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# Family psychological wealth, peer pressure, and corruption tendencies of adolescent students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria

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The study investigated the relationship between family psychological wealth, peer pressure, and corruption tendencies of adolescent Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State, Nigeria. The influence of gender on the corruption tendencies of these adolescent students was also investigated. The sample was made up of 814 respondents from 22 public and private secondary schools in Calabar Metropolis. A questionnaire with the following title was the tool used to gather the data: “Family Psychological Wealth, Peer Pressure and Corruption Tendencies Questionnaire” (FPWPPCTQ). This was constructed by the researchers and validated by Educational Psychologists and experts in Test, Measurement, and Evaluation. The reliability coefficient obtained by using the Cronbach reliability coefficient method was 0.76. Three hypotheses were formulated to direct the study and were tested with the aid of the Mann-Whitney *U*-test and Spearman’s rank correlation. The outcome revealed a significant difference between the corruption tendencies of male and female students with male students showing a greater tendency towards corruption. A significant negative relationship was obtained between family psychological wealth and corruption tendencies among adolescent SS2 students in Calabar Metropolis. Peer pressure and students’ corruption tendencies were found to be significantly and positively correlated. Family psychological wealth could, therefore, be explored to check Nigeria’s endemic corruption which persists despite the establishment of anti-corruption institutions. Non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to empower the boy child through counselling, mentorship, and educational assistance to reduce their tendency to corruption.

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## Introduction

Corruption is deeply rooted in the structure of Nigerian society with devastating consequences. The consequences of corruption can be felt by every citizen in Nigeria. Every arm of government and sector of the economy is dreadfully involved in corruption. The effects can be seen in its citizens' low standard of living despite being the richest oil-producing country in West Africa. Most of the resources of the country are in the hands of a few who live in luxury while a vast majority of Nigerians live in abject poverty. About 80% of Nigerians are poor by the international standards of living (Ibenegbu, 2017). Corruption is a social scourge with many definitions depending on the scholar's level of discernment and predisposition. According to Azelama (2002), corruption is the act of a member of an organization breaking its rules, ethics, norms, or regulations in order to further the member's own personal interests at the expense of the goals and objectives of the organization. Morris (1991) defines it as the abuse of power for one's interest. Yet, the most widely accepted definition of corruption is the use of governmental authority for personal gain (Tanzi, 1998).

Before the colonial era, Nigeria had seen widespread corruption. The country has a culture of materialism which made the slave trade possible through the material inducement of the leaders. During the period of colonial rule, the natives saw the British colonialists as strangers whose property and resources they could legitimately loot or convert. The British merchants of the Oil Rivers Protectorate which controlled trade along River Niger in Nigeria were also involved in fraudulent trade practices and the colonial officials stole from the public treasury. These corrupt practices by the colonial masters motivated Nigerians to steal even more and indulge in other nefarious activities like currency counterfeiting; adulteration of agricultural produce or crops; tax evasion; smuggling; burglary of European stores and theft in native treasuries (Ofonagoro, 1979; Lawal, 1979; Ogunyemi, 2014; Ojo, 2021).

In addition to the above, the colonial government did not deploy the resources which were derived from the colony for the welfare of the general populace but for the upkeep and aggrandizement of the colonial masters (Maekae, 2021). For instance, they built highbrow European quarters in Nigeria for their pleasure without reserving some of the resources for the training of Nigerians for important managerial positions. Similarly, the few colonial officials ensured increment in their remunerations while those of Nigerian workers remained stagnant. This selfish and self-centred mentality appears to have been adopted by the Nigerian political class who expend the resources of the country on themselves at the expense of the masses (Maekae, 2012).

Corruption in Nigeria is also driven by a lack of security, social pressure, and distorted value systems (Aramide et al., 2017). Regardless of the driving force, it is certain that corruption is deeply rooted in the structure of Nigerian society with devastating consequences. Nigeria has lost at least \$582 billion due to pervasive corruption since its independence in 1960, according to YLAGA Africa, a non-governmental organization (Ogune, 2021). The Nigerian culture places a huge premium on material acquisition at the expense of integrity which has resulted in the mediocrity of the leadership at all levels (Oluwagbemi, 2016). So much respect is given to high "net worth" individuals irrespective of how they acquired their wealth. Corruption appears to be encouraged by the traditional rulers who eulogize and confer high-profile chieftaincy titles on their kinsmen who have brought home some of the stolen goodies (Oluwagbemi, 2016). According to Oko (2018), the majority of Nigerians in the current generation were born corrupt, were reared by corrupt parents, attended schools built with corrupt money, and had teachers who obtained their degrees and credentials through corruption.

