CORRUPTION AND MANAGEMENT OF HIGHER INSTITUTIONS IN BENUE STATE

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Abstract

This paper investigated corruption and management of higher institutions in Benue State. Two research questions were raised and two hypotheses were formulated and tested for the study. The design of the study was a descriptive survey research design. The population of this study consisted of all the academic and administrative staff in six public higher institutions in Benue State. Judgment random sampling technique was used to sample 180 respondents from the 6 public higher institutions in Benue State. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire which consisted of 10 items duly validated by experts in educational management in Benue State University, Makurdi. A reliability of 0.89 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha statistic. Data collected were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation to answer research questions with a mean score cut-off point of 2.50. Chi-square (X^2) was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study concluded that administrative and academic corruption has significant impact on management of higher institutions in Benue State. The paper therefore recommended among others that higher education institution in Benue State in particular and Nigeria at large should establish anti-corruption units to help check mate corrupt practices among students and staff. This will go a long way in curtailing administrative and academic corruption in higher institutions of learning. Appropriate penalties should be given to those found involved in administrative and academic corrupt practices in higher institutions. This would serve as deterrent to others thereby dissociating themselves from such unlawful act for effective and smooth management of higher institutions and that higher education institutions administrators and staff unions should prevail on government to release enough fund to the system in order stop the collection of bribes from various sources.

Keywords: Corruption, management, higher institutions

Introduction

Education strengthens personal integrity and shapes the societies in which we live. However, since education typically usually gulps between 20 to 30% of a Nigeria's budget, it is critically prone to corruption, from the Ministries of education to Basic Schools and Universities (Amini-Philips & Ugbuagwu, 2017). According to the Global Corruption Report (2013) compiled by Transparency International, education sheds light on the many shapes and forms that corruption in education can take. It shows that, in all cases, corruption in education acts as a dangerous barrier to high-quality education, social and economic development. Corruption jeopardizes the academic benefits of higher education institutions and may even lead to the reputational collapse of a country's entire higher education system.

The existence of corruption in the nations of the world including higher education is indisputable. Amini-Philip and Ogbuagwu (2017) state that, in recent times, this malady has assumed a household word in our nation and its prevalence is assuming a worrisome dimension. Corruption, according to Mohammed (2013), is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon with multiple causes and effects, as it takes on various forms and contexts. However, the World Bank (2010) sees the term as unjustly using public office for selfish gains, this is seen when officials receive, solicit or extort money or material things. It is also abused when private agents actively connive to offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit. Besides, people also misuse public offices without necessarily taking bribe but when such offices are used for personal profit, nepotism, stealing of government assets or diversion of state resources that are supposed to be used for the execution or completion of projects (Mezieobi, 2010). Corruption can also be seen as the misuse of authority, power or trust for personal benefits and is a temptation indulged in not only by public officials, but also by others holding trusted position, by not-for-profit or private enterprises or organizations (Edinyang & Usang, 2012). This implies that when an individual in authority deviates from carrying out his duties which he swore by oaths of office and allegiance and engages in acts which solely benefit him, he is said to be corrupt.

Corruption tends to be dragging the higher education system in the country to public ridicule. Corruption in higher education distorts the efficiency and quality output of the system (Okojie, 2012). In addition, Okojie maintains that corruption had assumed a worrisome level in Nigerian university system and being an integral part of the society, could not be insulated from the menace. Corruption kills innovation, creativity, compromises public morality, contaminates individual and collective dignity and distorts the dignity of labour (Yomere, 2010). Corruption is an issue that seems to threaten the management of higher education in Nigeria in its various forms and content both in administrative and academic realms. According to Uchendu and Akwuegwu (2016) Management is the coordination of people's effort for the purpose of accomplishing goals and objectives by using available resources effectively and efficiently. Resources in higher education encompass human, material, technological and finance which are supposed to be deployed and manipulated for far reaching organizational outcomes. However, when these resources are siphoned, embezzled or misused and when the human resources in the higher education involves in various forms of unwanted or unlawful behavior for the sake of private gains it may become difficult in reaching the goal of higher education through effective management.

