

## **Corruption In Institutions of Higher Learning: The Nigerian Experience**

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### **Abstract**

The paper examined corruption in Nigerian institutions of higher learning to determine its natures and forms, causes, effects, and remedies. It defined corruption as any behaviour that exploits human person or disdainfully uses men and women for selfish interest. It carried out a holistic survey of corruption in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria and classified the corruption into administrative and academic corruption. The causes of corruption were discussed to include economic factor, donor imprudence, lack of transparent regulations and criteria, social factors, etc. Furthermore, the effects of corruption in institutions of higher learning in Nigerian society, lowering of the standard of education, retarding the overall national development, etc were highlighted. The study was anchored on Idealistic Theory, which explains why corruption occurs in our institutions of learning and in our society at large. Finally, some recommendations were made which are believed would help to stamp out corruption in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria, which include that the government should consider introducing a standard requirements, guidelines and principles that are reasonable for establishment of tertiary institutions, government should establish a telephone hot-line or code for

the staff, students, parents and all interested agencies who can anonymously talk about the corruption they have encountered at school.

**Key Words:** *corruption, administrative corruption, academic corruption*

## **Introduction**

The existence of corruption in the countries of the world over is indisputable. In recent times, this malady has assumed a household word in our nation and its prevalence is assuming a worrisome dimension. Corruption is rife in this country and permeates every sector. In our tertiary institutions, corruption appears to be widespread, where it has manifested in ways and forms that mirror the Nigerian society. Its effect is indeed very corrosive, affecting the fabric of our core values that were known to protect the society. Corruption does nobody good because it portends danger for all individuals, which include students, lecturers, parents, government and the society at large.

Generally, the word corruption is used to describe any act that violates generally accepted norms and behaviour of any society. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (7th edition) (2017) defines corruption as "dishonest or unapproved behaviour, mostly of people in authority". In line with this, Olubunmi (2015) views corruption "as an illegal behaviour of people who are either in office or public places and use their authority to do wrong things in return for money or favour".

The issues of corruption are national emergency situation. Before the advent of western type of education, traditional Nigerian education was based mainly on experiences and practices that are based on the norms and values of the society. Its mode of instruction was simple as knowledge was passed on orally and through practical exercises. Students were therefore meant to commit to memory knowledge or learn through observation Olubunmi (2015).

Traditional Nigerian education placed little or no emphasis on certification; students had the proper view of education seeing it as a means to an end not an end in itself. Besides, the Nigerian culture then frowned at corruption of any kind and would not hesitate to sanction offenders (Iyiya, 2010).

According to Ibia (2016), general moral decadence and the high premium placed on certificates by Nigerians have in recent time spawned fraud and corruption in institutions of learning. The general overdependence on educational certificates as a measure of one's knowledge and competence has led to a mad rush by most people for educational certificate (Ojiade, 2010). In a bid to acquire such certificates, many have resorted to unethical means, among which include corruption and examination malpractices, just to acquire the certificate at all cost. Without doubt, the persistent occurrence of corruption in Nigeria has spawned heinous problems such as:

- a. Lack of credibility of academic certificates acquired in Nigerian institutions of learning before the international community.
- b. Declining standard of education in the country.
- c. Inability to secure competitive and challenging jobs which require practical test of proficiency and skills.

The exciting correlation between examination malpractice and corruption in public offices as noted by Thomas Derry of the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and quoted in the Examination Ethics Project (EEP), Survey (2014), reports that students who wangle or bribe their ways to higher offices through examination malpractices would not find it different to engage in corrupt practices when they are employed. This corruption has economic many implications.

According to EEP (2014), Nigeria loses more than one billion naira annually to examination malpractice. This examination malpractice could equally be seen as an economic crime. Some measures have been employed to stop the menace.

For example, the federal government of Nigeria promulgated decree no. 20 of 1984 and later decree no. 33 of 1999 in which several punishments against perpetrators of examination malpractice were clearly spelled out. Further measures which have been taken in recent times to eradicate examination malpractice was by the Obasanjo's Administration, which embedded in the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), a policy document that targets 40% reduction in examination malpractice annually. The existing legislation on examination malpractice as contained in the 1999 constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria is still in force. Though the law is not appropriately enforced but the move by the Federal Ministry of Education to introduce civics in the school curricular is with a view of eradicating examination malpractices in school.

