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Whistleblowing and Corrupt Tendencies among Selected Employees in Three Public Organizations

Roles of Corruption Tolerance, Punishment Anxiety, and Neutralization

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ABSTRACT

Anti-corruption efforts are often predicated on how to encourage whistleblowing and discourage corruption. To strengthen the anti-corruption drives, previous studies underscored the need for more research on psychological variables that may be connected with whistleblowing and corruption. This study, therefore, tested the extent to which employees in public sector service occupations are likely to engage in corruption and whistleblowing when they condone corruption, are less apprehensive about punishment, and can justify punishable work behaviors. This correlational study involved 331 employees (155 males; 176 females) of public sector organizations (110 health workers; 116 police personnel; 105 teachers), whose had a mean age of 43.01 years (SD = 7.86). They completed measures of corruption tolerance, punishment anxiety, workplace neutralization, whistleblowing intentions, and corrupt tendencies. Results of the 2-step hierarchical multiple regression analyses showed that whistleblowing intentions significantly reduced as employees condoned corruption, were afraid of punishment, and justified punishable work behaviors. Corrupt tendencies significantly increased as employees overlooked corruption and were able to justify punishable work behaviors, but decreased significantly as they became apprehensive of punishment. Based on these results, public sector organizations, especially the police, health, and education, should institute policies and implement psychological strategies that reduce the corruption-tolerant climate in the workplace; by increasing the fear of

punishment for corruption and encouraging moral obligations to whistle-blow corruption among employees.

Keywords
Corruption
Neutralization
Nigeria Punishment
Public Organization
Whistleblowing

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Introduction

Corruption, as one of the most challenging hindrances to socio-economic development in Nigeria [1], has become an endemic disease that eats up the economic productivity of many developing nations. It entails abuse of trust and authority for personal benefits [2] and covers all forms of unethical behaviors and an improper exercise of power by both public and private officeholders [3]. Corruption is one of the oldest practices and a fundamental reason behind communal and intra-state conflicts, and social grievances against public servants and officeholders, the government, and their agencies [4]. For example, corrupt behaviors, such as embezzlement, bribery, money laundering, fraud, misappropriation, and disappearance of funds, have been identified as abuse of office by public office holders and have become a red thread through Nigerian recent history [5]. For instance, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that 63% of study participants reported that corruption has become a common practice in Nigeria, especially among the police, health workers, and those in education [6], which the Socio-economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) found as the three most corrupt public sector employees in Nigeria [7].

Sadly, efforts made to curb corrupt practices among public sector employees in the recent past, the activities of government anti-corruption agencies (e.g., Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) have yielded little results [8],[9]. To make matters worse, the ICPC and EFCC have been accused of embarking on selective patterns of corruption case application [10]. This may be an indirect call for more studies on the behavioral aspect of corruption and whistleblowing. Unraveling more psychological predictors that spark employees' willingness to report or tendencies to engage in corruption may help provide a deeper understanding of and more robust intervention on corruption.

Literature Review

A. Current study

Literature has shown that the legal angle to fighting corruption without commensurate input from the psychological or behavioral perspective to the anti-corruption drive may not yield the expected results. Consequently, there is a need to investigate more psychological variables such as corruption tolerance, fear of punishment, and the opportunities to provide justification for corruption or against corruption that may propel employees into self-serving behavior or join the anti-corruption crusade. Therefore, the current study aimed to investigate the extent to which corrupt tendencies and whistleblowing intentions in public health, education, and security organizations are connected with corruption tolerance, punishment anxiety, and workplace neutralization. The results of the current study would provide insight into how the possibility of reducing corruption tolerance and workplace neutralization and managing punishment anxiety may provide the background for psychological inputs into anti-corruption initiatives.

B. Theoretical background

Employees' tendencies to engage in, tolerate, or report corruption and other related behaviors are normally embedded in the societal norms and the extant rules of a zero-tolerance culture to corruption, which shape individuals' self-regulatory ability to resist or report corruption [11]. Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory postulated that, when individual and self-regulatory abilities are perfectly functioning, unethical behaviors including corruption and other related behaviors are deterred through self-condemnation [12],[13],[14].

Individuals, including employees, usually anticipate that there will be repercussions for their behaviors and, as such, may be deterred from and avoid the experience of internalized conflict by upholding moral standards. However, moral disengagement may occur, which may result in behaviors like corruption, especially when there is a disconnection between the two self-regulatory mechanisms. The social cognitive theory explains why employees tend to engage in corrupt behaviors, without apparent cognitive distress and deterrence [15],[16]. For example, [17],[18],[19] reported that the tendency to be morally disengaged from behaviors that could bring cognitive distress resulted in a wide range of negative work behaviors such as self-reported unethical behavior, decisions to engage in fraudulent and self-serving activities, and low job satisfaction.

Corrupt tendencies among public servants have been linked with several psychological factors including perceived organizational injustice [20], moral intelligence, and moral disengagement [21]. Corruption tolerance as the act of condoning or supporting self-serving behaviors to the detriment of the organization and others, could be another important factor

in corrupt tendencies and whistleblowing intentions. Punishment anxiety, which refers to the fear or apprehension of being penalized or going through a backlash or retaliation [20] for engaging in corruption or whistleblowing, respectively could be another salient factor in employees' corrupt and whistleblowing tendencies.

In Nigeria, efforts to curb corruption and other related activities have been taken from two basic dimensions: (a) institutionalization of anti-corruption agencies such as EFCC, ICPC, and Code of Conduct, among others, and (b) civic engagement and participation like whistleblowing. Civic participation in anti-corruption efforts may indicate another dimension of the process of installing conscious anti-corruption behavior in societal culture and norms. These efforts are attributed to the fact that societal norms greatly shape an individual's behaviors [22]. Though there may be no perfect or effective ways of controlling corrupt activities, especially among public sector employees, strategic and effective incorporation of whistleblowing policy into the national fight against corruption may promote and strengthen the level of civic participation.

Whistleblowing, which refers to the act of reporting wrongdoing in an organization [23], is one of the major recommendations and standard strategies for reducing corruption based on 32 special investigations, especially among police personnel [24],[25]. Instituting research-based policies that strengthen employees' intentions or willingness to report wrongdoing may be strategic to promoting and encouraging civic participation in the anti-corruption crusade [26]. The whistleblowing policy, to some extent, has helped to reduce unlawful conduct and fight against corruption by encouraging transparency and openness among public and private employees in Nigeria [27],[28]. Although the policy has served as an instrument to reduce crime and money laundering, checkmate governance and increase public awareness about efforts to fight against corruption, the whistle-blower policy has faced several challenges ranging from the nature, structure, and due process of the criminal justice system [27],[29].

