Science Teachers' Perception of Corruption in Secondary Schools in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria

Ibu, Prescilia Nkow; Adie, Emmanuel Benimpuye

Department of Science Education University of Calabar Calabar

&

Okaba, Lydia Agbo

Department of Biology/Integrated Science, Federal College of Education, Obudu.

Abstract

The study was on the Assessment of Science Teachers' Perceptions of Corruption in Secondary Schools in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two (2) research questions. Literature was reviewed empirically and theoretically according to the sub-variables of the study. The study adopted the survey research design with a purposive sampling technique to select a total of 69 secondary school science teachers from 100 science teachers in the study area. A questionnaire titled Corrupt practices (CP) was used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using frequencies and simple percentages, and the findings of the study showed that science teacher perception of corruption in Secondary schools is significantly high. Based on the finding it was recommended among others that government should allocate money to science educators for research.

Keywords: Science Teachers, Secondary School, Corruption and Teachers' Perception.

Introduction

Science education involves sharing of science content and processes with individuals who are not considered traditionally to be members of the scientific community. The individuals could be students, farmers, market women or a whole community. Science education in Nigeria concentrates on the teaching of science concepts, and addressing misconceptions held by learners regarding science concepts. Science education is very important to the development of any nation. That is why every nation must take it very serious in all institutions of

learning. Many of the developed nations were able to achieve so much in science and technology because of science education. Launching of educational programme by the Russian government on October, 4 1957 would not have been possible if not for the position they placed in physics and science education (Omosewo, 2009). The branches of science education are; biology, chemistry and physics which are combined with education and over the years there has been low enrolment of these courses in our institutions as identified by Aina (2011). Causes of this low enrolment include society disdain, mockery of teachers and low prestige of teachers (Okebukola, 2013). Interestingly, as important as these subjects are, students' performance has not been encouraging and this is worrisome and calls for investigation (West African Examination Council's Chief Examiner's report, 2018). Table shows students 'enrolment and performance in WAEC in Chemistry, Physic and Biology that make up science education from 2013-2017.

Table 1. Enrolment and performance of students in Biology, Chemistry and Physics in WAEC from 2013-2017

Year	Biology		Chemistry		Physics	
	Total entry	% pass	Total entry	% pass	Total	% pass
		at grade		at grade	entry	at grade
		A_1 - C_6		A_1 - C_6		A_1 - C_6
2013	1,052,575	36.72	438,935	51.92	434,510	44.51
2014	1,280,565	35.65	364,464	50.94	354,236	42.81
2015	1,083,525	34.58	436,324	46.95	436,298	54.25
2016	1,394,257	33.97	439,622	45.46	443,799	49.34
2017	1,893,653	33.90	454.28	45.78	489,265	44.65

Source: Ministry of Education Research and Statistics Department (2018) page 28.

Despite all the great things science education can accomplish in national development there are many problems militating against it especially in Nigeria. Some of these problems are corruption and lack of governance. According to Duyne (2011) corruption is defined as an improbability decay in the decision making process in which a decision maker consents to deviate or demands deviation from the criterion which should rule his/her decision making in exchange for a reward or for the promise/expectation of a reward, while these motives influence his/her decision making they cannot be part of the justification of the decision. On the other hand, Ayobami (2011) maintained that corruption is

abuse or misuse of power or positive trust for personal or group benefit (monetary or otherwise).

Generally, corruption can be defined as the misuse of entrusted power by heritage, education, marriage, election, appointment or whatever else for private gain. Corruption is therefore seen as a manifestation of the following: Institutional weakness, poor ethical standards, skewed incentives and insufficient enforcement Yushau (2012) pointed out that when people talk about corruption they mean public funds Siphone or misappropriated by civil servants, contractors, politicians etc. Corruption is the abuse of public office for private gain, and it is an aspect of bad governance (Oguniya, 2014). Corruption is rampart at all levels of government, crippling basic health education services and other social infrastructures (p.207). Good governance cannot be possible in a state where corruption is gaining foothold.

