

**‘Of Holy Names’ and Integrity in Business in the Contemporary
Nigerian Society**

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Abstract

Business and commercial outfits are named after divine names and attributes of God. Hardly will one visit or take a walk around any city in Nigeria without noticing commercial outfits or businesses named after God. Be that as it may, one will expect such businesses and owners to be of highly infectious integrity! But that make not be the case, as wrong measures, shortfalls and cutting-corners are the order of the day in businesses in Nigeria. This study, therefore, looks at businesses that have a religious connotation in their registration identity and Christian businessmen and women; with a view of assessing them from the biblical injunction of integrity in business and how faithful they are to what they professed. Purposive selection of businesses that have divine affiliation and one hundred samples of those who patronise them will form the fulcrum of this work. The questionnaire used was interpreted and analysed through descriptive statistics It is believed that whosoever is

named with God should depart from 'iniquity' and live up to the expectation of what they believed and confessed, to be a shining light to others as the Bible enjoins.

Keywords: Divine Names, Identity, Business, Integrity, Biblical Teaching

Introduction

Passing through any community in any African countries and especially in Nigeria, one is bound to see business outfits or enterprises whose name or appellation is coined after Divine names or reflecting the religious conviction or orientation of the business owners. It is not a strange or out of place phenomenon in any Nigerian state to see such business names like- God's Grace, Allah Dey, His Mercy, Dominion outfit, Chuckwu Ne Dum, Ifesinachi, Ogo Oluwa, Oluwaseun, God's Glory, Shalom, Divine Mercy; and many other names like the aforementioned. These names show religious affiliation and that such businesses are associated with God and what His principles and injunctions entailed are implied in such tags and identities. Even when the names are not expressly shown as the aforementioned, there are still many entrepreneurs who claimed to be children of God or are believers. There is no doubt that such businesses and enterprises are expected to be above boards. They are supposed to exhibit noticeable integrity, honesty and transparency in their business dealings and transactions. This is resting on the fact that no religion of the world endorsed cheating, falsehood or cutting corners that are paramount and seem to permeate the business world, since time immemorial and which appeared to be pronounced in this current dispensation! Many client or buyers are cheated by business owners or their employees. Sometimes the business seems to hide under a finger when things are not going well with the outfit, of which they are supposed to be bold to relate the challenge to their clients, sponsors and or shareholders.

Integrity is a cogent issue in any business endeavour and establishment. Attesting to this claim, Aroyehun¹ affirms that all business owners must detest from all falsehood and embrace the truth. He further clarifies that

when a person who associated his business with Divine exhibits anything less than the truth, such as walking in the path of the enemy and letting down their armour and protection. Thus, to Aroyehun, integrity is a form of an offensive weapon when it is upheld by a believer in business corridors. As a rejoinder to this, Aroyehun² believes that the Christian Businessman is in a secular and permissive world where Christian values have been eroded. Therefore there is more reason for such business outfit to live above boards and be counted for what they believed. He affirms that when there is transparency, sound relationships of trust and confidence is built; and by extension, the Kingdom of God is expanded.

This study will not explore all business outfits that are associated with one particular faith or another; its centre of attraction is commercial outfits and enterprises that are affiliated to Christian faith. It is also focused on the buying and selling or consumer providing trades, where measures can be changed and sub-standard product sold to unsuspecting consumers. This lunge of this research is to find out whether Christian consumer ventures owners are also involved in cutting-corners and unholy practices. Also, it is to determine whether such believers exhibited matchless integrity in dealing with people and showed outstanding pellucidity. Moreover, this is to determine whether they could be branded as role models when integrity, honesty and lucidity are concerned. One hundred respondents were selected across a wide spectrum of consumers and a self-designed questionnaire tagged ‘integrity in Business’ was used to collect opinion from the purposive sample selected on the subject.