Fighting corruption through whistleblowing may strengthen the anti-corruption process by enhancing corruption intolerance, civic responsibility, and participation among citizens, especially through enlightenment campaigns and corruption awareness training [30]. In this case, the actual disclosure of information about perceived unethical conduct such as bribery, and fraud are important actions that facilitate corruption intolerance in a workplace or among the citizens [31],[32],[33]. Individuals evaluate the possible consequences and punishment of engaging in corruption and other unethical behaviors in a workplace, noting the fact that there may be a person who could reveal the information about the behavior, alert the management or law enforcement agency [26],[34],[35].

Employees' feelings about the possible punishment associated with corrupt behavior could reduce their corrupt tendencies. For instance, [37] reported that bribery mostly disappeared when the expected penalties were sufficiently high. They concluded that individuals'

perception of the level of punishment that follows their corrupt behavior is, therefore, important in managing corruption. Ref. [38] explains the apprehension that accompanies giving and acceptance of bribes or other corrupt behaviors in terms of the experience of difficulty. For example, payment of bribes could easily help one to obtain permits or clearance from police officers, and smooth access to medical care from medical practitioners. In any case, rational individuals examine the result of every behavior, especially when such behavior is against the moral dictates of an immediate environment [39].

Ref. [41] discovered that individuals who engaged in dubious behavior tended to be more anxious about the details of the contextual circumstance. In this case, the fear of being punished as a result of engagement in corruption-related behaviors may reduce corrupt tendencies. In a situation where stiffer penalties were perceived as consequences for corruption, individuals had less tendency to engage in corrupt behavior [42]. In a study involving 197 employed postgraduate students, Ref. [43] reported that organizational deviance (which is a form of corrupt behavior) significantly reduced as the severity and certainty of punishment increased. Going by the outcomes of this study, one may be tempted to recommend the death penalty as a repercussion for corruption in the public and private sector organizations in Nigeria to reduce corruption and other related behaviors such as bribery, fraud, and money laundering. However, as brilliant as this idea may sound if those involved in reporting, investigating, and prosecuting corruption compromised the processes, no one may be found guilty of and executed for corruption. Therefore, it all comes down to an in-depth understanding of the human factors in the anti-corruption crusade.

In Nigeria, various studies [20],[27],[29],[44],[45] separately reported that corrupt tendencies and whistleblowing intentions significantly reduced with punishment anxiety, but increased significantly when employees had opportunities to justify corruption or intention to whistle blow it, especially if the justification can effectively neutralize the apprehension associated with the consequences of their intended acts. This implies that workplace neutralization could be a potent instrument for dousing or defusing the fear that might have discouraged the employees (who do not tolerate corruption but feel uncomfortable reporting the perpetrators because of the backlash); thereby bolstering their resolve to report the wrongdoing.

In the same vein, employees who feel compelled to engage in corruption but are apprehensive because of the punishment associated with it at the societal (through the legal system and societal sanctions) and at the individual level (through internalized moral engagement and self-condemnation), may able to dispel such fear and provide self-serving justification (through workplace neutralization) that strengthens their inclinations to engage

in corruption. In such a situation, employees engage in moral hypocrisy to provide self-soothing justification for the amoral act; thereby dousing the punishment anxiety and self-censor that might have prevented them from engaging in the corrupt acts [46],[47], especially when the employees perceive that reward for good and morally acceptable behavior is overtly missing [48].

Consequently, employees, who have a low tolerance for corruption, may need less justified to engage in whistleblowing than they would to engage in corruption compared with those who have a high tolerance for corruption. These connections may depend on the level of trust the employees have in the institution and whistleblowing channels as well as the effectiveness of the punishment system against corruption. For example, ref. [49, a study of seven East Asian countries (Japan, Mongolia, Philippines, Korea, Thailand, Taiwan, and Indonesia), found that corruption-tolerant individuals reported higher institutional trust than those who were intolerant of corruption when they experienced corrupt practices. This might be because the corruption-tolerant individuals benefitted more from the institutional lapses and unjust practices than those who did not condone or support corruption.

Though whistleblowing or corruption-control mechanisms have been appreciated in literature, little understanding is known about how the levels of corruption tolerance, apprehension about punishment, and workplace neutralization connect with whistleblowing intentions or corruption tendencies among public sector employees. Apart from that, to the best of our knowledge, no study has investigated whether corrupt tendencies and whistleblowing intentions (two seemingly opposite concepts in corruption study), could be driven by the same set of psychological variables. Consequently, if the current study could establish the patterns of relationships between corruption tolerance, punishment anxiety, and workplace neutralization with whistleblowing intentions and corrupt tendencies, it could be a lot easier to institute a psychological solution to reducing corruption and enhancing whistleblowing, especially among employees in the three public sector organizations notorious for corruption in Nigeria [7]. It was against this background that the following hypotheses were tested.

C. Hypotheses

1. Corruption tolerance will significantly predict whistleblowing intentions such that whistleblowing intentions will decrease as employees become tolerant of corruption.
2. Punishment anxiety will significantly predict whistleblowing intentions such that whistleblowing intentions will decrease as employees become apprehensive about punishment.
3. Workplace neutralization will significantly predict whistleblowing intentions such that whistleblowing intentions will reduce as employees justify punishable work behaviors.

4. Corruption tolerance will significantly predict corrupt tendencies such that corrupt tendencies will increase with corruption tolerance.
5. Punishment anxiety will significantly predict corrupt tendencies such that corrupt tendencies will reduce with punishment anxiety.
6. Workplace neutralization will significantly predict corrupt tendencies such that corrupt tendencies will increase as employees justify punishable work behaviors.

