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Corruption and Conflict: A Phenomenological Study of the Experiences of Nigerian Citizens

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Corruption and Conflict: A Phenomenological Study of the Experiences of Nigerian
Citizens

by

Farouk Adeniyi Raheemson

A Dissertation Presented to the
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Nova Southeastern University
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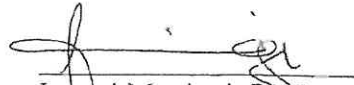
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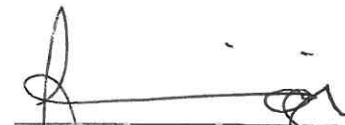
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Dedication

This research manuscript is dedicated to the participants in this study, for without them, this study would not have been possible. Not only did these wonderful people help me to better understand the phenomenon in question, they also provided support and reassurance throughout this demanding process. I greatly respect each one of them as friends. Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge that the writing in this manuscript may be mine, but the experiences are entirely theirs. For me, this study was less about contributing to a much needed dissertation that includes Nigerian citizens who have experienced corruption and conflict, and more about giving them the opportunity to feel validated and empowered by giving them the space to share their stories.

Acknowledgments

This dissertation represents not only my work at the keyboard; it is a breakthrough in more than five years of work at the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Nova Southeastern University. Without the guidance and support of my committee members, help from friends, and support from my family and wife, this dissertation might not have been completed.

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Abstract

This qualitative phenomenological study was designed to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict. A review of the literature found a gap in the understanding of the lived experiences of participants on corruption and conflict in Nigeria, and this study was designed to fill that gap. Using a purposeful sampling method, the investigator targeted 20 Nigerian citizens who have experienced corruption and conflict. The phenomenological method provided the basis for a reflective structural analysis that exposes the meanings and essences of the lived experiences of the participants on corruption and conflict in Nigeria. Participant interviews showed that many Nigerians encounter bribery on a daily basis because of the following reasons: they were encouraged by a perceived culture of greed, a culture of impunity, a culture of impropriety and a culture of no accountability. All of the participants indicated the need to survive the harsh realities of living in Nigeria. The study revealed a broad variety of corruption and conflict situations in Nigeria. This dissertation adds value and richness to existing body of knowledge, which suggested to policy makers, advocates and civil society of the need to develop policies and strategies to stem corruption as part of a wider strategy for resolving the negative conflicts that currently characterize the socio-political and economic landscape of Nigeria. Overall, as part of the major contributions and objectives, this dissertation illuminated the psychological impacts of corruption and conflict in Nigeria. In other words, this research bridged the gap between the social structural understandings and impacts of corruption and the personal component.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Justification

Corruption is apparently, believed to be a menace and major impediment to the growth and development of a nation. Within the context of this study, some existing researches have shown that corruption causes conflict (Advig 2007 & USIP, 2010), crime and poverty (UNODC, 2009), human rights abuses (Pia & Diez, 2007 & Human Rights Watch, 2010), and prostitution (Hughes, 2004 Gounev & Bezlov, 2010). Since Nigeria's independence from the British in 1960, there has been a growing interest among researchers and practitioners, who are trying to pinpoint the causes of persistent corruption in the country. As of today, corruption in Nigeria has reached an unbelievable height, characterized by shame, greed and lawlessness.

Nigeria offers a concrete example of such a nation embroiled in corruption, conflict, poverty, crime, prostitution, chaos and disorder. For years it has been struggling to decrease unemployment, income inequality and its dependence on oil (African Economic Outlook, 2014).

Ivo Jongejan (2014) puts together a reading list in his article titled; *Conflict and Corruption: A Reading List*. Jongejan (2014) had this to say:

“Corruption is a dangerous security threat. Both conflict and corruption go hand in hand. In recent days, the Iraqi army proved no match for ISIS insurgents in Mosul and other Iraqi cities. Ukrainian troops remain unable to subdue violent separatists. Terrorist groups and lawlessness pervade life in Northern Nigeria. In all these instances, defense and security forces that were well staffed, trained, and

equipped on paper have been unable to defend their citizens. Corruption diminishes the public's trust in the state, making it easier for groups like ISIS and Boko Haram to recruit members" (p.20).

Jongejans comment speaks directly to the premise of this research. It is true that on papers and even on social media, budgets are read in Nigeria, but budgets does not translate to any meaningful positive effects for Nigerian citizens, because of corrupt practices, which has negatively affected the development of Nigeria. Thus, even when budgets are read, only a few Nigerian citizens show interest. Instead, they are focused more on what life holds for them in a country where governments lack of accountability, has corroded public respect.

Daniel Brett (2014), an economic and political analyst, argued in his article titled; *Boko Haram: Military Is the Problem, Not the Solution*, that:

"Due to ineptitude, corruption and indiscriminate violence, the military is one of the causes of the insurgency, which now forms a strategic part of an arc of jihadism that stretches from Algeria to Somalia. Giving funds and resources to the Nigerian armed forces risks exacerbating the problem. Boko Haram thrives on the endemic corruption that has characterized post-independence Nigeria. Far from being anti-establishment, the group enjoys the patronage of parts of the political and military establishment, either through intimidation, sympathy or opportunism" (p.36).

From the above, there is an obvious indication that justifies the need for this dissertation, since corrupt practices are persistent phenomenon that continues to pervade

the Nigerian state. The implication from the above reveals a link between corruption and conflict. As a matter of fact, the corruption in Nigeria plays a vital role in inhibiting developmental progress, and in causing or exacerbating turmoil, chaos and tensions in the country.

Alexis Sinduhije, candidate for president in Burundi's 2010 elections, talked of the link between corruption and human rights:

“Crime and corruption are deeply rooted in many countries, including Burundi... In such countries, corruption sustains crime, while criminal acts protect the corrupt. In Burundi, the state commits crimes against humanity, despite the fact that we are now supposedly a democracy at peace. Each day, at least 20 people are assassinated for political reasons— more deaths than during our 12 years of civil war. And most such deaths today are fueled by corruption”(United States Institute of Peace Publications 2010).

An attempt to associate corruption to crime and insurrection in Nigeria remains an easy task, because doors to corruption, which sustains crime and insurrection, are always open in Nigeria. For example, in Nigeria, there have been situations when crimes were committed in broad daylight, and the police force, responsible for maintaining law and order, will walk away without making any supportive effort to protect its citizens. As a matter of fact, “corruption and insurrection go hand in hand” (latimes March 27, 2014).

In an Op-Ed from Los Angeles Times, Sarah Chayes (2014) views are in line with the justification for this dissertation. She wrote:

Motivations for complex phenomena like insurgencies never stem from a single

driver. Still, a remarkable correlation exists between severe and systemic corruption and ideological extremism. And almost every popular revolt aimed at toppling a government in recent years, from the Arab uprisings to Ukraine's revolution, began as a protest against acute corruption.

Besides Sarah Chayes assertion, it is pertinent to stress further that, there have been other situations in Nigeria when a high-level government official steals from the financial treasury for his/her own personal gain, and also, a wealthy parent would pay a certain amount to an authority, just to have their sons or daughters gain admission into a prestigious school in Nigeria.

What is known and believed to be the norm is that, to date, within the context of this dissertation, corruption works and everybody is willing to do just that as long as they can afford the money. Thus, corruption in Nigeria is about affording (of monetary value, gifts or acquisition of tangible or intangible items) what is expected of, and from you when the need arises.

Corruption in Nigeria is deep and has taken its toll on the socio-economic and political conditions in the country. Despite the country's oil wealth; two thirds of Nigeria's population lives in abject poverty. The reality is that there is hardly any Nigerian (rich, poor, young and old) that has not encountered corruption in their daily activities of life. And yet, these experiences are virtually absent from the literature. According to Ogunbadejo (1979):

The large-scale corruption that started soon after independence was another factor, which was at the root of the Nigerian tragedy. The politicians, while their

tenure of office lasted, turned the government treasury into a large private gold mine. To remain in office, they used armed thugs to silence opposition, manipulated census figures to ensure better representation for their political parties, and rigged elections with ingenious chicanery” (p. 48).

It is this absence of constructive research on the phenomenological experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict that this dissertation aims to explore and contribute to.

This dissertation focuses its attention on the absence of literature on Nigerian citizens who have experienced corruption and conflict. This dissertation explores, contributes and provides insights to the understanding of corrupt situations in Nigeria. This dissertation also attempts to explore corrupt situations that provided a lecturer with an opportunity to fail a female student in his course, or refuses to release her results, because she rejected his amorous advances, or a female student who seductively pesters her lecturer in order to pass a course she deservedly failed.

Autobiographical Backgrounds

An important part of qualitative research is the researcher’s background and experiences because it provides readers with a window into the mindset of the researcher. According to Creswell (2007), it is important to include an autobiographical statement about the author’s experience and the circumstances that lead to a curiosity about the topic.

From the moment the investigator started doctoral study, he knew it would come to an interesting part where his thoughts, views and opinions on contending issues, will

be published for educational, informational and policy purpose. As a result of his mindset, he took it upon himself to select a topic he is most passionate and keen about. With the hope that the topic positively impacts and transform individuals from all walks of life, the investigator approached the research study on corruption and conflict in Nigeria, not with abysmal intent, but more with curiosity. He felt that he was someone who could relate; share participants' pain/experiences, because he experienced the phenomenon under study, having lived in Nigeria for 23 years.

The investigator of this research completed his 4 years bachelor degree in History and International Studies, at Lagos State University, Lagos, Nigeria. Upon graduation, he served his nation under the National Youth Service Corps scheme (NYSC); an organization set up by the Nigerian government to prepare and involve the country's graduates in the development of the country. Unquestionably, by the virtue of the investigator's childhood and adult-life experiences and the environment in which he was raised, his contribution to the topic under discussion remains significant.

As a young boy who attended a university staff school, (nursery and primary); and as an adult who attended Lagos State University (LASU) for his undergraduate study, the investigator witnessed numerous corrupt practices (sale of mandatory handouts and textbooks written by lecturers that may assist a student to pass or fail a course, fake publications print out from lecturers seeking promotion, an administrative staff in charge of student transcript, who is ready to make alterations to a student copy with a certain fee), and conflict situations (from a lecturer who has shown interest in a student, to a female student, who repeatedly asked to be killed after she was raped multiple times by

her attackers at a university hall of residence). When things like this happen, it is because of the following themes; encountering bribery, perceiving a culture of greed, perceiving a culture of impunity, perceiving a culture of impropriety and culture of no accountability, present when participants narrated their experiences of corruption and conflict in Nigeria.

The investigator, a victim of corrupt practices, failed a course because he declines to purchase a mandatory book written by one of his instructors. The following year, he was lucky to register for the course again, because the instructor was on sabbatical, and as a result someone else taught the course. Besides that, the investigator experienced, on numerous occasions, school closure attributed to feud that involved the school vice-chancellor, non-academic staff union, academic staff union and senior staff academic union members, over unpaid salaries, promotion exercise and other issues that prolonged the duration of the investigators academic.

What stood out in the investigator's mind that was puzzling about corruption and conflict actually began when he became a student at LASU staff school, Lagos, Nigeria. He quite did not understand why issues between the university administrators, academic staff union and the student union, would lead to shutting down of the whole school. He quite did not understand that, whatever hurts the university, affects the staff school as well. For instance, during his school years at LASU staff school, he experienced corrupt practices and conflict situations that led to the closure of the university, which affected his education and learning experience.

The investigator's earliest memory of corruption and conflict was when he discovered that the series of unending closure of the institution, were attributed to issues

like non-payment of outstanding salaries for both academic and non-academic staffs, increase in students tuition, students grievance (In the last decade, hardly did any university in Nigeria, complete its academic session without an incidence of violent conflicts as a result of student grievance), misappropriation of funds, and also, substandard academic materials used in the university.

During that time and to date, life for families involves a constant struggle for survival within a vicious cycle of corrupt practices and riots that escalate into conflict. One would think government and the university administration could do better by paying attention to the needs of the university, but nothing of such was displayed. Instead, government would shut down the school if they were unable to meet the demands of the academic and non-academic staffs. As a result of the issues mentioned, students in a four-year degree program, end up graduating with an extra year or two more years.

During that time, the investigator would ask himself salient questions from; why did the government refuse to pay workers their salaries as at when due, why would the government resort to deploying armed militias on campus (to resolve an issue or escalate the issue), why did the school (staff school: a part of the university system) suffer the same problems with the university? These were questions that helped the investigator understand some of the corrupt practices in Nigeria.

The investigator's parents, at some point were concerned because their son was not learning much at school as a result of the on and off issues the university was facing. Eventually, his parents hired a private instructor to tutor me whenever he was away from school. During that time, not too many families could really afford a private instructor.

Anything private in Nigeria means richness and affluence available only to a very few rich family. At the end of the day when issues were resolved and the university is reopened, only a few of my classmates then would return to school. When dropout students could not go back to school, a very few of the lucky and intelligent ones were able to salvage themselves by finding a path void of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment.

Upon graduation, the investigator relocated to the United States to further his education. In the United States, he chose to earn a Master of Arts degree in international relations, since his bachelor's degree was in history and international relations. With his course of studies over the years, his search for genuine answers, based on determination and selfless service, provided him with meaningful resource to curb the menace of corrupt practices in Nigeria.

At the investigator's work as an equal opportunity/conflict analyst officer with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), he observed that his agency's effort to end global extreme poverty and enable resilience, democratic societies to realize their potential, has a strong connection or linkage with ending corruption, since there are USAID sponsored projects in Nigeria, which happens to be a corrupt democratic nation. In his mind, he would ask, how funds were moved to sponsor developmental projects in Nigeria. What was the experience like dealing with the society and the people in the region where most USAID projects were sponsored? In order to better understand the lived experiences, the meanings and essences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict, themes, memoirs, tones, thoughts, and reflections were used to uncover the

essence of corruption and conflict in Nigeria.

As a naturalized American citizen born and raised in Nigeria until the age of 24, the investigator is in a much better position, to conduct and develop a credible dissertation on a phenomenological study of the experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict. As a result of his background, the reasons for writing a dissertation in this area are both personal and professional. During the course of this research, his personal experiences on corruption and conflict were revealed, for the purposes of creating a holistic understanding of how this phenomenon is manifested in the Nigerian communities.

As a researcher, the investigator is aware that, global corruption and conflict are contentious topics within the research circles. However, his understanding is that, what is worth doing at all is worth doing well; and at the right time. As such, in order to address the concerns/issues that researchers have on this topic, it is very important to conduct a rigorous research on this area of research, devoid of any form of biases, since its purpose is focused mainly on positively documenting and expanding the research on corruption and conflict.

Research Questions

In this study, I wish to investigate and illuminate the human experience of corruption and conflict. The what of the question indicates that I seek the themes and essences to be discovered in their experiences? Investigations on examining commonalities of shared experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict, focuses on participants' perceptions and descriptions of the phenomenon under

investigation. In addition, the goal is to understand, with deepness and extensiveness, the textures and structures that describe their involvement in corruption and conflict.

By perception, I refer to what I asked of the participants of this study, an image that reflects on mind and stimulates the memory.

By description, I refer to what I asked of the participants of this study; a vivid account of their experience, in informal and formal conversations and interviews.

By experience, I mean the processing of feelings, perceptions, emotions, beliefs, thoughts, attitudes and other activities of corrupt practices and conflict situations. Experience is the way of life in a physical body, motion, space, time and interpersonal relations (Moustakas, 1994).

This research seeks to reveal and understand the lived experiences of Nigerian citizens in their day-to-day encounters with corruption and conflict in their nation. Specifically, this study utilized the following guiding questions to elicit the experiences of Nigerians *vis a vis* corruption:

- RQ₁: What is the shared lived experience of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict?
- RQ₂: What is the essence of corruption in the day-to-day activities of life of Nigerians?
- RQ₃: What does it feel like to have experienced corruption and conflict?
- RQ₄: What does it feel like to have personally given bribes to expedite action on a particular matter?
- RQ₅: What meanings do Nigerians find in their experiences on corruption and

conflict?

Research Problem

In the current literature, while a phenomenological study on corruption and conflict have all been explored; there is an apparent void of research on the lived experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict (Odemba, 2012, Wijayanto, 2007, Haigh, 2013, Dobovsek, 2009). There is subsequently also a dearth in the literature exploring the shared lived experiences of what it means to give and accept bribes. This research contributes to the field of conflict resolution in that it not only looks at the phenomenological analysis of corruption in Nigeria, but also at the conflicts that exists, as a result of corrupt practices in Nigeria.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to utilize Moustakas' (1994) approach to phenomenology for the illumination of the lived experiences of 20 adult Nigerian citizens who have experienced corruption and conflict. Within this methodological approach, the study was designed to seek the themes and essences of their experiences as reported by the researcher. Finally, the study was designed to provide in-depth descriptions and understanding of how these research participants perceive their experiences of corruption and conflict in Nigeria.

Relevance to Conflict Analysis and Resolution

According to Ross Stagner (1967), conflict is a “situation in which two or more human beings desire goals which they perceive as being obtainable by one or the other but not both” (p. 15). Wilmot and Hocker (2007) further defined conflict as “an expressed

struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals” (p. 9). This research aimed to better understand the experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict; which offers a “mixture of the good, the bad and the uncertain” (Folger, Poole & Stutman, 2009).

Conflict, according to Augsburger (1992), is experienced differently from person to person, but the reality and consistent nature of conflict is its inexorableness on the path of human experience. Within the context of this research, the consistent nature of corruption, which has become an inevitable experience and norm of the Nigerian society, causes conflict. Based on the lived experiences of each participant that participated in this study, this research is significant to the field of conflict analysis and resolution, because it creates a platform that helps explain both “expressive and instrumental conflict” as mentioned by Augsburger. According to Augsburger (1992), expressive conflicts arise from a desire to release tension, to express frustration, and to discharge emotion and are usually generated from hostile or negative feelings (p. 29).

On Instrumental conflicts, Augsburger emphasized that conflicts arise from a difference in pathways or goals: they are directed toward actual ends and press for visible outcomes. (p. 29). Within the context of this research, participant’s expressed dissatisfaction as a result of too many “corrupt pathways and goals” from states sponsored programs. Corruption causes violence by fueling political, economic, and social grievances, which eventually weakens security institutions (the Nigerian police and Army). Since both security institutions are meant to protect Nigerian citizens, difference

in pathways or goals, attributed to corruption, could not produce the required peace desired in the country. An example of such scenario is revealed in the persistent and successful uprising from Boko Haram, which has taken over a larger part of Northern Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

This research study has the potential for practical applications and adds to the body of theoretical and empirical knowledge on the lived experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict. Based on first-hand information provided by participants of this study, this research provides a better understanding of the emotions and desires on the lived experiences of corruption and conflict in Nigeria. Additionally, the information gathered serve as a resource guide for workshops, seminar and institutional-based programs that would assist policy makers to stem the tide of corruption in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This dissertation is organized into six chapters. This chapter, (Chapter One) provided a justification for this study, discussed my role and personal experiences on corruption and conflict in Nigeria, presented both the research problem and research purpose.

Chapter Two presents a review of the literature pertaining to corruption and conflict. In this chapter, a number of recurring and distinct themes in the literature form the basis for review in the literature. Chapter Two also presents relevant analytical literature.

Chapter Three will present the research design for this study, which includes an

overview of the rationale for utilizing a phenomenological approach, my personal bracketing, and the data collection and data analysis process. As far as this chapter is concerned, a qualitative phenomenological study is considered the most appropriate research methodology, since the goal of this research is, mainly to explore the experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict. For the purposes of clarity and avoidance of biases in this dissertation, this chapter strengthens its focus and attention on the purposeful sampling approach for data collection.

Chapter Four of this dissertation will present the data presentation and analysis. In Chapter Five, the results and essence for this study will be presented.

Chapter Six of this dissertation is the concluding part with an acknowledgement of limitations, and a discussion of the implications of this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature related to the phenomenological experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict. Researches on corruption and conflict have a number of distinct and recurring themes in the literature. These themes form the conceptual basis for my review of the literature. Because corruption and conflict go hand in hand, many of the literature reviewed, addressed the relationship between corruption and conflict. In essence, wherever corruption exists, conflict may follow, which will no doubt, impede the growth and development of that society. The chapter concludes with a review of relevant analytical literature. The theories used to analyze the data in this study were human needs theory, relative deprivation and structural violence. Human needs theory relates to an understanding that, men have needs that must be met, and most importantly, satisfied. When such needs cannot be met or satisfied, conflict emerges. Relative deprivation suggests an experience of being deprived of something to which one believes oneself to be entitled to have. It reminds one of discontent people who feel their situations and positions are worse off than many others in their society. Structural violence addresses how social structures impair or otherwise, cause difficulty or drawback to individuals.

Theme One: Corruption is one of the deadliest growing and non-curable disease in Nigeria.

An unspecified person wrote in 2012, in Transparency International:

Sometimes I marvel at the naivety of non-Nigerians who analyze this country and proffer 'solutions'. The only thing more astounding to me is the blind faith of

many Nigerians that some messianically righteous deliverer will arise one day and make everything okay. If you look around, you will understand the only thing that distinguishes the leaders from the led is the magnitude of the opportunity to steal obscene quantities of money. Poor plumbers and mechanics, middle class lecturers and professionals and wealthy business people are all endemically corrupt in their thinking and actions. It is an entrenched cultural phenomenon, and where people are outraged it is only because they have not gotten their own opportunity to manifest the criminal tendencies as profitably as they would like to. This will not change, and Nigeria is not unique. Everywhere on earth that you encounter countries and communities of Sub-Saharan African descent, this same corruption problem dominates. Until the culture changes, it will always be so. Only time will tell if the leopard can ever change its spots. (p. 36)

It is obvious that corruption in Nigeria has grown tremendously, and too many times, have been labeled, cancerous, which is hard to cure. Unless it is detected in the earlier stage, “corruption is Nigeria’s biggest enemy, and the only way to get rid of it is with scale assault. Anything short of that is useless (Yahaya, 2014, pp.1-2).

A general consensus of opinion among scholars who have researched and studied corruption is that corruption is very difficult to define. Despite the difficulty in defining corruption, publications and texts cited in this research, have a similar and balanced definition of corruption relevant to this study. Due to its usefulness and the use of some keywords related and significant to this research, corruption as defined by the transparency international is utilized.

According to Transparency International (a global organization in which government, politics, business, civil society and the daily lives of people are free of corruption), corruption is defined as:

“The abuse of entrusted power for private gain.” Corruption can be classified as grand, petty and political, depending on the amounts of money lost and the sector where it occurs. Grand corruption consists of acts committed at a high level of government that distort policies or the central functioning of the state, enabling leaders to benefit at the expense of the public good. Petty corruption refers to everyday abuse of entrusted power by low- and mid-level public officials in their interactions with ordinary citizens, who often are trying to access basic goods or services in places like hospitals, schools, police departments and other agencies.

