

Slaying Corruption for Effective Educational Management: A Clinical Insight

Chioke Stephen Chinedu

*Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. E-mail:
eruditescholar001@gmail.com*

Abstract

The major challenge confronting educational management is the problem of maladministration and mismanagement of the education sector. Specifically, this study investigated the extent corruption affected the management of education in Enugu State at the secondary level. The study adopted systems theory as its theoretical construct. Adopting survey research method; structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data needed for this research and textbooks, journals, unpublished works were incorporated and referenced as secondary sources. Out of a population of 362 tutorial staff of selected public secondary schools in Enugu State, 155 participants were data producing sample. Finding was that corruption affected the management of education in Enugu State at the secondary level to a great extent. The implication of this study is that if the Commissioner for Education in the State does not consider exterminating critical corrupt practices that have hampered effective educational management and administration in the State by motivating and supporting the educators and learners to pursue quality educational service delivery and academic excellence through effective management devoid all forms of corruption, the state's education sector will remain impotent in the area of human capital development. The study concluded that educational renaissance should be manifestly conceived and carried out within the state.

Keywords: *Corruption, Education, Educational Management, Human Capital, Systems Theory, Virus*

Introduction

This research titled, “Slaying corruption for effective educational management: A clinical insight,” is a critical study of challenges surrounding the management of education in Enugu State, Nigeria at the secondary level through a quantitative method in search of clinical (practical) measures that would enhance effective educational management in the state’s education sector and that of the general system, Nigeria. In the words of Arthur Miller, “It is wrong to remain in a situation you know is a mismatch for you.” So, in order not to remain in the current human capital development mismatch occasioned by academic corruption, this study attempts to project a road map regarding the repositioning of the ailing educational system by unveiling current challenges and proffering appropriate remedial measures through the study’s recommendations. This symbolizes the empirical significance of this research. Regarding the theoretical importance of this paper, it is the expectation of the author that this study will be an additional literature from the existing literatures that focused on academic fraud and educational management. Also, this study provides quintessential framework for navigating through the conceptual overview of terminologies under study.

Corruption is the major challenge/virus confronting Nigeria’s education system and Enugu State in particular. This study examines the problem of corruption in educational management in Enugu State from a bureaucratic lens. Bureaucracy is, “an organization where rules are observed or followed rigidly and where there is hierarchical arrangement of authority (Chioke, 2012, p.83).” There is no doubt that education sector is a bureaucratic setting and as such; policy makers, policy implementers, and all stakeholders are required to follow rules rigidly in the discharge of their routine functions in a way that enhances the efficacy of the sector. Regrettably, corruption in almost all the states in Nigeria is ethnicised and thus, rules are frequently manoeuvred to favour relatives and cronies of the ruling and non-ruling elites. In short, “Bureaucratic organizations in Nigeria are largely and grossly inefficient (Chioke, 2017, p.11).” Given this trend, Arowolo (2022) believes that, the major challenge which the persistence of corruption poses to all Nigerian of integrity and conscience is on how to de-ethnicise corruption.

Emphatically, the gross bureaucratic inefficiency within the educational system is a result of corruption and it therefore calls for concerted efforts at salvaging education sector through empirical studies and solutions thereof. Collaboratively, Paul & Ofuebe (2020) in their study observed that those political and public office holders across administrations in Nigeria perceived corruption as a worthwhile venture despite the campaign against corruption. Thus, this must have given impetus to the problem of corruption in educational management within the scope of this current study. Pertinently, bureaucratic coordination devoid of corruption is among the distinctive marks of modern educational sector. Ethics demands that while following laid down rules, stakeholders in this sector are supposed to act in a detached rational manner and not in a biased manner by making academic policies, implementing them and conducting oneself in keeping with impersonal demands. Hence, formal rules and regulations as well as impersonal relationships encourage rational, effective and unbiased policies and attendant actions in all sectors and the educational sector inclusive. At this juncture, a look at the position of Kofi Annan is imperative. To him:

Literacy is a bride from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty, and a building block of development, an essential complement to investments in roads, dams, clinics and factories. Literacy is a platform for democratization, and a vehicle for the promotion of cultural and national identity.

