Status-Conferral Function of the Press and the Fight against Corruption in Nigeria: Issues, Trends, and Implications

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Abstract

The study was carried out to ascertain the relationship between the status-conferral function of the press and the fight against corruption in the country, as well the issues, trends, and the implications. The study was predicated on Status Conferral Theory (SCT) and Social Responsibility Theory (SRT). The objectives were to ascertain the relationship between the status-conferral function of the press and the fight against corruption in Nigeria and evaluate the trends, issues and the implications of status-conferral function of the press on the fight against corruption in Nigeria. Interview schedule was used to elicit information from 24 media practitioners (12 Practising journalists and 12 Journalism teachers) selected from the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria, via convenience sampling method. Findings established relationship between status-conferral and the fight against corruption in Nigeria. Indicate the use of status-conferral in developmental reporting as a trend, whilst the issues of lack of integrity, objectivity and fairness in the media and no regard for the rule of law in the country, as well as corruption were highlighted, amongst others. Given the findings, the study recommends that the media should be circumspect, whilst utilising status conferral function of the press, so as not to glorify perpetuators of corruption in Nigeria, as well as not engage in witch hunt, amongst others.

Keywords: Status-conferral, Corruption, Fight against corruption, Trends, Issues, Implications.


Prefatory

Status-Conferral, one of the major functions of the press, is the notion that press coverage singles out and confers importance upon the person covered (Lemert, 2006). It is the idea that news coverage singles out and elevates the covered person or organisation - Hence, status conferral or recognition by the mass media indicates that one is important enough to single out from the mass and that one’s behaviour and opinions are significant and sufficient enough to demand media attention” (Omoera and Guanah, 2022). According to Smith (2016), status conferral is the role the mass media gives to a person, group of people or event that makes these things seem important or significant, whether justified or not. Asabor (2020) says that getting mass media attention, especially from respected media outlets, gives the public an impression that a person or event is important and deserving of consideration. This, Asabor (2020) goes on to say, elicits organized social action, because the mass media has legitimized the person or event by giving its support. Further, scholars agree that status-conferral function of the media is achieved by exposing individuals to large audiences for one good reason or the other, to make them appear important or esteemed. In agreement, Ate and Sunday (NOUN, 2009) assert that the mass media has the power to make instant celebrities of hitherto unknown persons, either for good or bad. In Nigeria, people who are
well connected are looked up to as opinion leaders and the function of status conferral in the country comes from being the subject of the subject of news reports.

On the other hand, scholars unitedly agree that corruption happens when one abuses power entrusted for personal gain. Corruption can be effected by elected politicians, civil servants, journalists, administrators, schools, or anyone in authority, amongst others. This misuse of power erodes the trust between two or more parties, government and the people, and by extension, weakens democracy and democratic institutions. Not only that, it also hinders the economic growth of a nation and aggravates poverty and inequality. Nigeria, over the years, has battled with the issue of corruption, which has given the country unprecedented negative attention (Enweremadu, 2006). Available data indicates that there have been countless promises, efforts and campaigns by the various levels of government in Nigeria to tackle this hydra-headed issue, much to no avail. Despite the above efforts, corruption still bedevils Nigeria, and has even festered vociferously. Much to the disadvantage of the Nigerian citizens, who now bears the odoriferous brunt of this quagmire. As rightly captured by several scholars, corruption has metastasized and become endemic in every sector in Nigeria, despite the various interventions engendered by successive governments. This is evidenced in the media reportage indicating mammoth malfeasance and treasury-pilfering across the Federal Government ministries.

The researchers quip that given the enormity of the power bestowed on the media as the fourth estate of the realm empowered to hold government, as well as its officials, accountable to the society, the media can, through media advocacy, advocate and engender positive cognition against providing comfort to corruption and corruption-laden activities. It should be noted that status-conferral function of the press can be a veritable tool ladened with the potency to fight corruption in Nigeria. But this can only happen if the media refuses to glorify and/or confer eminence status to corrupt persons and organisations through extension of their platforms, which ultimately end-up serving as an amplified megaphone. Rather than the above, the media should utilise their platforms to sheds light on corruption, as well as touting same as a challenge inimical to the development, revealing how entrenched the menace has become, the perpetrators and the steps required to curb corruption going-forward.