Corruption in many of our institutions is increasing daily, perhaps because of the culture of silence over the act in tertiary institutions and because most times, the misbehaviour is "swept under the carpet". Institutions of higher learning are expected to be places of breeding quality graduates for the development of the society, but examination malpractices have become strong impediment towards the realization of this objective. The necessity to curb corruption in our post secondary institutions stems from the truth that it is indispensable for achieving the goals of post-secondary education in the nation-high level manpower production as it concerns developing and inculcating the proper values for the sustenance of individuals and the society, developing the intellectual capability of the people to comprehend and value their internal and external environment, get both visible and intellectual capacity that will help individuals to be independent and productive members of the society, facilitate and foster scholarship and community service (FRN, 2014:36).

The phenomenon of corruption which has become endemic in Nigerian institutions of higher learning has attracted

a lot of concerns from different quarters, considering the fact that it impacts negatively on virtually all sectors of the country. Corruption constitutes a serious threat to the successful achievement of educational goals as pointed out by Hallack and Possion (2014). According to them, corruption tends to reduce the resources available for education; limits access to education, especially for the disadvantaged group, it also leads to continuous decrease in the quality of education and increases social inequality. Corruption in Nigeria's educational system has led to a worrisome situation where there is proliferation of illegal tertiary institutions across Nigeria, which is staffed by half-trained, ill-motivated and unqualified personnel.

Also, corruption on the part of administrators, academic staff and non-academic staff, as well as students had resulted in inadequate infrastructures, admission racketeering, examination malpractices, sorting of courses, falsification of academic records, such as transcripts, fraudulent award of degree results, misappropriation of funds, sexual harassment and victimization, as well as syndicated plagiarism by students and lecturers in tertiary institutions.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine the nature of corruption in the Nigerian education system, with a view to proffering solutions, which when adopted, will help to stem the endemic nature of corruption in tertiary institutions.

## **Conceptual Explanation**

### **Concept of Corruption**

Corruption is any behaviour which exploits human person, or disdainfully uses men and women for selfish interests. The person who exhibits such behaviour gains at the detriment of the other party. Corruption is a problem of routine deviation from established standards and norms of public officials and parties they interact with (Nkang, 2012). Khan (2016) asserts that corruption is a price, reward and gift or favour bestowed with or promised with the view to perverting

justices. He contends that in whatever way corruption is defined it entails acts which are perceived to be against public interest or violate certain legal or moral laws and principles and some of these are directly or indirectly harmful to the society. Iddrisu (2013) also contends that bribery and corruption are forms of deviant behaviours which involve both a state of moral turpitude and an attempt to by-pass laid down procedures. Patrinos and Ruthkagia (2014) also assert that corruption acts include bribery, extortion, influence peddling, nepotism, fraud, influence officials to take specific actions and embezzlement. Hallack and Poison (2014) also postulate that academic corruption is a systematic use of public office for private benefits, which impact is significant on the availability and quality of educational goods and services.

The Ololube (2016) views corruption as putridity, taint, debasement, spoliation, impurity, perversion, bribery, dishonesty, venality, rottenness and immorality. This definition is all-encompassing as it views everything that is evil as corruption. However, the World Bank (2010) sees the term as unjustly using public office for selfish gains, this is seen when officials receive, solicit or extort money or material things. It is also abused when private agents actively connive to offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit. Besides, people also misuse public offices without necessarily taking bribe but when such offices are used for personal profit, nepotism, stealing of government assets or diversion of state resources that are supposed to be used for the execution or completion of projects. IMF (2010) noted that corruption is the misuse of authority, power or trust for personal benefits and is a temptation indulged in not only by public officials, but also by others holding trusted position, by not-for-profit or private enterprises or organisations. This implies that when an individual in authority deviates from carrying out his duties which he swore by oaths of office and allegiance and engages in acts which solely

