

CORRUPTION AS A DETERMINING FACTOR IN THE PROVISION OF FUNDS AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED TEACHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENUE SOUTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated corruption as a determining factor in the provision of funds and retention of teachers in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District of Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to establish the impact of corruption on the provision of funds and retention of qualified teachers in secondary schools. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were formulated and tested. Survey design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 2,895 teachers in 178 secondary schools in the area of study, 435 or 15% from 27 secondary schools were sampled using proportionate stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques. A-10 item researchers' structured questionnaire titled "Impact of Corruption on the Provision of Funds and Retention of Qualified Teachers' Questionnaire (ICPFRQTQ)" was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was measured using Cronbach Alpha. It yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.926 which indicated high internal consistency. Mean and Standard Deviations were used to answer the research questions, while the Chi-Square test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings are that corruption has significant negative impact on the provision of funds and retention of teachers' in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District of Nigeria. The study therefore, concluded that if these practices continue unabated, the entire standard of education system in Nigeria will reduce drastically. This will also tarnish the image of Nigeria as a nation. Based on the findings, it was recommended among other things that Parent Teachers' Associations in collaboration with the school management across Nigeria should set up formidable monitoring teams that would ensure all projects allocated to the schools are executed properly and according to specifications to avoid diversion of resources meant for the development of schools.

Key Words: Corruption, Funds & Retention

Introduction

Nigeria is one of the developing countries in Africa that is endowed with abundant human and material resources capable of making her the greatest nation in the world. However, the current state of dishonesty and cheating seem to have crippled individuals, governments and international organizations' efforts and capacity to invest in the people and provide for the realization of their basic human rights. These practices are common and seem to exist at local, national and international levels and at any level of their existence, they seem to have devastating and disabling potentials to infest and reconfigure the psyche of those entrusted with the day to day affairs of the state (Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017).

Iyanda (2012) defines corruption from the economic perspectives as the non-violent criminal and illicit activity committed with the objectives of earning wealth illegally either individually or in a group or organized manner thereby violating existing legislation governing the economic activities of an institution, an organized body or a state. Obi (2004) defined corruption as an incentive offered to entice or encourage someone to break the rules of the organization to which s/he normally represents and delivers an unfairly favourable outcome. Pinga and Ahua (2018) see corruption as the abuse of public power for private gains. Pinga and Ahua, further explains that bribery, misappropriation of public resources, nepotism and influencing the formulation of laws or regulations for private gains are examples of corruption everywhere in the world.

Corruption by its nature is universal and does not restrict itself to borders or geographical territories (Okoye, 2013). In the same vein, the author notes that corruption does not restrict itself to a particular political regime. Corruption is also not restricted to a particular sector of the economy. Corruption and corrupt practices are common denominators that developed, developing and under-developed countries share in common. In all these countries, individuals and institutions that perpetuate corruption and corrupt practices intentionally and willingly do so as they on their own create a window of opportunities that promote and make corruption possible (Okoye, 2013). In a way, perpetrators of corruption and corrupt practices take exceptional interests in grabbing resources to themselves, in addition to being least committed to the ideals of social justice and human rights in their states. What this implies is that in states where corruption and corrupt practices flourish, priority and conscious efforts to focus on the welfare policies for the people are usually not a priority of the state. This is because available resources for initiating welfare policies are diverted by a given minority who hold the majority hostage.

Corruption in education sector shares similar characteristics with those of other public sectors (Hallak & Poisson, 2002). This covers a wide range of activities, such as clientelism, soliciting, bribes, nepotism and theft of public goods, among others. This definition has two important elements: it establishes a link between the identification of corrupt behaviour and its effects and insists upon the factor of regularity involved, by saying that corruption can be presented as the use of public funds/office for personal gains that affects the results and outcome of public goods and services. When applied to the field of education, this may lead to the following definition of corruption: the use of public funds and office for personal gains whose impact is significant on access, quality and equity in education.

Some of the definitions of corruption are distinct between petty (already defined above) and grand corruption which is the domain of high-level public officials and politicians who make decisions involving large public contracts or projects (Hallak & Poisson, 2002). Applying this definition in the field of education would mean distinguishing between those civil servants who, because of their strategic position in the management of the education sector, may be involved in grand corruption (particular attention could be paid to those who are in contact with foreign aid, where the amounts of money concerned could encourage corrupt behaviour); and those who, because of their limited influence on the management of the education system and more specifically on its resources (such as teachers) may be involved only in petty (school level) corruption. Ademoye (2012) adds that corruption in education is not a recent phenomenon.

