

THE UNBROKEN CYCLE; CORRUPTION AND ECONOMIC STAGNATION IN
NIGERIA.

BY

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CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned certify that this work was carried out by Precious Chinedu Omegah
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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God, my Family and everyone who supported me through my studies at the University of Benin.

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To God be all the glory for His guidance and blessings throughout this project even to the success.

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ABSTRACT

This project topic has been a recurring theme in various art forms/styles, yet its impact in the society has been limited. Various artist has attempted to tackle this issue through their work, using powerful imagery and symbolism to convey the devastating effect of corruption on the country's development. Nevertheless, despite these efforts, the cycle of corruption and economic stagnation remains unbroken, and the desired change has not been achieved to its fullest. This work aimed to grab the attention of the government to the harmful effects of corruption and economic stagnation on Nigerians daily lives.

To create a thought provoking piece that addresses this issue, a 4 feet by 6 feet stretcher was made, using the following steps.

- A fabric was placed/stretched over the stretcher
- The canvas was sized and primed
- The sketch was made for the painting
- Painting, using acrylic medium
- Detailing
- Finishing,

The study reveals that the three figures, representing people of different ages, are shown in chains, highlighting the heavy burden of stagnation. The illustrations on either side of the painting remind us of the harshness of political leaders and the struggling economy.

This study also reveals the serious problems facing the country and encourages viewers to face these hard truths

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background To the Study

Corruption has been a major issue in Nigeria since it became independent in 1960. The discovery of oil in the late 1950s and early 1960s brought a lot of money to the country, but it also led to many politicians and government officials stealing money meant for the people. From 1966 to 1979 and again from 1983 to 1999, military leaders ruled Nigeria, and they used their power to get rich while ignoring the needs of the people.

Corruption has seriously harmed Nigeria's economy. It has slowed down the country's growth, made it hard to invest in important things like roads and schools, and increased poverty. Every year, Nigeria loses billions of dollars to corruption, which prevents the country from developing properly. Because of corruption, many Nigerians do not trust their government. They often see it as taking advantage of them rather than helping them.

Though the Nigerian government has tried to fight corruption by creating special agencies focused on this issue. However, these attempts have faced challenges like a lack of strong support from politicians, not enough money, and even corruption within these anti-corruption agencies.

This painting showcases the damaging impact of corruption on Nigeria's economy and society while raising awareness about its historical and ongoing issues. It aims to inspire change and encourage Nigerians to hold their leaders accountable, ultimately advocating for transparency and good governance.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Many artists have tackled the issue of corruption in Nigeria through their work, they often use strong and provocative images to show how serious this issue is. Their methods range from making jokes about the situation to showing realistic scenes that highlight the effects of corruption, even though these efforts are well-meaning, they sometimes do not lead to real change, one reason for this is that their approach can feel too direct or blaming, which might turn away people who are willing to consider reforms. Additionally, some of the artwork can rely too much on shocking images instead of providing a deeper understanding of the complex issues related to corruption.

One criticism of these approaches is that they can be too focused on specific problems without considering the broader history and systems that contribute to corruption in Nigeria. To improve these artistic efforts, this painting aim to be more comprehensive and thought-provoking.

This painting aims to explore how corruption is connected to economic stagnation in Nigeria, the goal is to encourage viewers to think about the root causes and wide-ranging effects of corruption

1.3 Research Questions

This study examines the connection between corruption and economic stagnation in Nigeria, through the following Research Questions:

1. How does corruption affect economic growth and development in Nigeria?
2. What are the consequences of this topic on access to essential services, for every day Nigerians?
3. How can this painting be used to illustrate and critique this topic?
4. How can art help raise awareness, promote discussion, and encourage positive change regarding this topic?

1.4 Aim And Objectives of The Study

The aim of this study is to produce a painting that visually represents how corruption affects economic growth in Nigeria. It seeks to bring to awareness of the viewers the state of Nigeria.

The objectives of this painting are:

1. To portray how corruption affects economic growth and development in Nigeria.
2. To explore the consequences of this topic on access to essential services, for every day Nigerians.
3. To demonstrate that painting can be used to illustrate and critique this topic.
4. To visually represent that art can help raise awareness, promote discussion, and encourage positive change regarding this topic.

1.5 Significance Of The Study

This study is significant for this key reasons:

To the artist: This study will inspire other artists to tackle pressing issues, creating thought provoking art pieces that stir emotions, spark critical thinking, and raise awareness about the nation's challenges.