This paper, therefore, seeks to study the relationship between the status-conferral function of the press and the fight against corruption in Nigeria, as well as highlights the trends, issues and implications of utilisation of status-conferral function of the press on the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

**Research Objectives**

i. Ascertain the relationship between the status-conferral function of the press and the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

ii. Evaluate the trends in status-conferral function of the press and the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

iii. Assess issues pertaining to status-conferral function of the press and the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

iv. Determine the implications of status-conferral function of the press on the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

**Literature Review - Conceptual Underpinnings**

**Status-Conferral Function of the Press**

Merriam-Webster defines status as “(noun): a position or rank in relations to others”. Aiken, Lehan and Airth (2022) say that status is “the rank or position that a person holds… there are a set of behaviours (roles) that are expected from a givens status as each person has statuses that they were born into or achieved during their life”. Conferral, on the other hand, is defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as “the act of giving an official title, honour, or advantage to someone”. When put together, Status-conferral has
to do with giving or conferring a rank, position or importance to a person, a group or an event or happening whether for good reasons or for bad reasons. When it comes to the press, as stated earlier in this paper, status-conferral is the press coverage that singles out and confers importance upon the person or group being covered or treated. Basically, Status Conferral is the idea that news coverage singles out and elevates the covered person or organisation.

Merton (2015) states “the mass media confer status on public issues, persons, organisations, and social movements…The mass media bestow prestige and enhance the authority of individuals and groups by legitimizing their status. Recognition by the press or radio or magazines or newsmagazines testifies that one has arrived, that one is important enough to have been singled out from the large anonymous masses, and that one’s behaviour and opinions are significant enough to require public notice”. He goes on to say that the most vividly operation of the status conferral function is witnessed in the advertising pattern of testimonials to a product by prominent people: “Such testimonials not only enhance the prestige of the product but also reflect prestige on the person who provides the testimonials”.

In Nigeria, media reports revolve mainly around those in power and those who have done one thing or the other that attracted the attention of a large majority of the mass audience. This level of coverage and exposure which eventually leads to the conferral of status whether the individual is deserving or undeserving is what Asabor (2020) calls an advantage that Nigerians, particularly the politicians, have been leveraging on since the emergence of journalism in the country, especially “when they have the ambition to contest for a political position or get appointment at any given dispensation”. The status-conferral function of the media here in Nigeria provides information about public figures who are mostly considered opinion leaders and decision makers, and also information about events and happenings which the media makes important with status allocation.

Corruption

Corruption, according to Ekiyor (2005) as cited in Iyanda (2012), is “the unlawful use of official power or influence by an official or influence by an official of the government either to enrich himself or further his course and/or contrary to the conventions or laws that are in force”. He goes on to say “it is very unfortunate that this menace knows not any time nor period; it happens anytime or period of any nation’s history”. Transparency International defines corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain and then further state that it (corruption) erodes trust, weakens democracy, hampers economic development and further exacerbates inequality, poverty, social division and environmental crisis. They also state that corruption can take many forms and can include many behaviours, can happen anytime, can involve anyone, can happen in the shadow, as well as adapts to different contexts and changing circumstances - that is, it can evolve in response to changes in rules, legislation and even technology.

Further, Ezeogidi (2020), whilst tracing the origin of corruption in Nigeria, quips that corruption in Nigeria began to rear its ugly head in various chiefdoms and kingdoms long before the colonial fathers brought about the amalgamation. He asserts that corruption In Nigeria started from the local government level, penetrated from thence to the entire polity from where it continued to grow and morphed into the federal government agencies, parastatals, ministries, as well as every nook and crannies of the federation. Scholars agree that this malfeasance has quadrupled over the years and has almost becoming a norm in Nigeria. Available evidence abounds, even on the pages of newspapers, and in the various archived reports, indicating the frequency and extent the Nigeria’s common patrimony has been looted by successive regimes and government officials. Iyanda (2012), citing Justice Mustapha Akanbi (2003), categorised corruption in Nigeria into three, which are:

i.) Street level corruption, which describes corruption in administration, such that the citizens experienced in their daily activities and interactions with government officials, who demand and collect money before carrying out their legitimate functions.

ii.) Business corruption – this refers to corruption that occurs among low-to-medium size businesses, with or without active connivance of the equivalent public sector official; and
iii.) High level corruption – this refers to corruption that involves huge sums of money in high power centers, such as, in Ministry of Finance, public and civil service and administration.

