

INNOVATIVE TECHNIQUES FOR MANAGING CORPORATE CORRUPT PRACTICES IN UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined innovative techniques for managing corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population comprised all the Faculties of Education in the Federal and State universities in the South-East with a total of 1,680 academic and administrative staff as respondents. This is made up of 5 States and 4 Federal universities (excluding Federal University of Technology, Owerri). A simple random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 420 administrative and academic staff from 3 States and 2 Federal universities. These include 40 administrative staff (Heads of Department and Deans of the Faculties of Education) and 380 academic staff -- 141 males and 239 females representing 25% of the population. The instrument for the study was a 20-item questionnaire entitled: "Innovative Techniques for Managing Corporate Corrupt Practices (ITMCC)." The instrument was duly validated. The Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to compute the internal consistency of the questionnaire items to obtain reliability indices of 0.76 and 0.86 respectively. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses of no significant difference. The findings revealed among others, that the identifiable corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria are as follows: irregular attendance at lectures by some lecturers; borrowing human and material resources during accreditation; plagiarizing other people's researches; accepting bribes from students to distort poor grades; referring students to people who will write their projects/ dissertations/thesis; renovating school facilities during accreditation; fabrication of age certificate and sexual harassment. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others, that staff conditions of service should be improved if the university education system must be sanitised. This is because no nation's educational system has ever risen above the quality of its teachers.

Keywords: Innovative, corporate corrupt practices.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a veritable tool for sustainability, growth and development of any nation. University education plays a pivotal role in national development through its teaching, research and knowledge advancement. The sociologists see education as a key factor for moulding one's character, attitudes and perceptions around him. Every society has its own values and norms which include: good character, integrity, honesty, hard work, respect for constituted authority, among others. The aim of establishing educational institutions is to inculcate these values into the young ones. Hence, universities are expected to mould and transform their products to conform to societal norms and values. This is why universities adjudge their products (graduates) as being found worthy in both learning and character

during convocation. Ironically, moral decadence has become the order of the day in most of these universities. Among this hydra, is corruption, which has become so worrisome in the Education Sector and other public service sectors in Nigeria.

Azelama (2002) defined corruption as any action or omission enacted by a member of an organization, which is against the rules, regulations, norms, and ethics of the organization. In other words, the purpose is to meet the selfish interest of the member at the detriment of the organization. Ololobou (2003) also described corruption as an act of getting things done illegally and intentionally by hoping to benefit from such actions. Thus, corruption is a deviation from an accepted or assumed standard of conduct. Asiyai (2015) described corruption as an issue that seems to be threatening the attainment of quality education in Nigerian universities. In the Education Sector, corruption can be in the following forms: giving or accepting bribes “sorting”, giving lecturers gifts either in “kind” or in cash to get higher grades, sexual harassment, under-the-table transactions, leakage of examination papers, bribing to see exam scores, among others.

Corruption has been described as a cancerous global phenomenon which has continued to cripple the developmental efforts Nigerians are making. Eze (2006); Lawal (2006) reported that a myriad of corrupt practices have been found to exist in academic institutions; some of which are fraud, embezzlement, bribery, smuggling, sexual abuse, examination malpractices, admission malpractices, irregular attendance at lectures by lecturers and students, plagiarising researches of others, distorting of grades, compelling students to buy handouts/textbooks, forgery of age, over use of power, and certificate forgery. Ifeluni (2015) further lamented that our institutions of learning seem to have abandoned the philosophy of transmission of right values to the students. In another dimension, Iddrisu (2003) corroborated that the culture of corruption has become parts and parcel of the public service. To Iddrisu, corruption has become a norm rather than an act of prohibition in higher institutions of learning. Little wonder the present administration in Nigeria under the watch of President Muhammadu Buhari has isolated the fight against corruption as one key aspect of its agenda. This implies that corruption has become a household name in Nigeria.

This is true because corporate corruption, which incorporates illegal activities that are carried out as if they are normal activities by a corporation or by individuals who are identified with an organisation is nearly becoming an institution. Ojumah and Egwunyenga (2015) defined corporate corruption as a web of connectivity, showing the various individuals, organisations, institutions, both public and private in the scene of corruption. Hallack and Poisson (2007) also postulated that corporate corruption is a systematic use of public office for private benefits, which may have significant impact on the availability and quality of educational goods and services. In other words, the term, corporate corruption came about because individuals who indulge in corruption have seen it as a normal thing or an organisational culture (the way we do things here). Tanaka (2001) identified some areas of corporate corruption in universities. They include: corruption in examination, corruption in admission, corruption in procurement and professional misconduct. Asiyai (2015) corroborated that borrowing human and material resources for the purpose of accreditation are parts of the corporate corruption in the universities. Ifeluni (2015) observed that students come into the tertiary institutions with the notion that corporate corrupt practices are not in any way bad. Hence, it is a normal thing in the system and so when challenged, feel that lecturers are preventing their success and should be eliminated.