benefit him, he is said to be corrupt. Also, Section 2 of the ICPC Act (2010) defines corruption to include vices like bribery, fraud and other offences that are related. In this definition, bribery is outstanding and refers to the giving or receiving of money or any kind of favour in return or exchange for undue advantage over other people.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria's Constitution of 1999 (with amendments, 2011) prohibits bribery when it stated that "No person shall offer any officer serving the public money, gifts, property or profit of any sort in the cause of the public officer trying to discharge his official duties. Though the Nigerian Constitution puts the definition of corruption succinctly and forbids it, many public officers including the campus community members still indulge in corruption. Corroborating this state of affairs, Olayinka Ayoola (rtd), former Chairman of ICPC opined that the commonest form of the menace in Nigeria used to be bribery, but in recent years it is the embezzlement of funds meant for the public, extortion, misuse of discretion, misuse of public power for selfish gains, conflicting interest, nepotism, favouritism and unapproved financing of political parties. It therefore means that any person, whether in private or public organizations who violates the laid down rules and regulation on how to deal with the customers and colleagues especially by taking unjust advantage of them, by asking for or demanding gratification in kind or cash is corrupt.

Corruption as a concept does not easily yield itself to a one size fits all definition. This is why people see it as a "difficult concept to define" (Ganahl, 2013) and one that evades a universal prescription (Transparency International, 2013). The direction in which the above points hand towards is that definitions of corruption can be varied and divergent. To be expected, a concept that lacks universal prescription may open itself up to numerous manifestations, manipulations or interpretations as people in different cultures may conceive it

but all such conceptions across cultures may have one thing in common namely corruption and corrupt practices have disabling, impairing and devastating consequences on individuals, institutions and the economy of the states.

The foregoing background information on corruption can be well appreciated when viewed against the background of definitions of corruption as provided by scholars and institutions. Corruption according to Nkang (2012) is derived from the Latin word “*corruptus*” which translates as “to break”. For Khan (2016), corruption incorporates any act that deviates from those rules and regulations that govern the behaviour and action of any one in a position of public authority especially actions that turn such privilege into avenues for personally and privately amassing wealth, power and authority. Ojiade (2010) is more inclusive in his definition of corruption when he writes that corruption is any systematic vice perpetuated by individuals, society or a state in general, where not-too-good concepts for equality, social harmony and harmonious living e.g. favouritism, nepotism, tribalism, sectionalism, undue enrichment, amassing of wealth, abuse of office, power, position etc become norms upon which the people and the state operate.

### **Corruption in Nigerian Institutions of Higher Learning**

In recent times, corruption in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria has permeated every aspect – students, lecturers, non-teaching staff and the administration of the institutions. Corroborating the above assertion, Iyayi (2010) observes that “there is now a crisis of ethical standards of major proportions in our citadels of higher learning”. At the student's' level, the evil called cultism is another aspect of corruption, although on a low scale as a result of the stringent punitive measures adopted against cultists. The widespread academic dishonesty among students (undergraduates and graduates) is



another form of corruption which has assumed a worrisome dimension. There have been several reports of lecturers who have been physically attacked while some have been assassinated. Many lecturers have lost properties like laptops, money, or other personal effects. These crimes have been traced to students who perpetuate these crimes on unsuspecting lecturers for stopping them from cheating in examinations.

Another aspect or form of corruption displayed by students is bribery – This is the act of giving money or material things to a lecturer to influence him/her to award unmerited scores. This form of corruption is also known as sorting. Torulagha (2013) states that ‘there is a relationship between corruption and the poor state of academic standards’ that exist in Nigerian universities today. Furthermore, he notes that students who are from well-to-do homes do not have to be present at lectures to obtain high grades. Nkang (2012) warns that students should desist from forming themselves into “lecturers’ boys” who act as agents to extort money from innocent students for lecturers’, who eventually give them a percentage of the total collection. Furthermore, she emphasizes that this action is academic fraud and that when students learn and perfect in the trade, the cycle continues. She therefore suggests that class/course representatives should be those with impeccable character who can influence their mates positively.

