

Corruption and Management of Public Universities in South–South, Nigeria

¹Joan Nike Ada, Ph.D
adajnike@gmail.com

¹Aernyi Indira, Ph.D
aernyi@bsu.edu.ng

¹Jackson Ter Azever Inguran, Ph.D
jacksonazever@gmail.com
¹Department of Educational Foundations
Benue State University, Makurdi



Abstract

This study adopted descriptive survey design to investigate the influence of corruption on management of public universities in areas of infrastructural development and staff promotion. It was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. The population consisted of 11,102 staff of public universities in the South-South, while the sample size was 1,084 respondents drawn through multistage sampling. A 10-item questionnaire titled “Corruption and University Management Questionnaire” (CUMQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts. A trial test of the instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.80. The questionnaire was administered on 1,084 respondents. Data collected were analysed using Mean scores and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions while Chi-square was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that corruption has significant influence on infrastructural development and staff promotion in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. The study recommended that the government and management of universities should embark on awareness campaign to curtail the incidence of corruption and also collaborate and ensure that corruption is eradicated in public universities in the South-South of Nigeria so as to facilitate effective management of universities.

Keywords: corruption, management, universities, infrastructural, development, staff

Introduction

Education is an accepted veritable instrument that brings positive changes to an individual for national development. It produces different kinds of manpower such as engineers, teachers, lawyers, medical doctors, architects, soldiers, scientists, and so on, needed for national and individual development. Hence the saying that, "no society can develop beyond its educational system" (Akpakwu, 2012:31). It is the product of education that transforms the society. The quality of education will determine the quality of manpower and their products; it will reduce the rate of unemployment, since graduates and technicians can become self-employed after graduation. It will equally improve the moral rectitude of the society and quality of lives. This is because education is aimed at changing the character of the learner and influencing positively on his behaviour (Heyneman, 2009).

Corruption is the misuse of public power for private and personal benefit; it is usually surrounded by secrecy and the act itself may not be immediately perceptible. Momoh (2008) opines that corruption could also be seen as any behaviour or act that is irregular or against the norms of society. It is seen as any decision, act, or any conduct that is perverse to democratic norms and values. It also covers any decisions, act or conduct that subverts the integrity of people in authority or institutions charged with promoting, defending or sustaining the democratization process, thereby undermining its effectiveness in performing its assigned role; it can equally be seen as the receiving of illegal reward by an individual in the discharge of his duties (Adebayo, 2010).

Corruption covers a broad spectrum of acts and not just the simple act of giving and receiving bribes. What this entails is that corruption goes beyond 'give and take.' Using official stationery such as envelopes, papers, for private purposes is also another form of corruption. Those who hold offices as presidents or secretaries of unions, associations and clubs in churches and various societies that make use of government stationery to produce copies of circulars and minutes of meetings for circulation to their members are indulging in another form of corruption. Corruption also entails using government drugs, dressings and hospital equipment for private purposes; it also involves carrying cement, sand, attending weddings, funerals and other social engagements, attending to family affairs, electioneering campaigns with government vehicles. Other forms include demanding sex from opposite sex for jobs, tempering with applications, contracts documents and payment vouchers as well as misuse of overseas tours and so on (Adebayo, 2010). According to Bolaji (2007), nepotism is also well illustrated as a form of corruption and this is seen as an act whereby a person favours his own relations and friends to the disadvantage of others.

The standard of education might be affected by corrupt practices. According to Egwaikhide (2009), the phenomena called corruption manifests in various forms such as political corruption, electoral corruption, bureaucratic corruption, bribery, embezzlement, extortion, fraud, nepotism, favouritism, examination malpractice, impersonation, indecent dressing, sex for marks, and other illicit activities that are a clog on the wheels of economic growth and development. People engage in corrupt practices in institutions as a result of high level of poverty, high unemployment rate, under-remuneration of workers, financial hardship, persuasion by friends and colleagues in public offices, desire to please kinsmen, late payment of contractors by government, over-concentration of power and resources at the centre, unregulated informal economy, nepotism, tribalism in the administration of justice and lack of honest leaders (Yomere, 2009).