The Nigerian education system, especially secondary education, is in a terrible state due to corruption with serious implications for the country's future development (Saidu and Micah, 2020). Students pass through these poorly equipped and managed secondary schools and are admitted into the equally poorly equipped and managed universities thereby ending up as half-baked graduates who are neither useful to themselves nor society. Corruption in educational institutions occurs in various shapes and forms and at different levels thereby undermining the integrity of the entire education system. Corrupt practices by adults in the larger society seem to have been imbibed by their wards and teachers. The effects of these corrupt practices are evident in the myriad and prevalent cases of examination malpractice, shady admission exercises, extortion, cultism, absenteeism, sexual harassment, compulsory sales of study materials, favouritism, and sex for grades. There are cases of deplorable infrastructure, especially in public schools, and the embezzlement of funds meant for the renovation of schools, by government officials, thereby making teaching and learning difficult.

Due to corruption, kids from low-income households are at a disadvantage since they cannot afford to pay the money that teachers want in exchange for improved scores. Some struggle, get angry, and quit school as a result. Absenteeism is widespread because some teachers arrive at work early, get their names entered into the biometric system, and then leave to take care of personal matters before coming back to work at the end of the day to sign out (Asiyai, 2020). As a consequence, the syllabuses are not covered and little or no knowledge is transferred to the students and they turn around to collect money for private lessons or compensate them through examination malpractice. This is giving rise to a generation of students who think that hard work and integrity have no effect but that success can only be achieved through cutting corners, bribery, and favouritism (Saidu and Micah, 2020).

Women in Nigeria are more unlikely than men to offer bribes when they come in contact with a public official. Women are also more unlikely to receive bribes than their male counterparts (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020). This has, however, been contested by those who claim that it is because women are excluded from the male-dominated corruption networks which shut them out of the political sphere and prevent them from participating in the private and public sectors. In secondary schools, the gender of the student is also a factor in corrupt activities like examination malpractices. It was reported that girls were more likely to write things on their thighs, palms, purses, and disposable napkins than their male colleagues (Olusola, 2022).

Eze (2010) and Iheanacho and Anam (2019) examined corruption from the viewpoint of examination malpractice, impersonation, sneaking pre-written answers into the exam room, storing notes in secluded areas, using cell phones and electronic devices, and other unethical behaviours which were all part of the pattern of cheating. The findings indicated that male students were more prone than their female counterparts to commit examination fraud. Eze (2010) found that there was no consensus over which gender was more likely to cheat on exams and identified studies that supported this finding.

The Nigerian culture breeds a scarcity mentality—a profound sense of lack that no amount of material acquisition can satisfy. This perhaps explains why some of the country's leaders have stolen sufficiently to satisfy the needs of their unborn generations yet they are not done (Oluwagbemi, 2016). Contrary to the general misconception that the scarcity mindset leads to more career and life success, it is people with an abundance mindset who make better employees and better leaders (The Swaddle

Team, 2016). People should be aware of the fact that the dogged pursuit of money and the obsessive quest for material gain, which is termed affluenza, can damage their health, families, communities, and the environment (Desai, 2019).

People are insatiable thus they do not necessarily find happiness in material benefits. Material gains first result in a boost in one's quality of life, much like addiction in general. The person then presumes that more must be better but material things do not necessarily follow a linear pattern. Most of the time, what is beneficial in small doses becomes routine and eventually dangerous in bigger ones (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). Poor relationships have also been connected to a money-focused way of life (Desai, 2019). On the contrary, a psychologically wealthy person radiates bountiful positive emotions and is very content with his or her life. It has been shown that as income increases, the value of one's time increases as well, and one starts to feel ridiculous using it for anything other than generating more revenue or engaging in the outward display of wealth (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). Hence, the money-obsessed person starts to think that the opportunity cost of playing with one's child, spending time with relatives, or going to a family reunion is absurd, and so they quit doing those things. A person who just seeks money gain eventually loses sight of other things and is unable to find satisfaction elsewhere (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Luthar, 2003).