(Transparency)

Transparency International’s definition of corruption influenced many publications and researchers that followed the same track. According to the United States Institute of Peace Publications (2010), corruption is defined as:

“Misuse of power by those who hold it—people who, in their official position, exploit the power with which they are entrusted by seeking private gain.”

Corruption creates a system whereby money and connection determines who has access to public services and who receives favorable treatment. (p. 4).

Most definitions relate corruption to the behavior of a public official, which may be the object or the subject of corruption. Thus corruption is “an illegal payment to a public agent to obtain a benefit that may or may not be deserved in the absence of

payoffs” (Susan Rose-Ackerman), or “the sale by government officials of government property for personal gain” (Shleifer & Vishny, 1993). From the descriptions and definitions of corruption above, it is worthy to mention that; there are obvious consistencies that are reflected within the premise of this research. Consequently, it is clear that, corruption has links to conflict, but it is not enough to be the sole factor responsible for the destabilization, deterioration and dislocation of a country. Corruption is not a new phenomenon that debilitates existing structures in a balanced or unbalanced system of governance.

The World Bank’s Procurement Guidelines take a functional perspective, defining a corrupt practice as “the offering, giving, receiving, or soliciting of anything of value to influence the action of a public official in the procurement process or in contract execution”(IBRD & THE WORLD BANK, 2001).

Most definitions imply two willing actors (while fraud requires only one), usually but not always including a public official. Thus, “corrupt practices; mean the bribery of public officials or other persons to gain improper commercial advantage” (p. 56). However, “no precise definition can be found which applies to all forms, types and degrees of corruption, or which would be acceptable universally as covering all acts which are considered in every jurisdiction as contributing to corruption” (Council of Europe Publication on Anti-Corruption Instruments, 2002).

As Arnold Obomanu (2014) aptly states:

Corruption has become the bogeyman that looms over every ailment that troubles this nation; next to it are issues like tribalism, religious intolerance, loss of values,

gross indiscipline, and so forth...these issues are pointed out either separately or jointly as the reason Nigeria is still crawling so many years after gaining independence from colonial rule” (p. xx).

Surely, within the context of this dissertation, there is an understanding that corruption is evil, and has offered Nigeria, little or no hope for sustainable and equitable development.

Theme Two: Conflict is Inevitable

The word “conflict” in its simplest form is defined as a “competitive or opposing action of incompatibles: antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interests, or persons). Conflict is also defined as a mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands” (Merriam-Webster, 2010).

Conflict is an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals. The term conflict generally means a fight, battle, or struggle between two or more parties (Pruitt & Kim, 2004). Conflict grows in different contexts and occurs at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, inter-group, organizational, and transnational levels (Byrne & Senehi, 2009). Conflict is an “expression of dissatisfaction, disagreement or unmet expectations (Constantino & Merchant, 1996).

From the above descriptions and definitions of corruption, it should be borne in mind that, there are linkages that help create a better understanding of the premise of this research. What is observed and learned from the definitions speak to the experiences of

Nigerian citizens on the subject of discourse. That said, an attempt to create a holistic definition and description of conflict as it pertains to this study, leads this research to a much robust definition described by Diez et al, 2006):

Conflict is a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. Defined in broadest terms, conflict denotes the incompatibility of subject positions. This definition emphasizes the opposition or incompatibility at the heart of the conflict, and initially leaves open the exact nature of these incompatibilities, i.e. whether they are between individuals, groups or societal positions; whether they rest in different interests or beliefs; or whether they have a material existence or come into being only through discourse (p. 565).

Conflict is part of human interaction. As long as there is human interaction, conflict remains inevitable, because most conflict situations have underlying interests that often times, are not compatible with other people's views and philosophy of life.

Theme Three: Corruption increases Poverty that may lead to Conflicts

Literature shows that when the poor and the underprivileged, do not get needed services from public agencies, when corruption is rampant in society, such society is expected to experience intractable conflicts. As one Nigerian journalist succinctly puts it:

“Corruption became the catalyst for Boko Haram. [Mohammed] Yusuf [the group’s first leader] would have found it difficult to gain a lot of these people if he was operating in a functional state. But his teaching was easily accepted because the environment, the frustrations, the corruption, [and] the injustice made it fertile for his ideology to grow fast, very fast, like wildfire” (HRW, 2012).

Corrupt practices in Nigeria may be attributed to several reasons, including: (a) diversion and embezzlement of resources earmarked for services, including vital services such as education, health services, road networks, water supplies and transportation services (b) lack of access due to limited resources left-over after looting, and (c) lack of oversight and accountability engendering extortion for services by public officials which then leaves the poor with even smaller disposable incomes. Similarly, the poor are sometimes excluded from some vital social services because they do not have money to bribe officials. When these services are denied the poor, this further worsens their poverty situation.

In a new World Bank report, “corruption leads to violence because it hobbles development, and robs poor people of opportunities for economic and social advance” (Conflict, Security, and Development Publication, 2011). In the same report, findings on corruption were precise, and make for abstemious reading:

“Corruption, human rights abuses and low government effectiveness make countries 30-40% more vulnerable to violence. The new report's findings are particularly poignant for Africa, home to 23 out of the world's most conflict-affected and fragile economies. And conflict impacts negatively on development (p. 36).

Obviously, many Nigerians have seen and experienced the effects of corruption, but efforts to contain the dastardly acts of corruption, have waned.

Navi Pillay (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights),² also emphasized that:

“Let us be clear. Corruption kills. The money stolen through corruption every year is enough to feed the world’s hungry 80 times over. Nearly 870 million people go to bed hungry every night, many of them children; corruption denies them their right to food, and, in some cases, their right to life. A human rights-based approach to anti-corruption responds to the people’s resounding call for a social, political and economic order that delivers on the promises of “freedom from fear and want” (UNHCR, 2013).

An example of Navi Pillay’s assertion is evident in Nigeria today. There is hardly a day without reports on Nigeria’s corrupt practices. Corruption in Nigeria is endemic — from parents bribing teachers to get hold of exam papers for their children, through clerks handed ‘dash’ money to get round the country’s stifling bureaucracy to policemen taking money for turning a blind eye, these lists are endless. In Nigeria, for example, the shame of campus prostitution, campus crimes and hooliganism, are sources of corruption evident in the country. Alliances exist between students, politicians and their instructors for different reasons ranging from poverty (on the student's path who, either seek for money to take care of his or her immediate needs for school), unemployment (on the path of students and some of the instructors), and sheer greed and even simply for the love of sex.

Philip Gounev and Tihomir Bezlov of the Center for the Study of Democracy examined the links between organized crime and corruption. According to the authors, they were contracted by the European Commission (EC) to “analyze the links between organized crime and corruption” (Center for the Study of Democracy, 2010).

To accomplish these objectives, the CSD used robust quantitative and qualitative methods. Following a comprehensive literature review, the team undertook a series of analyses of statistical and survey data indicators related to corruption and organized crime. The main evidence for the report comes from 156 semi-structured interviews conducted across all EU Member States. The views consulted include those of anti-corruption bodies, law-enforcement, judiciary, private sector (lawyers, auditors, and fraud-investigators), academics and journalists. In-depth country studies, based on a larger number of face-to-face interviews and more comprehensive secondary sources were undertaken in six countries (Bulgaria, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain).

The report presented two different analytical views of organized crime's use of corruption. According to the authors, the report examined how politicians/ government administration, police, customs, the judiciary, and private companies were targeted; and depicted how corruption facilitated the operation of illegal markets (illegal cigarettes, drugs, prostitution, car-theft and extortion).

The report concluded that prostitution and illegal drug markets wielded the most corruptive effect in the EU. It showed how some illegal markets, like the illegal cigarette trade, targeted primarily customs or local governments and law enforcement in border areas. In other illegal activities, such as motor vehicle theft and protection rackets, corruption was less desirable because of the nature of the criminal operations. While this publication serves as a unique reminder on the curses of corruption, one is left to wonder if the focus of this publication should be centered on the EU countries only. If corruption

is a global issue, there is a need for a global discourse and engagement on corruption.

The Durban Commitment to Effective Action against Corruption (1999) also emphasized that, “Corruption deepens poverty, it debases human rights; it degrades the environment; it derails development, including private sector development; it can drive conflict in and between nations; and it destroys confidence in democracy and the legitimacy of governments. It debases human dignity and is universally condemned by the world’s major faiths (p. 41).

Michael Johnston is the Charles A. Dana professor of political science at Colgate University in Hamilton, NY. According to Johnston (2009):

Corruption often conjures up images of people getting rich. But in fact, corruption’s connections to poverty are far more numerous and pervasive. Corruption delays, distorts and diverts economic growth. It comes in a variety of forms, and while no two countries are alike, there are common dilemmas for all to see. The links between corruption and poverty affect both individuals and businesses, and they run in both directions: poverty invites corruption, while corruption deepens poverty. Corruption both causes and thrives upon weaknesses in key economic, political and social institutions. It is a form of self-serving influence akin to a heavily regressive tax, benefiting the haves at the expense of the have-nots (p. 87).

Brian-Vincent Ikejiaku (2009) established the relationship between poverty, conflict and development (PCD) in analyzing instability in the African continent. In his analysis, the author examines several variable factors that can help in the explanations of

the relationship between PCD in Africa. These variable factors include: economic, political, population, climate and environment, ethnic composition, militarization, poor growth and political corruption.

According to Ikejiaku (ibid), none of these varying factors can unilaterally explain the relationship between poverty, conflict and development as issues behind Africa's instability. However, the paper contends that "political corruption stands out as the most persuasive, compelling and primary explanation for the (causal) relationship(s) between PCD, though, it is not an exclusive one" (p. 15). While the paper recognizes that there are both exogenous and endogenous trends that influence political corruption, the paper adopts the endogenous (domestic political corruption) perspective, because political governance is now more controlled at home. The paper also employs the human needs theory for analysis.

In a book series titled; *Corruption and conflict: Contrasting logics of collective action*, Jens Christopher Andvig (2010) explored the causal linkages between corruption and civil wars. In the article, the author discussed the impact of corruption on the probability of violent conflict events and traced the shifts in the composition of corrupt transactions during and in the aftermath of violent conflicts.

The paper covered a lot of the research within the two chosen fields and it does so in a very extensive way, and presented the various contributions in great detail. However, the problem with the discussion is that it did not have a clear construction and organization, which undoubtedly, left me, and possibly other readers that might have come across the article, feel a bit disoriented on the topic under discourse, due to multiple

section of one description to another, without adding sufficient structure to the discussion.

The author conveyed the two strands of empirical research on corruption and civil wars together, and argued that inconsistencies arose that would have been difficult to detect within each field in isolation. Some of the significant key conclusions in the article emphasized that, “corruption causes GDP levels – GDP levels cause conflicts, hence, corruption causes conflict.

Andvig (2007) also stressed that; “countries characterized by high corruption have infant mortality rates almost twice those of countries with low corruption” (p. 17). As things now stand, one cannot expect to be able to uncover much in the manner of stable, autonomous relationships to link, for example, corruption and armed conflicts.

Theme Four: Corruption As a Violation Of Human Rights

There is an agreement among scholars that corruption violates human rights. According to Cobus de Swardt (2009), “the fight against corruption is central to the struggle for human rights. Corruption has always greased the wheels of the exploitation and injustice, which characterize our world. From violent ethnic cleansing to institutionalized racism, political actors have abused their entrusted powers to focus on gains for the few at great cost for the many” (p. 2).

In an International Council of Human Rights Policy Publication titled; *Corruption and Human Rights: Making the Connection* (2009), corruption is succinctly addressed in this manner:

Corruption violates human rights when a person is asked for a bribe in order to

obtain a service to which that person is entitled without payment, that person suffers discrimination in relation to other individuals in the same situation. There is a violation of the right in both examples because similar cases are treated in a different manner and the difference in treatment results from corruption which is not an objective or reasonable justification (p. 33).

Based on the aforementioned, there are obvious scandals and examples from Nigeria's corrupt practices that threaten citizen's human rights. For example, a very common situation in Nigeria, occurs when a police officer, expected to maintain law and order, arrests or punishes innocent victims who refused to give bribes because the officer accept bribes, or when an officer in a government establishment, refuses to attend to a client in a timely manner, because the client did not think it was morally right to give bribe when he knows he gets paid for his work.

Theme Five: Religious Ideas May Encourage Tolerance of Corruption

In a working paper titled; *Religions, Ethics and Attitudes towards Corruption: A Study of Perspectives in India*, (Parvala et al. 2010), argued that, "religion causes men to 'bribe God' by donating the proceeds of corruption to religious organizations. Religious leaders no longer seem to have moral influence" (p.3). To validate and strengthen the argument on religion as a contributing factor on corruption, Nigeria comes to mind. For instance, there have been situations when both clergymen and women in Nigeria have used their positions to seek for 'ridiculous donations' from their congregations. Through religion, greed and materialistic feelings sets in. For instance, in a Forbes magazine, Nsehe (2010), chronicled Africa's success stories and tracked its richest people.

According to Nsehe:

God is good, especially if you're a Nigerian pastor with some business savvy. These days, millions of souls, desperate for financial breakthroughs, miracles and healing, all rush to the church for redemption. And while the bible expressly states that salvation is free, at times it comes with a cost: offerings, tithes, gifts to spiritual leaders, and a directive to buy literature and other products created by men of God. Pastors are no longer solely interested in getting people to Heaven; they've devised intelligent ways to make good money while reaching out to souls. (p. 56)

In other words, besides being a platform for illicit activity, sometimes religion has a measurable influence and sometimes it does not. Nevertheless, within the context of this research, corruption is widely experienced in synagogues, churches and mosques; and has taken different shapes within the socio-economic and political landscape of Nigeria.

Theme Six: Tribalism and Ethnicity are perceived as a Product of Corrupt Practices, Which Leads to Conflict

Several studies suggest that corruption is more prevalent in countries that are more ethnically fragmented (Mauro, 1995; LaPorta et al., 1999; Treisman, 2000; Alesina et al., 2003). While one cannot draw causal conclusions based on this cross-country correlation pattern – ethnic fractionalization is likely to pick up omitted factors related to corruption (e.g. level of economic development, see La Porta et al., 1999, and Treisman, 2000) – it is interesting to note that there is within country evidence also pointing to more

corruption in ethnically fragmented locations. In a study of corruption in an Indonesian anti-poverty programme distributing subsidized rice, Olken (2006) finds that areas with higher within- village ethnic fragmentation have a higher likelihood of experiencing corruption. Similarly, considering variation within the U.S., Glaeser and Saks (2006) find higher levels of corruption in more racially fragmented states, controlling for state differences in income, education, population size and degree of urbanization.

Furthermore, some recent studies stress the role of ethnic inequalities and ethnic segregation. Alesina et al. (2012) find that countries with higher levels of ethnic inequality, i.e. economic inequalities across ethnic groups within countries (see also Baldwin and Huber, 2010), tend to have higher levels of corruption. Similarly, Alesina and Zhuravskaya (2011) find that more ethnically segregated countries, i.e., those where groups live more geographically separated, tend to score worse on a number of qualities of government indicators, including control of corruption.

In an article titled; *Corruption along ethnic lines: A study of individual corruption experiences in 17 African countries*, Ann-Sofie Isakson (2013) puts it this way:

While a growing literature relates macro variation in corruption to ethnic divisions, existing studies have paid little attention to the possible existence of systematic micro variation in corruption along ethnic lines. More specifically, this literature considers the effect of belonging to leading ethnic groups. Empirical findings drawing on data for more than 23,000 respondents in 17 African countries indeed suggest that individual corruption experiences vary systematically along ethnic lines. (p. 1).

Ethnicity as a product of corrupt practices, leads to conflict in Nigeria. For instance, there have been situations when certain social groups are favored in the allocation of resources, thus fueling grievances among marginalized groups. In fact, a “surge in communal violence has pitted Muslim against Christian and neighbor against neighbor in Nigeria. For extremist groups like Boko Haram, it is a holy war. For many Nigerians, it is part of a senseless fight for survival in a society where economic and political corruption is rampant” (Ochonu, 2014 p. 1). Even in Lergo’s article titled, *Deconstructing Ethnic Politics: The Emergence of a Fourth Force in Nigerian Political Force*, Lergo (2011), contends that, “ethnic and religious conflicts in Nigeria, especially in the north, are indicative of the quest by minorities for independence, empowerment, and identity construction. Until there are concessions made by the dominant cultural groups—Hausa Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba—and an opening up to ethnic minorities, Nigeria will be unable to move past the ethnic formats and difficulties that have stifled Nigeria’s social evolution. The power of the three major ethnic groups and the disempowerment of all other ethnic minorities have created chaos in Nigerian politics and government (p. 87).

Meg Handley (2010), reported for Time magazine in an article titled; “*The Violence in Nigeria: What’s Behind the Conflict.*” She reported that:

The machete killings of hundreds of villagers near the central Nigerian city of Jos on Sunday have thrown the sectarian problems of Africa’s most populous nation into the spotlight again. Nigerian officials claim the latest bloodshed — most victims were Christians, many of them women and children — were retaliation

for clashes in the same city in January. In that massacre, Christian attackers killed 300 Muslims (p. 1)

Though, it's possible to have differing views that attributes or links corruption along ethnic lines, it is historically significant and evident to say, that there is consistency in Nigeria's clamor and scramble for land, scarce resources and political clout, under the guise of ethnicity and tribalism.

In conclusion, many of the studies reviewed have a great and similar connection that speaks to the understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. However, in order to fully understand the experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict, we must be fully committed to some sort of constructive dialogue and engagement, for the purposes of exploring people's experiences from their perspectives of what their involvement and non-involvement of corruption means to them. Also very important is paying attention to descriptions as conveyed, the experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict. In this regard, my thesis will illuminate the lived experiences of 20 participants in an effort to better understand the phenomenological experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict.

Relevant Analytical Literature

The theories used to frame this study are human needs theory, relative deprivation and structural violence. To strengthen and validate the premise that corruption contributes largely to the unending chaos, poverty, crime, human rights abuses, and ethnic clashes in Nigeria, this research adopts three theories to explain the existing nexus between corruption and conflict in the country. Though some studies hypothesize that corruption

may not be enough to cause conflict anywhere in the world, the links are present, noticeable and must not be ignored. Undoubtedly, these theoretical frameworks explain the interrelatedness between the two variables.

The Human Needs Theory

Scholars like Abraham Maslow (1943), John Burton (1997), Laune Nathan (2003), Richard Sandbrook (1982) and Ted Gurr (1970) suggest that the lack of basic human needs leads to reactions that may result in conflict. The human needs theorists contend that there are conflicts and instability in developing countries because people are denied not only their biological needs, but also psychological needs that relate to growth and development. To strengthen the principle and relevance of the human needs theory to this research, Abraham Maslow (1943), focused on a theory of human developmental psychology that described the stages of growth in people. As far as Maslow is concerned, human needs are hierarchical; and suggested that people are motivated to fulfill fundamental needs before moving on to more advanced ones. This theory fits perfectly in the case of participants who have experienced corruption and conflict in Nigeria. Below is a pyramid that illustrates Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.



Figure 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. *Note.* From Psychology - The Search for Understanding by Janet A. Simons, Donald B. Irwin and Beverly A. Drinnien West Publishing Company, New York, 1987.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs:

- **Physiological or survival needs:** Most needs have to do with survival physically and psychologically. They consist of needs for oxygen, food, water, and a relatively constant body temperature. They are the strongest needs because if a person were deprived of all needs, the physiological ones would come first in the person's search for satisfaction.
- **Safety Needs:** On the whole, an individual cannot satisfy any level unless needs below are satisfied. When all physiological needs are satisfied and are no longer controlling thoughts and behaviors, the needs for security can become active. Adults have little awareness of their security needs except in times of emergency

or periods of disorganization in the social structure (such as widespread rioting).

Children often display the signs of insecurity and the need to be safe.

- Needs of Love, Affection and Belongingness: When the needs for safety and for physiological well-being are satisfied, the next class of needs for love, affection and belongingness can emerge. Maslow states that people seek to overcome feelings of loneliness and alienation. This involves both giving and receiving love, affection and the sense of belonging.
- Needs for Esteem: When the first three classes of needs are satisfied, the needs for esteem can become dominant. These involve needs for both self-esteem and for the esteem a person gets from others. Humans have a need for a stable, firmly based, high level of self-respect, and respect from others. When these needs are satisfied, the person feels self-confident and valuable as a person in the world. When these needs are frustrated, the person feels inferior, weak, helpless and worthless.
- Needs for Self-Actualization When all of the foregoing needs are satisfied, then and only then are the needs for self-actualization activated. Maslow describes self-actualization as a person's need to be and do that which the person was “born to do.” “A musician must make music, an artist must paint, and a poet must write.” These needs make themselves felt in signs of restlessness. The person feels on edge, tense, lacking something, in short, restless. If a person is hungry, unsafe, not loved or accepted, or lacking self-esteem, it is very easy to know what the person is restless about. It is not always clear what a person wants when there

is a need for self-actualization.

Several scholars and analysts in Nigeria have argued that Nigerians are influenced by the search to satisfy physiological needs (e.g. Orji, 2003; Igbuzor 2002). These, they reasoned, is largely responsible for the nation's loss of social values. Ikubaje (2002), while referencing Gire, recounted that the fear of job and future insecurity made so many Nigerians to see corruption as the best option to safeguard against future economic insecurity since Nigerian economy is declining. Concluding from the above, therefore, it seems persuasive to argue that corruption in Nigeria is boosted by Nigerian's desire to gratify their varied needs.

According to Abraham Maslow, security of body, property and resources are the most basic of human needs. Therefore, it is only when people have a good sense of safety and security that they are motivated to pursue other goals. In fact, this is why the primary duty of any government is to protect the lives and property of its citizens. When a government lacks accountability and fails in its primary duties, it loses the moral legitimacy and authority to continue in other aspects of governance. As such, a state is considered as having failed when the government fails to protect its citizens, or when its people no longer feel a sense of relative safety.

The Human Needs Theory, as explained helps to clarify the premise of this research. Based on the issue of corruption in Nigeria, the overriding importance and significance of this theory to the subject under discourse, is that it understands that human needs, particularly basic needs (such as food, water, shelter and health) unlike interests cannot be traded, suppressed, or bargained for; thus any attempt to do this, leads

to conflict. Against this background, it is worthy to strengthen the argument of this research that, as long as corruption (whether petty or grand) thrives in Nigeria, conflict may not stop.

For instance, Nigeria has, in recent times, been referred to as the fastest growing economy on the African continent and one of the 10 fastest growing economies in the world. Ironically, the country also harbors some of the poorest people in the world with as many as 69 percent of the population, which is about 112.47 million Nigerians, living below the poverty line (NBS, 2010).