Material and Methods

A. Participants and procedure

Since SERAP [7] reported that the health, police, and education were the top most corrupt public sector organizations in Nigeria, this correlational study was conducted among 331 employees (155 or 46.8% males; 176 or 53.2% females), which comprised 110 health workers (33.2%), 116 police personnel (35.1%), and 105 teachers (31.7%). The ages of the participants averaged 43.01 years (SD = 7.86) and ranged between 23 and 59 years. In terms of tenure on the job, they had spent between 1 and 34 years (M = 8.13; SD = 4.91). The responses of the participants to the question on marital status indicated that the majority of them (232 or 70.1%) were married; 51 (15.4%) had lost their spouse to separation, divorce, or death; and 48 (14.5%) were yet to get married as at the time of this study. Finally, the participants indicated their highest academic qualification as follows: 97 (29.3%) of them had up to, but not higher than, School Certificate; 84 (25.4%) had National Diploma or Nigeria Certificate in Education; 131 (39.6%) had Higher National Diploma or first degree; and 19 (5.7%) had postgraduate degree.

With the understanding and approval of the first-line or second-line authorities of the selected Police Commands, Public Health Facilities, and Public Schools in southwest, Nigeria, the prospective police personnel, health workers, and teachers were assured that the study would pose no threat to their job, health, and well-being. Non-probabilistic sampling technique was adopted in selecting the participants due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter. Also, information about the location of the sampled organization and other participant-specific information were deliberately omitted from the questionnaire. Participation and withdrawal of participation were voluntary without negative consequences. At an average of 130 per public sector organization, 390 copies of questionnaires were distributed to employees who were willing to participate in the study. Data were collected within two weeks. Three hundred and thirty-one of the 390 questionnaires (response rate = 88.7%), were duly completed and thus analyzed.

B. Measures

Corruption tolerance was assessed with the Corruption Tolerance Inventory (CTI), a 21-item scale developed by Ogungbamila and Ajayi (in review) to measure the level at which

employees condone or indirectly support corruption in the workplace. CTI, which was rated on a 6-point Likert scale (0 = not at all; 1 = a little; 2 = moderately; 3 = quite often; 4 = most of the time; 5 = always), had "I feel that my behaviors indirectly encourage wrongdoing among employees" and "I feel upset when an employee tries to cover up his/her wrongdoing" (reverse scored), as sample items. Among public sector employees in Nigeria, reported a Cronbach's alpha of .87. Among health workers in public health facilities in Nigeria, the scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .97 [45]. In a sample of employees drawn from public and private sectors or organizations in Nigeria [50] reported .87 Cronbach's alpha for the scale. With the current sample, CTI had a Cronbach's alpha of .81. Scores on CTI were interpreted in such a way that scores that were up to or higher than the mean indicated that the employees condoned or overlooked corruption in the workplace while scores that were lower than the mean implied that the employees did not tolerate corruption in the workplace.

Punishment anxiety was measured with the Punishment Anxiety Scale (PAS). PAS, a 21-item inventory rated on a 6-point Likert scale (0 = not at all; 1 = a little bit so; 2 = moderately so; 3 = quite so; 4 = very much so; 5 = extremely so), was designed to assess the extent to which individuals including employees feel apprehensive about acts that can make them incur the anger and punishment of others or the law [20]. PAS assesses two aspects of punishment anxiety; Thought about Punishment (10 items) and Feelings about Punishment/ Fear of Punishment (11 items).

In this current study, the analyses were based on the overall scores on the scale because the study focused overall level of apprehension about punishment rather than the dimensions of the anxiety associated with punishment. Sample items are: "I don't get frightened by the thought of the penalty or shame that comes with engaging in a wrongdoing." (Reverse scored – Thought about Punishment) and "Due to the penalty or shame, I feel frightened when I'm about to engage in a wrongdoing." (Feelings about Punishment/ Fear of Punishment). The overall scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .87 among police personnel in Nigeria [20]. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha of the overall scale was .88. Scores on PAS were interpreted such that those who scored up to or higher than the mean were highly fearful of being punished while those who scored below the mean were less concerned about punishment.

Workplace neutralization was evaluated with the Workplace Neutralization Scale (WNS), which was developed by Ref. [44]. WNS was a 14-item scale designed to measure the level at which employees find justification for punishable behaviors in the workplace and thereby use the justification to defuse the anxiety associated with the fear of punishment for the intended act. The instrument, which measured 3 dimensions of workplace neutralization (Organizational Neutralization = 6 items; Imitational Neutralization = 3 items; and General Neutralization = 5 items), was predicated on a 4-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 2 =

disagree, 3= agree, 4 = strongly agree). As stated earlier, the focus of the current study was on how the totality of employees' neutralization level connects with other variables. Sample items are: "Since what I put into the organization (e.g., effort and time) is more than what I get, it is in order if I took what I deserve even without authorization" (Organizational Neutralization), "A negative behavior exhibited by majority of the employees in an organization should not be punished by the organization" (Imitational Neutralization), and "The misbehaviors of the employees have no direct effect on a particular person" (General Neutralization).

Studies on police personnel [20] as well as police and other private sector security personnel in Nigeria [44] reported that the overall WNS had Cronbach's alphas of .95 and .90, respectively. With the present sample, WNS had an overall Cronbach's alpha of .96. Scores on the measure of workplace neutralization that were up to or higher than the mean showed that the employees engaged highly in workplace neutralization and found justification for punishable work-related behaviors to defuse the anxiety associated with such behaviors, while scores that were lower than the mean indicated that the employees engaged less in workplace neutralization.

Whistleblowing intentions were evaluated with the Internal and External Whistleblowing Intentions Scale (IEWIS) [23]. It was an 8-item designed to assess two dimensions of employees' intentions (Internal whistleblowing = 4 items; External whistleblowing = 4 items) to report wrongdoings in their organization. IEWIS was rated on an 8-point Likert scale (0 = not at all, 1 = very much unlikely; 2 = very unlikely; 3 = unlikely; 4 = likely 5 = very likely; 6 = very much likely; 7 = certainly). Sample items are: "If I notice any wrongdoing in this organization, I will use the reporting channels inside of the organization" (Internal Whistleblowing) and "If I notice any wrongdoing in this organization, I will inform the public about it" (External Whistleblowing). Ref. [23] found Cronbach's alphas of .88 and .86 for the internal and external whistleblowing subscales, respectively. In a 2-in-1 study that involved public sector employees in Nigeria, [51] reported the overall scale had Cronbach's alphas of .89 (study 1) and .87 (study 2). In the current study, IEWIS had an overall Cronbach's alpha of .97. Scores on IEWIS were interpreted in such a way employees' intentions to report wrongdoings in their organization increased with their scores on the IEWIS.