The Fight against Corruption in Nigeria

Enweremadu (2006) notes that the various manifestations of corruption in Nigeria are well documented in the numerous reports of commissions of enquiry established by successive commissions, such as the Foster-Sulton Tribunal of 1956 and the Justice Coker Commission of 1962, which highlighted how politicians of the First Republic used their privileged positions to divert public resources away from state corporations and companies, to their various political parties. The military latched on the above malfeasance to levy barrages of ‘distasteful’ military coup d’état ostensibly to fix corruption. Nzekwe, cited by Ezeogidi (2020), lent credence to the above thus that during the military coup of 1966, which was said to be to curb corruption, Major Nzeogwu tried to convince Nigerians that the enemies of the country were the “political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand ten percents. One military regime led to another and while some yielded some level of success in curbing the social menace with one commission set up or the other, others contributed to the evil that rapidly infiltrated the Nigerian society with repressive military rule and growing personalisation of power, spreading the evil to every sphere of society (including the civil society and the private sector) until it became a national culture (Amuwo, cited in Enweremadu, 2006). It should be noted that notable efforts made to “curb” corruption during these regimes led to the formation and setting up of several intervention programmes and commissions, such as Operation Purge the Nation, Public Complaints Commission (PCC), War against Indiscipline, and the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), amongst others.

Similarly, in order to curb corruption, Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000 (ICPC Act 2000) was enacted in June 2000. The ICPC Act, amongst other things seeks to prohibit and prescribe punishment for corrupt practices and other related offences. It establishes an Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC Commission), vesting it with the responsibilities of investigation and prosecution of offenders thereof. Although the Commission began on what publicly seemed to be a good note, it failed to make any major convictions after the first four years and Justice Akanbi, who was the Chairman of the Commission, blamed the lack of progress in part on severe underfunding and in part on the fact that the Commission was not authorised to investigate activity prior to the date the ICPC Act and ICPC Commission was enacted. (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Report 2004). Several scholars argued that rather than fight corruption that Commission was enveloped by corruption.

Given the inertia that bedeviled ICPC Commission, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act 2002 was enacted and amended in 2004. The Act commissions the EFCC to combat economic and financial crimes, thereby enabling the Commission to prevent, investigate, prosecute, and penalize economic and financial crimes. The Commission was also charged with the responsibility of coordinating the various institutions involved in the fight against money laundering and enforcement of all laws dealing with economic and financial crimes in the country (Brown, 2016). Just like the ICPC, the EFCC has had its own share of convictions and notable cases. However, the anti-corruption agency – although it is the most promising agency in the country to confront corruption with its recorded successes – has “failed to tackle corrupt politicians effectively” and this has been attributed to a number of reasons, which are similar to those given by the ICPC, and the fact that the Nigeria’s political system has continued unabated to reward rather than punish corruption (Human Rights Watch report 2011; Reported by the BBC on 25th August, 2011). There are also corrupt controversies surrounding the Commission, especially in regards to cases involving high-profile government officials, as well as politicians.

Asides the above, other efforts were made to stem the tide of corruption in Nigeria, this led to the attempt to establish the Code of Conduct Bureau in 1983. Unfortunately, this Bureau could not become operational due to the inability of the National Assembly to pass the bill until the demise of that republic.
However, with the enactment of the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act, the Code of Conduct Bureau was later established as a consequence of the provisions of the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act, Chapter C15 LFN 2004. The Act extended to the Bureau (CCB) the mandate to establish and maintain a high standard of public morality in the conduct of government business and to ensure that the actions and behaviour of public officers conform to the highest standard of public morality and accountability. It should also be noted that section 153, as well as the Third Schedule to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as amended, clothed CCB with constitution flavour and the enabling legal environment to function effectively. Scholars agree that despite the above, CCB is yet to achieve the desired results.

**Potency of Media Portrayal to Fight against Corruption**

Media portrayal refers to reporting news and events by various forms of media, including newspapers, television, radio, and online platforms. It is the process by which journalists and news organisations collect, verify, and disseminate information to the public. Media portrayal can significantly impact public opinion, policy decisions, and the fight against corruption. It can also shape how people perceive events and issues and influence their attitudes and beliefs. According to a study by the Pew Research Center, the news media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion on important issues. The study found that "the media has a powerful influence on public opinion, both in terms of the issues that people think are important and the way those issues are framed and discussed." Furthermore, media portrayal can also influence policy decisions. A study by the University of California, Berkeley, found that media portrayal of climate change significantly impacted the passage of climate-related legislation.