Worried about this trend, Meier and Griffin (2005), as cited in Kuranchie, Twene, Mensah and Arthur (2014), pointed out that graduates end up taking appointments at various sectors of the world's economies, but cannot fit properly into the work. However, if they are affected by corrupt activities at the university, one can envisage the sort of deviant behaviour they would exhibit in their various offices. Shelley (2003) observed that corruption in academic institutions has the tendency of reducing the ethical values of students. When students realise that personal success depends not on performance, but on bribery, favouritism and nepotism, they would develop unethical behaviour, which can be passed on to the next generation. Kuranchie et al. (2014) therefore, lamented that corruption in education negatively affects the welfare of a society by bringing up distorted values in the youths. Regrettably, universities which are supposed to be citadel of learning for producing people with sound mind, knowledge, character and integrity appear to have also become centres for producing high level dishonest and corrupt persons (Nnodum, 2008).

Innovative techniques can be seen as ways of applying different skills so as to improve the present state of a thing or a system. Innovation can refer simply to some new ways of doing things, or a change that improves administrative or scholarly performance, or a transformational experience based on a new way of thinking (White & Glickman, 2007). It is pertinent to note that all the efforts that various scholars are making in order to revamp the educational system depends on how corrupt-free the human resource in the system are. However, Idris and Ahmed (2015, p. 108) emphasised that, "in order to achieve the laudable educational goals in an atmosphere of corrupt practices, there is urgent need for alternative pedagogical strategy and pragmatic evaluation techniques that would redeem the standard of education in the country." Ojumah and Egwunyenga (2015) suggested that the application of checks and balances on the implementation of educational policies should be put in place. Kuranchie et al. ((2014) recommended that functional Ethics Committee should be established in every Faculty of the universities to sanction defaulters. Uche (2014); Asiyai (2015) also opined that other measures that can be adopted to manage corporate corruption in the universities are constant monitoring of universities by accreditation agency and severe penalty for offenders so as to serve as deterrent to others. Furthermore, the University Quality Assurance should provide Suggestion Boxes/ complaints in every Department for students and staff to report any corporate corruption practice they notice. Rules and Regulation Handbooks should be made available to students as soon as they are admitted into the university system. Heads of Department should be encouraged to recognise and award their staff with outstanding integrity at the end of every academic session.

Statement of the Problem

Corporate corruption seems to have bedevilled the Nigerian universities to the extent that it has become a norm in the system. It is no longer news that most of our graduates with outstanding grades have been tagged: "unemployable" by employers of labour. This can be exemplified when the former Governor of Edo State, Comrade Adams Oshiomole, was embarrassed to meet a teacher of over twenty years who could not read the wordings on her certificate. This scenario raises some questions in the minds of educational stakeholders. Such questions include: who taught the teacher? Was she evaluated and graded? How did the teacher pass her exams if she cannot read? How and what is the teacher teaching the pupils? As a matter of fact, corporate corruption automatically makes the educational system not only vulnerable to low quality of education but also "manufacturers" of perpetrators of social vices.

Worried about the much harm corporate corruption has done on the quality of the products that graduate annually from the universities, the researchers are bothered on what innovative techniques that could be adopted to manage corporate corruption in Nigerian universities.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine innovative techniques for managing corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives sought to:

1. identify the various corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria;
2. find out the innovative techniques for managing corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the identifiable corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria?
2. How can innovative techniques be adopted to manage corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated at 0.05 alpha level of significant:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of administrative and academic staff on the identifiable corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of administrative and academic staff on the innovative techniques adopted to manage corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population comprised all the Faculties of Education in the Federal and State universities in the South-East with a total of 1,680 academic and administrative staff as respondents. This is made up of 5 States and 4 Federal universities (excluding Federal University of Technology, Owerri). A simple random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 420 administrative and academic staff from 3 States and 2 Federal universities. These include 40 administrative staff (Heads of Department and Deans of the Faculties of Education) and 380 academic staff -- 141 males and 239 females representing 25% of the population. The instrument for the study was a 20-item questionnaire entitled: "Innovative Techniques for Managing Corporate Corrupt Practices (ITMCC)." The questionnaire was patterned with the 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agreed = 4, Agreed = 3, Disagreed = 2 and Strongly Disagreed = 1. The instrument was duly validated and the Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items to obtain reliability indices of 0.76 and 0.86 respectively. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses of no significant difference at 0.05 alpha level.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What are the identifiable corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Administrative and Academic Staff on the Identifiable Corporate Corrupt Practices in Universities in South-East, Nigeria.