For lecturers, corruption exists in several forms: lecturers who handle students’ charts compel students to pay money and change scores awarded by course lecturers for the students to graduate with better grades. Another aspect of corruption among lecturers is that course lecturers award unmerited marks to students for money. Yet another case of corruption among lecturers which is prevalent among male lecturers is demanding sex for high grades: male lecturers harass the female students with demands for sex in return for high grades, while the male students pay their way through. Uzochukwu (2015) observes that these are the things that

lecturers do that deserve severe punishment”. However, he points out that it is most painful because most of the female students harassed are married.

Corruption in higher institution also manifestS among the non-teaching staff, when they demand that students should pay money before they can check their results. Many non-teaching staff in tertiary institutions extort money from students before they can allow students to check their results. Some even go to the extent of requesting students to give them money before they can give them lecturers’ phone numbers. Some unsuspecting parents are made to pay money in the guise that they are lecturers and promise to secure admission for their children/wards. Some non-teaching staff also act as fronts for lecturers to extort money from the students after examination.

On the part of administrators, corruption manifests in cases of misappropriation of money meant for capital projects. Annually, the Federal Government gives grants to all institutions of higher studies through their management agencies for capital projects – National Universities Commission (NUC) for Universities, National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) for Polytechnics, and National Council for Colleges of Education (NCCE) for Colleges of Education. Unfortunately, sometimes such funds are stolen or diverted to other projects or completely misappropriated. The result of this as noted by Ololube (2016) is the declining quality of Nigerian higher education.

Corruption also manifests in the recruitment of both academic and non-academic staff. Many staff are employed in institutions of higher studies based on who they know and not on merit, some pay fabulous amounts of money before they are employed. There is also corruption in accreditation of programmes by accrediting bodies. When members of accrediting panels are bribed, criteria are by-passed and reports are written to favour of the department or institution.

Corruption is also seen in procurement of materials. Often the prices of materials are slugged and the surplus goes into the pocket of the staff. Another aspect of corruption among administrators is that some rich men bribe Admission officers and Head of Departments to secure admission. Those who are supposed to be admitted are by-passed (Uzochukwu, 2015). It is significant to mention at this juncture that the policy of carrying capacity (maximum number of students that is allowed in a programme) for each academic session because of facilities on ground must be liable for this corruption form. This is because with large number of students seeking for university education, many candidates are ever-ready to manoeuvre, undermine and outwit through bribery other candidates who merited admission. Corruption in institutions of higher learning can be categorized into administrative and academic corruption.

### **Administrative Corruption**

A set of rules and regulations exist that set a framework for permitted administrative activities in higher education. Any administrative act in breach of the rules and regulations designed for private gain would be deemed as an example of administrative corruption. Corruption in any society, institution or country is relative and is defined according to the value system. World Bank and Transparency International define administrative corruption as follows: “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain or for family relations and interests” (Iyiya, 2010). Administrative corruption is the abuse of roles, powers, or resources found within public bureaucracies. It may be initiated by line or staff officials, their superiors, or the agency clients. The latter will usually be private parties (for example, applicants for admission), but particularly in large and centralized institutions; clients might also be individuals or institutions from elsewhere in the public sector.

This entry considers the complexities of defining administrative corruption, some common varieties, major causal factors and consequences, the central role of administrative corruption and public administration theories in reform movements, and the effects of changing relationships between the public and private sectors on the basic concepts of administrative corruption. Administrative corruption is a subset of the broader phenomenon of corruption, and is commonly distinguished from political corruption. Corrupt practices in the administrative realm of higher education according to Ibia (2016) draws a distinction between different forms of corruption, namely, nepotism, bribery, extortion, fraud, graft, patronage, ghost worker phenomenon, greasing palms, kickbacks, breach of trust and official theft, to name a few, can occur through offering admissions, procurement scam, recruitment, promotions/ appointment and exercise of bureaucratic power (Braxton & Bayer, 2009). The Transparency International report highlights illicit payments for admission of students to degree programmes, tribalism and nepotism in recruitment to tenured positions, and bribery in on-campus accommodation and grading (Kigotho, 2013). These issues are more of management's roles, thus, they can be generalizing them as administrative corruption. These are termed as management failures or corrupt practices that have engulfed higher education in Nigeria.

