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# Perceptions of Unrestricted Gift Giving and the Integrity of Public Servants in Nigeria

Malachy Ogbonna Ugwu  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Malachy Ogbonna Ugwu

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2018

Abstract

Perceptions of Unrestricted Gift Giving and the Integrity of Public Servants in Nigeria.

by

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MBA, Enugu State University of Science and Technology

PGD, Anambra State University of Technology

B.Sc, Anambra State University of Technology

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

August, 2018

## Abstract

Many observers are concerned about the ramifications of the policy regulation in Nigeria that allows public servants to accept gifts without restriction on the basis of culture. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to better understand this cultural practice and its implications for the integrity of public servants. Using Mettler and SoRelle's conceptualization of policy feedback theory, the research questions focused on the perceptions of leaders of civic organizations on this cultural practice in relation to the integrity of public servants in a particular region of Nigeria. Data were collected from 10 purposely selected leaders of civic organizations using open-ended, semi-structured interview protocols, and other publicly available documents. The data were subjected to an inductive coding procedure followed by thematic analysis. Findings suggested that the perceptions of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service were negative and unethical. Consequently, the findings suggested an amendment to the relevant sections of Nigerian Constitution to provide for a restricted monetary value of gifts allowable in the public service. The implications for positive social change include discussing how policy makers and practitioners may be able to act on the study findings to bring about ethical, effective, and efficient public service in Nigeria.

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all genuine fights against public sector corruption in Nigeria. The worst enemy of the public is a corrupt public servant. Armed robbers, smugglers, counterfeiters, and other deadly mortal enemies of the public cannot succeed in their evil intentions without the complicity of corrupt public servants. And without an ethical public service intent on implementing public policy effectively and efficiently, Nigeria is doomed. May God Almighty bless all genuine efforts of men and women of goodwill and conscience so that Nigeria can be liberated from endemic corruption for the betterment of Nigerians in particular and humanity in general, Amen!

## Acknowledgments

My journey to obtain a higher degree for a higher purpose at Walden University leading to the award of PhD in Public Policy and Administration was an immensely challenging and rewarding experience. At the beginning of the journey, I was very enthusiastic to study in a world renowned university and on graduation become a scholar practitioner fully committed to research, teaching and learning. I underrated the sacrifices needed to pull through the program in terms of time, resources, discipline, and academic rigors. However, in the face of all the challenges, I had staying power and was able to soldier on with the special grace of God upon me and the unparalleled support and encouragement from my family members, a core group of lovely and reliable colleagues, and a number of exceptional Walden faculty members and colleagues some of whom will remain valued pals and confidants today, tomorrow and the day after.

I, therefore, thank God Almighty for His favors upon my undeserving self. In reality, it is through Him, in Him and with Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirits, that I completed my degree work, and all honors and glory are His Almighty Father forever and ever, Amen! My heartfelt appreciation goes to my wife, Scholastica; and children - Kachi, Ozi, Dumdum, and Chikamso. We all had the baptism of fire together. Their understanding and cooperation was a rare source of motivation.

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attainment and excellence. We leveraged each other's comparative advantage. Angela has just completed her M.Sc in Human Resources Management, Roehampton University, in preparation for a PhD program; Florence has just been inducted as a chartered accountant of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria; while Imanfidon is completing the last chapter of his dissertation leading to the award of PhD in Environmental Resource Management at Ambrose Ali University in Ekpoma, Edo State. They are dependable allies committed to achieving resonance in education and professionalism. A great future awaits each and every one of them.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

The widely accepted cultural practice of unhindered gift giving in the public service of Nigeria, especially in a particular territory of the country is viewed by some policy analysts as being contradictory to the fight against corruption and to the safeguarding of public servants' integrity (Bello & Murtala, 2015; Markovska & Adams, 2015; Szto, 2016). The intention of this study was to gain insights about the perceptions of leaders of civil society organizations regarding the use of policy instruments to regulate the practice of unhindered gift giving in the public service of Nigeria. To achieve this purpose, I sought answers to the following questions: What are the perceptions of civil society organizational leaders about integrity and corruption in relation to unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in Grade levels 15 and above? What do leaders of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Nigeria identify as issues related to the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in the referenced territory of Nigeria in Grade levels 15 and above? I also sought answer to what do leaders of CSOs in Nigeria perceive may be fitting policies needed to address issues related to the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in the particular territory of Nigeria in Grade levels 15 and above?

The policy feedback theory of Mettler and SoRelle (2014) grounded this study. I used a qualitative approach to explore the study phenomenon because the cultural practice of unobstructed gift giving and its implications for the integrity of public servants is relatively an unknown area in the social and behavioral science literature,



based on my review of the literature. The social change implication of this study is the potentials for it to generate insights which policy makers may use to bring about an ethical and productive public service that can implement public policy effectively and efficiently.

In Chapter I, I provide the background to the study, state the problem and purpose, review nature, theoretical framework, guiding research questions, assumptions, scope, delimitations and limitations of the study, and consider the importance of the study. In Chapter 2, I review the related literature, and in Chapters 3 and 4, I address the research methods, my data analysis and findings respectively. In Chapter 5, I further discuss the findings and consider their implications as well as offer recommendations for further research.

### **Background**

The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (As amended), Fifth Schedule, Part 1, demands that public servants maintain a high standard of morality, transparency and accountability in the conduct of government business. To this effect, Article 6 (1) of the same Fifth Schedule restricts public officers from asking or accepting any property or benefit of any kind (i.e. a gift) either for themselves or any other person in the course of discharging their duties. However, Article 6 (3) allows a public officer to accept such personal gifts or benefits from friends and relatives within the context of cultural practice. This provision is contradictory to the goal of fighting public sector corruption (Bello, 2014). I, therefore, considered it imperative that this policy guideline on unrestricted gift giving on cultural

basis be re-examined through a qualitative case study in order to arrive at informed judgment and protect the public from unethical practice.

Nigerian policy makers have implemented many policy options to fight corruption in the public sector but such measures have been largely ineffective (Waziri, 2010). These policy measures include Decree No. 54 of 1976 (Public Officer Investigation of Assets); Decrees No. 53 of 1999 (Forfeiture of Assets Decree); the Failed Bank Tribunal Decrees of 1996; the Code of Conduct Bureau and the Code of Conduct Tribunal of 1979; the Code of Conduct for Public Officers (Fifth Schedule, Part 1 of the Nigerian Constitution, 1999 (as amended)); the Ethical Revolution of 1979-1983; the War Against Indiscipline of 1983-1985; the War Against Indiscipline and Corruption of 1993-1998; the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission of 2000 to date, and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission of 2003 to date. In spite of these measures, “Nigeria is still rated one of the most corrupt countries in the world”, according to Ijewereme (2013, p. 39). This study was undertaken to address this policy gap.

### **Problem Statement**

The problem I addressed in this study was the existing policy guideline for the public service of a major territory in Nigeria which approves of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving. I believe that this guideline needs to be interrogated in order to determine its appropriateness in protecting the integrity of the public servants as well as fighting corruption in the public service. This has become more compelling in light of the fact that public service is public trust (ASPA, 2013). Article 6 of the Code of Ethics of the

American Society for Public Administration (ASPA, 2013) requires public administrators to demonstrate personal integrity by adhering to the highest standards of conduct. Doing so will earn these public administrators confidence and trust in the discharge of their duties (ASPA, 2013). Hence, administrators should exercise integrity, maintain truthfulness and honesty and resist compromising these imperatives for their progress, respect or private gain (ASPA, 2013).

The appropriateness of the culturally approved practice of unobstructed gift giving in the public service of Nigeria in relation to safeguarding the honesty of the public servants has been an issue of debate among policy experts (Bello, 2014; Osipitan & Oyewo, 1997). Gift giving in the public service creates an unfortunate opportunity for public sector employees (Jones & Bezuidenhout, 2014; Okonkwo, 1992). It is also positively correlated to corruption (Mentoor, 2010). Unrestricted gift giving may lead to unrestrained abuse of public office, and according to the World Bank Group Enterprise Survey (2014) and Oarhe (2013), it is often carried out by higher-ranking public officials.

In concluding this study, I sought to gain understanding of the problems linked to unhindered gift giving by examining perceptions of leaders of CSOs who are themselves participants in the policy process as well as opinion molders (see Hanf, 1978). This understanding formed the basis for recommendations I make in Chapter 5 for a responsive policy approach addressing any identified problems in order to preserve public trust and confidence in public officers.

## **Problem in Context**

In 2009, Kellogg, Brown and Root, a US business corporation committed a crime of giving bribe or gifts to the tune of \$180 million to high ranking government officials in the Ministry of Petroleum Resources, Nigeria in order to be awarded a contract of \$6 billion and was consequently found guilty as charged by a court of competent jurisdiction (Global Witness, 2012). According to the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (2016), the worldwide corruption perceptions of the public sector of Nigeria for 2013-2016 were “highly corrupt”. Similarly, Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita income between 1960-2015 "was 20 percent of the world's average" (Trading Economics, 2016, p. 8). Nigeria is rated as one of the poorest nations in the globe with more than 65% of its population living "below the poverty line" (United Nations Report, 2016). Nigeria has a policy guideline that prohibits gift giving in the public sector, but the same policy regulation allows unhindered gift giving in the public sector for cultural reason as per the provisions of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended); and the CCB Act, CAP 56, LFN, 1990; ICPC Act, 2000, among other extant regulations. The Fifth Schedule, Part 1: 6 (1)-(3) of the Constitution states that:

(1) A public officer shall not ask for or accept any property or benefit of any kind for himself or any other person on account of anything done or omitted to be done by him in the discharge of his duties.

(2) For the purpose of sub-paragraph '1' of this paragraph the receipt by a public officer of any gifts or benefits from commercial firms, business enterprises or persons who have contracts with the government shall be

presumed to have been received in contravention of the said sub-paragraph unless the contrary is proved.

(3) A public officer shall only accept personal gifts or benefit from relatives or personal friends to such extent and on such occasions as are recognized by custom (p. 207).

Bello (2014) describes article 6 (3) above as a window of opportunity for corruption as it is imprecise and irresponsible to addressing the problems related to the practice of unhampered gifting in the public sector.

The need to address the issues regarding the practice of unobstructed gift giving in Nigeria's public sector became necessary because the public service, explained Bello and Murtala (2015), is the bureaucracy that implements policies, programs, and projects of a country's government. According to Ayodele (2014), the public service is the service center that creates an enabling environment where individuals in all sectors of the economy can pursue their legitimate goals unfettered. In his book, *Performance Measurement and Management*, Ayodele (2014) listed the functions of the public service to include implementing and enforcing of socio-economic and political policies of the government; designing and implementing the public service; safeguarding political and fiscal discipline and accountability; serving the populace in an ethical, equitable, just, democratic, and fair manner; monitoring and evaluation of the activities of organizations, both public, private, and nongovernmental that render services on behalf of the government; and propelling development initiatives of the government.

In light of the central place of the public service in the life of a nation-state, public officers should be guided by a code of conduct that will enable them to be trustworthy and meet the expectation and confidence of the public. In Nigeria, the need to strengthen the existing modalities for monitoring the activities of public officers in order to make them be in tandem with the highest standards of public morality and accountability was the basis for the establishment of the Code of Conduct Bureau as well as the Code of Conduct Tribunal with legitimate powers to enforce the code of conduct for public officers (see Fifth Schedule, Section 1 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999 as amended)). All this notwithstanding, Mentoor (2010) stated that permissible gifting in the public service on the ground of cultural practice is a negation of the government efforts to stamp out corruption in the public service.

#### **Research problem and gap in the literature.**

Researchers such as Kem and Wood (2015); Kim (2014); Leisinger (2015), have examined the ethical as well as economic consequences of the practice unfettered gift giving in the public sector. However, these researchers did not examine the appropriate use of policy instruments to control the cultural practice of unhindered gift giving in the Nigerian public sector and its implication for the public servants as trustees of the people. These researchers also did not investigate the view of leaders of CSOs on the practice of gifting in the public service even though they (the CSOs) are "one of the self-governing, opinion molders in our society that makes effective contributions in the policy process" (Hanf, 1978, p. 23; see also Benson, 1982).

This study was intended to contribute to the literature by making available to policy makers empirical data with which to review the current policy guideline for Nigerian public sector officials. By so doing, the study was a practical case of implementing the policy feedback mechanism which is always needed in the policy process to guide policy makers on decision making concerning policy maintenance, sustenance, adjustment or total reversal (Pierson, 2003).

### **Purpose of the Study**

I investigated the perceptions of leaders of CSOs on the use of policy instrument to govern the prevailing "license" to unfettered gift giving in the public sector of Nigeria in relation to protecting the integrity of public servants. Oriented towards evaluating public policy as a "system of courses of action, regulatory measures, laws, and funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a government entity or its representation" (Cohen, 2012, p. 6), it was hoped that a critical evaluation of the existing policy on unrestricted gift giving in the public service might reveal issues that promote corruption in the public service and impact negatively on the honesty of the public servants.

This formed the basis for the evaluation of the problems that might be associated with the existing cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving since, According to Cohen (2012), public policy is a dynamic, complicated and interactive system of identifying and solving public problems. Consequently, questions guiding this study were targeted at seeking the perceptions of leaders of CSOs on the appropriateness of the current policy and recommendations to address issues that might negatively impair the realization of an

effective, efficient and ethical public service. Public policy initiatives, explained Cohen (2012); Pierson (1993), can solve identified human problems by evolving new policy guidelines or by reforming a subsisting policy to make it more efficient and effective.

The study helped to understand better the underlining contexts under which this case of cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of a major territory in Nigeria was sustained even in the midst of the devastating effects of corruption in the public service of Nigeria as reported by Bello (2014); Global Witness (2012); Kim (2014); Markovska and Adams (2015); Okonkwo (1992). Using a qualitative case study to review the research interest (the prevailing policy of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of a major territory in Nigeria) as undertaken by this study was in line with the aims and objectives of policy analysis which, according to Maxmanian and Sabatier (1983) include:

1. To derive the importance of policy analysis in contributing to determine, study, and assess public problems, policy performance, and policy prescription and advocacy;
2. To contribute to improved policy implementation and performance;
3. To understudy problems associated with a given policy and be guided on the determination of the required changes, modification, techniques, and other strategic steps that could be taken to address the identified problems and enhance its performance.



### **Hopes for Significant Discovery**

This study explored the role policy instrument could play in regulating this single case of the "cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of a particular territory in Nigeria" so that the honor of the public servants is not compromised. The qualitative case study adopted a prescriptive approach to policy analysis which, according to O'Connor, Orloff, and Shaver (1999), is aimed at generation of data and empirical analysis that are directed towards better policy evaluation and performance. This means that the study generated data from the research participants (leaders of CSOs in a given territory in Nigeria) from where it made research-based recommendations on the appropriateness or otherwise of the current policy guideline governing gifting in Nigeria's public service in the referenced territory in Nigeria.

The study's approach was problem-solving which proffered solutions informed by research findings. It was hoped that the perceptions of leaders of the CSOs on the prevailing "cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of Nigeria" would be a yardstick in determining the adequacy of the policy guideline for safeguarding the much needed trait of integrity necessary for the performance of the duties of the public servants. The investigation was, therefore, guided by Pierson's (1993) prescriptive and normative trust in policy analysis as a developing body of knowledge that will have direct application to solving the problems of the society.

Evaluating the adequacy of the subsisting policy instrument on the "cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of Nigeria" as it affects the integrity of the public sector employees was the thrust of this research effort. According

to Transparency International, Kenya (2013), gift giving to public servants is positively correlated to corruption which ultimately compromises the integrity of the public servants. Corruption, on its own part, is reported to be the major setback to Nigeria's development (Osipitan & Oyewo, 1999), and bribery is one of the channels through which corruption is manifested (Larossi & Clarke, 2011). Bribery and gift giving are closely related, in that both of them involve exchange of gifts or benefits. Okonkwo (1992) states that when gift giving transcends the boundary of social relations and becomes a means of compromising the personal integrity of the public servant-receiver, it translates to corruption. It was, therefore, imperative that the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of Nigeria be interrogated with a view to establishing its responsiveness in safeguarding the integrity of the public sector employees. The study generated the much needed data on the phenomenon of interest to guide Nigerian policy makers in decision-making in this respect.

#### **Link of the purpose and research questions.**

Public policy involves a choice; a critical, major or crucial choice to be made by the appropriate policy making body from several policy alternatives (Mettler & Soss, 2004). This study reviewed the appropriateness of the choice already made on the policy guideline on gifting in the identified territory in Nigeria. The data with which to investigate the policy guideline governing the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service Nigeria was supplied by assessing the perceptions of leaders of civil society organizations in a major territory in Nigeria on this phenomenon of interest, by

means of a qualitative case study. The study examined data from extensive interviews, observational field notes and applicable documents to arrive at evidence-based decisions.

The guiding questions of the study were crafted to address the problem statement of the study while the data obtained from the sources of data enumerated above answered the research questions guiding the study. In other words, the research questions were generated from the problem statement, and both informed the purpose of the study. According to Simon (2011a), research questions are researchable posers, properly framed to identify relationship between two or more variables and address the purpose of the study in such a manner that creates an interdependent and logical flow that links problem statement, research questions, and purpose of the study together (Creswell, 2013).

### **Research Questions**

Central question: What are the perceptions of civil society organizational leaders about integrity in relation to unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in levels 15 and above?

Sub question 1: What do ten civil society organizational leaders in a particular territory in Nigeria perceive as issues related to the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in the concerned area of Nigeria who are in grade levels 15 and above?

Sub question 2: What do ten civil society organizational leaders in a particular territory in Nigeria perceive may be appropriate policies needed to address issues related to the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in the concerned area of Nigeria who are in grade levels 15 and above?

I conducted a qualitative semi structured interviews using open-ended interview protocols. The interview participants were purposively selected interviewees from five CSOs in the research setting who met certain stated selection criteria. The interview questions were designed to be general and open-ended, and specifically focused on answering the central concern of the study which was the issue of "unrestricted gift giving" and its implication for integrity of the public servants in the said territory in Nigeria. A one-on-one interview approach was used as it was practical and helped to net the most useful data needed to address each research question. I also performed document analysis.

In particular, the study reviewed relevant policy documents such as 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended), ICPC and CCB documents as they relate to legal provisions pertaining to the practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service in Nigeria. The study also reviewed relevant Court judgments on gift giving related offences in the federal public service of Nigeria. The review also extended to the social media databases on gifting practices in the particular territory in Nigeria. Observational field notes were maintained throughout the course of the study.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical point of reference for study was the policy feedback theory of Mettler and SoRelle (2014). The theory is defined as a depiction to assist scholars in understanding that policies once made, restructure politics; how the adoption of new policies is influenced by subsisting policies, and how all these impact on the political landscape in a varied and insightful manner (Mettler& SoRelle, 2014). The theoretical

approach provides a guide for those who wish to understand the parameters of creating better and improved policies or re-adjusting existing policies towards the promotion of good governance, vibrant civic engagement, and democratic and fair participation of various groups and interests. Originated in the late 1980s (Pierson, 1993), this theoretical orientation is comparatively new in the fields of public policy and administration as well as political science, and it tasks policy scholars and administrators to make policy processes democratic (Sabatier & Weible, 2014).

This theory provides a viewpoint upon which policy scholars seek to promote establishing public policies in a way that encourage civic engagement in order that the policy products will also serve the best interest of democratic system and good governance (Pierson, 1993). In functional terms, policy feedback offers direction on the effective means of using public policy to impartially serve the best interest of the policy stakeholders as well as advance common good. Its framework is supportive of policy-making process that is people-oriented, problem-solving, competent and valuable, and this provided a lens through which data were gathered and analyzed. Using policy feedback theory to ground the study of the perceptions of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants, was appropriate because a feedback perspective is important to policy makers in order to guide them in retooling and refocusing policy initiatives (Harker, 1998; Mettler & Soss, 2004). This is in consonance with the view that public policies are dynamic and should reflect the changing needs of the citizens for which such policies are made (Campbell, 2012).

### **Theories Prompting Research Questions**

Research questions are derived from research problem (Simon, 2011a) as part of a larger discussion. The overarching questions of this research, therefore, sought to find out how citizens are affected by policies of government since it is important that policy analysts periodically examine the effects of such policies on the citizens (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983). Gaps between public policy and mass politics should be bridged through the application of policy feedback theory so that government policies may impact positively on the citizens' potentials to exercise self determination as well as influence how citizens conduct themselves as legitimate members of the polity (Mettler & Soss, 2004). A qualitative case study of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants in Nigeria was employed to answer the questions guiding the study by providing policy feedback on the adequacy of the cultural practice of unobstructed gift giving in the public sector in relation to the honor and reliability of the public servants.

Questions researchers ask, the problems they study, and how to go about gathering data, are predicated on the beliefs and philosophical assumptions researchers bring to research. Creswell (1998; 2013) says that these beliefs and assumptions inform the type of theories chosen to guide a particular research. These philosophical assumptions are further predicated on different theoretical and interpretive frameworks, hence a close relationship exists between the philosophical underpinning of a research work and how the researcher proceeds to adopt a framework to ground the inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). These philosophical assumptions or beliefs are referred to as

methodologies (Neuman, 2000); epistemologies and ontologies (Crotty, 1998); paradigms (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011); while Creswell (2009) refers to them as “alternative knowledge claim” (p. 11). All these address my belief about the nature of reality (ontology); what is knowledge and how claims to knowledge can be established (epistemology); the place of values in research (axiology); and the process of research (methodology). My philosophical orientation in this study was ontological; a belief in multiple realities as expressed through various views of research participants. This implies that the researcher reported various perspectives of the participants in form of themes or findings. When the ontological philosophy that grounded this study was embedded into a qualitative interpretive framework, the study was then framed into social constructivism/interpretivism (Maxwell, 2012). Post-positivism (Barbour, 2000) also holds true for this study in some limited degree because of its emphasis on multiplicity of views as do social constructivist/interpretivist theoretical lens which requires the researcher to look for complexity of views rather than simple and narrow meanings (Schwandt, 2007).

The aim of research in this situation was to rely mainly on the views of the participants, for example, the views of the CSOs on how they perceived the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the federal public service of Nigeria and its implication for the integrity of the public servants. Barbour characterizes post-positivism as reductionistic, and deterministic based on existing theories. More elaborate discussion on this would suffice in the review of literature (Chapter 2).

### **Feedback theory as foundation for research questions.**

Guided by the social constructivist/interpretivist framework upon which this research was based, the research questions for this study were open-ended, general and broad in order to allow the participants construct meanings they made of a qualitative single bounded case study of the practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of Nigeria as it concerned the uprightness of the public servants. Lincoln and Guba (2000) advise that constructivist researchers should focus on the given context in which participants live and work so as to appreciate the backgrounds of the participants. For example, one of the criteria for selecting leaders of CSOs was that each CSO concerned must be operating in a particular territory in Nigeria for upwards of 10 years, so that it could provide clues and perspectives based on rich historical background.

The interpretive framework of post-positivism partly grounded this study to the extent that it provided a lens to view qualitative research as requiring multiple perspectives from the participants rather than the belief in single reality. This study was also not oriented along cause-and-effect, nor was it deterministic based on a priori theories which are other characteristic elements of post-positivism (Barbour, 2000). These elements characterize post-positivism as the traditions of quantitative inquiry. Therefore, the post-positivism thrust of this study was valid to the extent that the study involved rigorous steps in data collection and analysis, and ensured that quality and credibility issues of research were addressed. The theoretical concerns of this study as discussed above were meant to guide the study of the perceptions of leaders of civil society organizations on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the federal public service of Nigeria and the meaning that emerge on the integrity of the public servants.



### **Nature of the Study**

The appropriateness of the current policy guideline permitting the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of a particular territory in Nigeria in relation to the integrity of the public sector employees was the concern of this inquiry. A qualitative case study guided the research design because qualitative paradigm is an appropriate method to explore a relatively unknown area (Yin, 2009) such as how leaders of the CSOs perceive the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of Nigeria. According to (Creswell (2013), qualitative design is "a situated activity where the researcher is located in the field" (p. 46), and it is concerned about interpretation of world phenomena in practical terms.

Data were collected from CSOs whose leaders met the following criteria:

1. Accreditation: Leaders whose CSOs were registered by the Bureau for public procurement (BPP) in 2007 which implied that they belonged to government-recognized CSOs. BPP is charged with the responsibility of accrediting CSOs for the purpose of monitoring procurement processes and bid opening by the federal government agencies.
2. Office location and operation: Leaders whose CSOs had their offices located in referenced territory in Nigeria and were operating in the territory, which suggested they were conversant with the research setting.
3. Length of operation in particular territory: leaders who had been serving in their various organizations for the past 10 years, which suggested they might be conversant with the nature of gift giving practice in the research setting.

4. Mission statements or Advocacy thrusts: Leaders whose CSOs had their mission statements or advocacy thrusts slanted towards anti-corruption, transparency and good governance in the public service, which suggested they might discuss the research interest with ease.
5. Independent funding: Leaders whose CSOs were not dependent on Nigerian government for funding, which suggested they might bare your minds on the research interest without hesitation.
6. Accessibility: Leaders whose CSOs' website or email addresses or physical location were easily accessible by me which, suggested I might access them for follow-up questions or clarifications when required, and
7. English language fluency: Leaders of CSOs who could read, write, speak, and understand English language well, which suggested they would understand the research questions well and would not require further translation of the research questions into local languages.

The study utilized qualitative data collection processes such as interviews and observational field notes, and analysis of relevant documents. The data collected were analyzed through sorting, coding, written notes (memos), and the use of qualitative computer software programs.

### **The Key Concept Being Investigated**

The study explored the views of leaders of CSOs on the cultural practice of unhindered gift giving in a particular territory in Nigeria within the context of the reputation of the public servants. Policy regulations in Nigeria with regards to code of conduct of public servants disallow corruption-related gifting in the public sector but approve of gifting in the public service within the ambit of cultural practice (please see Fifth Schedule, Part 1 of 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended); Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) Act, CAP 56, LFN, 1990; and Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences (ICPC) Act, 2000). This piece of policy regulation has become controversial in Nigerian policy circles in respect of its appropriateness in safeguarding the integrity of the public servants; hence this study sought to investigate the adequacy of the policy agenda.

#### **What guides the research design.**

The study was guided by a qualitative case design. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative case studies are identifiable by “the size of the bounded case, such as whether the case involves one individual, several individuals, a group, an entire program, or an activity; or intent of the case analysis” (p. 34). With regards to intent of the case analysis, three broad variations exist, namely: single instrumental, collective/multiple, and intrinsic case study (Nachmias, Nachmias & Dewaard, 2015). In terms of data collection in case studies, it is both rigorous and extensive, and draws from multiple sources of information (Creswell, 1998). However, this study utilized extensive interview protocols and documents. As per interpretation, the study focused on analysis of themes that emerged

from the collected data, not for the purpose of generalization beyond the case studied but for understanding the intricacies of the research phenomenon thoroughly.

***The value of the ideas and or theories.***

Apart from qualitative case study design, there are many other forms of qualitative designs or theories. Tesch (1990) identified 28 approaches; Miller & Crabtree (1992) identified 18 approaches, while Jacob (1987) and Lancy (1993) classified these designs into “traditions” and perspectives of discipline, respectively. However, Creswell (1998, 2009, and 2013) popularized the 5 main qualitative approaches that are mostly employed in qualitative investigation presently. These are ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, narrative research and case study. Qualitative research approaches are characterized by their orientation towards collecting data in the field (natural setting) where the participants live and work and experience the phenomenon of interest. They do not use “control situation” as obtainable in pure experimental quantitative tradition. In qualitative research, the researcher is the key research investigator in terms of data collection and analysis (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

Qualitative design also uses multiple method of data collection. These include interviews, observational field notes, analysis of documents, audio-visual materials etc. These data are reviewed, organized and classified into categories and themes. Qualitative designs also are characterized by complex reasoning through logical inductions and deductions. This process tasks qualitative researchers to maximally use their complex reasoning skills, because “qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (Creswell, 2013, p. 45).

*Rationale for the selection design.*

The rationale for the selection of qualitative case design as against other qualitative approaches was informed by the purpose the study intended to serve and the nature of data to be gathered. Consequently, this rationale could be appreciated better from a definition of case study by Creswell (2013) as a qualitative approach in which the researcher investigates a real-life, present-day bounded system or a case over time, through detailed, exhaustive data gathering through various sources of information such as observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, and documents and reports. The researcher usually describes the case as well as the emerging themes.

Though ethnographic design share most of the above characteristics; its goal is to determine how an entire culture-sharing group works, and as such, it could not have been appropriate for this study. Narrative research is concerned about exploring the life of an individual which is not the intent of my study. Phenomenological design seeks to understand the essence of the experience of a phenomenon, which is at variance with the goal of my study. The basis for the choice of case study was further established by the fact that development of a theory that is grounded in data collected from the field is the goal of grounded theoretical design, while the intent of case study such as this is to develop an in-depth description of a given case or several cases.

*From whom and how data collected and analyzed.*

Data for this study were collected through a purposive sampling technique involving two interviewees from each of the five civil society organizations in concerned territory in Nigeria who fulfilled the set selection criteria for this study as detailed above.

For example, the requirement of using leaders of CSOs that have spent an average of 10 years in the research setting was to ensure that the study used participants selected from CSOs which have the potentials to have in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study in order to describe it in great details and provide meaningful qualitative data (Creswell, 2013; Paton, 2015). Even if the official interviewees might not have spent up to 10 years in the organization, it was assumed that for one to be an official or leader of an organization, such official would have internalized the core values of the organization. The requirement of using CSOs that do not depend on Nigerian government for funding was to ensure that the interviewees emanate from CSOs that can volunteer independent opinion on the phenomenon of interest, since members of civil society organizations are known to play active role in the policy process and they have capacity to influence public opinion (Hanf, 1978). The criterion of selecting CSOs whose leaders could read, write, speak and understand English language well, was to ensure that the study used interviewees who could answer the research questions well including follow-up questions without encumbrances. Through one-one-one in-depth semi-structured interviews, these interviewees responded to the research questions. The data so generated were adequately protected by saving them in computer files and in the Google cloud. Data analysis was through coding and sorting of data, use of computer software programs and “Description, classification, and interpretation of the data” (Creswell, 1998, p. 147). Each research question was addressed by an appropriate methodical tool.

### **Operational Definitions**

*Bribe:* For the study, this term refers to anything of value offered illegally to a public servant with the intention, or having the potentials to compromise him/her in the performance of his/her duties. For the purpose of this study, gift giving and bribe will be used interchangeably as meaning the same thing.

*Civil society organizations:* For the study, I adopted the definition offered by OECD (2006) which is “the multitude of associations (in the research setting) around which society voluntarily organizes itself and which represent a wide range of interests and ties. These can include community-based organizations, indigenous people’s organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)” (p. 31).

*Corruption:* Hegemann and Berumen’s (2011) definition of “corruption” as “a lack of integrity seen in some who have positions of trust” (p. 1) was adopted in this study, including the authors’ further explanatory remarks that the term “corruption” is generally used in a wider sense to include dishonesty, jobbery, payoffs, nepotism and other forms of abuse of power for private gain.

*FCT-Abuja, Nigeria:* This refers to the Federal Capital Territory which is the seat of the Federal Government of Nigeria, in Africa.

*Gift giving:* This term refers to “an offer of property or benefit of any kind to a public servant in the performance of his/her official duties” (Bello& Murtala, 2015, p. 4).

*Integrity:* This term refers to a “personality trait desired for leadership and managerial effectiveness with strong commitment to sound moral principles and values” (Monga, 2016, p. 68).

*Policy instrument:* This term refers to the Nigerian government’s promulgated guideline for behaviors, activities, and practices related to gifting in the federal public sector of Nigeria. The term is also used interchangeably with “policy guideline” or “policy regulation”.

*Public servant:* This term refers to “appointed or elected government officials in the federal service of the particular territory in Nigeria in grade levels 15 and above.

*Public service:* The definition provided by Section 169 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria, (as amended) was adopted for this with minor deviation. The term encompasses “civil service, that is, ministerial departments; statutory corporations or parastatals, judiciary, legislature, educational institutions, financially wholly or principally owned by government at the state, local and federal levels, Nigeria police or Armed Forces and other organizations in which the Federal or State Governments owned controlling share or interest” (p.205). I restricted my focus in this study to public servants in the federal institutions as mentioned above that are operating in the referenced territory in Nigeria.

*Unrestricted gift giving:* This term refers to the freedom given by law for people to offer gift of property or benefit of any kind to a public servant in the performance of his/her official duties under the cover of cultural practice.

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions in a research study are things assumed to be true but not verified. They are also the guiding critical perspectives that are assumed likely true to the meaningfulness and continuation of the study (Merriam, 2014). In this study, the following assumptions sufficed:



- The study assumed that investigating the adequacy of the policy instrument that approves of gift giving in the public service of the particular territory in question in relation to the integrity of the public servants, was necessary for the improvement of the ethical standards of the public service in Nigeria.
- The study assumed that leaders of CSOs in the research setting are important opinion molders in the society whose perceptions on the adequacy of the subsisting policy of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving to public servants is reliable to guide decision-making.
- It was further assumed that using a purposive sample of two interviewees from each of the five civil society organizations in the concerned territory in Nigeria who scaled through the set selection criteria was appropriate to obtain “an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2013, p.156).
- It was also assumed that the participants would answer the research questions openly, honestly and in great details.
- The study assumed that the research method (Qualitative research) was best suited for investigating the research problem.
- The study further assumed that using the policy feedback theory of Mettler & SoRelle (2014) was an appropriate theoretical framework to ground the study and underscore the point that “policy feedback denotes the potential for policies to transform politics and influence future courses of policy development” (Moynihan & Soss, 2014).

- It also assumed that probing the ethics of unrestricted gifting in the concerned territory of Nigeria would contribute in the fight against corruption in the larger picture of Nigeria since “corruption is the bane of Nigeria’s development” (Smith, 2001, p. 323)

In the course of the development of a study of this nature, Simon (2011) says it is important to recognize underlying perspectives, restrictions and boundaries that may result in design limitations. The assumptions made in this study were things taken as given, and would not be verified in the study; things that the researcher believes to be true but would not be demonstrated or subjected to empirical investigation.

However, these assumptions were necessary in assessing quality, trustworthiness and credibility of the study. According to Smith (1991), researchers can replicate studies which have stated assumptions that are not addressed in original investigation. They also state that assumptions demand of the researcher to work hard to fulfill all quality requirements so that the assumptions can hold as stated. For example, one of the assumptions of this study was that the participants answered the questions openly, honestly and in great details. Then, for this assumption to be valid, I ensured that the instrument of data collection had construct validity (Nachmias, et al, 2015). For the study to be credible, I ensured that the outcome of the study was in consonance with the views expressed by the participants; and for dependability of the study, I ensured that I reported and or accounted for the changes in the context of the study, especially as the changes might affect the findings.

### Scope

In view of the fact that there was lack of research literature on the use of policy apparatus to control the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service in order to protect the honor and dignity of the public servants, the focus of this study was on the perceptions of leaders of civil society organizations (CSOs) in a particular territory in Nigeria on the current cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving to public servants as it affects the integrity of the public servants. Since available literatures dwelt mainly on the corrupting tendencies of the practice of unrestricted gift giving to public servants, and have little or nothing on policy regulation to address the problem, extensive data were obtained through interviews and observational field notes and documents from a purposive sample population of relevant leaders of the CSOs that met set criteria, and these data sets were analyzed through interpretive schemes grounded in "detailed description, categorical aggregation, direct interpretation, correspondence and patterns, and naturalistic generalization" (Creswell, 1998; Stake, 1995).

The specific aspect of the research problem of this study is that the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended), Fifth Schedule, Part 1: 6 (1)-(3) prohibits gift giving in the public sector of Nigeria. However, Article 6(3) of the same Fifth Schedule approves of unhindered gifting in the public service on cultural grounds. This study, therefore, investigated the adequacy of this Article 6 (3) policy regulation in relation to safeguarding the integrity of the public servants. This was necessary because public servants are the main implementers of public policy in an ethical manner. Item 6 of the code of ethics of the American Society for public Administration (ASPA, 2013) demands

that public servants demonstrate personal integrity, exercise integrity, “maintain truthfulness and honesty and do not compromise them for advancement, honor or personal gain; guard against using public position for personal gain or advance personal or private interest” (p. 2). Also, Part 1 (I) of the Fifth Schedule of Nigerian Constitution (1999 as amended), states that: “a public officer shall not put himself in a position where his personal interest conflicts with his duties and responsibilities” (p. 206). To determine whether the envisaged high ethical pedestals are being maintained by public servants in the context of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service was the primary focus of this study.

### **Samples, Data and Interpretive Schemes**

Leaders of 18 CSOs operating in the research setting formed the sample population, and two purposively selected interviewees from each of the five CSOs that fulfilled the selection criteria was the sample size. The study used qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and observational field notes as well as analysis of documents to assess or gauge the discernment of these leaders of CSOs on the current cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of Nigeria and the implication of such practice on the honesty of purpose of the public sector employees. The study was a qualitative case study that assessed “Perceptions of practice, perceptions of association between public service gift giving and integrity, perceptions of effect of practice, and perceptions of policy recommendation”, and did not measure the actual effect on the integrity of the public servants.

The result would not be generalized to other leaders of CSOs in Nigeria that were not assessed. It, however, could be generalized to the world of theory, and not other similar cases; because it has profound elements of exploration backed up with theoretical implications (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Qualitative research method may not provide quantitative data for quantitative analysis; the scope was limited to interpretation of the perceptions of the participants. The study was primarily concerned about a constructivist theory of knowledge by focusing on understanding the experiences of the research participants as rendered by the participants who lived those experiences. Therefore, a positivist orientation to underscore research validity through applied science of quantitative inquiry in explaining human behavior did not suffice in the study.

### **Transferability**

The potential transferability of the findings of the course was guaranteed by ensuring that the requirement of credibility of a qualitative study was met. This requirement demands that the qualitative researcher ensured that the findings of the research were a true reflection of the views of the participants as well as their beliefs. Creswell (1998) states that since the goal of qualitative study is to describe the phenomenon of interest from the point of view of those who live and experience the phenomenon, transferability of the result of this study should be ensured by providing detailed characteristics of what was studied and the procedural observances culminating to the final result. The essence is to allow external assessors to use objective and verifiable criteria to determine whether the transferability of the findings to elsewhere could be undertaken.

### **Delimitations**

Characteristics that limit the scope of a study and define its boundaries are what Simon (2011) refers to as delimitations. This study was delimited to a particular territory in Nigeria as the study's setting. Other delimitations of the study that narrowed its scope included focusing only on the perceptions of the purposively selected leaders of the civil society organizations that fulfilled stated selection criteria. The study was also delimited to assessment of the perceptions of the leaders of CSOs on the phenomenon of interest and not the actual effect of the phenomenon. The perceptions of the public servants was not sought on the research interest because it was suspected that they might not be honest in reporting on gift giving as it affects their own integrity. This study was delimited to the views of the leaders of CSOs in the research setting (especially the members of CSOs that were selected as sample size) on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving to only federal public servants in referenced territory in Nigeria in grade levels 15 and above. Even though the same policy regulation applies to all public officials in the public service of Nigeria, only those in the research setting were concerned with the study. Public servants in Nigeria who are serving in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja were not involved in the study because FCT public servants are under the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCDA) which is equivalent of a state government. The actual participants were the public servants in the federal ministries, departments and agencies located in a major territory in Nigeria and not those of the FCDA.

The policy feedback theory of Mettler and SoRelle (2014) was employed to frame and ground the study. This theoretical frame was considered most appropriate to assess

the perceptions of research participants on a policy agenda, because “the concept of policy feedback opens up new arenas for theoretical and empirical scholarship”, in recognition that “administration is a critical moment in the ongoing interplay of policy and politics” (Moynihan & Soss, 2014, p.332). Other related theories of the policy process that could be employed as a base to investigate the phenomenon of interest include the Narrative Policy Framework by McBeth, Jones & Shanahan (2014); the Advocacy Coalition Framework: Foundations, Evolution, and Ongoing Research by Jenkins-Smith, Nohrstedt, Weible and Sabatier (2014); and the Democratic Policy Design: Social Construction of the Target Population, by Schneider, Ingram and DeLeon (2014). These theories would not be investigated even though they are rich theoretical frameworks in the policy process in terms of possessing basic elements of theory in form of shared vocabulary and well defined concepts; and the theories are being applied by scholars in developing research programs as well as being used to explain the larger part of the policy process (Cairney & Heikkila, 2014).

### **Limitations**

The study was limited by its qualitative tradition and orientation towards social constructivism and or interpretivism (Creswell, 1998). In this circumstance, data were collected in natural settings; I was the chief investigator for data collection using multiple sources of data collection techniques, and the research method involved complex reasoning by way of induction and deduction (Creswell, 2013). I as the chief investigator and interviewer in terms of data collection and analysis presented a likelihood of biases

on my part; hence I maintained a heightened consciousness about the possibility of bias and exercised impartiality throughout the process (Goulding, 2002; Creswell, 1998).

The study was limited to perceptions of the practice, perceptions of association between the practice and integrity, perceptions of effect of practice and perceptions of policy recommendations only; it did not investigate actual effect of the practice. The qualitative tradition as a chosen method for this study is reported to be limited by its subjective views on issues as against the objective views ascribable to quantitative research (Creswell, 1998). Qualitative tradition is also hypothetic-inductive as against hypothetic-deductive approach of the Quantitative investigation (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

Furthermore, the study utilized purposive sampling technique to select research participants. There were 18 CSOs that met the selection criteria. Two leaders from each of the five purposively selected CSOs were recruited as interviewees for the study. Knowledge gaps might exist among the interviewees. Also being a constructivist-oriented study, it did not establish quality assurance of the study based on a positivist quantitative validity and reliability in the context of a real world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002); rather, it relied on the qualitative equivalents of validity and reliability which are trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability, member-checking, and less bias on the part of the researcher (Creswell, 1998).

### **Biases Influencing this Study**

Both my background as the researcher and my role as the chief investigator and interviewer for data collection, analysis and interpretation, positioned me to be in direct



contact with the data. Goulding (2002) says that this situation makes it possible for the researcher to be tainted with bias, and this has the potentials to influence the research outcome. In order to address the effect of these biases on the outcome of the study, I first and foremost, recognized the likelihood of a qualitative researcher being tainted with bias (Goulding, 2002). I further reduced the influence of subjective judgment by maintaining a high degree of consciousness concerning the possibility of bias. This means that I exercised objectivity throughout the research process. I reported any discrepant incident in the course of conducting the study. I also ensured that the research findings were subjected to member checking and peer review to improve the credibility of the findings (Goulding, 2002). I appointed an established academic to review the interview scripts, findings as well as recommendations. The feedback of this reviewer was incorporated into the report. I used multiple sources of data such as interviews, documents from court, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; social media etc., to collaborate findings and further enhanced the credibility of the result.

#### **Steps taken to reduce the impact of limitations.**

The limitations of the study in terms of design and or methodological shortfalls were reduced by taking some steps. Being a qualitative research, I documented all process of category development (please see Constas, 1992; Anfra, Brown, & Mangione, 2002) and further made the process of data analysis open and transparent so as to increase the trustworthiness of the findings. This went a long way in minimizing and or eliminating any incidences of subjectivity on my part. In terms of establishing trustworthiness and credibility of the findings, I used the process of “rich thick

description, member checking, peer review” as well as multiple sources of data to validate research outcomes (Creswell, 1998; Goulding, 2002). I provided a comprehensive description of the phenomenon under investigation so that assessment of it for possible generalization elsewhere could be made. The research outcomes also were subjected to a peer review by a qualified hand in the field for comments and feedback. These steps were taken to guarantee quality standard of the study (Creswell, 1998; Hall & Rist, 1999; McReynolds, Koch, & Rumrill, 2001).

*Additional delimiters.*

Beyond gauging the perceptions of leaders of CSOs on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants, this study was not concerned about other public social programs of government and its tax expenditures which, according to Howard (2003), constitute about one-fifth of an average nation's economy. Government expenditures and regulations touch the lives of the citizens in many ways: some are negative while some are positive. In whichever way it goes, it is important that the citizens whose "common wealth" is being used to run government programs should be able to ask relevant questions through mission-oriented scientific investigation on the socio-economic implications of such programs. Indeed the governed should be able to hold government responsible and accountable for its actions. This is a legitimate right of the citizens.

Policy analysis should describe and investigate how and why each policy of government is proposed, accepted, and implemented, causes and consequences, while policy advocacy should examine government policies against the backdrop of competing

alternative proposals with a view to identify best policy agenda that will serve the best interest of the citizens. All these are within the realm of public policy and administration research to pursue which the present study did not go into but are seriously recommended for future investigation. Policy researchers especially in a developing country like Nigeria should also carry out research on ways and means of reversing the trend where policies are made by the elites at the top and such policies are made to cascade down to the citizens without their input.

*Inherent problems in research methodology.*

My choice of qualitative research method as the preferred method to investigate my phenomenon of interest as against quantitative or mixed methods research was informed by the nature of my research problem, the type of research questions answered and the type of data collected to answer the research questions as well as clarify the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 1998; 2013).

The inherent problems in using the qualitative tradition to ground a research study is that qualitative approach to data collection, data analysis, interpretation of data and writing a report of the analysis, is embedded in social constructivism while the quantitative tradition is embedded in positivism. Consequently, qualitative study is framed in terms of applying "words" as against "numbers" in quantitative study; hence open-ended questions are used in qualitative study as against close-ended questions being applied in quantitative study. To this extent, qualitative study is said to be subjective and laden with researcher's bias, while quantitative study is said to be objective. Based on this premise, Rudestarn & Newton (2015) state that quantitative investigation is hypothetic-

deductive, while qualitative inquiry is normally inductive. They also explain that quantitative research is usually carried out under controlled conditions, while qualitative research occurs in natural situations and in context. Besides, the constructivist orientation of qualitative research requires the researcher to be in the field with the participants as well as the research interest and this may distort the outcome of that being studied.

All the identified problems of qualitative method notwithstanding, it is still the best method to investigate human behavior which is not measurable such as the present study; and it is difficult to be determined under cause-and-effect relationship obtainable in quantitative study. To eliminate the problems, I ensured quality of the study through the process of "credibility, transferability, dependability, member-checking, and confirmability" (Creswell, 2013), among others.

