

EFFECTS OF CORRUPTION ON PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

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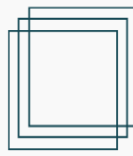
Abstract

Corruption has penetrated into the educational institutions in Nigeria, especially the public universities. This paper discussed the effects of corruption on the public university administration in Nigeria. Secondary data was used to support the various points raised in the paper. This paper generated secondary data from the print materials and online resources. The paper concludes that the effects of corruption on the public university administration in Nigeria include the following: reduction of funds for administrative functions, shortage of infrastructural facilities, shortage of academic staff, poor quality of education, resources wastage, increase in administrative cost, hampering development of public universities and resulting to poor image of public universities in international communities. To address these problems of corruption in the public universities, the paper recommends that the government and the school administrators should deploy human and materials resources to fight all forms of corruption in the university's system.

Keyword: Administration, Corruption, University education, Nigeria

Introduction

One of the major problems facing the administration of university education in Nigeria is corruption (Ogunode, 2021). Recently however, education in the Nigerian state has faced terrible challenges occasioned by corrupt practices (Madaki, 2019). This corruption has penetrated all educational institutions, include the higher education (Godwin 2018; Ogunode & Abubakar 2021). Ahmodu, & Sofoluwe, (2018) observed that Nigerian universities have now become an ivory tower in the throes of corruption scandals where things are no longer at ease, corruption allegations mounted on top officials of the Nigerian Universities are fingered in financial offensiveness and maladministration. Ahmodu, & Sofoluwe, (2018) submits that corruption is a recurring decimal in Nigerian Universities to socio-economic and political development of the country. Chinyere, & Chukwuma (2017) observed that the administrator's level shades



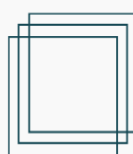
of corruption in the higher institutions included misappropriation and misapplication of fund meant for capital projects, offering of admission to undeserving students for a fee while deserving candidates are by-passed, amongst others. This paper will look at the effects of corruption on the university administration in Nigeria.

Concept of University Administration

Public universities are universities owned by the government. These types of universities are universities established to provide post-secondary schools for Nigerian. Public universities are universities established by the act of parliament to serve the interest of the public. Public universities deal with the provision of teaching, research and communities services (Ogunode, 2020). The objectives of the universities in Nigerian policy of Education (2014) including providing professional education with the following aims: the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and societies; the development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate environment; the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community; the acquisition of an overview of the local and external environments (FGN, 2014).

Public universities in Nigerian are grouped into federal and state-owned universities. The federal universities are owned by the federal government of Nigeria while the state universities are owned by the state government. The total numbers of federal and state public universities are 45 and 50 across the country (NUC, 2020).

Adewale & Taiye (2018) views University administration as the scientific approach to the management of human and material resources to achieve the goals and objectives of the university. For Ogunode (2020) University administration refers to the application of the universities' resources to implement the programme of the universities with the aims of realizing the objectives of the universities. University administration is the mobilization and arrangement of both human and materials resources for the achievement of the university's goals. University administration is the effective use of the resources of the university to implement the teaching programme, research programme and the community service programme of the universities. University administration is the deployment of the universities' resources to accomplish the universities' programme. The objectives of university administration include: implementation of the programme of the universities as defined; allocation of resources for implementing of the universities programme; to ensure implementation of teaching programme, to ensure implementation of research programme; to ensure delivery of quality community services programme, to ensure effective staff development, to ensure effective student administration, to ensure smooth implementation of academic calendar and to ensure quality education.

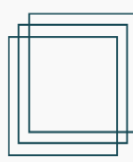


The federal government of Nigeria established the National universities commission to oversee the external administration and supervision of all universities in Nigeria. Administration of public universities in Nigeria takes two dimensions: the external administration and internal administration. The external administration is done through the federal ministries and other regulatory agencies in the country. External administration handles planning, policy formulation, programme accreditation, supervision, funding and quality control of the universities. The internal administration headed by the school administrators and other principal managers within the universities. The function of internal administration is to ensure implementation of policies, coordinate, supervise and organize the human and materials resources of the universities to accomplish the objectives of the universities (Ogunode, 2020).