### **Academic Corruption**

As an increasingly widely recognized higher education ethical issue, academic corruption encompasses and is done through undue influence in research, plagiarism, ghost authorship of academic papers, fraud (academic dishonesty), cheating, favouritism, leaking examination papers and other such behaviour. It may occur at institutional and systemic levels as well as the individual level. Since the 1990s, academic

corruption has had a negative impact on nearly every aspect of Nigerian Educational System. Commenting on the situation in Nigeria, a senior lecturer at Redeemer's University highlighted that whereas rules for academic promotion are clear, there is a divide between the rules and practices of advancement in academia. "Academics who are loyal to the vice-chancellor are likely to be promoted regardless of merit," said Omotola, who has taught in several public and private universities in Nigeria (Kigotho, 2013). At the international level, academic corruption has become a prominent issue in higher education; some argue that the world is witnessing a dramatic increase in the phenomenon (Altbach, 2014, Hallak and Poisson, 2014). There have been numerous instances of academic corruption reported in countries from the US to Russia, from India to Italy and from Nigeria to Georgia (Altbach, 2014; Orkodashvili, 2010).

The Higher Education Corruption Monitor (HECM) (HECM, 2015) reports that academic corruption can be found in both developed and developing countries, but it is prevalent in nations whose higher education systems are under severe pressure resulting from economic hardship, or have little external supervision and inadequate quality assurance mechanisms, and also in countries where societal corruption is pervasive. These features are more often found in developing countries, thus highlighting the critical need to address academic corruption in the process of development in these nations. The report purported that all these forms of corruption could be manifested through bribery, nepotism, extortion, kickbacks, breach of trust and dishonest behaviour. There is a clear distinction between student-administrator exchanges of any form of breach of norms that sets aside the cases of corruption mediated by administrators as opposed to those initiated by professors or staff members.

Cases involving faculty members deciding to take bribe in exchange for an undeserved grade raises issues

regarding norms of academic profession as well as formal and informal codes of conduct (Goode, 2017) and professional misconduct (Braxton and Bayer, 2009). Cases involving the coercion or invitation to collaborate with a faculty member by an administrator to give an undeserved grade demand a discussion on administrative ethics, quality of leadership, and distribution of power between administrators and professionals. A similar but not identical distinction may be drawn in cases when administrators bypass, coerce, or collaborate with staff members on education-specific corruption. Although both staff and administrators violate the law when engaged in corruption, involvement of an administrator indicates the depth of penetration of corruption in the organization and decayed leadership of the university.

### **Causes of Corruption in Tertiary Institutions**

1. ***Economic factors*** - Inadequate, irregular, or delayed salaries often force lecturers to seek supplementary income. As Voices of the Poor reports from Moldova, teachers have left their position in large numbers because they cannot survive on their salary alone. Those who remain manage by relying on subsistence farming or working extra shifts. In rural areas, teachers accept payments from parents in food or labour and they buy textbooks and manuals from publishing houses and resell them to pupils. This indicates that poverty is one of the main driver of corruption in the sector, but it can be the other way around cause by insufficient funding of schools. In higher education, shortage of funds places universities under great pressure to admit students, leading to overcrowded facilities. Institutions experiencing “permanent poverty” in societies that offer few options for the highly educated are more exposed to the lures of academic corruption.
2. ***Donor Imprudence*** - Donors and lenders risk flooding the education system with funds that bureaucracies cannot

absorb responsibly. It is also important to note the special dynamic that evolves when mid- and low-level officials are tasked with implementing anti-corruption measures which emanate from the Ministry or the donor community. In such cases personnel may attempt to cut corners, ignore rules, and bypass standard procedures in order to move activities forward. Thus, the pressure to get results may create an environment conducive to corruption. Hence, what some regard as corruption is merely seen as effective project management by others. A related problem arises when donors agree to pay government officials in order to “get things done”. Likewise, donors may pay project managers to obtain data which in any case should be publicly available. A continuation of such practices often results in a vicious circle where donors are prone to extortion from the partners and institutions they are working to support.