Corrupt tendencies were evaluated with the Corrupt Tendencies Scale (CTS). This 9-item scale was designed to measure employees' inclination to engage in self-serving behaviors at the expense of others and the organization [26]. The instrument was rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3= agree, 4 = strongly agree). Sample items are: "Aiding another employee to divert the organization's fund for personal use" and "Demanding for over-reimbursement from the organization". Ogungbamila and Udegbe reported a

Cronbach's alpha of .92. In studies that sampled police personnel and private sector security personnel in Nigeria, Ref. [20],[29] reported Cronbach's alphas of .96 and .97, respectively for the scale. In a sample of Nigerian security personnel (which comprised the Police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and Federal Road Safety Corps), Osamika, Ogungbamila and Tomoloju (in review) obtained .77 Cronbach's alpha for the scale. In the current study, the scale also had a Cronbach's alpha of .77. Scores on CTS were interpreted in such a way that scores that were either up to or higher than the mean showed that the employees had high tendencies of engaging in self-serving behaviors at the expense of the organization and others and vice versa.

C. Data analysis

Before the correlational analyses, which involved a combination of Spearman Rank Order and Pearson Product Moment statistics, were conducted to determine the type of relationships among the study variables, the four categorical variables were coded. Gender was treated as a dummy variable and coded as male = 0; female = 1. Marital status was coded as single = 1; married = 2; lost spouse to death, divorce, or separation = 3. Academic qualification was coded as Up to, but not higher than, School Certificate = 1; National Diploma or Nigeria Certificate of Education = 2; Higher National Diploma or first degree = 3; postgraduate = 4. The category of public sector employees was coded as health workers = 1; police personnel = 2; teachers = 3. All the socio-demographic variables were treated as covariates.

Two sets of 2-step hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted. In the first set, the covariates were entered into the regression model. The psychological variables (corruption tolerance, punishment anxiety, and workplace neutralization) were added to the model on Sept 2 for the analysis. Therefore, hypotheses 1 to 3 were tested in the first set of hierarchical multiple regression analyses.

The second set of hierarchical multiple regression analyses tested hypotheses 4 to 6. In the first step of the analysis, the covariates were regressed on whistleblowing intentions. In this step of the analysis, the effects of the psychological variables (corruption tolerance, punishment anxiety, and workplace neutralization) were regressed on whistleblowing intentions.

Results

A. Test of relationships

The mean and standard deviation scores as well as the relationships among the variables of the study, after coding the categorical variables. The results are presented in Table 1. The results in Table 1 show that whistleblowing intentions significantly reduced as employees in public sector organizations condoned corruption [$r(329) = -.42$, $p < .001$], as their fear of punishment increased [$r(329) = -.35$, $p < .001$], and they justified punishable work

behaviors [r (329) = -.17, p < .01]. The results in Table 1 also indicated that whistleblowing intentions significantly reduced with age [r (329) = -.18, p < .001] and with males showing significantly higher intentions to report corruption than females [r (329) = -.20, p < .001]. As employees in public sector organizations acquired higher academic qualifications, their intentions to report corruption tended to increase [r (329) = .21, p < .001]. Type of public sector employee had a significant relationship with whistleblowing intentions [r (329) = .12, p < .05]. Marital status [r (329) = -.07, p > .05] and job tenure [r (329) = -.04, p > .05] were not significantly related to the intentions of public sector employees to report corruption.

Table 1. Mean, SD, and Inter-variable Correlations

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Age	1										
2. Gender	-.07	1									
3. Marital status	.33***	.09	1								
4. Academic qualification	.04	-.27***	.23***	1							
5. Job tenure	.73***	-.04	.33***	.15**	1						
6. Category of public sector employees	.06	-.09	.14*	.11*	.09	1					
7. Corruption tolerance	.21***	.08	.19***	-.35**	.03	.09	1				
8. Punishment anxiety	-.03	-.12*	-.10	.09	.06	.03	-.29***	1			
9. Workplace neutralization	.15**	.01	.12*	-.19***	.09	.13*	.52***	-.18***	1		
10. Whistleblowing intentions	-.18***	-.20***	-.07	.21***	-.04	.12*	-.42***	-.35***	-.17**	1	
11. Corrupt tendencies	.09	.11*	.19***	-.18***	-.08	.03	.47***	-.44***	.33***	-.60***	-
M	**43.01**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**8.13**	**-**	**64.08**	**28.75**	**38.31**	**14.09**	**25.42**
SD	**7.87**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**4.91**	**-**	**8.11**	**9.53**	**9.15**	**9.70**	**4.63**

Note: * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001. N = 331. Gender was coded as male = 0; female = 1. Marital status was coded as single = 1; married = 2; lost spouse to death, divorce, or separation = 3. Academic qualification was coded as Up to, but not higher than, School Certificate = 1; National Diploma or Nigeria Certificate of Education = 2; Higher National Diploma or first degree = 3; postgraduate degree = 4. The category of public sector employees was coded as health workers = 1; police personnel = 2; teachers = 3.

The level of corrupt tendencies of employees in public sector organizations significantly increased with corruption tolerance [r (329) = .47, p < .001] and as they provided justifications for punishable work behaviors [r (329) = .33, p < .001]; but decreased significantly as they became apprehensive of punishment [r (329) = -.44, p < .001]. As shown in these results, corrupt tendencies significantly increased as public sector employees got married or lost their spouses to death, divorce, or separation [r (329) = .19, p < .001]; with females showing significantly higher corrupt tendencies than males [r (329) = .11, p < .05]. However, corrupt tendencies significantly reduced as employees acquired higher academic qualifications [r (329) = -.18, p < .001]. Results in Table 1 also show that employees tended to be corrupt, irrespective of age, occupation, or how long they had been on the job; as corrupt tendencies were not significantly related to age, job tenure, and public sector occupation.

