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Perceived Influence of Corruption on the Management of Universities in Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the perceived influence of corruption on the management of universities in Benue State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 2,902 academic and non-academic staff from Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi and Benue State University, Makurdi. A total of 216 staff were selected using stratified random sampling technique.Corruption and University Management Questionnaire (CUMQ) was used for data collection. The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and chi-square to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings are that corruption significantly influences the provision and maintenance of school facilities in Universities in Benue State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among other things that University Governing Council in collaboration with the academic staff union of universities should set up a formidable monitoring team that would make sure all projects allocated to the school are executed properly and according to specifications to avoid diversion of funds and other school resources.

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Corruption is concerned with any form or abuse of power or position by anyone at any level of government or in business. It is a deviation from norms, traditions and general approved ways of doing things and interaction in public and private establishments, thereby encouraging cheating, nepotism, favouritism, bribery, dishonesty and disobedience to constituted authorities (Ignore, 2004). Nigeria is a country that is endowed with so many resources (human and material). However, the current state of dishonesty, cheating and disobedience seems to have crippled governments and other international organizations' efforts and capacity to invest in the people and provide for the realization of their basic human rights. Amua (2010) noted that corruption in developing countries is a social phenomenon and it is fast growing to an extent that there is no sophisticated machinery to check this deadly conduct.As such, people who are charged with the responsibility of providing fundamental needs to the populace tend to convert such materials for their personal benefits.

In clear terms, Ibrahim (2004) defines corruption as the abuse of public resources to enrich or give unfair advantage to individuals, family members or friends to the detriment of the people who are originally designed to benefit from such facilities. Obi (2004) adds that corruption is an incentive offered to soften or encourage someone to break the rules of the organization to which he/she normally represents and delivers an unfairly favourable outcome. Lien (1990) also defines corruption as the abuse of public power for private gain. Lien, further explains that bribery, misappropriation of public resources, nepotism and influencing the formulation of laws or regulations for private gain are examples of corruption.

According to Msugh (2007), the forms and characteristics of corruption in the education sector are similar to those of other public sectors and, thus can be seen as the use of public office for private gains. This covers a wide range of activities such as favouring relatives, soliciting or extortion of bribes and theft of public goods, among others. This definition has two important elements.It establishes a link between the identification of corrupt behaviour and its effects, and insists upon the factor of regularity involved. Corruption can be presented as the systematic use of public office for private benefit that results in a reduction in the quality or availability of public goods and services. When applied to a particular field of education, corruption could be defined as a systematic use of public office for private benefit whose impact is significant on access, quality or equity in education.

Corruption in education is not a recent phenomenon(Ademoye, 2012). It has been observed in the management of educational system that misappropriation and embezzlement seem to affect the provision of funds, infrastructural facilities, instructional materials and maintenance of school plant atall levels of education. Reuben (2005) notes that policy-makers, school administrators and other officials in the management of education contribute to corruption by first allocating funds based on

favouritism, and secondly, by diverting funds meant for the running of institutions for their personal gain.

In education today, people who are saddled with the responsibility of controlling or disbursing educational facilities for the benefit of the public do end up diverting the facilities to their places of choice as this could be seen in the allocation or citing of tertiary institutions in improper places or at worse, selling the opportunity to those that may be able to pay for it(converting such into cash for their personal use) (Obanya, 2009). This may have tempered with the quality, standard and management of education in Nigeria.

It is also observed that the facilities used in our higher institutions are inadequate, while the existing ones are old, obsolete and not in tune with current industrial practices (Onyenchu, 2006).This could be as a result of misappropriation of funds meant to provide facilities to assist in the running of such institutions.Agur (2008) notes that corruption significantly leads to the diversion of essential facilities such as laboratory equipment, library facilities, sporting facilities and furniture as well as lecture halls and offices that are needed to enhance teaching and learning in tertiary institutions. In many instances, it is not that provisions were not made for the procurement of such facilities, but that the funds meant for the provision and procurement of the facilities were embezzled by those saddled with the responsibility. This leaves the universities in a pitiable state with inadequate essential facilities for the running of such institutions.Nwatu (2005) stresses that at times, contractors do collaborate with school administrators to supply less than what was originally contracted for the school. Even when the contracted funds or facilities get to the school, the school administrators neither use the facilities to the development of the school nor use the cash provided for the procurement and maintenance of school plant.

There is also an erroneous belief that public property is nobody's concern. That has for ages been the root cause of this habit of mismanaging public properties. Obi (2004) observes that provision of physical facilities in educational institutions has not been given very serious concern. Even when such facilities are provided, the maintenance culture is not there. This lack of maintenance culture of school facilities is very common in our higher institutions of learning in Benue States.Smith (2012) adds that school administrators divert the fund sent to them particularly for maintenance, because nobody would tell if the funds had been used or not over time. As a result, some of the school facilities such as libraries, laboratories, lecture halls, toilets, staff quarters, students hostels, ceiling fans, television to mention but a few have witnessed little or no renovation overtime.This may have crippled the quality of education offered with such facilities.