2.1 Concept of Corruption

Many authors have defined corruption according in different way. For Ahmodu, & Sofoluwe, (2018) Corruption is a widespread malady to the peace and well-being of human being which has spared no country in the world while Chinyere, & Chukwuma (2017) defined corruption as absurd or deviant disposition of people in institutions of higher learning which violates the ethical standards. The prevalence of corruption in tertiary institutions is viewed to negate the core values of education at this level. Ahmodu, & Sofoluwe, (2018) also defined corruption as the misuse or abuse of public office for private gains and wide array of illicit behaviour e.g. bribery, extortion, fraud, nepotism, grafts, theft, embezzlement, falsification of academic records, kickbacks, influence peddling. Khan et al., (2012) see corruption as involving the improper and unlawful behaviour of public-service officials, both politicians and civil servants, whose positions create opportunities for the diversion of money and assets from government to themselves and their accomplices.

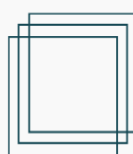
There are many causes of corruption in the higher institutions, especially in the public universities in Nigeria. Asiyai, (2015) identified the causes of corruption in universities to include moral decadence of the Nigerian society of getting rich quick syndrome, lack of fear of God, poor management and the desire to pass examination without working hard for it. She went further to observe that the Nigerian society worship for money and material wealth resulted in neglect of education for excellent character development. People who made it through dubious means are celebrated. This increases the rate of corruption which spread like wildfire into the universities. For Chinyere, & Godwin (2017) and Chuta (2004) the causes of corruption in the higher institutions include: Bureaucratic Factors, Undue Emphasis on Certificates, Non-Payment of Staff Salaries Promptly, Environmental Factors, Moral Decadence, Failure of Leadership, Materialism and Deviation from Ethical Principles and Values. Chukwuma (2017) dimensions of corruption include students, lecturers, non-academic staff and administrators. The shapes of corruption among students included bribing of lecturers



for unmerited grades, cultism, examination malpractice, attacks on lecturers for stopping students from indulging in examination malpractice, fiscal extortion from innocent students by fellow students who form themselves into “lecturers’ boys”. Ahmodu, & Sofoluwe, (2018) outlines the causes of corruption to include: policies, programs and activities that are poorly conceived and managed, failing institutions, poverty, income disparities, inadequate civil servants’ remuneration and lack of transparency and accountability are among the contributing factors.

There are different corruptions in the Nigerian public universities. According to Chinyere, & Chukwuma (2017), the forms of corruption among lecturers included demanding a tremendous amount of money, sex from students for high grades, etc. Among non-teaching staff, the shades of corruption included monetary extortion from students before they see their results, demanding of money from unsuspecting parents in the guise that they are lecturers with a promise to secure admission for their children/wards, they also act as agents for lecturers, receiving money from students for higher grades after examination. Godwin (2017) and (Okobi, 1997) observes that the following forms of corruption are common in most tertiary institutions in Nigeria: examination malpractice, admission racketeering, hostel profiteering, extortion of the students, abuse of office, sorting, forgery of certificates and statements of results, sexual harassment and immorality, embezzlement of funds, godfatherism, corruption in recruitment and promotion of staff, placing government’s or management’s machinery at the disposal of a particular student to win election during students’ politics in the campus. Others include: writing a good remark (confidential report) for a student (or a staff) that does not deserve it, contracts inflation and variation, lobbying to be posted to juicy departments, lobbying to be put in juicy committees, lobbying to be given more courses and larger classes, sycophancy, favouritism, bribery, absenteeism, truancy, poor attitude to work, padding of salaries, making “gifts” to those in authority in order to take advantages, violation of rules and policies for personal gains; kickbacks, nepotism (giving unfair advantages to your relatives, friends, political benefactors if you are in a position of authority or power), etc.