While this reality does not make for a favorable judgment of Nigeria, one is left to think deeply, by connecting the dots on Nigeria's corruption practices. This researcher, using the Human Needs Theory, argue that the declining capacity of institutions to deliver public goods, including the security, water, transportation, medical care, electricity, are enough to cause its citizens to revolt or join groups like (the Boko Haram extremists, who have food, clothing, shelter and funds to offer the unemployed youths, child beggars,) to disrupt the peace of the society.

To strengthen the significance of the Human Needs Theory within the context of this research, Freedom Onuoha (2014), in a United States Institute of Peace Publication titled; "*Why Do Youth Join Boko Haram*", succinctly put his thoughts this way:

"To weaken the armed groups' abilities to radicalize and recruit young men, the Nigerian government at all levels, perhaps with support from interested international actors, could institute monitoring and regulation of religious preaching; strengthen education, job training, and job creation programs; design

robust programs to aid destitute children; promote peace education; and embark on an anticorruption campaign. Addressing the conditions that make it possible for insurgents to recruit young men in Nigeria can significantly diminish the strength of the insurgency, if not eliminate it altogether” (p. 234).

Nigerian citizens, like every other human being, strive to satisfy their needs, either by using the system, acting on the fringes, or acting as a reformist or rebel. For instance, many Nigerians are aware that the country have become increasingly lawless and amoral, with the rich, famous and influential Nigerians, pursuing wealth and power without regard for the consequences, and ordinary Nigerian citizens seeking money by all means available simply to survive, contributes to a popular perception that law and order have given way to rampant corruption at every level.

Additionally, with the help of the Human Needs Theory, one is able to highlight the effects of some prominent section of Nigerian elites, who thrive on “crony capitalism and patron-client” (International Crisis Group 2014). These elites, according to the International Crisis Group, “violates the rule of law, that when they agree on how to share the spoils all is well, but when they disagree, they politicize, manipulate and instrumentalise ethno-religious and regional differences” (p. 12).

Relative Deprivation

This theory suggest “individuals turn aggressive when there are perceived/latent or real impediments to their route to success in life, basically when their material basic needs are not met (Van de Goor et al, 1996).

Ted Robert Gurr explains in *Why Men Rebel* (1970) that instead of an absolute

standard of deprivation, a gap between expected and achieved welfare creates collective discontent. This theory also applies to individuals who find their own welfare to be inferior to that of others to whom they compare themselves. “Relative deprivation ‘is the term... used to denote the tension that develops from a discrepancy between the “ought” and the “is” of collective value satisfaction, and that disposes men to violence.”

Elsewhere, Gurr (2005: 20) argues that structural poverty and inequality within countries are “breeding grounds for violent political movements in general and terrorism specifically.” Drawing on his studies of relative deprivation and conflict in Northern Ireland, Birrel (1972: 317) contends that group tensions develop from a discrepancy between the “ought” and the “is” of collective value satisfaction. Also, Davies (1962) argues that the occasion of political violence is due to the insupportable gap between what people want and what they get; the difference between expectations and gratifications: “this discrepancy is a frustrating experience that is sufficiently intense and focused to result in either rebellion or revolution” (Davies 1962: 5). The message from all these works is that violent actions flourish within a context of sustained grievances caused by relative deprivation.

Relative deprivation theory offers an explanation based on groups’ access to power and subjugation of the poorest of the poor (Irobi, 2005: 3). These theories are relevant in discussing the association between Nigeria’s corrupt practices and conflict. With weak governance structures and unequal accesses and distribution of social amenities and economic resources, some sections of Nigeria’s population are likely to have better opportunities relatively to others.

Through the relative deprivation theory, this dissertation argues that, with bad governance and corruption, persistent rise in terror activities from the Boko Haram may continue in Nigeria.

In an article authored by Sulaiman et al. (2015), findings based on qualitative data obtained through interviews with Nigerians, “explicates how poor governance in the country has created a vicious cycle of corruption, poverty, and unemployment, leading to violence” (p. 15). Although, authors mentioned that even though, Boko Haram’s motive has a religious purpose, however, “it takes full advantage of the social and economic deprivation to recruit new members” (p. 17). Additionally, it is no coincidence that one of the worst forms of political violence in Nigeria today originates in the most socio-economically deprived parts of the country. In the North, for example, where unemployment and chronic poverty are rife, radical Islamists groups have challenged the authority of the state. In the South-East, specifically the Niger Delta where Nigeria’s oil resource is located, environmental degradation caused by irresponsible oil practices has compromised the major source of livelihood of indigenous people. This, in turn, has given rise to various militant groups in the region, often consisting of unemployed youths, who have engaged in kidnappings, oil pipeline vandalizations, extortion, car bombings, and other forms of violent attacks against the Nigerian state and its oil infrastructures (Omeje 2004; Omotola 2006).

In particular, the effect of poverty on health and education in northern Nigeria is striking, if not alarming. In Borno State, the homeland of Boko Haram, “only 2% of children under 25 months have been vaccinated; 83% of young people are illiterate;

48.5% of children do not go to school” (Oxford Research Group 2012, p.3). Another report, by the National Population Commission, found that literacy rates are much lower among states in the North, and that 72 percent of children around the ages of 6–16 never attended schools in Borno State, where Boko Haram was founded (Foster 2012). Furthermore, the 2010 National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data show that the highest poverty rate of 64.8 percent is recorded in the North-East geo-political zone, followed by 61.2 percent in the North-West. On the other hand, the lowest rate of 31.2 percent is recorded in the South-East, followed by 40.2 percent in the South-West (NBS 2010). As for the poverty index in Nigeria, the top five states (that is, the poorest) are all in the northern areas (UNDP 2009, p. 9).

This situation is compounded by the predominant perception in northern Nigeria that “the wealthy elite throughout the country tend to be Christian, while the most impoverished communities in the country are found among the Hausa, Fulani, Kanuri, and other northern groups-all of them primarily Muslim” (Forest 2012: 56). Therefore, Alex Thurston observed that “Boko Haram has an entrenched sense of victimhood and now sees the state as both the main persecutor of ‘true’ Muslims and the major obstacle to ‘true’ Islamic reform” (2011: 1). Sope Williams Elegbe, Research Director of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), further argues:

The increasing poverty in Nigeria is accompanied by increasing unemployment. Unemployment is higher in the north than in the south. Mix this situation with radical Islam, which promises a better life for martyrs, and you can understand the growing violence in the north. Government statistics show that the northern states

have the highest proportion of uneducated persons. If you link a lack of education and attendant lack of opportunities to a high male youth population, you can imagine that some areas are actually a breeding ground for terrorism. (Oxford Research Group 2012: 4)

From the above, it is very clear that the genuineness and veracity of relative deprivation in northern Nigeria is deep-rooted, which demands more comprehensive intervention and attention from all and sundry.

Structural Violence

An attempt to use Galtung's theory of structural violence to expand on the discussion of corruption and conflict in Nigeria brings to the fore, the definition of structural violence as mentioned by the theorist.

In the journal of peace research, Johan Galtung (1969) defined "structural violence," as "social structures-economic, political, legal, religious, and cultural-that stop individuals, groups and societies from reaching their full potential" (pp. 167-191). Within the context of this dissertation, the unequal access to resources, to political power, to education, to health care, or to legal standing, are forms of structural violence that has kept Nigeria in the cycles of corruption and violence. In Nigeria, the struggle to reach full potential will continue as long as government is not committed and accountable to its people; and also the socio-economic and political processes continue to violate basic human needs. What right does an individual have to secure an oil refinery for himself? That is corruption right there. To Galtung, these are "unnecessary insults to basic human needs" (Galtung 1990). When people can no longer bear the burden of denial from the

society, they revolt against the government. When this happens, violence becomes the order of the day.

Violence, according to Galtung is not limited to just violent events. For instance, Nigerians are denied their basic human needs through violent socio-economic or political structures. As a result of this, some become traumatized, desperate to become wealthy through corrupt practices, violent activities and illegal means. Some Nigerian communities become less developed and ultimately, look really uninhabitable.

Galtung's structural violence means that, the most populous country in Africa, with oil wealth in abundance, will continue to experience poverty, because Nigerians live on less than \$US 1 per day, since majority of its resources are unevenly distributed. As bad as it sounds, despite Nigeria's richness in oil, the country still experiences fuel scarcity almost every year. While many may not know the importance of Nigeria's oil wealth, this dissertation informs its readers that, whenever there is a major crisis in Nigeria, it affects the price of oil in the international community. What is even more surprising and disturbing is that, the prices of oil in Nigeria always rise and never reduce, even when nations that do not have as much oil as Nigeria, have their prices cut down.

Johan Galtung expressed his views further on structural violence. According to Galtung, "if a person died from tuberculosis in the eighteenth century it would be hard to conceive of this as violence since it might have been quite unavoidable, but if he dies from it today, despite all the medical resources in the world then violence is present according to our definition" (Galtung, 1969 p. 168).

The above statement from Galtung is a logical example of structural violence in Nigeria. It is no longer a sorry tale that, in Nigeria today, people still die from minor diseases, and of course tuberculosis. This really, has no connection with unavailability of medical professionals, but it's due, largely to the fact that, some of the medical facilities in Nigeria have substandard equipment to function well. Often times, only public office holders and the very few wealthy Nigerians travel abroad for health related concerns. When a country is faced with the aforementioned, structural violence is inevitable and becomes extremely problematic; which will no doubt lead to direct conflict.

Nigeria is impacted by structural violence, a form of dysfunction where social structures prevent certain groups of people from having access to basic human rights, like education and healthcare. For instance, according to the World Bank, people with incomes at less than about \$1 per day) will be considered as a manifestation of economic inequality resulting from structural violence. In Nigeria, according to a 2006 Human Development Report, "70.8 per cent of the population lives on less than one dollar a day and 92.4 per cent on less than two dollars a day. To apply the theoretical framework of structural violence, then, what structures have unequal distributions of power to create this state of inequality in Nigeria?

On average, "only 48 per cent of the total population of Nigeria has access to an improved water supply. Only 44 per cent of the population uses adequate sanitary facilities. In some schools in Nigeria, as many as 500 children have been found sharing one latrine" (UNICEF, 2006). On average, only "30 per cent of children under-five have their births registered in Nigeria. UNICEF estimates that eight million children are at risk

of being trafficked or exploited for labor. The HIV prevalence rate is 4.4 per cent (Federal Ministry of Health, 2006), with only 18.3 per cent of adolescents aged 15-24 having correct knowledge about HIV transmission (National HIV/ AIDS & Reproductive Health Survey, 2003). Only 13 per cent of children aged 12 months are considered fully immunized against the major childhood diseases (2003 Coverage Survey) and only six per cent of children under-five sleep under an insecticide treated bed net to protect them against Malaria. Upon investigation, structural violence yields a complex picture of inequality as it considers economic factors (income inequality in Nigeria which allows the rich to get richer and the poor, poorer on a daily basis). Any country where the distribution of income is heavily concentrated in the hands of the few is an embodiment of underdevelopment and poor economic management.

Relevance of Theories

In this section, attempt was made to match the theories presented, for the purposes of revealing its significance, and most importantly, how each of the theories used, exceptionally contributed to the understanding of the problem of this research.

In the field of conflict analysis and resolution, theories are important tools that help shed light on certain aspects of global issues like, corruption and conflict in Nigeria. While some scholars may have argued against the premise of this research on corruption as a contributing factor to the unending conflict, poverty, crime and human rights abuses in Nigeria, theoretical frameworks presented in this research, have provided unique impetus to a growing body of knowledge that produces substance within the field of conflict resolution.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework and Research Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study is to understand the perceptions and, lived experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict. This chapter describes and explains the research rationale for a methodology that utilizes a qualitative phenomenological approach. This chapter is organized into the following sections: appropriateness of research method and research design, research question, paradigms (Interpretivism), phenomenological process, research procedures, sampling, population, criteria and data collection and procedures, validity and reliability, ethical issues.

Research Methodology Appropriateness

Qualitative research is a “situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3).

The purpose of this research study is to examine the lived experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict. The appropriate methodology for this inquiry is qualitative and descriptive, characterized by its aims (means for better understanding of human experience), which relates to understanding some aspect of social life, and its

methods, which in general generate words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis.

Qualitative research is difficult to define clearly. It has no theory or paradigm that is distinctively its own ... Nor does qualitative research have a distinct set of methods or practices that are entirely its own. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 6)

As the quote above indicates, qualitative research is broad and encompasses a wide range of approaches and methods found within different research disciplines. Despite this multiplicity and the sometimes-conflicting nature of underlying assumptions about its inherent qualities, a number of qualitative scholars and writers have attempted to capture the essence or defining characteristics of qualitative research (Barbour, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Flick, 2009; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Holloway and Wheeler, 2010; Silverman, 2011). At a general level, qualitative research is often described as a naturalistic, interpretative approach, concerned with exploring phenomena 'from the interior' (Flick, 2009) and taking the perspectives and accounts of research participants as a starting point.

In qualitative research, the focus is on obtaining descriptions of experience through first-person narrative accounts in informal and formal conversations and interviews. As Eckert (1998) succinctly puts it:

Qualitative research is a multi-methods approach to the study of social interactions in natural settings. It involves the collection and analysis of empirical information from multiple sources such as first-person accounts, life stories, themes, visual records, semi-structured and open-ended interviews, informal and formal observations, biographical and autobiographical materials, among others.

Through comprehensive collection and analysis, the intent and purpose is to make sense of, or interpret, the phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them. According to Patton (1978), qualitative research is an understanding that focuses on the meaning of human behavior, the context of social interaction, empathic understanding of the subjective (mental, nonobjective) states, and the connection between subjective states and behavior (p. 7). Patton also points out that participants are chosen because they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon the researcher is studying. By doing this, the researcher seeks to understand the experience as the person experiences it. Giorgi (1971), Habermas (1972), Heidegger (1977), and Hall (1994) explicate this perspective in their various works.

I chose phenomenology as a qualitative approach because it addresses and provides this study with an understanding of people's experiences on corruption and conflict. Unlike a quantitative study, I have not sought to demonstrate or measure the effect of corruption and conflict on Nigerian citizens.

Paradigms or Worldviews

Qualitative research is largely associated with interpretivism. Within the qualitative research tradition, this interpretive research seeks from "individuals their understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences-meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories. The goal of research then, is to rely as much as possible on the participant's' view of the situation" (Creswell 2007, p.

20).

Interpretivism (Bryman, 1988; Holloway & Wheeler, 2010; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Willis, 2007), as a key development and tradition in qualitative research, was first linked to the writing of Immanuel Kant, who in 1781 published the *Critique of Pure Reason*. According to Kant (2013):

There are ways of knowing about the world other than direct observation and that people use these all the time. Perception relates not only to the senses but also to human interpretations of what the senses tell us. As such, knowledge of the world is based on ‘understanding’, which arises from reflecting on what happens, not just from having had particular experiences. Knowing and knowledge therefore transcend basic empirical enquiry. (p. 11)

Wilhelm Dilthey’s writing during the 1860s-70s also contributed to the development of interpretivist thinking and the qualitative research tradition. In his (*verstehen* in his native German), he emphasized the importance of ‘understanding’ and of studying people’s ‘lived experiences’, which occur within a particular historical and social context. He also argued that self-determination and human creativity play very important roles in guiding our actions. He therefore proposed that social research should explore lived experiences in order to reveal the connection between the social, cultural and historical aspects of people’s lives and to see the context in which particular actions take place” (Ormston et al. 2013, p. 13).

Following the above line of thought, this study placed emphasis and value on human interpretation of their experiences on corruption and conflict; and the significance

of both participants' and the investigator's interpretations and understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Phenomenological Research Model

Phenomenology as a qualitative methodology is a “philosophy, a method, and an approach” (Patton, 1990). As a philosophy, phenomenology concerns the phenomenon of human consciousness (Von Eckartsberg, 1986; Moustakas, 1994). As a scientific research methodology, phenomenological research focuses on the meanings of human experiences in situations as they spontaneously occur in the course of daily life (Von Eckartsberg, 1986). A phenomenon can be an excitement, a feeling, anticipation, a link, or an entity such as a program, an organization, or a culture. Phenomenologists ask the question: “What is the essence of experience of this phenomenon for those who experience it? (Patton, 1990)” Phenomenology seeks to expose the implicit structure and meaning of such experiences. It is the search for the “essence of things” that cannot be revealed by ordinary observation (Sanders, 1982; Moustakas, 1994).

According to Creswell (2006), “phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon (within the context of this research, what is experienced by participants are chaos, poverty, crime, human rights abuse from corruption and conflict), that has plagued Nigeria for a very long time.

The basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence (a “grasp of the very nature of the thing,” van Manen, 1990, p. 177). To this end, qualitative researchers identify a phenomenon (an “object” of human experience; van Manen, 1990, p. 163). This human

experience may be phenomena such as insomnia, being left out, anger, grief, or undergoing coronary artery bypass surgery (Moustakas, 1994).

Manen (1990) insists that phenomenology is a human science since the subject matter is always the structures of the meaning of lived human experience. He further explains:

Phenomenological human science is the study of lived or existential meanings; it attempts to describe and interpret these meanings to a certain degree of depth and richness. In this focus upon meaning, phenomenology differs from some other social or human sciences which may focus not on meanings but on statistical relationships among variables, on the predominance of social opinions, or on the occurrence or frequency of certain behaviors, etc. Rather, phenomenology attempts to explicate the meanings as we live them in our everyday existence, our life world. (p. 11).

This study of the lived experiences of Nigerian citizen on corruption and conflict followed Moustakas' phenomenological research framework. I approached selected participants who narrated and described to me their lived experiences of corruption and conflict in Nigeria. Using this approach, the intent and purposes centers on a balanced understanding and description of corruption and conflict in Nigeria.

Phenomenological Process

According to Moustakas (1994), there are four general processes of phenomenological method. They are "epoche, eidetic or phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis of textures and structures" (p. 100). These four

processes, based on existing literatures, represent procedures for doing phenomenological analysis. They are discussed below, and integrated into this study to follow the principles and guidelines of qualitative research tradition.

Epoche

Epoche is the process to temporarily suspend the researcher's existing personal biases, beliefs, preconceptions and assumptions about the phenomenon in order to get straight to the "pure and unencumbered vision of what it essentially is" (Chamberlain, 1974, cited in Sanders, 1982), or simply put, to go "back to the things themselves" (Crotty, 1998).

Moustakas (1994) points out:

Although the Epoche is rarely perfectly achieved, the energy, attention, and work involved in reflection and self-dialogue, the intention that underlies the process, and the attitude and frame of reference, significantly reduce the influence of preconceived thoughts, judgments, and biases. Further, regular practice of the Epoche process increases one's competency in achieving a presupposition less state and in being open to receive whatever appears in consciousness, as such. (p. 90).

Epoche is also referred to as "bracketing" – a metaphorical use of the mathematical term. If one wants to bring another part of an equation/observation into focus, other parts are bracketed, leaving them constant but out of consideration (Sanders, 1982). Bracketing involves a phenomenological reduction, a process to develop a non-judgmental study that will not impede the perception of the phenomenon at the heart of

the study (Husserl, 1964).

During the course of this investigative and interpretive research, preconceived notions and biases associated with the experiences of corruption and conflict in Nigeria were recognized and set aside. I described my previous experiences with corruption and conflict in Chapter 1, Autobiographical backgrounds. I achieved this step by interviewing myself in the same manner that I interviewed my co-researchers. I then minimized my biases through reflection over and over again. I approached my co-researchers directly with an open mind and a fresh start on corruption and conflict. Although the process was a difficult task to do, I had the chance to review all of the interfering thoughts and feelings. In essence, the epoche is a way of putting aside prejudgments and biases.

In an attempt to create a “bracketing mind-gap” (Simon, 2011, p. 41), this dissertation followed the footsteps below, excerpted from: *Simon (2011), Dissertation and Scholarly Research: Recipes for Success. Seattle, WA: Dissertation Success, LLC.*

1. Write a central idea or question in the center of a blank sheet of paper; you could also draw a meaningful symbol that represents this construct. This central term or image should capture the problem being investigated.
2. Brainstorm other terms that relate to this central concept, and write them as branches emanating from the main idea.
3. Add sub-branches that include your beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, and views of each word or construct in each sub-branch.
4. Draw connections among the various terms you have written as you see them, based on how you believe or feel each of these terms interact.

5. Continue jotting down terms and drawing connections among them, without pausing to edit yourself, until you have exhausted your ideas about this central topic. Use additional sheets of paper if necessary.
6. Re-read your mind map of concepts and their connections; on a separate sheet of paper, list the connections that recur or appear most prominent.
7. Create another mind-map with the same main branches and think of how a person with an opposing view might view these terms and their interconnections. You may wish to research these views or discuss them with a person you know holds opposing views to yours.

Phenomenological or Eidetic Reduction

Following epoche comes the eidetic reduction, which “involves the movement from objects as facts to objects as exemplars (essences). In this process, particular features of a phenomenon are reduced or set aside so that note can be taken of that which shows itself as universal” (Ehrich, 1999, p. 25).

In phenomenological reduction, the task is to remember and describe feelings, thoughts, and images of the experience just as it appears to one. Usually, this task begins after the collection of raw data. The purpose is to reduce descriptions into horizons and themes of the experience. In this step, the procedures include: bracketing, horizontalization, delimiting, clustering of themes and textural description of the experience.

Eidetic reduction is the process to rid the phenomenon from its seeming appearances to reveal the “essential” (the word “eido” a Greek word meaning “image,

“idea” or “form”, which means the “essence” of things). It involves a process of going beyond, behind, or underneath the conventional patterns of thoughts and action in order to expose the meaning structure (Sanders, 1982; Moustakas, 1994).

Brooks (1980) describes eidetic reduction as extracting the attar of a rose: “As each petal of the blossom is removed, another is fully revealed. The layers of the petals, blended one with the other into a potpourri, yield the attar—the essence of the rose. Each layer revealed by the eidetic reduction successively yields experience, the reflection of experience, until the invariants of experience yield the essence of meaning, that which is constant.” (Brooks, 1980, cited in Sanders, 1982).

Bracketing consists of suspending ones ‘natural attitude’, or our taken- for- granted approach to everyday living informed by culture and education, including our “past knowledge of the phenomenon encountered” (Giorgi, 1997, p. 240). McKenna (1997) succinctly captures this in saying: “...epoché then is a way of making the transition from our more normal way of considering consciousness and the world to the properly phenomenological way of considering them” (P. 177).

The next step in phenomenological reduction is horizontalization, where all the meanings are considered to have equal value and importance. By giving equal value, this process allows the researcher to fully describe how participants of this study perceive and describe their experiences on corruption and conflict in Nigeria.

In delimiting, participant’s statements that have little importance or relevance to the essence of this research are eliminated. Only the invariant and non-repetitive are reserved. The clustering aspect involves putting together meaningful statements

according to the commonalities of each statement.

In thematizing, transcripts were read a number of times in order to achieve a holistic and intuitive understanding of the phenomenon under study. Then, transcripts were divided into discrete segments of expressions of the participant's experience. These are called Natural Meaning Units (NMUs...see Schweitzer 1998), which requires moving back and forth from units to the lists of raw data until invariant constituents of the experience have clearly emerged.

