

# *The Effect of Ethnic Orientation, Corporate Socialization, Money Attitude, and Money Importance on Unethical Behaviour in Nigeria: A Preliminary Model of Unethical Behaviour*

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## **Introduction**

Money is one language that every one understands because it plays a prominent role in people's life. People's ethno-linguistic meaning of money has received increased attention in the past few years. Money has objective, subjective, affective, symbolic, behavioural, social, functional and cultural importance (Mitchel and Mickell, 1999: 568; Nnedum, 2004: 11). Money is important as it represents a prominent feature of our society (Lim and Teo, 2003:1). People's attitudes towards money is really a summary of their life experiences in the past (Tan and Gulbert, 1995; 327; Zelizer, 1994) as well as summary of their biography and early economic environment (Gellerman, 1963). People's attitude towards money reflects their cultural values and ethnic orientation (Egwu, 1996), frame of reference (Tang, 1992) sub-cultural norm (Zelizer, 1994) existential experience (Zelizer, 1994) and world view (Tang, 1992; Zelizer, 1994; Nnedum, 2004).

Among different paradigms in the literature, the most obvious link is that these different attitudes towards money are acquired through an individual primary and secondary socialization process, beliefs, ethnic relations, child rearing practices and monetary habits (Furnham, 1984; Egwu, 2004; Nnedum, 2004). Peoples attitude towards money are established fairly in one's childhood, and maintained in one's professional life: corporate socialization (Kirkealdy kand Furnham, 1993). Indeed, money attitudes and money importance are based on more enduring normative beliefs produced by cultural conditioning, ethno- linguistic socialization and individual existential experiences in the world of work (Tang and Gilbert, 1995: Nnedum, 2004). This assertion is in line with the generative view (Egwu, 1996, 2004; Nnedum, 1998, 2003, 2004) about the relevance of early ethno- linguistic orientation which leads to internalization of attitudes and behaviour about money ethic endorsement (Tang, 1992: 197; Nnedum, 2003, 2004). The influence of people's ethno – linguistic orientation, corporate socialization, money attitude, and money importance on unethical behaviour may be of interest to researchers of both international business decisions and business ethics.

There are probably four implicit assumptions underlying most generative sub-cultural study on money ethic: (1) There is considerable ethno – linguistic and cultural importance attached to money (Nnedum, 1998, 2003, 2004; Egwu 1996,

2004). (2) there is a consistent individual difference in people's attitudes towards, and importance attached to money (Tang, 1992). (3) These individual differences in the meaning of money have cultural – specific (emic) and cultural free (etic) perspective (Nnedum, 2003; Tang and Tang, 2003). (4) These individual differences have important implications for a person's attitude to money; importance attached to money and unethical behaviour in organization (Tang, et al, 2003,2004a). In the present study, we operationally define the “symbolic” ethnico – linguistic Orientation as ethnicity; corporate socialization (Job change, tenure, and professional experiences) as the “socio-cultural” measure of corporate socialization; importance of money (MES: Factor: success and equity) as the “Subjective” measure of money; attitude to money (MES factors: good, evil, make money, budget money, save money, power, rich, respect, motivator) as affective measure of money; and workplace deviance: abuse position, (theft, bribery, abuse power (corruption) abuse resources (embezzlement) as unethical behaviour. These operationalization were in accordance with the money ethic literature (Tang et al, 2003, 2002a). Theoretically, an attitudinal approach to sub-cultural importance attached to money has been a testing ground for two rival theories, one motivational and the other generative. Abundant but contradictory evidence about approaches can be found in research papers as well as in broader theoretical formulations (Egwu, 2004; Nnedum, 2004; Michell & Mickel, 1999; Zelizer, 1994; tang and Tang, 2002). The motivational paradigm is mainly based on attitude – behaviour consistency, and restricted to individual difference phenomena such as asymmetrical money attitudes and perception: Money as a motivator or hygiene factor (Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman, 1959; Lawler, 1971); money as good or evil (Tang and Tang, 2002). On the other hand, generative perspective holds that the importance attached to money relates to cultural belief systems, ethnico – linguistic socialization, and orientation, which are core domain of group identity and existential experience, frame of reference and traditional personality (Egwu, 1995, 2004; Nnedum, 2003, 2004). In recent time, the psychology of money has become an increasing important topic in sub-cultural research (Nnedum, 2003,2004; Egwu, 2004). The sub-cultural method offers a new perspective for the comparison and testing of competing theories of money importance.

