scale corrupt practices such as the use of money to buy votes and financial misappropriation. The concept of good governance is missing in Nigeria political development. The concept of good governance According to Adeosun (2012) entails the capacity to manage a country's resources in a transparent, accountable, equitable manner, in response to the needs of the people. Hence the concept is synonymous with the term Omoluabi.

The concept of *Omoluabi* in Yoruba conception means *Omo-ti-Olu(wa)-bi*, literally meaning: a-child-borne-by-God. It is believed among Yorubas that whatever *Oluwa* (God) does, is good. It is therefore generally held that any child brought forth by *Oluwa* (God) must be good. Hence, *Omoluabi* is totally different from the others, they are often subjected to public scrutiny; the kind which other people are not subjected to. Political leaders in Nigeria has lost the traits of *Omoluabi* as Sklar, Ebere and Darren (2006) submit, Nigeria's political elites "vie for power and control over the vast spoils of office". Adenugba (2013) suggested criterion for good governance as "managerial and organizational efficiency, accountability, legitimacy, and responsiveness to the

public, transparency in decision-making and pluralism in policy options and choices". It can be submitted that this has long been missing in Nigeria political system.

In the light of the foregoing clarifications, the paper is organized into sections which covers the introduction which provides some background reflections on the subject matter, review of related studies, theoretical framework, methodology of study, discussion of findings and the conclusion and recommendations respectively. The paper examines the influence of the concept of *Omoluabi* and corruption among political leaders and political development in Nigeria. The major objective of the paper is to reflect critically on the concept of *Omoluabi* and political development in the context of curbing corruption among political leaders in Nigeria. The specific objectives are: (i) to examine political corruption among leaders in Nigeria, (ii) examine the influence of godfatherism on corruption among political leaders in Nigeria (iii) examine voters contribution to corruptions among political leaders (iv) to examine the concept of *omoluabi* and political development in Nigeria. Three (3) research questions and one (1) hypothesis were raised answered and tested for the study.

II. REVIEW OF RELEVANT STUDIES

The Concept of "Omoluabi": What is it?

The concept of *Omoluabi* is one of Yoruba Ideology and thought moralistic which says much about personality of an individual. Mohammed (2014) submitted that the Yoruba believe in proper human conduct which is captured in their notion of "*Omoluabi*" (the morally upright one). He further submitted that this notion of proper human conduct among the Yoruba is articulated in *ewà-inú*. In Yoruba cosmology, *ewà-inú* is a notion of beauty that transcends the physical; it emphasizes the character and conduct of an individual. This Yoruba philosophy is given force in Yoruba oral traditions, proverbs inclusive, in view of its importance. Coker and Coker (2008) submit that Yoruba proverbs are replete in philosophy and cultural ethics. The concept of *Omoluabi* describes the attitude and character of the bearer, it portrays the kind of the person the bearer is.

Akanibi and Jekayinfa (2016) submitted that the concept of '*Omoluabi*' is the standard which determines the morality and the immorality of an act in Yoruba society in Africa. They went further to submit that this concept is not new among Yoruba, given example that in the olden days, you could advertise your goods for sale by the road side without being there, all you needed to do was just to place a sample price on top or beside the goods, and nobody dared steal it or take it without pay. This example actually explains the existence of this concept among Yoruba people in the olden days.

Akanibi and Jekayinfa (2016) states the attributes of '*Omoluabi*' quoting Majasan (1958) and Oyerinde (1991) to include: "...

- respect for old age, loyalty to one's parents and local traditions,
- honesty in all public and private dealings,
- sociability,
- courage and itching desire for work and many other qualities necessary for keeping together the large centers of population, characteristic of Yoruba people".

In essence, before anybody or an individual could be refer to as *Omoluabi*, the person must possess some traits of virtuous, loving, caring and kind. An *Omoluabi* person most always be concerned about people than himself/herself, that is why people refer to *Omoluabi* as a different individual.

State of Politics in Nigeria

Nigeria's three-tier system of government – federal, state and local government areas (LGA) – was born out of military rule. At independence in 1960, Nigeria had elected governments in its three regions – northern, western and eastern – and at federal level. The country is beveled with abundant of human and natural resources but lack element of good governance most especially after the fourth republic. Evidence abound in literature has shown that before the discovery of oil in 1956 agriculture was the main source of the nation's wealth. Exportation of agricultural products during these periods gives the country the giant strides towards her economic growth which led to the development of other sectors (Odularu, 2007;Monye-Emina, 2009 & Akpan, 2012). Now, the petroleum production and export play a dominant role in Nigeria's economy and account for about 90% of the nation's gross earnings but despite these huge earnings on petroleum product, there has been little or no development.