Being worldly—having an excessive obsession with money or material things—can undermine one's happiness (Kasser, 2002; Diener and Biswas-Diener, 2002). There is, therefore, a need for rebirth and reawakening through a new national order which demands the resurrection of dead family values of selfless service and sacrifice that the traditional African communities were known for (Oko, 2018). Hence, the fight against corruption must begin at home, during childhood when the community has an unrestrained rich relationship with every newborn, and with the development of the concept of family psychological wealth (Iheanacho, 2021). This suggests that relationships, a positive view of life, and good health in mind and body contribute to happiness (Luthar, 2003). Family psychological wealth can be defined as the quantity and quality of interaction among family members, especially between the parents and the children, eliciting desirable behaviour (Iheanacho, 2004). Psychological wealth is a person's genuine "net worth," taking into account factors such as health, level of spiritual development, relationships, useful employment, optimism about the future, and material resources (Biswas-Diener, 2018). Happiness has been linked to the pursuit of a variety of activities, close friendships, time for reflection, and happy family life (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). Biswas-Diener (2018), illustrated the importance of psychological wealth by showing that a person with a high degree of psychological wealth can stay relatively wealthy even after losing half of his income because of his rich endowment in other areas like friendship and good health. One can have lots of money but is poor in the psychological sense.

To enhance self-esteem, individuals who lack psychological wealth prefer extraneous things like financial wealth, material possessions and status to focusing on the accomplishment of intrinsic fundamental human needs. According to empirical data, those who are very materialistic are more self-oriented, more concerned with their own success, power, and position, and less concerned with other people (Liang et al., 2016). Such individuals are susceptible to cutting corners and they use self-glorifying methods to secure admiration and approval (Zywica and Danowski, 2008). By contrast, individuals with high psychological wealth and positive self-esteem do not crave enhancement, which makes them stick to ethical behaviour instead of engaging in corruption. (Tice, 1993; Barkan et al., 2015; Jordan et al., 2015). A close loving partner, supportive family and friends, fulfilling work

or retirement activities, enjoyment of leisure activities, and good health are typical characteristics of those who score highly on life satisfaction. They do not struggle with gambling, drug, or alcoholism addictions, but they do have goals and ideals that are significant to them (Diener and Biswas-Diener, 2008). It can therefore be said that high self-esteem and psychological wealth may decrease corruption tendencies (Liang et al., 2016).

Children in upper socio-economic classes are more unstable than others and more likely to internalize their troubles and are also at higher risk for depression, anxiety, and eating disorders (Desai, 2019). Also, there is a very strong negative correlation between a teen's degree of happiness and their family's socio-economic status, educational attainment, and occupation, as well as the social class of the neighbourhood in which they reside. Children from lower socioeconomic classes typically expressed the highest levels of happiness, while children from upper middle classes typically expressed the lowest levels of pleasure (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Luthar, 2003). Iheanacho (2004) believes that family psychological wealth contributes greatly to the growth of an individual, right from the prenatal stage and identified the quality of interaction between family members as crucial. The quality of love and care in the family determines how the child will be treated. Such parents are likely to be very interested in the affairs of their children and would do everything to enhance their overall development.

Peers may also be a factor in checking corruption. A peer could be anyone whose behaviour you respect or admire or someone you feel is your age mate with the same ability (Hardcastle, 2012). Peer pressure, according to Jones (2010), is the ability of persons in the same social rank or age group to affect another's behaviour. Peer pressure is more common among teenagers though not limited to them. Many researchers have tried to make a distinction between peer influence and peer pressure. Sim and Koh (2003), for instance, submitted that peer pressure is every influence exerted by a peer group. In addition, Savin-Williams and Berndt (1990) suggested that no single definition can take into account the whole gamut of peer influence on adolescent behaviour because peer influence encompasses different facets of peer relationships. To put it another way, peer pressure is merely a component of peer influence. Peer influence and peer pressure, however, would be employed synonymously in this work.

Peer pressure has positive effects some of which are: Giving a sense of belonging; advice and encouragement such as participation in religious activities and sports; enhanced self-confidence; reinforcement of positive habits and attitudes. Peer pressure has also been found to contribute to corruption among secondary school students in Nigeria (Olafer et al., 2021). In Vietnam, cheating is seen as commonplace with many people feeling that those who do not get involved are at a disadvantage. The decision to cheat is driven by peer and social pressure and many are of the view that cheating is an essential component of the education system (McCornac, n.d.).