To the general public;

- Academic Value: It will show how art can be a powerful way to communicate social issues.
- Raising Awareness: It will inform Nigerians about the effects of corruption and economic stagnation, it will make them speak about their displeasures, promoting citizen engagement in fighting corruption.

- **Helping Policymakers:** It will be useful for government officials and others who want to fight corruption and encourage economic growth in Nigeria.
- **Building Knowledge:** It will add to what is known about corruption and economic problems in Nigeria, offering fresh ideas and views on these important issues.

1.6. Scope And Delimitation To The Study

The scope of this research also includes; the four objectives of this study.

How corruption affects economic growth and development in Nigeria.

How painting can be used to illustrate and critique this topic.

In addition, how art can help raise awareness, promote discussion, and encourage positive change regarding this topic.

This study is delimited to the 36 states of Nigeria, including the FCT.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter deals with the review of related literature, the review was carried out under the following sub-headings:

- Corruption and economic stagnation
- How corruption causes economic stagnation in Nigeria
- Explaining the link between corruption and stagnation
- Breaking the Cycle of Corruption and Stagnation
- Pictorial composition
- Principles of art
- Colour and Colour theory

2.1 Corruption and economic stagnation

Corruption has been a long-standing problem in Nigeria, and it is closely linked to the country's slow economic growth. Despite having plenty of natural resources, Nigeria struggles to progress because corruption weakens governance, wastes resources, and discourages investment. This review explains how corruption has contributed to Nigeria's economic challenges by looking at its effects on leadership, public services, and trust among citizens.

Corruption means using public office for personal gain, such as through bribery, stealing public funds, or giving unfair advantages to friends or relatives (Transparency International, 2023). Economic stagnation happens when an economy stops growing or grows very slowly, leading to issues like high unemployment and low productivity.

In Nigeria, corruption has been deeply rooted in the country's history. Ekeh (1975) explains that many people in public offices see their roles as opportunities to take resources for themselves or their communities rather than serving everyone fairly. This mindset has made corruption a normal part of governance in Nigeria.

Osoba (1996) also notes that weak systems, like poor monitoring of government spending and lack of transparency, have allowed corruption to grow unchecked in the country.

2.2 How corruption causes economic stagnation in Nigeria

Corruption has slowed Nigeria's economic progress in several ways:

- **Weak Governance and Institutions**

Corruption weakens government structures, making them inefficient and unable to serve the public properly. Achebe (1984) famously said that corruption is "the enemy of development" because it distorts decisions and allows only a few people to benefit from the country's wealth.

Okonjo-Iweala (2018) explains that in Nigeria, corruption often shows up in government contracts, where inflated prices are approved, and the extra money ends up in private pockets. This reduces the impact of public spending and leaves many projects incomplete or poorly executed.

- Discouraging Investment

Corruption creates an unstable business environment. Mauro (1995) points out that corruption increases the cost of doing business and makes rules unpredictable, which scares away investors. In Nigeria, foreign companies often hesitate to invest because they fear corrupt practices, such as bribes and unfair treatment (Sala-i-Martin & Subramanian, 2003).

Corruption also rewards people who use personal connections instead of innovation or hard work, discouraging entrepreneurs and slowing economic growth (Krueger, 1974).

- Poor Infrastructure and Public Services

Funds meant for important projects like roads, schools, and hospitals are often stolen or mismanaged in Nigeria. Transparency International (2021) reports that corruption leads to poor-quality infrastructure, making it harder for businesses and citizens to succeed. For example, bad roads and unreliable electricity increase costs for businesses and reduce productivity.

● The Oil Sector and Inequality

Nigeria's reliance on oil has made corruption worse. Money from oil exports often ends up in the hands of a few powerful individuals instead of being used to develop the country (Sala-i-Martin & Subramanian, 2003). This has widened the gap between the rich and the poor, leaving many Nigerians in poverty despite the country's wealth. Akinola (2018) calls this the "resource curse," where the abundance of natural resources fuels greed and corruption instead of benefiting everyone.