3. ***Lack of transparent regulations and criteria*** - Without clear standards and regulations, the line between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour becomes blurred. Inadequate accreditation mechanisms for schools and higher education institutions further exacerbate the problem.
4. ***Social factors*** - Some cultural practices can aggravate the problem of corruption in the education sector. For instance the tradition of giving token gifts has in some places evolved into a practice of widespread extortion. There are sometimes strong links between social corruption and corruption in academia. Societies with weak norms of meritocracy are often prone to academic corruption. An example is where a person can receive a degree or get promoted purely on the basis of belonging to a certain group or family, without provoking any protest.
5. ***Inadequate organizational structures and control Mechanisms*** - An absence of incentives for improved

performance can stimulate corruption and there may also be lack of mechanisms for control and punishment. This is the case in many transition countries where authoritarian and centralized systems hinder opportunities for professional growth, and a generally weak system makes it easy for staff to take inappropriate advantage of their positions. At management level, every effort is often made to maintain both discretionary powers and a cumbersome system awash with red tape, thus allowing corrupt practices to persist.

6. ***Inadequate human resources*** - Most administrators in schools are lecturers, and they often lack the knowledge to analyze, and audit financial information. **Thus**, skill deficiencies are often prevalent at district, provincial and national levels.
7. ***Lack of community involvement and access to information*** - Parents who are - deliberately or unintentionally - not given the opportunity to involve themselves in establishing, overseeing and supporting a school may lose a sense of ownership. This makes it less likely that they will hold school staff accountable for the expected educational outcomes. Where crucial information is not given freely to parents, the resulting discouragement of their involvement may hinder them from demanding their children's rightful education.

### **The Effects of Corruption on Institutions of Higher Learning in Nigeria.**

Corruption in institutions of higher studies negatively affects all aspects: students, teachers, non-academic staff and the administration. Among students, corruption among higher institution stakeholders has negative implication for learning. Many learners in higher institution do not attend lectures because the 70% attendance to lectures to qualify to write examination policy is hardly implemented, because students



are prepared to bribe to pass. Inadequate learning leads to examination malpractices and other 'sharp' practices like bribery/sorting of lecturers. Inadequate learning also has serious implication for the performance of students and often leads to the production of 'half-baked or unbaked' graduates. Such graduates have low self-esteem as they lack the intellectual competitiveness required to thrive in the 21st century job-market and workplace.

At the level of the lecturers, corruption is inimical to the essence of their calling and runs contrary to the oath to uphold the truth. It affects objectivity in grading of students scripts, leads to low self-esteem and morale because lecturers who collect money from students in order to award marks are hardly able to look at their students in the face. These lecturers also develop authoritarian relationship with students who do not give bribe. This type of relationship negates the mentored-mentor relationship that should exist between lecturers and students.

Among the non-academic staff, effects of corruption are also damaging. It affects the quality of service delivery in tertiary institutions. At the management level in higher education institutions, corruption has serious implication for the execution of projects. Ogbonnaya (2009) observes that contractors handling major projects like administrative blocks and hostel buildings in universities are sometimes compelled by Ministry officials to offer bribes to them. Furthermore, he notes that the management of such institutions also receives bribes before contracts are awarded. Such acts result in unfinished projects. Other effects of corruption on post-secondary institutions include:

- Diversion, embezzlement and misappropriation of financial resources
- Poor development of talents – Hidden talents are killed, underdeveloped or misapplied

- Distorts values of young people – Cynicism among young people. They feel it does not pay to be honest
- Blur lines between right and wrong, legal and illicit, good and evil
- Foreigners see graduates of Nigerian universities as very poor and second rate. This factor is responsible for many rich parents sending their children overseas to study at the detriment of the Nigerian economy as billions of Naira is lost as foreign exchange.

Since corruption is inimical to the progress and quality delivery of service in Nigerian higher institutions, it is expedient to curb it so that the goals of higher education will be effectively achieved.