Corruption could entail indulging in illegal acts for personal gains. As a result of this, Olubunmi (2015:5) views corruption "as an illegal behaviour of people who are either in office or public places and use their authority to do wrong things in return for money or favour". These definitions imply that corruption has to do with persons or individuals violating ethical behaviours while they occupy an office or position of authority in schools, colleges, universities, governmental institutions, Church, traditional stool in any given society. Corruption in many institutions is increasing day by day, perhaps because of the culture of silence that pervades university campuses and because most times, the misbehaviours are "swept under the carpet" (Adebayo, 2010:43). Akpakwu (2012) stresses that funding and staff welfare are paramount functions of educational managers which when negated generated unprecedented managerial difficulties. Corruption could influence funding of tertiary institutions in the areas of procurement and utilization of infrastructural facilities needed for effective teaching and learning, (Abiodun, 2012).

Management of universities includes functions such as provision and maintenance of infrastructural development and ensuring the accomplishment of educational objectives with the available resources. According to Okoro and Okigho (2012), indices of educational management include adequate funding, proper staff recruitment or appointment, planning, budgeting, organization, directing, supervision, sustained provisions for staff welfare, provision of needed equipment, facilities or materials, proper staff retention and making arrangements for optimal staff performance of organizational responsibilities to facilitate the rapid and timely accomplishment of the desired aims and objectives (Arrief, 2010). Afe (2006) maintains that once there is due process and transparency in the procurement, disbursement and utilization of educational infrastructure, educational policies and programmes are coordinated with ease. According to Akpakwu (2012), infrastructural

development refers to the fairness and transparency in the procurement and disbursement of educational facilities like office and classroom accommodation, hostels, libraries, laboratories, office furniture among others.

Corruption could influence management of universities in the area of infrastructural development where there could be the inflation of government contracts in return for kickbacks by leaders of the educational sector or political office holders. It is possible that funds allocated for the construction of infrastructure in the educational system may be siphoned and poor quality projects are carried out. In the long run, constructed buildings degenerate rapidly into death traps threatening the very occupants whom the projects were meant to serve. Consequently, Salleh (2015), Kassahn (2012) and Ekweba (2013) observe that as a result of corruption, there might be shortage of hostel and office accommodation for students and staff respectively, under-stocked libraries and laboratories, under-furnished lecture and recreational halls among others.

Corruption could also influence staff promotion in universities as it can weaken the quality of personnel in university through improper staff promotion exercises leading to low efficiency, wastage and misappropriation of resources, low quality service delivery (Garddwyl, 2012). According to Ude (2016), in most institutions of higher learning in Nigeria, staff are recruited based either on religious, ethnic, sectional or tribal sentiments. Ude stresses that, consequently, unqualified personnel are recruited to fill sensitive academic positions. Such under-baked graduates are only capable of offering the wrong quantity and quality of education that cannot guarantee the desired individual and national development. As a result of corruption in tertiary institutions, especially the universities, many graduates are unemployable yet they can brandish colourful certificates. Chain (2011) laments instances where some holders of the Bachelor Degree cannot communicate passably in English language talk less of being capable of writing.

These researchers speculate that the universities in the South-South Zone of Nigeria may not be alienated from corruption as captured in the background afore-presented. It is against this backdrop that the researchers embarked on a research to investigate the influence of corruption on management of universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

Despite the crusades of anti-corruption and a retinue of corruption-related court cases currently going on in Nigeria, the magnitude of corruption appears to be on the high side particularly in universities. Corruption could impair hard work, diligence and efficiency and might have caused incalculable damages to the social, economic, educational and political development of Nigeria. Furthermore, even with repeated

accreditation visits by the National Universities Commission to many universities in the South-South Zone of Nigeria, it seems all is still not well with these institutions. Corruption seems to be weakening these institutions of learning by hampering quality teaching and learning thereby retarding the educational development of the zone.