Among the many factors leading to corrupt behaviour is greed; this supports the rational choice theory which states that individuals are fundamentally egoistic and self-seeking and can only enter into a relationship or transaction based on a rational calculation of benefits and costs. The theory adds that individuals act to benefit themselves and not society *per se*. From this perspective, public servants work to advance their interests through a myriad of ways such as forging documents, underestimation and overestimation of budgetary figures, taking bribes or stealing from the state coffers. The central idea of the rational choice theory depicts that social interaction is an economic transaction that is guided in its course by the actors' rational choices based on rigorous calculus approach; people who subscribe to neo-classical economic theory and its rational derivatives are selfish and greedy or operate at least exclusively self-interested. This theory applies to the behaviour of individuals who use their offices, authority and power to advance their interests. The theory explains why some public officials abuse the public trust by engaging in corrupt practices that undermine the efforts of overall national growth and development.

The second reason is societal pressure; this is the pressure that society exerts on its members. It is one of the reasons individuals are disposed to engage in anti-social and/or illegal behaviours. This is related to the Anomie theory which argues that society sets goals for groups and individuals and the same society prescribes the means of attaining these goals. There are individuals whose means are not enough to attain the goals set for them by society as a result of poverty and low wages. This leads them to corrupt and unethical behaviour. Existing literature shows that corruption also has connections with the stability of political systems, the existing legal frameworks, the transparency of public information, the level of accountability of individuals and institutions, the efficiency of the mechanisms of governance and the importance and characteristics of foreign aid.

It has been observed in the administration of the educational system over the years that misappropriation and embezzlement of all sorts have affected the provision of funds, recruitment and retention of teachers, provision and maintenance of infrastructural facilities, instructional materials and many other aspects of secondary school administration.

Corrupt practices confronting many countries, Nigeria inclusive, is creating severe conflicts in the educational sector of many nations. This has resulted in a shortfall in budgetary allocation to education and other sectors of the economy. The state of corruption in Nigeria seems to have influenced the way cash flows in the country; and by extension in institutions of learning (Duze, 2017). Reuben (2005) noted that policy-makers, principals, teachers and other administrators of education contribute to corruption by first allocating funds based on favouritism and secondly, by diverting funds meant for the running of

institutions to their gains. For instance, at the national level, policymakers who are in charge of disbursing funds to various states and schools in some cases only disburse such materials on pages of paper and such funds never get to see the state and schools allocated. At the school level, school fees, Parent Teachers' Association levies, development levies, furniture levies among others are always being collected in schools but misappropriated or diverted into the pockets of a few persons who are in charge of collecting and managing such funds (Owoicho, 2021). In addition, it is observed that principals and head-teachers are fond of falsifying data to attract government attention to allocate resources to their schools. These in turn are diverted for their personal use. It is also common to see state governments falsifying data on the number of teachers employed just to increase the salary wage bill to enable them to divert the remaining funds for their usage (Pinga & Ahua, 2018).

Today, developing nations such as Nigeria receive a lot of support from developed nations such as the USA, UK, Canada, Germany and Netherlands. These funds come from philanthropy, government aids, subvention and corporate sector support. These organizations, governments and foundations are likely to withdraw these supports due to the level of insincerity and embezzlement of funds meant for public use. This may lead to a drastic reduction or outright withdrawal of their sponsors of educational development programmes (Neligan & Cruise, 2011). Some foundations such as The Gates Foundation and Mac Arthur Foundations have announced the intention to withdraw their funding since 2009. The effect will be witnessed in dilapidated infrastructure in our public schools, lack of and inadequate supply of equipment and financial support for capacity building for the staff may be withdrawn. Smith (2012) reports that most times, school administrators divert funds meant for repair and replacement because there is no proper monitoring and evaluation of such funds. This has crippled the quality of education offered with such facilities. Sani (2016) adds that foreign investors in education have been discouraged from contributing their quarter to the development of education as their efforts are also misused by those in power. Every essential aspect of school administration seems to have been affected today as funds are not allocated evenly to the various strata of school management.