Literature Review

Got question.org³ in an article accessed on their site explains that any business organisation where spiritual values were encouraged are less fearful, and they are committed to their workplace goals. He says such are less likely to compromise their values. The organisation quotes Mitroff by saying spirituality could be an ultimate competitive advantage. Gorquestion.org⁴says integrity is Christ-centred living. It is about doing what is right, than what is expedient. It further exemplifies that the business that has integrity will make its business decisions based on standards and principles of righteousness, truth and honesty. This means that it is congruency or consistent and suitable for what the organisation

verbalises and practices. In essence, no one will be able to point an accusing finger or call such an organisation a hypocrite. Socrates (469-399BC) cited in gotquestion.org⁵ ‘the greatest way to live with honour in this world is to be what we pretend to be’. Thus any organisation that claimed they were premised on Christian value deduced from the Scripture should exhibit such characteristics. A Christian business should be an epitome of integrity on the idea of excellence in service delivery unquestioned and unalloyed.

Gallup and National Resource Centre⁶, clarifies that any business that is committed to excellence demonstrates Gods power to transformed lives, not only through their employees but also to the clients and customers as well (Titus3:8). Kouzes and Posner⁷ surveying thousands of people and written over four hundred cases conclude that integrity is the highest demand frequently than any other trait, both in business and leadership. The indication of these is that the excellence that attracts the customer to the business organisation will also encourage such people to strive for excellence. Thus, any integrity tested organisation is witnessing of the Gospel indirectly to anyone that encountered or transacted business with them. The organisation, expressly encourages that such establishment must honour God and must be thoroughly cognizant of its role and mission in a pagan and adulterated world. This business institution must be a witnessing avenue to the secular world where they are doing business.

Another index for integrity identified by Heathfield⁸ is honesty and trust which is the quality of having strong ethical principles followed at all times. Any Christian business organisation must be honest and truthful to its people, be it employees or the customers. She extols further that the person with integrity demonstrates moral and ethical principles and does the right thing, whether in business or leadership; no matter who is watching. Such are accountable self-aware responsible and truthful and their actions are internally consistent.⁹ Being commitment and consistent has to do with fair compensation; when a product is faulty or sub-standard; performance recognition, this may involve reward for dedicated customer staff; and growth opportunities both professionally and personally, which is employee-oriented. For this, both the client and the

employee will have a sense of commitment to such business outfit because of the sense of obligation that the organisation has shown to its people within and without.

For Brian¹⁰, while commenting about her engagement in strategic planning sessions, believes that the first value that all business executives agreed on is integrity. She affirms that leaders and business mogul believes that honesty and integrity are the foundation of leadership and by extension any business enterprise. She cites an example of an American multi-billionaire businessman, Jon Huntsman, who she attests was able to grow his business from a little beginning or scratch to a multi-billion enterprise because he steadfastly refused to compromise his principles. Huntsman, according to Brian expressed that integrity is the reason behind his success. This showed how important integrity is to the growth of any enterprise.

Brian¹¹ further defines integrity as doing the right thing because it is the right thing to do. The implication here is that there is no shortcut to doing what is right than to do it the right way. She clarifies that any business or person who wants to be great or successful must not cheat or compromise. Added to this is the fact that integrity is important in giving and keeping promises. Any business of integrity once they make a promise must ensure that the promise is kept and to her, that is good for such an organisation.

Cairns¹² acquiesces that integrity in business or the lack of it can have a significant impact on the long term success of any business. He emphasises that business is not only about making money but about interaction with people who need the services and goods the business is offering. This to Cairns calls for human qualities and human nature. He clarifies that dealing with people boils down to the integrity and the character. For this, he explains that the Centre for Creative Leadership listed integrity as the top character strength that leaders need even at the top levels of an organisation. Cairns says integrity is not about speech alone, or what is done through marketing efforts, but a foundational ethical principle of character based on honesty and truthfulness. Integrity

is doing the right thing even when no one is looking. Thus he affirms that integrity should guide one's thoughts, speech and actions.

Moreover, Cairns¹³ stresses that the road to integrity in business starts with honesty to self and questioning of motives and motivation behind the business enterprise. He further says faulty products, shady deals, and hidden agendas have no place in a business that conducts itself with integrity. So also false data, documents falsification, misrepresenting facts, resorting to misleading adverts has no bearing with any business with probity, for the fact that both the owner and the business will be at the scrutiny edge of other people. Therefore it is not what the owner says about the business that stands the test of time, but rather what others come to realise after careful observation and first-hand experiences with such business. For instance, there was a particular petrol station near the writer's home, which started on a false note and short dispensing to unsuspecting customers. But as time goes on, even though people always like to try out a new outlet, the gimmicks of the fuel station was discovered and many stopped buying from them. What could have been sold within the space of days dragged to months because of the insincerity of the business owner!