The researchers' observations about the current trend in management of public universities in the South-South Zone of Nigeria have shown a high degree of lack of transparency and accountability which may be as a result of corruption. Many lecturers cannot afford a decently furnished office which could be due to improper and insufficient allocation of funds. The few available funds which are supposed to be well allocated in the educational institutions seem to be diverted to personal use, thereby denying the people of better standards of educational facilities that are expected. Personal observations of the researchers reveal that in some universities in the South-South Zone of Nigeria, infrastructural development projects seem to be inflated beyond imagination or executed with the lowest quality materials in the market.

Another issue that attracted the attention of the researchers is the staff promotion issue that exists in some universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria. Staff promotion procedures which require indication of available vacancies to fill available promotion criteria to staff by the Human Resource Management (HRM), consideration of appeal by HRM from staff after promotion exercises and promotion based on merit of staff devoid of bias are often side-lined in the study area. This anomaly could be traced to the influence of corruption. In public universities in the South-South Zone of Nigeria again, maybe as a result of the influence of corruption in universities, staff promotion might be based purely on religious, sectional, ethnic and/or tribal considerations. This seriously posed disadvantage for the effective management of universities in the area of study.

The researchers observe that corruption may have influence on management of universities in areas of infrastructural development and staff promotions in universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that the study sought to investigate the influence of corruption on management of public universities in the South-South Zone of Nigeria with particular focus on infrastructural development and staff promotions.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of corruption on management of public universities in South-South Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine the influence of corruption on infrastructural development in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.
2. determine the influence of corruption on staff promotion in public universities.

Research questions

The following research questions were raised for the study:

1. How does corruption influence infrastructural development in public universities in South-South Nigeria?
2. In what ways does corruption influence staff promotion in public universities?

Hypotheses

This study formulated two hypotheses and tested them at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: Corruption has no significant influence on infrastructural development in public universities in South-South Nigeria.

Ho2: Corruption has no significant influence on staff promotion in public universities.

Methodology

The design adopted for the study was descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 12,102 teaching staff in 11 public universities in South-South of Nigeria. The sample for the study was 1,084 or 10% of the 11,102 lecturers and 5 or 45% of the 11 universities. This is in line with Emaikwu (2011) who stated that for a smaller population, 10% and above sample is sufficient. The study employed proportionate random sampling technique, in order to avoid bias and ensure that each respondent has equal chance of being selected. A self-structured 10-item four point rating scale questionnaire was constructed and used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was made up of two clusters which covered influence of corruption on infrastructural development and staff promotion in public universities. The instrument used a rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) 4, Agree (A) 3, Disagree (D) 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) 1. The questionnaire was administered by the researchers and research assistants who were briefed on how to administer and collect them back in the sampled public universities. A total of 1,084 copies of the questionnaire were given out to the respondents in the sampled universities for the study which was collected back after four days. Data obtained were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while chi-square (χ^2) was used to test the hypotheses. The cut-off point considered as agree for the responses was 2.50. The basis for arriving at 2.50 was by adding $4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 10/4 = 2.50$. Thus, the interpretation of the mean scores was based on cut-off point of 2.50 and above which was considered positive. Chi-square (χ^2) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.5 level significance. It was considered appropriate for the study because it is a non-parametric statistics for treating data.

Presentation of results

Data results were analysed based on research questions and hypotheses raised. In order to answer the research questions, mean scores and standard deviation were used to analyse the opinions of respondents and the result presented on Tables 1 and 2.

Research question 1: How does corruption influence infrastructural development in public universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria?

The data that provide answers to the research question is presented on Table 1.