### **Significance of the Study**

The import of this study was to provide the necessary data that could be used by policy architects in Nigeria to plug the loophole in the extant literature on the use of appropriate policy apparatus to regulate the practice of unhampered gifting in the Nigeria's public service so as to protect the honor and reliability of the public servants. Mettler and Joss (2004) state that political scientists have promoted many theories about how the "publics" affect policies; but they have said little or nothing about how policies affect the "publics". This study was very significant in bridging this gap. The fight against corruption in any nation-state cannot be complete if not extended to the frontiers of the public service where public policies are implemented. The use of mission-oriented empirical studies such as this to fight corruption in the public service is in sync with the

Walden University's social change scholar practitioner model that is appropriate for applying knowledge to real life situation (Collahan, Wilson, Birdsall, Estabrook-Fishinghawk, Carson & Yob, 2012). A sound ethical public service is not only desirable, but a pre-condition for efficiency and effectiveness. This study provided the necessary policy feedback (Pierson, 1993) to the Nigerian policy makers on the policy agenda under investigation.

This study made available important material data required by Nigeria policy makers to fill the existing gap in the application of responsive policy regulation to govern the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of Nigeria so as to protect the honesty of the public servants. Ethics of gifting in the public sector is of primary concern in the field of public policy and administration (Schultz, 2010; O'Leary, 2014). Schultz says that the reciprocity implication of gifting in the public service makes the practice problematic in that it compromises the integrity of the public servants. It follows, therefore, that a study committed to probing public perceptions of the practice was not only relevant but also unique in addressing problems associated with unregulated professional practice of public policy and administration. This study was particularly significant in strengthening the code of ethics of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) by identifying means of using public policy to regulate ethical practice. It could be noted that ASPA Code of Ethics is "a statement of the aspirations and high expectations of public servants" (ASPA, 2013, p. 1). Besides, this study provided a practical approach to the use of policy feedback mechanism to transform politics (Mettler & SoRelle, 2014)

### **How the Profession Benefits**

The import of this study was a further elucidation that policy making should thrive on democratic principle that emphasizes the centrality of the citizens and not the government officials or the elites (Mettler & Soss, 2004). An evaluation of the policy guideline on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants from the lens of the mass publics is a means of bridging the gap between theory and practice in the field of public policy and administration. Citizens yearn for public policy because they are both the beneficiaries, clients as well as the targets of policy. This, therefore, makes them, in theory, the sub-structure upon which policy making should stand, but in reality, policy making is an elite monopoly (Sebola, 2016).

This study raised the bar of citizen consciousness about policy making. Campbell (2003) states that public opinion has minimal influence on policy making because majority of the citizens lack awareness and civic consciousness about their rights to fair representation by government. This study threw more light on, and fulfilled the, aspirations of the policy feedback theory of Mettler and SoRelle (2014) in the area of citizen engagement in the policy process. By indirection, this study brought to the fore the fact that citizens can and do influence policy using the sovereignty which resides with them either through political parties, elections, interest groups, mass media, their representatives or acts of civil disobedience. The study was in the main a call for the democratization of the policy process.

Campbell (2003) maintains that policies affect patterns of participation in the policy process by citizens, and this is done by “affecting levels of politically relevant

resources, affecting feelings of political engagement such as political efficiency and political interest, and effecting the likelihood of political mobilization by interest groups and other political entrepreneurs” (2012, p. 336). This evaluation research filled the above gaps in literature and contributed to research and scholarship especially to Easton’s (1957) systems models which discusses the way in which citizens respond to policy output.

### **Social change impact.**

The desire and high hopes of the public sector are that it will implement public policy efficiently, effectively, democratically, transparently and accountably without public market failure (Salmon, 1995). The potential of this study for positive social change was aimed at achieving this goal by equipping public administrators with the concepts, principles, structures, functions and processes that would dispose him to implement public policy successfully. Knowing that public office is public trust, and that its legitimacy depends on public confidence and support, this study provides the necessary check and balances needed for a public administrator to avoid market failure in delivering public goods and services in line with public policy guidelines.

By evaluating policy outcome of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants through the views of leaders of CSOs, the study emphasized the thesis of John Locke's social contract theory (Barker, 1960) that political power belongs to the people and that government officials or representatives hold this power in trust for the people and this power should be exercised to meet the yearnings and aspirations of the people. Government failure, which portrays a situation where

public markets are typified by incompetence in delivering public goods and services, negates public sector objectives (David & Aidant, 1992).

The ethics of gifting and integrity of the public servants which was the concern of this study would hopefully make significant impact beyond the field of public policy and administration to the larger world as it relates to social change. The study has enormous potentials to contribute in preparing the public servants to be able to deliver on their mandate. In particular, it would help the Nigerian policy makers to understand better that the "what and why" we study public policy is to effectively address the causes and consequences of public policy in terms of policy demands, policy decisions, policy statements, policy outputs and policy outcomes.

### **Rationale for the Study**

The need for this study could be underscored from the desire to explore a long standing practice of ethical relativism in the public service of Nigeria as against the ethical universalism (Leisinger, 2014). Universalistic approach to ethics is the order of the day in most developed countries of the world, notably USA, UK, France, Germany, among others. The cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in Nigeria's public service is a long standing practice that has lived with the country since independence in 1960 (Bello, 2014). It was therefore imperative that its sustained relevance in the present reality of a globalized world where international best practices prevail be investigated. Since "new polices create new politics" (Schattschneider, 1935, p. 3), it is important that policy makers in Nigeria review the subsisting policy governing ethics of gift giving in the public service. Therefore, the research phenomenon of unregulated public service



ethics of gifting and integrity of public servants in Nigeria was of personal and professional interest. I was agitated to contribute to knowledge, but more importantly, to contribute in solving an age long policy dilemma in Nigerian public service - the dilemma of unrestricted gift giving corruption that has negatively affected the fabric of the public service. The sacrifice I made to complete this study was well documented in my personal reflections. This study provided the necessary data to aid the review of Nigeria's policy option in fighting public sector corruption.

Similarly, a democratized system of policy making has become imperative so that the citizens to whom policies are made should make input in the conceptualization of the policy in order to make implementation of same easily achievable (Tilly, 1978). It is not enough that policy outputs are democratically produced; it is also very important that policies are implemented to promote democracy in such a way that the public knows the mechanism of their delivery and at what cost (Soss, 2000). According to Mettler (2002a), Policy study of process, feedback and analysis, should be holistic as to incorporate both the historical, individual-level analysis and group think with a view to presenting a composite picture of the trends in the development of state affairs in order to form the basis for gauging prevailing mass opinion and behavioral tendencies of the greatest number of the populace. The need for this study was amplified on this score.

### **Summary**

The cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of the concerned territory Nigeria and its repercussion on the integrity of the public servants has attracted little research attention. Earlier research studies have concentrated on the ethical

implications of "unrestricted gift giving in the public service", but none has been concerned about the use of policy mechanism to govern the practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service so that the integrity standing of the public sector employees could be guaranteed. Previous studies also have not investigated the perceptions of leaders of CSOs on the practice. This was why this investigation was considered apt in the field of public policy and administration by its attempt to examine the perceptions of leaders of CSOs on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of Nigeria. By so doing, the study discussed the nitty-gritty of the basis of public policy, uses of public policy, development and uses of public policy analysis, theories and models of policy analysis, tools and techniques in policy analysis, the policy process, determinants of public policy, evaluation of public policies, and problems attendant to public policies. This study was carried out through a qualitative case study, using multiple methods of qualitative data collection and analysis to answer the research question.

### **Transition**

The next Chapter to follow, that is Chapter 2, reviewed relevant Literatures. This Chapter examined extant literatures regarding gift giving policy guidelines in the public sector in relation to the integrity of the public servants. It examined the rubrics of ethics of gift giving in the public service and the role of public policy in governing the practice so that the integrity of the public servants is guaranteed. Chapter 3 dwelt on the theoretical methods of inquiry that grounded the research. It also identified "qualitative case study" as the most suitable methodology for the study and purposeful sampling technique with interviews or observational field notes and relevant documents as

preferred means of data collection. It also provided data analysis procedures that were utilized for the research.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

The appropriateness of the policy instrument permitting the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of a particular territory in Nigeria has generated debates in Nigerian policy circles. All extant policy regulations against corruption in the public service prohibit gift giving in the public service, but some regulations allow the practice of gift giving on cultural grounds (Bello, 2014). In contemporary scholarly literature, there is empirical evidence linking gift giving in the public service to corruption (Bello, 2014; Bello & Murtala, 2015; Schultz, 2010). However, minimal attention has been paid to the use of policy guidelines to govern the practice of gift giving on cultural grounds according to my review of the literature. This study was, therefore, aimed at assessing the perceptions of leaders of CSOs regarding the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of the concerned territory in Nigeria in relation to the integrity of public officers.

In this Chapter's review of the literature, I examine and synthesize relevant research on gift giving in the public service as it affects the integrity of public servants. The chapter begins with an overview of the literature search strategy and the theoretical framework that grounded the study. I then examine current research on the phenomenon of gift giving to public officials. The chapter's literature review is divided into three broad subheadings: gift giving, bribery, and corruption in the public service; public policy, governance and CSOs, and integrity of public servants. I then discuss most significant findings justifying the study, summary of what is known and not known related to the

study, summary of how the study fills a gap in the literature, and conclude with the primary points relating to this study.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The purpose for the literature review is to provide a review and synthesis of the theoretical framework of the study, related literature on gift giving and the chosen methodology. The identified themes and trends, which underpinned the variables and key concepts of the study, underpinned the literature review. In the review, I evaluated the differing points of views a to my study topic. I synthesized studies related to the variables and key concepts of my study in order to establish what is known about them, what is contentious, and what areas need further research attention.

Using libraries in my vicinity, I searched ProQuest Central database, Dissertations and Theses-Full Text database, Academic Search Premier and Business Search Premier, and Google Search engines. I also researched databases available via Walden University Library such as policy and administration databases (Business Source Complete, Political Science Complete, SOC/NDEX With Full Text, Sage Premier, etc); business and management databases (Business Source Complete ABI/INFORM Collection, Emerald Management, Science Direct, SAGE and Stats etc), and multidisciplinary databases (ProQuest Central, Academic Search Complete, and Expanded Academic ASAP). I reviewed dissertations and doctoral studies, government documents, peer reviewed journal articles, newspapers and magazines, reference materials, Statistics and Data. I used a subject-based approach for my searches. Search terms were key words such as : “gift giving”, “favors”, “unrestricted”, “restricted”, “restricting”, “restricts”, “public

service”, “public servants”, “personal integrity”, “cultural practice”, “public perceptions”, “public opinion”, “gift giving restrictions,” “unregulated”, “regulated,” “regulating”, “gifts as corruption”, “gifts as bribe”, “civil society” “civil society organization”, “civil society impact”, “civil society influence”, and “civil society influence on policy process”. There were relevant information on other sources which I included in the review and over all dissertation based on need. I stopped reviewing literature when I identified how the study fills a gap in the literature and extends knowledge in the discipline.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework upon which this was based was the policy feedback theory of Mettler and SoRelle (2014). This framework illuminates the mutually beneficial effect of how interest groups shape policies, and how in turn, policies shape interest groups. It provided a lens through which the various factors that come together to inform the use of policy instruments to regulate gift giving in the public service were viewed. The theory also emphasizes the resultant effect of public policy for democratic citizenship (Mettler & SoRelle, 2014). The major foci of policy feedback theory include explaining membership, building political cohesion and group distribution. Others are structuring or discouraging civic capacities, outlining policy agendas, problems and appraisals; and organizing, invigorating and halting political involvement” (Mettler & Soss, 2004, p.1).

### **Antecedents of Policy Feedback Theory**

Although policy feedback effect is relatively new in the scholarly literature in the social and behavioral sciences, the theory that public policies have the potential to shape

behavioral tendencies of people is standing in the field of political science.

Schattschneider (1935) was a foremost proponent that “new policies create new politics” (p.3). Theodore (1972) and Espring-Aderson (1990) agreed the content and structure of policies is shaped by political behaviors. The view of these scholars appear to the historical institutionalists who developed it further as an approach for analyzing public policy. Consequently, historical intuitionist scholars developed the idea of policy feedback as a theoretical framework in the late 1980s and early 1990s (see for instance, Hall, 1986; Pierson, 1993; Skecpol, 1992; etc). The term “*policy feedback theory*” was coined in Skocpol’s (1993) work titled: *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*.

#### **Major theoretical propositions.**

The major theoretical propositions of the Policy feedback theory include that policies once enacted have the ability to affect political behaviors of government, elites, interest groups, and mass publics through two main pathways - interpretive and resource effects (Pierson, 1993). The interpretive effect is achieved when polices are used as source of information and meaning, which affects political as well as altitudinal dispositions (Mettler & SoRelle, 2014). The resource effect is achieved by equipping political activities with means and incentives (Pierson, 1993). Four major areas, according to Mettler and SoRelle (2014), are the major concern of policy feedback theory. One is that: the meaning of citizenship is shaped by policies which encompasses the social contract relationship between the government and the governed, or elected or appointed representatives and the electorates or citizens (Skecpol, 1992). Another

theoretical proposition of policy feedback theory is that the making of new policies is profoundly affected by already enunciated and existing policies, some of which impact the political background in significant ways (Schattschneider, 1935). The theory also states that the attitudes of the mass publics towards a given policy ultimately influences (either explicitly or implicitly) the decisions of policy makers in reviewing the existing policy or in making new policies (Mettler & SoRelle, 2014).

***Rationale for the choice of policy feedback theory.***

My rationale for choosing policy feedback theory as a theoretical lens for the present study was based on my determination that it was appropriate for analyzing CSO leaders' perceptions of unrestricted gift giving and its impact on the integrity of public servants. A feedback effect refers to an impact of a report of an evaluation such as the impact of an evaluative study of the prevailing practice of unrestricted gift giving under investigation. Ideally, citizen engagement in policy making demands that policy makers and citizens identify political agendas, including how policy problems are defined, understood, prioritized and addressed by policy makers (Mettler & SoRelle, 2014).

***Relationship between the theory and the study.***

Policy feedback theory is positively related to the present study because it provides a framework upon which to base the analysis as to whether the "cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service" is actually the policy choice of the people; is it the most appropriate policy guideline in safeguarding the integrity of the public servants; and is it the best or the most efficient policy instrument to bring about an ethical, effective public service.



These concerns are tied to the overarching research question of this study: “What are the perceptions about integrity and corruption in relation to unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants?” Addressing this question helped to advance the course of policy feedback theory by contributing to its body of knowledge as the study is aimed at interrogating policy demands, policy decisions, policy enunciation, policy outputs, and policy outcomes or evaluation (Pierson, 1993).

*Analysis of theory application.*

Beyond early research works on policy feedback by Pierson’s (1993) -*When effect becomes cause: Policy feedback and political change*, and Skocpol’s (1992) - *Protecting soldiers and mothers: The political origins of social policy in the United States*, there have emerged new major streams of policy feedback research in the last decade. These cover the areas of Citizenship, form of governance, power of groups, and policy agendas and definition of policy problems. The development in policy feedback research has diversified both in subject matter and methodologies. For example, Weaver and Lerman (2010) studied the “political consequences of the Carceral state”, where the researchers examined policy issues of criminal justice in the area; Mettler (2011) analyzed the implications of public policy for democratic citizenship and how the gap between policy studies and mass politics can be bridged. Morgan & Campbell (2011) studied the state of Medicare and markets in the context of governance of social policy in a delegated welfare state. Maclean’s (2011) study concentrated on African countries where he looked at the exercise of citizenship in African countries as it relates to retrenchment of workers. Bruch, Ferree & Soss (2010) shifted emphasis from concentrating on case studies to

involving large dataset to study “From policy to polity: Democracy, paternalism and incorporation of disadvantaged citizens”. Lerman (2013) based his studies on experimental research and looked at “Public opinion towards privatization”. In sum, citizenship, form of governance, power of groups and political agendas and definition of policy problems constitute the nature of questions that policy feedback researchers seek answers to; the type of concepts that they explore, and the problems and prospects in policy feedback studies. The present study which is a case study of the perceptions of CSOs on the "cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service" falls under “power of groups” as a major stream of research in policy feedback.

*Literature related to methods.*

This study is an exploratory case research grounded in qualitative strategy of scientific investigation. Qualitative research method is a process-driven and procedural inquiry with a distinct philosophical-cum-theoretical framework upon which the study is grounded. Approaches to the study of qualitative research are many and varied. Miller & Crabtree (1992) classify all these approaches into disciplinary domains that constitute major influence on, and concern of, researchers. In educational field, for instance, Jacob (1987) classifies all qualitative research into “traditions”, while Lancy (1993), still under education, categorizes the approaches to qualitative inquiry into “discipline perspectives”. Denzin & Lincoln (2011) have their own way of organizing their classifications or typologies of qualitative research. These classifications or typologies are approaches that reflect the disciplinary orientation of the researchers as well as the strategies for data collection (Creswell, 2013).

In the field of education, Jacob's classification includes ecological psychology, symbolic interactionism, ethnography of communication, etc. Denzin and Lincoln's approaches are located in social sciences and they include grounded theory, case studies, ethnography, and clinical research, among others. The list of typologies or classifications of qualitative approaches is a long one, and it accounts for the diversity of recommended approaches by qualitative scholars, and how specific disciplines lay emphasis on specified approaches.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994; 2011) classify qualitative case studies as belonging to the disciplinary domain of social sciences, which is in tandem with the academic background of the present researcher as a social and behavioral scientist. Creswell's (1998) definition of research method as a theoretical-cum-philosophical framework that orients a given study, including the processes and procedures put in place to carry out the study, is necessary in underscoring why qualitative research is different from other research methods in terms of philosophical as well as theoretical assumptions that drive such studies. For example, the assumption of ontology relate to subjectivity and diversity of reality. This implies that a qualitative researcher should report the views of the participants and the diverse opinions expressed. In other words, the ontological assumption harps on multiple realities that characterize human existence which requires that the qualitative researcher should embrace multiple realities as he/she conducts his/her research. The axiological assumptions are concerned about values that propel research; hence a qualitative researcher should account for his/her personal values and interpretations in the narratives. Epistemological assumptions highlight the closeness

between the researcher and the phenomenon being studied. This, therefore, demands of a qualitative researcher to spend time in the field with a view to understanding and reporting the phenomenon appropriately.

Rhetorical assumptions relate to what constitute the language of research. In this case, the qualitative researcher should ensure that the research is encoded in the language that is appropriate for qualitative tradition. Methodological assumptions are concerned about research procedures and processes that are observed to arrive at a given finding. This entails that the qualitative researcher should use inductive approach to consider the contexts that give meaning to the study as well as the details in order to arrive at the study narratives.

Qualitative research method is distinct from the quantitative tradition. While qualitative paradigm is naturally interpretive or humanistic (Creswell, 2013), the quantitative research method is conversely oriented towards positivist tradition that analyzes phenomena on the basis of observable cause-and-effect relationship. Goulding (2002) reports that qualitative research method depends on mechanistic processes to test a priori theories.

Scholars have continued to debate on the superiority of the quantitative research method to the qualitative paradigm. Qualitative research is perceived by some sections of scholars as merely exploratory, conjectural investigation that is “unscientific, value-laden and a distortion of the canons of good science” (Goulding, 2002, p.11). They also argue that being a constructivist study that requires the researcher to be in the field with the

participants or the phenomenon of interest, it means that the presence of the observer will alter that being observed (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

However, those on the side of the divide (qualitative tradition) argue that “positivists in the social sciences are pseudo-scientific, inflexible, myopic, mechanistic, outdated and limited to the realm of testing existing theories at the expense of new development” (Goulding, 2002, pp. 11-12). Feminist theorists also accuse the quantitative paradigm proponents of creating “a hierarchy of power in which the omnipotent researcher, often a male, instructs, observes, records, and sometimes deceives the subjects” (Peplau & Conrad, 1989, p. 5).

Goulding, however, explains that this quantitative, qualitative divide is based on wrong judgment, and advises scholars to seek to understand the philosophical assumptions underlining each of the methods, their different disciplinary origins, the metaphoric framings of the individual method, and the ontological beliefs of each of the methods, adding that each of the methods has both merits and demerits. Furthermore, Goulding explains that each of the methods contributes to knowledge and scholarship in a special way either in isolation of the other or in combination of the two. Therefore, the paradigm war ought not to exist (Trochim, 2001). He says that differences between the two are only identifiable in terms of philosophical assumptions, and does not exist at the level of data analysis because qualitative data are convertible to numbers just as quantitative data are to words.

Creswell (1998) and Rudestam & Newton (2015) advise researchers to choose their research method based on the nature of the topic and the questions that guide the

study. Rudestam & Newton listed routine differences between the two methodological orientations and these include the following:

1. Quantitative data are usually rendered in numbers while qualitative data are usually rendered in words.
2. Quantitative investigation is hypothetic-deductive, while qualitative investigation is normally inductive.
3. Quantitative research is usually carried out under controlled situations, while qualitative research naturally occurs and within context.
4. Quantitative research usually isolate operationalized variable; while qualitative research takes a holistic view of the phenomenon of interest.
5. Quantitative research lays emphasis on objectivity, while qualitative research thrives in subjectivity.
6. Quantitative research lays much emphasis on predictions and explanations, while qualitative research emphasizes description, exploration, and search for emerging meanings.
7. Quantitative researcher involves in directing, manipulating, and controlling, while qualitative researcher involves in participation and collaboration.
8. The quantitative research is concerned about statistical analysis; while qualitative researcher is concerned about text analysis.

This study utilized qualitative research method to ground the investigation of the "cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service" in relation to the trustworthiness of the public officers.

My study was qualitative exploratory case study because there were no identifiable theories and variables to test the research interest. Under this circumstance where the phenomenon of interest is new and or unique, and it is imperative to engage in detailed study of the case in order to provide understanding, Creswell (2009); Goulding (2002) recommend the use of qualitative tradition of inquiry. This is in conformity with the purpose of qualitative strategy which is the description, clarification and explanation of human phenomena (Polkinghorne, 2005). As pointed out earlier about the gap in the extant literatures, scholars have probed the socio-economic consequences of gift giving in the public service, but not much exists on the use of policy guidelines to manage "cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service", especially from the opinions held by the civil society organizations on such practice. Of much concern is that the use of policy guideline to regulate unrestricted gift giving in the public service so as to protect the integrity of the public servants remains largely unexplored. There was, therefore, the need for a detailed study that would provide needed explanations to aid the understanding of the subject-matter of inquiry. This formed the basis for the choice of qualitative research method to ground this study.

Qualitative method has its own different traditions which are determined by the purpose of the research (Creswell, 2013). This study employed the qualitative tradition of case study for this inquiry. Case study by definition is "an intensive study of a specific individual or specific context" (Trochim, 2001, p. 161). Creswell (2013) agrees with this definition but adds that the study has to involve "real-life", "contemporary bounded system", in-depth data collection", and "multiple sources of information" (p.32). This

study was concerned about the specific, unique case of the ongoing practice of unrestricted gift giving as being experienced real life in the public service of a concerned territory Nigeria.

Case study research has come a long way across such disciplines as sociology, anthropology, among others. In fact, Hamel, Dufour & Fortin (1993) state that the origin of case studies in modern social sciences is traceable to sociology and anthropology. However, Stake (1995) and Yin (2009) are great authorities on case study research and applications. A review of Stake's (1995) *The art of case study research*; (2005) *Qualitative case studies*; (2006) *multiple case study analysis*; (2010) *Qualitative research: Studying how things work*, etc. can be academically illuminating. See also Yin's (2009) *Case study research: Design and method*; for further illumination on qualitative case studies.

Writing in Creswell (1998), Yin identified major sources of data in case studies to include "documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts" (p.23). Creswell (2013) agrees with these Yin's identified sources of data in case studies but further added "audio-visual material, and reports" (p.33). Tellix (1997) says that all these sources of data can only be utilized based on suitability within context.

Even though this review of methods has discussed both qualitative and quantitative research methods, it is still important that few insights be gained from the mixed methods approach which entails the combination of both methods. Onwuegbuzie & Turner (2007) State that researchers employ mixed methods approach in order to draw



strength or benefits inherent in the quantitative and qualitative methods. For example, quantitative method makes use of inferential and descriptive data; qualitative method uses “expressive” data in detailed description to analyze research problem. In mixed methods research, both quantitative and qualitative data are combined to strengthen the research outcome by complementarily providing more meaningful interpretation of data as well as the research interest.

This study was not pliable to mixed methods research because, according to Sparkes (2014), mixed methods research is not focused on underpinning the causes of troubles but concerned with examining the troubles. Besides, Vankatesh, Brown, and Bala (2013) surmise that the reality of a combination of multiple methods results in paradigmatic bottlenecks. Qualitative case study as against ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenological study, narrative, etc, is considered most appropriate for this study because the perceptions of CSOs on the "cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service" in relation to the truth, veracity and openness of the public servants, calls for a study with strong philosophical base that provides a framework for exploration in real-life environment (Cronin, 2014); a study having in-depth, systematic, rigorous, and holistic view using a single case or few cases (Hoon, 2013).

### **Nigeria's Public Sector Integrity**

The policy regulation approving the "cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of Nigeria, especially in the concerned territory in Nigeria" as it concerns the integrity quotient of the public sector employees has been a subject of controversy among policy analysts (Bello, 2014; Bello & Murtala, 2015; Ayodele, 2014; Osipitan & Oyewo, 1997). Gift giving policy in Nigeria is inconsistent. For example, the policy instruments restrict gift giving in the public service on one hand, but the same instruments permit unrestricted gift giving on cultural grounds, on the other hand (see 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (As amended); CCB Act, C AP 56, LFN, 1990; ICPC Act, 2000). Nigeria's 1999 Constitution (as amended), Fifth Schedule, Part 1, 6 (3) despite prohibiting public servants from accepting gifts or benefits or anything of value as contained in Part 1: 6 (2 and 3), goes on in 6 (3) to permit public servants to accept personal gifts, benefits, or anything of value from relations and friends on cultural grounds.

This policy inconsistency creates an unfortunate opportunity for public sector employees to have a cover to indulge in unethical behaviors (Okonkwo, 1992; Jones, 2014). The practice is also positively correlated to corruption, and raises integrity questions on the part of the public servants (World Bank Group Enterprise Survey, 2014; Oarhe, 2013; Mentoor, 2010). This is the arching problem of this study.

### **Literature Related to the Problem Statement**

Bello (2014) describes article 6 (3) above as a window of opportunity for corruption as it is imprecise and irresponsible to addressing the problems associated with

the "practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service". He calls for the elimination of the policy guideline. Global Witness (2012) gave account of how Messrs Kellogg, Brown and Root, a US business corporation was found guilty of "gift giving" in the sum of \$180 million to senior public officials in Nigerian government in exchange for award of contract worth of \$6 billion. Between 2013 and 2016, the world-wide corruption perceptions of the Nigerian public sector have remained all-time low as "highly corrupt" (Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, (2013).

Nigeria has adopted so many policy measures to fight corruption in the public sector but such measures have witnessed sustained serial failures (Wazir, 2010). It is necessary to recall such policy measures with a view to finding out what causes the failures since "Nigeria is still rated one of the most corrupt countries in the world (Ijewereme, 2013). The following anti-corruption policies in the public sector have been experimented on: Decree No. 54 of 1976 (Public officer investigation of Asset); Decrees No. 53 of 1999 (forfeiture of Assets Decree); Failed Bank Tribunal Decrees of 1996; Code of Conduct Bureau and the Code of Conduct Tribunal of 1979; Code of Conduct for Public Officers (Fifth Schedule, Part 1 of Nigerian Constitution, 1999 (as amended); Ethical Revolution of 1979-1983; War Against Indiscipline of 1983- 1985; War Against Indiscipline and Corruption of 1993- 1998; Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) of 2000 to date; Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) of 2003 to date, among others. In the face of all these measures, over 65 % Nigeria's population earn less than a dollar per day and therefore, they are extremely poor (UN Report, 2016).

### **Themes and Trends Discovered in the Literature Review.**

The guiding topic for this research was: “Perceptions of Unrestricted Gift giving and Integrity of Public Servants in Nigeria”. Having reviewed a total of 141 articles, books, and Dissertations of which 81 articles were sourced from peer-reviewed journals published in the last five years; 30 articles were sourced from peer-reviewed journals published below five years thus resulting in the use of 73% of scholarly articles published in peer-reviewed journals in the last five years; 16 books of which 11 were published in the last five years, while five were published below five years thus resulting in the use of 69% of books published in the last five years; eight Dissertations of which six were defended and approved within the last five years, while two were defended and approved below five years thus resulting in the use of 75% of dissertations approved within the last five years; and six non-peer-reviewed journals of which four were published in the last five years, while two were published below five years thus resulting in the use of 67% of non-peer-reviewed journals published in the last five years; three broad themes and trends are discernible.

The themes and trends were, one: Gift giving regulations, bribery and corruption in the public service; two, Public policy, governance and civil society organizations, and three, Integrity of public servants. Out of the 141 articles, books and Dissertations reviewed, 45 of them address the themes and trends of gift giving, bribery and corruption in the public service, 76 address public policy, governance and civil society organizations, and 20 address integrity of public servants. Gift giving, bribery and corruption is the greatest virus destroying the ethical foundation of the public service

(Oarhe, 2013), and addressing the problem with a view to contributing to its cure is the concern of this research. The emergent second theme and trend - public policy, governance and civil society organizations - is predicated on the need to promulgate public policies in a way that promotes civic consciousness and engagement so that the policy end-product will also serve the best, legitimate interest of democracy, good governance and the betterment of the society (Mettler & SoRelle, 2014; Pierson, 1993). The third theme and trend (integrity of public servants) focuses on the need for public servants to demonstrate personal integrity by adhering to the highest level of standards of conduct that can inspire the confidence and trust of the public.

#### **Gift giving regulations, Bribery and Corruption in the Public Service.**

The reviewed literature starts with an exposition of what the Public service is. Public service is public trust and public servants are the trustees of the public (Bello & Murtala, 2015). Public servants are guided by a code of conduct which spells out the extant rules and regulations obtainable in the public service. In Nigeria, these codes of conduct and or rules and regulations guiding the conduct of the public servants are contained in the Fifth Schedule, Part 1 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended). Writing on “Public service in Nigeria: An overview of functions and code of conduct”, Bello and Murtala summarized the functions of the public service based on the provisions of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria as follows:

1. Implementation and enforcement of the socio-economic a political polices of government;
2. The design and implementation of public service;

3. The generation of revenue for the government;
4. Strict adherence to “managerial, political and financial accountability”;
5. Service to the citizens;
6. Monitoring and evaluation of the activities of public, private and nongovernmental organizations providing services at the instance of the government;
7. Propelling all development initiatives of the government.

As a highly disciplined career, infringements on the codes of conduct guiding behaviors in the public service is usually visited with punishment through the process of disciplinary procedures. However, in his “Abstract” to their referenced article, Bello & Murtala state:

... penal sanctions and punishment alone are not enough to curb public misconduct, there has to be patriotism, honesty, integrity commitment, dedication and, above all, fear of God on the part of the general public and public officers in particular. (p. 61)

Still elucidating on the public trust and confidence reposed on the public servants, Barker (1960) states that a public servant who cannot implement public policy effectively, efficiently and in an impartial manner is a failure in social contract between the citizens and the elected or appointed representative of the people. It could be recalled that great philosophers such as Gratius (1583-1645); Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679); John Locke (1632-1704); Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1788), and more recently John Rawls of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century pioneered revolutionary thoughts on the social

contract theory. Barker states that social contract theory is about an implicit agreement between the people and the elected or appointed representatives of the people to whom the people surrender their sovereign power in return for good governance and actions that correspond to the wishes of the people. In consequence, administrators and managers of our public organizations have a duty to orient public servants to understand that they are the servants of the people who hold public offices in trust for the people. To this extent, behaviors that negative this confidence such as corruption-related gift giving will be avoided.

Towards providing functional and result-oriented leadership in the public service so that the trust and confidence of the public is not misplaced, Clawson (2012) advises that leaders in the public service should embrace "level three leadership and get below the surface" (pp. 1-340). He emphasizes the use of values, assumptions, beliefs and expectations (VABES) to understand the underlying motives and intentions behind why people behave the way they behave. Discussing "Personal, Workgroup, and Organizational Charters" Clawson describes organizational charter as a document containing "mission statement, vision statement, value statement, strategy, short-term operating goals, and leadership that defines these parts" (Clawson, 2012, p. 92) which he says organizational workers should follow. Of particular interest here is a value statement. These are statements that approximate the principles through which the organizations reach their goals (Clawson, 2012). The author says "If these (value) statements match the behavior of the managerial and leadership ranks of the organizations then the values are likely to become more and more instilled in the thinking

and behaviors of the rest of the organization” (p. 99). The author further explains that it sends wrong signals to the followers when leaders fail to walk the value talk, and conversely, when leaders walk the value talk, the followers have a duty to behave ethically (Clawson, 2012). The message here is that leadership has a role to play in upholding integrity and ethicality in our public organizations.

Bello & Murtala (2015); Barker (1969); and Clawson (2012) are not alone in addressing issues relating to the ethicality and service delivery in the public service. Northouse (2013) presents a highly informative account on “Leadership Ethics” as an emerging theoretical formulation in management. The author divides ethical theories into two domains; leaders’ conduct and leaders’ character (behavior or conduct and virtue-based considerations).

In the domains of ethical theories, the author explains that ethical egoism refers to selfish actions; ethical utilitarianism refers to service to people; while ethical altruism refers to promoting the best interest of others. The requirement of public service ethics can be best served under an atmosphere of ethical altruism (Northouse, 2013; Bello & Marshal, 2014). The American Society for Public Administration (ASPA, 2013) agrees with this view when it states that ASPA members are obligated to advance public interest by promoting the interests of the public and putting public service above self interest. Northouse enumerates 5 principles of leadership which he says cut across many disciplines. These are “respect, service, justice, honesty and community” (p. 431).

Indeed, Public policy and administration is the hub of all actors in the policy process (Cairney & Heikkila, 2014; Mettler & SoRelle, 2014). But to play its important



role of servicing all the actors in the policy arena through the bureaucracy, “ethics has emerged as a policy domain”, thus making public management “a value-driven activity with deep moral groundings” (Ferlie, Lynn, & Pollitt, 2007, p. 156). Public management ethics, is, therefore, built around the principles and values that determine what is right or wrong and how to arrive at informed judgment (Ferlie et al., 2007).

The United Nations in 1996 adopted the international code for public servants that recognizes public office as public trust, and enjoins public officials to be fair, just, impartial and not compromised in the discharge of their duties. In light of this, public organizations draw up ethics policy to guide officials to ethically establish the difference between their personal commitments and public duties in such a way that ethics and integrity will hold sway (Ferlie et al., 2012; March & Olsen, 1989). The recommendations for the adherence to the practice of public management ethics along with its principles and values are germane in addressing the research questions of this study.

### **Public sector Gift giving Regulations, Bribery and Corruption.**

The principles and values of public management ethics require that policy guidelines on gift giving in the public service must be stated in clear terms so as to draw a line between innocent gifts and corruption-related gifts (Ferlie et al., 2012). Jones and Bezuidenhout (2014) did a comparative analysis of the regulatory frameworks guiding gift giving in South African public sector and those of the international benchmark of guidelines and legislation in Sweden, New Zealand, Singapore, China, Australia, Brics, India and Eskom. The study relied on journals, text books, conference papers,

newspapers, among others secondary data sources to do its analysis. The result found out that while the South Africa's legislative frameworks with respect to gift giving and acceptance of gifts in its public service is both nebulous and woolly, that of the regulatory frameworks for gift giving and acceptance of gifts in China, Australia, Singapore, and New Zealand are strict, well defined, and broad. The study correlated the rating of New Zealand as the first least corrupt country and South Africa as the 69th least corrupt country on the Transparency International (TI) corruption perceptions index (2012) to the existing gift giving legislative frameworks in the referenced countries. This piece of literature attempts to provide answer to two of the research questions of the present study bordering on perceptions of unrestricted gift giving policy legislation and appropriate policy regulation to solve any identifiable problem associated with gift giving in the public service.

However, contrary to the report of Jones & Bezuidenhout (2014), Leisinger (2015) reports that the cultural peculiarities of a nation-state, including the cultural practice of gift giving in the public service of such a nation, should be respected. His study analyzed what roles business enterprises could play in the realization of the 2030 global agenda aimed at bringing about sustainable development where all nations of the world could achieve unity in diversity while thinking differently but acting in unison. The analysis reports that gift giving in the public service across the globe is seen from varying prisms, and the study perceives this as one of those factors that promotes nations' individualities in one global arena. The report views it as cultural imperialism for nation-states that practice restricted gift giving to impose their gift giving restriction on other

cultures where gift giving invokes a positive impression. It is at variance with the principles of corporate responsibility in a collective world characterized by cultural diversity and pluralism in values (Leisinger, 2014). Of relevance in answering one of my research questions is Leisinger's recommendation that each nation-state should embrace whatever gift giving regulation that is in sync with its peculiar cultural values, hence he called for the competences of "ethical musicality", "cultural sensitivity", and "societal intelligence" (p.24).

However, Etzioni (2014) insists that unrestricted gift giving in the public sector leads to compromise and favoritism. In a preliminary design of the study of the level and scope of political corruption in the US, the author reports how groups raise huge sums of money and give to congress members with a view to influencing the outcome of specific legislation in the interest of the group. He also reports that individuals or groups donate huge sums of money to political campaign organizations with a view to obtaining favors from the government when the election is won and the government is established. The report describes these donations or gifts as having the potentials to influence the government in form of diluting regulations, relaxing restrictions and weakening penalties in the areas of interest of those donors or gift givers. Etzioni further reports that Wilhite & Theilmann's (1987) study provides evidence of how financial donations from labor organizations to a political campaign organization translated to improved labor legislations when the government was finally established. His report also shows that congress members who chair sensitive committees attract more gifts than less influential congress members.

This report is, however, repudiated by Ansolabehere and Synder (1999) who stated that there is little or no correlation between gift giving and legislative outcome as members usually vote according to political affiliation. Scholarly discourses on political corruption are not limited to Etzioni's (2014) contraction of gift giving to public officers alone or Ansolabehere and Synder's (1999) co-relational analysis of gift giving and legislative outcome. Markovska and Adams (2015) took a rather preventive as against explanatory approach to the problem. In this case study of political corruption and money laundering in Nigeria, the authors x-rayed how immunity from criminal prosecution constitutionally granted to some executive officers in Nigeria notably the President and Vice-President as well as Governors and their Deputies has become an alibi for abuse of public office by way of money laundering, acceptance of various forms of gifts and chieftaincy titles, and a host of other acts capable of compromising integrity in the public office.

Agreeing that Nigeria's economic problems are squarely located on unprecedented level of political corruption at the high quarters, Markovska and Adams recommended the immediate removal of the immunity clause from Nigeria's policy architecture. The study examines the socio-cultural issues surrounding corruption in Nigeria and identifies the factor of gift giving culture in the public service as one of the motivations for incidences of corruption. The paper rejects the explanation that corruption constitutes part and parcel of Nigerian history and traditions, and calls for a legislative framework which would restrict the traditional practice of gifting in the public sector.

The Russian experience of public sector gift giving takes a more complex dimension than the Nigerian situation. Osipitan (2012) provides empirical data to show extensive informal economic relations between the government and the Russian university authorities have snowballed into “loyalty as rent”. The author reports that this became manifest when monumental corruption in Russian universities are condoned by the state power in exchange for loyalty and support for the political agenda of the ruling government. Rodgers, Williams and Rourd (2008) further report that a survey conducted among households in Ukraine on rent-seeking behaviors and corruption, “only 10% of respondents relied solely on the formal economy for their income, whereas 67% were employing a mixture of formal and informal practices” (p. 673). This social malaise is also evident in the employment sector of the universities where applicants secure jobs on the basis of bribery and “blat” as against the skill requirements of the jobs (Round, et.al 2008) “Blat” is defined as the” use of personal networks and informal contracts to obtain goods and services in short supply and to find a way around formal procedures” (Ledeneva, 1998).

In a proactive efforts to stem the ugly tide of corruption in the public sector, the government of the United Kingdom appears to have considered the effect of bribery and corruption in the public sector as being too pervasive across national boundaries to the extent that UK Bribery Act (UKBA) enjoys extra jurisdictional powers to outlaw not only gift giving/bribery in the UK public service but also prohibits UK companies from doing business with any country that allows gift giving in its public service. In her study designed as literature review and commentary, Yanga (2014) takes a critical view at the

UK Bribery Act (UKBA) 2010 and its implications for doing business in Africa. The findings which are instructive to any country practicing unrestricted gift giving in the public service are stated thus:

The UKBA has extra-territorial jurisdiction which empowers UK courts to prosecute cases of bribery committed abroad by UK companies and their associates. The risk of prosecution is likely to affect foreign direct investment and official development aid flows to Africa. However, companies can escape prosecution if they can prove that they have adequate procedures in place to prevent bribery. This raises the question as to whether the legislation shifts the responsibility of fighting bribery to under-resourced overseas business partners and supply chains. While most African governments have adopted robust anti-bribery laws, their enforcement is hampered by weak institutions. (p. 3)

Against the backdrop of the implication of the UK Bribery Act 2010, O'Leary (2012) has cause to encourage the proponents of global regulatory ethics to rise to the challenge of promoting common perspectives on social and economic justice, human rights practices, and environmental issues, among others. Similarly, a qualitative study by Napal (2014) examines the relationship between business ethical universalism and ethical relativism in relation to corporate business practices. Comparing the adoption of the ethical relativist and ethical universalist practices between developed and developing countries, the report pointed out that while developed countries are prone to adopting universalist ethical practices, their developing counterparts are prone to relying on their

relativist traditions. In a case study of Mauritius as a developing country, the researcher subjected Mauritius' relativist values to critical analysis against the background of universal ethics in order to determine whether observance of ethical relativism in dealing with issues of bribery and corruption is positively correlated to ethical failure. The study confirmed this in the affirmative and consequently advised developing economies to adopt a global business compliance system which is in tandem with international best practices. This advice stems from the author's view that the world is fast contracting into a global village with a global government based on mutual trust, collective bargaining, collective destiny, and if possible, collective global ethics. The thesis of this study is that the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of Nigeria amounts to the practice of ethics of relativism which, the study reports, calls for policy rethink.

Anti-corruption or prevention mechanisms are said to be effective in fighting corruption in the public service (Oyamada, 2015). The author comprehensively discusses the measures taken by, and the successes recorded in, fighting corruption by the Japanese government in an effort to win goodwill and public trust. The study reports that the Japanese corruption prevention measures are responsive in lessening corruption opportunities, and that public opinion on these measures was satisfactory. This finding is significant because Japan is the only Asian country that does not have an agency dedicated to fighting corruption in the country's public sector (Oyamada, 2015). The corruption prevention measures adopted by the Japanese government include "disclosure of gifts given to a public official, Whistle-blowing Protection Act, promotion of government transparency and accountability, National Public Service Ethics Act

(NPSEA) which was later transformed into an institution of government for corruption prevention through promotion of public service ethics” (Oyamada, 2015, p. 26). The report identifies gift giving in the public service as one of the corruption opportunities in the Japanese public service. However, the report says Japan has a gift giving culture that delineates hospitality gifts which are acceptable, and gifts as bribe which are objectionable. For example, “dango” and “amakundari” (i.e. gifts as bribe) were outlawed through a policy initiative (Oyamada, 2015).

Szto (2016) attempted to fill a gap in the literature in respect of Chinese gift giving practices and the appropriateness or otherwise of using virtuous gift giving as a means of fighting corruption. Indeed, there is a dearth of literature on the use of virtuous gifts to fight corruption in the public service. The study reports that gift giving practice in china is commonplace in the family circles, business arena and official public quarters. The author explains that the predominance of gift giving practices in many circles does not amount to corruption because most of the gifts are virtuous gifts. This notwithstanding, the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) prohibits gift giving to foreigners as an “influence” to procure business, and this makes it difficult for US nationals to do business in china because the practice of virtuous gift giving in the public sector is not recognized in the provisions of the FCPA Act (Yanga, 2014).

Szto's study, however, condemns corruption-related gift giving in China but makes a case for the use of virtuous gifts to fight corruption. The report defines the traditional rule of virtue in China as a principle of Confucianism which believes that religious-cum-cultural promotion of virtue is advanced more than government legislation.



As a religious observance, virtuous life is imbibed through rituals, and virtuous gifts are the channels through which virtuous life is attained (Szto, 2016). The report further provides insights into how a good number of Chinese businesses took off as ancestral trusts and profits, wherein they are used to service ancestral worship, philanthropy, and education. The study encourages virtuous gifts as being positively correlated to development and efforts at eliminating corruption in the public service.

The Nigerian "cultural practice of gift giving in the public service" is remarkably different from the Chinese virtuous gift giving practice because there is a delineation of boundaries between virtuous gifts and bribery in China but none exists in Nigerian situation. Bello (2014) honed in on the social practice of gift giving in Nigeria within the context of anti-bribery laws and the Nigerian constitution and states: "the laws are unclear, complex and difficult to interpret" (p. 279).

The study further reports that while bribery in most advanced economies such as the UK's Bribery Act 2010, among others, was clearly defined, bribery in Nigerian constitution and in the statute books of its corruption fighting agencies is nebulously defined. Explaining what is bad about bribery, Bello says: "the offer, conferral, request or acceptance of the financial or other advantage is intended to induce the other person to perform a relevant function or activity in breach of the expectation to act impartially in good faith or in a manner that amounts to betrayal of trust" (p. 280). Bello uses bribery and gift giving in the public service interchangeably in the belief that even "pure" and "free" gifts are not, in the true sense of the word "pure" and "free" (Laidlaw, 2000), because every gift (virtuous gifts inclusive) demands a veiled reciprocity. Bello,

therefore, condemns the legal provision in Nigeria where gift giving on the ground of customs is allowed in the public service, and calls for a policy amendment to draw a line between cultural gifts and corruption gifts.