Examining our educational sector, there appears to be absence of the foregoing features of development. Some scholars have attributed the absence of these indicators to alleged corruption in the system. Corroboratively, corruption in academic settings weakens economic development and perpetuates poverty levels and social inequalities (Stefan, 2017). A clear observation shows that Nigerian system of education has become bookish with the quest for paper qualification given undue prominence with little or no attention paid to the development of attitude and behaviour of the learners (Nnamani & Oyibe, 2016). This is another factor that has contributed in paving the way for corruption in the management of education.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, there seems to be noticeable prominence of maladministration and mismanagement of education in the state. Academic resources meant for the development of the society have been diverted for private purposes. Consequently, the problem of mismanagement of fund, diversion of fund for staff training, and inadequate release of running costs for education sector are perceived worrisome cankerworms affecting the administration and management of education in the country, especially Enugu state. In another parallax, there is manifest corruption in the procurement of teaching materials and thus, educators are forced to improvise. Using the above stated variables, the problem of this investigation is to study how corruption hampers the management of education in Enugu State public secondary schools. The question thrown up to guide the research was to what extent has corruption affected the management of education in Enugu State at the secondary level?

Conceptual Analysis

Corruption in the context of this study is a virus that has consumed the fabrics and rubrics of education system and other areas of human endeavor. Why? This is because corruption in the education sector has all the trappings of a virus in a living organism. It (virus) is hard to exterminate, because it is an intracellular obligate organism. As virus destroys the body system, corruption does same to an organisation. Corruption emanated from the Latin word, '*corruptus*' meaning '**to destroy.**' Appropriately, "a practice or an action is labeled as corruption because of the destruction it causes to the moral, political or socio-economic being of the society (Tikumah, 2009)." Tambawal (2017) argues that, "corruption is also a behavior which deviates from the normal moral role that one is expected to display as a result of undue influence." Corruption has been observed to have:

...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, educational and general development levels with **terrible viruses** that in addition

undermining the advancement and sustainable development of the country, corruption impairs and cripples the zeal for honesty, hard work and merit students admission in tertiary institutions (Nwaokugha and Ezeugwu, 2017).

It is imperative to add that, poverty is a serious enigma that must be curtailed by the government as it triggers corruption. Therefore, any attempted fight against corruption must strategically and simultaneously imbibe anti-poverty strategies. At this point, we accept the following perspective as a working definition in this study:

Academic corruption is corruption perpetrated by corrupt stakeholders in the education sector. This occurs in form of ghost teaching, maladministration, property tort such as conversion of teaching aids, sexual abuse of teenage/adult learners, favouritism in the allotment of grades/marks, misappropriation of fund, embezzlement, mismanagement of education funds and associated practices (Chioke, Agbodike and Nnaji, 2021, p.111).

Conclusively, corruption in this study encompasses all forms of malpractices in the managerial aspect of education. Thus, academic misconduct, academic fraud and academic dishonesty are corruptions evident in the management of education sector that inhibits the sector's development. Accordingly, quality education management must be one devoid of these nomenclatures.

Etymologically; the term, 'education' comes from a Latin word '*educare*,' meaning 'to lead out.' However, education has no generally acclaimed definition and as such researchers and writers approach the task of conceptualizing it from their different cultural inclinations cum individual perspective. Herein, education is the generic processes involved in instilling the societal values, assimilation of values and the resultant use of such values/knowledge to move from one social class to another and the use of the acquired knowledge to usher in sustainable development in the learner's society and other societies where such values have been assimilated and practiced. Therefore, education in the above sense is an agent of social mobility and social engineering.

Education is the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or adult develops the abilities, the attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he lives (Tambawal, 2013). From the foregoing perspective, it is clear that education is meant to create characters, abilities, attitudes and other **positive values** in man and the globe at large. However, it is pitiable to note that virtually all societies in this side of the globe are heavily fraught with the reverse, which is negative value. The education system here has done nothing or little to positively influence the nation's value system. It is important to note that, "Education in the broadest sense of the term is meant to aid the human being in his/her pursuit of wholeness. Wholeness here implies the harmonious development of all the potentialities God has given to a human person (Nwankwo and Nweke, 2016)." Parankimailil (2012) notes that, "education is a systematic process through which a child or an adult acquires knowledge, experience and relevant skills from one generation to another." In conclusion, education is the training of an individual whether young or old to become a better person that is humble, honest, skilled and cooperative for the general good of the society. Therefore, the goal of education is to usher in sustainable national development.