There is no doubt that petroleum product brings about huge earnings to the country but lack of transparency in governance inhibits development in the country. This is inline with (Ene, Arikpo, Jeffery, & Albert, 2013) submission that the crave by leaders and public servants in Nigeria to amass wealth while in public service, has not only affected national development but also accentuated political instability which manifests in youth restiveness, social insecurity, conflicts, social uprisings, civil wars and even coup de tats, to mention a few.

Researchers submit that leaders are not ready to serve the masses, they are only concerns about their purse that is why (Edoh 2003) was of the opinion that political parties and electoral process in most African States, Nigeria inclusive have been plagued with corrupt practices and electoral irregularities such as violence, stuffing of ballot boxes, thuggery, intimidation and elimination of recalcitrant opposition candidates, rigging, bribing of electoral officials, security men and party agents in order to have a free hand to change results at polling boots or else where. This suffices to say that politics in Nigeria is what is being known as “do or die affair”. Political leaders want to assume office because they want to enjoy political power and enrich their purse.

This explains the reasons for corruption among political leaders in the country. Political leaders want to enrich their pockets with public funds, political and electoral corruption culminates into misuse and embezzlement of public resources. Edoh (2003) submit that power seekers in Nigeria see politics as an avenue for making money, a sort of open cheque to wealth, to be in power and to control state resources which are often converted to personal uses correspondingly, to lose elections is to be out of power and to be denied access to the opportunity for aggrandizement. To maintain incumbency, those in power use all sorts of strategies to ensure that the election results favours them.

The Concept of Omoluabi and Political Development

The Yoruba constitute a huge proportion of Nigerians, with concentration in the Southwestern region of the country even though they migrate to different parts of the world within and outside of Nigeria. the term/concept of *Omoluabi* is derived from Yoruba word according to Oyerinde (1991), it is a derived noun, realisable after the process of assimilation, contraction or vowel coalescence and vowel elision from the longer form nominal phrases having 'Omo' as their head nouns and 'tioniiwa bi', 'tioniuwa bi', 'tioluiwa bi' as the relative qualifier. The literary of 'Omo' 'tioluiwa bi' or 'tioniiwa bi' which the sum is being refer to as *Omoluabi* is person or an individual with good character. That is the reason why Adagbada (2014), sees "*Omoluabi*" as a good and dependable person, who stands above board at all times.

Akanibi and Jekayinfa (2016) submitted that the virtues emphasised by the Yoruba in the concept of "*Omoluabi*" are varied and many, in fact the list is endless and the process continuous but this concept is gradually deemphasised as western education and technological advancement. They further submitted that the negligent of the concept is responsible for various challenges facing Africa, especially Nigeria; ethnic and religious violence, terrorism, kidnapping, rape, political mugging, corruption, indifference to duty, disrespect for the rule of law, bullying and other social vices.

It can be deduced that the concept had been used in the past and bring about peace in the society and its negligent in the present is resulting into different vices most especially among the politicians in the country which they sees the seats 'cake sharing' fixation, in which states scramble for a bigger piece of federal monies rather than expanding the overall country's output". In the same vein, Mohammed, (2014) submitted that it is evident that the alarming rate of corruption in Nigeria can be attributed to the erosion of the Yoruba ideals of inner beauty among Nigerian citizenry.

Theoretical Framework

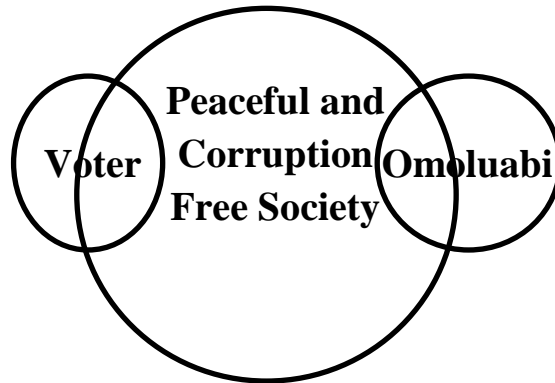
This study is anchored on clientalism theory and Socio-cultural linguistics. **Clientalism theory** the theory emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. Clientalism involves complex networks of patron brokerage selectively reaching different strata, sectors and groups and pervading political parties, factions and administrations (Appadorai A (2004). Clientalism is a phenomenon that operates against the principles of democratic rule and civil liberty. Clientalism is a theory or a model developed by scholars to interpret the political economy of governance through a patron-client relationship [Arrows (1986), Babawale, 2006, Bailye, 2006]. Clientalism is a political activity and a strategy which involve vote buying and rewarding of voters and political sponsors for undeserved favour which leads to corruption and abuse of political offices [Balboa and Medalla, 2006]. The theory is simply an explanation of patron-client relationship and how it emerged in a particular state starting from struggling for power particularly election into a political office [Bariledum K, Godpower NB, Tambari, 2016]. Clientalism is not only a mutual client-patron relationship as sometimes it can be the use of threat or coercion to manipulate political power [Creswell, 2014]. In general, it slows democratic rule and good governance as well as undermine democratic rule where some voters elect candidates for some side payments or in return for undue advantage in resource distribution. Basically, Clientalism has five major assumptions which include: the relationship is dyadic; the relationship is asymmetrical; the relationship is personal and enduring; the relationship is reciprocal and the relationship is voluntary (German Institute for Global and Area Studies GIGA).