Dawood (2012) educational Administration has to do with recruitment, admission and promotion. Corruption takes place in various forms. For instance, entrance examination into institutions most times is not on merit but on who is actually seeking the admission. As regard to recruitment and promotion of staff, academic and non-academic into the educational system is done by who is pushing the file giving chance to unqualified persons as well as depriving good hands the opportunity to contribute to the body of knowledge, the effect is felt in the quality of students produced. Similarly, fake certificates are now so much in the system that even those of the higher ladder are affected.



2.1 Level of Corruption in public Universities

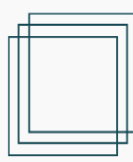
In Nigerian higher institutions, the reports of how lecturers sexually harass some female students in sex-for-marks corruption are alarming; while some of these crooked lecturers extorted male students in cash-for-marks misconduct. Apart from plagiarism, commercialization of admission or admission racketeering, examination malpractices, unethical sale of handouts, wrongful marks alteration and deliberate failure to teach students are some of the most pervasive forms of academic corruption on our campuses. In August this year, the news of a lecturer who raped an admission applicant at the University of Lagos dominated the airwaves. Just last month, a lawless Dean of Law at the University of Calabar was suspended because of the allegation of raping a 400 level Law student. Such stories are not uncommon on many campuses because of academic corruption (Mahfouzadedimeji2015).

Ahmodu, & Sofoluwe (2018), observed that corruption manifests in Nigerian Universities mostly as; bribery, embezzlement, money laundering, financial misappropriation, falsification of academic records, non-remittance of tax or money collected, contract inflation and ghost worker syndrome. Ololube, (2016) and Chikowore in Mapolisa, Ncube, Tshabalala, and Khosa (2014) observe that the number of cases of embezzlement and mismanagement of funds by higher education leaderships in Nigerian are quite frightening.

Khan et al. (2012) posited that corruption exacerbates paucity in Nigerian Universities while Ahmodu, & Sofoluwe (2018), submitted that they have accused University administrators of financial scandals. From vice chancellors to bursars, various officials of major Nigerian universities have been accused of corruption with some of them already being prosecuted. The recently prosecuted Universities are; Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA), University of Calabar (UNICAL), ObafemiAwolowo University Ile-Ife (OAU) and University of Ibadan. The Vice Chancellors and Bursars have been accused of mismanaging funds which were part of the N100 billion released by the Federal Government in 2013 to universities in response to agitations by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) for upgrade of facilities at the tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Telegraph Newspaper, 2016).

Godwin (2017) submits that there are cases of students being exploited by staff; recruitment and promotion of staff being based on political patronage instead of merit. There are cases of abuse of office by those in authority. Other vices include admission racketeering, hostel profiteering, sorting, examination malpractice, sexual harassment, etc.

The Budget and Monitoring Committee of the Academic Staff Union of Universities, Obafemi Awolowo University branch has accused the management of the institution of expending 3.5 billion Naira meant for hostel renovation and construction of new lecture theaters in breach of due process and transparency. The funds were part of the 100



billion Naira unrestricted funds of the federal government in 2013 for all universities in Nigeria. This fund was in response to the long drawn-out cry and agitation of ASUU against the government. The implementation and monitoring committee of the federal government spelt out guidelines for accessing the intervention funds by Nigerian public universities, but the management of Obafemi Awolowo University failed to abide by the guidelines (Ololube, 2016 and The Budget and Monitoring Committee, 2016).

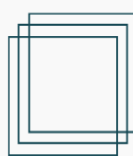
Punch (2020) opined that much of the little funds that go into the university's system are stolen. In the course of the face-off, the government claimed "the fraud in the universities is amazing and you will be shocked. ICPC did a system check recently, and it was so shocking. In fact, the worst two organizations they mentioned are the Teaching Hospitals and our universities." In 2018, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project claimed that there were allegations of corruption in several federal universities relating to the unfair allocation of grades; contract inflation; truncation of staff's salary on the payroll; employment of unqualified staff; certificate scandal; examination malpractice; sexual harassment; and issuance of results for expelled students to graduate (Punch 2020).