The negative effects of peer pressure manifest in many ways which include: Excessive demand for material things that friends have; flouting of rules to hang out with friends; stealing with friends; hints of drugs and alcohol consumption, misleading parents about friends, and complying with friends to avoid rejection (Sanjeev Data Personality School, n.d.). Other negative effects include a reduction in self-esteem; poor grades; adaptation to bad habits and harmful behaviour and thoughts of suicide (Sanjeev Data Personality School, n.d.). Peer pressure can influence identity development since adolescents copy their peers' body image (Morrison et al., 2004). Many adolescent girls have role models who have perfect bodies which they try to emulate as a result of which they subject themselves to various dangerous and unhealthy eating habits (Harvey, 2002). The years spent by

parents to inculcate in their children the right values and moral standards are lost to brainwashing by peers whom their kids spend most of their time with.

The family has been regarded as being essential to a child's development since the beginning of time. Parents' major duty is to take care of their children, and the morals they instil in them will decide how they will act and live as adults. Rather than being a natural trait, juvenile delinquency is instead learned through association, imitation, observation, pressure, requirements, wants, influence, and desires (Zakaria et al., 2022). The family environment is vital for the formation of good character and the maintenance of the mental health of children. This was aptly captured by Chen and Deng (2021) thus: Children learn to blame in an environment of criticism; they learn to fight in a hostile environment; they learn to blame themselves in an environment of ridicule; they learn confidence in an environment of encouragement; they learn to be just in an environment of fairness; they learn to trust in an environment of safety; they learn to love themselves in an environment of approval; they learn to feel guilty in an environment of humiliation, and so on.

Many family attributes influence the disposition of adolescents to peer pressure. The susceptibility of the adolescent to antisocial behaviour is a function of family structure and dynamics (Steinberg, 1987). Children from troubled homes are likely to become victims of peer pressure because little or no attention is received from their parents and the attention they get comes from their friends (Motunrayo, 2016). Children with poor relationships with family members, parents, and good family friends are also susceptible to peer pressure (Burton et al., 2003). It is difficult to pull a child out of a bad habit if the parents did not lay a strong moral foundation for the child. As a consequence, the child is emotionally alienated from the parents and is lost to bad friends (Motunrayo, 2016). A greater magnitude of parental monitoring results in reduced susceptibility of children to peer pressure and prevents them from engaging in unacceptable behaviour. On the other hand, adolescents whose parents were non-restrictive; lacked consistency in discipline, and did not closely monitor their children's behaviour, were more likely to be influenced by peer pressure (Tolan and Cohler, 1993).

In 2021, Nigeria's ranking among the 180 countries listed in Transparency International Corruption Index was 154. South Sudan took the 180th position as the most corrupt country while Denmark topped the list as the least (Transparency International, 2021; Obadare, 2022). The significance is that the problem of corruption is getting worse as the country dropped from the 149th position in the 2020 ranking. The overall score of twenty-four points in 2021, out of a possible hundred, reflects a 3-year trend of increasing corruption which gives it the unfortunate distinction of being the second-most corrupt nation in West Africa, behind Guinea Bissau (Obadare, 2022; Ojo, 2022). In the 2022 report, Nigeria's score remained at 24 points (out of 100 points) but its ranking marginally improved to 150 (Transparency International, 2022).

Since the country's independence in 1960, governments in succession in apparent recognition of the evil effects of corruption, have implemented policies, programmes, and established agencies to tackle the menace. One of the programmes was War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAIC) and the anti-corruption agencies are the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), and so on. Despite these efforts by the Government, corruption has continuously destroyed all facets of the country's internal affairs with incalculable damage being done to her perception by others in the comity of nations (Odo, 2015). So, understanding the psychological causes of corruption is essential in order to support efforts to combat it with evidence-based arguments.