The textural description is the final phase of phenomenological reduction. For the purposes of creating textural description for research participants, I incorporated individual's senses, feelings, perceptions, qualities, themes, and meanings to reveal and describe participant's experiences of corruption and conflict in Nigeria.

Imaginative Variation

Imaginative variation is the next step in phenomenological reduction process. The imaginative variation is a procedure used to reveal possible meanings through utilizing imagination, varying the frames of reference, employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions. The aim is to discover the underlying and precipitating factors accounting the experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Imaginative variation complements eidetic reduction. The former eliminates the irrelevant, while the latter expands the scope of inspection to discover the veiled and the hidden.

Husserl (1931) points to how the process evolves:

The Eidos, the pure essence, can be exemplified intuitively in the data of experience, data of perception, memory, and so forth, but just as readily... in the play of fancy we bring spatial shapes of one sort or another to birth, melodies, social happenings, and so forth, or live through fictitious acts of everyday life (Moustakas, 1994, p. 98).

Imaginative variation is targeted toward meanings, and it depends on intuition as a way of integrating structures into essences. It is here that the researcher seeks possible meanings through frame of reference, positions and different angles. The aim is to arrive at structural descriptions and factors that account for the experience. Through imaginative variation, the critical reflection, themes and structures of the experience are developed.

Synthesis of Textures and Structures

The final step in the phenomenological research is the natural incorporation of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement on the essences of the lived experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict as a whole. It is here that the researcher immerses himself or herself in the data until meaningful quotes and statements, based on the phenomenological experiences of participants are created (Moustakas, 1994, p. 100).

Research Procedures

In this section, research procedures utilized in preparing and undertaking this research is presented. In this section, the twenty participants of this study are described. In addition, I included how participants are located and selected. Also, included in this

section are the methods of collection, organization and analysis, and synthesis of the data.

Sample

Following the approval of this study from Nova Southeastern University's Institutional Review Board, I identified, selected and interviewed the participants for this study.

In an attempt to avoid complications in this research, I did not think I could refer participants as "co-researchers" (a common usage in phenomenological traditions Moustakas, 1994), because my understanding of co-researcher by definition means; someone who is working with you (a researcher) on a research, as against someone who has no knowledge of my research. As a result, throughout this study, I have used participants and not co-researchers.

According to Polit and Beck (2004), "population is defined as the aggregate or totality of those conforming to a set of specifications" (p. 50). Based on participant's willingness and availability from Nigeria's commercial nerve center in Lagos, 20 adults, ranged in age from 15 to 60 years, were targeted as participants for this study. All participants met the criteria of inclusion in this phenomenological study in that they were all over the age of 14 at the time of interview. Participants varied based on age, ranging from 15-60 years old, and were chosen to geographically represent the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. In trying to garner the most geographically diverse population, I ensured that no group represented more than others, and made sure that all participants communicated with me in English Language, since English is the official language spoken in Nigeria. The participants each also had different religious beliefs which ranged

from Islam, Christianity and Atheist. Also, each participant had different marital statuses which ranged from married, single, and divorced. During the interview process, each participant was advised that they would receive a pseudonym in the final analysis, and was asked whether they would prefer a name that is attributed to their respective religions or based on their ethnic backgrounds. Requests for specific pseudonyms were honored where applicable. A table of demographic information is presented on the next page.

Prior to selecting participants, I explained the purpose of the study and described the nature of participation expected from them. I selected 20 participants and provided them with the interview time and place. The interview was held at participant's place of convenience. Fieldwork was conducted in the period between July 23rd and August 28th and 10 female and 10 male were interviewed in the Lagos Metro area. For ease of access, I targeted mostly people with good understanding and command of the language widely spoken in Nigeria. The Lagos Metro area was utilized for reasons of access and patterns of development. For instance, given the relatively short research period and the daily traffic jams in Lagos, it was important that I had easy access and proximity to the research site. Second, Lagos State is the most commercialized part of Nigeria, which is immensely overcrowded. From all walks of life, there is everyone in Lagos State, because it is where everything happens in Nigeria.

Due to the general suspicion that many Nigerians have of anyone "official" and the current political landscape, I had to be conscious of my safety in terms of the information I revealed or requested. This methodological decision was further reinforced when I was asked by some of the participants on a number of occasions if I was from the

government. In these instances, I told them that I was a student doing research for my final project.

Table 1:

Demographics of Participants

Name / Pseudonym	Age	Religion	Location	Ethnic Group	Marital History
Femi	37	Christian	Lagos	Yoruba	Married
Tolu	59	Christian	Lagos	Igbo	Divorced
Deola	44	Muslim	Lagos	Hausa	Married
James	34	Christian	Lagos	Yoruba	Married
Raymond	45	Atheist	Lagos	Igbo	Single
Maryam	39	Christian	Lagos	Hausa	Married
Nduka	33	Atheist	Lagos	Yoruba	Divorced
Phillips	26	Christian	Lagos	Igbo	Single
Tinuke	21	Atheist	Lagos	Hausa	Married
Mary	16	Muslim	Lagos	Yoruba	Single
Dukor	19	Christian	Lagos	Igbo	Single
Alani	57	Muslim	Lagos	Hausa	Divorced
Segun	20	Christian	Lagos	Yoruba	Single
Sheriff	26	Muslim	Lagos	Igbo	Single
Jemila	20	Christian	Lagos	Hausa	Married
Ambali	17	Muslim	Lagos	Yoruba	Single
Muinat	21	Christian	Lagos	Igbo	Single

Victor	57	Muslim	Lagos	Hausa	Single
Ibrahim	19	Christian	Lagos	Yoruba	Single
Qudus	15	Muslim	Lagos	Igbo	Single

For confidentiality reasons, names were generated randomly, and do not apply to anyone with similar names.

Data Collection

Qualitative research is relevant when a “problem or issue needs to be explored” (Creswell, 2007 p. 39). During the course of this dissertation, data collection was provided and collated through several rounds of open-ended, semi-structured and in-depth interviews. Participants arrived at site of interview (*see Appendix C: Lagos State University Permission Letter*), at different time and hour; and were interviewed privately for 1 to 2 hours. After participants were identified and approached, I described and explained to them the purpose of this study, by requesting for their participation in this research. Once they showed interest, I emailed them copies of the consent paperwork to review and indicated that if they had questions or concerns about the process, that I would address those issues prior to obtaining their signatures. After I addressed questions and concerns, I asked each participant to return the consent forms to me via email or USPS, and waited for their return. Once returned, I scheduled face-to-face interview with participants at their most convenient time.

Upon making contact with participants, I reviewed the purpose of this study, and answered questions they had regarding procedure or protocol. I reminded them that their participation was voluntary and this ensured that the participants did not feel pressured

into participating in this study. I did not pressure the participants to reveal any information that they were uncomfortable with, and at the culmination of each interview (after the recording had ended and we were discussing logistical arrangements for the member checking stage), I asked if the participants had stated anything that they wished that I would withhold from the final analysis. Some of the participants who had mentioned colleagues, spouses, friends and families by name asked to have this information redacted and protected in the research manuscript. Another participant also asked; “please do not mention my oga’s (oga is a pidgin word, which means boss) name, and as well, my location.

In a qualitative research, several methods of data collection exists; and “interviews are among the best suited and most commonly used instruments” (Kumar 2005; Nohl 2009). According to Kumar, “interviewing can be very flexible, when the interviewer has the freedom to formulate questions as they come to mind around the issue being investigated; on the other hand, it can be inflexible, when the investigator has to keep strictly to the questions decided beforehand” (2005 p. 123).

For the exploration of Nigerians experience on corruption and conflict, data collections were carried out primarily, through narratives in a semi-structured anonymous interview setting, designed with open-ended questions. This was deemed appropriate based on the following considerations provided by Nohl (2009) & Creswell (2005). They are as follows:

1. The semi-structured design gives the participants’ ample time and scope to express their diverse views and allows the researcher to react to and follow up on

emerging ideas and unfolding events (Nohl 2009).

2. Results obtained through semi-structured interviews can be compared among each other since all participants are required to express their views about the same general themes (Nohl 2009).
3. Semi-structured interviews allow not only for assessing the participants' opinions, statements and convictions, they also allow to elicit narratives about their personal experiences (Nohl 2009).
4. Open-ended questions allow the participants to freely voice their experiences and minimize the influence of the researcher's attitudes and previous findings (Creswell 2005).
5. Anonymity was guaranteed in order to give the participants the opportunity to freely express their views and encourage them to also address politically delicate issues.

As far as the numbers of participants are concerned, I conducted interviews with 20 participants. The idea behind the number of participants selected for this study, points to the fact that, during the course of this research, there was nothing new worthy of development as far as the purpose for a detailed analysis was concerned.

According to Bogdan & Biklen (1992), the “researcher enters the world of the people he or she plans to study, gets to know, be known, and trusted by them, and systematically keeps a detailed written record of what is heard and observed” (p.112). As the principal investigator, I selected participants based on their willingness and availability from different Nigerian communities in Lagos, to partake in a research

centered on issues that bring virtually, many Nigerians together, but not in agreement as to how corruption and conflict could be tackled and managed.

In an attempt to gain access to participants for this dissertation, participants were determined and selected using a technique known as snowball sampling. This guiding principle of sampling in qualitative research, offered me the opportunity to ask participants, to suggest to me, others who might be willing to be interviewed. Through this technique, Rowland Atkinson & John Flint (2004) emphasized that, “snowball sampling gather research subjects through the identification of an initial subject who is used to provide the names of other actors” (p. 4). This method, according to Atkinson & Flint (2002), is “employed to overcome the problems associated with understanding and sampling concealed populations”(p.4).

The snowball method is a form of purposeful sampling in qualitative research that “typically proceeds after a study begins and occurs when the researcher asks participants to recommend other individuals to study” (Creswell 2005:206). Within the context of this research, availability of participants was never a problem, since the discourse on corruption and conflict in Nigeria remains a national issue, and people have always been interested. What posed a problem during the course of this research came as a result of timing, since the majority of Nigerian population is hard-working and always looking for ways to survive the harsh realities of corruption and conflict they live in. Participants were very open to discuss their experiences on corruption, without attaching excessive emotions on the study under discourse.

Due to the fact that some populations are challenging to reach or hidden because

they exhibit some kind of social stigma, illicit or illegal behaviors, or other trait that makes them atypical and/or socially marginalized, the snowball sampling, which is a non-probability based sampling technique is used to gain access to such populations. As far as this research is concerned, two steps were created to identify one or more units in the desired population.

Since corruption is the focus of this research, my first attempt was to try and find one or more units from the population I am studying (Nigerian citizens who have experienced corruption). Because I was mindful of the difficulty in finding just a small number of individuals willing to identify themselves and take part in this research, I started with just one or two Nigerian citizens (one or two units).

Due to the sensitivity of this study, I asked the initial participant who agreed to take part in this research to help identify other participants that may be willing to take part. As an alternative, I also asked the initial participant to pass along flyers, emails, and information sheets, for the purposes of preventing a breach in confidentiality or an invasion of privacy. For ethical reasons, these new research participants came forward themselves rather than being identified by the initial participant. In this respect, the initial participants helped to identify additional units that will make up my sample. This process continued until sufficient units have been identified to meet the desired sample size.

The main questions asked during the interview were a variation of Creswell's (2007) primary questions of: "What have you experienced in terms of the phenomenon? [And] What contexts or situations have typically influenced or affected your experiences of the phenomenon?" (p.61). These questions were aimed at developing a better

understanding of the research questions, which were:

- RQ₁: What is the shared lived experience of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict?
- RQ₂: What is the essence of corruption in the day-to-day activities of life of Nigerians?
- RQ₃: What does it feel like to have experienced corruption and conflict?
- RQ₄: What does it feel like to have personally given bribes to expedite action on a particular matter?
- RQ₅: What meanings do Nigerians find in their experiences on corruption and conflict?

Data Collection Procedures

In any phenomenological research study, there are underlying specifics researchers must strictly adhere to. Based on these specifics on phenomenological tradition, the ideal data collection procedures as reflected in this study, shows clarity, impartiality, reliability and validity. As a result, to produce evidence to answer the research questions, I initiated the following:

1. Engage in the Epoche process as a way of creating an environment and camaraderie for conducting the interview: Before I engaged participants, I set aside my preconceptions and biases. I had to be methodical to be able to set aside time to Epoche. I did enter each of the interviews with a renewed and an unbiased mind. This stance allowed me to report as closely as possible what the participants told me. For instance, as much as I understood the negativity of corruption in

Nigeria, I refrained from any conclusive statement when interviewing participants who have experienced corruption in one way or the other. I remember vividly, one participant who displayed emotional feelings when describing her experience was given recognition to express her thoughts and views while I listened on without interference.

2. Bracket the question: I bracketed the research question. I also focused on the research topic and question exclusively without any interference. Having arranged a pre-interview with the research participant(s) individually, I explained to them the purpose of the pre-interview is to help both of us explore and isolate my preconceptions about my experiences of corruption and conflict in Nigeria. During the interview process, I took the time to answer participants' questions thoroughly and frankly, just to ensure that the research is not a one-sided information gathering exercise provided by the participants only.
3. Conduct the qualitative research interview to obtain descriptions of the experiences: I engaged 20 adults' participants in the interview. I informed participants of time and place in advance. Each interview session was tape recorded and transcribed. I asked for perception and description of experience. I asked open-ended questions with informal dialogue about participants. Each of the interviews lasted approximately one hour. I also did follow-up interviews for clarification purposes. All of the interviews conducted were face-to-face interviews and tape-recorded with individual participants. In addition, I used verbatim language for the participant's narratives.

Organizing, Analyzing and Synthesizing of Data

In an attempt to follow the traditions and procedures of analysis in a phenomenological study, this research followed Moustakas' (1994) modification of the Van Kaam method to organize and examine the data gathered:

1. **Listing and Preliminary Grouping:** List every expression relevant to the experience (Horizontalization).
2. **Reduction and Elimination to Determine the Invariant Constituents:** Test each expression for two requirements:
 - a. Does it contain a moment of the experience that is a necessary and sufficient constituent for understanding it?
 - b. Is it possible to abstract and label? If so, it is a horizon of the experience. Expressions not meeting the above requirements are eliminated. Overlapping, repetitive, and vague expressions are also eliminated or presented in more exact descriptive terms.
 - c. The horizons that remain are the invariant constituents of the experience.
3. **Clustering and Thematizing the Invariant Constituents:** Cluster the related invariant constituents: Cluster the related invariant constituents into a core theme of the experience.
4. **Final identification of the Invariant Constituents and Themes by Application:** Validation check of the invariant constituents and their accompanying theme, against the complete record of the research participant.
 - a. Are they expressed explicitly in the complete transcription?

- b. Are they compatible if not explicitly expressed?
- c. If they are not explicit or compatible, they are not relevant to participants experience and should be deleted.

5. **Individual Textural Descriptions:** Using the relevant validated invariant constituents and themes, construct for each participant an individual textural description of the experience. Include verbatim examples from transcribed interview.
6. **Individual Structural Description:** Construct for each participant an individual structural description of the experience based on the individual textural description and imaginative variation.
7. **Textural-Structural Description:** Construct for each research participant a textural structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience, incorporating the invariant constituents and themes.
8. **Composite Description or Synthesis:** From the individual textural-structural descriptions, develop a composite description or synthesis of the meanings and essences of the experience, representing the group as a whole.

In this chapter I discussed in detail, research methodologies and paradigms (interpretivism). I also discussed the process of research procedures (Sampling, Sampling criteria, population, data collection and procedures). I also reviewed the methods of organizing and examining the data. In Chapter 4, I will show how I used Moustakas' (1994) Van Kaam's method of analysis of phenomenological data for analyzing the data.

Credibility and Validity

Theoretical validity and reliability in research studies are co-existent in that validity represents accuracy and authenticity, and reliability represents consistency and dependability (Neuman, 2003; Salkind, 2003; Simon, 2006). Validity in qualitative research focuses on the plausible means, cumulative impact of combining details, and connectivity in disparate details (Neuman, 2003). Reliability in qualitative research concentrates on recording the truth of an observation, valuing an evolutionary process, and collecting data through diverse methods that can provide new alternative views to the subject matter (Neuman, 2003).

From an interpretivist perspective, validity refers to how well the research method investigates what it intends to (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003; Mason, 2002) and the extent to which the researcher gained full access to informant's knowledge and meaning (Remenyi et al, 1998). For the purposes of ensuring that research findings were consistent with the statements of the participants, I employed a determined process of "member checking" (Pollo et al. 1997). According to Pollio et al, "phenomenological interviews naturally lend themselves to member checking as meaning is made through mutual dialogue" (p. 26). During the interview session, I did a lot of clarifications just to ensure I heard the right words, phrases and sentences as expressed by participants to describe or share their experiences of corruption and conflict. In the process of phenomenological reduction, I forwarded to participants, their textural and structural descriptions and asked for their input to avoid any kind of misinterpretation of words spoken by participants.

In terms of reliability and credibility, I employed a rigorous audit trail throughout

the analysis process (Creswell, 2007), for the purposes of adding and maintaining methodological rigor to this research study. According to Sandelowski (1986), a study's findings are: "auditable when another researcher can clearly follow the decision trail used by the investigator in the study. In addition, another researcher could arrive at the same or comparable but not contradictory conclusions given the researcher's data, perspective and situation" (In Carcary 2009, pp. 11-24).

Since it is my responsibility to convince members of my dissertation committee that this research on human subjects has been methodical, impartial and well intentioned, it is important to reveal every aspect of this study that led to emergent findings, using my manuscript. I began with my personal bracketing statement, continued to include the protocol transcripts, the transcripts coded for formulated meanings which included the horizontalization, the documents containing both individual and group thematic clustering of horizons, the textural and structural descriptions for each participant, and my personal memos during the process.

Reliability is largely concerned with whether a study can be repeated (Kvale, 1996; Lee and Baskerville, 2003; Mason, 2002; Yin, 2003). In the traditional natural and life sciences, reliability is an issue of considerable importance. However, qualitative researchers recognize the difficulty in reproducing social phenomena because of the challenges involved in replicating the precise conditions under which evidence was originally collected (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). For instance, assuming I researched in a later similar study, it is very unlikely I would provide identical responses from participants. This is because having reflected on the initial research process, their

understanding of the key issues may have further developed or changed. However, if similar studies were conducted with considerable care, one would anticipate that the findings would not be entirely different. Hence, the issue of reliability needs to be conceptualized differently when considering qualitative studies.

From an interpretivist perspective, reliability is concerned with demonstrating that the researcher has not invented or misrepresented data or been careless in data recording or analysis (Mason, 2002). Lewis and Ritchie (2003) suggest that the researcher can enhance reliability by reflecting on and outlining in a transparent way the procedures that led to the research findings; by checking through his/her interpretations; by carrying out the fieldwork consistently and ensuring all informants have sufficient opportunity to discuss their experiences; by systematically analyzing the evidence; and by supporting interpretations with evidence and offering a balanced perspective.

Ethical Issues

Ethical issues are important when conducting qualitative research. In order to produce quality research that involves human subjects, all researchers must be guided by the basic principles and guidelines of research. Since this study involved a sample of human subjects, this researcher was guided by the Belmont Report which insists on the respect of persons or research participants; the principle of beneficence; and justice or fair treatment of all subjects (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979).

Creswell (2007) contends that, “throughout all the phases of the research process, we are sensitive to ethical considerations. These are especially important as we negotiate entry to the field site of the research; involve participants in our study; gather personal

emotional data that reveal the details of life; and ask participants to give considerable time to our projects” (p. 44).

This research was presented to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at NOVA Southeastern University for the purposes of obtaining approval since “human science researchers are guided by ethical principles on research with human participants” (p. 109). Each participant was provided with an informed consent form that described the essence and nature of this study. Besides, participants signed and approved of the study based on their willingness and convenience to participate.

This research is important because it addressed corruption; an immoral act that has plagued the nation for many years. For this study on the phenomenology of Nigerian corruption, this research addressed many issues, and explained to research participants their roles. For example, gaining informed consent is problematic, if it is not clear what the participant are consenting to, and where participation begin and ends (Miller and Bell, 2003). As a result, this research emphasized to its participants, credible information that provided them with rules and guidelines that shapes the conduct of a phenomenological study.

The participants in the research study volunteered to be a part of this research, and also were informed of choices that best suit their interests. For this particular project, the participants were aware they could withdraw any time they wish. This has also been mentioned by Moustakas (1994) who emphasized the need that “co-researchers were free to withdraw at any time” (p. 110). Moreover, the confidentiality also is important in this research project.

As Rubin and Rubin (2005) puts it, when you promise interviewees that you will not reveal their information, identity, or link comments with participants' names, it is imperative to keep that promise (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). If the researcher for some reason in some situations may not be able to keep the information confidential, then the researcher must be straightforward with the research participants, and tell them. Also, it is important that the researcher inform the research participants about the psychological and emotional effects that this interview may cause to them, so that they will have the chance to decide whether to participate or withdraw from this research study.

This study contributes and complements existing qualitative and quantitative facts on corruption. This research contributed to the field of knowledge in qualitative studies on corruption using a phenomenological approach. The results and findings of this research are interesting, because it lays a foundational basis for further studies.

A more important ethical issue is a philosophical one of representation. As the principal investigator, this dissertation is not focused on any kind of blaming game. Rather, its interest lies on informing Nigerians to connect to their positive values and visions that bring the country out of the shackles of corruption and conflict. It is not a hidden fact that, often time, citizens of a particular country are best suited to proffer solutions to their country, because they have more information based on their living experience, than an outsider who might have an underlying interest to fully disclose and resolve the issues that affect Nigeria as a nation.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation and Analysis

In this chapter, I present the findings of this research on the lived experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict using descriptions and analysis and synthesis of the participants' interviews. I also examined all of the steps of phenomenological reduction including epoche, bracketing, horizontalizing, and clustering meaning units into tentative themes. By this reductive process, I uncovered the essential themes of the lived experience of Nigerian citizens on corruption. As a tradition in phenomenological research, I have selected all twenty participants to reflect the essence of the lived experience on corruption and conflict in Nigeria. I also present the textural description, derived from the phenomenological reduction process, and the structural description, obtained from imaginative variation. I then present the composite textural description, the composite structural description, and the synthesis, based on raw data collected from all of the 20 participants. Interviews were succinct and lasted 20 minutes on average. A few participants elected to stop talking because they were tired and in some cases felt like their answers were insufficient. In other words, they spoke fast so they could attend to their survival mode of lifestyle (that is, to rush back to where they could make ends meet). All interviews were transcribed by the researcher "near verbatim," leaving out disfluences and side conversation, but including Pidgin English, slang terms, and local lingo.