**Literature Review - Theoretical Underpinnings**

The paper is predicated on the Status Conferral Theory and the Social Responsibility Theory.

**Status Conferral Theory (SFT)**

According to Sanusi, Okunade, Ogungbamigbe and Anieudo (2014), the Status Conferral Theory (SFT) is a concept under the umbrella of the agenda-setting theory and it was propounded by Paul Lazarsfield and Robert Merton in 1948, referring to the amount of attention given to individuals by the media. Smith (2016) explains that the status conferral theory by Lazarsfield and Merton came about when they were explaining the functions and the power that the mass media has in the society; the ability to force so much information from anywhere at any given time and about any topic and the ability to make a topic seem like the most pressing matter to date. This finds traction in the fact that the SFT can be leveraged to extend humongous attention of the media to disseminating information that beams searchlight on corrupt practices, as well as muster the society to stand in solidarity with the fight against corruption. Further, the media, given the enormous influence and power weaved around it, could make issues of corruption topical, as well as its effects, which scholars agree, has the propensity to cause havoc and upheaval in the Nigerian Society.

Lazarsfeld and Merton (1996) argued further that being noticed by the media is a sign of success, significant enough to have been chosen out of the vast, faceless multitudes and significant enough for one's actions and thoughts to merit public attention. In other words, through elevating their social stature and bestowing prestige upon them, the media. The theory assumes that by often featuring people in the media, people are given status, according to Anaeto et al. (2008). This demonstrates that individuals prefer to view some persons as significant members of society the more the media highlights and portrays them. This is because the media cannot feature individuals irrelevant to society.

The theory, which contends that the mass media give status and legitimacy to individuals, ideas, and organisations and emphasises those seen as prominent figures in society, as well as increases their popularity, is relevant to the study's focus, which seeks to ascertain the relationship between the status
conferral function of the press and the fight against corruption in Nigeria, amongst others. Wimmer and Dominick (2000) note in support that what the media choose to publicise significantly influences what kinds of issues people debate, think about, and worry about. This indicates that if the media decides to devote the greatest time and attention to covering issues pertaining to corruption and persons orchestrating corruption, these subjects will take centre stage in the minds of the people.

Social Responsibility Theory

The Social Responsibility Theory (SRT), cited in Chukwu (2019), stems from the Libertarian Theory and was propounded by F.S Stebert, W. Schramm and T.B Peterson. The theory has its origin from Europe, and shaped by the Commission on the Freedom of Press in the United States of America. The theory encourages freedom of the press with no censorships, but only regulated by law. In interpreting Social Responsibility Theory, Peterson, cited in Chukwu (2019), quips that freedom carries obligation and that the press which enjoys privileged position under the government (constitution) is obliged to be responsible to the society. He further listed the following as what constitute social responsibility: Servicing the political system by providing information, discussion and debate on public affairs; Enlightening the public so as to make it capable of self-government; and Safe-guarding the rights of the individuals by serving as watchdog against government (Chukwu, 2019).

Flowing from the above, it is safe to say that the theory (Social Responsibility Theory) is germane to this study given the obvious fact that the press can leverage on its social responsibility to sensitize the Nigerian society on the usefulness and the positive effect of the fight against corruption, as well as the impact conferment of status on individuals and organisations unworthy of it can make in the society. The researchers argue that this may have far-reaching untoward consequences on the fight against corruption in Nigeria. Further, the media can leverage on its social responsibility to educate the people on the need to abhor corrupt practices, as well as make the issues of corruption topical to the Nigerian society.

Methodology

The study adopted qualitative research approach, whilst sampling was done using the convenience sampling method. Data for the study were collected from secondary sources and interview of media practitioners. Further, in-depth interview method was used to collect data from 24 media practitioners from the six (6) geopolitical zones of Nigeria, which includes 12 practising journalists (two from each zone) and 12 journalism teachers (two each from zone). Instructively, Interview schedule was utilised to elicit responses from the respondents.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Responses from the interview with the respondents regarding Objective one

Ascertain the relationship between the status-conferral function of the press and the fight against corruption in Nigeria:

Table 1. Relationship between Status Conferral and Fight Against Corruption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Respondents’ responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think relationship between the status-conferral function of the press and the fight against corruption?</td>
<td>All the respondents said Yes. They further state that the relationship is highly significant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you think conferment of status on unworthy individuals or organisations could affect the fight against corruption?</td>
<td>Twenty (20) respondents agree, whilst four (4) of the respondents disagree.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that all the respondents (100%) (media practitioners) agree that relationship between status-conferral function of the press and the fight against corruption do exist. They further quip that the
relationship is highly significant. The implication of the above is that relationship between status-conferral function of the press and the fight against corruption do exist, and that same is highly significant.