B. Test of hypotheses 1 to 3

A 2-step hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to test hypotheses 1 to 3. In the first step of the analysis, the socio-demographic variables were treated as covariates and were

entered into the regression model. The effects of corruption tolerance, punishment anxiety, and whistleblowing intentions (psychological variables) were included in step 2 of the analysis. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of the 2-step Hierarchical Multiple Regression on Whistleblowing Intentions

Models	*β*	*t*	*R*	R^2	ΔR^2	*F*
Model 1 (Socio-demographic variables)	-	-	.36	.13	.13	7.89***
Age	-.30***	-5.16***				
Gender	-.16**	-2.85**				
Marital status	-.05	-.91				
Academic qualification	.16**	2.76**				
Job tenure	.15*	1.99*				
Category of public sector employees	.10	1.85				
Model 2 (Psychological variables)	-	-	.55	.30	.17	15.11***
Age	-.18**	-2.95**				
Gender	-.14*	-1.86*				
Marital status	.06	1.02				
Academic qualification	.01	.21				
Job tenure	.04	.61				
Category of public sector employees	.12*	1.43*				
Psychological variables	-	-				
Corruption tolerance	-.36***	-5.85***				
Punishment anxiety	-.24***	-3.83***				
Workplace neutralization	-.12*	-2.16*				

Note: * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001. N = 331. Gender was coded as male = 0; female = 1. Marital status was coded as single = 1; married = 2; lost spouse to death, divorce, or separation = 3. Academic qualification was coded as Up to, but not higher than, School Certificate = 1; National Diploma or Nigeria Certificate of Education = 2; Higher National Diploma or first degree = 3; postgraduate degree = 4. The category of public sector employees was coded as health workers = 1; police personnel = 2; teachers = 3.

As indicated in Table 2, the six covariates jointly accounted for 13% of the whistleblowing intentions among employees in the public sector organizations investigated in this study (R = .36; R2 = .13; F = 7. 89, p < .001). Employees' level of whistleblowing intentions significantly reduced with age (β = -.30; t = -5.16, p < .001). Gender had a significant influence on whistleblowing intentions; with males showing significantly higher intentions to blow the whistle than their female counterparts (β = -.16; t = -2.85, p < .01). Their level of whistleblowing intentions significantly increased as they acquired higher academic qualifications (β = .16; t = 2.76, p < .01) and spent more years on the job (β = .15; t = 1.99, p < .05).

Since four of the six covariates also exerted significant influence on the whistleblowing intentions, the Collinearity Tolerance of the socio-demographic variables was determined. Results indicated that the Tolerance values ranged from .447 (age) to .966 (category of public sector employees). Since no Tolerance value was up to 1.00, none of the socio-demographic variables posed a multicollinearity problem (Yoo, Mayberry, Bae, Singh, He & Lillard, 2014).

The addition of corruption tolerance, punishment anxiety, and workplace neutralization (psychological variables) to the model in step 2 of the analysis, increased the R2 value from .13 to .30 (R = .55; R2 = .30; ΔR2 = .17; F = 15. 11, p < .001). This implied that the

three psychological variables jointly accounted for 30% of the intentions of employees in public sector organizations to blow the whistle against corruption in the workplace. The more employees condoned corruption the less they tended to report corruption in the workplace (β = -.36; t = -5.85, p < .001). The position of hypothesis 1 was confirmed by these results. The results in Table 2 also provided evidence in support of hypothesis 2. Employees showed significant intention to report corruption as their level of apprehension about punishment reduced (β = -.24; t = -3.83, p < .001). Hypothesis 3 was confirmed by the results in Table 2. As employees found justification for punishable behaviors in the workplace, their intentions to report corruption in the workplace significantly reduced (β = -.12; t = -2.16, p < .05).

C. Test of hypotheses 4 to 6

Hypotheses 4 to 6 were evaluated with a 2-step hierarchical multiple regression. The influence of age, gender, marital status, academic qualification, job tenure, and type of public sector occupation (covariates) was regressed on the corrupt tendencies in step 1 of the analysis. In step 2 of the analysis, corruption tolerance, punishment anxiety, and workplace neutralization (psychological variables) were added to the model to determine the joint and individual effects of these psychological variables on corrupt tendencies. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of the 2-step Hierarchical Multiple Regression on Corrupt Tendencies

Models	*β*	*t*	*R*	R^2	ΔR^2	*F*
Model 1 (Socio-demographic variables)	-	-	.35	.13	.13	7.74***
Age	.23***	3.82***				
Gender	.04	.77				
Marital status	.24***	4.14***				
Academic qualification	-.19**	-3.05**				
Job tenure	-.29***	-4.78***				
Category of public sector employees	.04	.67				
Model 2 (Psychological variables)	-	-	.60	.36	.23	19.79***
Age	.09	1.36				
Gender	.03	.58				
Marital status	.12*	2.16*				
Academic qualification	-.02	-.44				
Job tenure	-.18**	-2.99**				
Category of public sector employees	-.001	-.01				
Psychological variables	-	-				
Corruption tolerance	.28***	4.77***				
Punishment anxiety	-.31***	-5.18***				
Workplace neutralization	.11*	2.04*				

Note: * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001. N = 331. Gender was coded as male = 0; female = 1. Marital status was coded as single = 1; married = 2; lost spouse to death, divorce, or separation = 3. Academic qualification was coded as Up to, but not higher than, School Certificate = 1; National Diploma or Nigeria Certificate of Education = 2; Higher National Diploma or first degree = 3; postgraduate degree = 4. The category of public sector employees was coded as health workers = 1; police personnel = 2; teachers = 3.

The results in Table 3 show that the joint contribution of age, gender, marital status academic qualification, job tenure, and category of public sector employees to corrupt tendencies was 13% (R = .35; R2 = .13; F = 7.74, p < .001). Each of the covariates, except gender

and category of public sector employees, had significant relationships with corrupt tendencies. Employees tended to significantly engage in corruption as age their increased ($\beta = .23$; $t = 3.82$, $p < .001$) and as they got married and lost their spouse to separation, divorce or death ($\beta = .24$; $t = 4.14$, $p < .01$). However, employees' level of corrupt tendencies had significant inverse relationships with their level of academic qualification ($\beta = -.19$; $t = -3.05$, $p < .01$) and job tenure ($\beta = -.29$; $t = -4.78$, $p < .001$).

The Collinearity Tolerance of the socio-demographic variables needed to be determined because four of the six covariates exerted significant influence on corrupt tendencies. As shown in the results, the Tolerance values ranged from .447 (age) to .966 (type of public sector service occupation). In line with the position of Yoo et al. (2014), none of the socio-demographic variables posed a multicollinearity problem because none of them had a Tolerance value that was up to 1.00.