Notwithstanding, the most direct and in some ways the most inconsequential consequences of corruption as cited by David (2012) is the waste of the financial resources that get misdirected. The more serious costs are incurred when;

- students who unable to afford bribes are denied access to schooling or examinations,
- talent is misallocated due to promotion being awarded on the basis of bribery rather than merit, and
- a generation of students come to believe that personal effort and merit do not count and that success comes through manipulation, favoritism and bribery.

When corruption is so pervasive that it comes to be viewed as a basic mechanism of social and economic interaction, it instils a value that is highly destructive to social and economic development of a country (David, 2012).

Firstly, corruption promotes poverty. A selfish management of tertiary institution means that staff are not paid as at when due or receive their salaries as at when due. Some lecturers eventually migrate from one school to another because of the poor monthly salaries offered that often end in frustrations. If education remains one of the main routes leading to a good life and national development, without

education, what would be the future of these dependants and the country? (Kayode, 2013).

Secondly, corruption lowers the standard of education in Nigeria, through examination malpractices, such as cheating in the examination hall, impersonation, sorting in cash or kind for scores. Resultantly, the performance of many graduates in the work field is grossly below expectation. It must be recalled that the various military regimes that took over power from democratically elected representatives of the people had always justified their intervention on the grounds of grand corruption and looting of state treasury by political state actors and abandoning of different sectors of the society, which the education sector is inclusive (Ololube, 2016).

Thirdly, corruption contributes to the blanket criminalization of staffs, management, examiners and government agencies on educational system in Nigerians. With its capacity to generate poverty and instability, the youth have also been systematically hijacked for selfish ends by unscrupulous politicians and ideologies. Some of those that were not “hijacked” have found interest in advance fee fraud popularly known as online Yahoo business in local parlance. Thus, corruption has been implicated as one of the major causes of the systematic criminalization in the country (Uzochukwu, 2015).

Fourthly, corruption also has other social costs apart from poverty. As rightly noted by Myint (2010), in any society, there are laws and regulations to serve social objectives and to protect the public interest, such as building codes, environmental controls, traffic laws and prudential banking regulations. Violating these laws for economic gain through corrupt means can cause serious social harm. The frequent use of substandard materials and violation of building regulations have led to numerous building collapses. Killing innocent students, teachers and others have become a recurrent decimal

in Nigeria even in the church where people worship (Kayode, 2013).

Lastly, corruption is anti-developmental to the extent that it reduces the amount of funds available to be used for developmental purposes. Funds that should have been used to improve the education, health, infrastructure and other items needed to encourage a good life of Nigerians at the grassroots are stolen by a microscopic few (Torulagha, 2013).

Corruption by its nature is universal and does not restrict itself to borders or geographical territories. In the same vein, corruption does not restrict itself to a particular political regime in Nigeria. In fact corruption and corrupt practices are common denominators that developing and under-developed states share in common and in all these states, individuals and institutions that perpetuate corruption and corrupt practices intentionally and willingly do so as they on their own create window of opportunities that promote and make corruption possible. In a way perpetrators of corruption and corrupt practices take exceptional interests in grabbing all the benefits their states can afford to themselves, in addition to being least committed to the ideals of social justice and human rights in their states. What this tries to suggest is that in states where corruption and corrupt practices flourish, priority and conscious efforts to focus on the welfare policies for the people are usually not a priority of the state simply because available resources for initiating welfare of the people are usually not a priority of the state simply because available resources for initiating welfare policies are cornered or diverted by a given few minority who hold the majority hostage.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on Idealistic Theory.