In recent time, Nigeria was ranked second on the transparency international index of corruption in the world. Empirical information has shown that Nigeria is currently, the most corrupt nation as workplace deviance and unethical behaviour were dominant features of Nigeria's economic and political culture (Nengi, 2004: Ikpeme, 2004; Zero Corruption International, 2004). In Nigeria, researchers have examined money ethic endorsement among different ethnic groups, Gender, and residence (Nnedum, 2003); Comparative analysis of money metaphorical illuminations, work and time among ethno-linguistic groups (Egwu, 1996). People from various ethno-linguistic groups have fairly similar meaning of money in their metaphorical expressions concerning money (Egwu, 1999; 2004). Modern day Nigerian ethnic groups generally have high money ethic endorsement (nnedum, 2003). All ethnic groups in Nigeria have equally high interest in the love of money, wealth and materialism (Nnedum, 2004). Nigerians do work for the money (Nnedum, 1998) and as such, money is a potent motivator (Nnedum, 2003). Money is the stream of life as ethnico-cultural expectation influences individuals psychological frame of reference on money, wealth and materialism (Nnedum, 2004) that in turn, many lead to unethical behaviour (Nnedum, 2004).

The major purpose is to explore the nature of relationship in the money Ethic scale (MES: Tang and Tang, 2002) and unethical behaviour in Nigeria using the 58

items money Ethics Scale Nigerian version (Tang and Tang, 2002; Nnedum, 2003). We will test the following hypotheses:  
H1 Ethnicity will be related to corporate socialization.  
H2 Corporate socialization will be related to money attitude.  
H3 Money attitude will be related to money importance  
H4 Money importance will be related to ethical (or unethical) behaviour.

### Method

Data were collected via questionnaire, administered to 200 workers from 56 ethnico-linguistic subculture in Nigeria with a mean age of 34.79. The authors adopted the 58 item II factor money ethic scale (Tang and Tang, 2002) to measure money importance and 18 item pay satisfaction questionnaire (Heneman and Schwab, 1985) to measure money instrumentality. The ethical behavioural tendency was assessed by both the five item corporate ethical culture (Hunt, Wood and Chonko, 1989); and 15 item unethical behaviour tendency (Tang and Weatherford, 1997). All these previously developed instrument have very well established psychometric properties in the literature. Crombach’s alphas for all variables ranged from 0.78 to 0.98, suggesting very good inter-item consistency in this study.

### Data Analysis

The authors employ SPSS 11.0 and follow the structural equation analysis and Crombach’s alpha reliabilities were also reported.

### Results



### Unethical Behavior Model

Hierarchical Regression analysis was used to empirically test our hypothesis. The findings of the mean, standard deviations and correlations were also presented. The indirect path to frame the money importance indicate that ethnicity relations with corporate socialization path (0.139, P<. 001) was significant, suggesting that ethnicity was positively related to corporate socialization.

The corporate socialization relations with money attitude path ( 0.142; P<. 001) suggest that corporate socialization is related to money attitude of workers. And the money attitude association with money importance path (.694, PC001) was positive and highly significant suggesting that money attitude directly enhances money importance. Overall, the direct money importance association with ethical behaviour tendency path (-.203;P<.001) was negative and significant; suggesting that the more importance attached to money the less likelihood of observing ethical standard by Nigerian workers. It is therefore plausible that money importance is a strong predictor of unethical behaviour in Nigeria focal work organization.

### Discussion

This is first attempt to explore the unethical behaviour in Nigeria using the money ethic scale (MES), developed in the US (Tang and Tang, 2002), and validated in Nigeria (Nnedum 2003). Results of this study indicates that money attitude (affective measure), money importance (a subjective measure), are two

separate culture specific “emic” constructs. First, the results supported all the hypotheses derived from the model of unethical behaviour determinants proposed in this paper. Second, this study suggest a generative pedagogical perspectives, as a viable alternative to motivational paradigm, in approaching research on ethnico-linguistic sub-cultural relationship in the unethical behaviour determinants. Third, modern day Nigerian workers attitude to money is highly related to the importance they attached to money unlike in the olden days. Fourth, in modern day Nigeria, an increase in the pay system as an objective measure of money may however increase the importance workers attached to money. This is in line with previous studies that workers from various ethnic groups in Nigeria have equally high interest in the love of money, wealth and materialism (Nnedum, 2003). Fifth, this paper does not examine the issue related to measurement invariance across these 56 ethnico-linguistic sub-cultures in Nigeria. This issue will be examined in future papers.

The implications are quite interesting: Managers and researchers must recognize that Nigerian workers attach much importance to money and as such, money importance is a potential predictor of unethical behaviour in Nigerian focal work organization. Consequently, any tangential increase in the objective pay system may enhance “over time” endorsement of protestant work ethico in Nigeria because time is money (Egwu, 2004). It is apparent that ethico-linguistic demand and cultural extended family expectation may influence money importance that in turn, predict unethical behaviour in Nigeria.

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