David-Barrett (2014) appears to have introduced an interesting dimension to the gift giving or bribery debate in the public offices. In the researcher's seminal exploration on the ethics guiding anti-bribery laws with a view to determining whether some bribes in public offices are more harmful than the others, the researcher surmises that some bribes are actually less harmful than others in relation to the impact they have on the ethical health of the society. However, the author adds that all bribes are destructive because they all lead to undermining the rule of law. To arrive at his conclusion, the author analytically introduces and examines two hypothetical cases; one, a facilitation payment of \$100 fee so that the giver could be allowed to jump a queue, and a bribe of \$25,000 to win a contract.

The author explains that the bribe to win a contract is more harmful, because most facilitation payments have been removed from the provisions of the United States Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). FCPA cases are available at <http://www.sec.gov/spotlight.fcpa/fcpa-cases.shtml>. The researcher nonetheless see the "facilitation payment" case above as destructive as the second case because the officer who collected the bribe and allowed the giver to jump queue did that outside his official mandate. Those who were shortchanged in the queue would lose confidence in the ability of the public service to implement public policy fairly, equitably and justly (ASPA, 2013).

Gift giving corruption in the public service in relation to provision of infrastructural services is of two typologies: petty corruption and grand corruption. Rafi, Lodi and Hasan (2012) agree with this classification and explain further that while grand corruption in this circumstance refers to corruption gifts received by public servants to influence the award to contracts for the provision of infrastructural services to gift givers; petty corruption relates to cash gifts or bribes given to organizational low level staffers to smoothen the progress in the delivery of routine infrastructural services such as electricity, water, waste disposal etc. While agreeing that these two forms of corruption are indeed corrupt practices, the authors, however, took exception to petty corruption because of its elastic effect on the common man in the street who has to be denied access to everyday social services unless he/she spends his/her little earnings.

Similarly, in a qualitative survey research carried out by the authors to assess the categories and severity of bribes in the provision of utility services in Karachi, Pakistan, Rafi, Lodi and Hasan found out that the provision of both legal and illegal utility services attracts giving bribes to public officials but reports that taking bribe to provide illegal utility services is more condemnable than the other because both illegal practice of providing illegal utility services and taking bribe on such practice constitute double jeopardy. Consequently, the authors recommend that leaders should have the political will to do what is right and just, while the government should imbibe the democratic ideals of transparency and accountability.

The argument as to whether virtuous gift giving and corruption-related gift giving in the public service have the same or different effect, is the same argument as to whether

corruption-related gift giving and tipping have the same or different effects. Torfason, Flynn and Kupor's (2012) study found a positive relationship between an altruistic act of tipping and an immoral act of bribery in the public service. In their study "Here is a tip: Pro-social gratuities are linked to corruption", the researchers used "archival cross-national data for 32 countries", and after controlling for some intervening variables such as income disparities, per capita gross domestic product etc., they found out that the more a country practices tipping behavior, the more the rate of corruption in the country. Further follow-up survey studies in Paris reveal evidence that prospective orientation is the basic link between tipping and bribery. Indeed, the study suggests that there is a blurred line between bribery and tipping, and that both are characterized by the same norms.

This research finding is, however, contradicted by the prevailing practice in some US public service. For example, in the *Do It Right Handbook* of the department of Justice of the US which is an adaption from a handbook released by the office of Government Ethics, the *Do It Right Handbook* publishes detailed standards of ethical conduct for employees of the executive branch which permits "unsolicited gifts with a value of \$20 or less" (please see <https://www.justice.gov/jmd/do-it-right>). In fact, "tips" of not more than \$20 are permissible in the US public service ethics policy (Mazar & Aggrawal, 2011). The implication of this study in relation to my research question on policy recommendations favors outright prohibition of any form of gifting, the value of gift notwithstanding.

Though Dion's (2013) study is a treatise on corruption and its related indexes of perceptions measurement; it however makes significant analysis on bribe or gift-related corruption. The paper says that it is more difficult to fight corruption than to fight extortion or bribery/gift giving, because corruption is fundamentally cooperative while bribery and extortion can be understood from the exchange perspective. But between bribery and extortion, the study says that extortion is more adverse. The first step in fighting bribery and immoral gifts is to create awareness about what constitutes bribery and what constitute immoral gifts, because while bribery is expressly illegal, gifts are legal unless otherwise stated (Dion, 2013). The author recommends that citizens from a background where gift giving is permissible on cultural ground should be made to know when gift giving crosses the boundaries of cultural practice in that bribery and gifting are culturally and historically provoked. This ethical education is critical in that anti-corruption legislations should be enforced only when people are reasonably educated to be able to appreciate the real and clear distinction between what is customary gifts and what is gift-related to bribe (Dion, 2013). The above treatise from Dion emphasizes one point, that is, general creation of awareness on gift giving restrictions in the public service so that people may be aware of its prohibition and repercussions.

The inescapability of innocuous act of tipping or virtuous gift giving in the public service as being positively correlated to corruption is informed by the social compact of reciprocity which, by its human nature, concomitantly corrodes ethical behavior (Hartman & Ramamoorti, 2016). Human beings have obligations to repay gifts and favors because our ancestors learned to share and care for each other "in an honored

network of obligations” (Leakey & Lewin, 1977). Social anthropologists refer to this practice as “web of indebtedness”, and those who receive gifts and fail to give back are vilified and referred to as “moochers”, “free riders” and even “Social loafers” (Hartman and Ramomoorti, 2016, p. 44).

Hartman & Romomorti states that political corruption appears to be the most pervasive type of corruption in the public sector. A vendor presenting a “packaged” cash to a government official on the first meeting will be rejected and embarrassed because corruption process is deliberately slow and planned; but when the internalization process is completed, the corruption goes on as a routine (Abramott, 2011). In terms of prevention and deterrence approaches, Hartman and Romomorti recommend that beyond stringent regulations, there should be a mechanism for “perceptions of detection” of double standard so that even when a “big man” commits double-standards and circumvents the law, people should be aware that he played double standard and thus impugn on his reputational value in order to deter him from such act in future.

In summary, the above reviewed literature on gift giving regulations, bribery and corruption in the public service presents the public service as the nerve center of government activities whose officials are the repository of peoples' trust and confidence. To live up to the expectations of their revered office, public servants are to implement public policy objectively and without falling prey to undue influence. The "cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service" is viewed as an unfortunate opportunity or an alibi for corruption because gift giving is governed by the norms of exchange which demands reciprocity. At this juncture, it has become important to look at

the reviewed literature on public policy, governance, and civil society organizations in relation to the "cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service".

### **Public Policy, Governance and Civil Society Organizations**

This review is further divided into two parts: public policy literature and governance or civil society organizations' literature. Let us look at the first part.

#### **Public policy and Gift giving**

One of the research questions this study seeks to answer concerns the policy recommendations to address issues that may be associated with gift giving in the public service. Emery, Mulder and Frewer (2015) appear to have provided a guide in this desired policy options. In a case study on "Maximizing the policy impacts of public Engagement: A European study", the authors used a simple model to ferret out information based on a semi structured interviews conducted with policy makers and public engagement professionals. The study reports that policy processes constitute barriers to identifying policy impacts from policy engagement (PE). The study, therefore, recommends that political institutions should adopt a strategic formal procedure for monitoring receptiveness of policy initiatives by policy engagement (PE) practitioners so as to be guided with the evidence of such interface in decision-making considerations. The thesis of this research work is an emphasis on the desire to include the mass publics in the policy making processes since they are the rightful owners of policies. This is exactly what this study hopes to achieve. Doing this brings about transparency, trust and confidence in policy formulation and implementation (Emery et al., 2015). This is also a

further elucidation of the central theme of the policy feedback theory of Mettler and SoRelle (2014).

The lesson from the study is that policy initiatives on gift giving in the public service should be a product of civic engagement between policy makers and public engagement practitioners. Lasswell (1971) reinforced this link when he argued that the multi-disciplinary nature of the field of public policy demands that a workaday student conducting research in the field should be able to asks questions about policy characteristics, policy analysis and policy science; policy analysis and social sciences, theories and extant models of policy analysis, the policy process and its actors, and public policy determinants, evaluation and problems of public policy. This holistic approach is the best way to involve all actors in the policy process in fathoming appropriate policy options to address identified problems (Lasswell, 1971).

Magbaelo (2016) historically analyzed policy reforms in the Nigeria's Federal Civil Service from the colonial through post colonial era, and concludes that more responsive policy reforms are needed to fast-track development. However, the analysis centered more on the reform initiatives between 1999 when Nigeria embraced full scale civilian democracy till present. The author adopted the definition of reform as advanced by the Abuja Bureau of Public Service Reforms (2005): "a planned and systematic intervention aimed at producing a fundamental change involving innovation, modernization and attitudinal orientation in terms of values and service delivery" (p. 5). The study discussed problems militating against the federal civil service of Nigeria such as dysfunctional workforce, lack of proper succession planning, among others. However,



the one that concerns this study most is wearing-away of public service values. These values were enumerated as “selflessness, integrity, loyalty, professionalism, transparency, accountability, discipline, neutrality, impartiality and patriotism” (p.78). He specifically bemoans the erosion of values of integrity in the public service and calls on the relevant policy makers to initiate a process of ethical rebirth and realism in the public service. From a theoretical perspective and empirical explanations, Ijewereme (2015), did a yeoman’s job at examining the anatomy of corruption in the Nigerian public sector. He notes that while bribery or corruption-related gift giving lowers the integrity of the public servants, corruption takes a wider meaning to include all forms of abuse of public office for personal gain. The author listed many forms and shapes in which political corruption is manifested in Nigeria with a gratification or gift giving taking a premier position.

These are:

acceptance of gratification; succumbing to inducement and undue influence; embezzlement; conflict of interests, for example, the award of contracts by public office holders to cronies, family members, and personally held companies; bribery; fraud; nepotism and tribalism in recruitment or appointment, promotion; kickback on contract; rigging of elections; misappropriation and conversion of public funds for personal gains; procurement scam; leaking tender information to friends and relations; diversion and misappropriation of funds through manipulation or falsification of financial records; payment for favorable judicial decisions, and so on. (Ijewereme, 2013; Waziri, 2010)

Ijewereme further reported that policy initiatives against bribery and corruption in Nigeria's public sector has witnessed serial failures due to lack of political will to initiate stringent policy and lack of political will to implement it. Fortunately, the global anti-corruption legal framework has been revitalized in the last 20 years, and remarkable improvement against the corruption menace, especially in the public service, has been witnessed at both the international and regional frontiers (Wouters, Ryngaert & Cloots, 2013). The authors however regretted that the African Union's (AU) convention against corruption (of which Nigeria is a signatory) is presently not supported by any concrete mechanism for monitoring and evaluation and consequently called for policy retooling.

Wouters, Ryngaert and Cloots advise policy implementers in the developing countries to go beyond criminal prosecution of corrupt offenders to sensitize the citizenry to be morally armed to endanger the reputation of the culprits of corruption in the court of public opinion so as to serve as deterrent to others, adding that "incorruptible governments can only be constructed by using incorruptible citizens as their bricks and mortar" (p. 279). The advice became necessary because while the United States Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA); the UK Bribery Act (UKBA) 2010 and other extant regulations in most of the leading economies of the world criminalize gift giving in the public service to mean the same thing as, and having equal weight with, bribery and corruption, most developing countries of the world including Nigeria practice the opposite (Wouters, Ryngaert & Cloots, 2013). This is evident from their scholarly work "Tour d' Horizon" of the recent global legal framework against corruption where they dedicated Part IV of the article to the discussion on "cultural gift giving practices" in the

public service. They perceive cultural gift giving in the public service as an easy channel to corruption.

So far, the review of literature has predominantly focused on using appropriate policy regulations to fight corruption-related gift giving in the public sector. However, Krambia-Kapardis (2014) reports otherwise. In her study on “perceptions of political corruption as a function of legislation”, the author set out to determine whether countries that have comprehensive anti-corruption legislation are more likely to have lower corruption perceptions than countries that do not have such elaborate legislation. Relying on secondary data produced by the “EU DG Home” an appointed corruption country experts, the researcher used the Corruption Perceptions Index developed by the Transparency International (TI) to carry out a correlation analysis between these variables of legislation and the Corruption Perceptions. The findings showed that there is no correlation between elaborate anti-corruption legislation and corruption perceptions of a country, except on asset disclosure. This agrees with the recommendation of Ijewereme (2013) that corruption in the public service cannot be addressed by promulgating elaborate policies alone; the political will to do the right thing is fundamentally important.

Nicholson-Crotty and Carley's (2016) study is also an interesting treatise on the policy process. The authors corroborated Marc's (1993) characterization of public policy as one involving choice from several alternatives; proposed courses of actions or projected decisions; goal-oriented towards the attainment of necessary ends; responses to real challenges and environmental pressures; and a framework to guide course-setting

actions for present or future attainment of desired objectives. In this study, Nicholson-Crotty & Carley tested hypotheses based on the argument that a part of policy learning process would likely include the capacity to evaluate implementation of an innovation, because those who would like to adopt the innovation in their own environment would likely ask two questions: “Was the policy effective in other states that adopted it”, and “can we make the policy work for us?”. Using a “dyad analysis of renewable portfolio standards in American States between 1997 and 2009”, the authors found out that “shared implementation environments among jurisdiction help determine the impact that information about policy effectiveness has on adoption decisions”. This implies that policy learning practices may be a necessary element gain-able from concern about policy implementation.

It is also important to answer the question as to what extent does global corruption performance indices play a role in fighting corruption in the public service. Hansen (2012) indicates that corruption performance indices are being used by public sectors across the globe as a standard to arrive at what constitutes global acceptable social practices. Hansen relied on studies on organizational theory, surveillance and governmentality to analyze the role of performance indices in building equivalent and administrable performance indicators for global efforts in fighting corruption. Through communication and surveillance, the indices determine what constitutes corruption and anti-corruption indices (Hansen, 2012). The study states that global performance indices contribute to international governance literatures by standardizing units of scale, calculations, measurements, benchmarking and ranking of public sector practices.

Ranking a given public sector high or low in a global performance scaling can change the way the public perceives such public sector (Gullies, 2010).

As Gullies explained, Transparency International, a worldwide civil society organization championing the fight against corruption, adopted the following yardstick for determining the corruption perceptions of a country: freedom of information, access to information on public expenditures, standards of integrity for public officials, and independence of the judiciary. Using these yardsticks, the global organization rated Nigeria as a very corrupt country between 1996 and 2015 as Table 1 below shows:

Table 1

*Transparency International (TI) Corruption Perceptions Index Rankings for Nigeria from 1996 to 2016*

<u>Year</u>	<u>Rankings</u>
1996	54 of 54
1997	52 of 52
1998	81 of 85
1999	98 of 99
2000	90 of 90
2001	90 of 91
2002	101 of 102
2003	132 of 133
2004	144 of 146
2005	152 of 158
2006	150 of 163
2007	32 of 147
2008	121 of 150
2009	130 of 150
2010	134 of 178
2011	143 of 183
2012	139 of 176
2013	144 of 177
2014	136 of 175
2015	136 of 168
2016	136 of 176

Note. Adapted from Eme and Okoh (2011, pp. 57-58), and modified to accommodate 2015 and 2016 data.

In 96.7 % of articles reviewed by Trawfimow and Finlay (1996) on the predictors of behavioral intentions in the workplace, attitude was revealed as the most prevalent variable. Then, to what extent do the variables of organizational level (i.e. one's cadre in an organization), and level of education constitute a significant influence on attitudes towards giving and accepting gifts in exchange for favors or benefits in the public sector? Perryer and Isahuridu (2013) provide answer to this question through their study which employed hierarchical regression analysis to establish that "organizational level and education positively influence attitudes to accepting gifts, while only education influences attitude to giving gifts. The study also reveals that there is a positive correlation between higher organizational level and higher ethical attitudes. The study equally indicated that employees with tertiary education background are likely to possess higher ethical values in relation to giving and receiving gifts in the public sector than employees with no tertiary education background. The result of this study may have implication for policy administrators in terms of recruitment and posting of staff to gift giving and receiving vulnerable sections or departments of an organization, as well as in training and development of the workforce.

However, beyond Perryer and Isahuridu's (2013) variables of higher educational attainment and low educational attainment as predictors of ethicality or otherwise of public servants, Bamidele, Olaniyan and Ayodele (2016) added ethnic politics is an additional variable that promote unethical behaviors in Nigerian public service. In their qualitative ethnography, Bamidele, Olaniyan and Ayodele note that while Nigerian

culture abhors corruption, yet culture is used in Nigeria as a means of promoting corruption and also as a means of fighting the menace. The study traces the origin of Nigeria from the 1914 amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates, leading to the emergence of a new Nigeria built on a tripod of three clusters. The report states that squabbles among the clusters lead to tension and crisis in form of cut-throat competition, anxiety, mutual suspicion, rancor and bickering.

The implication of this seemingly forced unity is that whenever a person is appointed into a public office, he/she works to maximize benefits for his/her ethnic nationality at the expense of ethics and good conscience (Onuogu, 2002). Onuogu further states that a public officer is taught how to “steal” from the common coffers for the selfish interest of his/her ethnic origin. The author calls for policy initiative that would lead to value re-orientation and stringent rules and regulations guiding corruption in the public service.

In a seemingly direct response to the view that public sector gifting compromises the honesty of the public servants (Schultz, 2010), the International Association of Chiefs of Police Law Enforcement Code of Conduct prohibitively states: “I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force, or violence and never accepting gratuities” (2004, p. 45). However, Prenzler and Beckley’s (2013) qualitative case study analyzed three high-status cases involving gift giving to police in Australia and England. The study tracked the official investigation of the cases, and revealed how, in two of the cases that “gift giving and acceptance” weakened public trust and confidence in the neutrality of the police, and how

incompetent leadership and unethically tolerant policies facilitated the corrupt practices. Consequently, the authors recommended that the police authorities should evolve a stringent policy guideline on gratuities (gifts and benefits) which will be buoyed up by the establishment of a compliance management system and effective and efficient leadership.

The predictive correlation research design of Kumasey, Bawole and Hossain (2017) is significant in shedding light on the necessity of code of ethics in mitigating gift giving corruption in the public service. In their study of “Organizational Commitment of Public Service employees in Ghana: Do codes of ethics matter?”, Kumasey, et al. used “correlation, regression and descriptive statistics” to analyze 228 participants recruited through a convenient sampling technique and chosen from public service organizations in “Greater Accra Region of Ghana”. The study particularly focused on the relationship between codes of ethics in public service organizations and employees’ organizational commitment. The result shows that “codes of ethics significantly and positively predicted employee organizational commitment including affective, normative, and continuance commitment”. Discernible from this finding is that organizational commitment to implementing a regime of code of ethics is a disincentive to gift giving corruption in the public service. The authors explained code of ethics to mean organizational policy regulation, known to the employees, implemented impartially, and meant to enlighten the workers and the public about the mission and vision of the organization, its ethical climate and the imperative of the commitment of employees to imbibe the ethical requirements by heart and follow through its implementation.



Martineau (2016) attempted to reconcile the conflicting recommendations on suitable policy mechanism to address the corrupting tendencies of public sector gifting. The conflicting recommendations are: monetary value limits or disclosure threshold, and outright prohibition of gifting and acceptance in the public sector. The author analytically reports that “reducing the conflict of interest laws for public officials across all jurisdictions, and the various codes of conduct and corporate policies on gifts and hospitality for public sector employees to one set of rule is impossible” (p. 3). Consequently the author recommends that the approach to ensure hitch-fire compliance is “modesty as the best policy”, i.e. to keep any gifts or hospitality as reticent as possible. The author recommends the use of gift items such as pens, notepads, and such related modest offers that are not likely to compromise the integrity of the public servants.

However, Waldo (1998) came up with another formula for coping with ethical dilemmas. Taking a cue from the definition of ethics as the “study of values and how to define right and wrong” (Menzel, 1999, Van Wart, 1996), Waldo advanced ethical obligations which should guide the conduct of public servants.

One of the streams of policy feedback research is the power of groups (Mettler & SoRelle, 2014). It is the belief of this theoretical framework that organized groups and associations have significant influence on the forms and shapes of policy outcomes. However, available research evidence contradicts this claim. One of such research evidence is Sebola’s (2016) study which investigated the processes through which public engagement or participation is relevant in south-Africa’s policy-making, using the

“Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act 92 of 1996, the Abolition of Capital Punishment Policy, and Civil Union Act 17 of 2006 as case studies.

The report reveals that despite massive protests against the three aforementioned Acts of the parliament, they were adopted, thus negating the democratic principle that policy-making thrives on the centrality of the citizens and not the elites (Mettler & Soss, 2004). Even though the study did not explain the method through which it reached its conclusions (except mere analysis of the size and dimensions of the protestations), the research work is nonetheless relevant in understanding the influence of the elites in the policy process.

Factors of public policy effectiveness have also been researched by Stucke (2014). The researcher reviewed the case of “US Sentencing Commission’s Organizational Guidelines” of 1991 which equips firms with financial encouragement to institute an effectual ethics and compliance program. For over two decades, the “Guidelines” has encouraged firms with financial gifts to evolve an ethical compliance program of their respective organizations (Stucke, 2014). Unfortunately, the policy emphasizes extrinsic, incentive-based approach to the use of policy to effect ethical reform (Marc, 1993). In order to meet the conditions of the “Guidelines”, the firms rather pay attention to conforming to documentation requirements which is the primary concern of the “Guidelines” as against ethics education and inculcation of values to their employees (the intrinsic values of the reform) (Stucke, 2014). The result was that while the firms did well in documenting ethics compliance programs, many of their employees are found culpably bridging ethical regulations (Stucke, 2014) and are thus prosecuted by

the courts and Department of Justice (DOJ). The study, therefore, recommends that policy effectiveness will be better attained when an organization's core ethical values and routine operations are well aligned and both embedded into organizational ethical leadership and culture.

It is also interesting to note that there is a positive relationship between the use of research studies for policy work and one's possession of tertiary education certificate (Newman, 2014). To clarify policy making process, Lasswell (1956) and Pierson (1993) categorize the processes into three basic stages; namely: policy formulation, policy implementation and feedback or evaluation (please see figure 1below):

*Figure 1. Policy Making Process*

Note: Researcher's Schematic representation of policy making process, 2017

Newman (2014) investigated the characteristics of two classes of employees in the Australian public service – those who declare that they use research in the policy

work and those who state that they do not. Through a survey study of 2,084 public servants from both state and national levels between 2011 and 2013, tests of significance were conducted in participants' personal and professional statistics against attitudes towards the use of research in policy work. The result suggests that "Policy workers who use academic research are quite aligned with academics in that they often than not hold advanced University degrees and have work experience in the academic world" as against those who do not have such academic background. The implication of this finding is that the target audience of a policy research such as mine should be the well educated and enlightened public servants.

Lack of policy research to guide implementation of government program showed its negative consequences in the transition of the Chinese economy from central planning to a market-driven economy through the introduction of Deng Xiaoping's revolutionary "opening up policy" some 30years ago. Huang and Rice's (2012) study which relied on secondary data collected by World Bank's "investment climate survey" (2003) reveals that there is a close relationship between firm's propensity towards openness and increased, unintended incidences of bribery and corruption. The report states that the transition has also increased economic growth as well as cooperation, coordination and collaboration among firms.

However, Tam (2002) reports that since the transition to market-driven economy, there has been a predominance of unethical business practices and unmitigated corruption in the Chinese business environment as a result of cut-throat competition. He explains that firms pay bribe in an effort to surmount undue bureaucratic bottlenecks and

dysfunctional institutional supports which stand in the way of the firms' progress. This means that the introduction of new policy agenda must take into consideration an inbuilt mechanism to mitigate the unintended consequences of the new policy agenda, a point that underscores the value of policy research.

In summary, the above reviewed literature on public policy within the context of gift giving x-rayed the role of public policy in regulating gift giving in the public service: why the policies are formulated?; how are they determined?; what informs why policy A is chosen in preference to policy B?, and what are the policy inputs and outcomes?. Gift giving policy regulations across borders were analyzed along with emerging recommendations. Literature relating to "governance and civil society organizations" will now be examined.

### **Governance and Civil Society Organizations.**

Good governance is a highly priced asset of any nation because it is the gateway to effectiveness in the implementation of public policy. In an effort to ensure effective service delivery and avoid market failure in the public sector, many management experts have come up with a number of research-based ideas on management practices that can achieve this result. One of such efforts came from Ammonds (1995; 2002). In his books: *Accountability for performance: Measurement and monitoring in local government*, and *Performance measurement and managerial thinking*, the author discusses the high points of performance measurement in the public sector. He believes that the red-tape and all the low points associated with the normal bureaucratic practices including ethical concerns can be overcome with a performance or outcome-based management.

Performance measurement simply means “productivity, work measurement, and effectiveness” (Ammonds, 2002, p. 346). The advantages of this practice are identified as good decision-making, performance evaluation, accountability, service delivery, enhanced public service performance, public participation, and advancement in civic discourse. Typologies of performance measurement indicators include input indicators, output or workload indicators, outcome or effectiveness indicators, productivity indicators, among others (Ammonds, 2002). The emphasis is on achievement of result. Even though this literature is relevant in illuminating the research interest, it is my view that excessive focus on efficiency threatens social contract imperatives and makes public service too mercantile in outlook.

In his analysis of the questions of ethics in public sector management using Hong Kong as a case study, Luk reports that ethics is creating so much worry and tension in the public sector management. To maintain the integrity of the public servants, the author recommends for the institutionalization of ethics and integrity management practices. An ethical public servant is desirable and will, all things being equal, be involved in promoting an ethical organization, advancing professional excellence, safeguarding public interest, upholding the constitution and extant laws of the land, encouraging democratic participation in public affairs, and manifesting personal integrity (Luk, 2012; ASPA, 2013). After a thorough review of the upsurge of ethical issues in public administration such as the Hong Kong example of ethical practices, ethics prevention and enlightenment, sanctions for ethical violations, ethical dilemmas and associated problems, etc, the author states that evidence supports that employing a range of

approaches by indigenous officials increases trust and confidence. Consequently, the author recommends that the Hong Kong public sector should adopt a three-pronged strategy of “ethical leadership, ethical training, and ethics legislation” (p. 371). An ethical public service is a precursor for any successful policy implementation (Cox, Buck & Morgan, 1991).

The transformation of the public service into a “new public service” derived from the new public management model has continued to attract research interest with a view to establishing its implication on ethics and public service delivery as well as democratic governance. Park and Perry (2013) used General Social Survey (GSS) to explore this research agenda. The findings appear to allay the fears of Elcock (2012) that the new paradigm may alter work attitudes especially as they relate to ethics and public service delivery.

Park and Perry suggest that there are no significant attitudinal differences between traditional public servants (bureaucrats) and the new model public servants, including for-profit public servants. One of the practical applications of the new public service model is privatization and outsourcing or contracting out some of the functions of the public service. The goal is calculated to “alter incentive structures of employees and thus increase efficiency and productivity in the new governance” (Salamon, 2002, p.17), but Park & Perry’s research findings explain that for-profit workers to whom provision of public services are out-sourced are not significantly different from the traditional public servants both in perceptions and attitudes to work. Public policy making on ethics of gift giving in the public service should, therefore, take into consideration the fact that both the

New Public Management paradigm and the traditional public service model have their various merits and demerits; the difference only lies with the quality of leadership (Early, 2012).

It does appear that the way leaders/managers treat their workers can affect their attitudinal disposition towards ethical practice and the objective performance of their official duties. In their review of previous studies on workplace deviant behavior, Alias, Roziah, Ismail and Buhaman (2013) found three probable groups of “workplace deviant behavior determinators” among the workforce. These include “individual-related factors, organizational-related factors, and work-related factors” while “job satisfaction” was identified as an intervening variable. Of these factors, the authors singled out organizational-related factors as responsible for ethical failure in a workplace. Drawing analogy from Blau’s (1986) social exchange theory, the researchers surmised that organizational workers tend to reciprocate their perceptions of organizational unfair treatment, invidious ethical condition, and absence of support and trust from the organization with destructive behaviors, including unwholesome work attitudes and corruption. To mitigate this problem, the report called on human resources managers to institutionalize ethics in their organization as a means of countering negative behaviors, improve the image of the organizations and sustain the loyalty and serviceability of staff.

***Civil society organizations and the policy process.***

The potentials of the civil society organizations to impact policy making in a given environment has attracted profound research interests in the social and behavioral sciences. This plethora of studies on civil society organizations and their role in the



policy process seek answers to what policy demands the CSOs make; what policy decisions are arrived at as a result of their influence, what policy statements are made in form of statutes, orders, court rulings, decrees etc. at the instance of the CSOs; what policy outputs in terms of things implemented pursuant to policy decisions at the instance of the CSOs, and what policy outcomes (intended and unintended consequences) arose as a result of policy related activities of the CSOs? (Mettler & Soss, 2004).

Ohemeng (2015) made an interesting contribution in this regard by examining the impact of civil society organizations (Think Tanks) on policy outcomes in Ghana. The study reported that Think Tanks (CSOs,) impact democratic process and good governance, economic management and development, and policy outcomes through mission-oriented research (agenda setting, policy papers, agenda reinforcement reports, policy development); capturing policy actors, and leveraging on the mass media. The perceptions of CSOs on the research agenda of this study is better illuminated schematically. Figure 2 below represents CSOs and policy influence process.

*Figure 2. CSOs and Policy Influence Process*

Note. Researcher's Schematic Representation of the CSOs and the Policy Process (2017).

Whether the perceptions of the CSOs on the "cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants", can inform the opinions of the policy makers or not is an important area of concern in Black, Wedeking, Owens and Wohfarth's (2016) study bordering on whether public opinion can influence supreme court justices to modify the content of their judgment, the findings show that justices write unambiguous judgments when public opinion are at variance with theirs which suggests that public opinions influence judgment of the justices. To arrive at the result of his study, the researcher developed a "novel measure of public opinion clarity based on multifaceted textual readability scores" which were authenticated by engaging human raters.

While pairing an individual-level sample of Supreme Court cases with issue-specific public opinion polls, the study scrutinized "aggregate time series analysis of the influence of public mood on the subject-matter in order to arrive at the result. The study states that when supreme court's decision is at variance with the currency of public opinion, justices are worried about the court losing public goodwill and support, hence they are likely to do two things, one, to bring the content of their rulings nearer to public sentiment by seeking ideological goals (Epstein & Knight, 1998) and or two, pursue policy goals while lessening the possibility of losing public goodwill and support.

Moon (2016) sheds light on the role of the NGOs or public opinion in informing a given policy agenda. The author states that the Non Government Organizations (NGOs) of which Civil Society Organizations are a part in the policy process. The author examined the roles played by the South Korean NGOs in providing aid to South Korean

between 1995 and 2012. Using secondary data from reliable sources, the study reported that the potency of the NGOs to influence governance in a given setting is dependent on the extent of democratization or un-democratization of the government; explaining that democracy promotes NGOs' influence on governance while lack of democracy negates the influence. The report says that for NGOs to be able to exert such influence on governance, they have to be autonomous, transparent and accountable in their operations and management; they have to sustain their research, education and advocacy roles, and tenable means of funding.

Rukutiene's (2014) study yield similar result with that of Moon. In his own analysis of the role of the civil society organizations in the "EU's Eastern Partnership governance and networking processes", Rukutiene reports the active, and significantly positive participation of the CSOs in "most stages and interaction modes of the EU's relations with the Eastern partnership countries", a process the researcher says is predictive of the conditions under which global governance in the Eastern neighborhood areas would emerge.

The researcher applied a qualitative tradition of inquiry to seek variations of "bilateral and multilateral frameworks of the EU's neighborhood policy, hierarchical and network governance institutional setting; and the civil society's role in it". The study applied documents' analysis and semi-structured qualitative interview as its methodological thrust. 37 interviews were conducted in phases in 2011, 2012, and 2014 among EEAS, the European Commission, the European Parliament, diplomats representing Member States, and Civil Society Forum.

The findings show that civil society organizations are “important players for the success of the policy from the start of the European neighborhood policy creation”. This evidence-based report reinforces my confidence in the ability of the CSOs to perceptively inform policy makers on the appropriateness or otherwise of the subsisting policy instrument on the culturally informed practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants in a particular territory in Nigeria. Debra and Graham (2015) also produced empirical evidence to show that the civil society organizations were in fact the masterminds that raised awareness about the need for Ghanaian government to steer the country away from a resource curse, noting that the discovery and production of oil in commercial quantities in Ghana in 2011 should not be an end in itself but only a means to an end. The paper reported that the civil society forum on oil and gas fought and indeed won the war for creation of policy regulations that ensured transparency and accountability in the governance of the oil sector. Guided by the social capital theory, which is ideal for analyzing stakeholder modes in community development (Grant, 2001), purposive sample of 50 participants was used as key informants to provide data on the roles played by the CSOs in achieving transparency and accountability in the oil sector. Prominent theme that emerged from the data is that “CSOs’ inputs in the oil and gas legislations have not only enhanced the quality of laws passed but also ensured that government would obtain the best for the people of Ghana” (p. 30).

Similarly, the events of the 2001 through 2015 witnessed the CSOs’ fight against inequalities and campaign for minimum wage which eventually became a reality in UK in 2015. A living wage which reflects local cost of living and the actual cost of life was

achieved in UK through the efforts of the CSOs and it presently stands at \$8.25 for those living inside London and \$9.40 for those living inside London (Wills & Linneker, 2014). Relying on Edwards' (2010) *Three-fold model of civil society* as “associational life, the good society, and the public sphere”, Bunyan (2016) says the CSOs are promoters of social justice and radical democratic politics. Premised on the same Edwards' model, Chambers (2003) graphically presents the CSOs as agents of social change who fight inequalities in the system. He says: “. . . it is the fate of human beings to exist in-between the world as it is and the world as it should be. Reflective people of conscience (the CSOs) are constantly and painfully aware of the gap between our so-called values. . . the tension between the two worlds is the root of radical action for justice and democracy” (Chambers, 2003, p. 29) (emphasis, mine).

Policy formulation and implementation is a tripartite activity among the government, the civil society or NGOs, and the citizens (Marshal, 2015). In a study meant to capture “the complexity of public policy formulation and implementation in the commonwealth Caribbean”, Marshal collected data from focus groups in 8 Caribbean countries between 2010 and 2012 based on who initiates public policy, the role of research or evidence in policy formulation, implementation challenges and whether routine evaluation of policy processes is undertaken. One outstanding finding of the study is that policy formulation and implementation is a tripartite activity among the government, the civil society or NGOs, and the citizens of Caribbean. This underscores the special place of the CSOs in the policy process, and this is significant for this study since public policy theory is at the heart of the problem statement of the present study.

The recommendation of Moon's (2016) study that the civil society organizations should be autonomous, transparent and accountable in their operations and management, and should have a sustainable means of funding in order to continue to play the role of the "Fourth Estate of the Realm" appears to have gained empirical support. Williamson & Rodd (2016) used in-depth interviews to collect quantitative data to explore the "advocacy and service delivery role of the CSOs working in Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) prevention and mitigation" in Nigeria in April 2012. The survey results showed that the CSOs were funded by external sources and consequently, the CSOs' advocacy drive centered on achieving the goal of the funder, that is, "community mobilization related to behavior change in the areas of peer education which witnessed 54.9% of the CSOs, as well as rallies with a score of 58.2% of the CSOs with no attention paid to changing government policies. Further in-depth interview revealed the influence of donors and government in restricting the CSOs to the agreed areas of attention. The study concluded that donors and international organizations conceive CSOs as "a political" and not independent influencers of public policies.

On the contrary, when the CSOs are autonomous in their funding and operations, they function as independent opinion molders. Empirical evidence from Vaddiraju (2014) supports the notion. In fact, the CSOs can impact the government and the polity through conciliatory and confrontational means. In his case study of the CSOs, the state and public policy in South India, the author analyzed two CSOs, one, Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency (MYRADA), and two, Center for World Solidarity (CWS) against the background of their influences on public policy and governance. The projects

embarked upon by MYRADA included resettlement of Tibetan refugees and building self-help groups for rural women. The two projects were reported to be successful and MYRADA relationship with government was said to be conciliatory.

The center for World Solidarity (CWS) worked on policy change and governance processes. It has prominent solidarity organizations on the areas of water support services, Agriculture, and Forestry. In particular, the advocacy effort of the CWS in promoting organic agriculture and sale of organic produce at reduced prices was effective to the extent that the CWS had a buy-in from the public. Consequently the government was “blackmailed” to implement the program. The analysis presented the conciliatory and adversarial influences. The study states that civil society organizations are a major stakeholder in the governance process and they contribute to deepening democracy and good governance in India.

### **Integrity of Public Servants**

P.N.O. Ejiofor (1985) delivered a lecture in the lecture series organized by Imo State Government, Nigeria. The lecture is not published in any academic-cum-professional journal but the content of the lecture published in pamphlet form remains a rich academic and professional administrator’s delight then as it is today. Titled “Performance of our Organizations – Why they Fail?”, the author discussed the “integrity factor” as one of the reasons why public organizations fail. In his analysis, Ejiofor explained that it is not that the rules are not detailed; it is not that laws are not just; it is not that traditions are not quaint; it is not that the plans are not sound; he said all these

fail on the altar of desecrated integrity. To avoid distortion, I wish to produce his thesis on integrity verbatim:

No plan no matter how sound cannot be thwarted...; No rule no matter how intricate cannot be twisted...; No law no matter how well drafted cannot be circumvented...; No tradition no matter how viable cannot be grounded...; and no organization no matter how viable cannot be run down by well placed men of questionable integrity (p. 5).

The thesis of the literature is that the factor of integrity is imperative in organizational success. Integrity factor in itself is a significant factor of leadership effectiveness (Northouse, 2013), because the success or otherwise of an organization in the context of maintaining a productive workforce with high degree of integrity has a lot to do with how the leadership motivates its employees. Guillen, Ferrero and Hoffman (2015), in their analysis of the taxonomy of motivation, arrived at the conclusion that relying only the classical and popular theories of employee motivation without the inclusion of the ethical and spiritual elements of motivation represents a model which sees a worker as “self-interested, amoral, non-spiritual” (p. 803) and without integrity. A taxonomy of motivation which excludes these two important variables (ethical and spiritual) is incomplete and may most likely fail to make use of the best of workers’ integrity traits (Argandona, 2011).

After Guillen, Ferrero & Hoffman reviewed the seven major theories of motivation: “Motives and Needs, Expectancy Theory, Equity Theory, Goal-Setting, Cognitive Evaluation Theory, Work Design and Reinforcement Theory” (p. 804) and the



four classical theoretical taxonomies represented by Maslow, McClelland, Herzberg and Alderfer, the authors reached the conclusion that these approaches to motives and needs de-emphasized the nobility of the human character. The authors, therefore, recommend including the ethical and spiritual motivation in the taxonomies so as to inculcate the virtues of integrity.

As one of the independent variables of this study, “integrity” as a concept has been discussed elaborately in management and business ethics literature as a salient personality trait desired for leadership and managerial effectiveness. Monga’s (2016) study sought to obtain a unified conceptual framework of "integrity" which he said became necessary because “definitional ambiguities and uncertainties make integrity a desired and contested topic in management literature and many authors have called for a satisfactory unifying perspective on this integral aspect of business ethics” (Abstract). To address the issue, Monga provides an integrated conceptual framework of “integrity”. The normative view of integrity as a constituent of morality and ethics, and the objectivist view of “integrity” as morally and ethically neutral expression, were analyzed and reconciled, including the extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions of integrity. Maak (2008) itemized 7 important prerequisite conditions for integrity: “Commitment, conduct, content, context, consistency, coherence, and continuity”. (p. 353-368). Guided by this, the author listed the intrinsic dimensions of integrity as “commitment to sound moral principles and authenticity or being true to oneself or coherence”; while the extrinsic dimensions include “consistency of words and actions, consistency in adversity, context, continuity, conduct, and content. The study conclusively surmised that “commitment to sound moral

principles and values is a prerequisite to achieve the state of integrity”. Figure 3 below represents integrity conceptual integration.

*Figure 3. Integrated Conceptual Framework of Integrity*

Note: Researcher’s schematic representation of the integrated framework of integrity analyzed from Monga, M. (2016). Integrity and its antecedent: A unified conceptual framework of integrity. *The Journal of Developing Areas* (5<sup>th</sup>eds.); Special Issue on Kuala Lumpur Conference held in November, 2015.

Integrity is a precondition for successful implementation of public policy in an equitable, fair, justifiable and justice-able manner; hence policy administrators have been exposing their workforce to a number of integrity training programs and evaluations. Unfortunately, most of these integrity training evaluation methods merely rely on satisfaction or reaction surveys using “Kirkpatrick Scale” (1998), which is level 1 evaluation and which does not measure direct impact to prove that the training achieved

its set objectives. To fill this gap, Pallai and Gregor (2016) used a mixed methods research approach to validate training effectiveness of Level 2 Scale. The questionnaire instrument addressed participants' attitude towards the fight against corruption. Using a "quasi-experimental, nonrandomized pre-post quantitative evaluation design", where 26 trainers were employed to train 6,692 and 670 civil servants, respectively for one-day stretch and three-day stretch of identical content and methodology program, the authors assessed public ethics and integrity trainings implemented in Hungary between 2013 and 2015. The goal of the training was to "boost public ethics and initiate a model of public integrity management" in Hungarian Civil Service. The result of the study showed that participants' responses compared before and after training, witnessed significant change in their knowledge and attitudes towards the role of integrity in the successful implementation of public policy.

Through a survey data subjected to factor analysis and partial least squares-structural equation modeling, Shan, Chan, Le, and Hu (2015) probed the effectiveness of strategies employed by the Chinese public construction sector in countering susceptibility to corruption. The researchers established four response strategies, namely; "leadership, rules and regulations, training, and sanctions" (p.1). Factors promoting susceptibility to corruption include lack of transparency, lack of fair-play, unprofessional practice, lack of contract monitoring and regulation, and improper procedural accountabilities (Shan, Chan, Le, & Hu (2015).

On response strategy of leadership, the authors called on leaders to build and develop the values of integrity in the workforce as part of organizational mandate, adding

that leadership style has profound impact on compliance or non compliance to integrity matters. On the response strategy of rules and regulations, the report tasked organizational leaders to implement their anti-corruption policies stringently, fairly, competently, and without fear or favor.

On the response strategy of training, the report called on leaders of organizations to impose training and retraining programs on industry practitioners to imbibe the lessons of the damaging effects of corruption on the integrity of the workers as well as the health of the organization and society. On the response strategy of sanction, the authors advised organizational leaders to impose sanctions for corrupt practices so as to serve as a deterrent to others.

Integrity as a leadership trait is the cornerstone of public service ethics (Cooper, 2012). Researchers in the social and behavioral sciences have dissipated much intellectual energies to seek answers to the questions posed by Scott & Gong (2015): how can administrators “sustain the distinctive values that enable public servants to discern between what is ethically acceptable and what is not?” The answer lies in developing the ethical prospects of the concept of “integrity management” (Hoekstra, Belling & Heide, 2008, p. 211).

In a content analysis of scholarly papers which used cross-regional data to evaluate and explain the characteristic features of varying integrity systems, Scott and Gong identified the centrality of integrity management as being part and parcel of public management, and recommended its application as adopted by the OECD thus: “... attempt to combine modern management practices with the logic of economics while still

retaining the core public service values" (p. 67). The new management paradigm underline results in relation to "value of money" (VFM), to be achieved "through management by objectives, the use of markets and market-type mechanisms, competition, and choice, and devolution to staff through a better matching of authority, responsibility and accountability" (OECD, 1998).

The question of ethics, morality and integrity appears not to be fully answered by the apparent effort to transit from the traditional model of bureaucracy known in public administration to a new model of "public management". Hughes (2012) explains this new model to be a new paradigm shift that emphasizes decentralization, flexibility, client-focused, competition and intense application of market instruments for maximum delivery of goods and services.

In his descriptive analysis of the new model of public management, Elcock (2012) fails to perceive the new model from the prism of OECD (1998). OECD had in 1998 endorsed the model as "devolution to staff through a better matching of authority, responsibility and accountability" (p. 111). However, Elcock accuses this new model of sacrificing the rules and regulations fashioned to fight unwholesome work ethos in the public service on the altar of what Hood (1991) described as the "three Es": "economy, efficiency and effectiveness". Although the emphasis on entrepreneurship has attracted observable gains in terms of innovation, competence and public relations, however, it has also attracted different forms of corruption and erosion of respect for politics in particular and public administration in general (Elcock, 2012). Consequently, "A politics of moral

engagement is not only a more inspiring ideal than a politics of avoidance, it is also a more promising basis for a just society” (Sandel, 2010, p. 269).

Integrity management of our public organizations is the desire of any government that wants to deliver on its mandate. This is in tandem with the objectives of the government of Dutch when it established The Dutch National Integrity Office in 2007. The office published a well-researched book on *Integrity Management in Public Sector*, using the Dutch approach as a case study. Though not a peer-reviewed resource, I consider it to be of immense value to the present study.

Discussing integrity in public administration, the book pointed out that the Dutch government pays much premium on integrity, hence the office of National Integrity is a “wholesome government department for the purpose of advancing professionalism, integrity and quality of public officers” (p. 14). Integrity standards for public servants and relevant regulations are well documented, and where acts of violation are committed, objective integrity investigations are carried out. The integrity management experiment in Dutch has had positive result in Dutch manpower integrity performance (Huberts, 2016). The relevance of the book lies in its recommendation on the use of integrity management to fight unethical practice in the public service, and this is instructive for my study.

### **Themes and Trends Discovered in the Literature Review**

This study seeks to explore the use of policy guideline to govern the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of a particular territory in Nigeria within the context of protecting the reliability of the public sector employees. The literature search and review were guided by the key concepts and variables underpinning the research topic: Perceptions of Unrestricted Gift giving and Integrity of Public Servants in Nigeria. The themes and trends are, one: Gift giving, bribery and corruption in the public service; two, Public policy, governance and civil society organizations, and three, Integrity of public servants. A total of 141 articles, books and Dissertations were reviewed. 45 of them deal with the themes and trends of gift giving, bribery and corruption in the public service, 76 deal with public policy, governance and civil society organizations, and 20 deal with integrity of public servants.