In the second step of the analysis, where the effects of corruption tolerance, punishment anxiety, and workplace neutralization (psychological variables) were added to the model, the R-value increased from .35 to .60 ($R = .60$; $R2 = .36$; $\Delta R2 = .23$; $F = 19.79$, $p < .001$). The implication was that the three psychological variables jointly accounted for 36% of the tendencies of public sector employees to engage in corruption. Hypothesis 4 was confirmed by the results in Table 3 because the more employees overlooked corruption, the more they were likely to engage in corruption ($\beta = .28$; $t = 4.77$, $p < .001$). Public sector employees were less likely to engage in corruption as their level of fear about punishment increased ($\beta = -.31$; $t = -5.18$, $p < .001$). These results provided evidence in support of Hypothesis 5. In line with the position of hypothesis 6, when employees found justification for punishable behaviors in the workplace, their level of corrupt tendencies significantly increased ($\beta = .11$; $t = 2.04$, $p < .05$).

D. Additional analyses

The results of the correlational and 2-step hierarchical regression analyses indicated that whistleblowing intentions and corrupt tendencies were significantly related to most of the socio-demographic variables. While it might be more straightforward to interpret the results in Tables 1, 2, and 3 on the socio-demographic variables that were presented in continuous form (age and job tenure) and the one treated as a dummy variable (gender), interpreting the results of variables (type of public sector service occupation, marital status, and academic qualification) that were coded in ordinal scale might not be that easy. One may not be sure if the group of participants in each category of the variables had significantly the highest or lowest score on each of the dependent variables. Hence, two sets of One-way ANOVA (one for each dependent variable) were conducted for each of type of public sector service occupation, marital status, and academic qualification.

Comparative analysis of the whistleblowing intentions and corruption tendencies of police personnel, health workers, and teachers. Two sets of One-way ANOVA were performed to compare the scores of police personnel, health workers, and teachers on the measures of whistleblowing intentions and corrupt tendencies. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. One-way ANOVA on the Influence of Category of Public Sector Employees on Whistleblowing Intentions and Corrupt Tendencies

Dependent variable	Sources	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Whistleblowing intentions	Between	1682.59	2	841.30	7.64	< .001
	Within	36123.87	328	110.13		
	Total	37806.46	330			
Corrupt tendencies	Between	108.67	2	54.33	2.56	< .05
	Within	6971.80	328	21.26		
	Total	7080.47	330			

As shown in Table 4, the type of public sector occupation had a significant influence on employees' level of whistleblowing intentions [F (2, 330) = 7.64, p < .001] and corrupt tendencies [F (2, 330) = 2.56, p < .05]. In each case, the significant F does not show which group of employees had the highest or lowest levels of whistleblowing intentions and corrupt tendencies. Therefore, one is not sure which group had significantly the highest or lowest score on the measures of whistleblowing intentions and corrupt tendencies. Consequently, two sets of Bonferroni's post hoc test were further performed on the data. Table 5 shows the results.

Table 5. Bonferroni's Test on the Influence of Category of Public Sector Employees on Whistleblowing Intentions and Corrupt Tendencies

Dependent variable	Category of public sector employees	*N*	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3
Whistleblowing intentions	Health workers	110	13.90	9.35	-		
	Police personnel	116	11.56	5.85	2.34*	-	
	Teachers	105	17.08	9.76	-3.18**	-5.52***	-
Corrupt tendencies	Health workers	110	24.84	5.33	-		
	Police personnel	116	26.17	3.24	-1.34*	-	
	Teachers	105	25.19	5.07	-.35	.98	-

Note: * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001. N = 331.

Results in Table 5 indicate that teachers reported significantly the highest intentions to whistle blow corruption [M = 17.08; SD = 9.76, Bonferroni (329) = -5.52, p < .001] than health workers (M = 13.90; SD = 9.35) and police personnel (M = 11.56; SD = 5.85). Health workers had significantly higher intentions to report corruption than those police personnel [Bonferroni (329) = 2.34, p < .05].

Table 5 indicates that the tendencies to engage in self-serving behaviors were significantly higher among police personnel [M = 26.17; SD = 3.24, Bonferroni (329) = 1.34, p < .05] than health workers (M = 24.84; SD = 5.33). However, teachers (M = 25.19; SD = 5.07) tended to be as corrupt as health workers and police personnel.

Additional analysis on the influence of marital status on whistleblowing intentions and corrupt tendencies. To determine whether the three levels of marital status (single, married, and loss of spouse) were significantly different regarding whistleblowing intentions and corrupt tendencies, 2 sets of One-way ANOVA were conducted on the data. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. One-way ANOVA on the Influence of Marital Status on Whistleblowing Intentions and Corrupt Tendencies

Dependent variable	Sources	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Whistleblowing intentions	Between	423.63	2	211.82	1.86	>.05
	Within	37382.83	328	113.97		
	Total	37806.46	330			
Corrupt tendencies	Between	363.50	2	181.75	8.88	< .001
	Within	6716.97	328	20.48		
	Total	7080.47	330			

The results in Table 6 indicated that there was no significant difference in the intentions of public sector employees (who were yet to get married, were married, or had lost their spouse (due to separation, divorce, or death at the time of conducting this study) to blow the whistle on corruption [F (2, 330) = 7.64, p < .001]. This implied that the intentions of health workers, police personnel, and teachers to report corruption were not affected by their marital status (i.e., they intended to report corruption, irrespective of whether they were single, married, or had lost their spouse to separation, divorce, or death).

However, marital status had a significant influence on the intentions of health workers, police personnel, and teachers to engage in self-serving behavior at the expense of the organization and others [F (2, 330) = 8.88, p < .001]. There was a need to conduct Bonferroni's post hoc test to determine which of the marital groups had significantly the lowest or highest corrupt tendencies. Table 7 represents the results.

Table 7. Bonferroni's Test on the Influence of Marital Status on Corrupt Tendencies

Marital Status	*N*	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3
Single	48	24.75	3.87	-		
Married	232	25.02	4.71	-.27	-	
Lost spouse	51	27.86	4.22	-3.11**	-2.85*	-

Note: * p < .05. ** p < .01. N = 331.

As indicated in Table 7, those who lost their spouse to separation, divorce, or death tended to be significantly the most self-serving at the expense of the organization and others

(M = 27.86; SD = 4.22) than those who were either single [M = 24.90; SD = 3.87; Bonferroni (329) = -3.11, p < .01] and married [M = 11.56; SD = 5.85; Bonferroni (329) = -2.85, p < .05].

