

Teachers' Perception of the Influence of Corruption on Provision of Quality Basic Education in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State

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Abstract

The thrust of this study was to examine teachers' perception of the influence of corruption on provision of quality basic education in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. To direct the study, three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select samples. Three Local Government Areas were selected from which 12 secondary schools were drawn. The sample of the study comprised 240 teachers drawn from a population of 3450 teachers using simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled: Teachers' Perception of the Influence of Corruption on Quality Basic Education (TPCQBEO) which consisted of twenty (20) items of modified four point likert scale. The hypotheses were tested using independent t-test analysis tested at 0.05 level of significance and 238 degrees of freedom. The result reveals that corruption significantly impacts on the quality of basic education and that misappropriation of funds is a major corrupt practice that hampers quality basic education in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. It was recommended that school administrators should frequently give account of the financial statements of the school in order to bring about checks and balances, transparency as well as accountability.

Keywords: misappropriation of funds, tribalism, bribery and quality basic education.

Introduction

Education is an indispensable instrument for national development. The Nigerian government has invested at all levels of education towards attainment of the set

goals and objectives as enshrined in the National Policy on Education. In order to attain these goals, the school management and administration of basic education is expected to play leading roles of which the school administrators are the machineries. The behaviour of the administrators is a major factor that influences the productivity of teachers as displayed through their attitude to work. Teachers' productivity also influences pupils' learning outcome and determines the attainment of basic education objectives since they are the major implementers of the basic education curriculum.

Quality basic education requires the development of systems of education that closely connect a child-centered learning environment with community development. Establishing a process where expected learning outcomes (the levels of achievements which should be linked to national goals for education) are compared with actual learning outcomes is essential to determine if children are genuinely learning. Improving learner's achievement by enhancing the quality of education is contingent on the development of strong community-based school systems that are upheld by highly mobilized communities and supported by enthusiastic and competent teachers and administrators. Teachers are perhaps the most influential variable to develop a basic quality learning environment in the classroom. Developing the skills and motivation of teachers through innovative and regular training is a single investment guaranteed to enhance the provision of quality of basic education and improve learning achievement. Unfortunately, the resources allocated for teachers' training are often times diverted by leaders leaving the actual beneficiaries with no training (Colby, 2010).

One hydra-headed scourge that has assumed high profile and endemic proportion so pronounced and contagious that its seals and impressions can be noticed and felt by individuals and states is corruption. Corruption exists at local, national and international levels. Edinyang and Ekpoto (2016) opines that corruption has in-built devastating and disabling potentials to infest and reconfigure the psyche of the individuals, the state and those entrusted with the day to day affairs of the state at its social, political, economic, religious, moral and general developmental levels with terrible viruses that in addition to undermining the advancement and progressive development of the state, impairs and cripples the zeal for honesty, hard work and merit in citizens.

Obasi (1997) intimates that corruption reduces the quality of basic education and results to teacher's negative attitude to work which brings about undesirable behaviour characterized by low output, absenteeism and confrontational posture.

Ocho (2005) observes that the falling standard of quality education in Nigeria could be attributed to lack of job satisfaction as a result of corrupt behaviours. Ibukun (2013) opines that the failure of the provision of quality basic education in Nigeria can be traced to several factors which include teacher factor (shortage of, inadequate training and poor motivation of teachers), lack of basic infrastructure, lack of leadership/administrative will, shortage of adequate and accurate statistics, inadequate funding and misappropriation of meager funds, bureaucratic bottle-necks of civil service and Nigerian's poor attitude to work. According to the author, these factors result from corrupt practices orchestrated by those in position of authority.

Corruption in the education industry in Nigeria has done further irreparable damage to Nigeria and Nigerians. Every state looks up to its citizens and its education system as the panacea for fixing whatever threats and challenges it faces and every individual sees the involvement and participation in education as a route upon which emancipation will come from. This implies that at the end of graduation, one is sure to attain levels that can empower oneself or get some kind of empowerment through critical services rendered to the society. Simple honest reflection on this can lead one to conclude that participation in education without the necessary infrastructural facilities cannot produce the needed expertise and empowerment expected of education upon which one can become sustainable or self fulfilled so as to make his contributions to the development of his fatherland (Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017).

Olukolade and Oluwakemi (2015) carried out a study on the different ways of enhancing quality basic education in order to achieve millennium development goals in Nigeria. Also the paper further examined the pertinent facts about Universal Basic Education (UBE) as well as vision and mission of the UBE, some key challenges facing the universal basic education in terms of resources such as finance, human, infrastructures, materials, time etc. in order to ensure quality basic education for the achievement of the millennium development goals in Nigeria. Therefore, some policies were suggested in the paper including provision of adequate funds, improvement of teachers' quality and quantity, provision of adequate infrastructure, moderation of teachers-learners ratio per classroom and upward review of teachers' remuneration as well as enabling environment among others.