Related Studies

For clarity, a review of available few studies surface below in tabular form:

Author(s)	Year	Title	Objective(s)	Methodology	Results
Chioke, Agbodike & Nnaji	2021	Breaking the jinx of academic corruption for educational development in Enugu State: A focus on the covid-19 ordeal	To empirically determine appropriate ways of complying with the administrative and financial regulations guiding education sector in Enugu State.	Descriptive survey research design.	Compliance with the administrative and financial regulations guiding education sector in Enugu State will break the jinx of academic corruption for educational development in Enugu State.
Abdullahi	2018	Corruption in educational system and Management of primary school in Nigeria	Examining the nexus between provision of adequate fund and management of primary schools; determining the relationship between provision of adequate facilities and infrastructures and management of primary schools.	Proportional random sampling technique	It found that adequate provision of fund is necessary for effective management of primary education in North-Central; and provision of adequate facilities and infrastructures enhance the effective management of primary education in North-Central, Nigeria.

Author(s)	Year	Title	Objective(s)	Methodology	Results
Nwankwo and Nweke	2016	Effects of Corruption on Educational System: A Focus on Private Secondary Schools in Nsukka Zone	To examine the level of corruption in educational system of private secondary schools in Nigeria.	Qualitative research method	It found that corruption such as frauds; embezzlement, bribery, nepotism, examination malpractice and so on are not just in private secondary schools but also in public schools and even in higher institutions of the higher learning in Nigeria.

Gap in literature

Some critical indicators of corruption in education sector such as faulty recruitment, godfatherism, favouritism in staff recruitment and selection and so on were not analytically addressed in the reviewed empirical literatures. Moreover, a gap exists in the literature in analytically demonstrating the effects of these indicators on the administration and management of education in Enugu State at the secondary level. Also; inadequate attention was paid by the existing literatures to the extent to which corruption has affected the management of secondary schools in Enugu State. This present study is undertaken to fill the above identified gap in literature, because, there is no record of available study that was conducted in Enugu State with a view to examining the specific objective of this study.

Theoretical Framework

This study was rooted on postulations of systems theory. Systems theory is closely linked to Ludwig Von Bertalanffy. “In the systems approach, a system is defined as a set of inter-related and interdependent parts arranged in a manner that produces a unified whole (Sapru, 2013).” Nigeria is an embodiment of different organizations in the form of states, sectors, units, parts, arms, elements, forces, to mention but a few. The prevalent circumstance in the country’s public administration ecology is wholly or partly associated with corruption. But then, we must bear in mind that the very impact of related anti-corruption policies exists in the form of and in fact is the output of the system. So, input ushers in output and how the people react or respond to the hand effects thereof is by no means inconsequential. Then, what are the specific inputs in the administrative system of the education sector? Specifically, mismanagement of fund and unethical standards, are amongst the inputs in the Education Management unit that are on the negative side.

To Ikelegbe (1996), “systems theory sees policy as an output of the political system.” This therefore suggests that anti-corrupt policies and strategies in the educational sector and the entire system at large are output of the government geared towards making the system corrupt free and educational management is by no means an exception to this. Interestingly; in any bureaucratic organization, certain elements interplay and are manifestly involved. They are: input, output and feedback. Thus, in an organization like Nigeria, policies come in form of input. In this

dimension; corruption functions and thrives in a bureaucracy as an organizational input and resultantly leaves the organization with results which in turn receive demands in form of inputs from the public. Additionally; connecting the systems theory to the central theme, educational management, we bear in mind that the whole includes, the Board, the Management team, departmental heads of schools and other related parts of the sector. These parts function synergically to achieve the common objectives of establishing public schools in Enugu. Then, how does government respond to the inputs in form of demands directed to it with regard to corruption in public schools? Perhaps, you already know the answer. Then what are the indices of academic corruption and the extent to which they affect the management of public-school students within the scope of the study? This forms the basis for this research.

Tenets of the theory

- Subordination of the unit's will to the dictates of the general system. In other words, the rule is that every part is bound to obey the rules of the whole to which it is attached to.
- Superiority of the whole: The general system surpasses the component parts.
- Regulations: Since, the general system is greater than the part; it performs regulatory functions by determining what may pass between the units and the whole environment. Thus, the system determines how the units are affected by the convergence of forces in the part of the whole.