Corruption in higher education institutions in Nigeria seems to permeate every aspect – students, lecturers, non-teaching staff and the administration of the institutions. Corroborating the above assertion, Yomere (2010:8) observes that "there is now a crisis of ethical standards of major proportions in our citadels of higher learning". Corruption in higher education may take multiple forms in all areas of the system. Orkodashvili (2010) provides an overview of the categories of corruption in higher education and distinguished between corruption in selection, corruption in accreditation, corruption in procurement, professional misconduct, and corruption in educational property and taxes. However, this study has specifically categorized corruption and has distinguished between two different acts of corruption in higher education. These are the administrative and academic corruptions.

In the management of higher education, a set of rules and regulations exist that set a framework for permitted administrative activities in higher institutions. According to Seniwoliba and Boahene (2015) any administrative act in breach of the rules and regulations that designed for private gain would be deemed as an example of administrative corruption. Corruption in any society, institution or country is relative and is defined according to the value system. World Bank and Transparency International define administrative corruption as follows: "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain or for family relations and interests" (Jalilkhani, 2010:13). Administrative corruption is the abuse of roles, powers, or resources found within public bureaucracies. It may be initiated by line or staff officials, their superiors, or the agency clients. The latter will usually be private parties (for example, applicants for admission), but particularly in large and centralized institutions; clients might also be individuals or institutions from elsewhere in the public sector.

Administrative corruption in higher education according to Atalas (2016) can occur through offering admissions, procurement scam, recruitment, promotions, appointment and exercise of bureaucratic power. The Transparency International report highlights illicit payments for admission of students to degree programmes, tribalism and nepotism in recruitment to tenured positions, and bribery in on-campus accommodation and grading (Kigotho, 2013). Badie, Berg-Schlosser, Morlino (2011) also noted that paying a bribe especially in order to gain admission to a degree programme of choice has been on the increase in most universities in the region. There is also corruption in accreditation of programmes by accrediting bodies. When members of accrediting panels are bribed, criteria are by-passed and reports are written to favour the department or institution (Ololube, 2016). Corruption also manifests in cases of misappropriation and misapplication of money meant for capital projects (Uzochukwu 2015). Annually, the Federal Government gives grants to all institutions of higher studies through their management agencies for capital projects – National Universities Commission (NUC) for Universities, National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) for Polytechnics, and National Council for Colleges of Education (NCCE) for Colleges of Education. Unfortunately, sometimes such funds are stolen or diverted to other projects or completely misappropriated. The result of this as noted by Ololube (2016), is the declining quality of Nigerian higher education.

Administrative corruption goes beyond giving and taking bribes. In addition to economic crimes, many forms of unlawful and improper conduct seem to negatively affect higher education development. According to Seniwoliba and Boahene (2015) this is due to management's failure to obey the law, wastage/mismanagement of public resources or using them for purposes other than what they were intended for, undermining the administration

of justice, destroying the environment and engaging in actions which threaten or endanger the safety of individuals and the public. These issues are more of management's roles they play in terms of corruption other than generalizing them as administrative corruption. These can be regarded as management failures or support for corrupt practices that seems to have engulfed higher education in Nigeria and Benue State in particular.

Another dimension of corruption in higher education is academic corruption. Academic corruption encompasses and is done through undue influence in research, plagiarism, ghost authorship of academic papers, fraud (academic dishonesty), cheating, favouritism, leaking examination papers and other such behavior (Seniwoliba & Boahene, 2015). It may occur at institutional and systemic levels as well as the individual level. Torulagha (2013:6) stated that ''there is a relationship between corruption and the poor state of academic standards'' that exist in Nigerian universities today. Torulagha noted that students who are from well-to-do homes do not have to be present at lectures to obtain high grades. Nkang (2012) warned that students should desist from forming themselves into "lecturers' boys" who act as agents to extort money from innocent students for lecturers' use who eventually give them a percentage of the total collection.