Discussing the hard nut to crack nature of integrity Barnes¹⁴, explains that the power of rationalisation and the difficulties of definition reveal integrity as a subject that is neither easy nor simple! She exudes that this needs personal judgment. Integrity to him is not just a corporate responsibility, but a personal one as well. Thus, she advises that managers and business owners need to discuss and share integrity dilemma and brainstorm about the thinking behind individual decisions. Likewise, the business owner should can and should lead by example. She concludes that doing the right thing may be difficult, but our world is better imagined if everyone does it.

Schetellich¹⁵ speaking about ten rule of integrity for Christian Business defines integrity as wholehearted devotion to a moral standard as a matter of personal honour. The relevant ones among the ten rule Schetellich point out using the life of Job in the Bible as a model are: integrity towards friends, integrity towards those who are not friends, integrity

with money, integrity to employees and integrity to the society. He advises that people in business should have integrity like Job whom God Himself vouched for before his adversary the devil. He advises they can be like Job by living before the Lord, that is that God is all Knowing and all Seeing, govern by His Word- obeying the principle and tenets of the Bible as God Dictates; and holding to that despite the ups and downs of the business world and cycle. He affirms that to such businessmen and women of integrity the Lord will be able to say to a cynical world 'have you considered my servant... a perfect and an upright man (Job1:8).

On Schetellich words it is expedient to turn to the scripture to examine what it has to reveal about integrity.

Bible Injunction about Integrity

The Bible and its teachings are evergreen! It implied that it is for all ages and time despite being regarded as one of antiquity literature. The Bible has many passages making an inference to integrity and living about the board. From the Old Testament to the New Testament are instructions to deal fairly and live right with others. While others are inferences there are also direct injunctions about integrity in business. For instance, Leviticus 19:35-36 says

You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measures of length or weight or quantity.

You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. (RSV)

What this instruction or mandate connotes is that no one must cheat his or her neighbour from what is lawfully theirs' in weight, length, or quantity. The weight must be balanced and accurate for what is paid for. On no account must one person cheat another out of their just and lawful priced items paid for. God requires compliance from the people of Israel of biblical epoch and by extension the same of contemporary businessmen and women who called themselves believers. Keil and Delitzsch¹⁶ clarify in their commentary that

As a universal rule, they were to do no wrong in judgment (the administration of justice, v. 15), or

social intercourse and trade with weights and measures of length and capacity; but to keep just scales, weights, and measures. On ephah and hin, see at Ex 16:36 and 29:40.

Henry's¹⁷ commentary is weighty on the matter of false scale and measure! He sternly warns –

Justice in weights and measures is here commanded. That there should be no cheat in them, (v35) That they should be very exact, (v36) in weighing and measuring, we pretend a design to give all those their own whom we deal with; but, if the weights and measures are false, it is like corruption in judgment, it cheats under colour of justice, and thus to deceive a man to his damage is worse than picking his pocket or robbing him on the highway. He that sells is bound to give the full of the commodity, and he that buys the full of the price agreed upon, which cannot be done without just balances, weights, and measures. Let no man go beyond or defraud his brother, for, though it is hidden from man, it will be found that God is the avenger of all such.

Added to the Scripture above is another like it in Proverbs 11:1: A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight. (RSV)

The meaning is that when a person gives the adequate and accurate measure to the buyer, God Himself has delighted and He is happy with the person. When it is the other way round, the person is incurring the wrath and displeasure of God. Likewise Matthew 5: 16 also lend credence to the two passages above. It reads-

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (RSV)