I explain that the initial procedure of phenomenological reduction permits me to actively engage with the research in such a way that exhibits relevance and significance, as related to the research question. This is the epoche stage, which is centered on my

conscious attempt to set aside any preconceptions or biases relating to the research question. By doing so, I have engaged myself in bracketing the research by focusing only on the lived experience on corruption. Almost immediately, the horizontalizing process emerged through the utilization of all of the meaning units or phrases relevant to the experience on corruption and assigning equal value to them. For example, the following is a segment of one of the participant's interview expressing meaning units:

Farouk. The phrase: If you can't beat them, you join them-what does it mean to you?

Femi. I have served as a senior auditor for 8 years within the Lagos State Internal Revenue Service (LIRS) and still counting. By the way, LIRS is the major revenue generating Agency of the Lagos State Government saddled with the responsibility of collecting taxes. That said, I could not bear it any longer when I realized that younger and even newer colleagues, have built their respective homes, and have invested in multi-million projects and properties. I had nothing, and if I lost my job, I would have nothing to show for the number of years I served in the agency. Then, I would ask myself, if there was something wrong with me, or could it have been the same salary we all receive my colleagues have stretched thus far? Well, I knew it was not, and I made sure I was right. So, I joined the "big boys" of the LIRS to find out what was going on. As time went by, I learned the ways of doing things our own way, and not the way things are meant to be. Since the vast majority of tax revenues came from "pay as you earn" (PAYE) personal income tax withholding from formal businesses, we would falsify tax documents and illegally obtain money from our customers. Besides that, because we have access to

confidential information, we would permit some businesses and individuals to pay or not to pay their taxes, but we would collect our own cut from them. I couldn't beat them....so I joined them. Retired now, I could have sworn that if I didn't wake myself up, I would be left with nothing. If you ask me, what do I have to show for it? I would simply say a lot that can't be counted. In this country, we care about our own purse. Infact, we worry less when there are cases of corruption reported, as long as it does not affect or deny us our respective means of livelihoods. What bothers me the most about this country is when a "small thief" is caught in public and gets "jungle justice?"

Farouk. So, who is a small thief?

Femi. (Smiled). Well, within this context, a small thief is someone that engages in little or no value thievery in public. Such person, when caught, is either dealt with by angry mobs (depending on location of event) or sentenced to lengthy years in prison. I have seen worse things when angry mobs will even set the person on fire, or stone that person to death. That is barbarism of the highest order; and unfortunately, there are many big thieves like public officials, politicians, bankers, social elites, school directors and many more who have used their positions to acquire wealth through corrupt practices, and have not been punished or jailed. Even if they are caught, they will bribe their way out of trouble. I got used to this kind of life; and I'm sure it's not just me that feels this way for.

Farouk. So, what was that kind of life like for you?

Femi. Well, it's a kind of life that breeds uncertainty, greed and indiscipline. That is what corruption brings to one's doorstep. The fact that I have benefitted from corrupt

practices does not mean I do not want change to happen. Of course, I do. It took me a while before I joined the “big boys”. When I did, I was on a mission. After I got my mission accomplished, I retired, but the people I learned from are still there. Please note that I am responsible for my past and present behavior. However, I feel something needs to be done about corrupt practices in Nigeria. I had to retire because my actions and behaviors, with my colleagues have a lot of negatives vibes in it.

Farouk. Can you tell me more about the negative vibes?

Femi. When I joined the “big boys”, I became more vigilant as I tried to watch my back against backstabbing from my group. I was always nervous whenever a call came through on my phone, or when I received mails before opening them. In all, my conscience was always not settled, and at times, to make myself feel a little better, I would ask myself if I knew how much my boss and other officers have defrauded the agency, and I understood the reason they didn’t want to retire. Infact, some went as far as cutting their age to continue working for agency, because there is an age limit one is allowed to work in the government.

The meaning units are weighted equally and analyzed, along with the remaining meaning units in the interview. These segments are then reviewed for relevance to the research questions and repetition. As stated in previous chapter, the irrelevant and repetitious statements are removed. In this case, I am now left with the horizons of the experience to be sorted out into themes. So I now present the resulting horizons and tentative themes from above.

Since the vast majority of tax revenues came from “pay as you earn” (PAYE)

personal income tax withholding from formal businesses, we would falsify tax documents and illegally obtain money from our customers. Besides that, because we have access to confidential information, we would permit some businesses and individuals to pay or not to pay their taxes, but we would collect our own cut from them. I couldn't beat them....so I joined them. Retired now, I could have sworn that if I didn't wake myself up, I would be left with nothing. If you ask me, what do I have to show for it? I would simply say a lot that can't be counted. In this country, we care about our own purse. Infact, we worry less when there are cases of corruption reported, as long as it does not affect or deny us our respective means of livelihoods. What bothers me the most about this country is when a "small thief" is caught in public and gets "jungle justice?"

According to Moustakas (1994), in this process, the "human scientist determines the underlying structures of an experience by interpreting the originally given descriptions of the situation in which the experience occurs" (p.13). Through both the interpretation of direct quotes made by participants and the formulated meanings derived from those quotes, the structural descriptions are illuminated. Reviewing and analyzing the combined meanings and themes alongside the structural descriptions helps the essence to be revealed. Through a process of writing and rewriting, phenomenological reports of the essential themes were created with a strong orientation to the foundational inquiry, "what are the shared lived experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict?" In summary, their lives are characterized by the following themes listed and discussed below:

Themes

The clarifications of the themes that are essential constituents of the lived experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption are presented based on participants responses. These themes are also the lived experience common to each of the participant's description. Five themes were uncovered in the phenomenological reduction of the data. They include the following:

1. Encountering bribery
2. Perceiving a culture of greed
3. Perceiving a culture of impunity
4. Perceiving a culture of impropriety
5. Consequences of no accountability

From the composite textural descriptions of each of the participants and use of imaginative variation, a composite structural description representing the participants as a whole is constructed. This process of phenomenological gives a descriptive account of the underlying essences and meanings to demonstrate how the participants in this research as a group experience what they experienced. I include direct quotations from participants to support the explication.

Theme 1: Encountering Bribery

A common theme among the participants is “encountering bribery.” The theme “encountering bribery” shed light into better understanding the research question of what is the shared lived experience of corruption and conflict in Nigeria. This theme provided clarity as it exposed participant's experiences when they revealed and shared their

beliefs, opinions, ideals, and values. Many of the participants perceive bribery as a means to survive the harsh realities of the living conditions in Nigeria. For example, one of participants stated:

“As an auditor who is disciplined and committed to doing her job, I have rejected as many offers as possible from different companies to cover fraudulent activities. For example, because these companies know auditors do not earn that much in salaries, some of us are offered huge amount of cash, a car and a house. All these gifts are very tempting to us. Even if one is paid a high salary, earning extras does not hurt. But one has to be disciplined to not accept bribes or gifts. If I don’t accept bribes, what about other auditors who will, and have shown interest (Deola, age 44)

This experience may cause one to feel the temptation of accepting bribes knowing full well there may be consequences at some point for such behavior. Similarly, another participant added:

“Because I was disappointed and frustrated considering the number of times I failed a course, I had to bribe my way out of school. Simply, I showered the instructor with gift items, brought him lunch from my pocket money, and as well bribed him with money, just to allow me graduate. In this country, it is not always about how intelligent and book smart one is, you must “pass through school, and as well, allow school to pass through you”. I learned that really late. Otherwise, I would have graduated earlier; and most importantly with excellent grades. (Sheriff, age 26)

Corrupt practices occur at all levels of human interaction in Nigeria. Because corrupt behaviors have eroded the institutional capacity of government and ministries to deliver quality public services such as education, health, and infrastructure, ordinary poor Nigerian citizens, continue to perceive their living standards as worsening and stagnant. As a result, many are open to illicit ways to make ends meet. As one participant explained:

“In a nutshell, through a candidate who was also sitting for the same exams, I met a WAEC official in charge of distributing examination questions, who proposed “cash for exam papers”. We negotiated a fee and after we agreed, I received original exam question and answer booklet a day before my exam date. Bam, results were released and I passed the exams I failed three times. (Segun, age 20).

Another participant Maryam had this to say:

“You are right. So, I had to sit for the WAEC at the senior level, excel and gain admission to the university. Just so you know, I was writing the exam for the 3rd time since I didn’t score good grades in my previous exams in mathematics and chemistry. And these two subjects were important if I wanted to study medicine at any higher institution of my choice in the country. Because I had to rewrite the exams, I told myself, I will do whatever it takes this time to pass and move on with my life. So, how did I do it and pass? It’s a long story, but I will tell what I did, that ensured my success in the exams. Often times, I have heard and seen people that could not even read well, let alone write well. But, they pass the exams I failed three times. In a nutshell, through a candidate who was also sitting

for the same exams, I met a WAEC official in charge of distributing examination questions, who proposed “cash for exam papers”. We negotiated a fee and after we agreed, I received original exam question and answer booklet, a day before my exam date. Bam, results were released and I passed the exams I failed three times. I jumped for joy, and remembered a popular saying among my peers which goes thus: “One who is book smart, and knows the way is the real deal, but one that is book smart, but does not know the way, is doomed”. For me, what stood out really was the sense of using what one has, to get what he wants. Pretty much saying that, if you cannot study to pass an exam, you better have enough money to get you out of your predicament. In all, its money matters in Nigeria” (Maryam, age 37).

The above quotations as stated reveal the mindset of participants, who understood the need to bribe, might not be a problem. Participants understanding of widespread and unbridled corruption led them to believe the best way to resolve their respective issues are through bribery. The theme encountering bribery suggests that participants have a good sense of who they are, what they value, and what they feel about their circumstances.

Theme 2: Perceiving a culture of greed integrates the tentative themes of participant’s experiences of acquiring wealth, fame and power by all means. Below are quotations from participant’s perception of greed:

“My director misappropriated billions of naira worth of pension funds, which he claimed, to have recovered from pension thieves. What he did was disturbing,

Maggi said. Instead of his director to return the loot as he claimed, he deposited the funds for pensioners into his private accounts. At the end of the day, when the bubble burst, my director left the country and since then, has not returned. (Alani, age 57).

Another participant, an auditor described her experiences of corruption in Nigeria: “As an auditor who is disciplined and committed to doing her job, I have rejected as many offers as possible from different companies to cover fraudulent activities. For example, because these companies know auditors do not earn that much in salaries, some of us are offered huge amount of cash, a car and a house. All these gifts are very tempting for us. Even if one is paid a high salary, earning extras does not hurt. But one has to be disciplined to not accept bribes or gifts. If I don’t accept bribes, what about the other auditor who has shown interest? (Deola, age 44).

Another participant Otunba had this to say:

“One day, my friend asked if I could go to my shop to collect some of my customers’ hair, pack them in a bag and bring them with me to his house. From his friend’s house, they drove to a strange place that belonged to the leader of an occult group. Otunba was initiated, met people of high calibre in the society, and many public office holders and politicians who came for different purposes, but everything was tied to seeking for power, position, money and fame. During Otunba’s initiation to the occult group, he was promised wealth, fame and power as long as he’s able to bring as many human hairs as possible, from his barbershop, or elsewhere”(Nduka, age 33)

Undoubtedly, participants experience a culture of greed in many forms. From all indications, each of the participants understood that without greed, there couldn't be riches, power and fame. And because participants live in a society that barely pay attention to what others do, the need to acquire more wealth through corrupt practices, seem more important than anything else.

Theme 3: Perceiving a culture of impunity

The theme, "Perceiving a culture of impunity" has to do with participant's experiences of getting away with almost anything they do in the country. Obviously, participants understood that, one could hardly achieve something or get anything done if you don't give bribes. This culture of impunity is reflected in most of all the participants' experiences of corruption. Below are quotations that speak directly to participant's perception of the culture of impunity in Nigeria:

"Since the vast majority of tax revenues came from "pay as you earn" (PAYE) personal income tax withholding from formal businesses, we would falsify tax documents and illegally obtain money from our customers. Besides that, because we have access to confidential information, we would permit some businesses and individuals to pay or not to pay their taxes, but we would collect our own cut from them. I couldn't beat them....so I joined them. Retired now, I could have sworn that if I didn't wake myself up, I would be left with nothing. If you ask me, what do I have to show for it. I would simply say a lot that can't be counted. In this country, we care about our own purse. Infact, we worry less when there are cases of corruption reported, as long as it does not affect or deny us our respective

means of livelihoods. What bothers me the most about this country is when a “small thief” is caught in public and get jungle justice. (James, age 34)

Additionally:

“It means we could do anything and no one can question our authority. What most people do not know is, even though our bosses have received more than enough complaints about our attitudes and behaviors in public, they are less concerned, because they have better offices, live in good homes, and are well equipped. On a daily basis, countless Nigerians traveling on the roads to their respective workplaces, experience hell because our illegal roadblocks cause traffic. And the main purpose is to extort money, and frequently when victims don’t cooperate, we threaten them, commit human rights abuse or kill them. (Victor, age 57)

As perceived by the participants, the culture of impunity is deep and rife in Nigeria. As a result of this unfair and unequal arrangement that allows few rich and strong in the society to be above the law, the room to create a niche from such arrangement is expected by almost everyone that has the opportunity to display a sense of impunity at any level of human interaction in the society.

Theme 4: Perceiving a culture of impropriety

The theme “perceiving a culture of impropriety,” has a lot to do with participant’s understanding of a corrupt system that has no demonstrable legal improprieties. Because of a culture that fails to observe standards or show due honesty or modesty, corrupt practices have found a permanent home in Nigeria. Following are quotations that speak to participant’s perception of a culture of impropriety:

“Offer” help to some lazy students who resort to “sorting” (finding ways of purchasing high and unmerited grade mark from him to enhance their grades at the final examination). Tolu, age 59

Dukor:

“Become a “prolific writer” by writing as many books as possible, and ensure that students purchase your books. Jhigan learned he could also publish “handouts” which is normally illegal at some Nigerian university campuses, but some instructors have done that successfully, by adding a hardcover that has their respective names on the material they call handouts. (Dukor, age 19)

Phillips:

“Every morning before I leave for my checkpoint, I would be high on liquor, because it is the only way to stay firm on my decision when faced with a troublesome passenger or someone that questions my authority. Should the worst happen, I would gun down anyone that disturbs my work. I am excited about my experience because I barely need my salary since there is always something to take home from the checkpoint. (Phillips, age 26)

The impropriety situation and illogicality of the above scenario where we have a police officer, charged to perform his job responsibilities creditably well, but begin to first get drunk on the job, just to do the contrary, calls for a serious intervention.

Theme 5: Consequences of no accountability

The theme, “Consequences of no accountability” is reflected in all of the participant’s experiences of corruption. Because each of the participants understood that

there is no accountability in the country, it became a decision of their own to be corrupt or not to be corrupt, and to accept bribes or not to be corrupt. Some of these participants are employed, while some are not, but more importantly, most participants would rather bribe to get what they want. Depending on the situation as we have seen from the participants, corrupt practices could be for the following: survival, to acquire power, wealth and fame, to get a job done or secure a job. Based on participant's comments, the lack of accountability has corroded public respect. Below are quotations that speak directly to participant's understanding of the consequences of no accountability:

“On that fateful day, after I finished coaching a student who wants to sit for a university matriculation examination (UME), I got a call from another student who asked if I could help write a national exam for him. Initially, I declined but then told myself, I may never find such an opportunity again. So, I agreed. My student paid for the service I was to render, and all that was left for me was to find a way to get inside the examination hall to write the exam on his behalf. Because I couldn't do it myself, I looked for an invigilator who, agreed to collect a fee from me. This has been the way I have lived in Lagos for years paying my bills and all.
(James, age 34)

Ambali:

“During Maggi's final year at PenCom, there was a pension scam that involved my director. According to Maggi, my director misappropriated billions of naira worth of pension funds, which he claimed to, have recovered from pension thieves. What he did was disturbing, Maggi said. Instead of his director to return

the loot as he claimed, he deposited the funds for pensioners into his private accounts. At the end of the day, when the bubble burst, my director left the country and since then, has not returned. (Ambali, age 17)

From the quotations above, it is obvious that there is only one reason for such dialogue to hold. In the first place, it would not have happened if there were general senses of accountability from all in the country. Unfortunately, there is none, and since this is the case, participants feel the need to go with the flow of what is happening in the society, whether good or bad. For a more complete textural description of the experiences of each individual, please see Appendix F.

The following is another interview with Tinuke. As expected, the meaning units are incorporated.

Farouk. What is your experience on corruption?

Tinuke. Corruption is what it is. For me, it is an attempt to outsmart an already broken system that favors only the rich, famous and influential ones, while leaving the rest of the society to find a way to join the league or stay rotten. As a wealthy businessman, who buy and sell all kinds of astonishing range of merchandise, I experience corruption every day in my business because there are many sellers now than buyers. Because I have been in business for long, my loyal customers would explain to me how and where they bought a certain product at a much cheaper price at another store. Some have even gotten angry that I am just greedy, because my goods are just way too expensive. As a result, they stopped shopping at my store. So, I did my research on the market. For instance, the imported fabrics I sell, mostly from Europe, are sold at a very

cheap price. How did I find out? I bought some of the fabrics, took them to my store and looked at them carefully. To my disbelief, the fabrics are not genuine, but fake ones. I got even more confused when I realized that, the labels and logos from the fabrics look just the same when compared with the original. As if that was not enough, I learned that some of the merchandises were “confiscated” by the Nigerian customs, which later sold them back to interested buyers. From this scenario, I could either try to beat them or join them, because I was already losing my customers, and my sales have already gone down. So, I stopped importing and would just go to straight to the port. If I may ask you, to the best of your knowledge, if you have something confiscated, what does it mean?

Farouk. It means seize, and when one experiences such, it’s an authority that normally confiscates someone’s property or items. That is, order from above. And most likely, whatever is confiscated, will be destroyed. Simply, you cannot have it back or someone else receives it.

Tinuke. I appreciate your understanding of the question. You definitely nailed it. Unfortunately, in this country, confiscated and even contraband items are sold illegally to merchants like me. Depending on one’s social circle in the society, you could bring “contraband items” into the country, and not have them seized by the authority, because you have either bribed or agreed to bribe to have your items cleared. As a result, I joined these groups of people so I could make ends meet, and as well become relevant to my family.

Farouk. The phrase: I joined these groups of people so I could make ends meet, and as well become relevant to my family.

Tinuke. Yes, this business is all I have. I have to take money home. It's a way to survive....whether it's done legally or illegally. I'm sure that the custom officers responsible for carrying out their duties as well, will have a lot to say if you ask them about the reasons behind selling confiscated goods. It's much better than committing robbery, and other heinous crimes, even though the original owner of confiscated goods will struggle financially to overcome the loss of their items. But, do I really care? Of course, I do not. It is important to also inform you that, there are risks involved in this business. For instance, there was a time I paid for a full container of all kinds of merchandise, and was told somebody paid double the price of what I deposited. I fought really hard to get my money back, but I was made to understand that, you don't fight "authorities", as they remind me, "we make you, and can still break you". Because of that, I had to forfeit the confiscated goods and also the money paid. In order to save my business, and not get arrested or killed, I did not report the incident to anyone. I learned from that situation, and since then, I have kept three custom friends who always give me business report that relates to confiscated items at the port.

From this point on, I will include examples excerpted from interviews with some of the participants.

Farouk. Tell me about your experience on corruption in Nigeria.

Dukor. As an instructor, I experience corruption at my workplace (school), mostly from my students, their parents and also my colleagues. Though I am responsible for my actions and behaviors, I have no choice but accept bribes from these people, because my take home pay is never enough to feed me, let alone a family of four.

Because my students and their parents are very much aware of the fact that, we barely get paid, they bribe us just to make sure their kids don't fail or repeat a class. Since this has become a norm, I get my checks based on the importance of the subjects. For instance, some of my students are not good at mathematics and English. And since these subjects are key to securing student admission to the university, they would do anything and everything to get on board. As an instructor, I have been through a lot.

Farouk. What have you been through?

Dukor. I may be wrong, but I am very positive that, out of ten instructors, only two reject bribes. Obviously, they have a reason and for someone like me that accept bribes, I have million and one reasons. For me, the most obvious reason is, I barely get paid. And whenever I get paid, nothing is left from my salary, because I would have spent all to reimburse the people I borrowed money from. And I am back at square one. So, the only one option is to award grades for cash. The most annoying part of this is that often times, when the budget is read to the nation, education receives the highest budget. Pathetically, we hear the figure, but it does not translate to sharing the salary judiciously. So, in order to not live in abject poverty, the only way out as I have learned and observed is to cut corners. That is just the way I survive. Seriously, this is not the best country to be an instructor. It is a difficult job. Yet, people say it is the most rewarding job on earth. Maybe, Nigeria is not a part of this earth. It may sound funny, but it is not. The only reason I am still able to afford a home is because my landlord's two children are in my classroom. I use them as a shield to protect my family and me from homelessness.

Farouk. What does that mean to you?

Dukor. Survival...in the sense that, I use what I have to get what I want. Even if my landlord's kids are not intelligent, I could fail them, just to make sure their parents do not kick me out of their property for non-payment of rent. So, I devise a means with the children's parents that, their kids will never fail in my class, let alone repeat a class. However, I may not have to pay my rent or possibly allow me pay my rent whenever I have the funds. They jumped at this offer, and we have all been really good at our respective ends. And that is how it has been since. Next year, they graduate. But before they graduate, I have to look for another method. Otherwise, I could be kicked out of my home.

Interview with Phillips

Farouk. Describe your experience on corruption.

Phillips. As a sergeant in the Nigerian Police Force, my most important role is to protect Nigerian citizens from the ills of the society. But, not only am I engaged in the ills of the society, I have made fortunes from the kind of life I live in this country. My monthly wage is about 18000 naira. Are you able to convert that to US dollar since it's the most important currency in the world?

Farouk: Sure, I can. Let's check. It is about \$90.

Phillips. Thank you my brother! I am not trying to convince you or make you believe it is right to accept bribe, engage in fraudulent activities or use your power illegally to force people to do what they would not, normally do. But it is very impossible to survive the harsh realities of this country with that kind of salary. For your information, some of my colleagues who live in the most terrifying place on earth (police

barrack...a free housing for “eligible” Nigerian police officer), do not collect bribes because they do not pay rent. As far as I am concerned, I will continue to mount illegal checkpoints to get money from motorists for my rent, than live in the pitiable police barrack. That said, until an overhaul of almost every sector in Nigeria, corruption will not stop. As far as my experience on corruption is concerned, I see corruption as my daily bread. Without corruption, I may not be able to feed my family of six. I collect bribes, mainly from motorists and passengers (depending on the time). I grew up in a family of four. I was in high school when my parents died in a ghastly motor accident. Life became even more difficult since then. So, I left school to join the Nigerian Police. Life in the police force is characterized by greed, corruption and indiscipline. Normally, it should be the other way. Corruption, to me, starts from the police. For instance, because we lack loyalty and discipline, which stems simply from the fact that, we are not treated fairly by our bosses, we became the law.