The international clamour for Education for All (EFA) is borne from the conviction that Education is a fundamental human right. But since its funding, according to Transparency International (2013), is often obtained from 20-30 per cent of the budget of most countries, it is therefore prone to corruption from the operation of the system. In effect, "overcrowded classrooms and crumbling schools" where "books and supplies are sometimes sold instead of being given freely", are often observed; unauthorised fees which often force children of the poor out of school, the appointment of teachers through family connections and the sale of grades are all offshoots of corruption in schools.

In discussing the concept of corruption, Nwanze (2012, p.2) was quick to identify some offshoots of corruption. They include bribery, nepotism, misappropriation, fraud, embezzlement; extortion and favoritisms. He then proceeded to identify some of the causes of corruption to include weak institutional enforcement framework; lack of ethical standards in Government business; poor reward system; and extended family ties or pressures.

While it is true that poor and mismanaged economy could cause corruption, it may not be true that people are corrupt because of poverty, otherwise only the poor people would have been corrupt. It is on record that people who corruptly loot the treasuries in developing countries are the rich. It takes the will of any one to decide either to be or not to be corrupt. There are still both rich and poor citizens who are of high moral integrity in Nigeria.

In the view of Patrinos (2013), teacher absenteeism is a major source of corruption in schools, especially where they are illegitimate. Closely related is their habit of lateness to school or leaving school before closing period. Certainly these deprive students of the full opportunity to learn during official school hours. In his research in 21 countries, Patrinos found that the rate of absenteeism in primary schools range from 11 - 30 per cent; the rate in Uganda is as high as 30 per cent. It is even slightly higher in Kenya. He also concluded that absenteeism

rate is higher in underdeveloped countries. Hyll-Larsen (2013) equally lamented the misappropriation of US \$48million from 2004-2009 in Kenya. The leakage from the Education budget is certainly detrimental to the implementation of EFA.

The work of Chow and Nga (2013) dwelt on bribery for admission in schools in Vietnam. The existing practice was to "prioritise admissions on the basis of geographic eligibility to applicants, meaning that priority must be given to students who are officially registered as living in the area". However, over 31 per cent of the students in the desired schools were actually qualified got admitted from bribes offered by their parents as the schools were of high quality. It was so wide spread that 67 per cent considered the illegal practice as "normal".

Another segment of corruption in Education explored by Leach (2013) is sexual violence in schools. While majority of teachers were proud of their profession, a small proportion of them were involved in sexual misconduct like "heterosexual behaviours, with male perpetrators targeting female victims" and homosexuality in single-sex schools. In tertiary institutions, female staffs are often harassed by male colleagues, and sometime, by daring male students. For instance, out of 560 students in Botswana, Leach found that "20% of girls reported having been asked for sex by teachers and half accepted out of fear".

The crave for paper qualifications, the world over, especially in developing countries, has given rise to another form of corruption in schools. Transparency International (2007) has identified what she tagged "Degree Mills". In her submission, "Customers of degree mills do little or no work to earn their qualifications, which are simply purchased". This has led to an increasing rate of fake certificates, diplomas and degrees through counterfeiting processes. At the degree mills centers, students of all kinds, irrespective of qualifications are admitted.

In discussing academic integrity and misconduct, Bretag (2013) opined that academic integrity encompasses the five values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness and responsibility. This demands that teaching, research and learning are conducted honestly and fairly by staff and students. The negation of academic integrity include "plagiarism, cheating, unauthorised collaboration, the theft of others' work, paying for assignments from the internet, the falsification of data, the misrepresentation of records, fraudulent publishing and other actions that undermine the integrity of scholarship and research". It is sad to note that these vices now abound in most tertiary institutions all over the world.

The appointments of headship in Schools, Colleges and Universities are now being based on political affiliations instead of quality performance at competitive selection interviews. In some African countries, according to Salmi and Helma (2013), Heads of States appoint senior members of staff in tertiary institutions. This corrupt method of appointment has favoured the introduction of unwholesome vices by way of reciprocation into the tertiary institutions. This has

equally eroded the clamour for autonomy as fiscal accountability is now mortgaged by conscience in a bid to be loyal to the politicians through whose efforts one gained the employment.