Table 1: Mean score and standard deviation of respondents on influence of corruption on infrastructural development in public universities in South-South Nigeria

Item No	Item Description	N	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	σ	Decision
1.	As a result of corruption, funds meant for the procurement of office equipment for staff in universities are sometimes embezzled by the officers in charge of procurement.	1,084	738	291	11	44	3.68	.81	Agreed
2.	Owing to corruption, funds meant for the maintenance of school plant are sometimes mismanaged by management staff in my university.	1,084	712	243	36	93	3.56	0.72	Agreed
3.	The procurement of infrastructure is often fraudulently carried out with poor quality infrastructure procured and disbursed for use in the university where I work.	1,084	718	282	45	38	3.15	0.63	Agreed
4.	Contracts in the university where I work are often awarded to unprofessional bidders who have 'the long legs' and may be willing to give handsome 'kickbacks' to management staff as a result of corruption.	1,084	709	266	42	67	3.69	1.82	Agreed
5.	Contracts are often over-bloated in the university where I work with the balances siphoned for personal use.	1,084	523	439	92	30	3.19	1.83	Agreed
Cluster							3.45	0.68	Agreed

Table 1 shows response of respondents on the mean and standard deviation on the influence of corruption on infrastructural development in public universities in South-South Nigeria. This result revealed that item 1 has mean score and standard deviation of 3.68 and 0.81 respectively. The respondents agreed that due to corruption, funds meant for the procurement of office equipment for staff in public universities are sometimes embezzled by the officers in charge of procurement. Similarly, item 2 has mean score and standard deviation of 3.56 and 0.72 respectively. This means that respondents strongly agreed with the notion that owing to corruption, funds meant for the maintenance of school plant are sometimes mismanaged by management staff in universities. In the same vein, item 3 has mean score and standard deviation of 3.15 and 0.63 respectively. This indicates that respondents agreed with the item that the procurement of infrastructure is often fraudulently carried out with poor quality infrastructure procured and disbursed for use in public universities. Item 4 has mean score and standard deviation of 3.69 and 1.82 respectively. The implication of this result is that respondents agreed that contracts in public universities are often awarded to unprofessional bidders who have the “long legs” and are willing to give handsome “kickbacks” to management staff as a result of corruption.

Finally, item 5 has mean score and standard deviation of 3.19 and 1.83 respectively. This means that respondents strongly agreed with the item which states that due to corruption, contracts are often over-bloated in public universities with the balance siphoned for personal use. The cluster mean of 3.45 with the standard deviation of 0.68 were also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50 which implies that corruption has made the public universities unable to provide adequate infrastructural development for use by both students and lecturers; implying that corruption has influence on the provision of infrastructural development in public universities in South–South Nigeria.

Research question 2: In what ways does corruption influence staff promotion in public universities?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of respondents on the influence of corruption on staff promotion in public universities in South-South Nigeria

S/No.	Item Description	N	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	σ	Decision
6.	Sometimes lecturers in universities are compelled to bribe promotion panels before they are promoted as a result of corruption.	1,084	24	19	274	683	2.07	1.38	Disagreed
7.	In some instances owing to corruption, staff related to management staff or promotion panel, in universities are given unmerited favours pertaining to issues of promotion.	1,084	682	320	42	40	3.56	.91	Agreed
8.	Owing to corruption in the universities where I work, sometimes staff that are not in the good books of the vice-chancellor or other key officers in the universities management are denied promotion on flimsy excuses	1,084	684	311	32	57	3.71	1.86	Agreed
9.	Ethnicity and tribalism as forms of corruption at times exert negative influence on the promotion of staff instead of promotion being based on merit in the university where I work.	1,084	661	223	93	23	3.12	0.47	Agreed
10.	Sometimes due to corruption in the university where I work, the members of the promotion panel wave aside some promotion criteria to favour candidates in whose case they have interest.	1,084	66	10	245	683	1.97	1.02	Disagreed
Cluster							2.88	0.91	Agreed