Farouk. What does becoming “the law” means to you?

Phillips. It means we could do anything and no one can question our authority. What most people do not know is, even though our bosses have received more than enough complaints about our attitudes and behaviors in public, they are less concerned, because they have better offices, live in good homes, and are well equipped. On a daily basis, countless Nigerians traveling on the roads to their respective workplaces, experience hell because our illegal roadblocks cause traffic. And the main purpose is to extort money, and frequently when victims don’t cooperate, we threaten them, commit human rights abuse or kill them.

Farouk. What does this experience mean to you?

Phillips. Fearless, survival and hardcore. That's what being a police officer in Nigeria brings to you. Every morning before I leave for my checkpoint, I would be high on liquor, because it is the only way to stay firm on my decision when faced with a troublesome passenger or someone that questions my authority. Should the worst happen, I would gun down anyone that disturbs my work. I am excited about my experience because I barely need my salary since there is always something to take home from the checkpoint.

Farouk. Anything else you want to share?

Phillips. Well, you have to be a policeman anywhere in Nigeria, especially in Lagos to understand the depth of what I just told you. And unfortunately for us Nigerian policemen, we do not get the respect that should be accorded to us, because we lack discipline and have literally become a pest to our society. That's all I have to say.

Interview with Mary

Farouk. Describe your experience on corruption?

Mary. As the head of a higher education accreditation panel, I am responsible for ensuring that certification of competency, authority or credibility is presented to higher institutions that fall under that category. I have rejected many offers from top university administrators who are only interested in keeping their substandard programs at their respective institutions. Because they know that once a program is dropped from their school curriculum, or school loses its accreditation, they will lose some of their revenues. As a result, the only thing university administrators feel they could do to keep their

program or continue to have their schools accredited, is to bribe their way out, or possibly shower gifts to the person sent to check how such school is being operated. As far as I am concerned, I could either maintain my integrity, or lose it doing what I love.

Farouk. The phrase: I could either maintain or lose my integrity doing what I love.

Mary. Yes, to accept gifts or cash and not be a driving force for change and improvement on Nigeria's educational system, or no, because I want to serve well, reject bribes and other kind of offers that will influence my job duties.

Farouk. What does this experience mean to you?

Mary. Whether I accept bribes or not, some will and some will not. What this boils down to, is sense of courage, will and determination to lead without internal and external distractions. For me, there is a reason I am still working on this team, and most importantly, as a leader. Infact, I have received threats that aimed my life because I refuse to accept bribes, and eventually such institutions lose their accreditation.

Farouk: Anything else you want to share?

Mary. Corruption is real. You are either for or against it. I am against it, and will fight tooth and nail to reduce its curse. That's all I have to say.

Interview with Sheriff

Farouk. Describe your experience on corruption. I mean, what it is like to have experienced corruption.

Sheriff. Let me first start with my story. I was born in Oyo State, Ibadan. I lived with my parents and two siblings until the age of 23, when I left to seek for greener

pastures in Lagos State. After so many years of unemployment as a graduate of political science, I relocated to Lagos State, with a mindset of, hard work to succeed and survive. And since there is a famous saying among Nigerian youths that say, “if you can survive in Lagos, you can survive anywhere else in the world”. So, I was like, where else would I be? Lagos of course, because I feel it is the place that will prepare me for other things in life. So I moved to Lagos. I moved into my uncle’s place who offered me a room in his rented apartment. Fast forward, after months of unemployment, I struck a deal with my uncle to convert my room to a classroom where I could assist students with their schoolwork, and get paid. I had to do what I had to do. In Lagos, it is not a problem if you changed the whole of your apartment. What matters to the owner is his rent that needs to be paid. Besides that, we do not pay month-by-month, but yearly. So, once you deposit your rent for the year, you can do whatever you want with the house. Anyways, with the little I earned, the room could not contain my students and we moved outside. That is, the compound where the house is built. On that fateful day, after I finished coaching a student who wants to sit for a university matriculation examination (UME), I got a call from another student who asked if I could help write a national exam for him. Initially, I declined but then told myself, I may never find such an opportunity again. So, I agreed. My student paid for the service I was to render, and all that was left for me was to find a way to get inside the examination hall to write the exam on his behalf. Because I couldn’t do it myself, I looked for an invigilator who, agreed to collect a fee from me. This has been the way I have lived in Lagos for years paying my bills and all.

Farouk. The phrase: Such an opportunity again

Sheriff. I guess because I have struggled financially for a long period of time.

And, I saw my student's proposal as a way to get out of my pitiable financial condition.

As a matter of fact, the decision to agree with the proposal proved to play a pivotal role in my life, because I learned how to fish. That is, how to make money.

Farouk. Anything else you want to describe?

Sheriff. Not really, but I want to let you know that I do not feel any kind of regrets whatsoever. To live in Lagos, you have to learn how to survive. And to survive lies solely in your hands. And that's really all that matters to all Nigerians, because no one cares about you.

Interview with Jemila

Farouk. Describe your experience on corruption?

Jemila. My experience on corruption goes way back to when I was in college, and also at various employments with the government. I studied accounting at one of the leading universities in Nigeria, and barely did well, but I graduated with a pass. While at school, I struggled academically, and since I failed one particular course three times, I had to find a way out of my academic misery. Because I was disappointed and frustrated considering the number of times I failed a course, I had to bribe my way out of school. Simply, I showered the instructor with gift items, got him lunch from my pocket money, and as well bribed him with money, just to allow me graduate. In this country, it is not always about how intelligent and book smart one is, you must "pass through school, and as well, allow school to pass through you". I learned that really late. Otherwise, I would have graduated much earlier than I thought, and most importantly, with excellent grades.

Farouk. The phrase: You must pass through school, and as well, allow school to pass through you.

Jemila. I meant understanding the ins and outs of how a system works. For instance, after exams are written...immediately, students would follow the instructor to his or her office. Some would assist with carrying the answer sheets, or do other things that imply something. I did not think it was necessary or very important to do that, but I later learned it's a "courtesy" that has an underlying meaning. Even instructors, expect such. Infact, when you run to them for help, they will remind you that, "hey, now you are here asking for help. When you saw me struggling with two bags on my way to class or office, you didn't even say hello, let alone think about assisting me in carrying my bags. If you had helped, definitely I would have recognized your face, and you may not even have to ask me to do something for you before I do it".

Farouk: Anything else you want to share?

Jemila. I do not think I held my tongue on the questions you asked. If I did, I probably forgot, and for me, when I forget to mention something, I see it as irrelevant. So, that's just it.

Interview with Ambali

Farouk. Describe your experience on corruption.

Ambali. As a current employee of Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), I am responsible for disconnecting power supplies to our customers nationwide. It's a very simple exercise, but very complicated. It is also a very funny job, because I can't even remember when last we provided constant electricity to our customers. My daily routine

is to move from house to house, read house meters and disconnect if bills are not paid.

On that fateful day, as I stepped out of the building to disconnect a house that has not paid for six months, the following ensued:

Customer. If you mount on that ladder and disconnect my power supply, I will wait for you to get to the middle of the ladder, and remove it.

PHCN Employee. Really, you know you cannot do that. I am only doing my job.

Customer: Indeed, you are probably new on this job. You don't know how things work here. Do you? Let me tell you.....the fact that we don't even have constant supply of electricity, and because it's been about two months I have used my generator to power lights into my home, I feel you are a disturbance to me.

Besides that, I do not want you to come and mess up my connections, because it would be hard to find you guys when I need to.

PHCN Employee: Ok....so what do you want me to do?

Customer: Glad you asked an intelligent question. You see, your colleagues come here and spend little time, because they know how things work. We tip them with some cash. They are happy with that, because you know we have not even seen a bill from your company for years. Yet, you came with a bill and expect me to pay. Take this money and leave. When your company is ready to provide us constant electricity, and restructure their policies, we shall all be responsible and pay for the services rendered. Besides, I am not even forcing you to accept what I have for you. Worst-case scenario, you will call the cops and I will bribe the cops and at the end of the day, you will lose what you are supposed to gain now.

PHCN Employee: Ok, so how much are we even talking about?

Customer: It is about 10000 naira (equivalent to \$50). It's just for your food or use it to get gas on your way back to work.

PHCN Employee: Ok, let me have the money (accepted the funds and left the customer's house).

Farouk. What was that experience like for you?

Ambali. To be sincere, I was only pretending to do my job, because I was not asked to do what I did. In situations like that, after threatening to permanently disconnect people from power supplies, maybe in like ten homes, and they pay 1000 naira (\$5), it means I would have easily made 10000 naira (\$50). That is what we feed and rely on, because we barely get paid and even when we did, it's most likely peanuts that offer us little or nothing. Yet, we often hear when the budget is read, and the amount allocated for power.

Farouk. Anything else you want to share?

Ambali. There is absolutely nothing left to share. For every Nigerian you ask about corruption, there are always credible answers that make you wonder why corrupt practice exists in Nigeria. For me, our government taught us to be corrupt, because they have chosen that path for many years.

What follows is a bulleted list of all the non-repetitive meaning units from the example excerpted from some of the participants above. I derived the horizontal statements from raw data of the interview that I conducted.

- You must pass through school, and allow school pass through you

- When you saw me struggling with two bags on my way to class or office, you didn't even say hello, let alone think about assisting me in carrying my bags
- I would have graduated much more earlier than I thought, and most importantly, with excellent grades
- I lived with my parents and two siblings until the age of 23, when I left to seek for greener pastures in Lagos State
- Lagos of course, because I feel it is the place that will prepare me for other things in life
- What stood out really, was the sense of using what one has, to get what he wants
- I use them as a shield to protect me and my family from homelessness
- It's much better than committing robbery, and other heinous crimes, even though the original owner of confiscated goods will struggle financially to overcome the loss of their items
- The feeling of ease that, I will never ever go back to re-write the same exam I'd written three times
- Government have tried to kick them out of the streets, but they never succeeded, because they are backed by top public officials who receive their own share from illegal acts of acquiring wealth and resources.
- Whoever tries to prove a point will face their wrath; and in most cases, situations like this causes chaos and if not resolved immediately by someone of a higher authority in that locality, the chaotic situations spread to other

parts of the area.

- And the main purpose is to extort money, and frequently when victims don't cooperate, we threaten them, commit human rights abuse or kill them.
- Besides that, because we have access to confidential information, we would permit some businesses and individuals to pay or not to pay their taxes, but we would collect our own cut from them.
- I couldn't beat them...so I joined them.
- Retired now, I could have sworn that if I didn't wake myself up, I would be left with nothing.
- If you ask me, what do I have to show for it. I would simply say a lot that can't be counted.
- In this country, we care about our own purse.
- Infact, we worry less when there are cases of corruption reported, as long as it does not affect or deny us our respective means of livelihoods.
- What bothers me the most about this country is when a "small thief" is caught in public and gets "jungle justice".

The findings presented in this chapter speak to the general thematic issues participants have experienced. The essence of these phenomena is attributed to participants encounter with bribery, perceived culture of greed, a perceived culture of impunity and impropriety, and culture of no accountability.

Psychological Impacts of Corruption and Conflict

As part of the major contributions and objectives, this dissertation brings to light

the psychological impacts of corruption and conflict in Nigeria. In other words, this research bridged the gap between the social structural understandings and impacts of corruption and the personal component.

On corruption, there is a price everyone has to pay. Within the context of this dissertation, it is no doubt that, Nigeria's case is pathetic, since there are only a very few people in Nigeria, who thinks, corruption is an immoral act; and totally unacceptable for a cop, banker, a government official to accept bribe. Even worse, instructors that award extra point for students based on 'loyalty' instead of merit.

Nigeria as of today, whether male or female, young or old, literate or illiterate, religious or non-religious, have more people interested in public offices and governmental roles to enrich themselves, rather than truly serve the good of the nation.

In an article from corruption watch titled; "*The Psychology of Corruption*," clinical psychologist Dr. Giada Del Fabbro, criminologist Dr. Elisabeth Grobler, and Rhodes University organizational psychology lecturer Alwyn Moerdyk (2013), "examined the motivations that push people down treacherous road" (p. 1).

According to Del Fabbro, it is no doubt difficult, and "perhaps counter-intuitive to put people in boxes with neat little labels to explain their behavior, but there are some personality traits that make the slide into corrupt behavior easier" (p. 2). These characteristics, mentioned below by Del Fabbro, have become a norm that has shaped Nigerians experience on corruption and conflict for many years, and still has not changed. These characteristics include:

- i. Impaired empathy: Based on the premise that, individuals often struggle to

internalize attitudes or behavior. One may need to have a certain amount of empathy before being able to experience accurate compassion.

- ii. Self-centeredness: Individuals prioritize their own needs over those of others
- iii. Manipulation: Individuals deceptively influence systems or other people's perceptions
- iv. Entitlement: Individuals believe that they deserve to succeed or have their needs met more than others and that they deserve special treatment
- v. Tendency to project blame on to others: Individuals not taking full responsibility for their actions.

There is substantial evidence that makes one believe that, corruption hampers the growth of a nation. While some nations have practiced several forms of "organized corruption," which affords one the opportunity to study the phenomenon of their corruption, in Nigeria, corruption is like having a cup of water to sustain oneself physically and mentally. Basically, corruption is a necessity in Nigeria, because there is a culture of corruption practiced in Nigeria. Within the four walls of both open and hidden corners, corruption is an everyday meal in Nigeria.

In an attempt to put into proper perspective the psychological impacts of corruption and conflict in Nigeria, it is important to expand the discourse on the personality traits or characteristics mentioned above; as they relate to the vices of corruption and conflict in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, only a handful has shown some level of compassion for the country. From children denied quality education, to lack of adequate amenities and infrastructures,

to elections decided by money not votes, to kidnappers on the rampage (Boko Haram) in the northern part of Nigeria, to deplorable conditions of Nigerian roads, the corruption brochure of Nigeria cannot be ignored because they are not difficult to identify.

According to a voice of America writer Gilbert da Costa, “Nigeria’s annual traffic fatality rate was reported as 5,000 in 2009. A major contributor to this statistic is the poor condition of the roads. Potholes are numerous, leading drivers to swerve around them, sometimes putting themselves and those in other vehicles at risk. There are frequent delays when vehicles have to slow down. Lagos, the capital city, is notorious for its slow traffic. Some roads have deteriorated so badly they are impassable” (p. 9).

It is not beyond human comprehension that, the kidnapped Nigerian girls that sparked global outrage cannot be released safely to their parents. What is disturbing is the lack of empathy shown by the Nigerian government, and the general public since the story was made public to the international community. What most people outside of Nigeria do not know is that, kidnappings have been ongoing for several years in Nigeria. Many have been kidnapped and killed for rituals and no one ever finds out. Some people are aware by the virtue of knowing the person involved or possibly, the individual who engages in such ‘business.’ It is only in Nigeria people make ends meet or earn their living by kidnapping people for money rituals. This condition might have little to do with the government; but eventually, has a lot to do with government, because there is no public trust in leaders since government have shown no accountability to its people. As a result, the Nigerian society is left alone without being questioned for irrational actions and behaviors.

Self-centeredness as a personality trait is a rich ingredient that maintains corrupt practices. Human beings generally, are self-centered, but an alarming trend is discovered when an individual is so self-centered to the extent that, his decisions are only meant to satisfy his personal needs. Within the context of this dissertation, the act of selfishness is displayed at the highest order when a high ranking government official in Nigeria, decides to wield his power by ensuring that a certain government property is sold to a member of his family. In the first place, why should a government property be sold? Even if it has to be sold, the public must be aware and strict rules must be enforced and ensured, that no member of government or a family member of a government personnel must have anything to do with its purchase. In Nigeria, a slogan that continues to reverberate is “if you can’t beat them, you have to join them”. That is, if you have to give up fighting some group as a result of corrupt practices or other negative actions in Nigeria, band together with them and makes “positive success”.

It is just difficult for self-centered people to have a deep and real sense of empathy. Even if they do, it is usually on condition that, they benefit from what they are empathizing with. This is very typical of Nigerians. Only a very few, possess the quality of empathy without seeking for nothing in return. As stated earlier, the friends and associates of President Jonathan have already been promised a ‘share of the national cake’ if re-elected into office. In Nigeria, governance and politics is ‘big business’ because it affords individuals riches beyond their wildest dreams. It is only in Nigeria that past leader’s lives, never ever becomes the same again because they would have acquired so much wealth within the time they are elected into office.

Manipulation, as it relates to the discourse on corruption and conflict in Nigeria, has to do with control or influence. To change by artful or unfair means so as to serve one's purpose is always evident in corruption. It is also innate in human beings to be manipulative. As a result, this feature in man makes corrupt behavior easier to identify. When individuals deceptively influence systems or other people's perceptions, it is called an act of manipulation.

In Nigeria, the most common practice of manipulation is obvious in religion and ethnicity. For instance, there are people who, ordinarily have no connection with religion or certain tribes in Nigeria; and decide to use religion and ethnicity as a tool for cheating to achieve their personal ambition. In Nigeria, because politics is a do or die affair, a cleric could be used as running mate for the candidate vying for office. Over the years, there have been candidates selected from churches and mosques to possibly, persuade or convince voters that, they are vying for office to positively transform their lives; and as well, make the country livable for them. What happens after they win their election becomes a different game entirely.

Manipulation is a personality trait that makes corruption obvious in Nigeria. It is a part of that 'abnormal behavior' that makes corruption prevalent in Nigeria. Imagine a country that has five pastors as one of the richest in the world. How is an ordained Christian minister or priest that has 'spiritual charge' over its congregation, be so wealthy and famous? Yet, some of their congregations barely have funds to put food on their table, clothe their family, or even afford to pay their schools tuition.

Entitlement as a personality trait has to do with individuals belief that, they deserve

to succeed or have their needs met more than others and that they deserve special treatment. There is absolutely nothing wrong with an individual that thinks poverty; failure or dissatisfaction should not be in his collection of words. What an individual does to ensure he earns the right living and most importantly, able to withstand the test of time, is what makes him a man.

In Nigeria, there is no such thing as a 'level playing field'. There is no such thing as fairness for all or some kind of rules designed to make the outcome of play more equal. There is always someone favored against another. In Nigeria's socio-economic and political landscape, it is not about how successful you have completed your degrees; it is always about who you know that can help actualize the dreams of utilizing your degrees for its main purposes. The same applies to political appointments, attending universities of your choice, seeking employment at a certain organization and many more. Nigerians have gotten used to this arrangement. As a result, things are not rightly done, because an attempt to do things the right way could mean time wasting.

Entitlement is a dangerous culture practiced daily in Nigeria. It is at the heart of many questions concerning the distribution of resources in Nigeria. For instance, it is unbelievable that the regions that produce vast majority of the wealth resources in Nigeria, has little or nothing to show for it. These regions lack substantial growth and development, because very few individuals benefit more from the wealth of that region. It is only in Nigeria an individual has an oil refinery. What is expected to be the wealth of a nation is given to one person to manage and as well, make fortunes from such acquisition.

According to Brad Bushman (2004), “psychological entitlement has a pervasive and largely unconstructive impact on social behavior” (p. 1). This is of course; very true because there is neither a sense of productivity nor growth in Nigeria, if all that matters is entitlement. It is dangerous and totally unacceptable, locally or nationally, to give preference to some individuals than the other. One of the biggest problems Nigeria faces today is the problem of entitlement, which cuts across the socio-economic and political landscape of Nigeria.

In an Associated Press report dated, March 16 2004, residents of the Niger Delta area where oil is mostly discovered in Nigeria, contend that “they feel entitled to steal oil because they have received little reparation for decades of oil spills and gas flaring that have corrupted their environment, killing fishing and agricultural fields” (Associated Press).

The results of corruption are very clear. Within the context of this dissertation, it is safe to add that, Nigeria’s socio-economic and political freedom remains stuck, if corruption is not tackled. As observed, the corrupt practices here and there in Nigeria, has a lot to do with the conflict that continues to weaken Nigeria’s growth and development.

From all indications above, corruption is a learned behavior. According to Nye, “corruption is a behavior which deviates from the formal duties of a public role, because of private gains regarding personal, close family, private clique, pecuniary or status gains. It is a behavior which violates rules against the exercise of certain types of duties for private gains regarding influence” (1967, p. 417).

Corruption as a learned behavior; and an engine that fuels conflict, can also be

understood in the light of Albert Bandura's "*cognitive social learning theorist view*" (1977). According to Bandura, "the majority of the habits we form during our lifetimes are acquired by observing and imitating other people" (p.10). According to Bandura, "much complex behavior could never be learned unless people are exposed to some other humans who modeled them. Thus, observational learning permits human to acquire many new responses in settings where their 'models' are simply pursuing their own interests and are not trying to teach anyone anything" (p. 12). The observational/cognitive social learning theory is applied to the corruption and conflicts in Nigeria. This theory, best illustrate reasons behind Nigeria's pathetic state of affairs as far as corruption and conflict is concerned.

Chapter 5: Essence and Results

The following revelations came from the participants and me, the investigator Farouk. The essence of our shared experience exists within our individual and collective selves, legitimized by our individual and shared realities. As far as this study is concerned, participant's opinion and perspective is valid because it's their opinion. Therefore, participant's interviews have shed lights on the multidimensional, patterned essences of our combined experiences and perspectives.

One aspect of the essence of participant's experience of corruption and conflict is the understanding that the Nigerian government's lack of accountability to its citizens, forced participants to embrace a perceived culture of greed, a perceived culture of impunity and impropriety. Many of the participants expressed their views:

- Femi: "Besides that, because we have access to confidential information, we would permit some businesses and individuals to pay or not to pay their taxes, but we would collect our own cut from them."
- Maryam: "Whoever tries to prove a point will face their wrath; and in most cases, situations like this causes chaos and if not resolved immediately by someone of a higher authority in that locality, the chaotic situations spread to other parts of the area."
- Tinuke: "Unfortunately, in this country, confiscated and even contraband items are sold illegally to merchants like me. Depending on one's social circle in the society, you could bring "contraband items" into the country, and not have them seized by the authority, because you have either bribed or agreed to

bribe to have your items cleared.

- Phillips: “And the main purpose is to extort money, and frequently when victims don’t cooperate, we threaten them, commit human rights abuse or kill them.”
- Femi: “Infact, we worry less when there are cases of corruption reported, as long as it does not affect or deny us our respective means of livelihoods.”

Beyond the lack of Nigerian government’s accountability to its citizens, participants expressed the understanding that corrupt practices and conflict situations occur on a daily basis because many need to survive the harsh living conditions of the country; another facet of the essence of participants experience on corruption and conflict:

- Farouk: “Besides that, the investigator experienced, on numerous occasions, school closure attributed to feud that involved the school vice-chancellor, non-academic staff union, academic staff union and senior staff academic union members, over unpaid salaries, promotion exercise and other issues that prolonged the duration of the investigators academic.”
- Sheriff: “On that fateful day, after I finished coaching a student who wants to sit for a university matriculation examination (UME), I got a call from another student who asked if I could help write a national exam for him. Initially, I declined but then told myself, I may never find such an opportunity again. So, I agreed. My student paid for the service I was to render, and all that was left for me was to find a way to get inside the examination hall to write the exam

on his behalf. Because I couldn't do it myself, I looked for an invigilator who, agreed to collect a fee from me. This has been the way I have lived in Lagos for years paying my bills and all.”