Tribalism is the state of being organized in or an advocate for a tribe or tribes. In terms of conformity, tribalism may also refer to a popular cultural term as a way of thinking or behaving in which people are loyal to their own tribe or social group. Tribalism has been defined as a 'way of being' based upon variable combinations of kinship-based organization, reciprocal exchange, manual production, oral communication and analogical enquiry (James, 2006). For Akpochafo (2010), it is a

form of nepotism in which an office holder prefers his/her kinfolk and family members in the allocation of scarce resources.

Glazer and Moynihan (2015) conducted a study on the effect of tribalism on Universal Basic Education in Edo State. The hypothesis stated was that there is no significant effect of tribalism on Universal Basic Education. The study used a descriptive survey as the research design. A sample of 155 primary school administrators was drawn from the population using purposive sampling technique. The hypothesis was analyzed and tested at 0.05 level of significance and 153 degree of freedom using one-way analysis of variance. It was found that tribalism significantly affect Universal Basic Education. Tribalism as a form of corruption hinders effective implementation of UBE policies.

Adesulu (2016) opined that not everyone who teaches in primary school possesses the methodology of imparting knowledge to pupils. Grade II teachers were trained to passionately teach students effortlessly. Nigerian teachers who spoke with Vanguard decried their poor teaching conditions, noting that teachers are not so treated with disdain globally. According to them, whereas the Nigerian teachers are still using blackboards and chalks in the 21st Century, their counterparts in other countries are using whiteboards and markers, adding that many countries have even gone beyond the use of whiteboard to interactive classroom system, coupled with teaching aid. While teachers in many countries are well remunerated, they maintained that teachers in Nigeria are not only poorly and badly paid but many are being owed salaries for several months. Comparing teachers in Nigeria with their counterparts globally, they described the Nigeria's working conditions as appalling, adding that the average Nigerian teacher, apart from few private schools, works in poor conditions. They argue that the manner in which the federal and state governments handle teachers makes the society also to hold teachers and the teaching profession in low esteem. Abosede (2017) agrees with this, noting that in the past teachers used to receive good salary, and the community valued teachers, teachers were given scholarships and bursaries for further studies; but that presently teachers have been relegated to the background.

Bribery, as the primary form of corruption, involves payment (in money or kind) which is given or taken in a corrupt business relationship. The nicknames for bribery include "kick backs", "brown envelopes", "gratuities", "grease money", "facilitation payment", "expediting fees", "family support programme", "social responsibility", "sorting", "the needful", "appreciation", "Public Relations (PR)" and "egunje", among others. Bribery at basic education level may be conceptualized as an education crime which involves trickery, swindle or deceit. Extortion in school

involves corrupt practices, exchanges or transactions in which money or other things are violently extracted from unwilling individuals by persons who have the power and authority to occupy certain positions (Ovat, 2017).

Ovat (2017) in a study on the impact of administrative corrupt practices on primary school goal attainment found a significant impact of bribery as a form of corruption on primary school goal attainment. He also discovered that most administrators divert resources meant for the running of the school into private pockets leaving the work they are supposed to do. Most parents bribe teachers to get marks for their wards in order for them to be promoted from one class to another. Bribe at the basic education level is also seen during external examinations like common entrance and placement examinations where examiners are bribed to ensure that children pass. Proprietors of school also bribe external examiners to ensure that their pupils do not fail the examination.

Bribery is also known as favouritism. Favouritism in primary schools may be described as a highly biased distribution of school resources not minding how the resources were acquired in the first place. It is the tendency to favour friends, relations, tribesmen and women, family members and persons who are close and trusted at the expense of school or public interest. It is a misuse of public or organizational responsibilities for personal or group interests and desires. Schools where such things are done vary in their degree of involvement which pertains to the intensity, scale and hierarchical scale of corruption and this has given rise to different types of organizational identities pertaining to the extent of corrupt practices in school.

Bregman and Brymen (2005) found out, in their work on quality of primary education in Africa, that most Sub Saharan African countries are at different stages of reforming their education system. Many have begun to address access issues, reform the curriculum or develop management capacity. They were of the opinion that as government moves towards establishing an egalitarian rather than elitist education system, they need to ask themselves and stakeholders of education 'what is the purpose and intent of primary education system in general and junior secondary school specifically? Pitchard (2002) introduced the idea of using lesson quality adjustment in the measurement of education output. According to him, government inspectors in U.K make assessment regarding the quality of lessons. Pitchard (2002) noted that weight could be assigned to the rating categories for lessons such as good, very good lessons, satisfactory lessons and unsatisfactory lessons. They concluded that if these assessments were used to form a lesson quality adjustment, the rate of growth of volume of indicators would be raised.