Having completed the review, the selection of themes and trends has aptly illuminated the study including the rationale for the variables and concepts chosen to ground the study. Gift giving, bribery and corruption in the public service is the overarching problem that instigated this study and 45 articles, books and dissertations reviewed empirically established the destructive dimensions of the phenomenon worldwide, especially in the developing countries of which Nigeria is one. The second theme and trend: Public policy, governance and civil society organizations, is a way of asking the same question Mettler and Soss (2004) asked about a decade ago: “What are the consequences of public policy outcomes on democratic citizenship?” (p. 55). 76 articles, books and dissertations reviewed on these theme and trend crystallize the fact

that policy making through civic engagement promotes democracy, good governance and development (Sabatier & Weible, 2014). The final theme and trend (integrity of public servants) had 20 articles, books and dissertation dedicated to reviewing them. The review surmised that it is only on the basis of integrity that public servants can implement public policy effectively.

The review of related literature addressed key concepts and or phenomena under investigation such as public sector gifting, civil society organizations, and integrity of the public officials. The review highlighted significant points. There is a social compact of reciprocity arising from gift giving which affects ethical behavior in the public service (Hartman & Romamoorti, 2016). Gifts are reciprocated as an obligation (Leakey & Lewin, 1977). Some gifts are more harmful than the others (Rafi, Lodi and Hassan, 2012). Gifting in the public service creates an opportunity for corruption (Osipitan, 2014). Public service is the implementation organ of public policies and is guided by a code of ethics (Marshal & Murtala, 2015). To sustain the ethical health of the public service so that public servants would live up to their bidding of maintaining the highest standards of morality, gift giving in the public service should be prohibited (Bello, 2014).

The problem of gift giving corruption in Nigeria is policy-imposed; a situation where gift giving in the public service is generally prohibited, yet allowed unrestrictedly on cultural grounds defeats anti-corruption fight (Makovska & Adams, 2015). Countries such as Nigeria that approve of gift giving in the public service risk being denied of foreign direct investment from UK and US as a result of anti-bribery legislations in the said countries (Yanga, 2014). It is cultural imperialism for a country where gift giving



invokes negative emotions to impose gift giving limitations on countries where gift giving invokes positive emotions (Leisinger, 2015). Ethical universalism is positively correlated to anti-corruption while ethical relativism does not (Napal, 2014). Civil society organizations or NGOs and Think-Tanks are active participants in the policy process and their activities have improved governance (Debra &Graham, 2015; Black, Owen & Wohfarth, 2016; Bamidele, Olaniya & Ayodele, 2016). The virtues of integrity are paramount for an effective, efficient and ethical public service (Monga, 2016; Guillen, Ferrero & Hoftman, 2015).

What remains to be studied is how policies can be effectively used to create collective perspectives to the understanding of the dangers of ethical relativism so that cultural practices that are antithetical to modern day realities can be avoided through collective bargaining, collective vision and collective action.

### **Perceptions of Integrity Related to Corruption in Public Services**

The central research question of this study sought answers to the perceptions about integrity and corruption in the public service in relation to the practice of unrestricted gift giving; while the sub questions border about how the civil society organizations would address issues related to gift giving in the public service. All scholarly works selected for this study were responsive to answering the research questions, and illuminating the variables/concepts and or the phenomena of interest.

On the central questions of the study, the perceptions about integrity and corruption in the face of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service is generally negative. Etzioni (2014) condemns bribery as a way of influencing

the outcome of legislations in the US Assembly. Torfason, Flynn and Kupor (2012) condemn the practice of “tipping” in the US public service because they believe that “tipping” and bribery have the same effect of social exchange. Oyamada (2014) perceives gifting in the public service as an opportunity for corruption which negatively affects the integrity of the public servants. Osipitan (2014) bemoans the fate of Russian universities where corruption is condoned by the ruling class in exchange for loyalty and support for the government, among other such perceptions. On the sub questions, bordering on policy initiatives to address associated issues to the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service, Bamidele, Olaniyan & Ayodele (2016) identify ethnicity as the bane of Nigerian public service as well as the root cause of public sector corruption, hence the authors called for good governance, citizen engagement, civic education and inculcation of values to re-orient the minds of the people towards a unified vision. Wouters, Ryngaert and Cloots (2013) state that African Union (AU) of which Nigeria is a member, has an Anti-Corruption Convention but such Convention has no mechanism for monitoring and evaluation. They therefore called for such mechanism in order to make progress in fighting corruption in the region. Krambia-Kapardis (2014) surmised that it is not enough to have elaborate policy regulations against corruption in the public service, it is very important to have the political will to implement them. Pallai and Gregro (2016) call for integrity management, training and evaluation so as to equip the public sector to implement public policy effectively. Elcock (2012) calls for the evolution of the New Public Management so as to do away with usual bureaucratic red-tape that encourages corruption. Ales, Rozial, Ismail & Bulaman (2013); Emy, Mulder & Freero (2015);

Ijewereme (2015); Magbaelo (2016); Ohemeng (2015); Rukutiene (2014), among others share the view that civil society organizations are a catalysts for responsive policy formulation, implementation and policy sustenance or reversal and could be relied upon to perceptively inform policy makers about the appropriateness or responsiveness of a policy agenda such as the "cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service". All these explain the relevance and responsiveness of the selected studies to the research questions.

Based on the review of related literature and the synthesis of them, the following are the most significant findings that underscore the justification for my study:

1. Most leading economies of the world such as US, UK, France etc. have outlawed gift giving in their public sector because of its correlation to corruption while Nigeria still encourages the practice on cultural grounds (see UK Bribery Act, 2010; US Foreign corrupt practices Act, and Fifth Schedule of Nigerian Constitution, Part 1: 6 (1-3)).
2. Gift giving in the public service is positively correlated to corruption as it creates a cover for corruption (Bello, 2014; Hasen, 2012; Dion, 2013; Jones & Bezuideulont, 2014).
3. Cultural relativism is positively correlated to corruption (Nepal, 2014).
4. The Nigerian economy may not witness significant direct foreign investment if the cultural practice of gift giving is not abolished (Yanga, 2014).
5. Successive Leadership of Nigeria Lack political will to implement anti-corruption policies (Ijewereme, 2015).

6. The need to comply with international standard yardsticks for socio-economic evaluations is important as such results determine public perceptions of a country and influence its investment potential (Hasen, 2012).
7. Political corruption is high in Nigeria and its solution calls for stringent legislation, attitudinal change, encouragement of the activities of the civil societies or NGOs, and the press as well as good governance (Ijewereme, 2015; Bello, 2014; Krambia-Kapandis, 2014; Moon, 2016), among others.
8. The variables of ethical and spiritual motivation should be included in the taxonomies of motivation so that the virtues of integrity can be inculcated in the public servants.
9. Anti-corruption strategies such as Whistle-blowing, ethics education, stringent gift giving legislation, accountability and transparency as well as good governance which are antidotes for corruption in the public service are yet to take roots in the Nigerian public service.
10. Public servants in Nigeria lack training and retraining opportunities for building the values of integrity.
11. Ethical program that lays emphasis on extrinsic values at the expense of intrinsic values are bound to fail (Stucke, 2014).
12. Incompetent leadership and ethically tolerant policies breed corruption (Prenzler & Beckley, 2013).

The most significant findings of this research as summarized above address issues relating to gift giving in the public service, policy, governance and the civil society as well as the integrity of the public servants.

### **Themes and Trends related to the Discipline**

Despite the interdisciplinary nature of public policy and administration as being interrelated with so many fields in the social and behavioral sciences (Lasswell, 1956), it is yet to grapple with the myriad of policy challenges especially in the developing countries such as Nigeria etc. For example, experts state that possession of higher education is positively correlated to good ethical attitude and vice-versa (Perry & Isahuridu, 2013), but in practical terms in Nigeria, monumental corruption is committed by senior public officials (Oarhe, 2013; Global Witness, 2013); and by well-placed men of questionable integrity (Ejiofor, 1985). Policy learning is correlated to policy implementation (Ohemeng, 2015) but the experiences garnered from implementations of public policy in Nigeria from the Independence Day till present has not improved any policy outcome (Ijewereme, 2015).

However, one significant finding in the field that will be very useful in Nigeria is that deviant behaviors are promoted in the public service by the way managers treat workers and or provide ethical leadership (Alias, Roziah, Ismail & Bahaman, 2013). This is instructive for Nigerians managers/Leaders. Also worthy of note in the field is that incompetent leadership and unethically tolerant policies breed corruption (Prenzler, Beckley & Bronitt, 2013). There is a close relationship between the use of research based information for policy work and attainment of tertiary education (Pery & Isahuridu,

2013). This suggests that policy work is better handled by well educated officials. Ethical rebirth should emphasize both intrinsic and extrinsic values (Stucke, 2014). Civil Society organizations or NGOs may not fight for altruistic goals if they have no independent funding stream (Williams & Roda, 2016). Policy scholars should always strike a balance between how public influence policies and how policies influence the publics (Mettler & Soss, 2004).

### **Gap in the Literature**

This present study will fill some gaps in the literature and contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of public policy and administration. Scholars have looked at the issue of gift giving in the public service by investigating the moral and economic repercussions of the practice (David-Baret, 2014; Bello, 2014; Nepal, 2014; Dions, 2013 etc). However, there is minimal work on the use of policy instrument to address issues related to the "cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service" in order to protect the enduring characteristic traits of the public servants. There is also a dearth of literature on the perceptions of the civil society organizations on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service and its implication on the integrity of the public servants.

The data to be gathered from this study will inform policy makers on the appropriate policy guidelines to be promulgated and implemented to address issues that may arise from the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service in relation to safeguarding the integrity to the public servants. The introduction of new policy of market-driven economy in China increased the rate of public sector corruption

because there was no study to determine the unintended consequences of the policy (Wouters, Ryngaer & Cloots, 2013). The present study will contribute to the body of knowledge in public policy and administration by providing research based information to guide policy decision. Moreover, the effort of the research work is to advance the seven categories of functional analysis in the policy decision process, namely: information, recommendation, prescription, invocation, application, appraisal and termination (Lasswell, 1956).

### **Methodology Literature Review**

Of the three methods of research, namely: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research, I chose to investigate my research interest using the qualitative method. The reasons for this choice have been adduced in the previous sections of this chapter. However, it is important to point out that the nature of a study, the type of research questions and the type of data needed to answer the questions and explain the phenomenon of interest are major factors influencing the choice of method (Creswell, 2013).

In the literature review, some studies are closely related to the phenomenon of interest and selected methodology and methods were applicable to the scope of my study. For example, Osipitan (2012) used a qualitative case study to investigate “loyalty as rent: Corruption and politicization of Russian Universities”. In the survey data from Rodgers, Williams and Rourd (2008), which came from interviews conducted among households in Ukraine in relation to rent- seeking behaviors and corruption, “only 10% of the respondents relied solely on the formal economy for their income, whereas 67% were

employing a mixture of formal and informal practices (p. 673). The same over dependence on informal economy is also obtainable in the employment sector of the Russian Universities as applicants secure jobs on the basis of gift giving corruption and bribes as well as “blat” (Osipitan, 2012). The study further reported that while the government was aware of the high level of corruption going on in the university system, they condoned it because they require the University community to continue to give support and loyalty to the government of the day.

Emery, Mulder and Frower (2015) also used the qualitative case study tradition to investigate “maximizing the policy impacts of public engagement: A European study”. It made a useful policy recommendation to my study. The authors relied on a model to obtain information using a semi-structured interview protocol with policy makers and public engagement practitioners. The analysis of the data so collected showed that there is a gap in information between policy agenda/ processes and civic engagement. Qualitative paradigm is naturally interpretive or humanistic (Creswell, 2013) as presented above, while the quantitative research method, on the contrary, is oriented towards positivist tradition that examines phenomena on the basis of observable cause-and-effect relationship.

As a way of addressing the identified problem, the study recommends that political institutions should adopt using strategic official procedure of monitoring and evaluating the receptiveness or otherwise of policy initiatives by the policy engagement professionals and using the evidence-based information as a guide in future consideration of policy options. The thesis of the study is that when policy making and implementation



become an elite affair alone, the policy outcome is, all things being equal, unresponsive to the yearning and aspirations of the public (Sabatier & Weible, 2014).

Through a qualitative case study employing document analysis and interviews in Hong Kong to establish lines of ethical practices that could be effective in encouraging good ethical behavior in the public service, the researcher, Luk (2012), in his study “Questions of ethics in public sector management: The case study of Hong Kong” obtained data through interviews and document analysis to find out that corruption in the public service of Hong Kong is minimal in comparison with other nations of the world because there is ethical leadership on the part of indigenous managers who sustain the tempo on patriotic basis. The study reports that the use of indigenous officials to lead the way of ethical rebirth increases trust and confidence and this in turn promotes an ethical public service. Among variables considered to be promoting good ethical practice, such as “ethics education”, “prevention and enlightenment”, “sanctions for violation” and “showing the way by indigenous officials”; “showing the way by indigenous officials” was rated very highly. The author therefore recommends the use of indigenous officials to champion the institutionalization of ethics and integrity management practices in the public service. The report also called for the adoption of “ethical leadership, ethical training, and ethical legislation” (p. 373) in the Hong Kong public sector.

Newman’s (2014) case study provides a unique methodological approach that is still consistent with the scope of my study. The study employed a mixed methods approach but with much emphasis on the qualitative case study tradition. The mixed methods approach of the study could be seen from the data. While quantitative data are

usually provided in numbers, qualitative data are usually rendered in words; and while quantitative investigation is hypothetic-deductive, qualitative investigation is normally inductive (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Onwuegbuzie & Collins (2012) state that researchers employ mixed methods approach in order to maximize the strengths or benefits inherent in the two methods. For example, quantitative method employs the use of inferential and descriptive data; qualitative method uses “expressive” data in detailed description to analyze research problem.

The researcher sought to find out what characteristics of public servants in Australia use research in their policy work. The author used a sample of 2,084 public servants both from the state as well as the national level. The research period covered 2011 and 2013. Participants’ opinion towards the use of research in policy work was subjected to a test of significance. The research result suggests that “policy workers who use academic research are quite aligned with academics in that they often than not hold advanced university degrees and have work experience in the academic world”. On the contrary, public servants who do not have such level of academic exposure and work experience indicated that they do not use academic work in the policy work; an elucidation of this fact that policy making should be research-oriented, and should not be left in the hands of policy neophytes.

Williams and Rodd (2016) also carried out a study related to the key concepts underlying my study and the outcome is revealing. The researchers investigated “civil society advocacy in Nigeria: promoting democratic norms or donor demands? They used in-depth interviews to assemble quantitative data in exploring the advocacy and service

delivery roles of the CSOs who were working on the project “Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) prevention and mitigation in Nigeria, April, 2002.

The result suggested that the CSOs did not deviate from the funders’ intention as 54.9% of them concentrated on advocacy on community mobilization related to behavioral change such as peer education; 58.2% concentrated on desired rallies by the funders with no attention paid to constructively engaging the government on policy issues. The implication of the study is that donors and interactional organizations conceive CSOs as political and not independent autonomous groups that can influence the governance process on their own especially if they are being funded by an interested body that is external to the CSOs. This is noteworthy in understanding the factors that impair the effectiveness of the CSOs in relation to their involvement in influencing the policy process.

The negative implication of gift giving, bribery and corruption in the public service was established by Prenzler and Beckley’s (2013) study on “police gifts and benefit scandals: Addressing deficits in policy, leadership and enforcement”. Every police officer in Australia and England is guided by the International Association of Chiefs of Police Law Enforcement Code of Conduct, which requires every police officer never to employ unnecessary force, or violence and never accept gratuities in the course of his/her duties.

In their qualitative case study of three high profile cases of gift giving corruption in the police formations of Australia and England, the researchers relied on conducted interviews and other documentary evidences to authenticate the culpabilities of the

officers concerned in accepting gratuities. The culpabilities were further established to have ultimately compromised the integrity of the police and affected the image of the police adversely. The compromise also weakened public trust and confidence in the impartiality and neutrality of the police (Prenzler & Beckley, 2013). Further detailed analysis of the case showed that the act of giving and receiving gratuities was never frowned at the then police environment due to incompetent leadership and unethically tolerant policies of the police formations. Recommendations were made in the direction of stringent ethical regulations concerning gift giving, bribery and corruption in the police formations.

### **The Methodology Literature Based Description**

The six studies briefly discussed in the Methodology Literature Review were singled out because they are consistent with the methodology and methods employed in probing my research interest. The nature of the phenomenon of interest informed my choice of qualitative case study. The quantitative, qualitative divide is not an issue here because the divide is based on wrong judgment. Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2012) advise scholars to seek to understand the philosophical assumptions of each of the methods, their different disciplinary origins, the conceptual structure of the individual method, and the ontological beliefs of each of the methods. Each of the methods contributes to knowledge and scholarship in a special way either in isolation of the other or in combination of the two (Gouling, 2002).

Osipitan's (2012) qualitative case study on "loyalty as rent: Corruption and politicization of Russian Universities" shed light on other forms of gifting, bribery and

corruption in the public service. That a government holding the sovereignty of the Russian people with the mandate to provide the dividends of democracy through good governance was reported to be aiding and abetting corruption in the University system as a compromise to win support and goodwill from the University community for future elections, is unspeakable. Emery, Mulder and Frower's (2015); Williams and Rodd's (2016); Newman's (2014); Luk's (2012); Prenzler and Beckley's (2013) studies made significant empirical revelations related to the constructs of my interest. For example, policy regulation backed up with ethical leadership and patriotism was reported to be an effective means of fighting corruption in the public service; civil society organizations are more likely to be effective in promoting good and accountable governance if they have independent means of funding, and that policy making and implementation would be more effective through civic engagement.

### **Conclusion**

Significant findings were made after a comprehensive review and synthesis of related literature. The basic constructs grounding the study were better illuminated and this further justifies the imperativeness for the study. For example, gift giving in the public service is found to be positively correlated to corruption (Bello, 2014; Hasen, 2012; Dion, 2013; Jones & Bezuideulont, 2014). The literature also reports that cultural relativism is positively correlated to corruption (Nepal, 2014). Consequently, Nigerian economy may not witness significant direct foreign investment if the cultural relativist practice of cultural gift giving in the public sector is not abolished (Yanga, 2014). While most leading economies of the world such as US, UK, France etc. have outlawed gift

giving in their public sector because of its correlation to corruption, Nigeria still encourages the practice on cultural grounds (see UK Bribery Act, 2010; US Foreign corrupt practices Act, and Fifth Schedule of Nigerian Constitution, Part 1: 6 (1-3). The literature also reports that successive leadership of Nigeria lacks the political will to implement anti-corruption policies (Ijewereme, 2015). As a result, corruption, especially political corruption is high in Nigeria and its solution calls for both stringent legislation, attitudinal change, encouragement of the activities of the civil societies or NGOs, and the press, and good governance (Ijewereme, 2015; Bello, 2014; Krambia-Kapandis, 2014; Moon, 2016), among others.

Hasen's (2012) study suggests that Nigeria needs to comply with international standard yardsticks for socio-economic evaluations in order to improve on its international reckoning and be in a position to attract direct foreign investment. Anti-corruption strategies such as Whistle-blowing, ethics education, stringent gift giving legislation, accountability and transparency as well as good governance which are antidotes for corruption are recommended to be put in place in Nigeria's public service (Oyamada, 2014). Ethical program that lays emphasis on extrinsic values at the expense of intrinsic values are bound to fail (Stucke, 2014); while incompetent leadership and ethically tolerant policies breed corruption (Prenzler & Beckley, 2013).

### **Summary of what is known and not known related to this study**

There are a number of research findings established in the literature that are well known in the field of public policy and administration but are contradicted in practice and in the literature of other fields of study. For example, the review of related literature

suggest that possession of higher education is positively correlated to good ethical attitude and vice-versa (Perry & Isahuridu, 2013), but in practical terms in Nigeria, monumental corruption is committed by senior public officials (Oarhe, 2013; Global Witness, S2013); and by well-placed men of questionable integrity (Ejiofor, 1985). Ohemge (2015) suggests that policy learning is positively correlated to policy implementation, but the experiences garnered from implementations of public policy in Nigeria from the Independence Day till present has not improved any policy outcome (Ijewereme, 2015).

Prenzler, Beckley and Bronitt (2013) made a significant research finding that is relevant to the field, which is that incompetent leadership and unethically tolerant policies breed corruption, just as deviant behaviors are promoted in the public service by the way managers treat workers and or provide ethical leadership (Alias, Roziyah, Ismail & Bahaman, 2013). The intelligent guess that a well-educated public servant will be research-oriented in the course of discharging his duties than will be the case for non-educated public servant is empirically supported by Pery and Isahuridu's (2013) study. There is a close relationship between the use of research based information for policy work and attainment of tertiary education.

#### **Summary of how study fills a gap in the literature.**

This study hopes to make contribution to research, learning, scholarship and practice in the field of public policy and administration. There is dearth of literature on the appropriate deployment of policy instrument to govern issues related to the "cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service" in relation to protecting the

integrity of public sector employees. There is also little or no literature that gauged the perceptions of the civil society organizations on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service and its implication on the integrity of the public servants. Scholars, however, have looked at the issue of gift giving in the public service by investigating the moral and fiscal implications of the practice (David-Barret, 2014; Bello, 2014; Nepal, 2014; Dions, 2013) etc., but they are yet to examine using policy instrument to address issues that may arise from the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service.

This study intends to fill this gap through this qualitative case study. Data gathered from this study will guide policy makers on the appropriate policy guidelines to be promulgated and implemented to address issues that may arise from the "cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service" in relation to the integrity to the public sector employees. This means that the study will contribute to the body of knowledge in public policy and administration by providing research-based information to guide policy decision.

### ***Transition.***

An assessment of the related literature reviewed provided a comprehensive overview of the themes and trends that underpin the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service in relation to the personal integrity of the public servants. The research was grounded in the qualitative paradigm because there were no theories on the use of policy instrument to govern the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants from where variables could be derived to test the Nigeria



experience. This was why I depended on those who know about it and or have experienced it to gain understanding of the phenomenon. This, therefore, entailed interviewing a purposeful sample of the relevant population as informants (Creswell, 2015; Rudestam & Newton, 2015; Patton, 2015; Frankfort-Nachmias, Nachmias, & DeWaard, 2015). The responsiveness of the literature to illuminating the study depended on its in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of interest and further provided a direction for future research on the policy agenda of ethics of gift giving in the public service.

Chapter 3 presents a detailed account of the research design used for the study. This included the theoretical tradition of inquiry, the role of the researcher and dealing with researcher's subjectivity, setting and research sample, data collection and management procedures, issues of quality and trustworthiness, protection of participants' right and ethical matters, data management procedures, method of data analysis, among others.

## Chapter 3: Method

### **Introduction**

The policy legislation which approves the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of Nigeria has attracted the concerns of many observers in relation to its ramifications in safeguarding the integrity public servants. Scholars such as Bello and Murtala (2015); Markovska and Adams (2015); Szto (2016) viewed the policy as a negation of the fight against corruption in the public service. The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended), Fifth Schedule, Part 1, requires public servants to maintain a high standard of morality, transparency and accountability in the discharge of their duties. Consequently, Article 6 (1) of the same Fifth Schedule prohibits public officers from asking for or receiving any property or benefit of any kind either for themselves or any other person in the course of discharging their duties. However, Article 6 (3) allows a public officer to accept such personal gifts or benefits from friends and relatives on cultural grounds. This provision is inconsistent with Article 6 (1) which prohibits gift giving in the public service (Bello, 2014; Mentoer, 2010). Because of this inconsistency, I deemed it, therefore, necessary to ascertain the appropriateness of this policy guideline in safeguarding the integrity of public servants. I did so by conducting a qualitative case study.

In Chapter 3, I present a comprehensive report on the research design for the study. This includes the theoretical tradition of inquiry, the role of the researcher, setting and sample, data collection, data analysis, issues of trustworthiness, protection of participants' rights or ethical concerns, pilot study and summary of the chapter.

## **Research Design and Rationale**

I will start by restating the research questions in order to guide a better understanding of the study design and justifications.

### **Restatement of the Research Questions**

I used a qualitative case study design to understand the phenomena, context, and themes of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and its implications for the integrity of public servants in Nigeria. The research questions I sought to answer are as follows:

Central question: What are the perceptions of civil society organizational leaders about integrity in relation to unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in levels 15 and above?

Sub question 1: What do ten civil society organizational leaders in a particular territory in Nigeria perceive as issues related to the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in the concerned area of Nigeria who are in grade levels 15 and above?

Sub question 2: What do ten civil society organizational leaders in a particular territory in Nigeria perceive may be appropriate policies needed to address issues related to the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in the concerned area of Nigeria who are in grade levels 15 and above?

I asked a number of follow-up questions from the interview guide to illicit further rich data in order to adequately understand the study phenomenon. I asked these follow-up questions. Regarding the central research question:

1. Because the practice of gift giving in the public service of Nigeria is constitutionally unrestricted based on cultural grounds by virtue of the 5th Schedule, Article 6 (3) of the Nigerian Constitution, how do you perceive this practice in relation to integrity and corruption?
2. What are your perceptions as to whether the practice is ethical or unethical, positive or negative?
3. In this practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service, can you explain your perceptions in relation to the nature of an association between gift giving and integrity?

I asked these questions related to sub question 1:

1. Kindly explain your perceptions in relation to whether the practice has the potentials to compromise the integrity of the public servant in the performance of his/her duties.
2. Would you mind explaining your perceptions in relation to whether the practice has the potentials to lower the productivity of the public service?
3. What do you say regarding the potentials of the practice to compromise national security?
4. In human resource management, can you explain your perceptions in relation to whether the practice has the potentials to promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence?
5. What do say of your perceptions in terms of whether the practice is capable of affecting the ethical content of an organization?

6. Someone else describes the practice as a "window of opportunity for corruption"; how do you perceive this view?
7. In what other areas do you perceive issues associated with the practice in relation to the achievement of the mandate of the public service?

For sub question 2, I asked two questions:

1. What are your specific appropriate recommendations to address the potential problems that may be associated with the practice?
2. What other policy recommendations do you have?

**Central concepts.**

"Bribe" was one of the concepts underlining this study, and it is taken here to mean a product of value offered dishonestly to a public servant with the intention, or having the possibility of compromising him/her in the performance of his/her duties. Civil Society Organizations are taken here to refer to "the multitude of associations (in the concerned area in Nigeria) around which society voluntarily organizes itself and which represent a wide range of interests and ties" (OECD, 2006. p. 21) (emphasis mine). "Corruption" means act of dishonesty, fraud, sleaze, bribery, nepotism as well as lack of integrity on the part those public officers who abuse public office for private gain (Hegemann & Berumen, 2011). "FCT-Abuja" refers to the Federal Capital Territory which is the seat of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

"Gift giving" was one of the central concepts underlining this study, and by gift giving the study is referring to a present in form of property or benefit given to a public servant in the performance of his/her official functions. Similarly, "integrity" means a

person's attribute most needed for leadership and managerial effectiveness because of its good ethical conduct (Monga, 2016). "Policy instrument" refers to official rules and regulations governing behaviors, activities, and practices related to gifting in the public service of Nigeria. It is also taken here to mean the same thing as "policy guideline" or "policy regulation". "Public Servant" which is also one of the concepts refers to government officials (either appointed or elected) who serve in Nigeria's federal public service in grade levels 15 and above. Another concept is "unrestricted gift giving" which relates to liberty given by law for people to present gifts of property or benefit to a public servant in the discharge of his/her official duties under the disguise of cultural practice.

***The research tradition.***

The research interest was considered better investigated through a qualitative case study. I, therefore, chose the qualitative research design instead of quantitative or mixed methods one, because the problem statement required a constructivist approach of exploring multiple realities instead of seeking to generate hypothesis. Researchers in the qualitative tradition gather far-reaching data on various variables over a long period of time in an undisturbed and natural setting in order to gain insights not possible through other research traditions of inquiry (Yilmaz, 2013).

The research was, therefore, a qualitative case study of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of a major territory in Nigeria. It related to the integrity required of public servants. While available literature explored the social and economic implications of gift giving in the public sector (see Bello and Murtala, 2015; Markovska and Adams, 2015; Szto, 2016), the use of policy regulations to govern the

ethics of public sector gifting in order to protect the integrity of the public servants remained largely unexplored based on my review of the literature. In addition, I found few studies of the perceptions of the leaders of CSOs on this practice. Under this circumstance, the qualitative tradition of inquiry was chosen because, based on my review of the literature, many theories do not exist to explain the phenomenon.

My role as the researcher for this qualitative study was to function as the chief investigator and conduct the interviews. Consequently, I was in close contact with the data which meant that there would be a likelihood of my being tainted with bias (Goulding, 2002). Because of this, I maintained a high degree of consciousness about the possibility of bias. I also exercised objectivity during the entire research process by implementing academic rigor and thoroughness.

The research was conducted in a particular territory in Nigeria and the research participants were civil society organizational leaders in the territory. I used a purposeful sample. The means of data collection were interviews and analysis of documents. The data gathered were saved in computer files, and were analyzed through reading and memo writing, data codification, and the use of computer program. The findings of this study are presented through a case study narrative with detailed description and quotes from participants. To ensure the protection of the participants, I recruited them with their full consent and conveyed that they could opt out if they wanted to. I assured trustworthiness through the process of guaranteeing research credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, member checking, and less of researcher's bias.

*Rationale for the chosen tradition.*

The qualitative research design that grounded this study is defined in the following manner by Creswell, (1998):

An inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, conducts the study in a natural setting ( p.15).

It is the development of a complete picture from personal depictions as well as images communicated through research participants (Moustakas, 1994).

*Consideration of qualitative approaches.*

There are many approaches to qualitative study. Tesch (1990) recognized 28 approaches; Miller and Crabtree (1992) spoke about 18 approaches, while Creswell (1998; 2009; 2013) concentrated on the most popular five approaches. The latter's five approaches which formed the basis for this discussion are: case study, ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology and biography. In designing this study, I carried an evaluation of the approaches against the backdrop of the purpose of the study and the types of data sought. A brief commentary on these approaches would suffice here:

**Phenomenology:** This focuses on real life activities, practices or circumstances with a view to explaining or describing the phenomenon (Patton, 2015). Participants in phenomenological study are carefully selected to ensure that they experience the same phenomenon under investigation, and from the lived experiences rendered by the participants, a common meaning is established. This was not suitable for my study. Public



servants who are exposed to bribery/gift giving will not be willing to be identified; neither will they, in good conscience, tell the truth about their experiences. This was why the study relied on the perceptions of the “watch dogs” in the policy process (the leaders of CSOs) to explore the phenomenon.

***Ethnographic research:*** This involves examining a group or groups’ behavior in their cultural surroundings in order to understand them. The present study had nothing to do with culture, and interviews and documents were its major sources of data. Observation which is the major source of data in ethnography would not be enough to collect the multiplicity of data required for my study.

***Grounded theory:*** The purpose of grounded theoretical approach to scientific investigation is to generate a theory from data gathered to assist in building a theory. In essence, a grounded theory utilizes data generated from a study to build theory, and the theory so generated becomes the findings (Yin, 2014; Cronin, 2014). The aim of my study was not focused on producing a theory but to gain thorough understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

***Biographical research:*** This is a form of narrative research whose thrust is to study the life of a person, and records of his/he life experiences. This was obviously outside the frame of the present study. The concern of the present study was not about the life history of the public servants, but about their integrity standing in the face of giving and receiving gifts in the public service. Ethnographic study was, therefore, unsuitable for this study.

**Survey questionnaire:** This entails the use of close-ended questionnaire instrument which derives variables from an existing theory for the purpose of testing hypothesis. Even though survey questionnaire has the benefits of being free from researcher's bias (Creswell, 1998), there was no existing theory of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants. The phenomenon of interest (i.e. the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants) was relatively new in management literature, and the researcher needed to explore in order to provide a comprehensive report of the phenomenon. He, therefore, needed to learn from the experiences of the participants so as to present their viewpoints accurately. This was better achieved through interview approach as against survey questionnaire that would not give room for clarifications as much as they were needed (Nachmias et al., 2015).

**Case Study:** This was the approach I adopted for this inquiry. It is "an exploration of abounded system or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context" (Creswell, 1998, p.61). It is a design suited for providing an exhaustive understanding of a case such as the unique or largely unexplored case of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants.

*Best research method.*

Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods are the three types of research methods (Creswell, 2013; Nachmias et al., 2015; Earley, 2014). All these three methods could be employed to investigate my phenomenon of interest. However, the selection of research method is guided by the nature of the study and the type of research questions to

be answered (Creswell, 1998; 2009; 2013). In light of this, qualitative research method and a case study design were selected for this study. This approach was best suited to answer my research questions. Bansal and Corley (2012) explain that a quantitative approach would entail the use of large participants and range of choices through hypotheses testing. This was outside the focus of this study. Further, Moustakas (1994) surmises that the use of quantitative method cannot provide personal experiences that can enable the researcher to offer in-depth and graphic descriptions and articulation of phenomena as would do qualitative research. In terms of mixed methods research, there are the problems of complexity with a varied approach (Mertens, 2014); and mixed methods research is primarily concerned less about understanding what causes the problems, but more on solving the problems (Sparkes, 2014).

The qualitative method and case study design are well suited for exploring diverse characteristics of research participants to determine the nature of their interactions with each other in their environment. Qualitative research method is concerned about exploring and explaining human behavior (Bailey, 2014). A qualitative case study approach helped to facilitate my thoughtful consideration of the issues involved in the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public service in Nigeria.

*Justification for the research method.*

Qualitative Case study research was the approach that best answered my research questions because it is a design having strong theoretical foundation that provided a structure for exploratory research in real-life settings (Cronin, 2014). The limitations of other approaches such as phenomenology, ethnography, biographical research, and

grounded theory as alternative approaches to study my phenomenon of interest have been discussed above. Case study design makes it possible to examine present-day organizational phenomena in an in-depth, holistic analysis by means of a few cases or single case (Hoon, 2013). Hoon also states that the strength of case study emanates from the theoretical insight arising from case-specific findings established within context. Case study approach is a painstaking and organized method in wide-ranging situations (Cronin, 2014). The application of many sources of data in case studies such as interviews, observational field notes, documents, artifacts, audio-visual materials, etc. increases the validity and reliability of case study research. Case study permits for an in-depth account of a phenomenon from a wider sphere irrespective of how bounded by time, proceedings, activities and or individuals. Against the foregoing backdrop, case study is the most appropriate methodology to investigate a research interest where the “how” and the “what” such as the present study were the questions that drive the study (Creswell, 2013; Cronon, 2014; Tellis, 1997).

### **Role of the Researcher**

I carried out the whole processes of the research from the start to finish. Being the investigator who used the interview guide to collect data, I traveled to the various places in the research setting where the offices of the leaders of civil society organizations were located for the purposes of data collection. I personally recruited all the participants and sought the necessary consent and required permission to conduct interviews and collect data, including necessary documents from relevant quarters. To do this effectively, I used emails, telephone and letters to reach out to the participants and other quarters for data

collection. I personally conducted audio taped, and transcribed the interview proceedings. In order to facilitate analysis of the data and preparing the narrative report, I wrote down memos or notes in the course of the interview.

### **Relationships between Researcher and Participants**

Reports of lived experiences reflect the real meaning of qualitative tradition and freedom from biases reduces subjectivity (Moustakas, 1994); because recounting the inner and outer associations between the phenomenon and the researcher affects qualitative objectivity. Hammersley (2013) admonishes qualitative researchers about the possibility of becoming prone to researcher's biased judgment which could affect the data obtained during interviews.

I have worked in the public service for quite a good number of years. Between 1991 and 1994, I served as an administrative officer in a University system; 1994 and 1996 I was a personal assistant to an honorable commissioner in a state government; between 1996 and 1997, I was an elected executive chairman of his local government council; between 1997 and 2000, I was appointed the managing director/CEO of a state government parastatal, and between 2001 and present, I serve as director of administration in the then governing Peoples Democratic Party of Nigeria now the main opposition Party in Nigeria. All these could be considered as the personal and professional relationships I might have with the researched but I had no supervisory or instructor relationships involving power over the participants. I did not know them prior to the study; I accessed the CSOs and by extension their leaders through a public website:

[http://www.bpp.gov.ng/index.php?option=com\\_joomdoc&view=documents&path=CSO\\_LIST.pdf&Itemid=569](http://www.bpp.gov.ng/index.php?option=com_joomdoc&view=documents&path=CSO_LIST.pdf&Itemid=569)).

### **Researcher's role in data collection.**

Based on the requirements of the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB), all participants recruited for a study received written assurances of protection of their rights. Letter of Consent to participate was presented and signed prior to the conduct of the interviews. Informed consent form for qualitative interviews was explained in details in The Belmont Report (Nijhawan, Janodia, Muddukrishna, Bhat, Bairy, Udupa & Musmade, 2013). A signed "Informed Consent Form" is obligatory in carrying out some research procedures concerning human beings as participants for a study. In this respect, I advised the subjects about their rights, privileges and benefits, the reason for the study, required procedures to be undertaken, and gave assurances for their confidentiality (Nijhawan et al., 2013). The interview protocol included the following steps: an introductory statement; semi-structured interview questions and answer session; asking further curious questions; verification of themes noted during the interview by the participants; follow-up questions for clarification as may be necessary; and proper recording of reflective notes (Creswell, 2013).

### ***Managing researcher biases.***

In light of the sensitive role as the researcher, I took some steps to manage biases and or power relationships that might affect the quality of the data. In this circumstance, I made public my public service background in the introduction to the consent form, and thereafter maintained a great measure of consciousness about the possibility of bias. I

applied objectivity throughout the research process. I also reported any conflicting occurrence in the course of the study. Further, Goulding (2002) recommends subjecting research outcomes to member-checking as well as peer review as means of enhancing the credibility of the research findings. I requested a great academic and a respected personality within the research environment to review the interview transcripts, results and recommendations and his criticisms were incorporated into the report.

I also shared the initial findings with some of the participants, and their observations were equally incorporated into the report. Similarly, I used the various sources of data to interrogate the findings in order to enhance the integrity of research findings. Marshall et al. (2013); Dworkin (2012) recommend that other means of enhancing the reliability of findings are that the course of action leading to category development should be documented properly as well as making the procedure for data analysis transparent. I employed all these steps to guarantee quality assurances of the result and eliminated researcher's subjectivity.

*Applicable ethical issues.*

Beyond having a public service background, I also live and work in Nigeria, which was the environmental setting of the research. This had the potentials of raising some biases in the process of conducting the research. I avoided any likely inconsistency of interest and made sure that my actions were just. I followed The Belmont Report which offers procedures for protecting the participants' rights using the endorsed "informed consent form". Lincoln & Guba (1985) advise that employing a journaling process is recommended as a way of mitigating researcher's bias. I developed a

comprehensive reflexive journal together with the reason for embarking on the research (Janesick, 2011). I bracketed himself out of the picture of his background and previous experiences to enable him see things objectively. I did not use incentives in recruiting the participants because the practice is open to many interpretations (Creswell, 1998) more so when the purpose of the study bordered on the appropriateness of gift giving in the public service. Although there were no incentives, I, however, promised to offer a copy of my study report to the participants to enable them see their contributions to the study so that they might use such as a means of motivation and to better inform their advocacy campaigns for future interventions.

Producing knowledge from scientific research and maintaining high ethical principles and standards of research are the two priority interests for embarking on research (Damianakis & Woodford, 2012). Wester (2011) adds further that protecting the vulnerable populations, respect for the dignity of the human beings, autonomy, and justice are vital ethical principles to hold fast. The identities of the participants were protected by allocating individual forms CSOAP, CSOAP2, CSOBP1, CSOBP2 and so on through CSOEP2, and these forms were used to identify their responses during coding.

## **Methodology**

### **Population for the Study**

There were 48 CSOs that were accredited by the Bureau for Public Procurement (BPP), the Presidency, Nigeria in 2007. This was accessed via:

[http://www.bpp.gov.ng/index.php?option=com\\_joomdoc&view=documents&path=CSO\\_](http://www.bpp.gov.ng/index.php?option=com_joomdoc&view=documents&path=CSO_)



LIST.pdf&Itemid=569). The study population was made up of 18 of them that scaled through the selection criteria. However, five were selected purposely based on the recommendations of the research partners on the ground of their potentials to yield rich data, among others. While CSOs are registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) of Nigeria, the Bureau of Public Procurement, the Presidency, Nigeria has the mandate to periodically accredit them for the purpose of observing public procurement processes and bid opening in line with the requirements of due process. It was noted that beyond the 2007 accreditation exercise, there had been further and more recent periods of accreditation of the CSOs by the BPP but I selected that of 2007 accreditation as one of the criteria for sample selection in this study. This stemmed from the fact that qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting, and it entails complex reasoning both inductively and deductively; hence its focal point is on the participants who experienced the phenomenon over time and can express it from their perspectives and meanings (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, in order to be able to provide reliable perceptions of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants in the research setting in Nigeria, these leaders of the CSOs needed to have mingled with the public servants for a considerable period of time. The researcher considered a decade of interaction (2007-2017) worthwhile to satisfy his definition of "mingling with the public servants for a considerable period of time". Table 2 below represents the population of the study from where purposive sample was selected based on already established criteria.

Table 2

*List of CSOs in the Research Setting registered by the Bureau of Public Procurement in 2007*

S/ No	Name of CSO Rep.	Organization	Email Address	Office Address	Phone Number
1	Austin G.C Onuoha	African Centre for Corporate Responsibility( ACCR)	accrnigeria@g mail.comausti nonuoha@yah oo.com	No. 1 Ufuoma Close, Warri, Delta State. Block E, Flat 2, Anambra Court, Gaduwa Housing Estate, Garki, Nigeria.	+234803255 4402 +234808075 5425
2	-	Community Action for Popular Participation		SS6A Borno Street, Area 10, Garki, Nigeria	+234805812 4961
3	-	Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC)	info@cislacni geria.orgehie mererhema@y ahoo.comfavo urnee@yahoo .com	5, Mahathma Ghandi Street, Off Shehu Shagari Way, Area 11, Nigeria.	+234803384 4646 +234802356 7986
4	-	Community Action for Popular Participation		24 Borno Street, Area 10, Garki, Nigeria.	+234703531 7946
5	-	Centre for the Development of Civil Society		1269 Arthur Unegbe Street, Area 11, Garki, Nigeria.	+234803373 7253
6	-	Centre for Transparency Watch		Shop C2, Area 1, Shopping Complex, Garki, Nigeria.	+234929049 26

7	-	Centre for Peace Building and Socio-Economic Resources Development		CePSERD Secretariat, No. 2B, A Close Road 21 (Near Sun Court Guest Inn), Phase 1, Kado Estate, Nigeria.	+234805083 0888
8	-	Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP)	clementwasah@yahoo.com	Plot 556A, No. 240, Borno Street, Area 10, Garki, Nigeria.	+234803373 7253
9	-	Centre for Social Justice (CSJ)	ezeonyekpere@yahoo.com	Plot 17, Flat 2, Yaounde Street, Wuse, Zone 6, Nigeria.	+234805507 0909
10	-	Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)	jibo72@yahoo.com	4, Kikuyu Close, Off Nairobi Street, Off Parakou Crescent, Off Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse II, Nigeria.	+234803400 1200
11	-	Centre for the Development of Civil Society (CDCS)	eezeazu@yahoo.com	No 11, Dunukofia Street, Suite C 206, Area 11, Garki, Nigeria.	+234805736 7172
12	-	Crime Free & Peace Initiative (CFPI)	crifpinig@yahoo.com onyema_2010@yahoo.com maneke4jesus@yahoo.com	Suite 17, Garki 2 Shopping Plaza, Plot 1264, Mohammadu Buhari Way, Nigeria.	+234805508 2277 +234803671 3892
13	-	International Society for Poverty Elimination		Suite C109, Banex Plaza, Wuse II, Nigeria.	

14	-	Media Network Against Corruption		Plot 845, Yedesaram Cad. Zone A6, Maitama, Nigeria.	
15	-	Movement Against Corruption in Nigeria (MAC)	sojiapampa@t heconvention. orgsojapa@ya hoo.co.uk	Suite F1, 16 Nkwere Street, Garki, Nigeria.	+234803402 2669
16	-	Organization against Corruption and Drug Abuse	macada2009 @yahoo.com	Area 11, Block 6, Flat 11, Agbor Close, Garki, Nigeria.	+234806555 3218 +234807816 6126
17	-	Transparency and Anti- Corruption Campaign in Africa		Suite 16, A Block, Commerce Plaza, Old Federal Secretariat, Area 1, Garki, Nigeria.	
18	-	Zero Corruption Coalition	hauwakazeem @yahoo.com	Suite C 206, Plot 1269, Arthur Unegbe Street, Area 11, Garki, Nigeria.	+234802329 1309

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### **Setting and sample justification.**

The data for this study were gathered from civil society organizational leaders operating in the research setting in Nigeria. The researcher conducted the interviews in the venues chosen by them. The setting is a major territory in Nigeria. The headquarters of federal ministries, departments and agencies are also located in territory. Leaders of civil society organizations in the referenced territory were selected as the research participants from where the researcher gained understanding of the perceptions of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants. The

selection criteria for the CSOs were established as follows: 1. Accreditation: Leaders whose CSOs were registered by the Bureau for public procurement (BPP) in 2007 which implied that they belonged to government-recognized CSOs. BPP is charged with the responsibility of accrediting CSOs for the purpose of monitoring procurement processes and bid opening by the federal government agencies. 2. Office location and operation: Leaders whose CSOs had their offices located in the research setting and were operating there, which suggested they were conversant with the research setting. 3. Length of operation in the research setting: leaders who had been serving in their various organizations for the past 10 years, which suggested they might be conversant with the nature of gift giving practice in the public service of the particular territory of Nigeria. 4. Mission statements or Advocacy thrusts: Leaders whose CSOs had their mission statements or advocacy thrusts slanted towards anti-corruption, transparency and good governance in the public service, which suggested they might discuss the research interest with ease. 5. Independent funding: Leaders whose CSOs were not dependent on Nigerian government for funding, which suggested they might bare your minds on the research interest without hesitation. 6. Accessibility: Leaders whose CSOs' website/email addresses or physical location were easily accessible by the researcher, which suggested he might access them for follow-up questions or clarifications when required, and 7. English language fluency: Leaders of CSOs who could read, write, speak, and understand English language well, which suggested they would understand the research questions well and would not require further translation of the research questions and consent form into local languages.