2.3 Explaining the link between corruption and stagnation

Several ideas explain why corruption causes economic stagnation in Nigeria:

- Rent-Seeking Behavior: Krueger (1974) explains that instead of working hard or creating new ideas, many people focus on gaining favors through corruption. This slows down innovation and economic growth.
- Weak Institutions: North (1990) highlights that weak systems, like poor laws and lack of accountability, make it easy for corruption to thrive. In Nigeria, the absence of strong rules means corrupt practices often go unpunished.
- Selfish Leadership: Buchanan (1980) argues that corruption happens when leaders prioritize their personal gain over public welfare. This is often seen in Nigeria's politics.

2.4 Breaking the Cycle of Corruption and Stagnation

To escape the cycle of corruption and slow economic growth, Nigeria needs stronger institutions, better leadership, and more transparent systems. Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) argue that countries with fair and inclusive systems are better able to reduce corruption and achieve steady growth.

● How Corruption Affects Nigeria's Economy

Corruption has caused significant harm to Nigeria's economy in several ways:

Loss of Public Funds: Money that should be used for development projects is stolen, leaving critical sectors like healthcare, education, and infrastructure underfunded.

Fewer Investments: Foreign investors avoid Nigeria because corruption makes it risky to do business there.

Widening Gap Between Rich and Poor: Wealth is concentrated in the hands of corrupt leaders, while most people struggle with poverty.

Weak Institutions: Corruption makes public institutions ineffective, as they focus on benefiting a few rather than serving the public.

Corruption is one of the biggest barriers to Nigeria's economic progress. It weakens governance, scares away investors, and wastes resources, leaving the country stuck in a cycle of poverty and underdevelopment. Breaking this cycle will require strong reforms, honest leadership, and modern tools to ensure transparency and accountability. Without

these changes, Nigeria risks remaining trapped in an unbroken circle of corruption and stagnation.

2.5 Pictorial Composition

Composition involves the intentional arrangement of visual elements within an image, such as lines, shapes, colours, and lighting, to create an attractive and impactful picture. This arrangement guides the viewer's eye and establishes a clear focal point. Poore (1903) refers to composition as the harmonious arranging of the component parts of a work of art into a unified whole.

2.6 Principles of Art

Rhythm continuance, a flow, or a feeling of movement achieved by the repetition of regulated visual information.

Emphasis The principle of visual organization that suggests that certain elements should assume more importance than others in the same composition.

Proportion is the comparison of dimensions or distribution of forms

Balance A feeling of equality in weight, attention, or attraction of the various visual elements within the pictorial field as a means of accomplishing organic unity.

Harmony is the visually satisfying effect of combining similar, related elements.

(<https://learn.leighcotnoir.com/artspeak/principles/>)

2.7 Colour

Colour is described as the quality of the objects that comes from the different ways light bounces off or is given off by them.

Colour Theory

“Colours are governed by an internal logic, and colour relationships are more important than individual colours themselves” (Alberts, 1963)

In line with the colour theory, a visual representation of all the colours in a circular diagram called “colour wheel”, it’s a guide for the colour mixture. It represents the relationship and distinctions of colours.

Primary colours: red, yellow, and blue

Secondary colours: orange, green, and purple

Tertiary colours: red-purple, blue-green, yellow-green

Hue; Hue is the characteristic of colour that identifies it as a specific shade, such as red, blue, or green, on the colour wheel.

Value; Value refers to a colour's relative lightness or darkness, which is essential for creating contrast and depth in visual art.

Saturation; Saturation, also known as chroma or intensity, describes the purity and vibrancy of colour. It can range from fully saturated (vibrant) to de-saturated (grayed).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This is subdivided into the following categories;

- Population of the study
- Sample and Sampling Instrument
- Instrument for Data Collection
- Description of materials
- Studio Production Practice(procedures)
- Method of Visual Analysis

3.1 Population of the Study: The Population of this study is Nigeria as a whole.

3.2 Sample and Sampling Technique: The sampling technique employed in the selection of variables was simple random sampling.

3.3 Instrument for Data Collection: The methods used for data collection were mainly on historical news and information, especially sourced from the internet.

3.4 Description of Materials:

- **Stretcher:** a frame made of wood for the canvas to be stretched over.
- **Canvas:** a fabric material that is being stretched on a stretcher before painting on.
- **Brushes:** a plastic or wooden tool with bristles that are used to collect paint pigment from the palette and applied on a canvas.
- **Acrylic Paint:** is a semi-solid substance in various colours.
- **Emulsion Paint:** is also a semi-solid substance in various colors.
- **Top Bond glue:** an adhesive semi-solid substance, that binds two items together.
- **Palette:** a plastic material with a flat surface, on which paint pigment is mixed.
- **Palette Knife:** it is a blunt tool used for mixing and applying paint, with a flexible steel blade clamped with a ferrule to handle.