S/N	Identifiable Practices	Corporate	Corrupt	Administrative Staff		Academic Staff		Mean Set	Remarks
				\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD		
1.	Irregular attendance to lectures by some lecturers.			2.84	1.15	2.96	0.36	2.72	Agreed
2.	Borrowing human and material resources during accreditation n.			3.26	1.08	3.57	0.57	3.42	Agreed
3.	Plagiarizing other people's researches.			3.73	1.00	3.88	0.31	3.81	Agreed
4.	Accepting bribes from students to distort poor grades.			2.67	1.17	2.79	0.37	2.73	Agreed
5.	Referring students to people who will write their projects/ dissertations/thesis.			3.01	1.12	3.24	0.35	3.13	Agreed
6.	Compelling students to buy handouts/textbooks.			2.32	1.23	2.28	0.40	2.30	Disagreed
7.	Renovating school facilities during accreditation.			3.19	1.09	3.46	0.34	3.33	Agreed
8.	Collecting money from students to show them their results.			1.96	1.29	1.62	0.43	1.79	Disagreed
9.	Fabrication of age certificate			3.53	1.04	3.76	0.32	3.65	Agreed
10.	Sexual harassment			2.72	1.17	3.68	0.38	2.70	Agreed
Aggregate Mean/ Standard Deviation				2.92	1.13	3.02	0.36		

Data in Table 1 show the mean scores and standard deviations of administrative and academic staff on the identifiable corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria. Both the administrative and academic staff agreed to items: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9 and 10 in the table with mean scores greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. However, they disagreed to items: 6 and 8 which are less than the criterion mean of 2.50. The aggregate mean scores of 2.92 and 3.02 for administrative and academic staff respectively, indicated that they agreed to the items in the table as the identifiable corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria. These include: irregular attendance to lectures by some lecturers; borrowing human and material resources during accreditation; plagiarizing other people's researches; accepting bribes from students to distort poor grades; referring students to people who will write their projects/ dissertations/thesis; renovating school facilities during accreditation; fabrication of age certificate and sexual harassment. However, it is interesting to note that the respondents disagreed to: compelling students to buy handouts/textbooks and collecting money from students to show them their results as corporate corrupt practices in the universities.

Research Question Two: How can innovative techniques be adopted to manage corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Administrative and Academic Staff on the Innovative Techniques that can be Adopted to Manage Corporate Corrupt Practices in Universities in South-East, Nigeria

S/N	Innovative Techniques that can be Adopted to Manage Corporate Corrupt Practices	Administrative Staff		Academic Staff		Mean Set	Remarks
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD		
1.	Universities should adopt e-learning approaches, especially for computation of exam results.	3.12	1.10	3.26	0.35	3.19	Agreed
2.	Course Moderators should be in charge of setting exam questions and NOT the course lecturers.	3.36	1.06	3.54	0.33	3.45	Agreed
3.	After marking the exam scripts, they should be subjected to thorough vetting.	3.82	0.99	3.92	0.31	3.87	Agreed
4.	The Accreditation team should always do a follow-up to any university they visited.	3.45	1.05	3.63	0.33	3.54	Agreed
5.	A committee that will recommend appropriate textbooks at affordable prices for students should be set up in every Faculty.	3.02	1.12	3.05	0.36	3.04	Agreed
6.	Lecturers should be exposed to anti-plagiarism procedures before they publish their works.	3.09	1.11	2.86	0.37	2.98	Agreed
7.	Suggestion/Complaint Boxes should be provided at strategic places in every Faculty.	3.52	1.04	3.64	0.33	3.58	Agreed
8.	Any staff or student who indulged in unethical behaviour must face the Ethics Committee.	3.70	1.01	3.83	0.32	3.77	Agreed
9.	Heads of Department should be encouraged to honour their staff with outstanding integrity.	3.38	1.06	3.68	0.32	3.53	Agreed
10.	Seminars/Symposia where staff and students will be addressed on the effects of corruption should be organized quarterly by Deans of every Faculty.	3.87	0.98	3.96	0.31	3.92	Agreed
Aggregate Mean/Standard Deviation		3.43	1.05	3.54	0.33		

Data in Table 2 show the mean scores and standard deviations of administrative and academic staff on the innovative techniques that can be adopted to manage corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria. Both the administrative and academic staff agreed to all the items in the table with mean scores greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. The aggregate mean scores of 3.43 and 3.54 for administrative and academic staff respectively, showed that they agreed to the items in the table as the innovative techniques that can be adopted to manage corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria. These include: universities should adopt e-learning approaches, especially for computation of exam results; course

Moderators should be in charge of setting exam questions and NOT the course lecturers; after marking the exam scripts, they should be subjected to thorough vetting; the Accreditation team should always do a follow-up to any university they visited; a committee that will recommend appropriate textbooks at affordable prices for students should be set up in every Faculty; lecturers should be exposed to anti-plagiarism procedures before they publish their works; Suggestion/Complaint Boxes should be provided at strategic places in every Faculty; any staff or student who indulged in unethical behaviour must face the Ethics Committee; Heads of Department should be encouraged to honour their staff with outstanding integrity and seminars/symposia where staff and students will be addressed on the effects of corruption should be organized quarterly by Deans of every Faculty.

Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁ There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of administrative and academic staff on the identifiable corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Table 3: z-test of Difference between Administrative and Academic Staff on the Identifiable Corporate Corrupt Practices in Universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Status	N	Mean	S.D.	Df	z-cal	Critical Value	Decision
Administrative Staff	40	2.92	1.13	418	0.56	1.96	Accepted
Academic Staff	380	3.02	0.36				

P < 0.05

Table 3 reveals the z-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of administrative and academic staff on the identifiable corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria. The result shows that z-calculated value of 0.56 is less than the critical value of 1.96; therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted at 0.05 alpha significant level. Thus, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of administrative and academic staff on the identifiable corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria.

H₀₂ There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of administrative and academic staff on the innovative techniques adopted to manage corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Table 4: z-test of Difference between Administrative and Academic Staff on the Innovative Techniques Adopted to Manage Corporate Corrupt Practices in Universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Status	N	Mean	S.D.	Df	z-cal	Critical Value	Decision
Administrative Staff	40	3.43	1.05	418	0.66	1.96	Accepted
Academic Staff	380	3.54	0.33				

P < 0.05

Table 4 shows the z-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of administrative and academic staff on the innovative techniques adopted to manage corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria. The result shows that z-calculated value of 0.66 is less than the critical value of 1.96; therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted at 0.05 alpha significant level. Thus, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of

administrative and academic staff on the innovative techniques adopted to manage corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study revealed the identifiable corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria as follows: irregular attendance to lectures by some lecturers; borrowing human/material resources during accreditation; plagiarizing other people's researches; accepting bribes from students to distort poor grades; referring students to people who will write their projects/ dissertations/thesis; renovating school facilities during accreditation; fabrication of age certificate and sexual harassment. These findings are in agreement with Eze (2006); Lawal (2006); Asiyai (2015) who maintained that a myriad of corrupt practices have been found to exist in academic institutions. The findings are also in line with Tanaka (2001) who identified corruption in examination, corruption in admission, corruption in procurement and professional misconduct as some areas of corporate corruption in universities. The findings are in consonance with Ifeluni (2015); Iddrisu (2003) who lamented that corruption has become a norm rather than an act of prohibition in higher institutions of learning. Conversely, the result of the study revealed that compelling students to buy handouts/textbooks and collecting money from students to show them their results are not parts of the corporate corrupt practices in the universities. This is contrary to Lawal's postulation.

Another major finding of this study revealed that administrative and academic staff agreed that innovative techniques can be adopted to manage corporate corrupt practices in universities in South-East, Nigeria. These include: universities should adopt e-learning approaches, especially for computation of exam results; course Moderators should be in charge of setting exam questions and NOT the course lecturers; after marking the exam scripts, they should be subjected to thorough vetting; the Accreditation team should always do a follow-up to any university they visited; a committee that will recommend appropriate textbooks at affordable prices for students should be set up in every Faculty; lecturers should be exposed to anti-plagiarism procedures before they publish their works. Suggestion/Complaint Boxes should be provided at strategic places in every Faculty; any staff or student who indulged in unethical behaviour must face the Ethics Committee; Heads of Department should be encouraged to honour their staff with outstanding integrity and seminars/symposia where staff and students will be addressed on the effects of corruption should be organized quarterly by Deans of every Faculty. These findings are in line with Idris and Ahmed (2015); Ojumah and Egwunyenga (2015) who emphasised that in order to achieve the laudable Nigerian educational goals in an atmosphere of corrupt practices, there is urgent need for alternative pedagogical strategy and pragmatic evaluation techniques that would redeem the standard of education in the country. The findings are also in agreement with Kuranchie et al. ((2014) who recommended that functional Ethics Committee should be established in every Faculty of the universities to sanction defaulters. Uche (2014); Asiyai (2015) also corroborated that other measures that can be adopted to manage corporate corruption in the universities are constant monitoring of universities by accreditation agency and severe penalty for offenders so as to serve as deterrent to others.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have revealed quite a number of corporate corruptions that are practised in the Nigerian universities. Hence, it can be reasonably concluded that our

institutions of learning seem to have abandoned the philosophy of transmission of right values and norms to the students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Staff conditions of service should be improved if the university education system must be sanitised. This is because no nation's educational system has ever risen above the quality of its teachers.
2. Measures to checkmate corporate corrupt practices must be put in place and any defaulter must face the music.

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