In a Cambodian (1991) programme of integrating anti-corruption in School Curricular, secondary school students were given an opportunity to discuss "the source of their family income". It was meant to ascertain if it came from fraud of public or State assets, from exploitation of other people or the abuse of power for private gain. They also examined why corruption breed social injustice. This is an indication that corruption in school has become a global issue.

Among others, Nwanze also identified evils of corruption to include wastage of skills and time, political instability, reduction in quality of goods and services and upset of ethnic balance. It could cause the erosion of confidence in democratic structures; undermine effective governance, proliferation of abandoned projects, examination malpractice, distortion of financial surveillance and regulations. Sometimes, it leads to miscarriage of justice.

Adie, Anditung & Okri, (2019) carried out a study on mathematics education and corrupt practices among students in Federal Government Colleges in Cross River State. The design used was Expost-facto a sample of 240 students were selected from the population of all Federal Government Colleges in Cross River State, Data were analyzed using simple percentage. It was found out that mathematics education is a useful instrument that can eliminate corrupt practice among students in Federal Government Colleges in Cross River State

Adverse Effect of Corruption on Science Education

Corruption has eating deep into Nigeria system and it is manifesting in every sector including education. In Nigeria today it is not what you know but whom you know, that is why Mfon, (2016) said recruitment to jobs is tied down to criteria such as political favoritisms, geographical area or quota system. Many of the teacher training institutions and universities cannot boast of the best academic staff because the best probably do not have godfathers who can help them. Appointment is no longer based on merit but on whom you know and the amount of money/materials you can offer for such jobs.

Purchases of science equipment to schools are no longer done transparently since it is either the chief executive of the school or any of his or her relation who does the supply. In this case they neither supply the required specification nor the required quantity; in most cases they don't even supply anything. Most of the science laboratories are empty building or buildings filled with fake or obsolete science equipment which are useful for nothing but mere demonstration. Money meant for staff training are diverted to personal account while selection of those who benefit in staff training is on whom you know

syndrome. All these bounce back on the quality of science education the nation produces.

Nigerian leaders are corrupt that is why we lack stable political system of government which affect science education as posited by Oloyede (2015) that in any stable political system, teachers and their education system are well catered for. Science teachers are not well catered for in Nigeria instead they are looked upon by the politicians as beggars.

Corruption is the greatest challenge to development of science education in Nigeria; corruption led to many problems the country is facing presently. According to Olagunju (2010) corruption led to slow movement of files in offices, extortion in highways, ghost workers in work places, election irregularities and many more. Corruption makes school administrator mismanage fund meant for purchasing science equipment and ask science teachers to make sure student still pass in examinations by all means. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic country; this is affecting the country in many ways especially in education.

The world is in era of science and technology; every nation is craving for development in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which cannot be fully achieved without science education. Parents encourage their children to study science oriented courses which is good; children who have no ability for such courses opt for courses in humanities and arts. When the time of employment comes, those who opted for humanities and arts courses would be given jobs related to the sciences without prerequisite qualification. Those who originally studied sciences are schemed out of the jobs because of ethnicity; the attitude discourages young ones from studying science education. Employment is no longer based on merit; those who are qualified for teaching science are not given employment because they don't have 'godfather' in government. Teaching appointments are done based on nepotism and favoritism. This is affecting the development of science education in the nation.

There is corruption in the land and no one is spared neither is any organ of government spared (Aina, 2011). Lecturers in higher institutions have turned colleges and universities into supermarket shops where they sell handouts and books at outrageous prices. Staffers of many polytechnics have taken over the affairs of the institution because the chief executives are corrupt in awarding contract that never existed and mismanage funds meant for science equipment. They sell books and handouts at 'cutthroat' prices without being checked. Male lecturers molest female students who are not willing to dance to their music of promiscuous life styles. All these discourage students who want to study science education and kill the morale of those who are studying the course already. Scholarships and bursaries meant for science students are diverted to none science students because of ethnicity. Where the scholarship is given to science