With this trend of corrupt practices, the impact may be negative both on higher education and students. Kigotho (2013) states that since 1990s, academic corruption has had a negative impact on nearly every aspect of the Ghanaian Educational System. Commenting on the situation in Nigeria, a senior lecturer at Redeemer's University highlighted that whereas rules for academic promotion are clear, there is a divide between the rules and practices of advancement in academia. "Academics who are loyal to the vice-chancellor are likely to be promoted regardless of merit," said Omotola, who has taught in several public and private universities in Nigeria (Kigotho, 2013:23). At the international level, academic corruption has become a prominent issue in higher education; some argue that the world is witnessing a dramatic increase in the phenomenon (Poisson, 2007).

There have been numerous instances of academic corruption reported in countries from the US to Russia, from India to Italy and from Nigeria to Georgia (Orkodashvili, 2010). The Higher Education Corruption Monitor (HECM) (HECM, 2005) reports as noted by Orkodashvili (2010) academic corruption can be found in both developed and developing countries, but is especially prevalent in nations whose higher education systems are under severe pressure resulting from economic hardship, or have little external supervision and inadequate quality assurance mechanisms, and also in countries where societal corruption is pervasive. These features are more often found in developing countries, thus highlighting the critical need to address academic corruption in the process of management of higher education in Nigeria. The report purported that all these forms of corruption could be manifested through bribery, nepotism, extortion, kickbacks, breach of trust and dishonest behaviour. There is a clear distinction between student–administrator exchanges of any form of breach of norms that sets aside the cases of corruption mediated by administrators as opposed to those initiated by professors or staff members (Orkodashvili, 2010). All these issues and deep rooted nature of corruption have made stakeholders concerned in higher education in Benue State to wonder what impact corruption has on the management of higher education in Benue, thus the need for this study.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed by the researcher and stakeholders of higher education in Benue State such as administrators, academic and non academic staff, students and parents that the phenomenon of corruption seems to contaminate and threaten the management of higher education in Nigeria especially in Benue State. Several newspaper reports indicted the education sector especially the higher education of corrupt practices. Corrupt practices seem to engulf higher education in Benue State both in administrative and academic dimensions. Observations show that administrative corruption has threaten the management of higher education such that administrators and those in position of authority involve in wastage and mismanagement of higher education resources, there are also cases of paying/collecting money for admission, payment of money to secure accommodation, tribalism/nepotism in recruitment, promotion and appointments.

The academic dimension of management of higher education also seems to experience undue influence in research such that, there are experiences of plagiarism, ghost authorship of academic papers, fraud (academic dishonesty) cheating, leaking examination papers, paying money to secure scores and grades among others. All these seem to pose a great challenge to effective management of higher education in Benue State and it has become a source of worry as to what impact has corruption on the management of higher education in Benue State. However, providing quality higher education needs a corrupt free higher education system. Therefore, the problem of this paper put in question form is: What is the impact of corruption on the management of higher education in Benue State?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the impact of corruption on the management of higher institutions in Benue State. The paper specifically sought to:
1. ascertain the impact of administrative corruption on the management of higher institutions in Benue State.
2. examine the impact of academic corruption on the management of higher institutions.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:
1. What is the impact of administrative corruption on the management of higher institutions in Benue State?
2. What is the impact of academic corruption on the management of higher institutions?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:
1. There is no significant impact of administrative corruption on the management of higher institutions in Benue State.
2. There is no significant impact of academic corruption on the management of higher institutions.

Research Method

This study adopted survey research designed. The population of the study consisted of all the administrative and academic staff of six public higher institutions in Benue State. A total of 180 respondents were randomly selected from six public higher institutions in Benue

State using judgmental random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was researcher's constructed questionnaire titled "Corruption and Management of Higher Institutions Questionnaire (CMHIQ)" and was validated for and content validity by experts in educational management in Benue State University, Makurdi. The questionnaire was trial tested on 30 respondents (5 each) in six public higher institutions in Benue State who were not part of population and the Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded a coefficient of 0.89.

Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. A 4-point rating scale was used to score the responses as Strongly Agree (SA)=4, Agree (A)=3, Disagree (D)=2 and Strongly Disagree (SD)=1. The implication of the rating scale showed that an item that has a mean that is greater than the cut-off point of 2.50 is considered agree while the one that is below the cut-off point is not. The hypotheses were tested using chi-square at .05 level of significance.

Results
Research Question 1: What is the impact of administrative corruption on the management of higher institutions in Benue State?

Table 1: Mean ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on the Impact of Administrative Corruption on the Management of Higher Institutions in Benue State

Item No.	Item Description	N	$\bar{X}$	St.D	Remark
1	Money meant for capital projects is misappropriated in higher institutions.	180	3.01	1.12	Agree
2	Candidates' admissions are bribed undermining merit syndrome.	180	3.07	1.06	Agree
3	Gratifications are paid to secure promotions in higher institutions.	180	3.26	1.02	Agree
4	Campus accommodations are offered based on favouritism.	180	3.07	1.06	Agree
5	Staff recruitment into vacant positions is sometimes secured through payment of money.	180	3.16	.99	Agree
	Cluster Mean Score and Standard Deviation		**3.11**	**1.05**	**Agree**

Table 1 shows that items 1-5 have mean scores (and standard deviations) of 3.01 (1.12), 3.07 (1.06), 3.26 (1.02), 3.07 (1.06) and 3.16 (.99) respectively. This analysis shows the respondents agree that money meant for capital projects are misappropriated in higher institutions, candidates' admissions are bribed undermining merit syndrome. The respondents further agree that gratifications are paid to secure promotions in higher institutions, campus accommodations are offered based on favouritism and staff recruitment into vacant positions are sometimes secured through payment of money. This shows the impact of administrative corruption on the management of higher institutions. The cluster mean score of 3.11 which is high above the cut-off point of 2.50 implies that, administrative corruption impact on the management of higher institutions in Benue State.

Research Question 2: What is the impact of academic corruption on the management of higher institutions?

Table 2: Mean ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on the Impact of Academic Corruption on the Management of Higher Institutions in Benue State

Item No.	Item Description	N	$\bar{X}$	St.D	Remark
6	Students pay money to secure good grades.	180	3.26	1.06	Agree
7	Lecturers indulge in false authorship of academic papers.	180	3.28	.98	Agree
8	Accreditation officials are bribed with gifts to obtain pass mark for accreditation of courses.	180	3.14	1.20	Agree
9	There is leakage of examination questions papers.	180	3.21	1.02	Agree
10	Sometimes lecturers do not attend lectures when it is their period.	180	3.17	1.05	Agree
	Cluster Mean Score and Standard Deviation		**3.21**	**1.06**	**Agree**

Table 2 shows that items 6-10 have mean scores (and standard deviations) of 3.26 (1.06), 3.28 (.98), 3.14 (1.20), 3.21 (1.02) and 3.17 (1.05) respectively. This analysis shows that students pay money to secure good grades, lecturers indulge in false authorship of academic papers and accreditation officials are bribed with gifts to obtain pass mark for accreditation of courses. The respondents were agreed that there is leakage of examination questions papers and that sometimes lecturers do not attend lectures when it is their period. This shows the impact of academic corruption on the management of higher institutions. The cluster mean score of 3.21 which is high above the cut-off point of 2.50 implies that, academic corruption impact on the management of higher institutions in Benue State.

Hypothesis 1
There is no significant impact of administrative corruption on the management of higher institutions in Benue State.