There were 48 CSOs registered in 2007 by the BPP. Out of this number, there were 18 CSOs that satisfied the above selection criteria. This became the study population. From the 18 CSOs, two leaders from five of them were purposefully selected as key informants based on the recommendation of the community partners. "Key informants" here referred to those who could provide valuable information and insight into the study interest and could also identify others with relevant information on what was being studied for possible contact (Goulding, 2002). In the context of this study, these strategic interviewees consisted of leaders of the five CSOs who could and did provide "series of intense, full, and saturated description of the experience under investigation" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p.139). Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP), a CSO operating in the research setting for more than 10 years and working for the promotion of civic education, engagement, good governance and protection of human rights, and who fulfilled all the above mentioned criteria, accepted to serve as the researcher's community partners. Other community partners were: Center for Transparency Watch (CTW); Movement against Corruption in Nigeria (MAC); Transparency & Anti-Corruption Campaign in Africa (TACCA), and Zero Corruption Coalition (ZCC). They identified these potential interviewees within and outside their own organizations for the researcher to consider for interviewing. From the pool of interviewees or research participants so identified, the researcher selected two in each CSO through a process Creswell (1998) describes as:

- maximum variation - diverse forms of experiences; homogenous sampling
- same kind of experiences; extreme and deviant cases - experience which

was typical of the phenomenon or deviant from it; critical sampling - experiences which were significant to the phenomenon; criterion sampling - based on predetermined criteria considered relevant; and confirmatory sampling - experiences that confirmed or disproved earlier findings. (p. 211)

Gender criterion was not considered since the researcher's primary concern was the richness of data. Two interviewees purposively selected from two of the five CSOs that scaled through the stated selection criteria spent only eight and nine years respectively in the service of their respective CSOs; nonetheless, they were very knowledgeable about the research interest.

***Basis for sample criteria.***

Sampling in the qualitative research tradition refers to the choice of participants and documents that are appropriate for a specified study (Patton, 2015; Polkinghorne, 2005). Selection of participants and documents contingent upon their ability to contribute to the comprehension of the phenomenon being studied is imperative. This is because qualitative investigations are targeted at “describing, understanding, and clarifying a human experience” (Polkinghorne, 2005, p.139).

In qualitative study, population representativeness as per how different segments in the population experience the phenomenon of interest is of less importance than experiencing the phenomenon in its richness and variety so as to present an account of it that have depth and breadth (Creswell, 2009; 2013; Nachmias et al., 2015). Consequently, Wertz (2005) states “the basis of this decision is the judgment of those who experience

most fully and authentically manifests or makes accessible what researcher is interested in” (p. 171). Polkinghorn, therefore, recommends that the sample in qualitative inquiry should be selected from those who have “series of intense, full, and saturated description of the experience under investigation” (p.139).

The implication of the above is that purposeful selection of participants should be a key decision point in qualitative investigation (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2013). This is different from quantitative study which uses a randomly selected representative sample to generalize to the entire population even at the expense of experience. In this study, the researcher utilized purposive sampling to select those interviewees who could provide valuable information and insight into the phenomenon of interest. Out of the accredited 18 CSOs that met the selection criteria, five were selected based on the recommendation of the research partners. Two leaders from each of these five CSOs were further purposely selected. The guideline for sample size selection in qualitative inquiry requires researchers to select "few participants or sites that will avail the researcher rich and comprehensive data" (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). These Scholars did not state a given number to be so selected. However, Creswell (2013) states "I would not include more than 4 or 5 case studies in a single study” (p.157). For the purpose of this study and based on the selection criteria established, The researcher selected 10 leaders of the CSOs of which two were drawn from each CSO.



*Participants' eligibility and rationale.*

For a participant to be eligible for this study, he or she must be one of the two purposively selected interviewees from each of the five CSOs that met the required criteria for selection. These criteria had been explained to include:

1. Accreditation: Leaders whose CSOs were registered by the Bureau for public procurement (BPP) in 2007 which implied that they belonged to government-recognized CSOs. BPP is charged with the responsibility of accrediting CSOs for the purpose of monitoring procurement processes and bid opening by the federal government agencies.
2. Office location and operation: Leaders whose CSOs had their offices located in the research setting and were operating there, which suggested they were conversant with the research setting.
3. Length of operation in the research setting: leaders who had been serving in their various organizations for the past 10 years, which suggested they might be conversant with the nature of gift giving practice in the public service of the particular territory.
4. Mission statements or Advocacy thrusts: Leaders whose CSOs had their mission statements or advocacy thrusts slanted towards anti-corruption, transparency and good governance in the public service, which suggested they might discuss the research interest with ease.

5. Independent funding: Leaders whose CSOs were not dependent on Nigerian government for funding, which suggested they might bare your minds on the research interest without hesitation.
6. Accessibility: Leaders whose CSOs' website/email addresses or physical location were easily accessible by the researcher which, suggested the researcher might access them for follow-up questions or clarifications when required, and
7. English language fluency: Leaders of CSOs who could read, write, speak, and understand English language well, which suggested they would understand the research questions well and would not require further translation of the research questions into local languages.

The target research population comprised the relevant 18 CSOs in the research setting. In the qualitative research tradition, participant eligibility, for example, the two interviewees purposively selected from each of the five CSOs for this study, depended on their relevance to the study. There are three major types of sampling methods in qualitative study. These include “convenience sample, judgment or purposeful sample and theoretical sample” (Polkinghorn, 2005). In purposively recruiting the two interviewees from each of the five CSOs selected, I used Judgment or purposeful sample or purposive sample which permitted me to “select the most productive sample that could answer the research questions” (Marshall, 1996). Purposeful selection of study participants typifies a crucial decision point in qualitative investigation (Creswell, 1998). Purposeful sampling approaches for my study included: “maximum variation, homogenous sampling, extreme and deviant cases, critical sampling, and confirmatory

sampling, criterion (Creswell, 2009, p. 31). I used maximum variation (i.e. varied forms of experience), critical sampling (i.e. sundry forms of experiences which were important to the phenomenon), confirmatory sampling (i.e. experiences that approved or disproved previous findings), homogenous sampling (i.e. same kind of experiences); extreme and deviant cases (i.e. experiences which were typical of the phenomenon or deviated from it). Furthermore, I used informants' strategy that is employed to get participants who could detect others with relevant information.

I did not use convenience sample for the study because it entailed selecting the most convenient or accessible research participants. Polkinghorn (2005) states that convenience samples are viewed as the least vigorous technique. Its data are typically poor and its applicability lacks intellectual reliability. I did not also use theoretical sampling technique for this study in view of the fact that "it is theory-driven", as the approach constructs interpretive theories from developing data (Marshall, 1996).

Creswell (2002) underscores the need for the "widest array of data collection as the researcher attempts to build an in-depth picture of the case" (p.123). I also emphasize the need for diversity which is reflected in use of multiple data sources. In this study, I recruited different categories of participants. I used maximum variation to enable me have participants who have varied forms of experiences with the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants, and who had spent a considerable period of time, about 10 years in the research setting in order to have great insights into the phenomenon. Through critical sampling, I had participants with sundry forms of experiences which were important in understanding the phenomenon of interest.

I employed confirmatory sampling to recruit participants whose experiences approved or disproved previous findings concerning the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants. Confirmatory sampling was also one of the processes by which qualitative study was validated (Creswell, 2013). In employing homogenous sampling, I recruited participants who shared the same kind of experiences with the phenomenon of interest to enable me compare notes. I also had participants whose characteristics were typical of the phenomenon or deviated from it through the use of extreme and deviant cases. Other sources of data came from documents from courts, social media platforms, and extensive interview notes.

*Participants identified, contacted, and recruited.*

It is considered very crucial in the research process to develop rapport and gain access to participants (Creswell, 2013). To develop this rapport with prospective participants, I built trust, and got participants to realize the imperativeness of the study, and how rewarding the interview process would be for them (Nachmias et al., 2015). In building trust, I personally connected with prospective participants through telephone calls, personal visits and letters as the circumstance demanded. In doing this, I presented himself as a learner and collaborator in the quest to address whatever policy inadequacy might be associated with the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants in Nigeria. I enlightened them on the purpose of the study and why they were selected for the study. I further assured the participants of absolute anonymity and privacy both during and after the study. With respect to benefits, I explained to the participants that since they were well-informed and or had experience about the cultural

practice of gift giving and integrity of the public servants in Nigeria, the study would avail them the opportunity to publish their opinions and views on the phenomenon of interest. Furthermore, he pointed out to them that their experiences would be a huge contribution to the understanding of the appropriateness of the subsisting policy on cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants in Nigeria with a view to recommending a better policy approach that could be put in place to address any possible lapses. I assured them of making a copy of the research report available to them for their reading delight and references. I also drew their attention to any conceivable risk in the participation. Participants were assured that they were free to pull out of the study at any time without any consequences and could stop the interview process at will. I adopted the above approaches to gain direct personal contact and obtain their commitment as well as build trust between them and myself. I ensured that he got their consent before the interviews were conducted.

*Sample size and saturation.*

The sample size for this study was 10 interviewees of which two interviewees were purposively selected from each of the five CSOs that fulfilled the requirements of the selection criteria. However, it was my intention that after exhaustively interviewing the 10 participants and if the researcher could not reach data saturation, I would select additional participants from the pool of interviewees already identified by the community partners. However, by the time I was through with the "no holds barred" interviews with the leaders of the CSOs, I reached data redundancy. My sample size was, therefore, apt for my study because the type of research questions and the possible yield of outcomes as

data gathering were being carried out determined the sample size of this qualitative inquiry (Wertz, 2005). Another common guideline for sample size in qualitative investigation is to study a few sites or individuals but to collect extensive data on the site or individual (Creswell, 2013). In narrative research, for example, Huber & Whelan (1999) recommend one or two individuals or sites unless in the case of a collective story.

In phenomenology, Dukes (1984) recommends one to 35; in grounded theory, Charmaz (2006) recommends 20 to 30; in ethnography, Creswell (2013) recommends 1 cultural sharing group; and in case study, Creswell also recommends 4 or 5 cases in a particular study. In fact, Wolcott (2008a) emphasizes that any case beyond 1 reduces the level of details that can be provided. Wertz (2005) agrees with the above positions but adds that participants should be enlisted for information until saturation is attained. Dworkin (2012) explains that data saturation is the most essential element as far as taking decision on qualitative sample size is concerned. Saturation is reached when the data are exhausted and further collection processes have nothing fresh or significant to add (Morse et al., 2014). Put differently, saturation concerns all features of the phenomenon being satisfactorily addressed to the extent that no additional or different insights are needed (Morse et al. 2104). Saturation is a shared theme in qualitative research and the importance of saturation in qualitative tradition is underscored by giving full expression to the values the researcher desires to advocate through the research (Gergen, Josselson, & Freeman, 2015). In this study, I reached data saturation after interviewing the 10 participants.

## **Data Collection**

### **Self-developed Collection Instruments bases for Development.**

Interviews have been identified as the major data collection instrument for this study. Creswell (2013) states that where there are no available published data collection instrument, a qualitative researcher should choose what type of interview will be practical and responsive in netting the needed information that will best answer the research questions. In this case, the researcher should develop an interview protocol or guide (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), and the interview questions as well as the procedures through pilot testing (Samson, 2004). I followed these processes in developing my data collection instrument.

The developed data collection instrument was a semi-structured interview and the questions were open-ended, broad and focused on understanding the phenomenon of interest (Goulding, 2002; Singleton & Straits, 2005) which was the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants. I adapted questions where necessary in the course of the interview depending on a given specific participant category being interviewed. The open-ended questions allowed me to reformulate the questions guided by the participants' responses and the category in a way that helped me obtain detailed experiences of participants (McReynolds, Koch, & Rumrill, Jr. 2001). The interview session was participant-driven and not the reverse. The interview protocol (Appendix B) had a space for me to record responses to questions. When the interview was concluded, I prepared a comprehensive account of the narratives, a practice Stake (1995) termed "facsimile and interpretative commentary" (p. 22).

### **Data collection instruments and source**

The instruments for data collection for this study were two data sets: interviews and documentary sources.

**Interviews:** In this qualitative study, I was the chief investigator and interviewer. Consequently, I used semi-structured interview protocol as a regular guide for all of the interviews in the study (Appendix B). Interview protocol is one of the chief sources of data collection in a qualitative study (Creswell, 1998; 2009; 2013; Hall & Rist, 1999; McReynolds, Koch, & Rumrill, Jr, 2001), among others. Creswell (2013) suggests the use of extensive interview for a case study. I used interviews to ferret out relevant information from the participants on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants in the particular territory in Nigeria.

Opendakker (2006) states that interview techniques include “emails, face to face, focus group, online focus group, video conference, synchronous chat, and telephone” (p. 1). In this study, I utilized face-to-face in-depth interview. This has the advantage of social cues such as voice, as well as equipping me to assess the positive or negative attitudes of the interviewee to the questions (Janesick, 2011). Social cues availed me of extra valuable information that supplemented the verbal direct answers to the questions posed. Face-to-face interview also helped to avoid significant time delay between question and response because the questions and answers were spontaneous. The use of tape recorder with the consent of the interviewee enhanced accuracy of responses. The face-to-face interview also helped to create a standardized situation and a good interview ambience. Further, it allowed for tractability in the process to probe for details, shed light



on ambiguities and issues for appropriate responses, and collect auxiliary data (Singleton & Straits, 2005). It made it possible for the researcher to inquire to clarify obscurities and discern body language to help me analyze the data within context which might not be feasible in the telephone interview (Hall & Rist, 1999). Giving the diverse sources of target participants, and the need to capture the opinion of each leader of CSO on the phenomenon of interest without a “groupthink biases”, a focus group interview was considered inappropriate. Besides, the target participants were not similar in all respects and the teamwork required for the group interview was not be feasible among them (Creswell, 2013).

There are some disadvantages of the face-to-face interview which include cost ineffectiveness and being time-consuming. Another disadvantage is that a researcher may not get detailed information in a situation where a participant is hesitant (Creswell, 2013). All these notwithstanding, the richness and comprehensiveness of face-to-face individual interview far outweighs whatever disadvantages may be associated with it.

**Documentary Sources:** The cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of Nigeria as it affects the integrity of the public servants is an ongoing event. Therefore, I used both primary and secondary sources of data in underscoring the appropriateness of the subsisting policy instrument governing the practice. In light of the nature of the study, available data in the form of court judgments as well as significant legal reports were analyzed to determine the dimensions of gifting-related corruption in the public service of Nigeria and the culpability of the public officials which in turn would have a corresponding negative effect on the integrity of the public servants

concerned. These court judgments and legal reports were public documents and were obtained from the Nigeria Law Reports Website (<http://www.nigerialawreports.com/>) published by Agile technologies Limited (2006-2018). The Nigeria Law Reports contain judgments and decisions of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, judgments and decisions of the Court of Appeal of Nigeria, and judgments and decisions of the West African Court of Appeal (WACA), Volumes 1-18, 1930-1955. All these judgments and court decisions are usually reproduced verbatim and published by the organization as authorized, and they were reliable sources of data for this study.

Five major sources of available data are “public documents, mass media, personal or private documents, non-verbal and archival sources” (Singleton and Straits, 2005). Court judgments and legal reports, 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended), Code of Conduct Bureau Act (CCB Act, CAP 56, LFN, 1990); and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other related offences Act (ICPC Act 2000) as well as websites of mass media organizations were relied upon as public documents to obtain relevant information and they were analyzed in the reviewed literature. Personal or private documents, non-verbal and archival sources were not used in this study.

**Observational Interview Notes:** This is not a data collection instrument per se, but beyond interviews and documentary sources, I kept a journal to record day-to-day synopses of field observations throughout the span of the study. These notes formed part of his analysis and conclusions. Observational field notes are reliable source of data (Creswell, 1998; 2013; McReynolds et al., 2001; Merriam, 1998). Merriam likened field notes to interview transcript. Throughout the study, I observed and noted the

demeanor of participants, and after the interviews, he developed his jottings in line with Merriam's recommendation. Figure 4 below represents multiple sources of data for the study.

*Figure 4. Multiple Sources of Data Collection*

***Self- developed collection instrument content validity.***

Content validity refers to a situation where a data collection instrument appropriately answers stated research questions or measures what it purports to measure

(Nachmias et al., 2015). To establish content validity for my instrument, I ensured that the instrument comprehensively covered all the characteristics of the phenomenon of interest. I evaluated it for face validity which involved my own personal assessment of the suitability of the instrument for answering my research questions. Even after being satisfied, I still reconfirmed the suitability of the instrument by giving it to other scholars in my field to evaluate. There was a consensus that the instrument was appropriate, hence I assumed it to have face validity. Another type of content validity is sampling validity. This was achieved by developing a list of all aspects of the population to ensure that all the domains of the concept under study were covered by the instrument. This was important because problems associated with sampling can affect the overall validity of the data collection instrument (Helmestadter, 1970).

*Sufficiency of data collection instruments.*

Interviews and documentary sources were the data collection instruments that answered the research questions of the study. In qualitative research, Creswell (2013) states that data collection instruments should include observations, interviews, documents, and audio-visual materials. The nature of the present study did not require physical artifacts such as physical trace evidence (i.e. footprints of the researched); videotapes or films of social situations, an individual or groups of individuals; sounds such as music, individual laughter, sirens etc.; ritual objects, among others. These data set was beyond the scope of this study. The issue involved in the study was the adequacy of a subsisting policy instrument that governs the attitudinal dispositions of public servants to possible gift giving corruption.

Through interviews, the researcher obtained the perceptions of leaders of CSOs on the phenomenon of interest. Through observations, I maintained daily field notes of the summaries of observed events in the course of the study, and through documents, I accessed policy instruments and reports needed to better understand the phenomenon of interest. These data collection instruments helped me to gather data to the point of redundancy, which implied that no new information would be helpful from additional data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In fact, the sufficiency of data was enhanced more by the appropriateness of my sample size, sampling procedures as well as the quality, breadth and depth of interview data as well as multiplicity of other evidences.

*Pilot study procedures.*

When I took the course: Advance Qualitative Reasoning and Analysis (RSCH 8351) in the school of Public Policy and Administration, Walden University, part of the course requirements was to carry out a qualitative mini-project of one's choice as a pilot study of his or her proposed final dissertation project. I consequently carried out a mini-project pilot study on the present research topic: "Perceptions of Unrestricted Gift giving and Integrity of Public Servants in Nigeria". To determine all the procedures for recruitment, participation and data collection, I reproduced his research questions to guide the exercise. There was no significant change between the then research questions and the present ones except few issues of semantics.

Interviews and documents were billed to be the major procedures for data collection in the pilot study. However, he utilized only email interview for the study. The choice of email interview data collection tool was predicated on distance barrier between

Nigeria where I resides and US, UK, and other countries where the participants reside. Furthermore, the participants were constituted of reasonably educated sample population that could do well with email interview protocol. As a class room pre-test project, members were advised to use their class mates for the interview. It was a convenience sampling method which entailed the use of the most available research participants, and it is said to be the least rigorous sampling technique (Opdenakker, 2006). I dispatched email Interview Protocols to 5 class mates. Four responded positively and sent back their responses to him. Unfortunately, one of them did not attach the responses to his forwarding mail. His response rate was, therefore, 60%. Email interview has the advantage of extended access to participants regardless of distance. It does not encounter disturbing background noise as could be experienced in tape or video recording of face-to-face interviews. Because of no travelling expenses, email interviews are considered more economical than face-to-face interviews. It also has the advantage of the interviewee having enough time to ruminate on the questions before responding to them. However, the disadvantages include delayed responses, and lack of social cues.

Compared with the procedures that guided this study in terms of recruitment, participation and data collection, the present procedures were carried out through interviews and documents analysis. The interviews were face-to-face approach which achieved richer harvest of data on the research interest.

*Pilot study relationship with the main study.*

The relationship between the pilot study and the main study was very close. While the purpose of the pilot study was to test the responsiveness and or effectiveness of the

data collection instrument(s) in effectively answering the research questions as well as addressing the need to determine steps to ensure quality, trustworthiness, credibility, and less bias in the then proposed research, the present study was a full blown qualitative case study covering all aspects of the research processes and procedures starting from introduction, problem statement, purpose, research questions, theoretical framework, nature of the study, operational definition of applicable terms, limitations and delimitations, significance of the study, review of related literature, research design and methodology, data collection, data analysis, presentation of results and conclusions.

On steps to ensure quality assurance of the pilot study, I ensured that the participants understood the data collection tool very well and that it was appropriate in answering the research questions (Nachmias et al., 2015). Further, the questions were constructed in open-ended typology in line with qualitative practice in order to harvest rich information based on the subjective understandings of the participants rather than their objective reflections (Creswell, 1998). The researcher ensured that his duty as the researcher did not affect the veracity of the data collected, nor his bias compromise the value and or originality of the data. The pretest result proved that the data collection instrument was effective.

It is important to state that no monetary or other enticements were given to participants in both the pilot study and the main study. In this final study, the requirements of ethical research were observed. For example, the study was approved by the Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) with the approval number # 01-03-18-0467462. It expires on January 2nd, 2019. The study was also approved by the

National Health Ethics Committee of Nigeria (NHREC) with protocol number NHREC/01/01/2007 - 24/09/2017 and approval number NHREC/01/2007 - 12/10/2017. This approval dates from 12/10/2017 to 11/10/2018.

*Information collected for each research question.*

A coherent qualitative design is one in which other components of the design fit together with the methodological approach and yields a workable and productive study (Maxwell, 2013). The most important aspect of my design requirement was that it must lead to a critical connection with the operating research questions (Creswell, 2013). Maxwell describes this connection to the research question as “empirical connection and not a logical one” (p. 116).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used a matrix as a tool to show where the data were collected, who collected the data, and how the data were recorded. Upon approval of the Walden University's IRB Board and the National Health Research Ethics Committee of Nigeria (NHREC), the researcher as the main data collector gathered the data from the leaders of the 5 CSOs in the research setting for a period of about 62 days. The data collection process took a number of iterations through follow-up procedures depending on need for new perspectives, clarifications, confirmatory insights, and bridging gaps in information already provided until he reached data saturation point or redundancy.

The matrix below shows the coherence and compatibility of the research design to demonstrate how each of the components of the design helped to answer each of the operating research questions. Maxwell (2013) defines matrix (matrices as plural) as a



“strategy for developing, and displaying, the design of your research (p. 13). It shows how each research question is connected to specific goals, methods and issues of quality of the study. The matrix below (Table 3) shows how the research method is linked to the research questions in such a way that it revealed what information was collected for each research question.

Table 3

*Matrix for the Study of Perceptions of Unrestricted Gift giving and Integrity of Public servants*

S/ N	Research Questions (What to be known)	Why should I know	Sampling Decision (Where is the data?)	Data Collection methods – which data answer the questions?	Who gives access?	Data Analysis
1	What are the perceptions about integrity and corruption in relation to unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants between level 15 and above?	Leaders of CSOs are involved in the policy process and they are great influencers of public opinion	Accredited leaders of CSOs in the research setting since 2007	Interviews; public documents, and personal reflections from interviews	Two participants from five selected CSOs	Audio taping; transcription; coding; re-reaching; other readers.
2	What do members of civil society organizations in a particular territory in Nigeria perceive as issues related to the cultural practice of unrestricted gift	To better understand how the practice is assessed and perceived by the leaders of CSOs	Accredited leaders of CSOs in the concerned territory in Nigeria since 2007;	Interviews; public documents, and personal reflections from interviews	Two participants from five selected CSOs	Coding and thematic analysis, memoing; field notes.

	giving to federal public servants in the referenced territory between grade levels 15 and above?		sample reports; documents reviewed			
3	What do leaders of civil society organizations in a particular territory in Nigeria perceive may be appropriate policies needed to address issues related to the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in the referenced territory in Nigeria between grade levels 15 and above?	To understand what recommendations can solve issues identified in questions 1 and 2	Accredited leaders of CSOs in the particular territory in Nigeria since 2007; Documents reviewed	Interviews; public documents, personal reflections from interviews	Two participants from Leadership of the concerned CSOs	Ongoing analysis; categorization; narrative analysis.

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**Note:** The researcher's Tabular representation of Matrix for the Study of Perceptions of Unrestricted Gift giving and Integrity of Public Servants, 2018.

*How participants exit the study.*

The participants of the study, in the first instance, were two interviewees from each of the five Civil Society Organizations so selected. Getting them to buy into my project and provide the researcher with rich data consummated a number of agreements. How the participants exited the study, therefore, required my development of a strategy to

guide the exercise (Riley, Evans, Griffin, Morey & Murphy, 2015). This entailed working out a productive and cordial way of ending the research relationship. To this end, I reached out to each and every one of the leaders of the CSOs in their various offices to thank them immensely for their cooperation. I used the opportunity also to review the agreements he reached with them before commencing the data collection effort. I assured them that their contributions to knowledge in the field of the public policy and administration were acknowledged. Also covered in the exit event were issues of research honesty and trust, integrity and quality, confidentiality and anonymity, and a commitment to ensure that the study would be utilized for good cause and not for evil (Creswell, 1998).

Because the phenomenon under study was at the center of public service ethics, anti-corruption, transparency, good governance, and integrity in the public service which were in tandem with the advocacy thrusts of the CSOs, I worked out a modality with them on how both parties could use the evidence-based research information on gift giving policy regulations in the public service of the major territory in Nigeria to create awareness through advocacy campaigns for a better administered and managed public service of Nigeria. I promised to make the research report available to them when it is ready. Both parties agreed to leave their communications open for further collaborative engagement.

*Follow up procedures for participants.*

Member-checking and rechecking the data during the data gathering process was the basic aim of follow up procedures for participants. To implement this, I asked the

participants to review the synopsis of his interpretations of their responses with a view to finding out whether they actually incorporated the intended meaning of their responses. Follow-up procedure with participants is an essential process for a successful research. Maxwell (2013) reveals that gaining access to the researched is one thing, but establishing a cordial relationship with them that can allow you to ethically obtain all the necessary information to enable you answer your research questions, is yet another. The follow-up procedures were conducted both during and after the conduct of the research (Creswell, 1998). Creswell also explains that the essence of follow-up procedure is to improve on the over-all efficiency and effectiveness of the research effort.

Miles et al. (2014) state that a number of reasons inform follow-up procedures which include: the need to review new developments in the course of the study, seek clarifications on collated data; consummate an end in a given research study; fulfill a promise made on the onset of the engagement, meet up with the requirements of the institutional review and protocols for a study especially one exceeding 1 year; ensure that the set objectives or stated milestone are being realized, among others. In this study, I conducted follow-up procedures to enable him review developments in the process of carrying out the study, seek meaningful clarifications about irregular or ambiguous data, guarantee efficiency and effectiveness of the research effort and sustain a mutually beneficial research relationship.

### **Data Analysis**

In qualitative research, the first stage of data analysis theoretically begins at the onset of data collection (Goulding, 2002). The data collected were transcripts from

interviews, relevant information from public documents, and reflective notes from observed events and happenings in the course of the research. Focus group protocol, video-tape, artifacts, archival materials, and other kinds of data collection instruments were not used in this study.

### **Data and Research Questions**

The aforementioned data sets answered research questions on the perceptions of the leaders of the CSOs on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service in relation to the integrity of the public servants. I read these mass of data several times until I became immersed in it in order to make sense of the entire data. This process is called “reading and memoing” (Creswell, 1998, p. 143). Moustakas (1994) suggests a seven-step qualitative data analysis method for textual data. These steps are: itemizing textual information in groupings; minimizing as well as removing invariant ideas of the occurrence; assembling central part of the themes; scrutinizing for forms contradictory to the interview transcript; building structured depiction of experiences by each participant; constructing a structured description arising from the textual data, and applying each participant’s textual and structured description of the data from the shared interviews. I went through these steps.

#### **Type of and procedure for coding.**

While reading, I made reflective notes at the margin of the records and articulated preliminary findings in the form of a memo. These were “short phrases, ideas, or key concepts that occurred to me” (Creswell, 1998, p.144). Preliminary codes were developed and initial findings were sent to nominated participants for their comments. I utilized data

analysis procedures suggested by Creswell (2013) and Stake (1995) in respect of qualitative case study. These procedural tasks include “data management; reading and memo writing; description, classification and interpretation; and representation” (Stake, 1995, p. 27). In order to ensure that the expected large volume of data gathered was well managed, I developed a list of all data collected, and organized them into files according to topics and themes and then domiciled them in folders. I further developed methodical codes using letters and numbers to represent the topics and themes as a locating system for easy reclamation and analysis (Creswell, 2009; 2013).

All these guided me in deciding how the various types of data collected were responsive in answering each of the 3 research questions and follow-up questions guiding this study.

#### *Sorting and coding of data.*

In this second stage of data analysis, based on the data collected (transcripts from interviews, documents, and reflective notes), and documented initial findings in the form of memos, I commenced the process of coding development. To aid the process, I moved the entire data into the NVivo10® software by QSR International for computer aided data structuring. Besides, he used the Creswell’s (1998) “constant comparative approach” in the analysis. By means of this approach, I read all the data intensely and repeatedly for new insights until they were saturated, and no further meaning or insight emerged. I then developed initial codes. These codes were ideas resulting from the data in abstraction through a repetitive process. The initial codes were further regrouped with related ideas joined to form categories. The categories and codes were “compared and contrasted” to

develop new perceptions to form further codes. This was iteratively done until the data was saturated. These categories were applied to the research questions to offer understanding of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants in Nigeria.

“Description, classification, and interpretation of the data” (Creswell, 1998, p. 147) is the third stage of data analysis. This requires that I chart a methodical process of defining what is perceived from the data, develops categories and themes, defines the emerging themes and concepts, and makes claims and conclusions from the data derived from “hunches, insights, intuition, an interpretation within social sciences constructs or ideas or a combination of personal views as contrasted with a social science construct or idea” (p.145). This was observed. Procedurally, qualitative data analysis should be grounded in “detailed description” (i.e. exhaustive explanation); “categorical aggregation” (i.e. findings from multiple sources); “direct interpretation” (i.e. findings from single instances); “correspondence and patterns” (i.e. matching categories to establish patterns or a trend); and evolution of “naturalistic generalization” (i.e. assertions and conclusions based on the researcher’s encounter with the data) (Creswell, 1998; Stake, 1995).

For the purpose of this study, I used the process of “detailed description” to present the “facts” of the case and its contexts as revealed by the data. I employed the process of “categorical aggregation”, to identify ideas from various sources and classify them into categories and themes as denotations from the data (i.e. diverse forms of evidence). In order to detect evidence from a single case as “meaning”, I employed the

tool of direct interpretation. I did this through a lone instance of what a participant said; an idea which appeared in the documents once, and an observation a participant made in a single instance. I similarly matched categories to produce patterns. I interpreted the data, made declarations and conclusions grounded on “insights” to aid the understanding of the perceptions of the leaders of CSOs on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants. The fourth and final stage in the data analysis comprised documentation and presentation of evidence established in the data by way of a matrix or figure so as to make the analysis public.

*Software for data analysis.*

I employed computer software programs for my data analysis. Sinkovics and Alfoldi (2012) indicate that computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software plays a vital role in "enhancing trustworthiness through the organizing process" (p. 39). Data analysis software can manage and document the process more successfully.

Miles and Hubberman (1984) listed 14 functional benefits of the use of computer software programs in a qualitative research. These are: note-taking in the field, scripting of field notes, editing tasks, categorizations, preserving data bases, searching and recovering of information, data association, reflective memo writing, content analysis of data, showing of array of data, explanatory function of drawing conclusion and verification, theory development and building, graphic mapping, and final report writing. I took maximum advantage of these functional benefits of computer software programs. There were, however, challenges attendant to linking qualitative data analysis with interpreting the information (Baxter & Jack, (2008).



Interviewing and observing people usually end up in the gathering of data in the form of texts. Data analysis entails the inductive examination of recurrent themes, patterns, or concepts and then transmuting them into perfect and succinct interpretation (Nassaji, 2015). The goal of the interview process was to report the perceptions of leaders of CSOs on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants. Computer software programs were a great asset in data analysis for this study.

I used a Sony Model ICDPX333® digital recorder as well as Sony Sound Organizer 1.6® software to help me in recording the interviews. I uploaded the transcriptions produced from the interviews into TranscribeMe® software. The word-based data from TranscribeMe® was further uploaded into QSR-NVivo10® by QSR International (Smith & Firth, 2011) for the purposes of organizing the data. The word-based data from the interviews was similarly exported into QSR-NVivo10® software for the generation of themes and demonstration of the results.

*Treatment for discrepant cases.*

An exploration for discrepant findings or disconfirming data was necessary to fight confirmatory bias and to shun a quick recourse to one way interpretation of data (Licoln & Guba, 1985). I used discrepant case sampling as a method of elaborating, modifying, or refining a theoretical point of view (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Hackett (2010) states that discrepant cases are closely related to negative cases in that both cases do not fit the subsisting theory; the former modifies or refines while the later contradicts or refutes.

In this case study, I treated discrepant cases of interview data and documents through proper data interrogation which was facilitated by detailed verification and quality check. "Searching for convergence of information" is recommended for handling discrepant cases (Creswell, 1998, p. 2013). I employed the use of quality standard measures such as "multiple sources of data, rich thick description, member checking and peer review" to verify the research findings (Creswell, 1998). For interview data in particular, I used multiple sources of data to substantiate research findings wherein he collaborated claims and understood meanings that came forward from diverse categories of participants. I also validated data from semi-structured interviews by implementing the method of epoché. Moustakas (1994) defines epoché as a technique employed by researchers to increase academic rigor and eliminate preconceived notion one may have about an experience.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

#### **Credibility**

There are many acceptable ways of validating qualitative findings. Creswell (1998) states that the procedures for validating qualitative findings differ from standard procedures in quantitative research in terms of meaning and processes. Creswell explains that some researchers in the qualitative tradition have always established "qualitative equivalents that parallel traditional quantitative approaches to validity" (p.197). The language of quantitative research is framed in the positivist tradition while that of qualitative research is grounded in social constructivism (Patton, 2015). McReynolds et al. (2001) explain that qualitative tradition uses the terms "credibility", "trustworthiness"

and “authenticity” in place of reliability and validity. Verification for validity is used as a distinct methodological approach to orient qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2013. “Validity is not the triangle - a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object ... but a process resembling crystallization” (Richardson as cited in Leisner, 2005, p. 60). Qualitative researchers are in agreement that qualitative findings should be validated through the processes of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Creswell, 2013; Leisner, 2005; Trochim, 2001). In this study, I verified credibility through triangulation by using different sources for data collection, prolonged contact with the participants, member checks, saturation, reflexivity as well as peer-review or debriefing.

### **Transferability**

Describing the phenomenon of interest from the point of view of those who experienced it is the goal of qualitative study. Therefore, transferability demands that I as the researcher should provide detailed characteristics of what was investigated. This will allow for external valuation to be made as to whether the findings are transferrable elsewhere. The decision to transfer does not lie with the researcher; but he/she should provide necessary information to make such assessment possible. Consequently, I provided detailed characteristics of the subject studied, and worked with conflicting data. For a case study such as this, Creswell (1998) encourages detailed verification or quality check, and “searching for convergence of information” (p. 213). In this study, I used various sources of data, rich thick description, member checking and debriefing and peer review to authenticate the findings (Creswell, 1998).

**Dependability.**

Dependability involves indicating and reporting on the changing contexts of the study and how the changes impact the findings. This requires me to document procedures adopted to collaborate and confirm the findings (Trochim, 2001). To achieve dependability, Denzin (1970) recommends the use of audit trails and triangulation. The author suggested four possible types of triangulation: (1) data triangulation or gathering data through numerous sampling strategies, (2) investigator triangulation or using more than one researcher to collect and interpret data, (3) theoretical triangulation or the application of more than one theoretical position in data interpretation, and (4) methodological triangulation or use of multiple methods of data collection. I used data triangulation through the application of semi-structured interviews and documents analysis.

Through the use of multiple sources of data, the researcher obtained confirmation of findings by collaborating statements and interpretations that were obtained from different groups of participants. Initial findings were shared with selected participants to assess their responsiveness to participants' experiences. I provided an exhaustive description of the phenomenon being studied to enable assessment be made in respect of possible generalization elsewhere. I further subjected the findings to a peer review by a professional colleague or an academic for appraisal and the feedback was incorporated into my report.

### *Confirmability.*

The requirement of confirmability demands that I document all procedures adopted to collaborate and authenticate the research findings (Trochim, 2001). In this study, confirmability was assured by using rich thick descriptions from the study participants as well as reflexivity. I included verbatim records of each interview to provide appropriate and detailed rich data. I took notes during the interview, used the interview protocol to document developments, and during data analysis, I highlighted themes as they emerged. I also used direct quotes to deliver a rich detailed description of the data from the participant's point of view. Through reflexivity, I engaged myself in a conscious self-reflection while analyzing the results.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) define confirmability as the amount of neutrality exercised in reporting the study findings guided by the interests of both the participants and the researcher. To this end, I used the process of member checking and rechecking the data during the data collection process. I asked the participants to appraise the summaries of my interpretations of their responses with a view to finding out whether they actually captured the intended meaning of their responses. In all issues of qualitative trustworthiness, researchers such as Creswell (1998; 2009, 2013); Hall and Rist (1999); McReynolds et al. (2001) recommend the use of field notes and memos, debriefing or peer review, clarifying the researcher's bias, prolonged engagement and persistent field observation, providing rich thick description, use of external audit, and working with conflicting data.

*Intra and inter coder reliability.*

Coding of the data for analysis began immediately data collection commenced (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This early commencement was carried out to assist the researcher to ruminate upon the data collected and fine-tune strategies for collecting new ones, usually better data. This practice made data analysis a continuous event that invigorated further field work process. Intra and Inter-coder reliability is an iterative coding process between two or more coders during which low agreement “in a finite number of coding rounds” is corrected leading to an agreeable levels of inter-coder reliability (Miles et al. 2014, p. 71). In this study, I engaged two coders who carried out the task of coding iteratively in order to produce an acceptable agreement between them. Intra and inter-coder reliability demands that other interpreters other than the first coder be allowed to code the same text to avoid biased interpretation and associated risks of random error. Beyond the two coders engaged, I was the principal coder and supervisor of all the coding exercises. In doing this, I ensured that we developed a codebook that clarified terms and definitions so that all my research assistants involved in the coding exercise understood them and were able to eliminate redundant codes as well as codes with repetitive definitions. I endeavored to achieve intra and inter-coder reliability through building coding consensus that was promoted by effective supervision, one-on-one persuasion, congruity, coding skill development, and evolution of specific system of policy frame work to regulate the analysis (Conger, 1980).

### **Ethical Procedures**

In the words of Damianakis and Woodford (2012) "qualitative researchers have a two-fold priorities when conducting a study; the first is producing knowledge from the actual research and the second is upholding ethical principles and standards" (p. 23). McCormack et al. (2012) state that such formal assessments through ethical boards are also applicable to smaller scale research. Wester (2011) advises that ethical research should seek to protect vulnerable populations, respect persons, guarantee autonomy, and uphold justice.

In this study, I took steps to minimize risks and protect participants and stakeholders' welfare. I ensured informants' participation was voluntary; they were provided with enough information about the nature of their participation, including possible risks if any; the interview protocol and informed consent form provided much information including willingness to withdraw at will. The research was conducted with maximum possible benefits to the participants and the stakeholders, and with minimal possible harm (Walden University Institutional Review Board. (n.d.). The researcher had the participants sign consent forms which contained both the IRB approval for him to commence data collection as well as that of the National Health Research Ethics Committee of Nigeria (NHREC) to conduct ethical research in Nigeria. Above all, I conformed to the ethical requirements of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Walden University, Center for Research Quality (n.d.).

The data storage and disposal process involve hoarding all data on a portable flash drive in a locked fire-proof safe, and this has been done waiting for the data life span of 5

years before shredding all paper data. Similarly, all computer and electronic data files would be deleted from hard drives and digital devices. I did not offer monetary or other incentives to the participants.

### **Institutional Permissions**

In the event of the 1991 uniform US federal policy on common rule for the protection of human subjects in carrying out research, federal agencies, institutions and individual researchers are required to comply by establishing Institutional Review Boards (IRB). In Walden University, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for ethical standards in research ensures that all Walden University research is conducted in compliance with the university's ethical standards as well as the U.S. federal regulations. To this effect, IRB approval is a condition precedent before a researcher collects data, including pilot data. According to the Walden University Review Board (n. d.), Walden University does not take responsibility for research conducted without IRB's approval, and no credit will be awarded to students whose works fail to comply with the laid down policies and procedures concerning the university's ethical standards in research. Consequently, all students and faculty members embarking on any research project involving collection of data should apply to the IRB for consideration for approval. However, literature reviews, hypothetical research designs, and faculty projects which are entirely independent of Walden resources, participants and funding do not need to go through the IRB approval.

This study was approved by the Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) with the approval number # 01-03-18-0467462. It expires on January 2nd, 2019. The study was also approved by the National Health Research Ethics Committee of



Nigeria (NHREC) with protocol number NHREC/01/01/2007 - 24/09/2017 and approval number NHREC/01/2007 - 12/10/2017. This approval dates from 12/10/2017 to 11/10/2018.

**Recruitment of materials ethical concerns.**

The procedures for the recruitment materials and ethical concerns were successively carried out as follows:

1. Prior to visiting the leaders of the CSOs in their various offices, I contacted their officers through phone numbers provided in the websites of the Bureau for public procurement (BPP) being the government agency which accredits the CSOs for the purpose of observing public procurement processes.
2. I scheduled meetings with the leaders of CSOs so contacted so as to seek their buy-in and participation in the study
3. I attended the scheduled meetings during which he presented them with the letter of introduction and recruitment
4. On obtaining their letters of cooperation, I scheduled interview appointments
5. On the occasion of the interview, I provided them with the consent form for review and endorsement.
6. Prior to interview sessions, I took them through the consent form to ensure proper understanding. I sought and made all clarifications and answered questions that arose. Then I sought their consent to use audio-video tape recorder.
7. I took all the questions one after the other and sought clarifications where needed.

8. I recruited two knowledgeable research assistants in qualitative method to assist in validating themes that emerged from the transcripts.
9. Subsequent interviews were carried out in an individual format to provide extra validation that the results actually represented the authentic views of the leaders of the CSOs.
10. All issues relating to material/resource recruitment were treated with good ethical practice.

*Data collection ethical concern*

Choosing the correct technique and carefully planning for all aspects concerned with data collection is the key to a successful qualitative research (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Qualitative study thrives in amassing large volume of data from multiple sources (Creswell, 2013). Whether interviews or documentary sources including archival data, the researcher needs to guarantee the ethical protection of the research participants in order to obtain the cooperation and buy-in into the project. Data collection could pose serious challenge when large amount of data is to be managed (Yu, Abdullah & Saat, 2014). The authors further argue that researchers using only the interview format run the risk of poor results. The use of concurrent supplementary documents and fieldwork, however, appears too rigorous and demanding; but researchers favoring limited sources of data at times misread qualitative research techniques (Marshall et al. (2013; Nijhawan et al., 2013).

The participants in this study were adult males and females who were leaders relevant CSOs in the particular territory in Nigeria. There was no known harm that was associated with the participation of the informants. However, I made arrangement prior to

the interview for referral services within the interview neighborhood in case a participant experienced any harm in the course of participating in the study. The conduct of the interview was guided by the contents of the consent form which every interviewee signed. This included early withdrawal from the interview without any qualms, protection of confidentiality of the participants etc.

*Agreements.*

Shared expectations of a research study are usually consummated between the researcher and the participants through explicit agreements (Mills, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). Mills et al. enumerated the questions on which the corresponding answers form the basis of the agreement. These questions are in respect of the time and efforts required for the research; the kind of data collection needed – interviewing, observation, journal writing, etc; whether participation is voluntary or not; who designs and steers the study, how the confidentiality of the materials from the participants be protected; what of the anonymity of the participants; from whom will the descriptive and explanatory products be produced; will the participants review and appraise the initial and final reports; and what benefits are accruable to both participants and researcher (p.57). I reached agreements with the participants on these issues raised.

Nijhawan et al. (2013) emphasize the role of informed consent for qualitative interviews. He says that its role in the ethics of dealing with human subjects in conducting research is made clear in The Belmont Report, and it is an obligation in respect of some research procedures involving human beings as subjects for study. Obtaining informed consent requires counseling the participants about his or her rights,

the rationale of the study, procedures undertaken, rights to withdraw from the study at will, and the assurance of confidentiality (Nijhawan et al., 2013).

*Confidentiality of data.*

Data collected for this study came from two sets; interviews and documents. Interviews were conducted with two interviewees from each of the five CSOs who fulfilled the requirements for the study selection. Building trust with the informants is very crucial in securing the required necessary cooperation. If proper buy-in of the informants is achieved, it is expected that they would give their best in providing rich data. I achieved this buy-in through professional rapprochement, understanding and mutual trust. Any agreement reached on the anonymity or confidentiality of any data was respected. Anonymity or confidentiality of participants (as required by the consent form) was guaranteed through assigning letters in place of their names, and data obtained were kept under my secured protection. The use of public documents such as Nigerian constitution, CCB and ICPC Acts, and media websites did not constitute any special treatment because they are "public". However, Gibbons (2015) and Yin (2014) recommend that a qualitative case study researcher should collect data from additional sources including documentation and archival records. Bryde, Broquetas and Volm (2013) state that documentation including archival records is advantageous because participants can provide access to these information that may not be available through public record. One of the disadvantages of using this data set is that the data may be obsolete, incomplete, or inaccurate. The advantage, however, is that when obtained in

appropriate degree and condition, it makes for multiple rich data which is the craving of any qualitative case study researcher (Bryde et al. 2013). I did not use such data anyway.

*Data Treatment.*

The means of treating collated data, storage and protection of the informants is a major decision factor in the research process. Due to advancements in modern information management technologies, researchers are now better able to involve in important reflection, scrutiny of data, and adoption of improved data management strategies (Josselson, 2014). There must be a methodical approach a researcher should adopt to guarantee value, safety, protection, anonymity of informants, and usage of collated data (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013). The role of computer-aided qualitative data analysis software in promoting trustworthiness through efficient and effective data treatment is recognized (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012).