The international organization stated this in a new report titled: "Corruption in Education Systems in West Africa." According to the report, corruption is commonplace in education systems across the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The report highlighted "Resource misallocation, corrupt procurement, exchange of sex for grades, examination malpractices, fake qualifications, teacher absenteeism, and corrupt recruitment practices" as the various corruption risks and challenges facing education systems in all the countries (Premiumtimes 2020).

Ololube, (2016) quoted ASUU, (2016) report that pointed out that out of the 701 development projects in Nigeria universities, 163 (23.3%) are abandoned and 538 (76.7%) are perpetually under ongoing projects. Some of the abandoned projects in Nigerian universities are over fifteen years old and some are over forty years old. 76% of Nigerian universities use well as a source of water, 45% use pit latrines and 67% of students use bush as toilets. All the aforementioned reasons that were advanced by ASUU are as a result of misappropriation of the funds marked for the execution of the projects.

Effects of Corruption on University Administration

The effects of corruption on the public university administration in Nigeria include: reduction of funds for administrative functions, shortage of infrastructural facilities, shortage of academic staff, poor quality of education, wastage in the system, increases in administrative cost, hampering development of public universities and resulting to poor image of public universities in international communities.

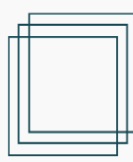


3.1 Reduction of funds for administrative functions

One of the function of university education is to ensure effective allocation and use of funds for the administration of the university. The high rate of corruption in the university system is reducing the quantities and volume of funds released to implement the universities programme. Dare (2008) quoted Ogbondah (2010) who submitted that despite of the inadequacy of allocations to the public university system, any fund made available often go down the drain through the corrupt practices of those entrusted with the implementation of university programmes because of inadequate monitoring of university income and expenditure, such is the grim state of affairs, thus the future will need a paradigm shift. Asiyai, (2015) observes that, when the authority mismanaged the money meant for the smooth running of the university, failed to purchase the security gadgets and not put housing accommodation for staff in place, insecurity sets in. This is a major problem with many Nigerian universities. Even for fear of being kidnapped, many university staff leaves far away from the university campuses since there are no accommodation for them within the university. Ololube (2016); Agabi (2014); Ekankumo & Kemebaradikumo, (2014) and Ogunode (2020) agree that the inadequate funding of higher education by Nigeria government has contributed immensely to the decay in the sector, especially since the country cannot meet the recommended UNESCO's benchmark of 26 percent of every developing country's annual budget to be invested on funding education. However, regardless of the annual budgetary provisions by the Nigerian governments over the years, the standard of educational in the country has continued to decrease because higher education leaders are not sincere as moneys meant for higher education is often used for other purposes and it was observed by Ogunode (2021) and Acho & Abuh, (2016) that the little funds released are mismanaged in the system. This action of corruption is responsible for the meager resources for administrative functions.

3.2 Inadequate infrastructural facilities

Inadequate infrastructural facilities in many public universities in Nigeria have been linked to the high rate of corruption in the system. Money provided for infrastructural facilities are diverted and looted, leaving the universities to suffer a shortage of facilities. Priye (undated) observed that corruption began to affect education seriously in the middle and late 1980s as the psychosocial beast beclouded the minds of those who ruled Nigeria. The scrambled to loot as much as possible by those in a position of power resulted in the neglect of the educational sector. Suddenly, education that was considered being the cornerstone for the development and modernization of Nigeria was ignored, neglected, and starved of the funds and policy initiatives needed to move it forward. Increasingly, national and state governments started cutting educational funds, creating the impression that education was no longer an important strategic tool in directing the country's growth. With this development, the looting of educational



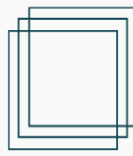
funds became acceptable. Thus, it became fashionable to loot funds allocated for academic enhancement, capacity building, infrastructural development, modernization, and rehabilitation of educational institutions. The looting involved educational policymakers, bureaucrats in various educational ministries, and school officials responsible for administering the schools (primary and secondary schools and universities). Ebehikhalu & Dawam (2017) observed that many of the stakeholders in the university system in Nigeria are also responsible for the rot in the university system. ASUU has struggled to force the government to fund the universities properly, but these funds are managed poorly, embezzled and stolen. This high level of corruption is a practice common among the universities' administrators. The corrupt practices in higher institutions are similar to what is obtainable in the civil service and in the political world. They manifested the symptoms of these corrupt practices in the dilapidated, very substandard and poorly delivered buildings and other infrastructure. Majority of the universities' administrators have seen their positions as opportunity to amass wealth, caring more on how to enhance their financial wherewithal than protecting the integrity of the university system.