Every school requires money for its effective human resource administration, particularly in the area of recruitment and retention of staff. Agencies need finance to recruit, pay salaries and other allowances to motivate staffs to stay on their job. Onyenchu (2006) notes that no organization functions effectively without funds to provide for the needs of the staff. Unfortunately, funds allocated to education in Benue State are grossly inadequate and this affects the recruitment and payment of qualified and experienced teachers which thereby, leads to most teachers leaving the profession. In a situation where there is no money for payment of teachers' salaries, purchase of equipment, books, furniture and other facilities, teachers are not motivated to perform their duties effectively.

In Nigeria, most secondary schools recruit the services from both professionally and academically qualified teachers to help execute the instructional process as a result of the government's inability to retain needed teachers. Ololube (2006) maintain that academically qualified teachers are those who have academic training from educational institutions by obtaining qualifications such as HND, B.SC, B.A, M.SC and so on. Professionally qualified teachers are those who get professional training for professional knowledge, skills, techniques in education. They hold, for example, Grade II, NCE, B.ED, M.ED, and so on.

Terfa (2013) observes that looting public funds allocated to the educational sector has created inadequacy in all ramifications, ranging from employment to payment of

teachers salaries and allowances, teachers' capacity development, provision of instructional materials and infrastructural facilities to enable the teachers perform efficiently. Terfa adds that, because of mismanagement of school funds, school management most often prefer to work with a fewer number of teachers or mostly employ unqualified teachers who will accept lower salaries.

Embezzlement of funds in our educational system today has an adverse influence on the management of secondary schools as rightly posited by Maduabum (1990), that many trained teachers have abandoned the teaching profession for untrained hands who come in as the last resort for their unsuccessful search for other jobs. This is caused by the misappropriation and diversion of funds by school administrators who out of greed loot the little funds allocated for the management of schools to provide comfort for those involved in the process of imparting knowledge. This situation has created the impression of the teaching profession as an occupation for drop-outs. The entry of all kinds of people or unqualified persons into the teaching job is a result of poor planning and this has produced undesirable consequences for the profession and has helped to reduce the prestige, reward and job satisfaction of teachers. It has also caused brain drain and has made teaching a place for amateurs (Ciwar, 2003).

From the foregoing, one can notice the importance of proper management of the allocated funds in the teaching and learning process at the secondary school level of education, making it imperative for the appropriate bodies or authorities to embark on acquiring and retaining the service of professionally qualified teachers. It is also important to note that the administrators of secondary education cannot embark on the employment and retention of qualified teachers without adequate funds. Going by the above background, one can argue that provision of funds and retention of teachers may have been adversely affected by corruption or mismanagement of the available resources. The above phenomenon seems to be the present situation in most secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District which prompted the research. It is against this background that the researchers, therefore, investigated the impact of corruption on the provision and retention of teachers in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.

Statement of the Problem

Looting of educational funds seems to be a common practice condoned at all levels of education as it seems to be a common feature of those governing to loot funds allocated for educational development, capacity building, infrastructural development, modernization and rehabilitation of public secondary schools. There are instances where politicians at the federal level influence the allocation of resources to their states, local governments and areas that do not need such funds to the detriment of those who are in need but do not have people to influence things in their favour.

In most cases, teachers are not recruited on the basics of the qualifications, but by their connections and what they can offer in return for such appointments. Worst of all, teachers are not properly taken care of, and this has made many qualified teachers leave the job for greener pastures, thereby leaving the sector for the amateur and non-professionals which has reduced the quality of education in Benue South Senatorial District.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of corruption on the provision of funds and retention of qualified teachers in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District of Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. find out the impact of corruption on the provision of funds in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District of Nigeria.
2. establish the impact of corruption on the retention of qualified teachers in secondary schools.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of corruption on the provision of funds in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District of Nigeria?
2. What impact does corruption has on retention of qualified teachers in secondary schools?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Corruption has no significant negative impact on the provision of funds in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District of Nigeria.
2. Corruption has no significant negative impact on retention of qualified teachers in secondary schools.

Research Method

The study adopted the survey design. The population comprised 2,895 teachers from 178 secondary schools (Ministry of Education, 2019). A sample of 435 teachers representing 15% was selected using proportionate stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques. This sample is considered adequate since it is in line with Glass and Hopkin (1994) in Alanana (2014) who asserts that 5% to 15% sample is ideal for a population of 1000 or more.