- Rag: any fabric material that is used for the cleaning of the brushes while painting.
- Staple Gun: this is a device made up of light metal used manually to fasten canvas to the stretcher.
- Bowl: a plastic container that is used to hold water while painting.

3.5 Studio Production Practice(procedures):

- Stage 1: Canvas Preparation
- Stage 2: Sizing and Priming
- Stage 3: Transfer of Sketch and Wash
- Stage 4: Painting Process
- Stage 5: finished stage

3.6 Method of Visual Analysis:

A critique was carried out as follows to evaluate the project.

- Project Title

- Concept
- Draftsmanship
- Medium
- Colour
- Style
- Technique
- Analysis

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 STUDIO PRODUCTION PROCESS (PROCEEDURE) AND CRITIQUE

This chapter deals with the detailed Studio Production Process and critique of this project.

I. Stage 1: Construction and Preparation of Canvas

A construction of 6 feet by 4 feet frame was made, then a canvas was properly stretched over it from all four sides of the frame and stapled with the aid of a staple gun.



Plate 1: Canvas Preparation

II. Stage 2: Sizing and Priming Stretched Canvas

Sizing is a mixture of water and glue (top bond), this is applied on the already stretched canvas, to cover the air pores on the fabric (canvas), to avoid paint from penetrate through. After that, the priming follows. This is a mixture of glue, emulsion paint and water applied to the surface of the canvas to make a thin layer coat suitable for painting.



Plate 2: Sizing and Priming

III. Stage 3: Transfer of Sketches and Wash

After the work surface is prepaid and properly dried, the sketch is then transferred to the already primed canvas, ready for painting.



Plate 3: sketch and Wash

IV. Stage 4: Painting Process

This stage involves the application of first-layer colours to the already made sketching. The compositions are marked out, using blocking.



Plate 4: Painting Process

V. Stage 5: Detailing

This involves making further detail on the composition (figures), creating emphasis and application of the elements and principles of art.



Plate 5: Detailing

VI. Stage 6: Finishing Stage

This is where the finishing touches are added to the painting.



Plate 6: Finished Work

4.2 Critique

A critique was carried out as follows to evaluate the project

Project Title: The Unbroken Cycle; Corruption and Economic Stagnation

Medium: The medium utilized to carry out this project was Acrylic on a 4 feet by 6 feet canvas.

Concept: The three figures represents the citizens of the nation; the child, youth and old (all chained), depicting the state of stagnation. The figure on the left side of the canvas represents how the political leaders has been oppressor from ages and the one on the right also showing the decline in the economy of the nation.

The concept of this project was to visually represent the state of the country.

Draughtsmanship: Acrylic and brush was used to create the sketch, this is to aid a proper rendering of the composition.

Technique: The painting technique utilized is a wet-on-dry application, taking full advantage of the fast-drying properties of acrylic paint. Colours: Cool and Vibrant colours were used to show the depth in visual representation of this project, the choice of colours relates directly to the concept.

Style: The style of painting is realism and abstract.

Analysis: This painting depicts how corruption has engrossed the nation and it effect on it's citizens. It aims to create awareness of the effects of corruption on the economic growth of the country.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Summary

This project, “The Unbroken Cycle; Corruption and Economic Stagnation,” depicts how artists can express their opinion on the situations of the country. It explores the relationship between corruption and economic stagnation in Nigeria.

Despite the efforts to address corruption, it has always remain a major problem to the economic growth and development of Nigeria. This study has been able to prove that artists can pass their messages through any form of art, which can serve as means to educate the viewer about the problems of the country.

1.2 Conclusion

Corruption has consistently hindered Nigeria’s economic growth and development. This project examines the historical context, economic impact, and social consequences of corruption in Nigeria. Through a thorough analysis of existing literature and artistic expressions, it becomes evident that corruption has established a self-perpetuating cycle that obstructs economic progress and worsens poverty.

The project’s findings highlight the urgent need for systematic reforms and collective action to break this cycle through the instrument of Art.

1.3 Recommendations

The need for public awareness is very important in achieving the purpose of this study, and I will say that;

Artist should participate in addressing certain national problems. They should be able to educate the people, using whatever medium of art they can, this does not only resonates with the people but also ensures a significant impact.

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