Table 3: Chi-Square Analysis on Significant Impact of Administrative Corruption on the Management of Higher Institutions in Benue State

Items	Fo	Fe	x^2 Cal.	x^2 Crit.	Df	Level of Sign.	*Decision*
SD	18	45.0					
D	21	45.0	107.778[a]	7.82	3	0.05	Sign.
A	37	45.0					
SA	104	45.0					

Total	180

Table 3 shows that x^2 cal. (3) = 107.778[a]> 7.82; *P<.05*. With this result, the null hypothesis was not accepted. This implies that, administrative corruption has significant impact on the management of higher institutions in Benue State.

Hypothesis 2
There is no significant impact of academic corruption on the management of higher institutions in Benue State.

Table 4: Chi-Square Analysis on Significant Impact of Academic Corruption on the Management of Higher Institutions

Items	Fo	Fe	x^2 Cal.	x^2 Crit.	Df	Level of Sign.	*Decision*
SD	23	45.0					
D	13	45.0	73.422[a]	7.82	3	0.05	Sign.
A	59	45.0					
SA	85	45.0					
Total	180						

Table 4 shows that x^2 cal. (3) = 73.422[a]> 7.82; *P<.05*. With this result, the null hypothesis was not accepted. This means that, academic corruption has significant impact on the management of higher institutions in Benue State.

Discussion of Findings
The first finding showed that administrative corruption has significant impact on the management of higher institutions in Benue State. The finding agreed with Kigotho (2013) who said the Transparency International report highlights illicit payments for admission of students to degree programmes, tribalism and nepotism in recruitment to tenured positions, and bribery in on-campus accommodation and grading. Badie, Berg-Schlosser and Morlino (2011) who reported that paying a bribe especially in order to gain admission to a degree programme of choice has been on the increase in higher institutions in the Nigeria. Uzochukwu (2015) in a separate agreement with this finding affirms that corruption also manifests in cases of misappropriation and misapplication of money meant for capital projects. There is also corruption in accreditation of programmes by accrediting bodies. Ololube (2016) states that when members of accrediting panels are bribed, criteria are by-passed and reports are written to favour the department or institution. The researcher opined that all these could have negative impact on management of higher education and the consequence is poor quality higher education.

The second finding showed that academic corruption has significant impact on the management of higher institutions in Benue State. This finding is in line with Seniwoliba and Boahene (2015) who opined that academic corruption encompasses and is done through undue influence in research, plagiarism, ghost authorship of academic papers, fraud (academic dishonesty), cheating, favouritism, leaking examination papers and other such behavior. The finding also agreed with Torulagha (2013:6) who stated that ''there is a relationship between corruption and the poor state of academic standards'' that exist in

Nigerian universities today. The above view is collaborated by Kigotho (2013:13) who asserted that, academics that are loyal to the vice-chancellor are likely to be promoted regardless of merit. The researcher observations showed that when academic corruption engulfed management of higher institutions, it will result to low and poor academic standards in higher institutions.

Conclusion

Corruption in institutions of higher education in Nigeria is widespread and it is assuming a near-crisis dimension. Administrators, students, lecturers and even some parents are indeed partakers in this menace. The consequences of this evil on the administration of Nigerian higher educational institutions are grave and needs to be curbed if the goals of our higher education institutions are to be achieved effectively. The paper concluded that both administrative and academic dimensions of corruption have significant impact on the management of higher institutions in Benue State. The demand to institute and implement portent strategies that will check the malady in our institutions of higher studies is urgent, so that Nigeria can take its position of pride among the nations of the world and rebuild confidence in our educational sector.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study it was recommended that:
1. Higher education institutions in Benue State in particular and Nigeria at large should establish anti-corruption units to help check mate corrupt practices among students and staff. This will go a long way in curtailing administrative and academic corruption in higher institutions of learning.
2. Appropriate penalties should be given to those found involved in administrative and academic corrupt practices in higher institutions. This will serve as deterrent to others thereby dissociating themselves from such unlawful act for effective and smooth management of higher institutions.
3. Higher education institutions administrators and staff unions should prevail on government to release enough fund to the system in order stop the collection of bribes from various sources.

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