Application of the Theory to the Study

In applying the systems theory to this study, the researcher seeks to enquire the extent to which the state's educational sector as a unit of the general system is being affected by the interplay of corrupt indices in the study area. The corrupt indices in form of inputs that go into the educational system of Enugu State, which directly or indirectly affect the general system are: promotion based on unethical means, poor funding, misappropriation of funds by school authorities, diversion of funds for staff training and favouritism in the promotion of staff which aid and reinforces

breaking of rules and regulations by the stakeholders which the output of these inputs is maladministration of the public secondary schools. As a result of the interconnections that prevail in a system; the logic remains that whatever affects a subsystem, affects the whole. This being the truth, the study verified how corruption affects the general system in terms of educational management using Enugu State's public secondary education as the focus.

Research Method

Study Design and Instrumentation

The researcher adopted survey research design. The questionnaire was face and content validated by two research experts in the Department of Public Administration Nnamdi Azikiwe University.

With respect to internal consistency, the researcher administered the questionnaire on 20 persons. Using SPSS version 20, the Cronbach Alpha reliability index α result for this cluster showed that $\alpha = 0.8$. This result shows that the instrument passed the reliability test and thus considered reliable enough for attaining the research objective.

Scope and Participants

The study took place in Enugu State and two schools from each of the three Senatorial Zones were selected. The total staff strength of the schools selected from Post Primary School Management Board (PPSMB) Enugu record is 362. Out of the sample size of one hundred and ninety (190), one hundred and fifty-five (155) questionnaires were rightly filled and found useful. This indicates that the response rate was 86%. This is in line with Arowosogbe and Muhamed (2015) position that a 20 to 30% response rate is common in survey questionnaires.

Ethical Issues and Data Analyses

In collecting data, the researcher did ask for permission of the relevant authorities via a written letter of permission to head Research and Statistics Department of PPSMB Enugu. Significant procedures were followed by the researcher to address research ethics. In this regard, public schools tutorial staffs were given letters of consent stating the objective of the study. Confidentiality, withdrawal clauses and the convenience of the

research participants was duly considered. In addition, the privacy of the respondents was respected as personal detail like names of the respondents were not disclosed in the entire study. Descriptive and inferential statistics was adopted for data analysis. A mean value of 3.0 was taken as a criterion to ascertaining the position of the respondents on each item of the research question. Therefore, any item in the instrument which has a mean equal to or higher than 3.0 will be regarded as ‘accepted’ while items with less than 3.0 will be regarded as ‘unaccepted.’

Data Presentation and Analyses

Research question 1: How would you rate the extent corruption affects the management of education in Enugu State at the secondary level?

A bench-mark of 3.0 was used for the study. Since, the mean value of all the questionnaire items for the variables was above 3.0, it depicts that all the questions were accepted for the study. Hence, all variables in this cluster were used for the study.

Discussion of findings

The study found that corruption affected the management of education sector of Enugu State to a great extent. This finding corresponds with the fact that, “No one can doubt that corruption as an immoral behaviour does not have negative implications on the management of education in Nigeria (Nwaokugha and Ezeugwu, 2017).” With this in the system, there is predominance of two categories of people namely irresponsible educators and irresponsible students and this is as a result of corruption in the administration and management of education in the state.

Table 1

Mean ratings of participants' responses on the extent corruption affects management of public secondary schools in Enugu State.

S/N	Items	SA (5)	A (4)	SD (3)	D (2)	N (1)	\bar{X}	Std.	Variance	Decision
1	High rate of mismanagement of fund.	91	14	16	20	14	3.9548	1.42493	2.030	Accepted
2	Lack of prompt payment of salaries, gratuity and pension.	105	12	1	7	30	4.0000	1.61968	2.623	Accepted
3	Selection and promotion based on unethical means	98	14	13	28	2	4.1484	1.24208	1.543	Accepted
4	Inadequate release of running costs	71	7	7	38	32	3.3032	1.69558	2.875	Accepted
5	Inadequacy of teaching materials.	100	19	12	15	9	4.2000	1.26594	1.603	Accepted
6	Diversion of fund for staff training.	50	55	24	6	20	3.7032	1.31017	1.717	Accepted
	Grand Total						3.8849	1.4263	2.065	

