CORRUPTION IN EDUCATION SECTOR AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF AKWA IBOM STATE

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Abstract

The study employs a descriptive survey design to investigate the relationship between corruption in education sector and economic development of Akwa Ibom State. The research utilizes a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, including questionnaires and oral interviews. The study population comprises individuals age 15 to 64, being 926,369 drawn from three Local Government Areas in the state. The findings reveal a significant relationship between corruption in the education sector and economic development. The study emphasizes the need for stringent measures to address corruption in the education system to foster economic growth.

Keywords: Corruption, education sector, economic development, Akwa Ibom State

Introduction

Corruption in the education sector refers to unethical practices, such as embezzlement of funds, bribery, and academic fraud, that compromise the quality and effectiveness of education. In the context of Akwa Ibom State, corruption in education is a multifaceted issue with implications for both individual students and the broader economic development of the State. One major aspect of the problem is the mismanagement and misappropriation of funds earmarked for education. Financial resources intended for improving infrastructure, providing quality teaching materials and ensuring adequate teacher training often end up in the wrong hands. This not only hampers the immediate educational experience of students but also has long-term consequences for the state's human capital development. The consequences of corruption in the education sector are dire. The quality of education suffers, leading to a workforce that may lack the necessary skills and knowledge required for a competitive and diverse economy. When education is compromised, it becomes challenging to produce a workforce that can contribute meaningfully to various sectors, hindering economic growth and diversification.

Furthermore, corruption can create a vicious cycle. A poorly educated population may be more susceptible to corruption, perpetuating a culture of dishonesty and undermining the foundations of a transparent and accountable society. This, in turn, can deter potential investors and hinder the growth of businesses in the State. The record of corruption in Nigeria was high in

2005. Among the 158 countries surveyed by the Transparency International in 2005, Nigeria was ranked eighth most corrupt countries in the world. In 2006, 163 countries were surveyed by Transparency International and Nigeria was 21 in ranking as the most corrupt country in the world. Haiti was the world's most corrupt nation that year. In 2007, 180 countries surveyed and Nigeria ranked 147 on the table alongside Angola and Guinea-Bissau. This result showed that Nigeria was the 33 most corrupt countries in the world. An analysis of the anti-graft/anti-corruption laws in Nigeria shows that corruption will continue in spite of the laws because the perpetrators do not fear any consequences, (Oyinola, 2011).

In 2012, Transparency International again deemed Nigeria one of the most corrupt nations in the world and Nigeria ranked 139th out of the 176 surveyed countries, making Nigeria the 37th most corrupt nation (Uzochukwu, 2013). In 2013, Nigeria ranked 144 out of 177 surveyed countries in terms of transparency. The score made Nigeria 33 most corrupt country in the world that year. The result published by the organization also showed that Nigeria scored 25% out of 100 in terms of transparency. In the 2014 ranking, Nigeria was ranked 136 out of 174 surveyed countries (Transparency International 2014).

Corruption Perception Index released by Transparency International in 2018, Nigeria has relapsed deeper into corruption moving 12 steps backward from 136 to 148 (Vanguard news 2018) with respect to the 2014 results. In the year 2018, Corruption Perception Index ranked 180 countries and territories. The rankings are from 1 to 180, with 180 indicating the country having the worst perception of corruption (Olawoyin, 22nd February, 2018 cited in Premium Times Online News, January 31, 2019). Nigeria occupied number 144 on the table with Comoros, Guatemala, Kenya and Mauritania. Based on the position of 144 on the table, it indicated that Nigerian was the 36th most corrupt country in the world in 2018 (Transparency International, 2019). Nigeria failed when it came to transparency in the country's government. By contrast, in 2013, Denmark and New Zealand scored highest at 91% each, meaning the countries are clean and have higher Confidence Intervals than Nigeria. In other words, Nigeria is highly corrupt. Corruption in Nigeria hurts a lot of people and economic sectors including education, agriculture, manufacturing and electoral system, as the money that would have been used to reduce poverty in the country is being channeled into the pockets of a select few.