Socio-cultural linguistics is an approach to linguistic analysis aimed at revitalizing the socially and culturally linguistic analysis. Bulcholtz and Hall (2005:5) describe sociocultural linguistics as “the broad interdisciplinary field concerned with the intersection of language, culture and society”. Bulcholtz and Hall feared that

sociolinguistics was getting rather narrowed in its focus, suggesting certain kinds of study, while de-emphasizing cultural and anthropological linguistics, among others.

According to Nilep (2006:3), sociocultural linguistics to Bulcholtz and Hall would “include sociolinguistics, anthropology, discourse analysis, sociology of language, as well as certain streams of social psychology, folklore studies, media studies, literary theory and the philosophy of language”. Nilep’s description of sociocultural linguistics reveals that the theory of language is highly interdisciplinary, drawing on culture, society, orature, literature, psychology and language.

Clientalism theory and Sociocultural linguistics approach are no doubt relevant to this study, society has major influence in choosing the right person which can be referred to as Omoluabi through their votes. This will determine the kind of leaders that will govern the affair of their country, since political corruption is being exercise by leaders who abuses the power of office.



Researcher’s Construct

III. METHODOLOGY

This section describes the data instrument and source of the instrument, and explains the pilot study. Also focuses on the data collected by a survey questionnaire from community people in Nigeria A survey questionnaire was administered through a convenient sampling size to select respondents from Newspapers Vendors. In Nigeria out of 384 survey questionnaire administered to the respondents, 313 were received this indicates 81.51 percent response rate. Convenience sampling was used in selection of the population for this study.

A pilot study was conducted among Newspaper readers through the administered of the survey questionnaire prior to the final administered of the survey questionnaire. The purpose of the pilot test is to refine the questionnaire so that respondents will have no problem in answering the questions. The internal consistency of the scale was ascertained through Cronbach’s alpha coefficient and the result indicated 0.80 Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. This is considered reliable because Pallant (2010) submitted that Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of a scale should be above 0.7.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section provides the results of the data analysis for this study

4.2.1. Political Leaders in Nigeria are Corrupt.

These research question is to look at the correlation that is between how the citizenry sees their leaders in terms of corruption.

Are political leaders in Nigeria corrupts?

Table I: political leaders in Nigeria corrupts

| Statements | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|---|----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Political leaders in Nigeria are majorly concerns about their pocket | 116 (37.1%) | 180 (57.5%) | 10 (3.2%) | 6 (1.9%) | 1 (0.3%) |
| Political leaders in Nigeria are executes projects that favours their pocket | 128 (40.9%) | 161 (51.4%) | 19 (6.1%) | 3 (1.0%) | 2 (0.6%) |
| Political leaders in Nigeria are majorly concerns about sharing of money | 177 (56.5%) | 110 (35.1%) | 23 (7.3%) | 2 (0.6%) | 1 (0.3%) |
| Political leaders in Nigeria are majorly sees office as a place to share national cakes | 97 (31.0%) | 171 (54.6%) | 19 (6.1%) | 18 (5.8%) | 8 (2.6%) |
| Political leaders in Nigeria are less concerns about the welfarism of the populace | 150 (47.9%) | 97 (31.0%) | 15 (4.8%) | 31 (9.9%) | 20 (6.4%) |

The table shows that larger percentage of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that political leaders in Nigeria are majorly concerns about their pocket 116(37.1%) and 180(57.5%)of the respondents strongly agreed and also agreed respectively to the statement, 128(40.9%) and 161(51.4%) strongly agreed and agreed that Political leaders in Nigeria are executes projects that favours their pocket.110(35.1%) and 177(56.5%)of the respondents strongly agreed and also agreed that Political leaders in Nigeria are majorly concerns about sharing of money. 97(31.0%) and 171(54.6%)of the respondents strongly agreed and also agreed that Political leaders in Nigeria are majorly sees office as a place to share national cakes while 97(31.0%) and 150(47.9%)of the respondents strongly agreed and also agreed that Political leaders in Nigeria are less concerns about the welfarism of the populace. The findings of this study revealed that larger portion of the respondents were of the opinion that the political leaders in Nigeria are corrupt. Godfatherism and Corruption among Political Leaders in Nigeria