Going by the above instances, one could argue that university management may have been adversely influenced by corruption. It suffices to say that this, in many instances, may have influenced the provision of facilities and maintenance as well as supervision of schools, payment of salaries and many others. The above phenomenon seems to be the present situation in the universities in Benue State.This prompted the

researchers to conduct a research in the area. The issue of management of resources in
Mahmud Pinga, Ph.D and Nguyiman Ahua tertiary institutions seems to have reached the peak where effective use of relevant
strategies would be explored and employed. It is against the background that the
researchers, therefore, investigated the influence of corruption on the management of
universities in Benue State.

Statement of the Problem
Infrastructural decay seems to be one of the major problems faced by schools.
In most institutions, buildings have deep cracks while others have no window louvers,
good classrooms, offices, toilets, recreational facilities, laboratories, libraries, students'
hostel,staff quarters among others. There seems to be shortage of instructional materials
and other essential facilities that would have enabled effective teaching and learning to
take place in universitiesin Benue State. All these problems culminate into examination
malpractice thereby reducing the academic output of students. What seems to have
caused this problem may have been unequal distribution of resources and educational
provisions among schools. Looting of educational funds has become a common practice
condoned at all governing strata asit seems to be a common feature of those governing
to loot funds allocated for educational development, capacity building, infrastructural
development, modernization and rehabilitation of educational institutions. In most
cases, money meant for infrastructural facilities get into wrong hands. Terfa (2010)
observes that the falling standard of education is as a result of the diversion and poor
management of the available funds by people who are in charge of these funds. It is this
seemingly prevailing threat of corruption to quality and equal educational opportunities
that prompted the researchers to investigate the influence of corruption on the provision
and maintenance of school facilities in universitiesin Benue State.

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study was to find out the influence of corruption on the
management of universitiesin Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:
1.   find out the influence of corruption on provision of school facilities in
universitiesin Benue State.
2.   establish the influence of corruption on maintenance of school facilities in
universities.

Research Questions
The study was guided by the following research questions:
1.   How doescorruption influence the provision of school facilities in universities
in Benue State?
2.   What is the influence of corruption on maintenance of school facilities in
universities?

Hypotheses

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

1.   Corruption has no significant negative influence on provision of school facilities in universities in Benue State.

2.   Corruption has no significantnegative influence on maintenance of school facilities in universities.

Research Method

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population comprised 2,902 academic and non-academic staff of Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi and Benue State University, Makurdi during the 2015/2016 academic session (Registry Department of the Universities, 2016). A sample of 216 staff representing 7% was selected using stratified random sampling technique. This sample is considered adequate since it is in line with Glass and Hopkin (1994) in Alanana (2014) who asserts that 5% to 10% sample is ideal for a population of 1000 or more.

A researcher-structured questionnaire titled "Corruption and University Management Questionnaire (CUMQ)" was used for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into Sections A and B. Section A contained itemson the personal data of the respondents, while Section B was divided into two clusters - A and B. Cluster A contained items 1-5 that focused on the influence of corruption on provision of school facilities in universities. Cluster B contained items 6-10 on influence of corruption on maintenance of school facilities in universities. Responses were based on a 4-point rating scale with the response modes of Strongly Agree (SA)= 4, Agree (A)=3, Disagree (D)=2 and Strongly Disagree (SD)=1. The data collected were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Any item with less than 2.50 was rejected as having no influence. On the other hand, it was accepted if it was 2.50 and above. Chi-square test of goodness-of-fit was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

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

Research Question One: How does corruption influence the provision of school facilities in universities in Benue State?

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations on Influence of Corruption on the Provision of School Facilities in Federal and State Universities

Item No	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	*M*	*SD*	Decision
1	Embezzlement of funds affects the procurement of laboratory equipment.	102	92	17	5	3.30	0.71	Agreed
2	Diversion of money affects the provision of school libraries.	107	99	7	3	3.44	0.63	Agreed
3	Taking of bribe affects the procurement of textbooks.	98	89	16	13	3.26	0.84	Agreed
4	Sharing of projects money affects the building of lecture halls.	103	97	10	6	3.38	0.70	Agreed
5	Falsification of figures affects the procurement of sporting facilities.	96	83	21	16	3.20	0.90	Agreed
Cluster mean/ standard deviation						**3.32**	**0.76**	**Agreed**

Table 1 revealed that the mean ratings of items 1-5 are 3.30, 3.44, 3.26, 3.38 and 3.20 respectively with their corresponding standard deviations of 0.71, 0.63, 0.84, 0.70 and 0.90 respectively. The cluster mean of 3.32 with standard deviation of 0.76 was also above the cut-off point of 2.50. This means that corruption influences the provision of school facilities in universities in Benue State.

Research Question Two: What is the influence of corruption on maintenance of school facilities in universities?