Source: *Author's field work*

First, a look at the information on the above cluster shows that the majority of the respondents supported the idea that high rate of mismanagement of fund is an extent to which corruption in the educational sector affects administration and management of education in the state. This is consistent with Obasi (2003) below: “mismanagement of public funds and not paucity of funds that the federal government often claims, is the main cause of the inability of the government to adequately fund the nation's tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Obasi, 2003).” Indeed, funds designated for educational purposes are often mismanaged by corrupt politicians or their cronies in education sector. It follows then that the presence of corruption in education sector truncates the administration and management of education in the state to a high extent. This is consistent with the study conducted by Dridi (2014) which made it clear that, “The most obvious argument is that corruption is inimical for the development of an economic and institutional environment that enhances education expansion and high-quality human capital formation.” With a mean score of 4.148, participants agreed that selection and promotion of tutorial staff is based on unethical means. In a related study, Ukeje, Ndukwe, Chukwuemeka, Ogbulu & Onele (2020, p.370) highlighted that, “in practice, directives are received from the highest echelon to employ certain people for certain position in certain places without recourse to laid down rules.” This has a far reaching implication on the educational management, as selection and promotion based on unethical means brings in inefficiency into the system. Similarly, Ukeje et al (2020) found that in Ebonyi State Civil Service, those employed without recourse to ethical processes cannot run the machinery of government effectively and efficiently. Also; the study revealed the prevalence of: lack of prompt payment of salaries, gratuity and pension; inadequate release of running costs; inadequacy of teaching materials; diversion of fund for staff training. Corroborating these findings in a study, Abdullahi (2018) contextualized corruption as, “the inadequate provision of educational fund, facilities and infrastructure as well as political favouritism in appointing educational managers.” Viewed from the theoretical framework of this study, it is obvious that these factors correlate and interplay to bring major decay to the well-being of the state. Most importantly, the area of human capital development is really the worst hit by the ebb and flow of these indices. Therefore, Ifedili and Ochuba (2009) were right to have maintained that appointment of

unqualified teachers based on ethnicity and parochialism, inadequate instructional facilities, mismanagement of fund, poor remuneration of teachers among others as the factors militating against the maintenance of standard education in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This study has revealed that corruption affected the management of education in Enugu State at the secondary level to a great extent. Obviously, corruption has balkanized the educational system into hostile units (irresponsive educators versus irresponsible students) and has left management of education in tatters. Academic corruption in school administration and management has therefore remained a causative agent that is responsible for illiteracy, unemployment, unemployability of school leavers/graduates and underemployment with their enigmatic outcome, seemingly insurmountable but actually surmountable on the application of right measures. A situation where there is selection and promotion based on unethical means and inadequacy of teaching materials helps in breeding unemployable human resources in the state. Corruption in school administration leads to unemployment – a situation where qualified persons are sidelined and the unqualified taken. Equally, the practice of selection and promotion based on unethical means fosters the underemployment of members of the teaching staff. This study thus raises an alarm over the increased rate of unemployability of school leavers as a result of acute corruption in the administration and management of secondary education in the state. With this, the study has created an understanding of the causal link that exists between corruption and unemployability of the poorly educated.

Therefore, this study has contributed to knowledge as the woes associated with education management which are directly orchestrated through academic fraud were brought to the fore. This study authenticates that these woes (high rate of mismanagement of fund; lack of prompt payment of salaries, gratuity and pension; promotion based on unethical means; inadequate release of running costs; and inadequacy of teaching materials) are problems that must be addressed if students are to receive

the high standards of education, they need in order to meet the demands of the ever dynamic local and global employment market.

However, further research should be conducted to ascertain the degree of the effects of these aforementioned variables in private schools. The study concludes that educational renaissance should be manifestly conceived and carried out within the state and Nigeria at large, because whatever affects a unit of the whole equally affects the whole as seen from the lens of systems theory. The following insights on slaying corruption are possible solutions to the issues that were empirically unveiled:

- Since there is there is significant relationship between corruption and management of education in Enugu State; selection and promotion should be strictly based on ethics. When teachers are ethically selected and promoted as and when due, better there would be better educational management of secondary schools and quality learning guaranteed.
- There should be adequate release of running costs, prompt payment of salaries, gratuity, pension and other benefits so as to make teachers to be focused while carrying out their functions effectively.
- Adequate teaching materials should be made available for the state's secondary schools. In this regard, the state library and school libraries should be thoroughly refurbished for effective teaching and learning.

Implication of the Study

The implication of this study is that if the Commissioner for Education in the State does not consider exterminating critical corrupt practices that have hampered effective educational management and administration in the State by motivating and supporting the educators and learners to pursue quality educational service delivery and academic excellence through effective management devoid all forms of corruption, the state's education sector will remain impotent in the area of human capital development.

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