Adefisayo (2015) reported that Nigeria's education sector got it wrong by not putting infrastructure in place; pointing out that non-availability of teaching materials are issues endangering the quality of basic education in Nigeria. In a similar study, Ekpo (2014) who investigated the impact of UBE curriculum implementation and quality basic education in Nigeria, asserted that quality basic education is possible if UBE curriculum is implemented by providing the basic requirements for effective teaching/learning. On the other hand, the provision of these requirements is difficult to meet as a result of bribery and corrupt practices.

Statement of problem

The poor quality basic education in Cross River State in particular and Nigeria at large has been attributed to poor infrastructural development, poor learning environment, poor teachers' performance, misappropriation of funds, tribalism, negative attitude to work and negligence of duty by teachers. The high rate of failure at the basic education level over the years has been a matter of concern to all education stakeholders for which most people attribute it to corrupt practices due to misappropriation of school funds. One school of thought believes that teachers' attitude to work constitutes one of the major factors in the decline of quality basic education in Cross River State. Some teachers are of excellent performance while some are on the average, just as significant numbers are merely performing due to some personal factors such as dissatisfaction as a result of corruption exhibited by their headteachers. These have affected the provision of quality basic education. Some may be driven by their personal needs and others by the craving for the fulfillment of organizational goals. Although, the allocation to education in Nigeria is far from being adequate, yet the little resources are often time diverted into personal pockets. No level of education can thrive without a reasonable level of availability of both human and material resources needed for the success of the system. Hence, the need to examine teachers' perception of corruption and provision of quality basic education in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State.

Purpose of the study

The aim of this study was to examine teachers perception of the influence of corruption on provision of quality basic education in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. Specifically, the study investigated the influence of:

- i. Misappropriation of funds on provision of quality basic education
- ii. Tribalism on provision of quality basic education
- iii. Bribery on provision of quality basic education

Research questions

The following research questions were formulated to direct the study:

- i. How does misappropriation of funds influence provision of quality basic education?
- ii. To what extent does tribalism influence provision of quality basic education?
- iii. To what extent does bribery influence provision of quality basic education?

Research hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were stated to guide the study:

- i. There is no significant influence of misappropriation of funds on provision of quality basic education
- ii. There is no significant influence of tribalism on provision of quality basic education
- iii. There is no significant influence of bribery on provision of quality basic education

Methodology

The study area was Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Calabar Education Zone consists of six (6) Local Government Areas and is located in the Southern Senatorial District of the state. The population of the study consists of 3450 teachers. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were adopted for the study. The study area was divided into three (3) strata, that is, two Local Government Areas in each stratum. A Local Government Area was picked from each stratum making three (3) Local Government Areas used for the study. From each Local Government Area, four (4) schools were selected making a total of 12 schools and from each school twenty (20) teachers were selected using simple random sampling technique. This implies that 240 teachers were selected in all. Hence, the sample consisted of 240 teachers drawn from the population using simple random sampling technique.

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled Teachers' Perception of Corruption and Quality Basic Education Questionnaire (TPCQBEQ) which consisted of twenty (20) items of modified four point Likert scale. The modified four point Likert scale used were Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Strongly Agree and Agree were grouped as high while Disagree and Strongly Disagree were grouped as low. The instrument was validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Calabar, Calabar. The reliability values obtained ranged

from 0.765 to 0.893. The data collected were analyzed using independent t-test and tested at .05 level of significance with 238 degree of freedom.

Presentation of results

The results for the three hypotheses were presented as follows:

Ho1: There is no significant influence of misappropriation of funds on provision of quality basic education.

Table 1: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of misappropriation of funds on provision of quality basic Education

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-cal.	P-value
High	154	18.17	4.88	7.872	0.000
Low	86	15.33	4.27		

$P < 0.05$, $df = 238$, Critical t-value = 1.972, $N=240$

The result in Table 1 reveals that the calculated t-value of 7.872 was greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 level of significance and 238 degree of freedom ($P < 0.05$). By this result, the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of misappropriation of funds on quality basic education was rejected. This implies that misappropriation of funds significantly influences provision of quality basic education. That is to say that inappropriate management of funds meant for basic education programmes by those at the helm of affairs such as head teachers, teachers, commissioners, and others impede the quality of basic education programmes.

Ho2: There is no significant influence of tribalism on provision of quality basic education.

Table 2: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of tribalism on provision of quality basic education

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P- value
High	133	18.54	5.03	10.691	0.000
Low	107	15.55	4.33		

$P < 0.05$, $df = 238$, Critical t-value = 1.972, $N=240$

The result in Table 2 indicates the calculated t-value of 10.691 was greater than the critical t-value of 1.960 at .05 level of significance and 238 degree of freedom

($P < 0.05$). This result leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of tribalism on provision of quality basic education. The conclusion is that tribalism significantly influences provision of quality basic education. This implies that when employment and other appointments are done on the basis of man-know-man at the expense of quality and standard, the quality of basic education is negatively affected.