students they introduce unnecessary bureaucracy into it that students may not get the money for many years.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchor on the Bad Apple theories. These theories were propounded by De Graaf, in 2007. Bad Apple theories posit that corruption is rooted in "defective human character and predisposition toward criminal activity". People act corruptly because they have wrong moral values such as greed. Bad apple theories attribute corruption in organizations to "a few unsavory individuals...lacking in some personal quality, such as moral character" (Trevino & Youngblood, 1990, p. 378). Criminological approaches to corruption are relatives of bad apple theories. De Graaf(2007) informs us that bad apple theories have no empirical bases of support. He also argues that it is an oversimplification to hold that corruption results only or mainly from desire for material gain as the official could "be seeking a higher social standing, excitement, work pleasure or a cure for frustration" (p.50) and that perpetrators of crime pursue a variety of different goals. Lacking an absolute universal morality, it will be difficult to even agree on what is corrupt. And in the absence of agreement as to what is corrupt, those who are prosecuted, even when pronounced guilty by a competent court of law, may continue to deny any wrongdoing.

In a deeply religious society such as Nigeria, this should be a surprise. However, empirical studies have shown that morality operates in the lives of students at two levels: declaratory and practical levels and that there are differences between these two. One study found that "the high rate of cheating manifested by the students was not consistent with their expressed negative attitude to cheating" (Olasehinde-Williams, Abdullah, &Owolabi, 2003).

Statement of Problem

Whereas corruption was thought to be an evil peculiar to politicians by many Nigerians, studies in transparency and accountability in the publications of UNESCO suggest that corrupt practices also go on in educational institutions. This has been observed by the researcher among students and staff of secondary schools in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. Corruption has adversely stigmatized Nigerians in most parts of the world as she was ranked the second most corrupt nation among identified 92 countries in 2001 - 2003. This is enough justification for the budgetary allocation to sustain the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practice Commission (ICPC), the two dreaded anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria. The average Nigerian believes that the wealth of the nation is concentrated much on the rich minority with the poor majority dependent on them. It is corruption that

has created the great gap between the rich and the poor in Nigeria and other third world countries.

Corruption among adults is a vice that is being passed on to young people. They are sometimes recruited and equipped with dangerous weapons for political campaigns and as body guards even after elections are over. It is therefore heartaching to observe that mathematics teachers who are regarded as the custodians of good morals and leaders in academic pursuits are now engrossed in corruption. The research effort was geared toward exploring the corrupt practices found among students and selected secondary school science teachers in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State of Nigeria. A major problem facing Nigeria is how to exterminate corruption in the Country to improve the global perception on her. The process involves the identification of corrupt practices that people indulge in. In this exercise, the secondary school in Calabar Municipality is the focus.

The problem of this study is to find out if there are concrete corrupt practices that go on in secondary schools in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State of Nigeria. In other words, are there identifiable corrupt practices among students and staff in these institutions of learning? And if there are, do they have any effects on secondary education in the State?

Research Ouestions

The under listed two research questions were drawn up to guide the study.

Q₁: To what extend do science teachers perceive corruption in secondary schools in Cross River State?

Q₂: What are the corrupt practices perceived by science teachers in secondary schools Cross River State?

Methodology

This study is a survey among mathematics teachers' perception to ascertain if there are any corrupt practices in secondary schools. Specifically 10 schools out of 16 public secondary schools were randomly selected from each of the words in Calabar Municipal Local Government Area of Cross River State. The Principals of the selected schools had been visited and were informed about the research work. A total of 100 science teachers made up of both male and female were randomly selected. Two questionnaires were used for data collection. The first questionnaires were used for data collection. The first questionnaires was on corrupt practices among secondary students identified by science teachers (CP) with seventeen open ended items while the second questionnaire was on evils of corrupt practices on secondary education identified by science teachers (ECP) with eighteen open ended items. Two research assistants helped in the administration of the questionnaires. A total of 69

teachers returned completed questionnaires which were analysed using frequency and simple percentages.

Presentation of Data

The information obtained from the retrieved questionnaires is presented to answer the research questions. The responses in each Table are shown in frequencies (f) with corresponding simple percentages and arranged in decreasing order.

Q1 What are the corrupt practices in Secondary Schools in Calabar Municipality,

Cross State of Nigeria?