As corruption appears to have defied all efforts at its eradication, could family psychological wealth and peer pressure contribute to its reduction? The following hypotheses were consequently posed:

1. No significant relationship exists between family psychological wealth and corruption tendencies of adolescents in Secondary Schools in Calabar Metropolis.
2. No significant relationship exists between peer pressure and corruption tendencies of adolescents in Secondary Schools in Calabar Metropolis.
3. There is no significant difference in the corruption tendencies of both male and female adolescents in Secondary Schools in the Calabar Metropolis

## Methodology

**Participants.** The population of the study was made up of 12,081 (twelve thousand and eighty-one) SS II Students in both public and private schools in Calabar Metropolis during the 2020/2021 academic session. A sample of 814 (eight hundred and fourteen) respondents—320 (three hundred and twenty) males and 494 (four hundred and ninety-four) females from 22 public and private schools in Calabar Metropolis was obtained through the stratified random sampling method. However, most of the schools were public.

**Data collection.** The research instrument used for data collection, constructed by the researchers, was a questionnaire titled: "Family Psychological Wealth, Peer Pressure and Corruption Tendencies Questionnaire" (FPWPPCTQ). The questionnaire had two sections, A and B. Section A had the respondents' personal information, including the name of the school, class, sex and age. Section B was made up of 33 items measuring their level of family psychological wealth, peer pressure and corruption tendencies on a four-point Likert scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Some examples of the items include: "We rarely go for picnics during school vacation" (negative item); "we hug one another each time we return home" (positive item); "our parents are always proud of us" (positive item); "our rooms have never been sprayed with sweet-smelling fragrance e.g. air freshener" (negative item). For SA, A, D, and SD, the positive items received scores of 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. Negatively phrased items had the opposite effect.

Two Educational Psychologists and two experts in Test, Measurement and Evaluation determined the instrument's face validity. A trial test was performed to determine the instrument's reliability through the use of the Cronbach Reliability Coefficient method by administering it to 60 students from two schools (private and public)—30 students from each school. The schools were chosen from the population but were not part of the sample. The reliability coefficient was 0.76.

After obtaining permission from the principals of the various schools, the researchers administered 814 copies of the instrument and personally collected them.

**Data analysis.** The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and the Mann-Whitney *U*-test. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were also used to see if the data were normally distributed.

## Results

The descriptive statistics of family psychological wealth, peer pressure, and corruption tendencies are shown in Table 1. The outcomes of the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests indicated that the data were probably not normally distributed.

**Table 1** Descriptive statistics of family psychological wealth, corruption tendencies and peer pressure.

Variable	Mean	Median	Std. deviation	Range	N
Family psychological wealth	43.54	44.00	5.419	33	814
Corruption tendencies	21.51	22.00	4.084	26	814
Peer pressure	18.38	18.00	3.567	39	814

**Table 2** Spearman’s rank correlation analysis of the relationship between family psychological wealth and corruption tendencies among adolescents in Secondary Schools in Calabar Metropolis (n = 814).

Variable	Mean	SD	r	Sig. (1-tailed)
Family psychological wealth	43.54	5.42	-0.234	0.000
Corruption tendencies	21.51	4.08		

Accordingly, Spearman’s rank correlation and Mann–Whitney *U*-test, which are non-parametric correlation and means comparison tests, were used. A cursory look at the data showed a negative correlation, so a one-tailed test was performed. However, a two-tailed test also gave the same result.

**Hypothesis 1.** No significant relationship exists between family psychological wealth and corruption tendencies among adolescents in Secondary Schools in Calabar Metropolis.

The Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient of  $-0.234$ , in Table 2, shows a significant negative relationship between family psychological wealth and corruption tendencies among adolescents in Secondary Schools in Calabar Metropolis:  $r(812) = -0.234, p = 0.000$ . Accordingly, the null hypothesis, which states that no significant relationship exists between family psychological wealth and corruption tendencies among adolescents in Secondary Schools in Calabar Metropolis was rejected ( $r = -0.234$ ). This means that as family psychological wealth increases, corruption tendencies decrease among adolescents.

**Hypothesis 2.** No significant relationship exists between peer pressure and corruption tendencies among adolescents in Secondary Schools in Calabar Metropolis.

The Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient obtained was  $0.208$  (see Table 3), which showed a significant correlation between peer pressure and corruption tendencies among adolescents in Secondary Schools in Calabar Metropolis:  $r(812) = 0.208, p = 0.000$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that as peer pressure increases, the corruption tendencies of the students increase.

**Hypothesis 3.** There is no significant difference in the corruption tendencies of male and female adolescents in Secondary Schools in Calabar Metropolis.