Table II: Godfatherism and Political Leaders

| Statement | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|---|------------|------------|----------|---------|---------|
| Political godfatherism is common in Nigeria | 136(43.5%) | 162(51.8%) | 12(3.8%) | 2(0.6%) | 1(0.3%) |
| Godfathers dictates for political leaders | 131(41.9%) | 171(54.6%) | 10(3.2%) | 0(0.0%) | 0(0.0%) |
| Godfatherism governs the country than political leaders | 125(39.9%) | 173(55.3%) | 12(3.8%) | 2(0.6%) | 1(0.3%) |
| Godfathers demands too much from political leaders | 125(39.9%) | 177(56.5%) | 7(2.2%) | 1(0.3%) | 3(1.0%) |

The table shows that larger percentage 136(43.5%) and 162(51.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that Political godfatherism is common in Nigeria. 131(41.9%) and 171(54.6%)of the respondents strongly agreed and also agreed respectively that Godfathers dictates for political leaders. 125(39.9%) and 173(55.3%)of the respondents strongly agreed and also agreed respectively that Godfatherism governs the country than political leaders while 125(39.9%) and 177(56.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed and also agreed respectively that Godfathers demands too much from political leaders. It can be deduced from the findings of the study that the concept of godfatherism promote corruption among political leaders in Nigeria. Voters and Political Leader Corruptions

Table IIIvoters contribute to corruptions that political leader exhibit

| Statement | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|---|------------|------------|----------|---------|---------|
| Voters demands money before voting for any political party | 127(40.6%) | 174(55.6%) | 7(2.2%) | 2(0.6%) | 3(1.0%) |
| Voters will not vote for any political leaders that did not pay them well | 110(35.1%) | 182(58.1%) | 11(3.5%) | 8(2.6%) | 2(0.6%) |
| Voters considered well paid political leaders before voting | 122(39.0%) | 166(53.0%) | 16(5.1%) | 9(2.9%) | 0(0.0%) |

The above shows that larger percentage of the respondents127(40.6%) and 174(55.6%)strongly agreed and agreed to that Voters demands money before voting for any political party.110(35.1%)and 182(58.1%)of the respondents strongly agreed and also agreed respectively that Voters will not vote for any political leaders that did not pay them well. 122(39.0%)and 166(53.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed and also agreed respectively that Voters considered well paid political leaders before voting. It can be deduced from the findings of the study that majorly, voters contribute to the corrupt practices that political leaders exhibits.

V. TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant relationship between the concept of *Omoluabi* and political leaders

Table IV: Correlation between the concept of *Omoluabi* and political leaders

| | | <i>Omoluabi</i> and Political Leaders |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Spearman's rho | concept of <i>Omoluabi</i> and political leaders | Correlation coefficient |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| | | N |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). | | |

The table shows the level of relationship that exists between the variable concept of *Omoluabi* and political leaders. It shows that the Spearman's rho correlation value is 0.704 and these shows a highly positive association among the 2 variables and it can be deduced that the value is statistically significant at 5% level of acceptance; there is high relationship shows that as the respondents sees the concept of *Omoluabias* highly important to political development in Nigeria.

VI. CONCLUSION

The concept of *Omoluabi* could be established in Africa through good governance, fairness, honesty, justice, transparency, accountability and a careful nurture of democracy through good education. The concept of *Omoluabi* can be employed in combating corruption that has been one of the most internal constraints to development in Nigeria which has led to political instability in Nigeria and has affected economic growth of most African states. Masses should use their power "vote" judiciously in electing leaders that have concerns for the masses. Corruption in political offices has resulted in erosion of cherished cultural values such as dignity of labour, fairness, honesty, faithfulness, integrity, etc. It has also affected the practice of democracy in Nigeria and hindered transparency and accountability, leading to bad governance. The concept of *Omoluabi* will provide peaceful and corruption free society for the masses if they use their vote in promoting good governance. The masses should be educated on the power of vote in promoting good governance.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the above conclusion, the study recommends that the concept of *Omoluabi* must be promoted among the masses with the use of vote in promotion of good governance. The masses must discourage the act of selling their votes to political leaders. Governmental, Non-governmental organisation as well as concerned organisation should embark on sensitization programme to educate citizenry on the use of their vote as their power to choose rightful leaders for peaceful and corruption free society.

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