The data the researcher collected was moved into NVivo10® software for organization and analysis of the raw data. The NVivo10® software permitted structuring the data for coding into themes that guided further analysis using Moustakas' (1994) Van Kaam method (i.e. for analysis of textual data). The emerging themes from decoding were separated, identified and categorized. When the collated data were assembled into an electronic file, all materials were labeled appropriately and exclusively kept under my custody. For the purposes of protecting participants' identities, each participant received a distinctively assigned number of CSOAP1 and CSOAP2 for the first two participants from the first CSO, and so on. There was an alignment for each participant and all information was treated as a separate dataset. The researcher took personal control,

storage, and custody of the all data files which were locked in a fire-proof safe for a period of 5 years. Thereafter, I will shred all the paper files and delete all electronic files.

*Conflict of interest.*

In the endorsed consent form, I made public my public service background in order to avoid conflict of interest. I was not doing the research in my work environment and there was no power differential between myself as the researcher and the participants. As the main data collector, I was in close contact with the data (Goulding, 2002). I, therefore, observed several measures to deal with the possibility of subjectivity. Specifically, I maintained a high degree of consciousness about the possibility of bias and exercised impartiality throughout the process. I reported any discrepant occurrences in the course of the study. Furthermore, the research findings were subjected to member checking and peer review to improve their credibility (Goulding, 2002; Creswell, 1998). I also requested a professional colleague and an academic to review the interview transcripts, outcomes and recommendations and his feedback was integrated into the study narrative. Initial findings were shared with the participants, and their observations were also incorporated into the narrative. I also used multiple sources of data to authenticate findings and increase the reliability of research outcomes. Similarly, I was guided by the rules of engagement as contained in the informed consent form.

In light of the nature of the study in respect of probing the appropriateness of a subsisting policy instrument on gift giving in the public service, I did not offer anything of value as incentives to the participants to avoid possible misconceptions. I simply explained the potential benefits of the study to the overall good of the public service.

Also, I made use of various sources of data to interrogate the research outcomes in order to ensure that the result was credible. I also made the process of data analysis transparent for the purpose of trustworthiness.

### **Exploratory/Pilot Study**

Prior exploratory research is the best way to determine the features of other accompanying designs (Light, Singer & Willet, 1990 as quoted in Maxwell (2013). Light et al believes "no design can be so complete that it does not need improvement by a prior, small scale exploratory study" (p. 2013). I conducted a pilot study when I took the course - Qualitative Reasoning and Analysis (RSCH 8351). As part of the requirements for the course, students were required to conduct a pilot study on their chosen or would-be topic for dissertation. My topic then has not been altered; it remained the same save only a few insignificant amendments. Based on the problem statement, purpose and research questions grounding the study, the research design was chosen to be a qualitative case study, while procedures for data collection were through Interviews and documents. However, only email interview data collection procedure was utilized in view of distance barrier between me and the participants who were classmates from far away countries.

The relationship between the pilot study and the larger project was that the pilot study provided an overview of what I expected in the field. It charted the study horizon for me, and helped to test the content validity of his research questions (Nachmias et al. 2015). It fulfilled the essence of pilot study which, according to Meriwether (2001), surveys the research path and prepares the researcher on what to expect from the study. From the pilot study, I was able to witness the limitations of mail interview approach with

respect to lack of follow-up questions and verbal cues. In fact, the pilot study reinforced my decision to adopt face-to-face interview approach as a preferred option for this study.

### **Lessons from Pilot Study**

Discussing pilot study as a researcher's tentative effort meant to chart the research horizon, Norhcutt and McCoy (2004) stated: "We construct reality, not exclusively but importantly, in terms of cause and effect. We must - else our individual worlds would be chaotic jumbles of actions unrelated to consequences" (p. 169).

Apart from helping the researcher to explore the research environment and prepare him for the task involved in the just concluded research, the pilot study also provided an insight into what he expected in terms of the results of the inquiry. An interesting aspect of the result from the pilot study was participants' recommendation on appropriate policy guidelines to address issues that might arise from the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants. Two themes or trends were competitively canvassed: "Restricted value of gifts" and "Outright abolition of gift giving practice". The United States Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) approves "unsolicited gifts with a value of \$20 or less" (please see <https://www.justice.gov/jmd/do-it-right>). In fact, it has been stated that "tips" of not more than \$20 are permissible in the US public service ethics policy (Mazar & Aggrawal, 2011). The spirit and letters of the Act believe that such gifts are incapable of corruptly enriching the receiver of the gifts and accordingly may not result in impartial delivery of public service. However, Torfason, Flynn and Kupor's (2012) study suggest that there is a positive relationship between an altruistic act of tipping and an immoral act of bribery in the public service, stating that the



more a country practices tipping behavior, the more the rate of corruption in the country. However, this substantive study has produced definite results as could be seen in chapter 4 below.

### **Presentation of Result.**

The results of this study were presented using the pragmatist and or realist tradition in line with Creswell's (1998) recommendation for a case study storyline. Through this approach, I provided a detailed description with quotes from participants in addition to an interpretation within the framework of the "cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants" as well as my intellectual insights. I wrote bearing multiple audiences in mind so that I would be properly understood. The results was conveyed through the use of words, rhetoric, tables, charts, diagrams, and other visuals so as to equip the narration in arousing readers' interest and maintaining the importance of the study.

Structurally, I borrowed a leaf from Merriam's (1998) explanation that there is "no standard format for reporting a case study research". However, the author suggests striking an appropriate balance between background information and analysis on one hand, and interpretation and discussion on the other hand. She further recommends that this balance be put at 60%/40% or 70%/30% in favor of background information. Creswell (1998) agrees with this structural balance proposition but argues that the "overall intent of case study shapes the narrative structure" (p. 189); adding that essentially matters of structure of qualitative narration should be left "to writers to decide" (p.188).

Writing in Creswell (1998), Asmussen and Creswell reported of their study that applied a balance of “33% for background, 33% for themes and 33% for interpretation, discussions and conclusions” (p. 191). This means that in view of the basis of their research, Creswell and Asmussen implemented a structural balance that favored a large amount of analysis, interpretation and conclusions. In the narrative structure for this study, I was guided by the objective of the study; namely, to offer a profound understanding of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants. The study was strengthened by its richness in the mass of data generated and comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of interest in order to fill the necessary gap in the existing literature. Accordingly, the structure of study narrative was balanced as 30%/70% in favor of analysis, interpretation and discussion as against the background information.

### **Summary**

The central focus of chapter 3 was the examination of the theoretical method of inquiry and design for the study. This study sought to examine the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants in the concerned area in Nigeria. The subsisting policy guideline on gift giving in the public service of Nigeria prohibits gift giving in the public service but allows gift giving to public servants on cultural ground. While researchers have probed the social and economic problems associated with gift giving in the public service, little was known about the application of public policy mechanism to govern the practice of gifting in the public service so as to protect the integrity of the public officers. Far less was also known about assessing the

views of leaders of CSOs on this "cultural practice in relation to protecting the integrity of the public servants". Filling these gaps in the literature was the basis for this study.

Qualitative case study design was applied for his study because, according to Creswell (2013), it is the most appropriate method to “explore a real-life, contemporary bounded system ...over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and reports a case description and case themes” (p. 33). Face -to-face interviews and public documents were the methods of data collection. The interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions. The sample populations were leaders of the 18 CSOs who scaled through the selection criteria. The sample size for this study constituted 10 leaders of the five selected CSOs (i.e. two leaders per CSO) through the process of “maximum variation, critical sampling, informants' recommendation, homogenous sampling, extreme and deviant cases, and confirmatory sampling strategies” (Creswell, 1998). The collated data were coded and analyzed through Creswell’s (2013) data analysis strategy of “detailed description, categorical aggregation, direct interpretation, establishment of patterns, and naturalistic generalizations” (p. 186). The findings were validated through the “use of field notes and memos, debriefing or peer review, clarifying the researcher’s bias, prolonged engagement and persistent field observation, providing rich thick description, use of external audit, and working with conflicting data” (Creswell, 1998; 2009, 2013); Hall and Rist (1999); McReynolds et al. (2001). Presentation of narrative report followed the pragmatist approach. The rights and ethical concerns of the participants were addressed in accordance with the agreed conditions spelt out in the consent form. The theoretical

design and methodology produced the required information that contributed to the understanding of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants in Nigeria.

### **Transition**

The above theoretical design and methodology for exploring the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants in a major territory in Nigeria, provided the operational framework for data collection, data analysis, issues of trustworthiness, ethical research and means and ways of protecting the rights of participants. While the chapter outlined the qualitative method used to assist in understanding the phenomenon of interest, chapter 4 analyzed the data generated and produced findings that helped to answer the research questions guiding this study.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

In Chapter 4, I present the findings from the in-depth interviews during semi-structured interview sessions I conducted with leaders of purposefully selected ten leaders of CSOs. The purpose of the study was to gather data about the perceptions of leaders of the CSOs on the use of policy instruments to govern public service ethics of gift giving and integrity of public servants of a major territory in Nigeria. I wanted to gather information that policy-makers may use to reinforce existing public policy. The study answered the following research questions: What are the perceptions of leaders of CSOs about integrity in relation to unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in levels 15 and above? What do ten leaders of CSOs in the research setting perceive as concerns related to the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in the concerned territory who are in grade levels 15 and above? And what do ten leaders of CSOs in the research setting perceive may be appropriate policies needed to address issues related to the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in the referenced territory who are in grade levels 15 and above?

Additionally, follow-up questions were asked from the interview guide to net rich data that could help to provide adequate understanding of the phenomenon. These included what are the perceptions of the leaders of CSOs on the constitutionally guaranteed cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of the particular territory in Nigeria as per the 5th Schedule, Article 6 (3) of the Nigerian Constitution? The follow-up question also sought to find out how the leaders of CSOs

perceive this practice in relation to integrity and corruption? Further, it asked, what are the perceptions of the leaders of CSOs as to whether the practice is ethical or unethical, positive or negative? I also sought to find out the perceptions of the leaders of the CSOs on this practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service in relation to the nature of an association between gift giving and integrity?

Other follow-up questions included the perceptions of the leaders of CSOs on this practice in relation to whether the practice has the potentials to compromise the integrity of the public servant in the performance of his or her duties; lower the productivity of the public service; compromise national security; promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence; affect the ethical content of an organization; serve as a "window of opportunity for corruption"; and negate the achievement of the mandate of the public service? I also asked about the specific appropriate recommendations of the leaders of CSOs to address the potential problems that may be associated with the practice as well as any other policy recommendations they could provide.

I chose to use a qualitative method and a case study design based on my research questions, the problem statement and the purpose of the study. My aim in conducting the study was to interrogate the existing policy guideline in the public service of Nigeria which approves of the widely accepted cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service. I wanted to verify the appropriateness of this practice in protecting the integrity of the public servants as well as fighting corruption in the public service.

I deemed a qualitative method using case study design as appropriate. As Yin (2009) noted, qualitative paradigm is a fitting method to use in exploring a relatively

unknown area. For example, how leaders of CSOs perceive the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of referenced territory in Nigeria, was relatively new according to my reviewed literature, hence it was judged suitable for a case study design. Creswell (2013) describes qualitative approach as a research effort involving field work, and it is concerned about interpretation of world phenomena in practical terms.

In employing a case study design, I took into consideration the fact that case study research is a qualitative approach where the researcher studies a real-life, contemporary and circumscribed scheme over time, utilizing comprehensive data collection sources such as observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, and documents and reports. The objective is to present a case description and case themes. The unit of analysis in the case study could encompass several cases or what Creswell (2013) referred to "a multisite study" or a single case which the author also referred to as "a within site study" (p.33). In the course of my data gathering and analysis, the research approach and design as spelt out in Chapter 3 did not change because the research problem was better investigated through my chosen tradition.

In terms of chapter organization, I briefly present the process of data generation, the procedure used for gathering and recording data and the process through data were analyzed. Finally, the findings arising from the research questions are presented.

### **Overview of the Study**

According to the literature I reviewed, the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of Nigeria in relation to the integrity of public servants is relatively a new area of study. In view of this lack of research, I carried out a pilot study on the research interest. It was a small-scale preliminary study aimed at pretesting my research instrument, namely the semi-structured interview guide. The results were encouraging, because the research instrument scaled through the test of construct and face validities.

The present study was carried out in a major territory of Nigeria, because it is one of the commanding centers in Nigeria. Research participants were purposefully selected leaders of CSOs who met the seven broad selection criteria. The research setting was appropriate for the study and did not throw up any personal or organizational conditions that altered the research from its original design as presented in chapter 3.

I deemed demographic information such as age, income, education, and so forth as not necessary for my research. Thus, they were not encompassed in the research questions. The primary data collected for this study were obtained through semi-structured, open-ended, face-to-face in-depth interviews. The interview data were augmented by observations I recorded in a journal throughout the interview process. The data collected were analyzed using NVivo data management software, and by coding transcripts, organizing specific codes and themes, matching patterns for internal reliability, and building explanations and comparing these to findings from the literature review.



In keeping with appropriate processes to maintain standards set by the Walden's IRB, and the NHREC of Nigeria coupled with my heightened consciousness to mitigate bias, I established the reliability and validity of my research. However, in this qualitative inquiry, I guaranteed trustworthiness of the study through the process of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The result of the study supported the propositions of the major literature reviewed that the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service is a "window of opportunity for corruption" in the public service, and it impacts negatively on the integrity of the public sector employees.

### **Pilot Study**

In the strict sense of the word "Pilot Study", I did not carry out pilot study commissioned and approved by the Walden IRB. However, when I took the course: Advance Qualitative Reasoning and Analysis (RSCH 8351) in the school of Public Policy and Administration, Walden University, part of the course requirements was to carry out a qualitative mini-project of one's choice as a pilot study of his or her proposed final dissertation project. I did not hesitate to carry out a mini-project pilot study on the present research topic: "Perceptions of Unrestricted and Integrity of Public Servants in Nigeria". The purpose of the pilot study was to test the responsiveness and or effectiveness of my data collection instrument(s) in effectively answering the research questions as well as addressing the need to determine steps to ensure quality, trustworthiness, credibility, and less bias in the proposed research. The research questions guiding the study then had no significant difference from the present ones except few issues of semantics.

Interviews and analysis of documents were billed to be the major sources of data collection in the pilot study. However, I utilized only email for the pilot study. The choice of email interview data collection tool was based on distance barrier between Nigeria where I reside and US, UK, and other countries where the participants reside. Furthermore, the participants were constituted of reasonably educated sample population that could do well with email interview protocol. As a class room pre-test project, we were advised to use our class mates for the interview. It was a convenience sampling method which entailed the use of the most available research participants. Opdenakker (2006) considers this sampling method as the least rigorous sampling technique. I dispatched email Interview Protocols to five class mates. Four responded positively and sent back their responses to me. Unfortunately, one of them did not attach the responses to his forwarding mail. The response rate was, therefore, 60%.

The pilot impacted the main study by providing an insight into what I would expect in terms of the results of the inquiry. In the first instance, the questions were well understood by the participants (face validity). Further, the result from the pilot study showed that two themes were strongly canvassed by participants in respect of appropriate policy guidelines to address issues that might arise from the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants. The two themes and or trends were: “Restricted value of gifts” and “Outright abolition of gift giving practice”. The pilot study, therefore, helped in charting the research horizon to assist the substantive study to produce valid and reliable result. The pilot study did not lead to changes either in instrumentation or in data analysis strategies.

## Setting

The research location was major territory in Nigeria. 65% of the CSOs had their offices located in one of the modest thickly populated streets in the said territory. The offices of the remaining 35% were located in other parts of the territory and they were all accessible through mails, phone calls and physical visits. An administrative map of Nigeria is presented below.



*Figure 5. Administrative map of Nigeria showing the 36 state structure of Nigeria*

Note. The-geography.blogspot.com

Based on detailed selection criteria which formed the basis for selecting the CSOs whose leaders constituted the research participants, there was no factor, personal or organizational, that negatively affected the participants or their experience at the time of study that might impact negatively on the interpretation of the study results. The

participants expressed their views frankly and without fear or favor, and the researcher attributed this to the fact that the CSOs whose leaders were selected for the study were not funded by the government of Nigeria or any of its agencies. The background of the leaders of selected CSOs as active participants in the policy process and advocates of anti-corruption in the public service might have made it possible for them to address the research questions creditably well.

### **Demographic Data**

None of my research questions guiding the interview captured basic demographic information from each participant. 10 participants participated for the face-to-face open-ended in-depth interviews. The research phenomenon was a relatively unexplored area of research; hence my primary concern was to purposefully recruit participants who could avail me of rich data on the research interest, and not to achieve representation on the basis of sex, age, income, or the dynamic balance of the population. In terms of the demographic information, I was careful not to collect any data that would potentially identify the participants in keeping with the terms of the endorsed Letter of Consent. However, in the course of the interview, I was able to discover that out of 10 participants, seven were males while three were females. Table 4 below represents the sex statistic of the participants.

Table 4

*Gender Statistic of Participants*

<b>Name of CSO</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>CSO A</b>	<b>P1</b>	<b>P1</b>
<b>CSO B</b>	<b>P2</b>	-
<b>CSO C</b>	<b>P2</b>	-
<b>CSO D</b>	<b>P1</b>	<b>P1</b>
<b>CSO E</b>	<b>P1</b>	<b>P1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>P7</b>	<b>P3</b>

Note. *The ratio of male participants to female participants was 7:3 or 70% to 30%*

However, all participants in the research were adult Nigerians whose CSOs enjoyed accreditation by the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) in 2007. The Bureau for Public Procurement is charged with the responsibility of accrediting CSOs for the purpose of monitoring public procurement processes and contract bid openings. By implication, the Nigerian government considers these CSOs as potential watch dogs of the government activities. Additionally, the parent CSOs whose leaders were participants had their head offices located in research setting and they also operate in the area. Instructively, living and experiencing a phenomenon in its setting is necessary in qualitative research since the approach is a situated activity where the participants are located in the field. Moreover, this research approach is concerned about understanding the world phenomena in realistic terms (Creswell, 2013, p. 46).

Another factor relating to participants' segmentation was that the research participants were selected from CSOs that had operated in the research setting for 10 years or more. The implication was that the concerned CSOs would have been accredited and registered by the Bureau for Public Procurement (BPP) in 2007. I accessed the accredited CSOs for 2007 via:

[http://www.bpp.gov.ng/index.php?option=com\\_joomdoc&view=documents&path=CSO\\_LIST.pdf&Itemid=569](http://www.bpp.gov.ng/index.php?option=com_joomdoc&view=documents&path=CSO_LIST.pdf&Itemid=569)). The inclusion of this demographic criterion was to recruit participants who could explore a real-life, contemporary bounded system of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of the concerned territory in Nigeria as it affects the integrity of the public servants. According to Creswell (2013), participants have to study a research phenomenon over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information such as observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, and documents and reports. This would enable the participants report the case description and case themes. The researcher considered 10 years as reasonable time frame to experience the phenomenon of interest.

The participants' backgrounds in terms of their advocacy thrusts were also considered. The study recruited participants from CSOs whose mission statements and or advocacy campaigns were oriented towards anti-corruption, transparency and good governance in the public service. The researcher identified this through the recommendations of my community partners and through accessing their websites, reading their fliers and or introductory pamphlets. This enabled him to recruit participants that were versatile and knowledgeable about the research interest. Additionally, for the

purpose of getting research participants that could courageously and objectively answer my research questions, consideration was specifically given to leaders of CSOs that do not depend on any agency of Nigerian government for their funding. I determined this through reading funding information provided in their websites, fliers and or introductory pamphlets as well as recommendations from my research community partners. Finally, the participants for this study were accessible to me. I then reached them through their email and website addresses, phone calls and personal visits. They were also proficient in English language as they could read, write, speak, and understand English language very well. This saved me the trouble of translating the research questions as well as the Letter of Consent into local languages.

### **Data Collection**

Interview data and personal reflection field reports were collected from 10 purposefully selected leaders of five CSOs (i.e. n=10). Two participants were recruited from each of the five CSOs. These participants were invited to participate in this study because they belonged to civil society organizations that met set criteria, and they were further recommended by members of their CSOs as leaders who had knowledge and experience related to the topic being studied. For example, they were invited to participate in the study based on the following: 1. Accreditation: they were leaders whose CSOs were registered by the Bureau for public procurement (BPP) in 2007 which implied that they belonged to government-recognized CSOs. BPP is charged with the responsibility of accrediting CSOs for the purpose of monitoring procurement processes and bid opening by the federal government agencies. 2. Office location and operation:

they were leaders whose CSOs had their offices located in the research setting and were operating in therein, which suggested they were conversant with the research setting. 3. Length of operation in research setting: they were leaders who had been serving in their various organizations for the past 10 years, which suggested they might be conversant with the nature of gift giving practice in the public service of the particular territory in Nigeria. 4. Mission statements or Advocacy thrusts: they were leaders whose CSOs had their mission statements or advocacy thrusts slanted towards anti-corruption, transparency and good governance in the public service, which suggested they might discuss the research interest with ease. 5. Independent funding: they were leaders whose CSOs were not dependent on Nigerian government for funding, which suggested they might bare your minds on the research interest without hesitation. 6. Accessibility: they were leaders whose CSOs' website/email addresses or physical location were easily accessible by the researcher, which suggested the researcher might access them for follow-up questions or clarifications when required, and 7. English language fluency: they were leaders of CSOs who could read, write, speak, and understand English language well, which suggested they would understand the research questions well and would not require further translation of the research questions and consent form into local languages.

Damianakis and Woodford (2012) indicated that qualitative researchers must endeavor to uphold ethical principles and standards. McCormack et al. (2012) added that similar to formal evaluations through ethical boards, all research on human subjects should ensure that the research is conducted in strict observance of specific ethical



standards in relation to protection of vulnerable populations, respect for persons, autonomy, and justice, among other such important ethical principles to adhere to. To protect participants' identity, and for the purposes of confidentiality of both the CSOs and the participants, the five CSOs were identified as CSOA, CSOB, CSOC, CSOD, and CSOE, while the two participants from each CSOA were identified as CSOAP1 and CSOAP2. The two participants from CSOB, were identified as CSOBP1 and CSOBP2, ditto for other CSOs up to CSOEP1 and CSOEP2 respectively.

Saturation is a standard for qualitative investigation (Morse et al., 2014; Rabinovich Kacen (2013). Rabinovich and Kacen (2013) further stated that saturation occurs when additional analysis does not yield any additional information, that is, data redundancy. They maintained that tools applied during the interview process can uncover most of the core categories facilitating saturation. Researchers perceive saturation valuable toward giving expression to social, moral, and political values (Gergen et al., 2015). To achieve data saturation, and in recognition of the fact that quite a number of qualitative case study design approaches require a specific protocol involving data collection and data representations (Nolen & Talbert, 2011), I as the researcher in this qualitative study as well as the chief investigator, relied largely on semi-structured interview technique as the major instrument for data collection. The interview protocol provided a dependable guide for all of the interviews in the study (please see B). To ensure the validity of the study, I employed the method of epoché via the semi-structured interviews. Moustakas (1994) explains that epoché is a technique used by researchers to reduce bias one may have regarding the research interest. Being aware of potential biases,

the researcher can set them aside to view the phenomena under investigation from a new perspective. The implementation of epoché by a researcher leads to increase in academic rigor all through the research project (Yu, 2014).

### **Location, Frequency, and Duration**

Before going to the respective offices of the CSOs to begin data collection, I contacted each and every one of the selected leaders to book appointments with them. On the appointed date, I called each of them to re-confirm the appointment. Six of the interviews held in the respective offices of the CSOs, two held in a serene environment in a secluded spot of a recreation garden, but at different dates; while the last held at a different recreation garden that enjoyed similar serenity. All interview appointments, dates, time and venues were fixed at the convenience of the participants. Each interview lasted for approximately 60 minutes. In general, the participants considered the study very essential for the wellbeing of Nigeria, and consequently were very supportive by sharing their experiences. They were very passionate about fighting corruption in the public sector in line with the advocacy drive of their respective CSOs. In one particular case, however, one participant (CSOCP2) declined to grant an interview on the basis that he would not like to speak on the subject on personal grounds. He was replaced by another participant from the same CSOC based on further recommendation from the community partners.

Each interview session usually began with greetings, a brief personal introduction, and review of the research topic. In each case, I appreciated the participant for volunteering and taking the time to permit the interview. I would present the consent

form for reading and endorsement. Thereafter, a brief review of the signed consent form would follow to ensure complete understanding and cooperation. Where any interviewees had any questions or clarifications, he provided them. When the interview was to start formally, I would inform the participants that a digital recorder was being turned on and he would note the date, time, and location. A Sony Model ICD-PX333® digital recorder and Sony Sound Organizer 1.6® software aided me with recording the interviews. The coding identification of the interviewee was indicated verbally and written on the actual consent form. The interview would then begin. The approximate time for each of the interviews was 60 minutes. The questions were used in sequence, and he paused after each question was asked to ensure the participants understood the question. Follow-up questions were asked where necessary. If they did not want to answer any particular question, they were asked to do so freely without giving reason why they did not want to answer the given question. At the end of the interview, he thanked the interviewees again for taking the time to participate in the study.

The interview sessions were guided by a graphic representation of the central concept upon which the study was based, namely: the regulatory provisions currently applicable to gift giving and receiving of gifts in the public service of Nigeria, as captured in Table 5 below:

Table 5

*Regulatory Provisions Currently Applicable to Gift giving and Receiving in the Public Service of Nigeria.*

<b>Fifth Schedule, Part 1 of 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as Amended)</b>	
<b>Provisions</b>	<b>Contents</b>
<b>Fifth Schedule</b>	A public officer shall not ask for or accept any property or benefit of any kind for himself or any other person on account of anything done or omitted to be done by him in the discharge of his duties.
<b>Article 6 (1)</b>	For the purpose of sub-paragraph '1' of this paragraph the receipt by a public officer of any gifts or benefits from commercial firms, business enterprises or persons who have contracts with the government shall be presumed to have been received in contravention of the said sub-paragraph unless the contrary is proved.
<b>Article 6 (2)</b>	A public officer shall only accept personal gifts or benefit from relatives or personal
<b>Article 6 (3)</b>	Friends to such extent and on such occasions as are recognized by custom” (p. 207).

Throughout the interview sessions, I was guided by Marshall et al.'s (2013) recommendation that data collection procedure should not be routine so that experienced interviewers take advantage of unexpected opportunities during the interaction. The scholars also recommended for an element of caution during the interview so that the interviewer does not influence the discussion toward a biased position. These observances guided my data collection practices which paved way for my semi-structured interviews to harvest positive, negative, and mixed answers from the research participants (Damianakis & Woodford, 2012).

Documents analyzed for the purposes of information gathering included Constitution of Nigeria (1999 as amended); enabling laws for the establishment of Code of Conduct Bureau and the Code of Conduct Tribunal of 1979; Code of Conduct for Public Officers (Fifth Schedule, Part 1 of Nigerian Constitution, 1999 (as amended); Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) of 2000 to date, and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) of 2003 to date. These were well covered in the review of related literature, and they were further reflected on during data collection and analysis. The data collection processes and procedures were iterative involving new perspectives, clarifications, confirmatory insights, and bridging gaps in information already provided until data saturation was reached. This covered a period of 62 days.

#### **Recording of data.**

During the interviews, I seized every available opportunity to observe and record participants' demeanor. Participants answered the questions very passionately and exhibited great emotion in their rendition of the accounts (Researcher's Field Notes, 2017). I tape-recorded all the interviews and transcribed them, save one incident where the respondent pointed out that he would wish not to be tape-recorded for personal reasons. Consequently, I took down copious notes and transcribed them immediately after the interview. I maintained a reflective journal throughout the study to keep track of emergent meanings; hence he captured field observations made throughout the study, including participant's nonverbal reactions as well as my general perceptions during fieldwork. Each audio recording was then transcribed verbatim and saved in a word

document. At the time of transcription, I included reflective notes while listening and transcribing the interviews. The excerpts from interview transcript are attached to this study (Appendix C).

***Variations in data collection and unusual circumstances.***

There were no variations in data collection from the plan the researcher presented in chapter 3 because I utilized semi-structured, open-ended and in-depth interviews as the primary source of data collection. The interview procedure was face-to-face interaction and the interactions were recorded with the consent of the interviewees (Damianakis & Woodford, 2012). Similarly, there were no unusual circumstances encountered in the data collection efforts apart from a participant declining to speak on the phenomenon for personal reasons and another not permitting to have his interview recorded on tape.

**Data Analysis**

A distinguishing characteristic of the qualitative research paradigm is that data analysis ideally begins with the commencement of data collection (Goulding, 2002). Even though qualitative data management software helps to manage data in a systematic way, it does not analyze data (Center for research Quality, Walden, n. d.). I utilized QSR-NVivo10® for systematic management of my data. The transcriptions developed from the interviews were uploaded into TranscribeMe® software. The textual data from TranscribeMe® were further uploaded into QSR-NVivo10® for the purpose of assisting with structuring the data.

Additionally, I employed data analysis procedures advocated by Moustakas (1994), using a seven-step modified Van Kaam analysis approach which allows researchers to analyze textual data. These steps consisted of the following:

1. Listing textual data in alignment,
2. Reducing and getting rid of invariant themes of the phenomenon,
3. Clustering together central part of the themes,
4. Checking for patterns differing from the interview transcript,
5. Developing a well thought-out portrayal of experiences by each person,
6. Producing a structured description arising from the textual data, and
7. Applying an individual textural-structural depiction of the data from the joint interviews.

In implementing the above procedure, and in view of the volumes of data gathered, I developed a list of all data collected. These data sets were then organized into files in relation to the subjects and then placed in folders. I further developed logical hand codes using letters and numbers to represent the topics as locators for easy recovery and analysis (Creswell, 1998). Then I read the entire material - transcripts emanating from interviews, documents, and field notes - repeatedly until I became immersed in it and made sense of the entire data. Creswell (2013) referred to this step as “reading and memoing” (p. 181). While reading the manuscripts, I made reflective notes at the margin of the records and specifically spelt out initial findings in the form of memos. These included “short phrases, ideas, or key concepts that occur to the reader” (Creswell, 1998, p.144).

The process employed to move inductively from coded units to larger representations including categories and themes was Thomas et al' (2001) five-step process for using inductive coding, namely:

1. Prepare the raw data files (i.e. data cleaning in order to format the data files in a consistent order).
2. Read the text in detail until the content becomes very familiar.
3. Create categories.
4. Overlap codes or un-code text as required.
5. Sustain refinement of the categories, and within each category seek for themes.

In this process, the initial coding categories changed several times after evaluating the data. Once a new code was discovered or canceled, I went back to every transcript to re-read the data and make the required changes. I arranged sub-categories according to the relevant questions addressed such as the central question and its follow-up questions, sub-question 1 and its follow-up questions, and the sub-question 2 and its follow-up questions. This helped me to identify and classify specific nature of perceptions each participant had on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants in the referenced territory in Nigeria.

### **Coding**

I developed initial codes which were ideas originating from the data in abstraction through an iterative process. The codes were developed using the constant comparative approach (Creswell, 2013). In line with the dictates of this approach, I read the entire data over and over again to gain new information until it was saturated as no additional



meaning or information could be gathered. The preliminary findings were sent to selected leaders of the CSOs for their comments. These initial codes were further regrouped with similar ideas put together to form categories. The categories and codes were “compared and contrasted” to develop new ideas to form extra codes. This was done until the data became redundant. Consequently, categories were applied to the research questions to offer explanation and understanding of the perceptions of the leaders of the CSOs on the widely accepted cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of a major territory in Nigeria and its implication on the integrity of the public servants.

The adoption of Moustakas' (1994) seven-step modified Van Kaam analysis approach as the primary means of data analysis method and complemented partly by Creswell's (2013) constant comparative approach, eased the coding process. This combinational therapy enabled me to recount what was seen in the data; build categories and themes, understand the emerging themes and constructs, and establish assertions and conclusions from the data based on what he (Creswell) described as “hunches, insights, intuition, and interpretation within social sciences constructs or ideas or a combination of personal views as contrasted with a social science construct or idea” ( p. 185). For a qualitative case study, these authors, namely Moustakas (1994), Creswell (1998; 2013), and even Stake (1995) are in agreement that qualitative data analysis should be grounded in “detailed description” - expressly stated meaning; “categorical aggregation” - findings deciphered from multiple sources; “direct interpretation” - findings from single occurrences; “correspondence and patterns” - harmonizing categories to establish patterns or a trend; and development of “naturalistic generalization” - claims and

conclusions supported by the researcher's encounter with the data. By detailed description in practical terms, the researcher provided detailed account of the data and the meanings that emerged. Through the process of categorical aggregation, I put together instances or impressions and ideas to form a meaning. In doing this, I coded the records and similar ideas and impressions and put them together in a single class to form a meaning. Through the process of "direct interpretation" I identified meaning as a finding from a particular instance of what a leader of a CSO said, or an idea which surfaced from the transcripts once or an observation made by me in a single instance. In terms of "correspondence and patterns", I coded the transcripts and summed up how often an idea appeared in a given way to show patterns. By the process of "naturalistic generalizations", I made claims and deductions based on insights derived from the data. In this case, the analysis and findings did not consist of only facts because I also interpreted the data to make the case explicable. Stake (1995) explains that this approach is a key function of a case study researcher. However, to do this, I provided detailed facts to allow readers make their own claims, interpretations and or conclusions. I utilized these steps throughout the data analysis process, and finally presented what was found in the data in a form of figures, tables, matrices etc. in order to make the analysis open. The specific codes, categories and themes that emerged from the data are as shown in table 6 below.

Table 6

*Research Questions, Categories of Perceptions, No of Occurrence, and Emergent Themes*

Research Questions	Categories of Perceptions	No of Occurrence	Emergent Sub-Themes
Central question and its inter-related follow-up questions	Perceptions of the practice of gift giving Generally	25	Positive and ethical; Negative and unethical
Central question and its inter-related follow-up questions	Perceptions of the nature of association between unrestricted public service gift giving and integrity	36	Favorable and unfavorable
Sub question 1 and its inter-related follow-up questions	Perceptions of effects of the practice of gift giving	29	Lowering productivity, not lowering productivity, impairing national security, not impairing national security, promoting mediocrity, not promoting mediocrity, affecting ethical content of an organization, not affecting ethical content of an organization, providing window of opportunity for corruption, not providing window of opportunity for corruption.

Sub question 2:1 and 2	Perceptions of Policy recommendations	30	Amendment of the constitution for outright removal of the Fifth Schedule, Article 6 (3); No amendment or maintenance of the status-quo so that the unrestricted gift giving constitutional provision subsists; Amendment of the constitution for a restricted monetary value of gift between N100 to N2000; Amendment of the constitution for a restricted monetary value of gift between N2,100 to N5,000; Amendment of the constitution for a restricted monetary value of gift between N 5,100 to N10,000
Sub question 2: 1 and 2	Perceptions of Policy recommendations for constitutional amendment	25	Amend constitutional provision for outright removal of 5 <sup>th</sup> schedule Article 6(3); Amend the constitution for a restricted monetary value; and no amendment whatsoever
Sub question 2: 1 and 2	Perceptions of policy recommendation for restricted monetary value of gifts	24	Between N100 naira to N2,000; Between N2,100 to N 5,000; Between N 5,100 toN10,000

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*Dealing with discrepant cases.*

Hackett (2010) states that discrepant cases are closely related to "negative cases" in that both cases do not fit the subsisting theory; the former modifies or refines while the later contradicts or refutes. I conducted an exploration for discrepant findings or disconfirming data in order to fight confirmatory bias and to avoid a one-way interpretation of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I used discrepant case sampling as a method of detailing, modifying, or refining my theoretical point of view (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993).

Consequently, I treated discrepant cases of interview data through proper data interrogation which was facilitated by detailed verification and or quality check. "Searching for convergence of information is recommended for handling discrepant cases" (Creswell, 1998, p. 2013). I employed the use of quality standard measures such as "multiple sources of data, rich thick description, member checking and peer review" to verify the research findings (Creswell, 1998). I also used multiple sources of data to substantiate research findings. This was achieved by collaborating claims and understanding meanings that emerged from diverse categories of participants. Further, I also validated data from semi-structured interviews by employing the method of epoché which, according to Moustakas (1994), is a technique employed by researchers to increase academic rigor and eliminate preconceived notion one may have about an experience.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

Validation of qualitative findings is at the heart of authenticity of the qualitative paradigm. Even though there is no distinct adequate way of validating qualitative findings (Goulding, 2002); the fact remains that researchers in the qualitative approach have sought to institute “qualitative equivalents that parallel traditional quantitative approaches to validity” (Creswell, 1998, p.197) in order to aid the acceptance of qualitative research. Establishing quality standards in a qualitative study is at variance with standard processes in quantitative research with regards to definition and procedures (Creswell, 1998). The positivist traditional language of quantitative research does not shape into qualitative research (Nachmias et al, 2015), because the language of “reliability” and “validity” within the context of the qualitative tradition does not have the same meaning as they do in quantitative research. Terms such as “credibility”, “trustworthiness” and “authenticity” are used instead of reliability and validity (McReynolds et al., 2001). Creswell (1998) used "verification" for validity so as to ground qualitative research as a distinctive methodological approach for research. Guba & Lincoln (as cited in Trochim, 2001) believed that qualitative findings should be validated through the processes of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The researcher validated the findings of this study through these processes.

#### **Credibility**

Credibility refers to a situation where study participants find results of a study to be a true and credible reflection of what transpired in the field (Venkatesh et al., 2013;

Yilmaz, 2013). Houghton et al. (2013) explained that credibility is referenced in terms of value and believability of the research outcomes. The qualitative requirement of credibility, therefore, demands that a researcher should establish that the results reached are consistent with participants' perspectives and beliefs. To achieve credibility in this study, I incorporated the process of member-checking by asking participants to review the materials or transcripts for accuracy (Moustakas, 1994; Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012; Yilmaz, 2013). I further established credibility of my study by carrying out appropriate steps to maintain the highest levels of academic standards and ethicality by adhering to the Walden University's IRB research guidelines as well as those of the National Health Research Ethics Committee of Nigeria (NHREC). Consequently, this study was approved by the Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) with the approval number # 01-03-18-0467462. It expires on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019. The study was also approved by the National Health Research Ethics Committee of Nigeria (NHREC) with protocol number NHREC/01/01/2007 - 24/09/2017 and approval number NHREC/01/2007 - 12/10/2017. This approval dates from 12/10/2017 to 11/10/2018. I also carried out a combination of appropriate methods and instruments applicable to case study research which helped in strengthening trustworthiness (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). I utilized multiple data sources such as interviews, analysis of documents and reflection field notes which promoted triangulation and helped establish internal credibility and consistency (Copeland Agosto, 2012). Triangulation of data lent credence to the completeness of my data (Houghton et al., 2013). The strength of a study is increased when additional data are harvested because with additional evidence, deeper understanding of the phenomenon

under investigation takes place through data triangulation (Venkatesh et al., 2013). Denzin (1970; Nachmias et al., 2015) indicated that the idea of triangulation has four possible categories, namely: data triangulation by gathering data through numerous sampling strategies; investigator triangulation which requires more than one researcher to collect and interpret data; theoretical triangulation relating to using more than one theoretical position to interpret data, and methodological triangulation which refers to the application of more than one method for data gathering. I used data triangulation in this study via the semi-structured open-ended interviews and other strategies for data collection on the perceptions of the leaders of the CSOs on the widely accepted cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants in Nigeria. There was no significant adjustment to the credibility strategies mapped out in chapter three.

### **Transferability.**

Transferability refers to the trustworthiness of a qualitative study in terms of developing contextual statements that could be transferred to other populations (Yilmaz, 2013). It (transferability) takes place in a situation where the findings of a study are transferable to another qualitative study. In specific terms, what are transferred are the actions and events (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I assured the transferability of my study methods by cautiously documenting and describing the entire research process. The use of member-checking helped me to gauge participants' approval of how I interpreted the findings and meanings from the interviews (Yilmaz, 2013). The resort to member-checking also aided the researcher with establishing data saturation (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2012). Member-checking is desired for supporting interpretations to



confirm the accuracy of data from the interviewees (Creswell, 2013). I carried out member-checking to allow participants to corroborate the accuracy of my recorded account of their experiences. I implemented this by restating or summarizing the participants' statements and opinions, and asking them to confirm if they were correct interpretations. Since the essence of a qualitative study is to describe the phenomenon of interest from the point of view of those who experienced it (Creswell, 1998; 2012; 2013), transferability demands of the researcher to provide detailed characteristics of what was studied. This will give room for external assessment to be made in relation to whether the findings could be transferred elsewhere. It is not the duty of the researcher to make that decision, but he has a responsibility to provide information to make such assessment possible. In this study, I provided detailed characteristics of the qualitative case study of the perceptions of leaders of civil society organizations on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of a major territory in Nigeria and its implication on the integrity of the public servants. I did not witness any adjustment to the transferability strategies set out in chapter three.

### *Dependability*

A study is said to exhibit dependability if the procedure for choosing, validating, and applying research strategies and methods provide apparent rationalization in order to understand what was done and the basis for the study (Guba (1985). However, Nolen and Talbert (2011) indicated that reliability and dependability are transposable. To make the study dependable, I asked participants to authenticate the interpretations of themes the researcher reported as emergent from their interviews. This provided the participants an

opportunity to evaluate the interpretations of their points of view. The satisfactory representation of their views made them to be individually contented with the truthfulness of the interpretation of their perceptions regarding the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants in the referenced territory in Nigeria.

I used open-ended questions which were augmented with relevant documents as secondary data to serve as a technique of increasing the dependability of the qualitative case study. Houghton et al. (2013) indicated that the requirement for dependability calls for data stability as a precursor for availability and collection up to the point of data saturation. To further ensure data stability, I kept on reporting the changing contexts of the study and the ways such changes would affect the findings (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The dependability strategies as mapped out in chapter three were implemented accordingly.

#### *Confirmability*

Confirmability is the level of neutrality exhibited by the researcher in reporting the findings of the study as arising from the participants' account without imputing researcher's biases or interests (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). One of the ways of achieving this is to ensure detailed documentary of the procedures implemented to collaborate and substantiate the findings (Trochim, 2001). Satisfactory procedures recommended by Creswell (1998); Hall and Rist (1999); McReynolds et al. (2001) for achieving confirmability are by means of field notes and memos, the deployment of multiple researchers, application of multiple sources of data, peer review or debriefing, prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field, operating with discrepant data,

explication of researcher's bias, member checking, providing rich thick description, and carrying out external audit. It is further recommended that at least any two of these strategies should be employed to assess the quality of qualitative findings (Creswell, 1998).

I achieved confirmability through member-checking and re-checking the data during the data collection process. Participants were asked to appraise the summary of my interpretations of their responses to corroborate whether I accurately reported the real meaning of accounts given by them. I also embarked on thorough verification or what Stake (2005) referred to as "quality check" (p. 81) in order to de-emphasize hunches and deal with concrete issues as established in the study. In line with Creswell's (1998) recommendation, I also searched for congregation of information to establish data consistency. I confirmed the study findings from a corroboration of statements and meanings that emerged from various participants. I shared initial findings with three participants to ferret out their feedback on whether the preliminary findings represented their experiences. For the purposes of likely generalization of the study elsewhere, I provided an exhaustive description of the research interest. I requested an academic in the field of social and behavioral sciences to peer-review the findings and report assessment. The essential elements of his feedback were incorporated into the report. I continued interviewing the participants until I reached data saturation and additional interviewing was no longer necessary. My confirmability strategies earlier set out in chapter three were implemented successfully.

### **Findings of the Interviews**

The findings of this study from in-depth, open-ended semi-structured interviews with 10 leaders of civil society organizations in a major territory in Nigeria on their perceptions of the widely accepted cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of the referenced territory and its implication for the integrity of the public servants, are presented here. While reading and rereading the transcripts, I was painstakingly concerned about how my own beliefs about the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of Nigeria and its implication for the integrity of its public servants might affect the interpretations I was making about the data. Consequently, each interview was carefully analyzed in relation to each question, looking for consistencies or otherwise among the expressed perceptions of the participants on each given subject-matter.

In order to have the 10 participants answer the research questions contextually, and to establish the threshold of what constitutes the perceptions of the leaders of CSOs in relation to the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of the concerned territory in Nigeria and its implication on the integrity of the public servants, I asked a number of inter-related open-ended interview questions from the interview guide (see Appendix B). I also analyzed secondary documents as well as my reflexive journal to triangulate and confirm data gathered from the interviews.

The theoretical framework that grounded this study was the policy feedback theory of Mettler and SoRelle (2014). I reviewed this framework to gain a better understanding of the use of policy instrument to govern the cultural practice of

unrestricted gift giving in a public sector in relation to the integrity of the public servants. The result of the study from each of the research questions are hereby presented while the details are contained in the interview transcript (Appendix C).

## Results

### **Emergent Theme 1: Perceptions of the Cultural Practice of Unrestricted Gift Giving.**

The results interpreted from the conceptual summaries of the perceptions of the practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants in a particular territory in Nigeria (see Table 7) below centered on participants' responses to the question seeking their views on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants in the referenced territory. Leaders of CSOs mentioned the above theme "Perceptions of the Cultural Practice of Unrestricted Gift giving" 25 times during interview and responses to questions as indicated in Table 7. Relying on the coded responses of the leaders of the CSOs, and the sub-themes that emerged (i.e. positive and ethical, and negative and unethical), the frequency of responses was calculated to determine the dominant perceptions.

Table 7

*Frequency of Perceptions of Practice of Unrestricted Gift giving and Integrity of Public Servants*

Subtheme	<i>N</i>	% of frequency of occurrence
Positive and ethical	8	30
Negative and unethical	17	70
Total	25	100

*Note.*  $N$  = frequency

### **Perceptions of Practice**

Public service ethics of gift giving is found to be positively correlated to corruption (Bello, 2014; Hasen, 2012; Dion, 2013; Jones & Bezuideulont, 2014). Reviewed literature also reports that public service gift giving practice on cultural ground is associated with the practice of cultural relativism which is as unethical and negative as it leads to ethical failure (Nepal, 2014). The literature also reports that successive leaderships of Nigeria lack the political will to implement anti-ethical policies in its public sector (Ijewereme, 2015). Consequently, corruption in Nigerian public sector needs to be addressed through stringent legislation, attitudinal change, encouragement of the activities of the civil societies or NGOs, and the press, and good governance (Ijewereme, 2015; Bello, 2014; Krambia-Kapandis, 2014; Moon, 2016). The sub-theme theme of positive and ethical perceptions of the cultural practice of unrestricted public service gifting is in sync with the report of Leisinger (2016) where he advocates for the sustenance of public sector gifting as a way of immortalizing the time-honored tradition of hospitality and care with which majority of African nations are known for.