Mann–Whitney *U*-test was performed to check if there is any significant difference in the corruption tendencies of male and female adolescents in secondary schools in Calabar Metropolis (see Table 4). The findings show a significant difference between the corruption tendencies of the male and female adolescents ( $U = 69,128.5, p = 0.000$ ) with male students being more prone to corruption. We, therefore, reject the null hypothesis and state that there is a significant difference in the corruption tendencies of

**Table 3** Spearman’s rank correlation analysis of the relationship between peer pressure and corruption tendencies among adolescents in Secondary Schools in Calabar Metropolis (n = 814).

Variable	Mean	SD	r	Sig. (1-tailed)
Peer pressure	18.38	3.57	0.208	0.000
Corruption tendencies	21.51	4.08		

male and female adolescents in Secondary Schools in Calabar Metropolis.

## Discussion

The result of the test of hypothesis one shows a significant negative correlation between family psychological wealth and corruption tendencies among adolescents in secondary schools in Calabar Metropolis. This means that higher levels of family psychological wealth could lessen the propensity towards corrupt practices. Since family psychological wealth ensures a close relationship between parents and their kids (Iheanacho, 2004), these adolescents would have been under the direct influence of their parents to imbibe the right values. Adolescents who are more bonded with their parents are more likely to shun corrupt tendencies.

Since psychological wealth includes a person’s true “net worth” which takes into consideration factors such as health, level of spiritual development, relationships, useful employment, optimism about the future, and material resources (Biswas-Diener, 2018), any psychologically wealthy person is likely to have a satisfying life and is also more likely to resist temptation. As a consequence, it becomes more rewarding if people are endowed with more psychological wealth. A fulfilling family life, which includes having close friends, having time for reflection, and pursuing a variety of interests, is a guaranteed way to happiness, as Csikszentmihalyi (1999) noted. If happiness is assured through psychological wealth, it is, therefore, not rewarding to choose a money-oriented approach to life or corruption which has a weak relationship with satisfaction (Desai, 2019). As with all addictions, things in life do not have a linear relationship—what is beneficial in small doses could become ordinary and then destructive in bigger ones (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). So, it makes sense to choose family psychological wealth that deters corruption, boosts life satisfaction, and enables one to exude an abundance of good feelings.

Given the connection between family psychological wealth and corruption, larger, more potent doses of family psychological wealth are required to fight corruption. This could start from the womb through the traditional African display of love during infancy and childhood (Oko, 2018; Iheanacho, 2021). This makes it possible to shape the youngster into an adolescent with good values, morality, interests, and attitudes. Such an adolescent is less likely to be susceptible to corruption. Thus, the future generation is prevented from becoming maladjusted due to inadequate parental care and lack of moral and spiritual guidance (Olayinka, n.d.).

The result of hypothesis two indicates a positive correlation between peer pressure and corruption tendencies among adolescents in secondary schools in Calabar Metropolis. The inference is that higher peer pressure leads to higher corruption tendencies. Adolescence is a stage of transition between childhood and adulthood. All through their childhood, adolescents spent many hours socializing with teachers, parents and peers. With the onset of adolescence comes new experiences and developmental tasks and noticeable biological changes. Their

**Table 4 Mann-Whitney U-test analysis of the difference in corruption tendencies of male and female adolescents in Secondary Schools in Calabar Metropolis (n = 814).**

Variable	Sex	N	$\bar{X}$	Median	SD	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Sig. (1-tailed)
Corruption tendencies	Male	393	22.14	22	4.248	442.10	69128.5	-4.069	0.000
	Female	421	20.92	21	3.838	375.20			

thought pattern takes a more idealistic and abstract form. Relationship between adolescents and their parents becomes different and they become closer and more intimate with peers (Santrock, 2015). If the relationship is with bad friends, then they are influenced to engage in corrupt practices. The negative effects of peer pressure on adolescents become more troubling when parental closeness and bonding are lacking or absent (Ambrose et al., 2022). Since family psychological wealth involves much care and love, it could create a high level of bonding between parents and children. As a consequence, the adolescent respects family discipline and would adhere to family instructions more than the ones from peers.

The test result of hypothesis three is that male adolescents are more disposed to corruption than their female colleagues. This may be because female adolescent students in Calabar Metropolis are afraid of the shame of being caught for engaging in corrupt practices. On the contrary, male students are intrinsically bolder and braver and do not feel much guilt or shame when caught engaging in corrupt practices (Olayinka, n.d.). Society and parents place high hopes and expectations on the male gender which pushes them to engage in acts of corruption (Eze, 2010). The efforts of numerous organizations focused on girl child education and moral uprightness may also be a contributing factor.