#### **Idealistic Theory**

This theory is based on the proposition that it is people's ideas that influence their culture, behaviour, organization of their society; therefore, corruption is the nature of social and moral values prevailing in the society (Nkom, 2012). This theory explains corruption in terms of some selfish ideas, which are prevalent in the value system of the society (Ganahl, 2013). A simple extension of this logic leads to perception of corruption as emergent perversion of morality and value system in the society. This argument sets the platform on which the positions of two different schools of thought were built. These are the traditionalist school and the modernist school. The argument of the traditionalist is that corruption and unethical practices in society are symptoms of perversion of traditional values, beliefs, norms, ethics, and so on (Heyneman, 2009). This school blames corruption on invasion of African culture by the West. This school opined that during the colonial era, civilization was highly regarded as Europeanization of African societies, so whether the adopted strategy was that of indirect rule or principle of assimilation, a cultural transformation was aggressively pursued by the colonial masters in the areas of pattern of education, religion, value system, governance, politics, language, administrative and legal systems, and so on. They believed in cleansing the cultural elements and attributes that they saw as substandard to those of European societies; they would enthrone a cultural revolution that was indispensable to the development of African societies (Azelama, 2012).

The cultural contact between Western Europe and African Traditional societies produced a cultural change in Africa. Africans embraced some aspects of the European culture and value. Embracing European culture did not lead to rejection of their traditional values; this led to a "culture conflict." Before the advent of colonization, African societies had their conventional way of preventing and penalizing

corrupt practices. Azelama is of the opinion that, to a varied extent, Ghanaians continue to be influenced by traditional religious beliefs, even those who claim to be devoted Christians, Muslims, and educated elites, which is regarded as the “culture conflict.” The resultant effect of culture conflict today is that African traditional values have proved too weak while adopted European values proved insufficient in restraining and preventing corrupt practices.

The African traditional value that was based on communal life was eroded by the western value of monetized economy, materialism, capitalism, without Africans or Nigerians fully internalizing corruption control mechanisms in the new system evolved in Africa by the West. Therefore, the people’s moral value became perverted, leading to endemic corruption. This implies that culture contact led to materialism that occasioned greediness, reduced devotion to communal services, and so on. The modernist perspective is that corruption in Nigeria is a remnant of the unyielding attitude, institution of the African traditional societies. The modernist idealists associate corruption with certain traditional practices such as offering of gifts, ethnic loyalty, and other parochial tendencies (the obligation to protect members of your kinship and your nation), which tend to encourage corrupt behaviour and which may be overcome by modern rationalist values (Anazodo, 2012).

## **Conclusion**

Corruption in institutions of higher education in Anambra State and in Nigeria at large is widespread and it is assuming a near-crisis dimension. Administrators, students, lecturers and even some parents are indeed partakers in this menace. The consequences of this evil on the administration of institutions of higher learning are grave and needs to be curbed if the goals of our higher education institutions are to be achieved effectively. The demand to institute and implement portent

strategies that will check the malady in our institutions of higher studies is urgent, so that Nigeria can take its position of pride among the nations of the world and rebuild confidence in our educational sector. A good measure of ethical reorientation is needed to restore the Nigerian institutions of higher studies back to its status at inception.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the study, the following recommendations are made:

- The government should consider introducing a standard requirements, guidelines and principles that are reasonable for establishment of tertiary institutions.
- Government should establish a telephone hot-line or code for staffs, students, parents and all interested agencies who can anonymously talk about the corruption they have encountered at school. The information gathered through this hot-line or code can be transferred to the respective department or the Ministry of Education.
- Government and other responsible bodies should endorse the teaching of ethics, and moral instruction as core subjects/courses at all levels of education in Nigeria.
- The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission in Nigeria (EFCC) should collaborate with local agencies to investigate all financial crimes in institutions of higher learning, including illegal fee being charged by the some school managements to reduce exploitations of the students especially in the private schools.
- The role of civil society may be akin to being partners with government in the implementation and monitoring of corrupt practices in educational sectors.
- The ministry of education and policymakers should provide additional guidance and policies to tertiary institutions who seek to employ lecturers on terms and

conditions for employment of lecturers in their various schools.

- Students also need to be adequately educated on their rights on such issues and be encouraged to report any corrupt practices they experience to the school authorities.
- The school management should introduce good salaries, incentive system and improve other conditions of work so that the level of poverty can be reduced among their lecturers. This will inevitably reduce their vulnerability and susceptibility to corruption.
- The institutions ought to evolve codes of conduct to ensure high standards of integrity in the conduct of staff activities. The institution that already has codes of conduct ought to ensure compliance and to allay the fears of students of victimization when they report such incidences.

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