Additional analysis on the influence of academic qualification on whistleblowing intentions and corrupt tendencies. Two sets of One-way ANOVA were performed on the data to ascertain whether employees in the four categories of academic qualification investigated in this study (Up to, but not higher than, School Certificate; ND/NCE; Higher National Diploma/ first degree; and Postgraduate degree) were significantly different in their intentions to blow the whistle on corruption and their level of corrupt tendencies. The results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. One-way ANOVA on the Influence of Academic Qualification on Whistleblowing Intentions and Corrupt Tendencies

Dependent variable	Sources	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Whistleblowing intentions	Between	1920.24	3	640.08	5.83	<. 001
	Within	35886.22	327	109.74		
	Total	37806.46	330			
Corrupt tendencies	Between	318.18	3	106.06	5.13	< .001
	Within	6762.28	327	20.68		
	Total	7080.47	330			

The results in Table 8 indicated that the academic qualification of public sector employees service had a significant influence on their intentions to blow the whistle on corruption [F (2, 330) = 5.83, p < .001] and corrupt tendencies [F (2, 330) = 5.13, p < .001]. These results implied that the level of academic qualification of health workers, police personnel, and teachers determined whether or not they would report or engage in self-serving behaviors in the workplace. Again, two sets of Bonferroni's (1936) post hoc tests were further performed on the data to determine the directions of the results of the F tests. The results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Bonferroni's Test on the Influence of Academic Qualification on Whistleblowing Intentions and Corrupt Tendencies

Dependent variable	Academic qualification	*N*	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4
Whistleblowing intentions	Up to, but not higher than, School Certificate	97	11.76	6.57	-			
	ND/ NCE	84	12.20	7.90	-.44	-		
	HND/ first degree	131	16.31	9.79	-4.55**	-4.11**	-	
	Postgraduate degree	19	18.95	9.15	-7.18***	-6.75***	-2.63*	-
Corrupt tendencies	Up to, but not higher than, School Certificate	97	26.26	2.81	-			
	ND/ NCE	84	25.65	4.05	.60	-		
	HND/ first degree	131	25.15	5.45	1.11	.50	-	
	Postgraduate degree	19	21.89	6.60	4.36**	3.76**	3.26**	-

Note: * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001. N = 331.

The results in Table 9 show that employees who had postgraduate degree (M = 18.95; SD = 9.15) reported significantly the highest intentions to whistle blow corruption compared with those who had up to, but not higher than, School Certificate [M = 11.76; SD = 6.57; Bonferroni (329) = -7.18, p < .001]; ND or NCE [M = 12.20; SD = 7.90; Bonferroni (329) = -6.75, p < .001]; and HND or first degree [M = 16.31; SD = 9.79; Bonferroni (329) = -2.63, p < .05]. Those who had HND or first degree reported significantly higher intentions to whistle blow corruption than those who had up to, but not higher than, School Certificate [Bonferroni (329) = -4.55, p < .01] and those who had ND or NCE [Bonferroni (329) = -4.11, p < .01]. However, those who had up to, but not higher than, a School Certificate was not significantly different in their level of whistleblowing intentions from those who ND or NCE [Bonferroni (329) = -.44, p > .05].

The results in Table 9 show that that health workers, police personnel, and teachers who had postgraduate degree (M = 21.89; SD = 6.60) tended to be significantly the least self-serving compared with those who had up to, but not higher than, School Certificate [M = 26.26; SD = 2.81; Bonferroni (329) = 4.36, p < .01]; ND or NCE [M = 25.65; SD = 4.05; Bonferroni (329) = 3.76, p < .01]; and HND or first degree [M = 25.15; SD = 5.45; Bonferroni (329) = 3.26, p < .01]. However, employees with up to, but not higher than, a School Certificate, ND or NCE, and HND or first degree had similar corrupt tendencies.

Discussion and Conclusion

Whistleblowing could be one of the best strategies for reducing corruption and its tendencies on teachers, health workers, and police personnel, who were employees of public sector organizations that have been noted for corruption in Nigeria [7]. However, whistleblowing and other strategies for reducing corruption may not be effective without an adequate understanding of the psychological factors such as the act of overlooking or supporting corruption, apprehension about punishment, and workplace neutralization that may boost or discourage employees' tendencies to engage in whistleblowing or corruption as the case may be. The current study investigated the connections of corruption tolerance, punishment anxiety, and workplace neutralization with whistleblowing intentions and corrupt tendencies of the three public employees (health workers, teachers, and police personnel).

Employees who condoned corruption also showed high tendencies of engaging in corruption; and showed low intentions of reporting corruption; but high tendencies of engaging in corruption. These findings were in tandem with the expectations of hypotheses 1 and 4. Ref. [49] study provided a plausible explanation for these findings. As implied in their findings, corruption-tolerant teachers, health workers, and police personnel in the current study might have enjoyed perpetual benefits from the corruption-tolerant atmosphere in the organizations, which was trusting enough to encourage and fuel corrupt tendencies and

discourage whistleblowing. Those who were intolerant of corruption could not trust the organizations enough to report corruption and showed low tendencies to engage in corruption.

As expected in hypotheses 2 and 5, punishment anxiety led to a reduction in the levels of whistleblowing intentions and corrupt tendencies in teachers, health workers, and police personnel. These findings aligned with results of previous studies [20],[37],[41],[42], which reported that the more individuals were apprehensive about punishment associated with a corrupt act, especially in terms of severity and certainty [43], the less likely they would engage in such act. The teachers, health workers, and police personnel who participated in the current study might have perceived that the moral environment of their organization frowned at corruption and appropriately punished corrupt employees [39]. The fear of being censored by the organization and its agency might have reduced their corrupt tendencies.

Ordinarily, one would have expected that in such circumstances, employees would have been encouraged by such a prevailing moral environment to report corruption. However, the reality of the moral environment might have displayed some inconsistency in the punishment of corrupt persons and those who whistle-blow corruption. The employees might have felt inadequately protected from the backlash associated with reporting corruption. Consequently, punishment anxiety reduced whistleblowing intentions. This might be because they perceived their intentions to blow the whistle as an act that would be against the general dictates of the work environment; and consequently, wrongdoing that would attract punishment. This ultimately might have discouraged them and led to low whistleblowing intentions. Generally, the participants in the current study might have perceived that both whistleblowing and corruption would lead to negative consequences, which might have culminated in low whistleblowing intentions and corrupt tendencies.