Participants specifically addressed both themes (Positive and ethical or Negative and unethical) during interviews based on their individual perceptions:

- CSOAP1 said: "It is both unethical and negative"
- CSOAP2 responded: "The practice is ethical, and it is also positive"
- CSOBP1 answered: "There is nothing ethical or positive about it"

- CSOBP2 said: "As the root cause of public sector corruption, it is inevitably negative and unethical"
- CSOCP1 responded: "Very negative and unethical"
- CSOCP2 noted: "Only the corrupt-prone people with negative intentions can see the practice as unethical and negative"
- CSODP1 said: "The practice is fundamentally negative as well as unethical"
- CSODP2 keenly said: "There is no gainsaying that it is both unethical and negative and goes to the root of the problem".
- CSOEP1 responded: "It is obviously negative as it is unethical"
- CSOEP2 said: "I do not see anything negative or unethical about this our time-honored practice of hospitality"

**Emergent Theme 2: Perceptions of the nature of Association between Gift giving and Integrity**

Participants' responses yielded two sub-themes, namely: one, favorable association, and two, unfavorable association. There were 36 mentions from participant interviews containing the theme: "Perceptions of the nature of association between gift giving and integrity". Table 8 below shows the subthemes and frequencies.

Table 8

*Frequency of Perceptions of the nature of association between Gift giving and Integrity*

Subtheme	<i>N</i>	% of frequency of occurrence
Favorable association	11	30
Unfavorable association	25	70

Total	36	100
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Note. N = Frequency

### **Public Service Gift giving and Integrity**

The perceptions of the nature of association between gift giving and integrity of the public servants has attracted quite a number of research attentions. Oyamada (2014) perceives gifting in the public service as irresistible bait for corruption which negatively affects the integrity of the public servants. Ejiofor (1985) states that integrity is the sub-structure upon which effective service delivery in the public service stands, adding that without integrity, public service would continue to suffer a compromised integrity. It is noted that the worst enemy of the public is a corrupt public servant (Ejionye, 1984).

Participants specifically expressed their views on this association in the following ways:

- CSOAP1 said: "Its association with integrity is negative because I perceive the practice as having the potentials to compromise the integrity of the public servants. It is an imprecise piece of legislation which cannot protect integrity, and it is susceptible to corruption".
- CSOAP2 responded: "To me, it is associated with integrity in a positive way because the practice of gift giving should be carried out with good intention. There is no way we can shy away from our cultural background. And it is not the reason for the corruption in the public service. A public servant can be corrupt without receiving any gift. It has no integrity problem".



- CSOBP1 answered: "The act in itself in the public service is not only associated with integrity in a bad way, but it is corruption in itself, because public office is public trust"
- CSOBP2 noted: "It has everything to do with corruption and nothing to do with integrity. Therefore, it is unfavorable to integrity"
- CSOCP1 replied: "Its corrupting tendencies are glaring, therefore, it is unfavorably related to integrity and good conscience"
- CSOCP2 noted: "It can only be associated with corruption and lack of integrity if men of already questionable integrity are on the saddle; otherwise why should our cultural identity be explained away as corrupt"
- CSODP1 said: "The practice of gift giving affects the integrity of the public servant and is associated with corruption. A public servant is likely to have more friends among his clients than enemies. Therefore, allowing gifts on the basis of friendship or relationship is as good as not having any restrictions in place. It is an alibi for corruption apart from its potentials to compromise integrity"
- CSODP2 noted: "The practice erodes the integrity of public servants while its effect is very corruptive".
- CSOEP1 explained: "It is every inch associated with corruption and lack of integrity. Over time the hands that do not bring gifts are seen as leprous, stingy, unappreciative and therefore, not worthy of service. Since there is no 'free lunch anywhere', clients have come to embrace this art of gift giving to curry favors. What is more, corruption and lack of integrity are the by-products".

- CSOEP2 responded: "The good intentions of the cultural practice has nothing to do with adverse association with integrity and corruption. Each stands on its own. A corrupt public servant is corrupt whether gift or no gift... the practice does not have the potentials to compromise the integrity of the public servants in the performance of his/her duties"

### **Emergent Theme 3: Perceptions of Effects of the Practice of Unrestricted Gift**

#### **Giving**

Participants' responses were diverse and yielded 10 subthemes of: lowering productivity, not lowering productivity, impairing national security, not impairing national security, promoting mediocrity, not promoting mediocrity, affecting the ethical content of an organization, not affecting the ethical content of an organization, providing window of opportunity for corruption, not providing window of opportunity for corruption. There were 29 mentions from participant interviews containing the theme: "Perceptions of Effects of the Practice of Unrestricted Gift giving". Table 9 below shows the subthemes and frequencies.

Table 9

#### *Frequency of Perceptions of Effects of the Practice on the Productivity of the Public Service*

Subtheme	<i>N</i>	% of frequency of occurrence
Lowering productivity, impairing national security, promoting mediocrity, negatively affecting ethical content of an organization, providing window of opportunity for corruption.	20	70

Not lowering productivity, not impairing national security, not promoting mediocrity, not negatively affecting ethical content of an organization, not providing window of opportunity for corruption.	9	30
Total	29	100

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Note: N = Frequency

### **Productivity of the Public Service**

Based on the provisions of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria (as amended), the public service is charged with the functions of implementation and enforcement of the socio-economic and political policies of government; the design and implementation of public service; the generation of revenue for the government; strict adherence to “managerial, political and financial accountability”; service to the citizens; monitoring and evaluation of the activities of public, private and non governmental organizations providing services at the instance of the government; and propelling all development initiatives of the government, among others. If this main sector of government set out for the implementation of public policy is adversely affected from discharging its duties efficiently and effectively, it means recourse to public market failure (David & Aidant, 1992). Participants' perceptions of effects of the practice of unrestricted gift giving on the public service were specifically rendered thus:

#### **Potentials to lower the productivity of the public service:**

- CSOAP1 responded: "I perceive the practice as having the potentials to lower the productivity of the public service"

- CSOAP2 said: "I do not perceive the practice as having the potentials to lower the productivity of the public service"
- CSOBP1 noted: "My perceptions of the practice is that it has the potentials to lower the productivity of the public service"
- CSOBP2 said: "I agree that the practice has the potentials to lower the productivity of the public service"
- CSOCP1 stated: "The practice has the potentials to lower the productivity of the public service"
- CSOCP2 responded: "Our time-honored cultural value is not a precursor for lowering the productivity of the public service"
- CSODP1 said: "Apparently, the practice has the potentials to lower the productivity of the public service"
- CSODP2 noted: "I hold the view that the practice has the potentials to lower the productivity of the public service"
- CSOEP1 said: "I submit that the practice has the potentials to lower the productivity of the public service"
- CSOEP2 responded: "My own perceptions of the practice is that it does not have the potentials to lower the productivity of the public service"

**Potentials to compromise national security:**

- CSOAP1 responded: "I perceive the practice as having the potentials to compromise the national security"

- CSOAP2 said: "I do not perceive the practice as having the potentials to compromise national security"
- CSOBP1 said: "My perceptions of the practice is that it has the potentials to compromise national security"
- CSOBP2 explained: ""Indeed, I share the perceptions that the practice has the potentials to compromise national security"
- CSOCP1 noted: "The practice is has the potentials to compromise national security"
- CSOCP2 said: "I am not convinced that our time-honored cultural value can be said to be compromising national security"
- CSODP1 responded: "Apparently, the practice has the potentials to compromise national security"
- CSODP2 noted: "Against the background of my explanation so far, I hold the view that the practice has the potentials to compromise national security"
- CSOEP1 said: "Yes, it compromises national security"
- CSOEP2 noted: "My own perceptions of the practice is that it does not have the potentials to compromise national security"

**Potentials to promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence:**

- CSOAP1 responded: "It promotes mediocrity at the expense of excellence"
- CSOAP2 noted: "No, it does not promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence"

- CSOBP1 said: "The practice has the potentials to promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence"
- CSOBP2 confirmed: "Indeed, it promotes mediocrity at the expense of excellence"
- CSOCP1 noted: "It has potentials to promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence"
- CSOCP2 reacted thus: "Not yet convinced that it is promoting mediocrity at the expense of excellence"
- CSODP1 said: "It promotes mediocrity at the expense of excellence"
- CSODP2 responded: "I hold the view that it promotes mediocrity at the expense of excellence"
- CSOEP1 said: "Without hesitation, the practice promotes mediocrity at the expense of excellence"
- CSOEP2 explained: "Perceptively, the practice does not have the potentials to promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence"

**Potentials to negatively affect the ethical content of an organization:**

- CSOAP1 noted: "The practice negatively affects the ethical content of an organization"
- CSOAP2 responded: "I do not perceive the practice as negatively affecting the ethical content of an organization"
- CSOBP1 reacted thus: "There is no free lunch, hence the practice negatively affects the ethical content of an organization"

- CSOBP2 noted: "Indeed, it negatively affects the ethical content of an organization"
- CSOCP1 said: "Yes, it negatively affects the ethical content of an organization"
- CSOPCP2 noted: "No, it does not negatively affect the ethical content of an organization"
- CSODP1 said: "Apparently yes, it does negatively affect the ethical content of an organization"
- CSODP2 explained: "Yes it does because it can lead to the best not getting what they deserve to get by merit; while the staffer-gift-givers get whatever they want regardless of their performance or qualification".
- CSOEP1 noted: "Really, Gift, by its nature, requires reciprocity, and the desire to reciprocate compromises the effectiveness of the public officer"
- CSOEP2 responded: "Not really, a corrupt civil servant should not blame his indulgence into bribery and corruption on gift giving practice but on his integrity problem"

**Potentials as a window of opportunity for corruption:**

- CSOAP1 responded: "It provides a window of opportunity for corruption", and "Nigeria is fast degenerating to a country without good ethical content"
- CSOAP2 noted: " I do not perceive the practice as providing a window of opportunity for corruption"

- CSOBP1 reacted thus: "Perceptively yes. For example, customs men could endanger national security if they take gratifications from importers of illegal arms.
- CSOBP2 noted: "... if gifts do not change hands, nothing gets done, so it is a window of opportunity for corruption"
- CSOCP1 said: "I agree it provides a window of opportunity for corruption"
- CSOCP2 said: "Where public servants are men and women of integrity, it does not provide a window of opportunity for corruption"
- CSODP1 responded: "A gift brings smile to most faces involuntarily; so the practice provides window of opportunity for corruption"
- CSODP2 noted: "When gifts are used to unduly influence and compromise officials, human resources management as an important sector of management is at a cross road. This is a window of opportunity for corruption"
- CSOEP1 said: "The practice is a minus to integrity of public servants. It paves the way for corruption"
- CSOEP2 explained: "My own perceptions of the practice is that it does not have the potentials to provide a window of opportunity for corruption"

#### **Emergent Theme 4: Perceptions of Policy Recommendations for the Practice of Unrestricted Gift giving**

From the conceptual summaries of the above theme bordering on perceptions of policy recommendation for the practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants in a major territory in Nigeria, I interpreted the result of the participants'



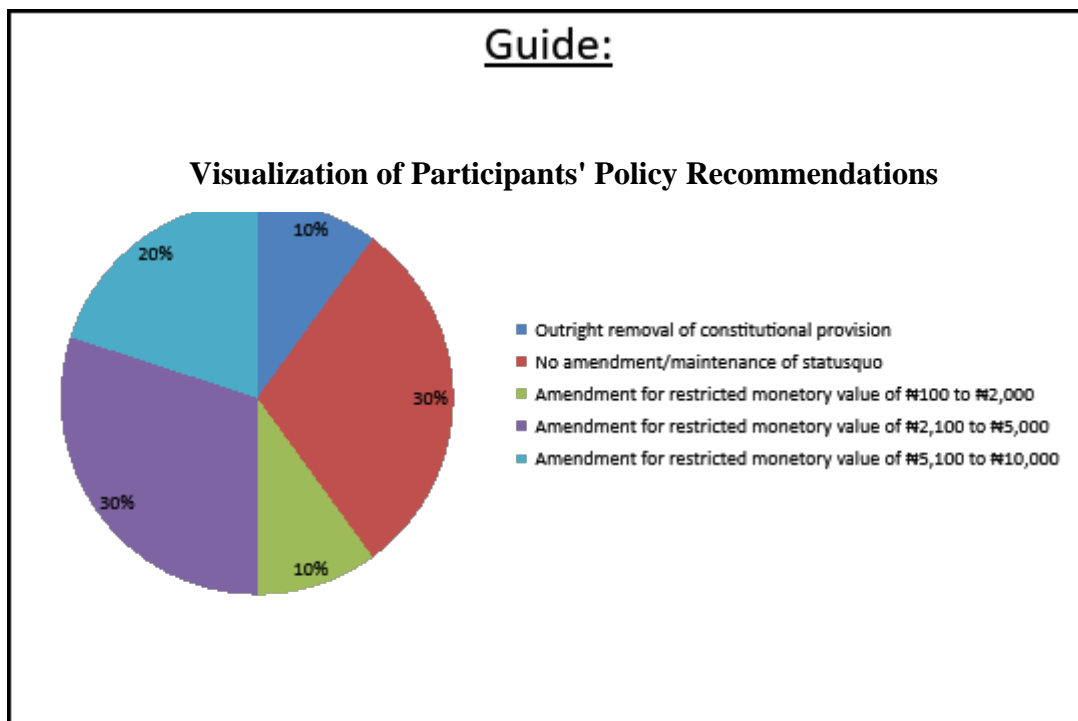
responses. Participants mentioned the above theme 30 times during interview and responses as indicated in Table 10. Relying on the coded responses of the participants, five sub-themes emerged. The display of the overview of the sub-themes and their frequencies are hereby presented.

Table 10

*Overview of Participants' Policy Recommendations*

Subtheme	<i>N</i>	% of frequency of occurrence
Amendment of the constitution for outright removal of the Fifth Schedule, Article 6 (3)	3	10
No amendment or Maintenance of the status-quo so that the unrestricted gift giving constitutional provision subsists	9	30
Amendment of the constitution for a restricted monetary value of gift between N100 to N2000	3	10
Amendment of the constitution for a restricted monetary value of gift between N2,100 to N5,000	9	30
Amendment of the constitution for a restricted monetary value of gift between N 5,100 to N10,000	6	20
Total	30	100

*Note:* *N* = frequency



*Figure 6. Visualization of Participants' Policy Recommendations*

Note. The conversion rate from naira to dollar was guided by the prevailing parallel market rate of 365 naira per one dollar as at March, 2018.

### **Policy Recommendations**

In the review of related literature, I pointed out that while the socio-economic, political and the ethical dimensions of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service have been deservedly investigated, the use of policy instrument to govern the practice has attracted little or no research attention. In exploring this theme, participants specifically canvassed these views:

- CSOAP1 recommended: "Amendment of the constitution for outright removal of the Fifth Schedule, Article 6 (3)", adding "the best way to tackle any problem is to take out the root causes so as to avoid future occurrence. Therefore, an amendment of the Fifth Schedule, Article 6(3) of the 1999 Nigerian constitution, and other subsequent acts and laws governing the conduct of the civil servants is necessary and of utmost importance".
- CSOAP2 recommended: "The maintenance of the status-quo so that the constitutional provision subsists (i.e. Fifth Schedule, Article 6 (3)", noting "I do not subscribe to any form of restriction, instead, the institutionalization of the enforcement of rules and should be strengthened in order to check-mate abuses".
- CSOBP1 suggested: "Amendment of the constitution for a restricted monetary value of gift to not more than N1000 naira or \$3", adding "unrestricted gift-giving is the foundation and building blocks of corruption".
- CSOBP2 proposed: "Amendment of the constitution for a restricted monetary value of gift to not more than N7000 naira which is equivalent of \$19".
- CSOBP2 further explained "It is not very possible to eradicate gift giving but stiffer legislations could at least remind the givers and takers that there could be consequences"
- CSOCP1 advocated: "Amendment of the constitution for a restricted monetary value of gift to not more than N10,000 naira (i.e. equivalent of \$27).
- CSOCP2 recommended: "The maintenance of the status-quo so that the constitutional provision subsists (i.e. no amendment). ...bribery and gifts should

not be interpreted as being the same thing. Bribery should be outlawed out rightly, but giving and receiving of gifts should not be outlawed, because it is our culture... but it should not be tied to any processor activity".

- CSODP1 suggested: "Amendment of the constitution for a restricted monetary value of gift to not more than N3000 naira or \$8. The constitution should stipulate that no public officer is allowed to receive a gift item worth more than ₦3000.00"
- CSODP2 proposed: "Amendment of the constitution for a restricted value of gift to not more than N2,500 naira or \$7"
- CSOEP1 suggested: "Amendment of the constitution for a restricted value of gift to not more than N5000 naira which is equivalent of \$14."
- CSOEP2 recommended: "The maintenance of the status-quo so that the constitutional provision subsists (i.e. no amendment)", stressing "a corrupt civil servant should not blame his indulgence into bribery and corruption on gift giving practice but on his integrity problem".

**Emergent Theme 4.1: Perceptions of Participants' Policy Recommendations for the Amendment of the 5<sup>th</sup> Schedule, Article 6 (3) of Nigerian Constitution 1999 (as amended)**

From the available data on sub-theme of "policy recommendations", it could be seen that out of 10 participants, seven recommended several scopes of amendments ranging from outright removal of the constitutional provision (i.e. 5<sup>th</sup> Schedule, Article 6 (3), to restriction of monetary value of gifts to specified sums of money; while three

participants recommended no amendment or maintenance of the status-quo. This resulted in a-70% support for constitutional amendment as against 30% opposed to amendment.

**Emergent Theme 4.2: Perceptions of Participants' Policy Recommendations for Allowable Monetary value of Gifts**

7 participants out of 10 recommended for amendment of the 5<sup>th</sup> Schedule, Article 6 (3) of Nigerian constitution (1999 as amended). However, one of these 7 participants recommended for outright removal of the constitutional provision (i.e. 5<sup>th</sup> Schedule, article 6 (3), while the remaining six participants shared the view that the Constitution of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) should be further amended to provide for a given monetary value of gifts allowable in the public service of Nigeria. The subthemes that emerged from the six participants' recommendations were: monetary value between N100 naira to N2,000; monetary value between N2,100 naira to N5,000; monetary value between N5,100 to N 10,000. There were 24 mentions from participant interviews containing the theme of policy recommendations for allowable monetary value of gifts. Table 4.8 displays the sub-themes and frequencies, while figure 6above provides a visual representation of the policy recommendations in terms of percentages.

Table 11

*Frequency of Perceptions of Participants' Policy Recommendations for Allowable Monetary value of Gifts*

Subtheme	<i>N</i>	% of frequency of occurrence
Between N100 naira to N2,000	4	17
Between N2,100 to N 5,000	12	50

Between N 5,100 to N 10,000	8	33
Total	24	100

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Note: N = Frequency

### Summary

Chapter 4 provided an overview of the processes employed to gather, manage, and analyze data collected from leaders of five CSOs regarding their perceptions on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants. Purposeful sampling technique guided participants' selection, and all participants were informed of their rights and signed informed consent forms prior to the commencement of semi-structured, open-ended, face-to-face in-depth interviews.

The central question sought to know the perceptions of the leaders of the CSOs on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants in Nigeria. Analysis of available data from interview transcripts, relevant documents as well as my reflection field notes was undertaken. There was no consensus among all participants on a line of perceptions. However, the dominant perceptions (70%) perceived the practice as negative and unethical, while 30% perceived it as positive and ethical. The result suggests that gift giving in the public service of the major territory in Nigeria is negative and unethical.

The central question and its further inter-related follow-up questions also sought the perceptions of the leaders of the CSOs on the nature of association between gift giving and integrity of public servants. Relying on analysis of transcripts from interviews, relevant documents and researcher's interview reflections, I arrived at the result which

suggests that there is an unfavorable association between the cultural practice of unrestricted public service gift giving and integrity of the public servants (70%).

Sub question 1 and its interrelated questions sought to know the perceptions of effects of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving on the productivity of the public service of the major territory in Nigeria. I relied on analysis of transcripts from interviews, relevant documents and field notes to arrive at the result. Participants representing 70% perceived such effects as having the potentials to lower the productivity of the public service; compromise national security; promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence; negatively affect the ethical content of an organization; and provide a window of opportunity for corruption; while 30% did not perceive the practice as having such effects. The result, therefore, suggests that gift giving in the public service of the major territory in Nigeria is perceived as having the potentials to lower the productivity of the public service; compromise national security; promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence; negatively affect the ethical content of an organization; and provide a window of opportunity for corruption.

Sub question 2: 1 and 2 sought to know the perceptions of leaders of the CSOs on policy recommendations to address issues that may be associated with the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants in the major territory in Nigeria. 10% of the participants recommended amendment of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria for outright removal of the 5<sup>th</sup>Schedule, Part 1, Article 6 (3) so that gift giving in the public service is not provided for; 30% recommended maintenance of the status-quo (i.e. no amendment) so that gift giving as already provided for goes on unhindered; while

60% recommended amendments of the constitution for a restricted monetary value of acceptable gift in the public service. Both the 10% recommendation for outright removal of the constitutional provision (i.e. the 5<sup>th</sup> Schedule, Article 6 (3), and the 60% recommendation for a restricted monetary value of acceptable gift, constitute policy recommendation for constitutional amendment. The result thus suggests amendment of the 5<sup>th</sup> Schedule, Part 1, Article 6 (3) of 1999 constitution of Nigeria to provide for a restricted monetary value of gifts as a policy recommendation to address identified problems associated with the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants of Nigeria.

Sub question 2: 1 and 2 also sought to know further policy recommendations. From the participants that shared the views that the constitution of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) should be further amended to provide for a restricted monetary value of gifts allowable in the public service of the major territory in Nigeria, 17% recommended between N 100 to N2000; 33% recommended between N2,100 to N 5000, while 50% recommended between N5,100 to N 10,000. The result supported the recommendation that restricted monetary value of gift giving allowable in the public service of Nigeria should be between N5,100 to N10,000. This translates to between \$14 to \$27 going by the prevailing exchange rate in the parallel market of 365 per dollar as at January, 2018. Table 12 below presents summary of the results.



Table 12

*Summary of Results of the Study*

Research Questions	Perceptions Investigated	Findings/Result
Central question and its inter-related follow-up questions	Perceptions of the practice of gift giving generally	The perceptions of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of research setting was considered by the study participants as negative and unethical.
Central question and its inter-related follow-up questions	Perceptions of the nature of association between unrestricted public service gift giving and integrity	The perceptions of the nature of association between the practice of unrestricted public service gift giving and integrity of the public servants was unfavorable
Sub question 1 and its inter-related follow-up questions	Perceptions of effects of the practice of gift giving	The perceptions of effects of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving on the productivity of the public service was that it lowers productivity, impairs national security, promotes mediocrity at the expense of excellence, negatively affects the ethical content of an organization, and provides a window of opportunity for corruption.
Sub question 2: I and 2	Perceptions of Policy recommendations	The perceptions of policy recommendations to address problems that may be associated with the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of the research setting was amendment of the 5 <sup>th</sup> Schedule, Part 1, Article 1, 6 (3) of Nigerian constitution 1999 (as amended) to provide for a restricted monetary value of gifts.
Sub question 2:1 and 2	Perceptions of Policy recommendations for allowable Monetary value of gifts	The perceptions of policy recommendations for allowable monetary value of gifts was between N5,100 and N10,000 (i.e. equivalent of between \$14 and \$27).

## Conclusion

The widely accepted cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of a major territory in Nigeria has remained controversial in the policy circles. The controversy stems from the divergent views of its potential to have positive or negative effect on the integrity of the public servants. Leisinger (2015) has maintained that most African nations of which Nigeria is one have rich cultural heritage that abhors corruption but borders on core values of hospitality, care and love which are the basis of the practice of gift giving. He describes the cultural practice of gift giving as a nation's individuality, stating that gift giving in the public service is on its own pedestal, while corruption is a different standpoint. Conversely, Hartman and Romomorti (2016) believe that the practice is an unfortunate opportunity for corruption in the public service because gift giving is governed by the norms of exchange which demands reciprocity, and therefore, capable of compromising integrity in the public service.

This study was an attempt to gather data to aid a better understanding of the relationship between gift giving in the public service and integrity of the public servants. The study probed the perceptions of leaders of civil society organizations (CSOs) on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving, using a major territory of Nigeria public service as a case study. The result, analyzed from interview transcripts, relevant documents and observational field notes, showed that the leaders of the CSOs perceived the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service as negative and unethical. It also showed that the perceptions of the CSOs on the nature of association between public service gift giving and integrity of public servants was unfavorable.

Additionally, the result suggests that the CSOs perceived the effect of the practice of unrestricted public service gift giving on the productivity of the public service as having the potentials to lower the productivity of the public service; compromise national security; promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence; negatively affect the ethical content of an organization; and provide a window of opportunity for corruption. The result further recommended amendment of the relevant sections of the 1999 constitution of Nigerian to provide for a restricted monetary value of gift between N5,100 to N10,000.

Chapter 5 presents an interpretation of the study findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications for social change, and conclusion.

## Chapter 5: Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### Introduction

The purpose of the study was to gather data to increase understanding of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants in a major territory in Nigeria. To this end, I investigated the implications of such gift giving for the integrity of n the public service of the concerned territory in Nigeria and its implication for the integrity of public servants in the area. I aimed at gathering data that policy makers may use to reinforce existing policy on public service ethics regarding gift giving. The following research questions were used to guide the study:

Central question: What are the perceptions of civil society organizational leaders about integrity in relation to unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in levels 15 and above?

Sub question1: What do ten civil society organizational leaders in a particular territory in Nigeria perceive as issues related to the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in the concerned area of Nigeria who are in grade levels 15 and above?

Sub question 2: What do ten civil society organizational leaders in a particular territory in Nigeria perceive may be appropriate policies needed to address issues related to the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in the concerned area of Nigeria who are in grade levels 15 and above?

I asked a number of follow-up questions from the interview guide to illicit additional rich data to help in providing an understanding of the study phenomenon.

## Overview

For the study, I used a qualitative research approach and a case study design which I considered to be appropriate given the purpose of the study and the type of data required to carry out the investigation. This methodology was adopted because it provided multiple sources of data to build a comprehensive representation of the perceptions of leaders of civil society organizations on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and its implications for the integrity of public servants in Nigeria. The level of detailed information needed to provide a deeper understanding of the research topic would have been difficult to achieve if a qualitative case study methodology was not employed. A quantitative survey was not used because quantitative investigation, according to Rudestam and Newton (2015), is hypothetic-deductive, while qualitative investigation is normally inductive. In other words, quantitative research method is preliminarily precursory while the qualitative method is understandably inferential. Rudestam and Newton also noted the following differences between the two methods:

- quantitative research is usually carried out under controlled situations, while qualitative research naturally occurs within a certain context;
- quantitative researcher usually isolates operationalized variables; while qualitative researcher takes a holistic view of the phenomenon of interest;
- quantitative researcher emphasizes objectivity, while qualitative researcher thrives in subjectivity; and

- quantitative researcher places much premium on predictions and explanations, while qualitative researcher emphasizes description, exploration, and search for emerging meanings.

The design did not employ other qualitative approaches such as phenomenology, ethnography, biographical research, and grounded theory because Creswell (1998) and Rudestam and Newton (2015) advise that researchers should choose their research method and design based on the nature of the topic and the questions that will be used to guide the study. The nature of my topic and the research questions were best suited to a qualitative case design. Case study design makes it possible to examine present-day organizational phenomena in an in-depth, holistic way using means of a few cases or single case (Hoon, 2013).

Being the best approach that fittingly answered my research questions, case study design has strong theoretical foundation that provides a structure for exploratory research in real-life settings (Cronin, 2014). The limitations of other approaches such as phenomenology, ethnography, biographical research, and grounded theory as alternative approaches to study my phenomenon of interest have been discussed in Chapter 3 above. Employing case study design makes it possible to examine present-day organizational phenomena in an in-depth, holistic analysis using of a few cases or single case (Hoon, 2013). Hoon also states that the strength of case study stems from the theoretical insight arising from case-specific findings found within context. Case study approach is a thorough and organized method in wide-ranging situations (Cronin, 2014). The use of many sources of data in case studies such as interviews, observational field notes,

documents, artifacts, audio-visual materials, etc. increases the validity and reliability of case study research. Case study allows for an in-depth explanation of a phenomenon from a wider sphere notwithstanding how bounded by time, proceedings, activities and or individuals. Based on the foregoing, case study was the most suitable methodology to investigate a research interest where the “how” and the “what” as obtainable in the present study were the questions that drive the study (Creswell, 2013; Cronon, 2014; Tellis, 1997).

Mettler and SoRelle's (2014) policy feedback theory was the theoretical framework for the study. This theoretical approach provides a guide for policy makers who wish to understand the parameters of creating better and improved policies or re-adjusting existing policies towards the promotion of good governance, vibrant civic engagement, and democratic and fair participation of various groups and interests in the policy process (Sabatier & Weible, 2014). The theory is a fitting framework to bridge the gaps between public policy and mass politics. According to Mettler and Soss (2004), through the application of policy feedback theory, government policies are made to impact positively on the citizens' potentials to exercise self determination as well as influence how they conduct themselves as legitimate and participatory members of the polity.

Two data sets were used for the study. These consisted of interviews and relevant documents. Two leaders each from five civil society organizations were purposely recruited as study participants based on seven selection criteria including knowledge and experience related to the topic being studied. Documents analyzed for the study were

Decree No. 54 of 1976 (Public Officer Investigation of Assets); Decree No. 53 of 1999 (Forfeiture of Assets Decree); the Failed Bank Tribunal Decrees of 1996; the Code of Conduct Bureau and the Code of Conduct Tribunal of 1979; the Code of Conduct for Public Officers (Fifth Schedule, Part 1 of the Nigerian Constitution, 1999 (as amended)); the Ethical Revolution of 1979-1983; the War Against Indiscipline of 1983-1985; the War Against Indiscipline and Corruption of 1993-1998; the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission of 2000 to date, and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission of 2003 to date. I also analyzed the observations I made in the form of field notes. The analysis was done using Moustakas' (1994) 7-step modified van Kaam analysis approach which consisted of:

1. listing textual data in alignment;
2. reducing and getting rid of invariant themes of the phenomenon;
3. clustering together central part of the themes;
4. checking for patterns differing from the interview transcript;
5. developing a well thought-out portrayal of experiences by each person;
6. producing a structured description arising from the textual data, and
7. applying an individual textural-structural depiction of the data from the joint interviews.

The study's findings were validated through the use of multiple sources of data, member-checking, rich thick description, and peer review.

The summary of the findings were:



- The cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of a major territory in Nigeria was considered by the study participants to be negative and unethical.
- The perceptions of the nature of association between the practice of unrestricted public service gift giving and integrity of the public servants was unfavorable.
- The perceptions of effects of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving on the productivity of the public service was that it lowers productivity, impairs national security, promotes mediocrity at the expense of excellence, negatively affects the ethical content of an organization, and provides a window of opportunity for corruption.
- Policy recommendation to address problems that may be associated with the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of the major territory in Nigeria was considered by the participants to be amendment of the Fifth Schedule, Part 1, Article 1, 6 (3) of Nigerian constitution 1999 (as amended) to provide for a restricted monetary value of gifts, and
- The perceptions of the allowable monetary value of gifts was between N5,100 and N10,000 (the equivalent of between U.S. \$14 and \$27).

This chapter consists of five sections: Interpretation of findings, Limitations, Recommendations, Implication for social change, and Conclusion.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The findings of this study requires to be clarified and explained for proper discernment, meaning, grasp and understanding. Consequently, I shall make reference to

the outcome of the study as discussed in chapter 4. I shall also describe in what ways the findings confirm, disconfirm, or advance knowledge in the discipline by comparing the findings with what has been established in the peer reviewed literature as per chapter 2.

**Perceptions of the Cultural Practice of Unrestricted Gift Giving and its implications for the Integrity of Public Servants.**

The central question and its inter-related follow-up questions sought the perceptions of CSO leaders on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of a major territory in Nigeria in relation to the integrity of the public servants. Based on the central research question ND follow-up questions, analysis of interview responses, journalized field notes as well relevant documents, the result suggested that the perceptions of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of a major territory in Nigeria was negative and unethical, while the perceptions of the nature of association between the practice of unrestricted public service gift giving and integrity of the public servants was unfavorable.

These two results are supported by the claims of Bello, (2014) ; Hasen (2012); Dion (2013) and Jones & Bezuideulont ( 2014) that unregulated gift giving in the public service is found to be positively correlated to corruption. In fact, the positive correlation between unrestricted gift giving in the public service and corruption further validates the views of the research participants who concluded that the framers of the Nigerian Constitution unwittingly provided the basis for compromising the integrity of public servants in Nigeria. This is because the Constitution unconditionally reprobates acceptance of property or gifts of any kind by public officers in its Article 6 (1) and

conversely approbates acceptance of personal gifts or benefits on customary grounds in Article 6 (3). Bello's (2014) summary that Article 6 (3) provides "a window of opportunity for corruption" in Nigeria is, therefore, evidence-based.

Since the Article 6 (3) fails to define what gifts or benefits are recognized and permissible by custom, public servants are provided much liberty to act according to their own whims. This Article 6 (3) appears over-generalized because what is customary to an Igbo man may not be customary to an Hausa, Yoruba, Kanuri or Efik man since there are cultural differences. By implication, in inserting Article 6 (3) which confers the right of unrestricted gift giving or receiving on public servants, the framers of the Nigerian Constitution failed to recognize that without law to regulate human behavior, life will be full of abuses (Aristotle, 350 BC, as cited in Buehler, 2006).

Northouse's (2013) "Leadership Ethics" as an emerging theoretical formulation in management divided ethical theories into two domains; leaders' conduct and leaders' character. He explains "leaders' conduct" to mean behavior or conduct, and "leaders' character" to mean virtue-based considerations. He says that in ethical theories, ethical egoism refers to selfish actions, while ethical utilitarianism refers to service to people. Similarly, he says that ethical altruism refers to promoting the best interest of others. He submits that the demand of public service ethics can only be best served under an atmosphere of ethical altruism. By implication, the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service borders on ethical egoism which is self-serving, negative and unethical (Northouse, 2013; Bello & Marshal, 2014).

The negative, unethical, and unfavorable perceptions of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service in relation to the integrity of the public servants, finds further support in Prenzler and Beckley's (2013) study on "police gifts and benefit scandals: Addressing deficits in policy, leadership and enforcement". I relied on conducted interviews and other documentary evidences to authenticate the culpabilities of police officers in accepting gratuities. The culpabilities were further established to have, in the end, compromised the integrity of the police and thus negatively affected the image of the police. This also was said to have weakened public trust and confidence in the impartiality and neutrality of the police (Prenzler & Beckley, 2013).

The American Society for Public Administration (ASPA, 2013) states that public officers are obligated to advance public interest by promoting public gain above personal gain. When a public official receives personal gifts on the basis of the office he occupies, he appropriates public office for personal gain. This practice is at variance with Northouse's (2013) five principles of leadership, namely: "respect, service, justice, honesty and community" (p. 431) which are also domesticated in many other disciplines in the social and behavioral sciences. Indeed, ethics has taken a pride of place as a policy domain in the field of public policy and administration in order to guide all actors in the policy process (Cairney & Heikkila, 2014; Mettler & SoRelle, 2014). Thus, public management has become "a value-driven activity with deep moral groundings" (Ferlie, Lynn, & Pollitt, 2007, p. 156). Public management ethics, is, consequently, built around

the principles and values that determine what is right or wrong and how to arrive at informed judgment (Ferlie, et al., 2007).

The question that could guide discernible minds in underscoring the "how come" the result of this qualitative inquiry into the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants is perceived as negative and unethical is to ask: if public management is "a value-driven activity with deep moral groundings", where lies the morality in the practice of unrestricted gifting to public officers by virtue of the public offices they occupy? The answer was provided by the United Nations in 1996 when the global body adopted the international code for public servants which recognizes public office as public trust, and concomitantly demands of public officials to be fair, just, impartial and not compromised in the discharge of their duties.

Etzioni (2014) states that unrestricted gift giving in the public sector leads to compromise and favoritism. In a groundwork design of the study of the level and scope of political corruption in the US, the author reports how groups raise huge sums of money and give to congress members with a view to influencing the outcome of specific legislation in the interest of the group. Additionally, he explained that individuals or groups donate huge sums of money to political campaign organizations with a view to obtaining favors from the government if they finally won the election and establish government. The study reported that these donations/gifts have the potentials to influence the government in the form of diluting regulations, relaxing restrictions and weakening penalties in the areas of interest of those donors or gift givers. Etzioni further reports that another study by Wilhite and Theilmann (1987) provides evidence of how financial

donations from labor organizations to a political campaign organization translated to improved labor legislations when the government was finally established. His report also shows that congress members who chair sensitive committees attract more gifts than less influential congress members. This is the basis why public organizations painstakingly draw up ethics policy to guide officials to be able to draw a line between where their personal commitments stops and where public duties begin, so that ethics and integrity are never compromised (Ferlie, et al., 2012; March & Olsen, 1989).

Napal (2014) describes the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of Nigeria as the practice of ethical relativism. In his study, he looked at the relationship between business ethical universalism and ethical relativism in relation to corporate business practices. Comparing the adoption of the ethical relativist and ethical universalist practices between developed (UK, USA etc.) and developing countries (Nigeria, South Africa, Mauritius etc.), the report pointed out that while these developed countries adopt universalist ethical practices, their developing counterparts rely on ethical relativist traditions. Using Mauritius as a case study, I subjected Mauritius' relativist values to critical analysis against the background of universal ethics in order to determine whether observance of ethical relativism in dealing with issues of bribery and corruption is positively correlated to ethical failure. The study confirmed this in the affirmative and consequently advised developing economies to adopt a global business compliance system which is in tandem with international best practices. This advice stems from the author's view that the world is fast contracting into a global village with a global government based on mutual trust, collective bargaining, collective destiny, and if

possible, collective global ethics. The thesis of this study is that the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of Nigeria amounts to the practice of ethics of relativism which, the study reports, calls for policy rethink. And I so agree!

### **Perceptions of the effects of the practice of unrestricted gift giving**

Sub question 1 and its inter-related follow-up questions sought the perceptions of leaders of civil society organizations on the effects of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving on the productivity of the public service. Based on the research sub-question 1 and its follow-up questions, analysis of interview responses, journalized field notes as well relevant documents, the result suggested that the perceptions of the effects of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving on the integrity of the public servants and productivity of the public service of concerned territory in Nigeria was that it lowers productivity, impairs national security, promotes mediocrity, negatively affects the ethical content of an organization, and provides window of opportunity for corruption.

Integrity is the hallmark of public service. As a concept, it has been discussed elaborately in management and business ethics literature as a salient personality trait desired for leadership and managerial effectiveness (Northouse, 2013). The finding of the study that the effects of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service is perceived as compromising integrity, among other negative effects, is confirmed by peer-reviewed literature. Management experts are unanimous in their view that public sector management without the factor of integrity is bound to fail (Bello, 2014; Bello & Murtala, 2015; Ayodele, 2014; Ijewereme, 2015).

Monga (2016) provides both the normative view of integrity as a constituent of morality and ethics, and the objectivist view of “integrity” as morally and ethically neutral expression. Maak (2008) listed the intrinsic dimensions of integrity as “commitment to sound moral principles and authenticity, being true to oneself and coherence; while the extrinsic dimensions include "consistency of words and actions, consistency in adversity, context, continuity, conduct, and content" (p. 4). The study conclusively surmised that without “commitment to sound moral principles and values as a prerequisite to achieve the state of integrity”, public management is bound to fail.

CSOCP1, one of the 70% participants who perceived the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service as lowering the productivity of an organization, among other negative effects, specifically stated that the practice leads to bureaucratic red-tape and inefficiency; promotes indiscipline, cronyism and stagnation; provides the license or bedrock for fraud and corruption; "bastardises" traditional societal values; short-changes the employer(s) or governments, particularly in generating revenue; contributes largely to economic melt-down and social crises as revenues meant for public services end up in the private pockets of the few opportunists to the detriment of the masses; and leads to unemployment and crime. This perceptions falls into what Ejiofor, (1985) described as "dysfunctional work ethos" (p. 5).

Ijewereme (2013) and Waziri (2010) stated that corruption-related public sector gifting has a devastating effect on the integrity and productivity of the public servant and public service. They, however, explained that corruption takes a wider scope of which gifting is a major casualty. They enumerated corruption cases to include “acceptance of



gratification; succumbing to inducement and undue influence; embezzlement; conflict of interests, for example, the award of contracts by public office holders to cronies, family members, and personally held companies; bribery; fraud; nepotism and tribalism in recruitment/appointment, promotion, and kickback on contract". Others are: "rigging of elections; misappropriation and conversion of public funds for personal gains; procurement scam; leaking tender information to friends and relations; diversion and misappropriation of funds through manipulation or falsification of financial records; payment for favorable judicial decisions, and so on" All these are the Achilles' heel of the public service and gift giving corruption is a major plank.

Ejiofor (1985) bemoaned the attitude to work of Nigerians and stated that many public servants joined the service neither to serve, nor even to be served, but to secure attractive positions that can be a magnet for gifts, "kick-backs", PR, 10% etc. from where they serve themselves at the expense of the public. Ejiofor corroborated the research finding when he stated that where public officials are men of questionable integrity, no plan no matter how sound cannot be thwarted; no rule no matter how intricate cannot be twisted; no law no matter how well drafted cannot be circumvented; no tradition no matter how viable cannot be grounded, and no organization no matter how viable cannot be run down where men of questionable integrity are at work.

Ejionye (1984) agrees with Ejiofor that the worst enemies of the public are not the armed robbers, the counterfeiters, the smugglers and their likes. Even though these unscrupulous elements are grave enemies of the public, these authors believe that they are limited in operation without the connivance of the public servants. According to the

authors, the worst enemies of the public are the corrupt civil servants. They justified their claims with the following examples: 1. No smuggler can cross the border with contraband goods without the connivance of a customs officer (a public servant) who has received "gifts". 2. The counterfeiter cannot print fake currency notes unless he offers "gifts" and collaborates with public servants in the security printing agency of the government. 3. How can the counterfeiter distribute the fake notes without giving "gifts" to bank officials (public servants) or the security agents. 4. How can a student access examination papers in advance without offering "gifts" and collaborating with a public servant (clerk, teacher, tutor or lecturer). 5. How can a ghost worker be earning salary for months in a public office unless a public servant-supervisor is sharing the money with him (gift) and covering him up. The list goes on in that order. Ejiofor concludes his concern over public service bad ethics of unrestricted gift giving in Nigeria in this way: "A people that go on living as if bribery is in their blood and corruption part of their culture, are born for underdevelopment" (p. 19).

***Perceptions on policy recommendations.***

Sub question 2 and its inter-related follow-up questions sought the perceptions of leaders of CSOs on policy recommendations to address problems that may be associated with the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants in Nigeria. Based on the sub-question 2 and its follow-up questions, analysis of interview responses, journalized field notes as well relevant documents, the result suggested that the perceptions of policy recommendations to address problems that may be associated with the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants in the

major territory in Nigeria was to amend the 5<sup>th</sup> Schedule, Part 1, Article 6 (3) of Nigerian constitution 1999 (as amended) to provide for a restricted monetary value of gifts.

This finding is substantiated by reviewed literature. Unguarded cultural practice of gifting in Nigeria's public service is a case of cultural relativism and it is positively correlated to corruption (Nepal, 2014). As a result, Nigerian economy may not witness significant direct foreign investment if the cultural relativist practice of cultural gift giving in the public sector is not abolished (Yanga, 2014). Leading world economies such as US, UK, France etc. have outlawed gift giving in their public sector because of its correlation to corruption (see UK Bribery Act, 2010; US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), and Fifth Schedule of Nigerian Constitution, Part 1: 6 (1-3). Corruption, especially political corruption is high in Nigeria and its solution calls for both stringent legislation, attitudinal change, encouragement of the activities of the civil societies or NGOs, and the press, and good governance (Ijewereme, 2015; Bello, 2014; Krambia-Kapandis, 2014; Moon, 2016), among others.

Magbaelo (2016) historically analyzed policy reforms in the Nigeria's Federal Civil Service from the colonial through post colonial era, and concludes that more responsive policy reforms are needed to fast-track development. However, the analysis centered more on the reform initiatives between 1999 when Nigeria embraced full scale civilian democracy till present. The author adopted the definition of reform as advanced by the Abuja Bureau of Public Service Reforms (2005), namely: "a planned and systematic intervention aimed at producing a fundamental change involving innovation, modernization and attitudinal orientation in terms of values and service delivery" (p. 5).

In this context, this particular finding of the study, namely, that the Fifth Schedule, Article 1: 6 (3) should be amended to provide for a restricted monetary value of gifts, is in tandem with the crying need for reform in the public service of Nigeria.

For example, Magbaelo discussed problems militating against the federal civil service of Nigeria such as dysfunctional workforce, lack of proper succession planning, integrity question, among others. However, the one that concerns this study most is wearing-away of public service values. These values were enumerated as “selflessness, integrity, loyalty, professionalism, transparency, accountability, discipline, neutrality, impartiality and patriotism” (p.78). He specifically bemoans the erosion of values of integrity in the public service and calls on the relevant policy makers to initiate a process of ethical rebirth and realism in the public service.

CSOAP1 had recommended that the best way to solve a problem is to root out the source of the problem. The study has identified the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving as the cause of most ethical problems in the public sector. It is, therefore, logical that amending the constitutional provision upon which the practice of unrestricted gift giving is based will go a long way in reforming the public sector of Nigeria.

Hasen’s (2012) study suggests that Nigeria needs to comply with international standard yardsticks for socio-economic evaluations in order to improve on its international reckoning and be in a position to attract direct foreign investment. Anti-corruption strategies such as Whistle-blowing, ethics education, stringent gift giving legislation, accountability and transparency as well as good governance which are antidotes for corruption are recommended to be put in place in Nigeria’s public service

(Oyamada, 2014). Ethical program that lays emphasis on extrinsic values at the expense of intrinsic values are bound to fail (Stucke, 2014); while incompetent leadership and ethically tolerant policies breed corruption (Prenzler & Beckley, 2013).