- Dukor: “As an instructor, I experience corruption at my workplace (school), mostly from my students, their parents and also my colleagues. Though I am responsible for my actions and behaviors, I have no choice but accept bribes from these people, because my take home pay is never enough to feed me, let alone a family of four. Because my students and their parents are very much aware of the fact that, we barely get paid, they bribe us just to make sure their kids don't fail or repeat a class. Since this has become a norm, I get my checks based on the importance of the subjects. For instance, some of my students are not good at mathematics and English. And since these subjects are key to securing student admission to the university, they would do anything and everything to get on board. As an instructor, I have been through a lot.”
- Tinuke: “Yes, this business is all I have. I have to take money home. It's a way to survive....whether it's done legally or illegally. I'm sure that the custom officers responsible for carrying out their duties as well will have a lot to say if you ask them about the reasons behind selling confiscated goods. It's much better than committing robbery, and other heinous crimes, even though the original owner of confiscated goods will struggle financially to overcome the loss of their items.”

As participants became more engaged in corruption and incorporated other vices

of corrupt practices in their day-to-day activities of life, the way they lived and worked changed. As a result of this arrangement, the dependence on corruption as a way of life expands to its greatest height, such that hardly can anyone get anything done without giving or taking bribe.

Research Results

Although results of this study are not generalizable to larger populations, the uniqueness of the experiences described provides rich detail for those who want to understand the lived experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict. The participants' experiences, as narrated in their own words and interpreted in the five themes described in Chapter 4 were used to answer the following research questions.

Research Questions: What is the shared lived experience of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict? Participants shared their experiences of corruption, and are deeply ambivalent about it—resigning themselves to it, justifying it, or complaining about it. They are agonizingly aware of the damage corruption does to their country and see themselves as their own worst enemies, but they have been unable to curb the menace of corruption. Typically, participants often engage in corrupt practices because of its acceptance and profitability in Nigeria. For these participants, as soon as the opportunities arise, they make the best use of it, just to survive the harsh realities of living in the country.

What is the essence of corruption in the day-to-day activities of life of Nigerians? The essence of corruption to many of the participants, lie in their understanding of existing norms and beliefs, that has shaped the country's socio-economic and political

landscape. Many of the participants felt corruption is part of their daily life. For instance, when police officers routinely demand bribes, local government leaders steal and divert funds meant for schools; politicians and public office holders acquire funds meant to improve the nation, for their personal use, and still move freely in the country without any form of punishment, ordinary Nigerian citizens have it all to do.

What does it feel like to have experienced corruption and conflict? Many of the participants felt nothing extraordinary, but relieved they could use what they have to get what they want. For participants, corruption remains a tradition that exists in Nigeria. People may either frown at it, or embrace it. But, in reality, participants understood its embrace in Nigeria is more widespread than anything else. For participants, the feeling that one can name a price to get what may never become available to them is admirable. Life is not all about money. But in Nigeria, life is about money, because you can hardly get anything done if you are short of funds.

What does it feel like to have personally given bribes to expedite action on a particular matter? Participants, who have given bribes or accepted bribes, are of the opinion that, when you give and accept bribes to get things done, you are most likely to accomplish your goals and aspirations. What choice does a motorist have when he's asked to pay a certain amount of money by a Nigerian police officer? What choice does a student who failed a course have when he's faced with an instructor who demanded cash in exchange for a grade change? Participants feel that reaction of ease because, when they found themselves in such a situation, and they are able to abide by the rules that govern bribery, they move on with their life and think about what the future holds for them.

Should participants argue or question an authority, the consequences become real in that, such person may not even live to narrate his ordeal in the hands of their respective bribe taker.

What meanings do Nigerians find in their experiences of corruption and conflict? All participants find meanings in their experiences of corruption and conflict. For participants, corruption is deep, and remains a culture embraced with so much vigor and robustness in Nigeria. Virtually, all participants understand that there is negativity in corruption, but they would rather, be left alone to share in the “national cake,” (a term used to explain corrupt practices) than to be blown away by poverty and unemployment.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Summary

This study examined the experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict. This chapter will briefly review the purpose and research design of this study. In addition, the significance, contributions of this study to the field of conflict resolution, the study's correlation to the literature and theoretical context, future research as well as implications will be discussed. This study revealed five themes during the phenomenological reduction of the data. They include the following: encountering bribery, perceiving a culture of greed, perceiving a culture of impunity, perceiving a culture of impropriety; and consequences of no accountability. These themes exist because they represent the experiences of participants of this study on corruption and conflict in Nigeria.

The purpose of this study was to examine participant's experiences of corruption and conflict using a phenomenological methodology. This qualitative study used a snowball sample of 20 Nigerian citizens who have experienced corruption and conflict. Audio taped interviews were used to explore this experience. As with the review of literature chapter, this section is organized into themes; which form the conceptual basis for a review of the literature, and as well, relevant analytical literature that focuses on participant's experiences and perceptions of corruption and conflict in Nigeria.

Significance

By exploring the lived experiences of participants who have experienced corruption and conflict in Nigeria, the investigator:

- Provided insight into the feelings, struggles, successes and failures of participants

who have engaged in corrupt practices and experienced conflict situations.

- Provided insight into the impact corruption and conflict situations has on their personal life.
- Provided understanding of how corruption and conflict, as experienced by participants on a daily basis, affects inequality and income distribution in Nigeria.
- Identified the overall effects of corruption and conflict on governance, poverty, human rights abuse, safety and developmental growth in Nigeria.

Contributions of the Study to the Field of Conflict Analysis and Resolution

To date, a considerable body of research has sought to explore and investigate Nigeria's corruption and conflict situations (Ibekwe 2014, Adeyemi 2012, Obah-Akpowoghaha 2013 and USIP 2010). This research has characteristically shown that wherever corruption exists, such society may experience violence, poverty, human rights abuse and many vices that come with corruption. In contrast, the current research is the first attempt to explore the experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict, using theoretical frameworks (Human Needs Theory, Relative Deprivation and Structural Violence) to rationally and logically transition from simply describing a phenomenon observed to generalizing about various aspects of that phenomenon.

The investigator used in-depth interviews that allowed participants to tell their stories on corruption and conflict. The use of guided interviews afforded participants, rare and unique opportunities to have their respective voices heard. The use of qualitative phenomenological methodology to explore the experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflicts remains beneficial to the course of this study, and most

importantly, enlightening as it produced and uncovered people's experiences on corruption and conflicts.

The practice of conflict resolution has been in existence from a very long period of time and is not a recent new terminology to human nature. Despite the imperfect status of the United Nations, its unique model of international cooperation since 1945 appears to have played an important role in providing aid to developing nations, peacekeeping in troubled areas, awareness of human rights violations, and a world court. Both current and past leaders, scholars, conflict practitioners, firms, friends and families, have used conflict resolution to govern, and as well, resolve some contending issues globally.

This research study, serve as a valuable platform and resource for conflict practitioners and scholars in the field. This study, largely orientates researchers goals to match an area of societal importance (curbing corruption and preventing violence, human rights abuse, and conflict resolution). As this research study communicates the field of conflict resolution to a wide public, it rearranges and restores the value and importance of the field to the international community, theoretically and practically.

In the same vein, despite the revealing nature of this research as a result of the small sample of people interviewed, this study breaks new ground in the awareness of conflict resolution as a discipline; and analysis of the phenomenological experiences of Nigerian citizens on corruption and conflict. As this study offers an initial background of shared experiences on cases of corrupt practices which has both local and international implications and benefit, the commitment and value of the field of conflict resolution, takes a center stage as it becomes even more prominent.

Conclusively, this study contributes immensely to the field of conflict resolution, in such a way that, it provides the general public, an understanding of both, the theoretical and practical framework that shapes the nature and concept of the field of conflict resolution, in a changing world, filled with complex situations.

Correlation to the Literature

Participants' experiences and perceptions

The findings of this study correlated to past research findings with regards to the experiences and perceptions of participants on corruption and conflict in Nigeria. Several studies (Ayobami, 2011; Ogbeidi, 2012; Okekeocha, 2013; Imhonopi & Ugochukwu, 2013; Kelly, 2014; Dong, 2011; Ogbu, 2010) found that bribery is encountered on a daily basis in Nigeria. Participants in these studies expressed that, corruption is a necessary means to an end, and because there is uncertainty and fear of an unknown future in the country, they are motivated to give and accept bribes, and as well, steal what they can, and when they can. The participants in the current study repeatedly expressed similar feelings as they described the harsh realities they face living in Nigeria.

All of the participants in the current study talked about everyday struggle and survival. Because they have lost confidence, hope and trust in the unpardonable failure of political leadership managing the affairs and wealth of the country, access to economic prosperity and quality living condition, which is significant to participants' well-being, must be tackled and resolved, anyhow they deem necessary.

Imhonopi & Ugochukwu (2013) identified the impediment to national development as a spin-off of the leadership crisis and corruption prevalent in its public

sector and made valuable recommendations. In Nigeria, the public sector has become an epitome of all that is corrupt, mediocre and fraudulent. Self-preservation is preferred to national interest and the leadership crisis prevalent at all levels of decision-making has further deepened the imbroglio. Thus, Nigeria has lost traction in its attempt to achieve national development because of the invidious climate of “chop-I-chop” politics, ethnicity, mediocrity, partisanship, cronyism, corrupted process of recruitment of leaders, among other factors. These, correlated with the findings from the current study. In the current study, nearly all of the participants stated that the sense of using what one has, to get what he or she wants is gratifying in a country where everyone cares about their own purse. They felt it was important to justify the practice of corruption as a supplement, because of the experiences they have encountered in a country where the political, economic and social support is lacking or non-existent. This is true in Nigeria where the political structures are weak and there exists little or no planned national welfare and social security programs. In this situation, participants and many Nigerians may use whatever influences and position to secure the wealth needed to survive the harsh realities of living in the country.

Imhonopi & Ugochukwu (2013) argued that there is no way Nigeria can survive under the current oppressive weight of leadership crisis riddled with corruption. Without doubt, national development will continue to remain a mirage when lip service is paid to fighting leadership crisis and corruption in the country. As Tokunbo in Lawal & Ariyo (2006, p. 67) observed, there is no exaggeration regarding the tragic events of corruption since the country's independence. All efforts to improve on the public service or

bureaucracy have been frustrated by corruption. The evil so exists in every facet of national life that one has to bribe to get one's child into a school; one has to pay to secure a job and even continue to pay in some cases to retain it; one has to pay 10 percent of any contract obtained to grease the palms of government officials; one has to dash the tax officer to avoid paying taxes; one has to pay the hospital doctor and nurse to get proper medical attention and even some have to pay "something" to police officers to evade arrest. This catalogue of shame can no longer continue ad infinitum. As Imhonopi & Urim (2012) remorsefully observed, over thirteen years since Nigerians embraced democracy (the largest unbroken period ever in its history), Nigerians are yet to bid farewell to the very situations that characterized the military era such as poverty, corruption, infrastructural decay, social menace, rising unemployment and violation of basic human rights. This worrisome situation has encouraged large-scale emigration especially among Nigerian youths to other countries perceived to offer better social and economic conditions. This situation cannot just continue. For fear that Nigeria falls prey to a repeat of the Arab Spring; critical steps must be taken to avert the looming crisis on the horizon.

Ogbu (2010), in combating corruption in Nigeria, critically appraised the laws, institutions and the political will. In his final analysis, Ogbu argued that the "battle against corruption can only succeed when it is institutionalized and when there is demonstrated political will to fight corruption, which is presently lacking" (p. 51). One of the participants (Amoke, who worked in a corrupt banking system) shared and expressed similar viewpoint on "uneven supervision and enforcement, unstructured governance and

management processes at the bank.” Another participant expressed his views as he argued that, because we lack accountability and comprehensive checks and balances, Nigerian citizens like him are always willing to take all the necessary risks, because there is a belief that opportunity comes to those who seek for it, and not what some people ascribe to opportunity that it comes just once in a person’s lifetime. According to this participant, all you need do is come to Nigeria, and see for yourself numerous opportunities developed illegally by Nigerians to sustain their livelihoods, since there is always room for consistent violation of ethical norms that command societal consensus. The findings of the current study spoke to this phenomenon as participants described their experiences of corruption and conflict in Nigeria.

Correlation to the Theoretical Context

Abraham Maslow’s Theory of Human Developmental Psychology (1943) identified the hierarchy of needs. According to Maslow, one does not feel the second need until the demands of the first have been met or satisfied or the third until the second has been satisfied, and so on. All participants were influenced by the search to satisfy their respective physiological needs. These are biological needs which consist of the need for oxygen, food, water, and a relatively constant body temperature. They are the strongest needs because if a person were deprived of all needs, it is these physiological ones that would come first in the person’s search for satisfaction. For instance, all participants recounted that the fear of job and future insecurity made them see corruption as the best option to safeguard against future economic insecurity since Nigerian economy is declining. All participants felt the increasing poverty in the country is

accompanied by increasing unemployment.

In addition, Ayobami (2011) emphasized “that some of the things that cause poverty in Nigeria are the Nigerian ruling and business elite. The ruling elite lack the kind of philosophical and ideological vision and orientation that is committed to developing a dream society. They have no dream beyond the satisfaction of desires” (p. 2). All of the participants are dissatisfied because their welfare, health, employment, education, political power, physical security, and empowerment, are lacking in a country where survival remains a problem. Unless you are a member or friends to the powerful elites in Nigeria, one may not feel the impact of bad leadership in the country. This arrangement, of course provides a sense of illicitness and impropriety for participants, since they appear to understand fully, that the features that makes life worth living is missing. All participants, for example were well aware of numerous unorthodox means to influence their children or wards’ admission to the best schools in the country. Also, virtually all participants of this study knew that in Nigeria, you could rent from police officers, firearms to harass the public and engage in highway robberies.

Many of the participants in this study expressed discontent, because they evaluated their own wellbeing not only on the basis of what they have but also on the basis of what they have relatively to what other people have. According to Marx (1847), “a house may be large or small; as long as the neighboring houses are likewise small, it satisfies all social requirements for a residence. But let there arise next to the little house a palace, and the little house shrinks to a hut” (p. 2). For instance, one of the participants of this study (Otunba) was formerly a barber before he was initiated to an occult group

that promised him wealth, fame and power. In exchange for wealth, fame and power, he was asked to bring with him, his clients hair, to perform rituals. The shared experience of a perceived culture of greed resonates with all of the participants in this study. Because participants make a living in a society that barely pay attention to what others do, the need to acquire as much wealth as possible through dangerous and corrupt practices, seem more important than anything else.

Additionally, Ebere (2014) contends that, “one of the major problems bedeviling the Nigerian economy is the high rate of poverty and underdevelopment which has resulted in inequality and deprivations in basic core welfare indicators like wealth, energy, education and health in some parts of the country” (p.1). Some of the participants in the current study were socially and economically deprived. As a result, participants’ lack of basic necessities of life, have caused many to challenge their perceived exploiters in the system, which apparently, causes chaotic and violent uprisings in the community.

Ayegba (2015) reported that, “many graduates in Nigeria wander the streets without anything reasonable to do for a living. The government is capable but unwilling to provide jobs for them. Employment in Nigeria is usually not based on merit but depends on how connected you are with people that have power. This leaves many highly qualified people in poverty as seemingly no one cares to know what they are capable of achieving. These people are missing out on the income they would have got if they were employed. The number of quality jobs in the economy is low and many government resources are misallocated (p. 128). All of the participants in this study perceived, unconstructive shift in their day-to-day activities of life in the country. Thus, so far in this

study, there is a relationship between socioeconomic condition and violence in Nigeria. This connection between economic deprivation and tendency for violent acts affirmed the position of Robert Gurr, who is credited for the theory of Relative Deprivation. To Gurr (ibid), violence and extremism like the Boko Haram insurgency in the North is as a result of collective discontent caused by a sense of relative deprivation by the young people who contrary to believe that democracy will improve their living conditions worsened it off. In his assertion, Obi (2008) noted that, “the high expectations of the people that democracy would reverse decades of poverty, corruption and underdevelopment have hardly been met by the new democrats” (p. 7). These eventually created feelings of deprivation and desire to form a rebel group and engage in terror attacks on both the innocent citizens and government.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study. The first limitation is the sample size. Although the sample size was appropriate for the research design, it is possible that it may not be a true representation of all Nigerian citizens who have experienced corruption and conflict. In addition, a snowball sampling technique was chosen because participants were able to suggest to the investigator, others who might be willing to be interviewed for the study. Because of this, all participants were from the mega city of Lagos. Again, the findings may not be transferrable to other parts of the country. Furthermore, the participants were representative of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria.

As far as this study is concerned, the investigator recognized that, at times his personal beliefs, and family history may have influenced his analysis of the data. For

instance, because he lived in Nigeria for 23 years and witnessed corruption and conflict as well, he could have become fixated or unable to get over certain situations during the conduct of this research. To remove that kind of researcher bias, he employed a vigorous series of member and peer-checking opportunities.

This study is also limited in terms of the language used to select participants for this study. Though, English is the official language spoken in Nigeria, there are other ethnic groups, beside the main ethnic groups (Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa) in Nigeria that speak other languages. Participants are selected based on their understanding of the official language. In Nigeria, not everyone is literate to understand English language, let alone speak the official language.

This study, undoubtedly, will add to the body of knowledge in the field of social sciences and humanities. Since this research is mainly focused on Nigeria, the population sample size may lead to findings relevant only to Nigeria; and selected few participants mentioned in this study. As a result, findings in this study, no matter how informative, cannot be generalized outside of this study.

This research, despite its caveats, offers a rich and important insight into the phenomenological study on the experiences of Nigerians on corruption and conflict. An important finding here is that the impact of participants shared experiences on corruption and conflict, no doubt, will vary in size, degree and amount across the states in Nigeria. Because it is just impossible to cover everything in research, there is always a need for continuous research on corruption and conflict in Nigeria. What is not covered and addressed in this research should be considered in further studies.

Future Research

Based on this study as conducted, the investigator recommends the following studies:

- An in-depth study exploring corruption and conflict among the major ethnic groups (Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa) in Nigeria.
- A large-scale quantitative or qualitative study on corruption within the local governments in Nigeria.
- A study focusing on the experiences of religious leaders on corruption in Nigeria.
- A study focusing on corruption within the judicial, executive and legislative arm of government in Nigeria.

My Challenge

In my current professional life, I support my agency (USAID) to continue to partner with Nigeria, for the purposes of curbing corruption, fighting poverty, maintaining peace and security, and offer developmental efforts that will positively transform the future of the country. I believe that my personal challenge is to help the country develop, set policies and understand the need to re-strategize and re-organize to fight corruption and maintain peaceful co-existence among Nigerians.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

MEMORANDUM

To: Farouk Raheemson, M.A.
Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences

From: David Thomas, M.D., J.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

Date: April 24, 2014

Re: *Corruption and Conflict: A Phenomenological Study of the Experiences of Nigerian Citizens* – NSU IRB No. 03261439Exp.

I have reviewed the revisions to the above-referenced research protocol by an expedited procedure. On behalf of the Institutional Review Board of Nova Southeastern University, *Corruption and Conflict: A Phenomenological Study of the Experiences of Nigerian Citizens* is approved in keeping with expedited review category # 6 and #7. Your study is approved on **April 24, 2014** and is approved until **April 23, 2015**. You are required to submit for continuing review by **March 23, 2015**. As principal investigator, you must adhere to the following requirements:

CONSENT: You must use the stamped (dated consent forms) attached when consenting subjects. The consent forms must indicate the approval and its date. The forms must be administered in such a manner that they are clearly understood by the subjects. The subjects must be given a copy of the signed consent document, and a copy must be placed with the subjects' confidential chart/file.

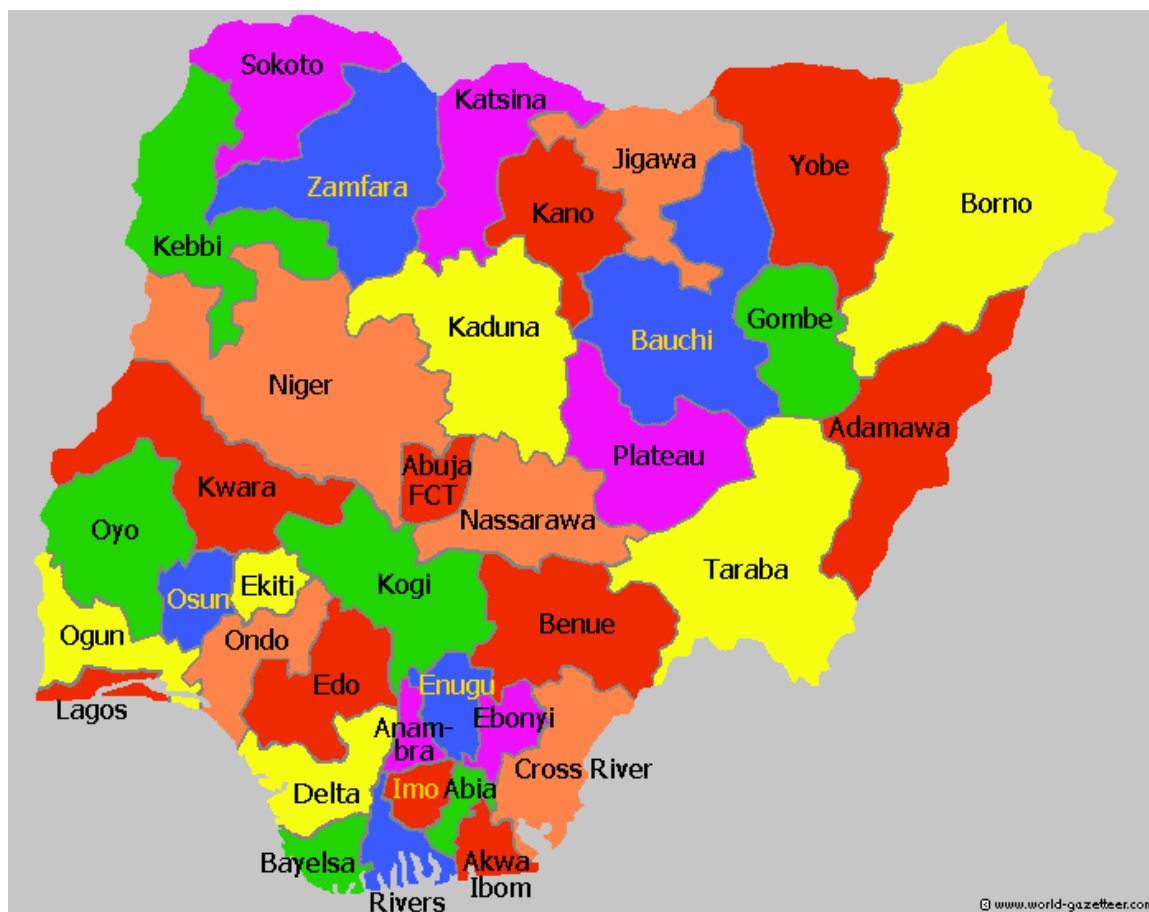
ADVERSE EVENTS/UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS: The principal investigator is required to notify the IRB chair of any adverse reactions that may develop as a result of this study. Approval may be withdrawn if the problem is serious.