A researcher-structured questionnaire titled: Impact of Corruption on the Provision of Funds and Retention of Qualified Teachers' Questionnaire (ICPFRQTQ) was used for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into Sections A and B. Section A contained items on the personal data of the respondents, while Section B was divided into two Clusters - I and II. Cluster I contained items 1-5 that focused on the impact of corruption on the provision of funds in secondary schools. Cluster II contained items 6-10 on impact of corruption on retention of qualified teachers in secondary schools. Responses were based on a 4-point rating scale with the response modes of Strongly Agree (SA)= 4, Agree (A)=3, Disagree (D)=2 and Strongly Disagree (SD)=1.

The data collected were analyzed using Mean Scores and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions. Any item with less than 2.50 was rejected as having no impact. On the other hand, it was agreed if it was 2.50 and above. Chi-square test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The results are analysed and interpreted in line with the research questions and hypotheses as follows:

Research Question One: What is the impact of corruption on the provision of funds in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District of Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of the Impact of Corruption on the Provision of Funds in Secondary Schools

Item No	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	X	Std	Decision
1	Politicians at the federal government level influence the allocation of funds to states of their choice.	99	152	79	70	2.70	1.03	Agreed
2	The little available funds in the school are misappropriated by the school heads.	89	179	99	33	2.81	0.88	Agreed
3	Funds generated at the school level are hardly accounted for by officers in charge of such funds.	141	186	35	38	3.08	0.90	Agreed
4	School administrators do used the funds allocated for the provision of school materials for their personal gains and ends up providing substandard products for the school.	111	177	76	36	2.91	0.91	Agreed
5	Funds provided by international organizations to assist the development of education in Nigeria are diverted for private gains.	138	148	35	79	2.86	1.18	Agreed
Cluster Mean						2.87		Agreed

Table 1 shows that all the mean ratings were above 2.50 mean score. This means that the respondents agreed that politicians at the Federal Government level influence the allocation of funds to states of their choice and that the little funds available at the school are misappropriated by the school heads. They also agreed that funds generated at the school level are hardly accounted for by officers in charge of such funds. Moreover, school administrators' use the funds allocated for the provision of school materials for their personal gains and ends up providing substandard products for the school; and that funds

provided by international organizations to assist the development of education in Nigeria are diverted for private gains. The cluster mean of 2.87 was found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that corruption has impact on the provision of funds in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.

Research Question Two: What impact does corruption has on the retention of qualified teachers in secondary schools?

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of the Impact of Corruption on the Retention of Qualified Teachers in Secondary Schools

Item No	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	X	Std	Decision
6	Embezzlement of school funds has adverse impact on the regular payment of teachers' salary in secondary schools.	123	166	47	64	2.87	1.03	Agreed
7	Mismanagement of funds has impact on the payment of teachers allowance in secondary schools.	90	154	100	56	2.70	0.97	Agreed
8	Diversion of school funds impacted the promotion of teachers in secondary schools.	63	200	112	25	2.75	0.79	Agreed
9	Misappropriation of school funds affects the organisation of training programmes for teachers in secondary schools.	164	166	36	34	3.15	0.91	Agreed
10	Embezzlement of school resources has a devastating impact on the turn-over of teachers in secondary schools.	120	190	41	49	2.95	0.95	Agreed
Cluster Mean						2.88		Agreed

Table 2 shows that all the mean ratings are above 2.50 mean score. This means that the respondents agreed that embezzlement of school funds has adverse impact on the regular payment of teachers' salary in secondary schools and that mismanagement of funds has impact on the payment of teachers allowance in secondary schools. Also that diversion of school funds impacted the promotion of teachers in secondary schools. More so, misappropriation of school funds affects the organisation of training programmes for

teachers in secondary schools and that embezzlement of school resources has a devastating impact on the turn-over of teachers in secondary schools. The cluster mean of 2.88 was also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. This is an indication that corruption has impact on the retention of qualified teachers in secondary schools.

Hypothesis One: Corruption has no significant negative impact on the provision of funds in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District of Nigeria.

Table 3: Chi-Square Test of Impact of Corruption on the Provision of Funds in Secondary Schools

Response	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	df	Level of sig	χ^2 -cal	P-value	Decision
SD	62	100					
D	87	100	3	0.05	40.46	.000	Significant
A	154	100					
SA	97	100					
Total	400						

Table 3 shows that χ^2 -cal. = 40.460^a; P<.05 with 3 degrees of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that corruption has no significant negative impact on the provision of funds in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District was therefore rejected. This means that corruption has significant negative impact on the provision of funds in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.