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations on the Influence of Corruption on Maintenance of School Facilities in Universities

Item No	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	*M*	*SD*	Decision
6	Diversion of funds affects the repair of ceiling fans.	92	87	19	18	3.17	0.91	Agreed
7	Sharing of school money affects the renovation of lecture halls.	95	102	12	7	3.32	0.73	Agreed
8	Embezzlement of funds affects the staff/ students accommodation.	89	99	15	13	3.22	0.82	Agreed
9	Procurement of substandard items affects the servicing of laboratory equipment.	114	79	14	9	3.38	0.79	Agreed
10	Falsification of data affects the serving of school toilet facilities.	106	86	17	7	3.35	0.76	Agreed
Cluster mean/ standard deviation						**3.29**	**0.80**	**Agreed**

Table 2 showed that the mean ratings of items 6-10 are 3.17, 3.32, 3.22, 3.38 and 3.35 respectively with their corresponding standard deviations of 0.91, 0.73, 0.82, 0.79 and 0.76 respectively. The cluster mean of 3.29 with standard deviation of 0.80 was found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. This means that corruption influence the maintenance of school facilities in universities.

Hypothesis One: Corruption has no significant negative influence on provision of school facilities in universities in Benue State.

Table 3: Chi-Square Test of the Influence of Corruption on Provision of School Facilities in Universities

Responses	Observed frequency	Expected Frequency	df	Level of sig	$\chi^{2\text{-cal}}$	χ^{2_tab}	*P-value*	Decision
SD	6	54						
D	16	54	3	0.05	137.93	7.82	0.00	Significant
A	43	54						
SA	151	54						
Total	**216**							

Values in parentheses are percentages ($\chi^2 = 137.926$ [a], df = 3, p = 0.05>0.00)
Table 3 shows that χ^2 cal. = 137.926[α] > 7.815; *P<.05* with 3 degrees of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis was not accepted. This means that corruption has significantnegative influence on provision of school facilities in universities in Benue State.

Hypothesis Two: Corruption has no significant negative influence on maintenance of school facilities in universities.

Table 4: Chi-Square Test of the Influence of Corruption on Maintenance of School Facilities

Responses	Observed frequency	Expected Frequency	df	Level of sig	$\chi^{2\text{-cal}}$	$\chi^{2\text{-tab}}$	P-value	Decision
SD	3	54						
D	21	54	3	0.05	131.04	7.82	0.00	Significant
A	78	54						
SA	114	54						
Total	**216**							

Values in parentheses are percentages ($\chi^2 = 131.037$ [a], df = 3, p = 0.05>0.00)
Table 3 shows that χ^2 cal. = 131.037[α] > 7.815; *P<.05* with 3 degrees of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis was not accepted. This means that corruption has significantnegative influence on the maintenance of school facilities in universities.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of this study revealed that corruption has significant negative influence on provision of school facilities in universities in Benue State. This is in agreement with Agur (2008) who notes that corruption significantly leads to the diversion of essential facilities such as laboratory equipment, library facilities, sporting

facilities and furniture as well as lecture halls and offices which are needed for effective teaching and learning in tertiary institutions. This finding is also in line with the researchers' current observations during their fieldwork, as they noticed that despite the huge allocations and financial charges by these institutions, students were still standing to receive lectures without fans or air conditioners to provide the needed conducive environment for the students to learn effectively.

The second finding showed that corruption has significant negative influence on maintenance of school facilities in universities. This finding is in line with Smith (2012) who notes that school administrators divert the funds sent to them particularly for maintenance, because nobody would tell if the funds had been used or not over time. As a result, some of the school facilities such as libraries, laboratories, lecture halls, toilets, staff quarters, students' hostels, ceiling fans, television to mention but a few have witnessed little or no renovation overtime.This may have crippled the quality of education offered with such facilities.This research affirms Smith's (2012) findings in the area of the study as the school facilities have not been renovated/repaired for quite a long time despite the fact that funds may have been allocated for the repair of the facilities. This makes the face of the institutions not to look decent as they are supposed to be.

Conclusion

Based on the result of this study, it was established that corruption has significant negative influence on provision of school facilities in universities. It was also found that corruption has significantnegative influence on maintenance of school facilities in universities. It is common to observe low quality materials used in the building and furnishing in Nigerian universities and abandonment of some projects that have been awarded three to five years ago. This research also enabled the researchers to notice the poor maintenance culture prominent in public institutions, education inclusive, even when funds have been allocated for the repair of these facilities. If this attitude continues, the standard of education will fall beyond recognition.The relevance of the study is due to the fact that the development of corruption in Nigeria at the present stage has reached a high level. Corruption is raised in various spheres of life, including in education. It destabilizes the prevailing moral foundations of society, violates the principles of social justice and equality.

Recommendations
The following recommendations are made here under:
1.   The University Governing Council in collaboration with the academic staff union of universities should set up a formidable monitoring team that would make sure all projects allocated to the school are executed properly and according to specifications to avoid diversion of funds and other school resources.

2.   School management should contract the maintenance of the university facilities to private organizations and constitute a strong monitoring department to ensure that university facilities are properly maintained to enhance effective teaching and learning.

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