- 3) **AMENDMENTS:** Any changes in the study (e.g., procedures, consent forms, investigators, etc.) must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
- 4) **CONTINUING REVIEWS:** A continuing review (progress report) must be submitted by the continuing review date noted above. Please see the IRB web site for continuing review information.
- 5) **FINAL REPORT:** You are required to notify the IRB Office within 30 days of the conclusion of the research that the study has ended via the IRB Closing Report form.

The NSU IRB is in compliance with the requirements for the protection of human subjects prescribed in Part 46 of Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46) revised June 18, 1991.

Cc: Dr. Ismael Muvingi
Ms. Jennifer Dillon

Appendix B: Map of Nigeria



Appendix C: Invitation to Participate

Invitation to Participate in a Research Study Entitled Corruption and Conflict: A Study on the Experiences of Nigerian Citizens.

Dear friend,

I hope this finds you well. My name is Farouk Raheemson. I am in the final stages of completing my Ph.D. degree in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, USA.

I will be conducting and compiling research information to complete my doctoral dissertation titled: Corruption and Conflict: A Phenomenological Study of the Experiences of Nigerian Citizens; and I would like to invite you to participate in my dissertation research.

Specifically, this dissertation is a phenomenological exploration of the experiences of Nigerians on corruption; and will reveal the contributions of corruption to the ongoing conflicts in Nigeria. Overall, as part of the major contribution and objective of this study, this dissertation brings to light the psychological impacts of corruption and conflict in Nigeria. In other words, this research will bridge the gap between the social structural understandings and impacts of corruption and the personal component.

As far as this study is concerned, interviews will be conducted based on the following criteria stated below:

- All 20 participants must be between the ages of 18-60 years
- All 20 participants must have experienced conflict and corruption at the same time in their workplace, community, and school.
- All 20 participants must be residents of Lagos; the commercial city of Nigeria.
- Since English is the official language in Nigeria, interested participants are expected to speak and understand English Language.

Interested participants are informed that interviews will only last for 30mins, and as well, conducted at the location specified by the researcher. Also, interviews are conducted individually to insure privacy and confidentiality.

Please be assured that absolutely no intrusive questions will be asked of you. No record of your participation will be kept except in my personal research notes and files, which will remain permanently confidential. This project is thoroughly reviewed, critiqued and will be approved by the Nova Southeastern University Institutional Review Board, whose sole purpose is to ensure the safety of all research participants.


I sincerely hope that you will consider participating in this study. If you are willing, please contact with any questions you may have at the phone number or email address below:

Farouk Raheemson, M.A.
1660 Dogwood Lane,
Hanover Park, IL 60133
Phone: (630) 449-8279
Email: fr182@nova.edu

If you choose to participate, I will then contact you directly to discuss in detail, the project. You will then have the opportunity to sign a voluntary consent form that fully explains your right to discontinue participation at any time with absolutely no repercussions.

I genuinely appreciate your time and consideration, and look forward to hearing from you!

With warm regards,
Farouk Raheemson


 NOVA University
 Institutional Review Board
 Approval Date: APR 24 2015
 Continuing Review Date: APR 23 2015

Appendix D: Interview Guide

Interview as a method for qualitative research seeks to “describe and the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects. The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say” (Kvale, 1996). In this section are, a list of open-ended questions I asked participants during the course of my interview for this dissertation. These questions are designed to guide, expand and strengthen the focus and direction of this dissertation, which was carried out during the interview session. These questions also ensured that the necessary data was gathered to accomplish the goals and objectives of the interview session. The lists of questions used in this research are listed below:

1. What do you understand by the word “corruption”? What does it mean to a person like you?
2. What do you understand by the word “conflict”? What does it mean to a person like you?
3. How do you deal with corruption in your household, workplace and in public?
4. How do you deal with conflict in your household, workplace and in public?
5. Based on your few examples and experiences of corruption, would you say there are more people involved in corruption, than a fewer people in Nigeria?
6. Can you give me a few examples of conflict situation you have been a part of and experienced?

Appendix E: Examples of Individual Textural and Structural Description and Syntheses

The following are exemplary individual textural descriptions, textural and structural descriptions, and syntheses of the lived experiences of four participants on corruption. The general character or attitude of participant's descriptions was informative. The themes were presented in stories that highlight certain characteristics about the lived experiences of corruption. Through the participants' stories, the researcher narrates and presents the lived experiences of Nigerian citizens by using pseudonyms.

Amoke

Amoke's Textural Description of Experience on Corruption

Amoke is a 45-year old woman, and a mother of three children. Her story captures the situation, conditions and her experience on corruption. She decided to quit her job as a top bank executive in one of the apex banks in the country, because she has fulfilled her childhood dreams of surviving without her parents. At the time of the interview, Amoke owned her business, but for years, she worked in a corrupt banking system, that awarded several undocumented loans to board members and even management, who were not eligible, but somehow received loans because they were able to bribe their way securing loans. After spending many years in the banking industry, Amoke emotionally stated:

“I realized it was time to go after several years of illegal transactions, trading's and dealings that involved me and my fellow conspirators. Unethical funds disbursement and loan approval was the order of the day, and that was pretty much all I understood then. In addition, we would steal old currency notes meant

for destruction, back into circulation.”

Amoke chooses that path in banking because she believed that was the only opportunity for her to be successful, richer and never again experience poverty as she did while growing up. As the only daughter, she lived most of her life without her parents who died in an auto accident. And since other extended family members reside outside of Lagos, parenting and nurturing her was a difficult task. She stated:

“No family member from both of my parents side wanted me, because I guess they had their own children, and most importantly, they were not financially able to cater to my needs.”

Amoke, despite the struggles she experienced growing up, ensured that education was all she could give to herself, and she did. As a young teenager, she understood that ‘your life is what you make of it’.....that is, the power to fail or succeed rests solely in your hands, and nobody else. Believing so much that she’s her own helper, and it’s a must to succeed, her experience of corruption dates back to college days, and up until she resigned her banking job duties.

Amoke’s experience on corruption is not a very unique one, because throughout her years in the banking industry, she and her conspirators did not face the wrath of the law. She attributed the problem to “uneven supervision and enforcement, unstructured governance and management processes at the bank”, which is made possible by insider abuses, fraud and embezzlement.

Amoke feels she did what she had to do, because if she did not, someone else will. And because she knows the banking system and how it operates, it was risky for her

to decline any kind of illegal banking transactions. She stated: “I have seen a few of my colleagues hurt, or killed because they refused to be a part of team that corrupts the banking system. The reason for this has a lot to do with ensuring that nobody tells anyone; and really, what lies beneath not telling was “oath taking. When I am talking about oath taking, I do not mean, a solemn promise. I am talking about oath of allegiance to a deity, which involves sharing each member’s blood.” In other words, I feel I have developed some kind of “family relationship” with team members.

Amoke’s Structural Description

The following individual structural description provides a clear account of the underlying dynamics of Amoke’s experiences, the themes and qualities that account for the “how” of her thoughts and feelings on corruption.

The structures that permeate Amoke’s perception and description of her experience on corruption are brought into the researcher’s awareness through relation to upbringing, ambition and her relationship with others.

Amoke’s experience as an orphan may have affected her upbringing one way or the other. Since her parents died in an auto accident at the age of sixteen, and no member of her extended family wanted to take care of her, she had to move on with her life, using what she has to get what she wants. Even if she thought she was doing the right or the wrong thing, nobody was around to challenge her. She was very clear about the consequences of her actions and behaviors that she resigned her job duties after she realized that she had acquired enough wealth and resources that would keep her in the social limelight, without fear. During those moments, Amoke was conscious of her

upbringing, coupled with the fact that she didn't have to cater to anyone but herself.

For Amoke's experience on corruption, ambition is presented as a worthy quality and feature that had only one consequence. Within the context of Amoke's corruption narrative, her ambition, suggests that it is more satisfying and rewarding to achieve your goals through corrupt practices, than to achieve them fairly. But if one looks at ambition through the lens of Shakespeare's classic Macbeth, ambition which had series of consequences in the book, suggests that it is more satisfying and rewarding to achieve your goals fairly than to achieve them through corruption. She described the corruption experience as a journey that was needed for her own survival.

Amoke's corruption experience was described in terms of her relationship with others. She maintained the increasing levels of trust and acceptance with conspirators at work. For instance, since she was bounded by the oath taking exercise, her sense of duty and obligation will always reflect within her circle of conspirators, which makes her feel safe and worry less someone might report them to a higher authority.

Otunba

Otunba's Textural Description of Corruption

Otunba describes his experience on corruption as a "necessary evil" to get by just to survive the harsh realities of living in Nigeria. He was born and raised in a polygamous home, with no positive role model, and barely anyone interested in what the other was doing. "As long as you are productive, either through legal or illegal means, all that matters was bring money home," Otunba said.

According to Otunba, because his father had about six wives, and him being the

twelfth of sixteen children, no one could keep track of another. At times, he said: “I don’t even see my dad for months and we live in the same house.”

Otunba’s understanding of the situation at home led him to become a hustler. According to Otunba; “there was nothing I could not do.” I just had to go with the flow to survive and move on with my life. As a result of this set-up, he was very open doing a lot of good and what many may call bad things. So, he started the internet scam business with his friends, to defraud victims or to otherwise take advantage of them. For example, “we steal people’s personal information and send about 200 dodgy emails a day.” According to Otunba, with their respective laptops placed on their laps, they would sit very close to each other in a small room to check who has fallen victim to their request. As soon as there is a response, a loud shout of “maga don pay” (A fool has paid) is up in the air. Otunba said; “You need to see the expression on everybody’s faces....happy faces because there is money to blow.”

Besides the internet scam business, Otunba was also a barber. One day, a customer told Otunba he could do much better for himself if they worked together. He responded that: “as long as money is involved, I am more than happy to work with you.” So, I started ‘rolling it’ with my customer, and became inseparable.

One day, my friend asked if I could go to my shop to collect some of my customer’s hair, pack them in a bag and bring them with me to his house. From his friend’s house, they drove to a strange place that belonged to the leader of an occult group. Otunba was initiated, met people of high calibre in the society, and many public office holders and politicians who came for different purposes, but everything was tied to

seeking for power, position, money and fame.

During Otunba's initiation to the occult group, he was promised wealth, fame and power as long as he's able to bring as many human hairs as possible, from his barbershop, or elsewhere. When the initiation was over, he became an official member of the occult group. This experience for Otunba is a fulfillment of a personal value, which implies hope and a better tomorrow for him.

After a few months, he realized that a lot of things have changed for him. Gradually, he became rich and famous. He ran for a political office to become the chairman of his local district and won. When he became the chairman of his local government in Lagos State, his priorities changed. He wanted to serve his people the best way he could. To achieve his goals, he stopped attending meetings of his occult group, but the main problem he had was centered on his group seeking all kinds of favor from his office. For instance, he stated: "My group would authorize that I grant and award them government contracts. As if that was not enough, whenever I accept their requests, they would inflate the cost of contracts awarded to them." Some contracts were never completed or even carried out, but they received funds to carry out projects. What they did not do, they said they did. I covered their loopholes to prevent my office from unnecessary attention from the public. Whenever I complained that their behavior and attitude has become so unbearable, they were quick to remind me that they made me who I am today, and if care is not taken, they will ruin my political career first, and then kill me." In order for Otunba to retain his position and not lose his power, fame and wealth, he had no choice but to grant his group what they wanted at the expense of his people.

However, when things became really rough for Otunba, he would use his authority to enforce decision or compel obedience on the path of his group, but in response, his group will cause chaos and disrupt the order of the day. In a nutshell, Otunba summarizes his experience on corruption as follows:

I learned very early in life that you make the most of something. So, I decided to exploit my country's weaknesses to gain power and strengths; and possibly transform my life for the better. In this country, because we lack accountability and comprehensive checks and balances, Nigerian citizens like me are always willing to take all the necessary risks, because there is a belief that opportunity comes to those who seek for it, and not what some people ascribe to opportunity that it comes just once in a person's lifetime. All you need do is come to Nigeria, and see for yourself numerous opportunities developed illegally by Nigerians to sustain their livelihoods, since there is always room for consistent violation of ethical norms that command societal consensus.

Otunba's Structural Description of his Corruption Experience

Structurally, Otunba's experience of corruption is shaped by his perceptions of the culture of impunity (nothing will happen syndrome and mentality), interpersonal relationships and impropriety (a failure to observe standards or show due honesty or modesty).

For Otunba, it is natural for him to think that no one cares about what he does. And for whatever reason he did something, no one can question him because that is the way things have been in the country. This is probably why he thinks being a "hustler"

focused on anything as long as it brings money to him is the only way to go in the country.

Through Otunba's interpersonal relationships, one can tell he enjoys being with his friends doing what they know how to do. But, his interpersonal relationships with his occult group may very well be the hallmark of his experience on corruption, because through his occult group, he moved up the 'ladder' to become rich, famous and powerful in the society.

In addition, Otunba observed that there is no checks and balances in the country. Using this as a tool, he recognized the need for impropriety. For example, he started "rolling it" with his customer when he realized he would be richer, famous and powerful if he could supply his occult group, human hair from his barbershop.

Maggi

Maggi's Textural Description of Corruption

Perhaps the most obvious narrative experience of Nigerian citizens on corruption was that many of the participants were influenced by the lack of accountability, deep sense of impunity and impropriety. For Maggi, her experience of corruption dates back to her years working at the National Pension Commission. According to Maggi; "Working at PenCom offered me loads of financial upliftment, and power to negotiate with anyone that has anything to do with pension funds."

Maggi was born in Lagos State, with a silver spoon. Her parents are wealthy merchants with chains of business in almost every nook and crannies of Lagos metropolis. She attended schools for the elites and most powerful in the country. Maggi,

being the only child, was provided almost everything, if not all. Going to school was more like a breeze for her. “I missed school drop offs, because I had my own car and would sit by the owners corner every morning on my way to school”....I really missed that part,” She said. In a nutshell, she went to school without any kind of worries, because her parents took care of everything she needed. Fast-forward, she graduated from college, and through her dad’s influence, secured a job as an auditor and accountant.

Maggi’s job as an auditor with PenCom, is to conduct performance audits, non-audit reviews, and revenue certifications. The best part of my job is that, “I meet different kinds of people every day from all walks of life asking for what not,” she said. Maggi, who strives to perform her job excellently, experience everyday corruption on her job, because she detects fraud easily. Maggi succinctly summarized her experience:

Understanding that misstatements are relevant when auditing financial reports, clients would do everything they can to falsely increase the depreciation time length on the balance sheets, inflate assets, and underreport line costs by capitalizing rather than expensing, and inflated revenues with fake accounting entries. At the end of the day, these kind of behaviors lead to loss of jobs, and losses for investors. Because perpetrators (mostly company heads and their accountants) of these kind of fraud, at some point may have their company audited, they negotiate and work things out with the auditor sent to detect fraud and financial misappropriation. As an auditor who is disciplined and committed to doing her job, I have rejected as many offers as possible from different companies to cover fraudulent activities. For example, because these companies know

auditors do not earn that much in salaries, some of us are offered huge amount of cash, a car and a house. All these gifts are very tempting for us. Even if one is paid a high salary, earning extras does not hurt. But one has to be disciplined to not accept bribes or gifts. If I don't accept bribes, what about the other auditor who has shown interest?

During Maggi's final year at PenCom, there was a pension scam that involved my director. According to Maggi, my director misappropriated billions of naira worth of pension funds, which he claimed to have recovered from pension thieves. What he did was disturbing, Maggi said. Instead of his director to return the loot as he claimed, he deposited the funds for pensioners into his private accounts. At the end of the day, when the bubble burst, my director left the country and since then, has not returned.

Maggi's Structural Description of Corruption

Structurally, Maggi's experience of corruption began when she started working as an accountant/auditor. Of course, she may have heard so many stories about corruption, but her firsthand experience came when she gained employment with PenCom. For someone like Maggi, her experience of corruption is shaped by her orientation from her wealthy home, which stuck firmly with her. It should be borne in mind that, the fact that one is born into a rich family does not mean, such person is not likely to engage in corrupt practices. Within the context of Maggi's narratives, it is obvious that her parent's outstanding support could well be the bedrock of her dislike on corruption. This researcher is very careful to admit that Maggie did not accept bribes because she was trained well or possibly because her parents loved her since everything was at her beck

and call. There are many people out there, who had a much better background, and still accept bribes, and engage themselves in fraudulent activities.

For Maggi, her interpersonal relationship was mostly centered on her close-knit family. Maggi didn't feel the need to associate with anyone other than her parents. During the interview session, everything we discussed about was about her and her parents. She did not mention having any kind of relationships with colleagues at work. Thus, that decision to not associate may well define her approach to corruption, since the people that surround us, normally influence us positively or negatively.

Jhigan

Jhigan's Textural Description of Corruption

Jhigan describes his corruption experience as a necessity for survival. He graduated from one of the leading universities in Nigeria, and luckily for him, he secured a lecturer 1 position within that university system. And since then, he has continued to work at the institution, as a lecturer.

According to Jhigan who is now a senior lecturer at the university, he said: "Being a lecturer at any Nigerian university, is the most difficult and less rewarding job in the country. Just so you know, if you ask the kids out there if they are interested in teaching at the university, they will run away from you, or curse you. As far as my experience of corruption is concerned, as academics, we are less valued in the society. I mean, with a very low salary, very low promotion exercise for instructors, pitiable academic environment, very old libraries with old books to conduct excellent research, and many unserious college kids, what more is there to keep one on this job? Of course, it

is corruption that causes these problems as mentioned, and it is corruption that still keeps me, like many other academicians in the academic environment. And I'll tell you why and how most of us use what we have to get what I want.”

In remembering what was going on in his environment, Jhigan as a lecturer recognizes the need to go with the flow. According to Jhigan, “I saw many of my colleagues doing well and even better off than I am. Almost every session, they drive new cars, travel abroad to attend conferences, and as well build their respective homes.” I told myself, “Man up, and ask them how they are doing it, knowing full well that none of us can survive on our respective salaries.”

One day, Jhigan invited a friend to come by his office. They talked and Jhigan told his friend his problems. His friend told him there are so many resources he could make use of as an instructor. For instance, Jhigan's friend told him to “offer” help to some lazy students who resort to “sorting” (finding ways of purchasing high and unmerited grade mark from him to enhance their grades at the final examination). Jhigan's friends continued by offering another suggestion, which implies that he becomes a “prolific writer” by writing as many books as possible, and ensure that his students purchase his books. Jhigan learned he could also publish “handouts” which is normally illegal at some Nigerian university campuses, but some instructors have done that successfully, by adding a hardcover that has their respective names on the material they call handouts.

Jhigan claims that his friend's suggestion was new to him, as he has been teaching with passion, and has legitimately done so without having to do all that his friend asked

him to start doing. He states that, “financial struggle,” couple with the need to overcome the harsh realities of poverty, led him to seek for advice and counseling from his friend. In his words, “It’s all about getting paid and nobody wants to be poor.” At that point, he describes how he succumbs to corrupt practices at his workplace.

Through Jhigan’s experience, it became obvious that financial gains became one of the reasons why corruption continues to be a social problem in Nigeria. By his own account, the decision to be a part of an endless list of corrupt instructors was influenced by his state of financial affairs.

Jhigan’s Structural Description of Corruption

Structurally, Jhigan’s experience of corruption has a lot to do with his reaction to the unfavorable living conditions of instructors, who do not accept bribes or engage in corrupt practices at their respective workplaces. For Jhigan, his experience of corruption is the most attractive way to stay on the job, and actualize his dreams.

Interpersonal relationships are vital to Jhigan’s survival as an instructor. Through his interpersonal relationship, he was guided and was able to uncover the “hidden truths” of success and accomplishments as an instructor in Nigeria.

Composite Textural-Structural Synthesis of Corruption

Moustakas (1994) suggests that the final step in a phenomenological analysis requires an integration of the composite textural and composite structural descriptions, providing a synthesis of the meanings and essences of the experience. This composite synthesis will focus on the essences and meanings of the experiences of the 20 participants. I synthesized the meanings units, themes, and structural descriptions of each

of the participants into universal meanings or essences of the experiences.

Each participant in the research study understood the meaning and essence of surviving the harsh realities of living in a corrupt system. Since many of the participants encounter corruption on a daily basis, the question that comes to mind for them, was to either, make a living from corruption, or ignore, completely corrupt practices. For participants, the need to survive anyhow is reflected in their day-to-day activities of life in the country. Based on participants' responses, it was "important for them to do what they had to do," without any show of guilt, remorse or consequences that may imply wrongdoings.

For the most part, many of the participants enjoy the freedom to bribe (the freedom of 'ask and it shall be given to you depending on what you bring along with you), just to prevent unnecessary disturbances and unwanted waste of time and resources to get things done, because they know what is required of them to accomplish their goals. According to one of the participants, "our culture of greed, politics of winner takes all, and politics of ethnicity," defines the country, because everyone wants to be extremely rich and influential, by acquiring as much as possible. For instance, if an individual, by the virtue of belonging to an interest group, owns and manages an entire oil block in Nigeria, what then is left that cannot be owned in the country?

Each of the participants in this study perceives a culture of impunity (exemption from punishment or face the wrath of the law), and impropriety (failure to observe standards or show due honesty), which is attributed to corruption. This is evident from the phrases participants used to describe their experiences of corruption. Because most of

the participants are aware of what they have to do to survive, they engaged in several acts of corrupt practices, and even dangerous acts. For instance, one of the participants who used his clients' hair for money rituals was fully aware of the kind of society he lives in. He understood his actions, and of course ready to face the consequences of his actions, if there was any at all.

Another important theme that is reflected from participant's narrative on their experiences of corruption is the perception of greed. Most of the participants in the study described 'greed' as a major factor that fulfills their perceived needs. Some of the participants, painted an image that implies 'a nothing wrong' in their acts when compared to some public office holders who have acquired enormous wealth by greed through corrupt practices, and still retain their positions. Because of the absence of law in Nigeria, participants felt, greed will continue, since there is hardly any Nigerian, not looking forward to enrich themselves in what is regarded, a norm embedded in the culture of Nigeria's socio economic and political landscape.