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation on the influence of corruption on staff promotion in public universities in South-South Nigeria. The data collected and analysed shows that item 6 has mean score and standard deviation of 2.07 and 1.38 respectively. This result indicates that respondents disagreed that sometimes lecturers in universities are compelled to bribe promotion panels before they are promoted as a result of corruption. Again, item 7 has mean score and standard deviation of 3.56 and 0.91 respectively. This means that respondents strongly agreed that in some instances

owing to corruption, staff related to management staff or promotion panels in universities are given unmerited favour pertaining to issues of promotion. Again, item 8 has mean score and standard deviation of 3.71 and 1.86 respectively. This indicates that respondents agreed that owing to corruption, in public universities, sometimes staff are denied promotion on flimsy excuses. Item 9 has mean score and standard deviation of 3.12 and 0.47 respectively. This means that respondents agreed that ethnicity and tribalism as forms of corruption at times exert negative influence on the promotion of staff instead of promotion being based on merit in public universities.

Finally, item 10 has mean score and standard deviation of 1.97 and 1.02 respectively indicating that respondents disagreed with the item which states that sometimes due to corruption in universities, the members of the promotion panel wave aside some promotion criteria to favour candidates in whose case they have interest. The cluster has mean score and standard deviation of 2.88 and 0.91 respectively. Based on the boundary criteria for decision making, this implies that corruption influences staff promotion in universities in South – South Nigeria.

Ho1: There is no significant influence of corruption on infrastructural development in public universities in South-South Nigeria.

Table 3 shows a summary of data analysis in relation to this hypothesis.

Table 3: Chi-square analysis of influence of corruption on infrastructural development in public universities in South South Nigeria

Opinion	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Level of Sig	df	χ^2 cal	P-value	Decision
SD	20	251	-231	.05	3	472.4	.00	Sig. not accepted
D	311	251	60					
A	192	251	-51					
SA	481	251	230					

(P-value = 0.00; P=0.00<0.05, not accepted).

Table 3 shows Chi-square (χ^2) value of (3df) 429.62, and P<0.05; the null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This result reveals that the null hypothesis which states that corruption has no significant influence on the infrastructural development in public universities in South-South Nigeria was not accepted. This implies that there is significant negative influence of corruption on infrastructural development in public universities in South-South Nigeria. This therefore indicates that corruption exerted a negative toll on the provision of infrastructural development in public universities in South-South Nigeria.

Ho2: There is no significant influence of corruption on staff promotion in public universities.

Table 4 shows a summary of data analysis in relation to the hypothesis 2.

Table 4: Chi-square analysis of the influence of corruption on staff promotion in public universities

Opinion	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Level of Sig	Df	χ^2 cal.	P-Value	Decision
SD	42	251	-209					Sig
D	103	251	-148					
A	328	251	77	.05	3	251	.00	Not accepted
SA	531	251	280					

(p-value=0.00; P=0.00<0.05; not accepted).

Table 4 shows Chi-Square (χ^2) value of (3df) 251 and P<0.05. This result shows that the null hypothesis which states that corruption has no significant influence on staff promotion in universities in South-South Nigeria was not accepted. This implies that corruption has negative influence on staff promotion in universities in South South-Nigeria.

Discussion of the findings

The first finding of this study, arising from the testing of hypothesis 1 was that there is a significant influence of corruption on infrastructural development in public universities in South-South Nigeria. This implies that corruption exerted a negative toll on infrastructural development in the study area. This result agrees with Salleh (2015) who found that there is significant negative influence of corruption on infrastructural development as funds meant for the development of infrastructure are siphoned into private purse negating the purposes for which they were initially meant. Also, the findings of this study rhymes with previous findings by Kassahn (2012) and Ekweba (2013) who separately found that corruption had significantly negative influence on provision of students' hostels, science laboratory as well as maintenance of school plant.

The second finding of the study, which was the outcome of testing hypothesis 2, indicates that corruption significantly influences staff promotion in public universities in South-South Nigeria. The implication of this finding is that corruption significantly and negatively influences staff promotion in public universities in South-South Nigeria. The result of the study is in line with previous studies by Kassahn (2012) who found out that there was a statistically significant influence of corruption on the

promotion of staff. The findings of this study also agree with Garddwyl (2012) who found that corruption had significantly negative influence on staff promotion and retention in higher institutions. Similarly, the findings of this study agree with previous findings of Ukuluje and Ogbonaya (2009) that corruption negatively influenced teachers' promotion in secondary schools.