3.3 Shortage of Academic staff

Another effect of corruption in the university administration is shortage of academic staff. Because of the corruption practices in the recruitment processes in the Nigerian public universities, this result to the employment of unqualified staff resulting to shortage of professional teachers in the system. The problems of ghost workers in many public universities have also led to the shortage of staff in the system. Dawood (2012) opines that the senior staffs such as the Head Teachers, Principals, Rectors, Provost and Vice-chancellors who are in charge of their institutions' funds do transferring these funds to their personal bank account for their personal use. They are also involved in placing ghost workers on salaries and over invoicing of given contracts.

3.4 Poor quality of Education

Academic corruption in many public universities in Nigeria is responsible for fall in standard of higher education. Kingston (2011), observes that corruption in the academia is one of the most prominent factors contributing to diminishing standard of university education. Babalola (2010) opines that academic corruption is a problem due to the public outcry of a fallen standard of education both in the news and print media. For instance, the demand for gratification by teachers, among others, has led to the fallen standard of education in Nigeria. Ikechukwu (2014) did a study and revealed that corruption had an enormity of negative effects on the output of the system on productivity and acceptance of degrees awarded by the institutions in the labour market. Tanzi and Davoodi (1997) notes that corruption reduces productivity since it is associated with lower expenses and maintenance which will have negative impact on



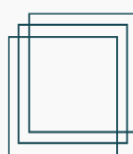
economic growth. The findings of Asiyai, (2015) on corruption in public universities showed that the effect of corruption are production of poor graduates, lack of good moral values, poor image of Nigeria at the international scene, poor infrastructural development, poor academic standards and poor modernization of university facilities. Corruption affects education access, quality, inclusion and learning outcomes with devastating consequences, not only for national economic growth but also for the life chances of children, their families and communities. Godwin (2017) opines that corruption in the higher institutions will lead to fall in tertiary education standard. This is because illiterates are daily being produced while international community received our certificates with contempt. Ololube, (2016) discovered that poor quality of higher education in Nigeria are as a result of inadequate funding, misappropriation and mismanagement of education funds. Godwin (2017) lamented that educational corruption in tertiary institutions in Nigeria affects standard of education. For instance, examination malpractice, sorting, sale of marks for cash or kind, etc., have adverse effects on the manner in which educational practices are run and practiced; it reduces standards and quality of education in the society as it produced illiterate graduates.

3.5 Wastage in the System

Another effect of corruption in the university administration is the waste of resources. Corruption practices at the administrative level of the universities cause a lot of waste. Dawood (2012) confirms this and observes that the problem of corruption is further compounded by the culture of waste and recklessness in which they abandoned public projects without an explanation to the public. For instance, some capital projects invested in by the Federal and State Government amounting to billion of Naira in the Educational Sector have not been commissioned. The above scenario highlights a very clear picture of waste, lack of accountability and transparency propelled by corruption with devastating consequence on the educational system entirely. Corruption has brought about the underdevelopment of the Educational sector. Suleiman (2005) also notes that corruption coupled with economic and political mismanagement has led to instability and gross abuse of power, led to the decaying infrastructure, inadequate staffing, poor and failing education standards, the disappearance of grants, trust funds, loans and of the entire project without a trace.