**Responses from the interview with respondents regarding Objective two**

Evaluate the trends in status-conferral function of the press and the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

**Table 2. Trends of Status-Conferral in the Fight Against Corruption**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Respondents’ responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the trends of status-conferral in the fight against corruption?</td>
<td>The respondents are evenly divided in their responses. 12 (50%) of the respondents interviewed believed that there is nothing new or no new trend regarding status-conferral and the fight against corruption in Nigeria. They further assert that “the media gives attention the way it has always does to those that deserve it, when they deserve it be it in good times and in bad times”. Whilst the other 12 (50%) respondents believed that the new trend is the use of status-conferral alongside other functions for the fight against corruption.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table indicates that the respondents are evenly divided in their responses pertaining to trends of status-conferral in the fight against corruption. 50% of the respondents (media practitioners) believed that there is nothing new or no new trend regarding status-conferral and the fight against corruption in Nigeria. Whilst the other 12 (50%) respondents agree that new trend exist and that it is in the use of status-conferral alongside other functions for the fight against corruption. The implication of the above is that new trend exists and that it is in the use of status-conferral alongside other functions for the fight against corruption.

**Responses from the interview with respondents regarding Objective three**

Assess issues pertaining to status-conferral function of the press and the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

**Table 3. Issues Pertaining to Status-Conferral and the Fight Against Corruption in Nigeria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Respondents’ responses</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the issues in status-conferral and the fight against corruption?</td>
<td>The respondents agree that issues in status-conferral and the fight against corruption in Nigeria exist. Further they identified the following as the issues: Integrity, objectivity, Fairness, lack of regard for rule of law, Undue attention to person or persons or organisations undeserving of such limelight/status, Corruption/Brown envelop syndrome, Corrupt individuals holding the judiciary system to ransom, Ownership structure influence, government influence/interference.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that the respondents (100%) agree that issues in status-conferral and the fight against corruption in Nigeria exist, as well as identified the following as the issues - Integrity, objectivity, Fairness, lack of regard for rule of law, Undue attention to person or persons or organisations undeserving of such limelight/status, Corruption/Brown envelop syndrome, Corrupt individuals holding the judiciary system to ransom, Ownership structure influence, government influence/interference. The implication of the above is that issues still bedevil the fight against corruption in Nigeria.
Responses from the interview with respondents regarding Objective four
Determine the implications of status-conferral function of the press on the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

Table 4. Implications of Status-Conferral on the Fight Against Corruption in Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Respondents’ responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| What are the implications of status-conferral function of the press on the fight against corruption in Nigeria? | The interview responses from the respondents established that there are varying implications of status-conferral function of the press on the fight against corruption in Nigeria. They quip that:  
  a). Conferment of status on individuals and organisations unworthy of it can normalize corruption and create impressions in the minds of citizens, to the extent, that the fight against corruption does not matter to the Nigerian society.  
  b). That integrity and credibility of the media is called to question, where the media extends or pays attention to one particular person or organisations to the detriment of others, whilst utilising the status conferral function of the press in the fight against corruption in Nigeria. They agree equally, that this may have far-reaching untoward consequences on the fight against corruption in Nigeria.  
  c). The respondents assert that unregulated or bias utilisation of the status conferral function of the press in the fight against corruption might impact fairness, balancing reportage, and objectivity, which are important critical elements of journalism.  
  d). The respondents do agree that effective use of the status conferral function of the press in the fight against corruption would assist in no small measure in stemming and/or obliterating corruption in Nigeria.  
  e). They further acknowledged that status-conferral plays significant role in the fight against corruption, given the fact that if same is wrongly utilised, it could send wrong signal that corruption is wanted, as well as provide corrupt people the impetus to indulge more in corruption. |

The table established and identified several varying implications of status-conferral function of the press on the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

Discussion

Findings show that all the media practitioner interviewed in Nigeria agree that relationship exist between the status conferral function of the press and the fight against corruption in Nigeria. They further acknowledged that status-conferral plays significant role in the fight against corruption, given the fact that if same is wrongly utilised, it could send wrong signal that corruption is wanted, as well as provide corrupt people the impetus to indulge more in corruption.