Hypothesis Two: Corruption has no significant negative impact on retention of qualified teachers in secondary schools.

Table 4: Chi-Square Test of the Impact of Corruption on the Retention of Qualified Teachers in Secondary Schools

Responses	Observed frequency	Expected Frequency	df	Level of sig	χ^2 -cal	P-value	Decision
SD	69	100					
D	42	100	3	0.05	89.90	.000	Significant
A	117	100					
SA	172	100					
Total	400						

Table 4 shows that χ^2 -cal. = 89.900^a; $P < .05$ with 3 degrees of freedom. This shows that the null hypothesis which stated that corruption has no significant negative impact on the retention of qualified teachers in secondary schools was rejected. The implication is that corruption has significant negative impact on the retention of qualified teachers in secondary schools.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of this study reveals that corruption has significant negative impact on the provision of funds in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District. This finding is in consonance with Oguiche (2007) who reports that corruption has significant impact on financing system in secondary schools. The study further reveals that favouritism also has impacted the level of finance allocated to schools; and that most facilities are abandoned because money meant for their completion is embezzled. It is also similar to Abu (2014)'s finding that politicians at the federal level influence the allocation of resources to their states or areas of interest and this may be against the interest of the populace and the federal character commission in the even allocation and distribution of resources according to population and areas of need. Obi (2014) also reported that politics has made government officers to allocate funds inappropriately thereby favouring other institutions to the detriment of others. This finding is also in line with that of Reuben (2005) who reported that policy-makers, principals, teachers and other administrators of education contribute to corruption by allocating funds based on political reasons and also divert such funds meant for the running of schools for their private use. This is seen at the national level where policymakers who are in charge of disbursing funds to various states, local governments and schools in some cases only disburse such funds on pages of papers and they never get to see the state, local government and schools allocated to. In addition, Owoicho (2021) also reported that at the school level, school fees, Parent Teachers' Association levies, development levies, furniture levies among others are always being collected in schools but misappropriated or diverted into the pockets of a few persons who are in charge of collecting and managing such funds. The researchers discovered during their fieldwork that due to corrupt practices in our system, funds are most times over allocated to states, local governments and areas that do not need such funds at that moment to the detriment of those who are in dire need but do not have people to influence things in their favour. This has created inequality in our educational system as most areas do not have the needed funds and facilities to accommodate the number of students coming in for enrolment.

The second and last finding of this study reveals that corruption has significant negative impact on the retention of qualified teachers in secondary schools. This finding is in agreement with that of Abu (1996) who found that government non-payment of staff entitlements significantly leads to brain drain in education sector. Similarly, Terfa (2003) observes that looting of public funds allocated to the educational sector has created inadequacy in all ramifications, ranging from employment to payment of teachers salaries and allowances, teachers development, provision of instructional materials and infrastructural facilities to enable the teachers perform efficiently. Terfa, stated further that, because of mismanagement of school funds, school management most often prefer to work with fewer number of teachers or mostly employ unqualified teachers who will accept lower

salaries. The implication of this finding is that the non-motivational environment created in the education sector has discouraged the retention of most qualified teachers thereby creating a vacuum in the sector that only time can heal.

Conclusion

The little allocated funds in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District are misappropriated by officials in charge of such funds. This is evident in the non-completion of projects that have long been completed on paper and payment made in respect to such contracts. Today, principals have misappropriated funds allocated to their schools by either providing substandard materials or not providing at all. Corruption in education has threatened Nigeria's citizens' equal access to education which has a negative impact on the less privileged people in Benue South Senatorial District. If these practices continue unchecked, not only the image of the country would be tarnished but the entire education system will go down the drain.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that:

1. Parent Teachers' Associations in collaboration with the school management should set up formidable monitoring teams that will ensure all projects allocated to the schools are executed properly and according to specifications to avoid diversion of funds and other school resources meant for the development of schools in Benue South Senatorial District.
2. Government should ensure that salaries and allowances of teachers are paid promptly and also provide incentives that will entice teachers to stay on the job and do their best to enhance the quality of education in Nigeria.

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