Conclusion

From the findings, it can be concluded that corruption has significant influence on infrastructural development and staff provision in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The government and university management should embark on sensitization campaign to create awareness, and on punitive measure should be meted on culprits found to have engaged in any form of corruption which affects infrastructural development in universities.
2. Management of universities should ensure that policies on staff promotion are strictly adhered to and anybody found violating the policies through acts of corruption should be prosecuted and sentenced accordingly.

References

- Abiodun, A. (2012). Combating financial crisis and corruption in Nigeria: Prevention versus enforcement strategies: A paper presented in National Workshop on Performance, Transparency, Accountability and Development at the local government level organized by the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation at Abuja, February-March.
- Adebayo, A. (2010). *Power in politics*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
- Afe, B. (2006). The dwindling standard of education in Nigeria: The way forward. First Distinguished Lecture Series delivered at Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria.
- Akpakwu, S. O. (2012). *Educational management: Theory and Practice*. Makurdi: Destiny Ventures.
- Arrief, W. A. (2010). Impact of corruption on staff performance in private colleges in Southern Canada over two decades. *The Social Science Journal*, 49(1), 90-97.
- Belyh, A. (2015). *When and how to promote your employees*. Retrieved on September 10, 2018 from <https://www.cleverism.com>
- Bolaji, L. (2007). *Anatomy of Corruption in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Day Star Press.
- Chain, J. (2011). Towards ethno cultural diversification of higher education. *Cultural Divers Ethnic Minor Psychology*, 17(3), 243-251.

- Egwaikhide, Y. O. (2009). Corruption and growth. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 1(1), 20-41.
- Ekweba, M. J. (2013). Impact of corruption on education in Nigeria. *The Social Science Journal*, 4(1), 22-37. Retrieved from <http://www.wordwebonline.com>.
- Emaikwu, S. O. (2011). *Fundamentals of research methods and statistics*. Makurdi: Selfers Academic Press Limited.
- Garddwyl, G. D. (2012). Influence of corruption on staff engagement, performance and retention in Greece's non-degree higher education system. *Public Administrative Review*, 43(2), 146-154.
- Heyneman, S. P. (2009). The appropriate role of government in education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy*, 3(1), 35-57.
- Kassahn, F. H. (2012). Influence of educational corruption on secondary students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Borno and Adamawa State of Nigeria. *Public Administration Review*, 5(2), 46-64.
- Momoh, C. S. (2008). *Philosophy of a new past and an old future*. Auchi: Africa Philosophy Project Publications.
- Okoro, J. C. & Okigho, P. T. (2012). The role of media in curbing corruption. *Journal of Organization Behaviour*, 2(1), 32 – 41.
- Oladimeji, D. (2014, August 16). Nigeria: controversy over Genetically modified seeds. Retrieved 10 January, 2018 from <http://allafrica.com/stones/201408180894.html>.
- Olubunmi, I. C. (2015). *The economic theory of democracy*. New York: Vacals House.
- Salleh, M. E. (2015). Evaluation of education in Nigeria: A focus on College of Education, Gindiri. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 11(3), 15-34. Retrieved from <http://jambume.blogspot.com/2012/02/544-students-expelled-in-enugu-state.html>.
- Transparency International (2007). *Annual report*. Cambridge: University Press Cambridge.
- Ude, E. M. (2016). Helping combat corruption. *Journal of Development*, 1(1), 42 – 56.
- Ukuluje, H. I. & Ogbonaya, O. J. (2009). Corruption as managerial problems of head teachers of public secondary schools in Abia State. *International Monetary Fund*, 45(4), 34-48.
- Yomere, G. (2009). Cultivating entrepreneurship minds through education. *Nigeria Academy of Management Journal*, 3(1), 7-15.