The implication of this is that when a business organisation and its representative acts right, just and fair, they are radiating the light of God in a crooked and perverted world as it is presently. By this, they will

outshine other outfits that are cutting corners and this will be of tremendous advantage to their business. It puts them on good pedestal and recommendation with people that patronise and do business with them. Bible Exposition commentary¹⁸ expression is that life gives light to people and gives direction, so will any business with integrity be. This according to the commentary will point others to the right path and influence them for good. Moreover, Matthew Henry's Commentary¹⁹ thinks that the light of integrity must shine to attract others to the Saviour and think well of Christianity and by that give glory to God by the deed exhibited. This as ... comments above will lead to evangelising and witnessing by such business organisation for Christ and that which Christianity is known for! *Mathew Henry Commentary* stress further that:

The glory of God is the great thing we must aim at in everything we do in religion, (1 Peter 4:11). In this centre, the lines of all our actions must meet. We must not only endeavour to glorify God ourselves, but we must do all we can to bring others to glorify him.

In the same chapter of Matthew and verse, 37 is the Bible instruction to:

Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No';
anything more than this comes from evil.
(RSV)

The correct interpretation to this is that, when a person yes is found and affirmed to be yes, such a person is exhibiting a high degree of integrity. Such disposition is highly commendable by God and that is what He expected from His People. *Bible Knowledge Commentary*²⁰ comments that the Lord was saying one's life should be sufficient to back up one's words. A yes always ought to mean yes, and a no should mean no. Thus the commentary confirms that James seems to have picked up these same words of the Lord in his epistle in James 5:12, attesting that a simple yes is yes and no is no. *InterVarsity Press Bible Background Commentary on NT*²¹ affirms as *Bible Knowledge Commentary* that Jesus demands that people simply be as good as their word.

*For Bible Exposition Commentary*²² writes that Jesus imparted that our conversation should be so honest, and our character so true, that there would be no need for 'crutches' or props to get people to believe whatever is said. It affirms that words depend on the character, and swearing oaths

cannot compensate for a poor character. Whoever has proof of integrity will have their words taken at face value without any embellishment.

The searchlight has turned to the Scripture to see what the Bible encourages about integrity the study then did an opinion poll to feel the pulse of a wide spectrum of respondents. The findings are discussed below.

Empirical Findings

The tool adopted to elicit additional information was a self-design questionnaire on ‘Holy Name and Integrity in Business’ with a close-ended nominal scale –Yes or No as an option made available to respondents. The respondents were one hundred in number. The demographic data are represented in the tables below:

Biographic data

Table1.1 Gender

S/n	Gender	No of Respondent	Percentage
1.	Male	56	56%
2.	Female	44	44%
	Total	100	100%

Source: Field study Oct. 2019

From the table above, it showed that fifty-six (56%) respondents of the sample were males and forty-four (44%) were females. This means that there were more males than females as a sample. The age range of the samples was presented in the table below

Table1.2 Age Range

S/n	Age Range	No of Respondent	Percentage
1.	20 – 30	52	52%
2.	31- 40	08	08%
3.	41 and above	40	40%
	Total	100	100%

Source: Field study Oct. 2019

From table 2 above, the indicator is that age range 20 to 30 were fifty-two representing (52%), 31 to 40 were eight (8%) and 41 and above were 40 (40%). The implication here was that age range 20 to 30 were in the majority as the respondent to the questionnaire

Table1.3: The Question

The table below represents the ten-question items on the questionnaire to elicit information about integrity in business by outfits and organisation which seems to be associated with faith or religious name. As indicated above, the responses to the question were closed-ended nominal scale, ‘Yes or No’ which the respondents were to select from. The outcome was presented in the table below, while the discussion on each question followed the table

S/n	Question	Response		undecided
		Yes	No	
1.	Are you aware that there is a consumer business outfit that is named after divine attribute or religious affiliation?	88	12	
2.	Have you ever transacted business with such an outfit?	72	28	
3.	Are there any differences in their outlook in terms of truthfulness compared with other businesses which are not associated with the name of God?	40	60	
4.	Is their customer services outstanding compared to others?	60	40	
5.	Have you ever been cheated by any of such businesses?	36	60	4
6.	Are they trustworthy and reliable business organisations in term of value for money paid?	48	52	
7.	Do they exhibit a high degree of honesty and integrity when there is conflict in the transaction?	40	56	4

8.	Would you do or do you still transact business with them?	60	40	
9.	Can you recommend them to other people?	48	52	
10.	Do they measure up to the standard of the Bible if they are Christian oriented?	40	60	

Source: Field study Oct. 2019

The first question posted on the questionnaire is whether the respondents were aware of business organisations or consumer outfits that are named after divine attributes or religious affiliation? The responses emanating from there were eighty- eight (88%) respondent from the sample answered yes, while twelve respondents (12%) answered in the negative. What this indicated is that many of the respondents were conversant with a business named after God and His attribute and such usually showed the religious affiliation of the owner.