It should be noted that aside from the above, status conferral function of the press could be utilised to bring to limelight malefascance in government, as well as other crimes, such as embezzlement, abuse of office, and diversion of funds, amongst others. This is where the social responsibility theory used in this study clearly tandems with the findings of the study. Another clear example of the relationship of status conferral function of the press and the fight against corruption can be found in the fact that those who have been conferred status by the media do what they can to ensure that their reputation stays clean and live devoid of corruption.

Relatedly, data elicited from the interview regarding trends of status conferral in the fight against corruption, indicates that the respondents are evenly divided in their responses pertaining to trends of status-conferral in the fight against corruption. 50% of the respondents (media practitioners) believed that there is nothing new or no new trend regarding status-conferral and the fight against corruption in Nigeria.
Nigeria. Whilst the other 50% respondents agree that new trend exist and that it is in the use of status-conferral alongside other functions for the fight against corruption. The implication of the above is that new trend exists and that it is in the use of status-conferral alongside other functions for the fight against corruption.

Further, data from the study regarding issues pertaining to status-conferral and the fight against corruption in Nigeria, indicates that the media practitioners (100%) agree that issues in status-conferral and the fight against corruption in Nigeria exist. The media practitioners further identified the following as the issues - Integrity, objectivity, Fairness, lack of regard for rule of law, Undue attention to person or persons or organisations undeserving of such limelight/status, Corruption/Brown envelop syndrome, Corrupt individuals holding the judiciary system to ransom, Ownership structure influence, government influence/interference. The implication of the above is that issues still bedevil the fight against corruption in Nigeria. Instructively, the above outcome contrast sharply with the assumptions of the theories x-rayed in this work. Further, the findings tandems with the assertion held by several scholars in the literature review, which asserts that several issues are laden in the status conferral function of the press and the fight against corruption if utilised wrongly.

Similarly, data elicited regarding to implications of status-conferral on the fight against corruption in Nigeria, established and identified several varying implications of status-conferral function of the press on the fight against corruption in Nigeria. The implications include conferment of status on individuals and organisations unworthy of it, which the media practitioners quip could normalize corruption and create impressions in the minds of citizens that the fight against corruption does not matter to the Nigerian society. Integrity and credibility of the media could be called to question, especially where the media extends or pays attention to one particular person or organisation to the detriment of others, whilst utilising the status conferral function of the press in the fight against corruption in Nigeria. Unregulated or bias utilisation of the status conferral function of the press in the fight against corruption, which may impact fairness, balanced reportage, and objectivity, which are important critical elements of journalism. Others include, Effective use of the status conferral function of the press in the fight against corruption, which, according to the media practitioners, would assist in no small measure in stemming and/or obliterating corruption in Nigeria. They further acknowledged that status-conferral plays significant role in the fight against corruption, given the fact that if same is wrongly utilised, it could send wrong signal that corruption is wanted, as well as provide corrupt people the impetus to indulge more in corruption. The implication of the above findings is that mammoth implications exist, and that these implications may have far-reaching untoward consequences on the fight against corruption in Nigeria, which may hamper the medias’ ability to effectively utilise status conferral function of the press to fight corruption, as well as the media’s ability to leverage on the tenets of social responsibility theory.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the study concludes that relationship between status-conferral function of the press and the fight against corruption do exist and that same is highly significant in the fight against of corruption in Nigeria. Given the above, the researcher recommends that the relationship should be encouraged through concerted efforts of the media, as well as the government.

Further, the study concludes that issues bothering on status-conferral and the fight against corruption in Nigeria exist, and that, given the enormity of the issues identified by the media practitioners, the study recommends that urgent intervention of the media stakeholders, as well as government, in other to fix the issues, which may have a chokehold on the fight against corruption in Nigeria. Also, given the importance of this media function (Status conferral), the study recommends that the media should be circumspect whilst utilising this media function, so as not to glorify perpetuators of corruption in Nigeria.
References