Table 1. Corrupt practices among secondary students identified by mathematics teachers

S/No	Corrupt Practices	(f)	%
1.	Examination malpractice		31.41
2.	Cultism		19.23
3.	Raping of female students/sexual immorality		8.97
4.	Stealing; fraud		8.12
5.	Extortion of money/materials from female students		6.41
6.	Bribing of teachers to pass examinations		6.41
7.	Cheating	24	5.13
8.	Rudeness/ stubbornness to teachers	15	3.21
9.	Drug abuse/smoking of weeds	12	2.56
10.	Telling lies	9	1.92
11.	Bullying on junior students	9	1.92
12	Pornography		1.28
13.	Truancy	6	1.28
14.	Fighting	3	0.64
15.	Impersonation	3	0.64
16.	Indecent dressing	2	0.42
17.	Lateness to school	2	0.42
	TOTAL	468	100.00

Q2: What are the effects of corrupt practices on secondary school students in Calabar Municipality, Cross State of Nigeria?

The responses of science teachers used for answering this question are shown in Table2

Table 2. Effects of corrupt practices on secondary school students identified by science teachers

S/No.	ı .	(f)	%
	school students		
1.	Lowering of education standard	114	27.21
2.	Some students are no longer serious with their home work	63	15.04
3.	Graduating half-baked students into the labour market	60	14.32
4.	Increase in cultism /militancy/killing of people	42	10.02
5.	Poor performance in external examinations like WAEC and NECO	36	8.59
6.	Increase in cases of examination malpractice	21	5.01
7.	Disobedience/disrespect for constituted authority	18	4.30
8.	Increase in dropout rate	15	3.58
9.	Employment of incompetent staff	9	2.15
10.	Bribery	9	2.15
11.	Poor school management	6	1.43
12.	Truancy among staff and students	6	1.43
13.	Decrease in moral values	5	1.19
14.	Secondary school certificates cannot be defended	5	1.19
15.	No more self- reliance	3	0.72
16	Laziness among staff	3	0.72
17.	Demotion of teachers to lower ranks	2	0.48
18.	Production of bad future leaders	2	0.48
	TOTAL	419	100.00

The data in Tables 1 and 2 showed that corrupt practices have done a devastating blow on secondary education in Calabar Municipality in Cross River Nigeria. The science teachers agreed that it has led to a lowering of education standard and those most graduating students are half-baked. Lack of interest in reading with its increasing poor performance in examinations and the evils of cultism,

militancy, rioting and destruction of school properties are all outcomes of corruption in secondary schools.

Discussion of Findings

In the process of answering the research questions, the data presented revealed the following findings.

Corrupt practices found among secondary school students in Calabar Municipality include examination malpractice, cultism, and sexual immorality and bribe to pass examination, stealing and cheating. Drug abuse, fighting their tutors and truancy were also associated with them.

Staff of secondary schools extorted money from students aided them to cheat at examination and sexually defiled female students. They also exhibited poor attitude to work in teaching and school attendance. The three most pronounced corrupt practices in secondary schools are examination malpractice, cultism and sexual immorality.

Corrupt practices are causing the lowering of education standard, poor attitude to work among students and staff, disrespect to staff by students and graduation of half-baked graduates.

This finding in is support of earlier finding of Adie, Anditung and Okri, (2019) who found out that mathematics is a useful instrument that can eliminate corrupt practice among students in Federal Government Colleges in Cross River State.

Conclusion

In the light of the above discussions and findings it is obvious that science education plays very important role in anticorruption campaign and corruption are the major problems militating against its development in Nigeria. However, there are other problems like unstable political system of government, poor economy, poor method of teaching and teachers' attitude to teaching. Overcoming the problems is the responsibility of everybody in the country. To overcome this problems government must create more job; corruption must be shunned everywhere in the country; there must be continuity of government good program; diversification of economy to agriculture is necessary and science teachers must be ready for change in their method of teaching and attitude to work.

Recommendations

Having investigated science teachers' perceptions of corruption in secondary schools in Calabar municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria, the following recommendation were made.

1. Corruption in the secondary school system has certainly been introduced by staff of the schools. The staff must be given a new orientation through

- training; seminars and workshops to enable them imbibe the philosophy of the transformation agenda of the Federal Government of Nigeria.
- Bad behaviour is infectious on their students. Teachers proven to be engaged in corrupt practices should be sanctioned appropriately by their employers.
- 3. Government should make science education a priority in its agenda. More money should be allocated to science teachers for research.