Ho3: There is no significant influence of bribery on provision of quality basic education.

Table 3: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of bribery on provision of quality basic education

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	P-value
High	121	16.758	4.152	5.254	0.000
Low	119	15.408	3.774		

$P < 0.05$, $df = 238$, Critical t-value = 1.972, $N=240$

Table 3 shows that the calculated t-value of 5.254 was greater than the critical t-value of 1.960 at .05 level of significance and 238 degree of freedom ($P < 0.05$). The null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of bribery on provision of quality basic education was rejected. This implies that bribery significantly influences provision of quality basic education. This means that corruption in any form hampers the quality of basic education programmes in Cross River State and Nigeria in general.

Discussion

The result of the first hypothesis indicates that misappropriation of funds significantly influences provision of quality basic education. This is in line with the findings of Obasi (1997) who noted that corruption reduces the provision of quality of basic education and results to teacher's negative attitude to work which brings about undesirable behaviour characterized by low output, absenteeism and confrontational posture. The finding also lend credence to Ocho (2005) who observes that the falling standard of quality education in Nigeria could be attributed to lack of job satisfaction as a result of corrupt behaviours.

Ibukun (2013) opines that the failure of basic education in Nigeria can be traced to several factors which include teacher factor (shortage of, inadequate training and poor motivation of teachers), lack of basic infrastructure, lack of leadership/administrative will, shortage of adequate and accurate statistics,

inadequate funding and misappropriation of meager funds, bureaucratic bottle-necks of civil service and Nigerian's poor attitude to work. Corruption exists at local, national and international levels; At any level of its existence, corruption has in-built devastating and disabling potentials to infest and reconfigure the psyche of the individuals, the state and those entrusted with the day to day affairs of the state at its social, political, economic, religious, moral and general development levels with terrible viruses that in addition to undermining the advancement and progressive development of the state, impairs and cripples the zeal for honesty, hard work and merit in citizens. These are possible because corruption in any of its multi-dimensional forms has terrible potentials that can neutralize and bring to zero point the developmental aspirations of honest and hardworking individuals and institutions in states in the form of causing general disenchantment and instability, making nonsense state institutions, discouraging foreign direct investments and eroding genuine value system upon which the sustainable development of a people and their state is laid (Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017).

The second hypothesis result revealed that there is a significant influence of tribalism on provision of quality basic education. This agrees with the findings of Glazer and Moynihan (2015) who conducted a study on the effect of tribalism on Universal Basic Education in Edo State. It was found that tribalism significantly affect Universal Basic Education. Tribalism as a form of corruption hinders effective implementation of UBE policies.

Aduda (2016) speaking at the International Conference on Corruption in the Academia and the State of Education in Africa, noted that the ills were classified into different levels of occurrence such as policy level, Ministry/state and local government level, schools and administrative levels, in which various forms of corruption are existing. For him, corruption in education was a major hindrance to achieving the second Millennium Development Goals of comprehensive primary school education for all the world's children by 2015. He posited that the effects of corruption on the education sector were extensive and damaging because it endangers a country's social, economic and political future. He submitted that where personal effort and merit do not count and success comes through manipulation, favouritism and bribery, then the very foundations of society are shaken. According to him, corruption in education affects more people than corruption in other sectors, both in rural and urban areas basically because schools are the breeding grounds for future generations. Corruption threatens equal access, quantity and quality of education. Its consequences are particularly harsh for the poor who, without access to education or with no alternative but low-quality education have limited or no hope of escaping life of poverty, especially in a certificate crazy society like Nigeria.

Finding from the third hypothesis indicates that there is a significant influence of bribery on provision of quality basic education. This agrees with Ovat (2017) whose study on the impact of administrative corrupt practices on primary school goal attainment found a significant impact of bribery as a form of corruption on primary school goal attainment. He also discovered that most administrators divert resources meant for the running of the school into private pockets leaving the work they are supposed to do. Most parents bribe teachers to get marks for their wards in order for them to be promoted from one class to another. Bribery at the basic education level is also seen during external examinations like common entrance and placement examinations where examiners are bribed to ensure that children pass. Proprietors of school also bribe external examiners to ensure that their pupils do not fail the examination.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it has been established that corruption significantly influence the provision of quality basic education and that misappropriation of funds is a major corrupt practice that hampers quality basic education in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. It can also be concluded that tribalism and bribery are other forms of corrupt practices that influence the quality of basic education in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

- i. School administrators should frequently give account of the financial statements of the school in order to bring about checks and balances and transparency as well as accountability.
- ii. The government should ensure that funds release are closely monitored.
- iii. Corrupt officials should be highly sanctioned to serve as a deterrent to others.

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