When employees had enough justifications for corruption, they were able to effectively neutralize the fear of organizational- and self-censors associated with their intended act, which they were aware contravened the moral expectations of society. Therefore, workplace neutralization might have enabled them to effectively disengage from the internalized moral standards, which condemned and would have deterred the employees from corruption [48]. This result confirmed the findings of Ref. [20][29], which reported that workplace neutralization significantly increased the corrupt tendencies of employees. This might be because workplace neutralization helped such employees ward off the cognitive distress associated with the perceived inability to uphold moral standards. When employees were able to successfully disengage from the moral-promoting thoughts, they formed decisions and were able to engage in corrupt behaviors [16],[18],[19]. Based on the results of Ref. [48], a lack of

adequate and prompt reward for morally acceptable work behaviors might also be an excellent point for neutralization and an increased level of corrupt tendencies.

The findings of Ref. [51] were supported by the results of the current study. As predicted in hypothesis 6, workplace neutralization was significantly related to a decrease in the level of whistleblowing intentions of employees of the three public sector service occupations in Nigeria. The employees might have found a good ground to identify with corrupt employees and the corruption-promoting work environment. Under such circumstances, the employees might have become more tolerant of corruption and trusted the organization and its agency because the work environment created the needed institutional lapses and unjust practices, which might have promoted corruption and discouraged whistleblowing [49].

In terms of inter-sectoral analysis, police personnel were significantly the most corrupt and the least willing to report corruption compared with health workers and teachers. This might be because the structure of the police and most public sector organizations in Nigeria reflects and respects a more bureaucratic and hierarchal structure in operation and responses [52]; with less discretionary behaviors unlike the structures of public health and educational facilities, which tended to be less hierarchical in their operations and responses. Corruption may, therefore, permeate bureaucratic and hierarchical organizations, such as the police, more easily [53]; and whistleblowing efforts could easily be frustrated when employees could not perceive sincere and deliberate efforts aimed at curbing and discouraging corruption or promoting and protecting whistleblowers.

Though employees had intentions of reporting corruption, irrespective of marital status, individuals who lost their spouses to separation, divorce, or death showed the highest tendencies to engage in corruption compared to those who were married or yet to get married. This might be because, apart from the emotional burden, being a single parent places huge and extra financial burdens on the individuals. Such emotional and financial burdens might have provided enough opportunity to neutralize the fear of punishment and the self-censorship or condemnation associated with corruption. Therefore, corruption might have appeared as a good opportunity for meeting financial obligations.

Whistleblowing intentions increased with academic qualification. Education might have enhanced the employees' level of moral engagement and self-regulation, which increased their moral reasoning and moral obligations. Those with higher levels of academic qualification might have felt more morally obliged to report corruption than those with low levels of education. However, corrupt tendencies reduced as the academic qualification of employees increased. Those with lower academic qualifications might have felt trapped in their current job with fewer opportunities outside their current job. This might have provided enough

justification for engaging in corruption, especially if the organization does not adequately reward morally acceptable work behaviors [48].

Implications of the findings

The findings of the current study have shown that when employees could easily disengage from internalized moral standards and provide justification for morally unacceptable behavior through the mechanism of workplace neutralization, which helps them to reduce the fear anxiety associated with the perceived societal and self-censorship of morally unacceptable behavior, they tended to be more tolerant of corruption, less likely to whistleblow corruption, and more likely to engage in corruption. These empirical links have extended the cognitive theory of moral behavior moral disengagement, and self-regulation postulations [13],[48] to explain whistleblowing and corruption among employees of public service occupations that are noted for high levels of corruption in Nigeria [7].

The implication of the results of this study for research lies in the fact that it showed the need to explore the aftermath of engaging or not engaging in whistleblowing or corruption on the moral behavior of employees. For example, does whistleblowing or corruption lead to moral guilt or fulfillment in employees? This may help explain how corruption may become cyclical in nature and prevalent; thereby creating a norm of corruption and an increasing level of corruption tolerance in an organization, such as police, which may discourage whistleblowing and dampen anti-corruption efforts. There is also a need to investigate the differential effects of dimensions of punishment anxiety (internal versus external) on whistleblowing intentions and corrupt tendencies to determine which dimension of punishment anxiety would discourage whistleblowing and corruption the more. This would imply an appropriate and effective blend of punishment anxiety into whistleblowing and anti-corruption policies.

In terms of managerial implication, the results have pointed at a policy direction, which indicates that public sector organizations should reduce work situations that provide employees with opportunities to justify corruption to neutralize the internal and external fear of punishment, which might enable employees to disengage from self-regulation and moral censorship against corruption. Overtly celebrating, rewarding, and protecting whistleblowers and, at the same time, bringing severity and certainty into the punishment mechanisms would send a clear-cut signal about morally acceptable and unacceptable work behaviors. In designing such policies, special attention should be paid to the police personnel, those who have lost their spouse (due to separation, divorce, or death), and the less educated employees. Those who behave with integrity, report, or do not tolerate corruption should be specially and

openly celebrated, rewarded, and protected to serve as a veritable point of motivation for others.

Limitation and Suggestions

This study is not without shortcomings. Firstly, the current study did not investigate some important psychological variables such as guilt in the connections of corruption tolerance, punishment anxiety, and workplace neutralization with whistleblowing intentions and corrupt tendencies. For example, the study did not test how fear of self-punishment (self-censorship) and anxiety for societal/organizational punishment and guilt connected with corruption tolerance, whistleblowing intentions, and corrupt tendencies and how workplace neutralization influences such relationships. This would have pointed out the path analyses and models of how the whistleblowing cycle can be encouraged and the corruption cycle can be broken. Secondly, the current study did not compare the connections of corruption tolerance, punishment anxiety, and workplace neutralization with whistleblowing intentions and corrupt tendencies in employees of public service organizations who are noted for corruption with those in less corrupt public service organizations.

Future studies, against this background, should investigate the relationships of corruption tolerance, type of punishment anxiety, guilt, and workplace neutralization with whistleblowing intentions and corrupt tendencies in employees in corrupt and less corrupt public service organizations. This may provide more evidence in support of an efficient management of cycles of whistleblowing and corrupt tendencies.

Conflict of Interest

We declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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