3.6 Increase in Administrative Cost

Corruption in the university administration increases administrative cost. This submission is supported by Alli (2004), Educator (1996) and Dawood (2012), who notes that the cost of corruption to the Nigerian educational system represents about 15½% of its GDP. Experiences of other countries reveal that corruption increases the cost of education, materials and training of staff. Suleiman (2005) discloses, corruption direct



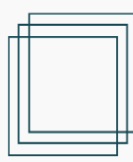
resources from the designed projects to white elephant projects are heavily over invoiced; it increases the costs of running the schools, distort public expenditures and defers private-public partnership investments. It also erodes the consistency for grants and funding. In Nigeria institutions of learning, corruption has undermined the normal functioning of their social, economic and academic systems. Godwin (2017) agrees that institutionalized educational corruption increases administrative costs, losses in the revenue of these institutions, results in goal displacement as the institutions' goals are replaced with the personal benefits of some persons.

3.7 Hamper development of Public universities

The high rate of corruption in the university administrative also hamper the development of the universities. Godwin (2017) and (Acho, 2017) submits that corruption can sap the development potentials of not only the institutions but the entire nation. Specifically, corruption in the education sector has the potential of eclipsing any meaningful educational policies and programmes. Again, it stunts pertinent variables necessary for educational development, including multiplier effects, by rendering impotent the very structures, institutions and human resources that facilitate growth. Ahmodu, & Sofoluwe, (2018) observes that the negative consequences of the prevalent corruption have continued to hamper educational growth and development in Nigeria and has caused the suspension and removal of some Nigerian Universities Vice-chancellors and Bursars while some others are under investigation. Dawood (2012) quoted Okoli (1995) who explains that huge sums of money stocked in foreign banks by some ministers, commissioners of education, vice-chancellors through money laundering are used by those nations for developmental purposes and taking care of their people, while the official who loot the money met for the educational development owe staff in their countries four to six months' areas of salaries allowances. He reasoned that this is man's inhumanity to man.

3.8 Poor Image of Public Universities in international communities

Ololube, (2016) submits that the mismanagement of funds meant for Nigerian institutions of higher learning has thrown Nigeria in a bad light. They grossly mismanaged the little funds appropriated to these institutions. Since Nigerian institutional leaders mismanage their funds, it bound the quality of higher education to deteriorate. This was supported by Asiyai, (2015) who revealed that corruption in public universities has resulted poor image of Nigeria at the international scene. Corruption practices have done more harm to the educational institutions. Corruption within the educational institutions has created a bad image for the Nigerian educational institutions. It is also responsible for the poor quality of education because funds meant for development of facilities that supposed to have improved the quality of education have been diverted (Ogunode & Isaac, 2021).



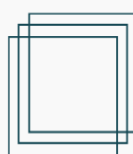
Way Forward

To address this problem of corruption in Nigeria universities, the following have been recommended:

- a) Government should appoint corrupt free administrators to head the various universities in the country. The government should give administrators target to fight all forms of corruption in the system,
- b) School administrators should engage the services of Counsellors in the universities to organize seminars/symposia and workshops to enlighten the university community on good moral and ethical standards that help to prevent academic corruption especially based on examination ethics once in a semester, using orientation programmes.
- a) The school administrators should prepare and read riot act to all the teaching and non-teaching staff in the universities.
- b) Technologies should be deployed to carry out financial transaction in all the universities in the country
- c) Every financial dealing that amount to millions must be disclosed to the stakeholders in the universities
- d) The ASSU and SUG should establish financial monitoring and evaluation committee in the universities to help check corruption
- e) The anti-corruption agencies in the Country should establish their presence in all the universities silently to monitoring financial dealing of the institutions
- f) The government ensures regular auditing of all the universities quarterly
- g) To curtail the problem of sex for mark, universities should stopped lecturers from marking their scripts. All universities should centralized script marking. A department within the university should handle the marling of scripts by adopting a waces model, where an interested individual will be invited to mark the scripts in the universities.
- h) The school administrator should introduce a system in all the universities that will allow students to assess lecturers every semester.

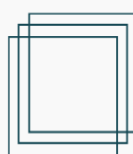
Conclusion

In conclusion, no any meaningful development can take place in the educational institutions, especially the universities, under the system of corruption practices. Corruption can destroy the educational institutions if not fought violently. So, the government and the school administrators should deploy human and materials resources to fight all forms of corruption in the university's system.

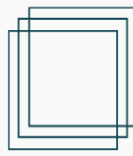


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