The second question on the questionnaire is whether the respondents have ever transacted business with such an outfit. Seventy- two respondents answered in the affirmative which represents 72%. While twenty-eight others (28%), responded in the negative. The implication was that many of the samples used have done business deals with such organisations that showed religious affiliation of owners or religious appellations.

Besides, another question posed is, is there any difference in their outlook in terms of truthfulness with other businesses which are not associated with the name of God? The responses to this question showed there was no outstanding show of truthfulness from these outfits from others not associated with religiosity or divine Names. Sixty (60%) respondents were in the upper case and their response is in the negative, while forty (40%) respondents affirmed the question.

Question four is on outstanding customer services compared to others. The outcome here favoured the business outfit as sixty respondents acclaimed that their customer service is outstanding and commendable; which the rest of the respondents number forty denied. Furthermore, another question asked is if the samples have ever been cheated by any of such businesses. Thirty- six said yes while sixty responded no, and four were undecided.

Question six from the table about was seeking to ask about trustworthiness and reliability of such business organisations in term of value for money paid. The responses are forty-eight yes and fifty-two 'No'. It means there was no difference between them and other secular oriented organisation. Also, a question about the exhibition of a high degree of honesty and integrity when there is conflict in the transaction was the next. Forty of the samples were affirming, fifty-six denied, while four were undecided. It means there was no clear cut show of integrity and honesty but these religious outfits.

The next item is to check continuous business transaction by the sample used to such businesses. Sixty percent answered they will continue to do business with them while forty percent declined. The next question bothers on recommending them to other people. Forty-eight respondents will still give a recommendation and tell others about the organisation, while fifty-two will not recommend them to others. Moreover, the last listed question on the questionnaire is to check the organisation as having measure up to the standard of the Bible if they are Christian oriented. The respondents nailed the outfits as not measured up to the standard of the Scripture as affirmed by forty of them, while sixty answered in the negative. What this brought to bear is that the business organisations have not lived up to what they professed.

Conclusion

From the findings above, it signified that the integrity of the business outfits named after divine attributes was on 'dilly-dallying' level! There was no much show of integrity, truthfulness and outstanding quality in them. They were nothing to distinct or distinguished them from the normal routine that pervades the consumer and service-oriented businesses in modern-day Nigeria. From the outcome of the empirical study, the organisations never exhibit distinctive integrity. It is 'business as usual', the way and standard of the world as experienced in Nigeria. However, that they can still be recommended to others as signified by a slim margin (52:48%) of the respondents that cannot recommend them, still showed there is a ray of hope for them to do better. If they are

determined as pointed out by Cairns²³ who says integrity starts from self-conscious efforts, and Brian²⁴ who says it is the right thing to do.

Recommendations

Be that as it may, the position of this writer is to call a spade a spade. It is therefore recommended as thus,

1. Business organisations identified with divines should live up to the measure of what they professed, as succinctly expresses by Schettelich²⁵ so that they could be a point of reference and pride to God and thereby witness of the Gospel in the permissive and corrupted world.
2. It is of paramount importance that businesses that are associated with divines should live up to the standard of what they profess. They must shun all forms of cutting corners, false measure, sub-standard services because all these are an abomination before God. Even if their patrons are still condoning the excesses and kept coming, without integrity and honesty the tempo may not be sustained for a long time. The clients will see through the facade and will decide to pitch their tent with other more outstanding and truthful outfits.

Integrity is a key point in business, it should not be compromised. It is what gives longevity and success to a business. This will showcase and advertise the businesses even without any concerted efforts by the owner. The customers will spread the 'good news' of their integrity mien.

Endnotes

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