Nigeria has adopted so many policy measures to fight corruption in the public sector but such measures have witnessed sustained serial failures (Wazir, 2010). Nigeria is still rated one of the most corrupt countries in the world (Ijewereme, 2013). Several anti-corruption policies in Nigeria's public sector have been experimented without success. Ijewereme (2013) spelt them out as follows: Decree No. 54 of 1976 (Public officer investigation of Asset); Decrees No. 53 of 1999 (forfeiture of Assets Decree); Failed Bank Tribunal Decrees of 1996; Code of Conduct Bureau and the Code of Conduct Tribunal of 1979; Code of Conduct for Public Officers (Fifth Schedule, Part 1 of Nigerian Constitution, 1999 (as amended)); Ethical Revolution of 1979-1983; War Against Indiscipline of 1983- 1985; War Against Indiscipline and Corruption of 1993- 1998; Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) of 2000 to date; Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) of 2003 to date, among others. In the face of all these measures, over 65 % Nigeria's population earn less than a dollar per day and therefore, they are extremely poor (UN Report, 2016).

The research finding on policy recommendation requiring policy makers to amend the 5<sup>th</sup> Schedule, Article 1, 6 (3) of Nigerian constitution 1999 (as amended) to provide for a restricted monetary value of gifts, is however, a subject of debate in some policy circles. The argument is whether corruption-related gift giving and "tipping" have the same or different effects. Torfason, Flynn and Kupor's (2012) study found a positive

relationship between an altruistic act of tipping and an immoral act of bribery in the public service. In their study, Is used “archival cross-national data for 32 countries”, and after controlling for some intervening variables such as income disparities, per capita gross domestic product etc., they found out that the more a country practices tipping behavior, the more the rate of corruption in the country. Further follow-up survey studies in Paris reveal evidence that prospective orientation is the basic link between tipping and bribery. Indeed, the study suggests that there is a blurred line between bribery and tipping, and that both are characterized by the same norms of exchange.

This research finding is, however, contradicted by the prevailing practice in some US public service which permits unsolicited gifts not more than \$20 (please see <https://www.justice.gov/jmd/do-it-right>). Indeed “tips” of not more than \$20 are permissible in the US public service ethics policy (Mazar & Aggrawal, 2011). The implication of Torfason, Flynn and Kupor’s (2012) study in relation to my research finding favors outright prohibition of any form of gifting, the value of gift notwithstanding. This is exactly the extant regulation contained in the UK Bribery Act, 2010.

Similarly, Hartman & Ramamoorti (2016) explained that the inescapability of innocuous act of tipping or virtuous gift giving in the public service as being positively correlated to corruption is informed by the social compact of reciprocity which, by its human nature, correspondingly, corrodes ethical behavior. Human beings have obligations to repay gifts and favors because our ancestors learned to share and care for each other “in an honored network of obligations” (Leahey & Lewin, 1977). Social

anthropologists refer to this practice as “web of indebtedness”, and those who receive gifts and fail to give back are vilified and referred to as “moochers”, “free riders” and even “Social loafers” (Hartman & Ramomoorti, 2016, p. 44).

The above controversy notwithstanding, the fact remains that while the United States Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA); the UK Bribery Act (UKBA) 2010 and other extant regulations in most of the leading economies of the world criminalize gift giving in the public service to mean the same thing as, and having equal weight with, bribery and corruption, most developing countries of the world including Nigeria practice the opposite (Wouters, Ryngaert & Cloots, 2013). This is evident from their scholarly work “Tour d’ Horizon” of the recent global legal framework against corruption where the authors dedicated Part IV of their article to the discussion on “cultural gift giving practices” in the public service. They perceive cultural gift giving in the public service as an easy channel to corruption, and called for a policy initiative to curb the corrupting tendencies of unrestricted gift giving in the public sector. This policy initiative to curb the corrupting tendencies of cultural practice of public sector gifting has found expression in the findings of this study, hence the need to amend the Nigerian constitutional provision that protects the practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service.

***Perceptions of policy recommendations for allowable monetary value of gifts.***

The same sub question 2 sought the perceptions of the leaders of civil society organizations on policy recommendations for allowable monetary value of gifts. Based on the research sub question 2 and analysis of interview responses, journalized field notes as well relevant documents, the result suggested that the perceptions of policy

recommendation for allowable monetary value of gifts was between N5,100 and N10,000 (i.e. equivalent of between \$14 and \$27).

Martineau (2016) has attempted to reconcile the conflicting recommendations on suitable policy mechanism to address the corrupting tendencies of public sector gifting. The conflicting recommendations include: monetary value limits or disclosure threshold, and outright prohibition of gifting and acceptance in the public sector. The author analytically reports that “reducing the conflict of interest laws for public officials across all jurisdictions, and the various codes of conduct and corporate policies on gifts and hospitality for public sector employees to one set of rule is impossible” (p. 3). Consequently, the author recommends that the approach to ensure hitch-fire compliance is “modesty as the best policy”, i.e. to keep any gifts or hospitality as reticent as possible. The author recommends the use of gift items such as pens, notepads, and such related modest offers that are not likely to compromise the integrity of the public servants.

In a bid to guide gifting in the public service in such a way that it will not compromise the integrity of the public servants, Waldo (1998) came up with another formula for coping with ethical dilemmas by advancing ethical obligations which should guide the conduct of public servants in the discharge of the duties. These obligations are acceptable moral conducts a public servant owes to: the constitution, law, nation or community, democracy, organization/bureaucratic norms, profession and professionalism, family and friends, self, middle range collectives, public/general interest, humanity or the world, and religion or God. Additionally, the principles and values of public management ethics require that policy guidelines on gift giving in the public service must be stated in



clear terms so as to draw a line between innocent gifts and corruption-related gifts (Ferlie et al., 2012).

The question that remains to be answered is: Does monetary value of gift of between N5,100 and N10,000 represent what Martineau (2016) refers to as "modest offers that are not likely to compromise the integrity of the public servants" or approximates to Ferlie et al.'s (2012) principles and values of public management ethics which require that policy guidelines on gift giving in the public service must be stated in clear terms so as to draw a line between innocent gifts and corruption-related gifts?. The answer is "Yes". Going by the prevailing FOREX (foreign exchange rate) in the Nigerian parallel market as at March, 2018, between N5,100 and N10,000 is equivalent of between \$14 and \$27). This is an average of \$21.5 or N7, 800.00 which is not significantly different from allowable monetary value of gift of \$20 in the US public service (please see <https://www.justice.gov/jmd/do-it-right>).

This amount can barely give a public servant between level 15 and above a good launch. It is my view that this amount is a "modest offer" that may not be so influential as to compromise the integrity of the public servant receiver. In terms of Martineau's recommendation that policy guidelines on gift giving in the public service must be stated in clear terms so as to draw a line between innocent gifts and corruption-related gifts, it is my view that instead of the provisions of the Fifth Schedule, Part 1, Article 1, 6 (3) that "A public officer shall only accept personal gifts or benefit from relatives or personal friends to such extent and on such occasions as are recognized by custom" (Nigerian Constitution, p. 207) which is imprecise and nebulous (Bello, 2014); it will

now be "A public officer shall only accept personal gifts or benefit from relatives or personal friends not exceeding a monetary value of N7,800.00". This is considered stated in "clear terms so as to draw a line between innocent gifts and corruption-related gifts", and any gifts above the stated amount is considered corruption-related gift.

The implication of most literature reviewed is that while it is difficult to outlaw gifting in the public service completely in view of the nature of man and his cultural practices, it is expedient that gifting in the public service be restricted to a monetary value that may not be considered "influential", hence the prevailing cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of the major territory in Nigeria (courtesy of the Fifth Schedule Article 1, 6 (3) did not gain support of this study. The policy regulation is recommended to be strict, well-defined and should serve as a disincentive to corruption.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework that grounded the study was the policy feedback theory of Mettler and SoRelle (2014). It guided the understanding of the various factors that come together to inform the use of policy instruments to regulate gift giving in the public service of Nigeria. The application of this theory to ground the study empirically demonstrated the central role of democratic citizenship in the policy process. The major effect of policy feedback theory as demonstrated in this study include: "building civic capacities, and framing policy agendas, problems and evaluations", among others. (Mettler & Soss, 2004, p.1).

Although policy feedback effect is relatively new in the scholarly literature in the social and behavioral sciences, the theory that public policies have the potential to shape behavioral tendencies of people is a long outstanding proposition in the field of political science. Historical intuitionist scholars developed the idea of policy feedback as a theoretical framework in late 1980s and early 1990s (see for instance, Hall, 1986; Skecpol, 1992; Pierson, 1993; etc).

The major theoretical propositions of the Policy feedback theory include that policies once enacted have the ability to affect political behaviors of both government elites, interest groups, and mass publics through two main pathways – interpretive and resource effects (Pierson, 1993). The interpretive effect is achieved when policies are utilized as source of information and meaning, which impact on political as well as attitudinal dispositions. On the resource effect, this is achieved by equipping political activities with means and incentives. All this was evident from the findings of this study. Even with overwhelming evidence of the corrupting tendencies of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service, it was instructive that 30% did not support amendment of the constitutional provision to provide for a restricted monetary value of gift that will not compromise the integrity of the public servants. These 30% participants had bought into the interpretive effect and meaning that our cultural heritage must be protected by the constitution even when gift giving endemic corruption is staring us in the face.

The four major conceptualizations of the policy feedback theory were at play in this study. One, the meaning of citizenship is shaped by policies. Public servants in

Nigeria (i.e. citizens) practice unrestricted gift giving on cultural ground. This practice was considered corruptive. Therefore, public servants in the major territory in Nigeria were perceived corrupt (70%). Another conceptualization of the policy feedback theory is the social contract relationship between the government and the governed. The participants expressed their views on the policy agenda because they believed that the government holds their sovereign power on their behalf and should use such powers to the extent that it conforms to their expressed desires. Participants, therefore, answered the research questions enthusiastically in their belief that their views would count. Another theoretical proposition of the policy feedback theory is that the making of new policies is profoundly affected by already enunciated and subsisting policies, some of which impact the political background in significant ways (Schattschneider, 1935). By extension, the theory contends that the attitudes of the mass publics to whom policies are made towards a given policy ultimately influences explicitly or implicitly the decisions of policy makers in reviewing the existing policy or in making new policies. The research participants believed that the existence of the unrestricted gift giving policy was the bedrock upon which new policy regulation on public service gifting could be made.

The rationale for adopting the policy feedback theory as a theoretical lens through which to view and understand the present study is informed by the appropriateness of the theory to explain the perceptions of leaders of civil society organizations on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of a major territory in Nigeria and its implication on the integrity of the public servants. A feedback was needed on the gift giving policy regulation and the result of the research effort has provided the required

feedback. Ideally, citizen engagement in policy making demands that the policy makers and the citizens identify political agendas, including how policy problems are defined, understood, prioritized and addressed by the policy makers.

Policy feedback theory provided the lens through which this study analyzed the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service with a view to establish whether it was actually the policy choice of the people; the most appropriate policy guideline in safeguarding the integrity of the public servants; and whether it was the most efficient policy instrument to bring about an ethical and effective public service. These concerns are tied to the research questions of this study which the participants answered frankly and passionately. By so doing, the policy feedback theory that grounded this study has contributed to the body of knowledge in public policy and administration by providing the framework with which the study evaluated gift giving policy demands, policy decisions, policy enunciation, policy outputs, and policy outcomes or evaluation (Pierson, 1993).

### **Limitations of the Study**

There were some limitations to this study one of which was its qualitative tradition and orientation towards social constructivism and or interpretivism (Creswell, 1998). In this circumstance, data were collected in natural settings; I was the chief investigator using multiple sources of data collection techniques, and this research method involved complex reasoning by way of induction and deduction (Creswell, 2013). I as the chief investigator or interviewer in terms of data collection and analysis presented the possibility of biases on my part; hence I maintained a heightened consciousness about

the possibility of bias and exercised impartiality throughout the process (Goulding, 2002; Creswell, 1998).

The result of the study may not truly represent the perceptions and beliefs of leaders of civil society organizations in a major territory in Nigeria within the larger population because the research was not intended to generalize. I was not concerned about representation but about collecting extensive and rich data from the participants who were knowledgeable about the research phenomenon until he attained data saturation (Wertz, 2005; Creswell, 2013).

Purposive sampling technique was consequently adopted to enable I use participants who were very knowledgeable about the research interest. Also, the responses to interview questions were self-reported by the study participants which might yield the possibility of recall bias or misrepresentation of facts. To mitigate this, I employed member-checking with the participants to appraise and reconfirm my narrative of their interview responses as correct.

The study investigated perceptions of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving on the integrity standing of the public servants; it did not investigate the actual effect. Additionally, the qualitative tradition as a chosen method for this study is reported to be limited by its subjective views on issues as against the objective views ascribable to quantitative research (Creswell, 1998). Qualitative tradition is also hypothetic-inductive as against hypothetic-deductive approach of the Quantitative investigation (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

## **Recommendations**

### **Areas of Future Research**

The findings from this study demand additional investigation on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service in relation to the integrity of the public servants. The study probed perceptions of the practice; perceptions of nature of association between unrestricted gift giving practice and integrity of public servants, perceptions of effect of the practice, and perceptions of the policy recommendations to address any identified problems that may be associated with the practice. It did not probe the actual effect of the practice on integrity of the public servants and or on productivity of the public service. This requires a more vigorous research with larger sample size and testing of hypotheses to establish relationship between relevant variables. This recommendation has become more compelling in view of the New Public Management (NPM) imperatives.

Hughes (2012) explains that the imperatives of the NPM include "the introduction of competition in the public sector, corporatization and outsourcing, focus on private sector style of management, standardization and professionalism, systematic use of standards and measure of performance, and result-orientation"(p. 33). If NPM is an evolution from a bureaucratic to a managerial model which is fashioned towards efficiency and effectiveness in the use of scarce resources, and oriented towards results, accountability and transparency, decentralization and speedy and accurate operations, what is the place of unrestricted gift giving under this management paradigm? It is considered important to explore the place of the cultural practice of gift of giving in the

context of the NPM. Furthermore, researchers should conduct further studies to explore problems not covered in this study to address limitations and delimitations as discussed above. Since this study focused on a major territory in Nigeria, I recommend expanding research to include other geographic areas of Nigeria.

Additionally, one of the findings of this study in respect of policy recommendation was amendment of the Fifth Schedule, Article 1, 6 (3) of Nigerian constitution to provide for a restricted monetary value of gift that may not compromise the integrity of the public servants. Sequel to this, participants recommended between N5,100 to N10,000. This recommendation is in tandem with the provisions of *Do It Right Handbook* of the department of Justice of the US which is an adaptation from a handbook released by the office of Government Ethics. This regulation put a ceiling to allowable gift giving in the public service to be not more than \$20. (please see <https://www.justice.gov/jmd/do-it-right>). This is the basis for allowing tipping in the public service of US provided it does not go beyond \$20. However, Torfason, Flynn & Kupor (2012) & Hartman & Ramamoorti (2016) found a positive relationship between an altruistic act of tipping and an immoral act of bribery in the public service. According to them, both practices are guided by the norms of exchange which demands reciprocity. The scholars, therefore, argue for outright removal of any gifting in the public service. This is also the background upon which the UK Bribery Act (2010) prohibits any form of gifting in the public service. Between these two practices, that is: restricted monetary value of gift to a modest amount that may not compromise integrity of public servants, and outright restriction of gifting in the public service, which of them will be more



effective in safeguarding the integrity of the public servant? An inquiry into this question is called for.

There are also a number of research findings established in the literature that are well known in the field of public policy and administration but are contradicted in practice and in the literature of other fields of study. For example, the review of related literatures suggests that possession of higher education is positively correlated to good ethical attitude and vice-versa (Perry & Isahuridu, 2013), but in practical terms in Nigeria, most monumental corruption is committed by senior public officials (Oarhe, 2013; Global Witness, 2013); and "by well-placed men of questionable integrity" (Ejiofor, 1985, p. 7). Ohemge (2015) suggests that policy learning is positively correlated to policy implementation, but the experiences garnered from implementations of public policy in Nigeria from the Independence Day till present has not improved any policy outcome (Ijewereme, 2015). I call for further scientific investigation into these research claims with a view to establishing the veracity of these research findings in the Nigerian context.

Policy analysis is required to investigate how and why each policy of government is proposed, accepted, and implemented, causes and consequences, while policy advocacy should examine government policies against the backdrop of competing alternative proposals with a view to identify best policy agenda that will serve the best interest of the citizens. All these are within the realm of public policy and administration research to pursue which the present study did not go into but are seriously recommended for future investigation. Policy researchers especially in a developing country like Nigeria

should also carry out research on ways and means of reversing the trend where policies are made by the elites at the top and such policies are made to flow down to the citizens without their input.

### **Recommendations for Policy Action and Implementation**

The findings of the study include:

1. The perceptions of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of a major territory in Nigeria was negative and unethical
2. The perceptions of the nature of association between the practice of unrestricted public service gift giving and integrity of the public servants was unfavorable.
3. The perceptions of effects of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving on the integrity of public servants/productivity of the public service was that it lowers productivity, impairs national security, promotes mediocrity, negatively affects the ethical content of an organization, and provides window of opportunity for corruption.
4. The perceptions of policy recommendations to address problems that may be associated with the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of the major territory in Nigeria was amendment of the 5<sup>th</sup> Schedule, Article 6 (3) of Nigerian constitution 1999 (as amended) to provide for a restricted monetary value of gifts, and
5. The perceptions of policy recommendations for allowable monetary value of gifts was between N5,100 and N10,000 (i.e. equivalent of between \$14 and \$27) or average of N7,800 or \$21.5.

Against this backdrop, the Nigerian policy makers are invited to take necessary steps to amend the Fifth Schedule, Part 1, Article 1, 6 (3) of the Nigerian constitution to provide for a monetary value of gift not more than N7, 800 or equivalent of \$21.5. It is hoped that this measure, when implemented, would help to minimize the tendency for gifting in the public service so that the integrity of the public servants will not be compromised. Besides, the measure if implemented would help Nigeria to stop practicing ethical relativism in public service ethics of gift giving which Leisinger (2015) says leads to dysfunctional work ethos including ethical failure.

Nigerian policy makers also need to buy into the recommendations of Hasen's (2012) study to the effect that Nigeria needs to show seriousness in fighting corruption and comply with international standard yardsticks for socio-economic evaluations in order to improve on its international reckoning and be in a position to attract direct foreign investment. Anti-corruption strategies such as Whistle-blowing, ethics education, stringent gift giving legislation, accountability and transparency as well as good governance which are antidotes for corruption are recommended to be put in place in Nigeria's public service (Oyamada, 2014). Ethical program that lays emphasis on extrinsic values at the expense of intrinsic values are bound to fail (Stucke, 2014); while incompetent leadership and ethically tolerant policies should be avoided as they breed corruption (Prenzler & Beckley, 2013).

### **Implications for Social Change**

The findings of this study have the potential to create positive social change for the public service of Nigeria in the area of implementing public policy efficiently,

effectively, democratically, transparently and accountably without public market failure (Salmon, 1995). This is because the findings complement existing data to increase the understanding of the implication of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service on the integrity of public servants. This will also equip policy makers with needed information to reinforce extant gift giving public policy. Knowing that public office is public trust, and that its legitimacy depends on public confidence and support, this study provides the necessary policy check and balances needed for a public administrator to avoid market failure in delivering public goods and services in line with public policy guidelines. The study contributes to research and scholarship towards the democratization of the policy process (Mettler & Soss, 2004).

By evaluating policy outcome of the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of the public servants through the views of leaders of civil society organizations, the study emphasizes the thesis of John Locke's social contract theory (Barker, 1960) that political power belongs to the people and that government officials or representatives hold this power in trust for the people, and this power should be exercised to meet the yearnings and aspirations of the people. Government failure, which explains a situation where public markets are typified by incompetence in delivering public goods and services, negates public sector objectives (David & Aidant, 1992). The findings of the study impacts the ethics of gifting and integrity of the public servants and equips Nigerian policy makers to understand better that the "what and why" we study public policy is to effectively address the causes and consequences of public policy in terms of policy demands, policy decisions, policy statements, policy outputs and policy outcomes.

I plan to disseminate the results of this study via various venues including local and international presentations, professional conferences, and peer-reviewed journals. I intend to liaise with the Nigerian National Assembly on a system-responsive bill on gift giving in the public service. I will share the results of the study locally with the public service of Nigeria. The findings of the study will be shared with public administration, human services, and other related professionals at conferences, workshops and retreats. I am glad to mention that most of the research partners who signed my letters of cooperation have requested that on completion of the study, I should come forward with the findings for discussions and possible necessary action. Similarly, a director in one of the ministries in the concerned major territory in Nigeria who was briefed about the study by one of the research partners, has had discussion with me and equally made arrangement for my invitation, on completion, for presentation of the research findings to the management of the ministry for necessary action as may be approved.

It is also gratifying to note that the abstract of this study has been accepted by the Institute of Corporate Administration of Nigeria (ICAD-N) for an international conference coming up in May, 2018. I intend to publish a book on this research interest for the academic community for use in colleges and universities. The findings of the study has the potentials to assist the Nigerian policy makers to use policy instruments to govern ethics of gift giving with a view to retool and refocus the public service on the path of ethical rebirth.

## Conclusions

The appropriateness of the policy regulation on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving and integrity of public servants in Nigeria has been a subject of controversy in Nigerian politics and among policy makers. This qualitative study explored perceptions of leaders of civil society organizations on this widely accepted cultural practice in relation to the integrity of the public servants. The study exposed the negative implications of cultural relativism in an interrelated and interdependent global community. It also confirmed the claims of many existing literature which indicated that the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service should not be a strategic policy option as it is a window of opportunity for corruption.

As a part of a shared humanity in the global arena, Nigeria should endeavor to embrace international best practices. Drucker (1954) states that there are no underdeveloped countries; there are only under managed countries. Nigerian policy makers need to confront mismanagement of the country's affairs. The country is blessed with men, materials and other resources to make it great and eliminate the word "underdevelopment" in its economic lexicon. Policy analysis and evaluation outcomes as represented in this study are used to determine whether promulgated policies are implemented according to guidelines, achieving set goals and objectives; whether the nature of changes produced by the policy are intended or unintended; and whether to continue, modify or reverse the policy. The thesis of this study suggests that policy makers in Nigeria have to reverse the subsisting policy on the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service as it affects the integrity of the public

servants negatively. This study is my valued contribution to the fight against public sector corruption in Nigeria. The rough road I went through to accomplish this mission-oriented scientific investigation was daunting and those tasking experiences have been aptly captured in my personal reflections. Of a fact, if I have an opportunity to do another PhD program, I will do it at Walden University where I will pursue a higher degree for yet another higher purpose!

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## Appendix A: List of Acronyms Used in the Study

ASPA:	American Society for Public Administration
BPP:	Bureau for Public Procurement
CSO:	Civil Society Organization
CAPP:	Community Action for Popular Participation
CTW:	Center for Transparency Watch
EFCC:	Economic and Financial Crimes Commission
FCT:	Federal Capital Territory
ICPC:	Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission
MAC:	Movement against Corruption in Nigeria
RSCH:	Research (Advanced Qualitative Reasoning and Analysis (RSCH 8351 )
TACCA:	Transparency & Anti-Corruption Campaign in Africa
ZCC:	Zero Corruption Coalition

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

**Interview Protocol Topic:** Perceptions of Unrestricted Gift giving and Integrity of Public Servants in Nigeria.

**Time of the Interview:**

**Date:**

**Place:**

**Interviewer:**

**Interviewee:**

**Position of the Interviewee:**

1. The interview session will begin with greetings, a brief personal introduction, and review of the research topic.
2. Appreciation to the participant will occur for volunteering and taking the time to permit the interview.
3. A brief review of the signed consent form will occur to ensure complete understanding and if any final questions are needed.
4. The participant will be informed a digital recorder is being turned on and I will note the date, time, and location.
5. The coding identification (where applicable) of the interview will be indicated verbally and written on the actual consent form.
6. The interview will begin.
7. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes for exhaustive responses to the questions.

8. I will use the questions in sequence.
9. I will pause after each question is asked to ensure the participants understand the question. If they do not want to answer any particular question, they may do so for any reason or no reason at all.
10. At the end of the interview, I will thank the interviewee again for taking the time to participate in the study.

Central question: What are the perceptions of civil society organizational leaders about integrity in relation to unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in levels 15 and above?

Sub question 1: What do ten civil society organizational leaders in a particular territory in Nigeria perceive as issues related to the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in the concerned area of Nigeria who are in grade levels 15 and above?

Sub question 2: What do ten civil society organizational leaders in a particular territory in Nigeria perceive may be appropriate policies needed to address issues related to the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving to federal public servants in the concerned area of Nigeria who are in grade levels 15 and above?

A number of follow-up questions were asked from the interview guide to dig out rich data that could help to provide adequate understanding of the phenomenon. These follow-up questions were as follows:

On the central research question:

1. Because the practice of gift giving in the public service of Nigeria is constitutionally unrestricted based on cultural grounds by virtue of the 5th Schedule, Article 6 (3) of Nigerian constitution, how do you perceive this practice in relation to integrity and corruption.
2. What are your perceptions as to whether the practice is ethical or unethical, positive or negative?
3. In this practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service, can you explain your perceptions in relation to the nature of an association between gift giving and integrity?

On sub question 1:

1. Kindly explain your perceptions in relation to whether the practice has the potentials to compromise the integrity of the public servant in the performance of his/her duties.
2. Would you mind explaining your perceptions in relation to whether the practice has the potentials to lower the productivity of the public service?
3. What of the potentials of the practice to compromise national security; what do you say?
4. In human resource management, may you explain your perceptions in relation to whether the practice has the potentials to promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence.
5. What do say of your perceptions in terms of whether the practice is capable of affecting the ethical content of an organization?
6. Someone else describes the practice as a "window of opportunity for corruption"; how do you perceive this view?

7. In what other areas do you perceive issues associated with the practice in relation to the achievement of the mandate of the public service?

On sub question 2:

1. What are your specific appropriate recommendations to address the potential problems that may be associated with the practice?
2. What other policy recommendations do you have?

## Appendix C: Excerpts from Interview Transcripts

CSOAP1

The provision that protects the practice is perceived as a near perfect window of opportunity for public servants to carry out corrupt practices while escaping from any form of punishment. This allows public officers the privilege of collecting bribe in the name of gift from relatives and friends. Public officers are left with the choice of when to collect bribes in form of gifts, from who to collect and also the luxury of choosing what to accept and also what to turn down. For a law enforcement agent charged with the responsibility of monitoring the activities of civil servants in respect of gifts, how does he know who is not a friend or relative of the public servant? And when is a gift too big to be just a gift? This is an imprecise piece of legislation. The practice today is that, those who want to offer bribe to public officers pass it as gifts through friends and relatives, thereby compromising the conscience and the integrity of the officer concerned.

.....

Of course, it is negative as it is associated with corruption

.....

I perceive the practice as having the potentials to compromise the integrity of the public servants in the performance of his/her duties; lower the productivity of the public service; compromise national security; promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence; negatively affect the ethical content of an organization; provide a window of opportunity for corruption, and impair the achievement of organizational mandate.

.....

What do you expect when staffers are recruited on the basis of gift giving influence as against performance? The practice, of course, denies the country the opportunity of having qualified and efficient work-force to manage the affairs of the civil service which, 'mutandi mutandi', promotes mediocrity at the expense of excellence. Presently, the level of bribery and corruption in Nigerian public service constitutes a big image problem to the public sector to the extent that the trust and confidence in government business is completely eroded. The issues related to the practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service are too numerous to mention and they are at the heart of Nigeria's survival as a nation. Nigeria is fast degenerating to a country without good ethical content, and such a country is socially, economically and culturally doomed.

.....

I recommended amendment of the constitution for outright removal of the Fifth Schedule, Article 6 (3). The best way to tackle any problem is to take out the root causes so as to avoid future occurrence. Therefore, an amendment to the Fifth Schedule, Article



6(3)of the 1999 Nigerian constitution, and other subsequent acts and laws governing the conduct of the civil servants is necessary and of utmost importance. In line with the recommendation for the amendment of the constitution, the outright removal of the constitutional provision is necessary, thereby totally abolishing gift giving in the public sector

.....

#### CSOAP2

There is no way we can shy away from our cultural background. The practice is not negative. For example, in Africa and Nigeria in particular, the expectation is that if you do somebody a favor, the person is expected to show some level of appreciation. This is our culture, and it is not the reason for the corruption in the public service. The favor may not take away the competence and integrity of the public servant or the organization. As far as one's competence and integrity is maintained, the practice, to me, is ethical and positive. As long as the rules and standards set are respected by the public servant, the integrity of the public servant cannot be compromised. A public servant can be corrupt without receiving any gift.

.....

I do not perceive the practice as having the potentials to compromise the integrity of the public servants in the performance of his/her duties; lower the productivity of the public service; compromise national security; promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence; negatively affect the ethical content of an organization; provide a window of opportunity for corruption, and impair the achievement of organizational mandate.

.....

There is nothing wrong with our constitution as far as the gift giving provision is concerned. No need for amendment, please. I do not subscribe to any form of restriction instead the institutionalization of the enforcement of rules and standard practice should be strengthened in order to check-mate abuses. I say capital No to tampering with the constitution on the ground of amendment to remove gift giving practice. Let the status-quo be maintained, but the enforcement of the Rules of engagements and standard practice should be strengthened substantially. The placement of people in very serious positions of authority and high levels should be done in such a way that takes into consideration more of merit and ability to deliver in addition to integrity purposes than on ethnic or religious linings.

.....

#### CSOBP1

As an officer of a nongovernmental organization, I have taken time to look at the Nigerian Constitution on the issues relating to this question and discovered that the foundation for the prevailing corruption in Nigerian public service was laid through unrestricted gift giving in the Nigerian public sector as provided for in the Fifth Schedule, Article 6(3) of the 1999 Constitution (As Amended). While Articles (1) and (2) of the Fifth Schedule seem to forbid gift giving and receiving by Public Officers of whatever levels, Article 6(3) seems to negate Articles (1) and (2) by leaving a very wide window of

opportunity for bribery and corruption to prevail in the Public Service. Since the Article 6(3) did not specify who the relative or personal friend should be, to what extent the gift should be, and on what occasion should such gift be given or received knowing that there are so many customs in Nigeria, I perceive the provision of Article 6(3) of the 1999 Constitution (As Amended) as a convenient means through which bribery and corruption will continue to thrive in the public service with its negative implication on the integrity of the Public Servant, and it is not police-able.

.....

My perceptions of the practice is that it has the potentials to compromise the integrity of the public servants in the performance of his/her duties; lower the productivity of the public service; compromise national security; promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence; negatively affect the ethical content of an organization; provide a window of opportunity for corruption, and impair the achievement of organizational mandate. I will go on to explain better: The answer to this question is embedded in the age-worn axiom "there is no free lunch". The overall objective of unrestricted gift giving is to bend the rules or cut corners and being a rational being, the sole aim of the gift giver is to seduce the receiver to give him/her unmerited or illegal favors. In most, if not all cases, the gift giver only wants the receiver to compromise integrity in the performance of his/her integrity for the sole advantage of the giver. Declining productivity is certainly one of the fallouts of compromised integrity brought about by unrestricted gift giving and receiving. Certainly, national security is always and invariably threatened when public officers prefer to be induced and keep blind eyes to clear and present dangers to issues relating to safety of lives. For example, customs men could endanger national security if they take gratifications from importers of illegal arms. Yes, where integrity is compromised and corruption thrives, mediocrity takes centre stage. The easiest thing for mediocre to do is to grease the palms of compromised superiors to get promoted/elevated above more competent colleagues. In any "system where integrity is compromised, excellence is an Alice In Wonderland". The ethical content of any organization where the integrity of its workers is compromised can never remain the same. Unrestricted gift giving is the foundation and building blocks of corruption.

.....

I recommend amendment of the constitution for a restricted value of gift to not more than 1000 naira

.....

#### CSOBP2

I perceive it as an alibi for corruption in the public service, and this practice could account for the pervasive corruption in our land. For example, Trading Economics recently scored Nigeria 28 out of 100 points on the 2016 Corruption Perceptions Index reported by Transparency International. Corruption Index in Nigeria averaged 20.17 Points from 1996 until 2016, reaching an all-time high of 28 Points in 2016 and a record

low of 6.90 Points in 1996. Currently, Transparency International ranked Nigeria 136 out of 176 nations on the corruption scale. Although the nation is out of the worst 10 most corrupt nations of the world, corruption in the public service still roars its ugly head, and the root cause is the cultural practice of unrestricted gift giving in our public sector.

.....

Indeed, I share the perceptions that the practice is that it has the potentials to compromise the integrity of the public servants in the performance of his/her duties; lower the productivity of the public service; compromise national security; promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence; negatively affect the ethical content of an organization; provide a window of opportunity for corruption, and impair the achievement of organizational mandate. Further, Irrespective of grade levels, the perceptions of civil society organizations and the Nigerian public generally on unrestricted gift giving to public servants are that it compromises the integrity of public servants; leads to bureaucratic red-tape and inefficiency; promotes ill-discipline, cronyism and stagnation; provides the license or bedrock for fraud and corruption; bastardises traditional societal values; short -changes the employer(s) or governments, particularly in generating revenue; contributes largely to economic melt-down and social crises as revenues meant for public services end up in the private pockets of the few opportunists to the detriment of the masses; leads to unemployment and crime

.....

I go for amendment of the constitution to provide for a restricted value of gift not more than 7000 naira.

.....

Even more audacious public servants have given gift giving various names ranging from PR, facilitation fee, processing fee, transport money and financial engineering. The practice erodes the integrity of public servants while its effect is very corruptive. It is such that if the gifts do not change hands nothing gets done. Because sanctions are illusory and the conditions of service scandalously low, even those that are minded to resist soon succumb. Productivity becomes one of the casualties as only those that are sure to attract gifts, cash or kind, receive attention. While blunting the ethical orientation of the regular recipient, gift-taking gradually becomes the norm rather than an aberration. It is not very possible to eradicate gift giving but stiffer legislations could at least remind the givers and takers that there could be consequences. There should be sustained and systematic education of the public servant as to the destructive effects of unbridled gift giving. This is important because many young public servants imbibe precedents set by their superiors and capitalizing on their IT knowledge, push corruption to the next level. Also, of critical importance is to strengthen the agencies that monitor and punish corruption. If the institutions could function independent of the whims of role occupants, the impact would be monumental. The payment of a living wage would help minimize the temptation to engineer gifts to make ends meet.

.....

## CSOCP1

To begin with, any conclusion that the framers of the Nigerian Constitution unwittingly provided the basis for compromising the integrity of public servants in Nigeria can neither amount to over exaggeration nor be faulted. The Constitution cannot unconditionally reprobate acceptance of property or gifts of any kind by public officers in its Article 6 (1) and conversely approbate acceptance of personal gifts or benefits on customary grounds in Article 6 (3). Bello's (2014) summary that Article 6 (3) provides a window of opportunity for corruption in Nigeria is not only accurate, but down-to-earth.

Since the Article 6(3) fails to define what gifts or benefits are recognized and permissible by custom, public servants are provided carte blanche to act according to their whims. What is more, the Article is over-generalized because what is customary to an Igbo man may not be customary to an Hausa, Yoruba, Kanuri or Efik man since there are cultural differences.

.....

In inserting Article 6 (3) which, somehow, confers the right of unrestricted gift giving or receiving on public servants, the framers of the Nigerian Constitution failed to recognize that only very few men can withstand the highest bidder. They also did not envisage the current pervasive tendency where public officers exploit the practice of simple gift giving prevalent in traditional societies to indulge in mind boggling graft, fraud and corruption. Whereas the integrity of public servants during- the colonial rule in Nigeria was almost impeccable, the same cannot be said of them today. The reason is not farfetched. Then, the conduct of public servants was guided by rigid General Orders tailored along the rules of colonial administration and which forbade unrestricted gift giving. The colonial overlords certainly did not accommodate unrestricted gift giving implied by Article 6(3)". He admitted that the practice is both negative and unethical

.....

It goes without saying that the practice is that it has the potentials to compromise the integrity of the public servants in the performance of his/her duties; lower the productivity of the public service; compromise national security; promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence; negatively affect the ethical content of an organization; provide a window of opportunity for corruption, and impair the achievement of organizational mandate.

.....

Yes, I agree with the idea of restricting gift giving in the public service to a value that may not be considered 'influential' as well as allowing corporate gifts such as key holders, memo pads, etc which will not be capable of influencing official in particular since they are for the general organization. This recommendation is predicated on the belief that there will be an effective system of enforcing/monitoring compliance.

In that case, I recommend naira value of gifts not to be more than N10,000.00. However, if there will not be an effective system of enforcing/monitoring compliance, I recommend outright removal of the constitutional provision allowing gift giving in the public service. Maintaining the status-quo is totally out of it because gift giving in the Nigerian public sector has helped corruption to thrive in the public service to a level

where it is considered traditional. I further recommend formulating whistle-blowing policy against corruption-related gift giving as well as providing incentives for whistle-blowers. I recommend amendment of the constitution for a restricted value of gift which is not more than 10,000 naira.

.....

## CSOCP2

The practice of unrestricted gift giving in the public service of Nigeria is ethical and should not be perceived negatively because the practice is customarily protected. Our culture abhors ill-gotten wealth. We shall not be influenced by the practices obtainable in the white man's land, because they have no enduring culture. We shall be concerned about enlightening and educating our people on the core values of our culture which does not permit bribery and corruption. A true culturally informed Nigerian public servant cannot compromise his integrity because of gifts given to him. We shall market our culture to the white man instead of denouncing it. For example, a white man does not invite a visitor to come and eat food; whereas we literally beg the visitor to please join us and eat with us. The law agencies should do their bid by fighting corruption and not killing our time-honored cultural practice.

.....

I am yet to be convinced that our time-honored cultural value can be blackmailed to a precursor for compromising the integrity of the public servants in the performance of his/her duties; lower the productivity of the public service; compromising national security; promoting mediocrity at the expense of excellence; negatively affecting the ethical content of an organization; providing a window of opportunity for corruption, and impairing the achievement of organizational mandate. Except the rules and standard set is lowered by the public servant which will also be in tandem with the productivity of the public servant concerned, I do not see how gift giving affects the productivity of the public servant concerned. Again any form of fowl-play by the public servant in the discharge of his responsibility can lead to a potential security risk for a nation, not just gift giving. For example, if as a result of gift-taking a public servant lowers the rules and standard for a particular person/organization there is a tendency for National Security to be compromised especially if the job concerned touches National Security. Same goes for other act of dishonesty. Similarly, there is a possibility of gift-taking resulting in the promotion of mediocrity if the right public servant that has high level of integrity is not involved. In other words, our public servants should be men and women of integrity so that the positive aspect or our cultural practice of gift giving is sustained. Let us preach ethical rebirth and not to scandalize our culture.

.....

There is nothing wrong with the provision to deserve such amendment. Let the status-quo remain. It is only an attitude problem. Further, I would assume that bribery and gifts should not be interpreted as being or meaning the same thing. They are quite different and should not be confused. Bribery should be outlawed out rightly, but giving and receiving of gifts should not be outlawed, because it is our culture. Traditionally, due to

our African hospitality, which is inherent, we should not outlaw giving or receiving of gifts, but it should not be tied to any process or activity.

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#### CSODP1

One of the ordinary meanings of the word 'gifts' is something given to another voluntarily, without charge. Perhaps, it is the unconditional nature of gifts that encouraged the writers of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria, while outlawing the acceptance of benefit for work done, to allow the proviso that "a public officer shall only accept gifts from personal friends and relations and on such occasions as are recognized by custom" (CFRN 1999. Schedule, Part 1: 6(1) - (3)). However, two questions arise as we interrogate this matter; who is a friend or relation and when is a gift recognized by custom? A well groomed public servant is likely to be courteous and friendly, though firm and fair. If he/she has to deal with the same clients over a period, it is more likely that a certain friendly relationship would develop. The argument is that the public servant is likely to have more friends among his clients than enemies. Therefore, allowing gifts on the basis of friendship or relationship is as good as not having any restrictions in place. The practice of gift giving affects the integrity of the public servant and leads to corruption. Man is selfish by nature. The body likes aggrandizement. A gift brings smile to most faces involuntarily.

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Apparently, the practice has the potentials to compromise the integrity of the public servants in the performance of his/her duties; lower the productivity of the public service; compromise national security; promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence; negatively affect the ethical content of an organization; provide a window of opportunity for corruption, and impair the achievement of organizational mandate.

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I recommend amending the constitution for a restricted value of gift that is not more than a given amount of money which may not be considered "influential" to the individual receiving such gift. If this is the case, the individual does not feel the need to attach much reciprocal sentiments just because he/she received such a gift. Further, the limits to gift giving could be spelt out clearly in the constitution and code of conduct of the public sector as is the case in some countries. The constitution should stipulate that no public officer is allowed to receive a gift item worth more than ₦3000.00 under no circumstances. This will go a long way to curb bribery in the public sector, as any individual receiving more than the stipulated amount will be prosecuted for bribery charges.

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#### CSODP2

I am in tandem with the belief that it is a serious blow to halting corruption, more especially as public officials who steal or appropriate public property will claim they were gift. There should be a line between cultural practices and official act. Where there

is any contradiction, the constitution should take upper hand and so, gift based on cultural practices should be distinct and should be limited to cultural object and artifact and not on items that would advance ones wealth or pocket.

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There is no gainsaying that it is both unethical and negative and goes to the root of the problem. Serious legal and official issues should be made out of such practices if we have the real intention of putting high level corruption behind us in this country. The practice erodes the integrity of public servants while its effect is very corruptive. It is such that if the gifts do not change hands nothing gets done.

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Against the background of my explanation so far, I hold the view that the practice has the potentials to compromise the integrity of the public servants in the performance of his/her duties; lower the productivity of the public service; compromise national security; promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence; negatively affect the ethical content of an organization; provide a window of opportunity for corruption, and impair the achievement of organizational mandate. I perceive the practice as having the potentials to promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence because it can lead to the best not getting what they deserve to get by merit; while the staffer-gift-givers get whatever they want regardless of their performance/qualification. When human resources managers are unduly influenced and compromised through unrestricted gift giving, human resources management as an important sector of management is at a cross road; unwholesome work attitude is tolerated, ghost workers are kept alive in the payroll, workers are promoted without due process, and the by-product is dysfunctional work ethos. It is only logical that the practice is capable of affecting the ethical content of an organization to a level where public officials/servants can no longer maintain truthfulness and honesty; instead, they will resort to compromising the advantages of their offices for their individual advancement, honor, or personal gain.

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I would recommend amendment of the constitution to restrict the value of gift to not more than 2, 500 naira. Allowing gifts on the basis of friendship or relationship is as good as not having any restrictions in place.

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#### CSOEP1

Yes, I perceive the practice as having potentials to compromise the integrity of the public servant in the performance of his/her duties. This is because it has the potential to influence the receiver's action/behavior in favor of the gift-giver as against ethical standard of an organization, hence, causing integrity problem.

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My perception of the practice is negative because the practice is associated with corruption. Over time the hands that do not bring gifts are seen as leprous, stingy, unappreciative and therefore, not worthy of service. Since there is no "free lunch anywhere", clients have mastered this art of gift - giving to curry favors.

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I will not hesitate to submit that the practice has the potentials to compromise the integrity of the public servants in the performance of his/her duties; lower the productivity of the public service; compromise national security; promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence; negatively affect the ethical content of an organization; provide a window of opportunity for corruption, and impair the achievement of organizational mandate. Obviously yes! A civil servant who is responsible for screening and approving application forms for job opportunities, will be psychologically tortured into giving positive consideration to the application submitted by an individual or individuals who offered him gift as against one who did not. Gift, by its nature, requires reciprocity, the desire to reciprocate compromises the effectiveness of the public officer and in the long run lowers the productivity of the public service.

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 My recommendation is for amendment of the constitution to restrict the value of gifts to not more than 5000 naira  
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#### CSOEP2

There is nothing wrong with our cultural practice in respect of gift giving in the public service. It is important to point out that our gift giving cultural practice does not condone corruption or unproductively. By culture, we are hospitable people, affectionate and caring. We shall preach integrity and good conscience in the public service without destroying our cultural heritage which is the envy of the so-called advanced societies.

Our hospitality will stand the taste of time and it is even supported biblically. Integrity of a public servant can be compromised by so many factors unrelated to gift giving. So, why worry our head over our cultural identity. Mark you, I do not support corruption in the public sector. In fact, I decry it, but it is not by castigating our culture that we can show that we are fighting corruption. Let the constitutional provision stand, please.

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 These factors of corruption under review are entirely independent of the practice of gift- giving in our public service. A corrupt public servant is corrupt whether gift or no gift. My own perceptions of the practice is that it does not have the potentials to compromise the integrity of the public servants in the performance of his/her duties; lower the productivity of the public service; compromise national security; promote mediocrity at the expense of excellence; negatively affect the ethical content of an organization; provide a window of opportunity for corruption, and impair the achievement of organizational mandate.

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 I recommend maintenance of the status-quo so that the constitutional provision stays as provided, that is, no amendment. I wish to add that the law enforcement agencies should be alive to their responsibilities. Issues of bribery and corruption in the public service should be taken seriously. A corrupt civil servant should not blame his indulgence into bribery and corruption on gift giving practice but on his integrity problem. Such civil servant should be made to face the full weight of the law, first for debasing our culture,



and second, for corruptly enriching himself. There should be renewed emphasis and efforts to be placed on the prosecution of individuals convicted of bribery and corruption regardless of their level in the public service and society. Over the years, we have witnessed how the judicial arm of government in Nigeria has continually made mockery of discharging cases of bribery and corruption. There have been instances where individuals convicted of bribery and corruption scandal worth millions of naira are allowed the option of fine or plea bargaining which, in most cases, is far less than the amount collected as bribes. This encourages other individuals within the sector to continue to be corrupt.

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