References

- Adie, E.B, Anditung, P.A & Okri, J.A (2019). Mathematics Education and Corrupt Practice among Students in Federal Government Colleges in Cross River State. *Journal of Faculty of Education, University of Calabar*, 15(1), 105-110
- Aina, J. K. (2011). Teaching aids improvisation in the Teaching and Learning of Physics in Secondary Schools Retrieved from http://www.articlesbase.com/science-articles/teaching-aids-improvisation-in-the-teaching-and-learning-of-physics-in-secondary-schools-5675240.html.
- Ayobami, O. O. (2011). What is corruption in Nigeria: An Appraisal. Retrieved September 8th, 2018. From www.webpages.urdaho.edu/ayobamihtm
- Bretag, T. (2013). "Short Cut Students: From Academic Misconduct to Academic Integrity", Global Corruption Report: Education. London: Earthscan Pub. and Routledge.
- Chow, S. &Nga, Dao Thi (2013). Student Protests in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Higher Education*, 22(2), 157-173.
- Duyne, P. V. (2011). What is corruption?/corruptive. Retrieved September, 8th 2018, from www.corruptie.org/en/corruption/wha.
- Graaf, Gjalt De. (2007). Causes of Corruption: Towards a Contextual Theory of Corruption. *Public Administration Quarterly*, 31(1/2), 39-86.
- Leach, F. (2013). "Corruption as abuse of power: Sexual violence in Educational Institutions", pp.94-95.
- Mfon, E.E. (2016). Educational reforms and the agenda of technical and Vocational Education facilities in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research in Education*, 4(1&2), 280-285.
- Nwanze, C. (2012). Corruption in Nigeria Exposed with Cases, Scams, Laws and Preventive Measures. Lagos: Control and Surveillance Associations Pub.

- Ogundiya, I. S. (2010). "Democracy and good governance: Nigeria dilemma", *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 4 (6); 201-208.
- Okebukola, P.A.O. (2013). Curriculum implementation in Nigeria. Strategies For the 21st century. *Journal of the Institute of Education*, Lagos state University, 1, 1-6.
- Olagunju, O. (2010). Corruption control in Nigeria: Holistic approach. *Advance in Arts, Social Sciences and Education Research* 2(1), 76-84.
- Olasehinde-Williams, F. A. O., Abdullah, I. O. E. & Owolabi, H. O. (2003). The Relationships between Background Variables and Cheating Tendencies among Students of a Federal University in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Foundations*, 6(1). Pp. 167-171
- Oloyede, E.O. (2015). Science Education and Technological Development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research.in Education*, 4 (1&2), 95-103.
- Omosewo, E.O. (2009). Views of physics teachers on the need to train and retrain Physics teachers in Nigeria. *African Research Review*, *3*(1), 314-325.
- Patrinos, H. A. (2013). "Teacher Absenteeism and Loss in Schools": Global Corruption Report: Education, op. cit., pp. 73-76.
- Salmi, J. & Helms, R. M. (2013). "Governance Instruments to Combat Corruption in Higher Education", ibid, p. 116.
- Transparency International (2013a). "Transparency and Integrity in Higher Education". pp. 134-135.
- Transparency International (2013b). Global Corruption Report: Education.
- Transparency International. (2007). Mapping of Corruption and Governance Measurement Tools in Sub-Saharan Africa: Transparency International & UNDP.
- Transparency Task Force (1991). "Integrating Anti-Corruption into School Curricula (Cambodia)", www.online.com.kh/users/csd.
- Trevino, L. K., & Youngblood, S. A. (1990). Bad Apples in Bad Barrels: A Causal Analysis of Ethical Decision-Making Behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75(4), 378-385.
- West African Examination Council's Chief Examiner's report, 2018 Chief Examiners' Report, Lagos Office, Nigeria. (2018).
- Yushau, B. (2012). Epidemic corruption in our educational system and the future of Nigeria. Retrieved September, 5th 2018. From www.gamji.com/article800/news8464.