## Conclusion

Corruption in Nigeria and many other nations could be tackled by encouraging the citizenry to embrace family psychological wealth. Psychologically wealthy families are aware that greed, self-centredness, and excessive accumulation of wealth do not lead to happiness. Psychologically wealthy families raise children with the right morals and values which enables them to resist negative peer pressure. Children that are raised in psychologically wealthy families are likely to shun corrupt practices which could lower their self-image and tarnish the name of their families. The Nigerian Government, therefore, needs to create this awareness towards reducing corruption which has reached horrifying proportions with devastating consequences on the standard of living of the citizens. The Government should also encourage non-governmental organizations to aid the boy-child through counselling, mentorship, and educational assistance to lessen their susceptibility to corruption.

## Data availability

The datasets that were obtained and analysed during the course of the study are included in a supplemental information.

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## Author contributions

All the authors listed in this article made substantial contributions to its final outcome and are worthy of their inclusion as authors. The aspects of the study handled by each author are given below: (a) RAEI—lead author—developed and created the study's framework and the research questionnaire. Took part in the vetting/correction of draft manuscript and preparation of its final version for publication. (b) MEO-I—co-author—data acquisition, vetting/correction of draft copies and preparation of its final version for publication. (c) JUO—co-author—undertook the literature review and contributed to the intellectual content of the draft manuscript. (d) NAA—co-author—preparation of coding sheet, preliminary analysis, and preparation of the draft copies of the manuscript, vetting/correction of draft copies and preparation of its final version for publication

## Ethical approval

**Introduction:** The research on “Family psychological wealth, peer pressure and corruption tendencies among adolescent students in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria” was conducted in line with the ethical guidelines endorsed by the British Psychological Society (BPS) and American Psychological Association (APA) on research with human participants. The major issues addressed include confidentiality, protection from harm, informed consent, deception and debriefing. **Ethical approval:** The ethical guidelines for research involving human participants as approved by the Ethical Committee of the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Calabar, were also adhered to by the researchers. **Confidentiality:** The participants were informed beforehand that the information they would give would be used strictly for the research and would not be disclosed to any other person or authority. There were no provisions in the questionnaire for the names of the participants and their schools. Participants were also not required to write their names or that of their school on the instrument, rather alphabets and codes were used. Distribution of the questionnaire was done in the presence of teachers and the respondents were required to sit at a reasonable distance from one another to prevent them from seeing the response of their colleagues. To enhance their dignity, they were informed that they were no right or wrong answers but they should give honest responses to the items in the questionnaire. The instruments were collected immediately after completion in no particular order. **Protection From Harm:** To protect the participants from any psychological harm, the researchers avoided questions that may embarrass them or invade their privacy. Questions were general in nature and were designed to establish the differences between the families of the participants in terms of family psychological wealth and peer pressure. However, in the case of corruption tendencies, questions were couched using the projective technique to elicit responses from the participants. For example, having many boyfriends/girlfriends is a way of having a variety of fun; there is nothing wrong with assisting my friends in the exam hall to pass the examination. This was to avoid embarrassing the respondents who would be unwilling to accept their disposition to corruption. As a consequence, the projective techniques removed the burden of guilt from the respondents. **Deception:** The adoption of the projective technique could be seen as deception as the participants would not feel guilty if they responded positively to the items on corruption tendencies. Accordingly, those who gave positive responses were absolved from any form of stigma. **Debriefing:** The reason for employing deception was explained to the school principals and participants at the end of the exercise.

## Informed consent

The researchers wrote letters to the principal of each of the schools, chosen for the study, seeking their permission to use their students in the study. Copies of the questionnaire were attached to the letter for their perusal and the aims and objectives of the research were fully explained. As an additional measure, the researchers met each principal physically to explain further and address any concerns that they may have. Each student also received a written request for participation in which the purpose of the research was explained. Further clarifications and explanations were made before the participants began responding to the items in the questionnaire. As they were responding to the questionnaire items, further clarifications were made as regards the items they did not understand clearly. The respondents were informed that participation was optional and that they were free to withdraw at any point from the exercise. Such action would not incur any penalties or upset the researchers.

## Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

## Additional information

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