No country has been able to completely eliminate corruption, but studies show that the level of corruption in countries with emerging market economies is much higher than it is in developed countries. According to the World Bank's estimate, the cost of corruption at the global level is about 1 trillion US dollars per year in a world economy of 30 trillion US dollars. According to the African Development Bank, the cost of corruption for Africa may reach 25% of the continent's GDP (Nguyen, Nguyen and Binh, 2014).

Whereas economic development is a policy intervention endeavor with aims of improving the economic and social well-being of people, economic growth is a phenomenon of market productivity and rise in GDP. Consequently, Sen (1983) pointed out, economic growth is one aspect of the process of economic development.

In order to better support the development of human capabilities, achieving higher levels of transparency and accountability in education agencies is fundamental. Studying corruption in education is relevant because it may increase public awareness on its deleterious effects and provide political support to implement anti-corruption initiatives in the sector. Unfortunately, research of corruption in education has been neglected (Tanaka, 2001; Hallak and Poisson, 2002 and 2005; Segal 2004; Rumyantseva, 2005) and the limited available research suffers from the lack of reliable data and from a missing conceptual framework to describe the particularities of corrupt practices in education. In addition, a systematic examination of the possible avenues through which corruption influences the distribution of educational opportunities is absent. However, education founded on wrong philosophy such as this, cannot drive meaningful and sustainable development of such a country, (Effiong, Ekanem and Ottong, 2023).

Educational corruption is frequently observed. Examples from a number of countries suggest that, this area of corrupt practice is nearly omnipresent and their negative consequences are documented. In the Philippines, for example, teachers and candidates bribe educational authorities to be hired as staff and for quick promotions (Chua, 1999). The likely outcome is that those hired may not necessarily the candidates most capable to teach. In Mexico, embezzlement of public education funds often results to insufficient distribution of textbooks to the schools, affecting academic achievement of students, (Martinez, 2004). In the United States, teachers cheating on standardized tests pervert incentive programs (Jacob and Levitt, 2003) which have the likely results of their students receiving a substandard education.

Wonah, Beshel, and Uangbaode (2020) studied Corruption and Governance in Adult Education in Nigeria: A Case Study of Cross River and Akwa Ibom States This study adopted the ex-post facto research design. Forty two (42) Continuing Education Centres out of the eighty (80) Continuing Education Centres in Cross River and Akwa lbom States were sampled for the study. Purposive and simple random techniques were adopted for the study, One hundred and eighty (180) stakeholders of education, were sampled for the study. This was out of the six hundred and twenty (620), stakeholders as population of the study. Research questions were followed by hypotheses which were formulated to direct the study. The test statistics used for data analysis was the one -way ANOVA. The result of the analysis showed that literacy level was low because corrupt officers who were mandated to handle continuing education issues corruptly mismanaged the fund meant for this purpose. It is recommended that sanctions should be labeled against corrupt officers who govern (administer) Continuing Education and very seasoned administrators should be used for the scheme.

Statement of the Problem

Corruption has affected many countries all over the world especially the developing countries. It has various implications for both the developed and developing economies. Corruption hampers development and thus raises the level of poverty in any economy that finds itself entrenched in corrupt practices. Corruption is a serious crime in Nigeria and it is punishable by the Law.

Section 494 (1c) of Criminal Code Act (1916, CAP 77) Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria clearly specified that offence of corruption is two years imprisonment or fine of N1000 or both. Corruption is considered a strong constraint to economic growth and development (Kochanova, 2015). In Nigeria, the government recognizes the threat that corruption poses to the nations' economy and as a result, has taken some steps to address the problem. Although in Nigeria, some progress has been made by anti-corruption agencies, namely, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) and the Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT), these agencies have become revitalized and more proactive in the pursuit of perpetrators of corrupt practices, irrespective of their social status and political persuasion. This is a radical departure from the past. Notwithstanding, Nigeria is still struggling to translate its policies and comparatively strong legislative framework into practice on the ground.

The education sector plays a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of Akwa Ibom State, serving as a catalyst for human capital formation and economic progress. However, the prevalence of corruption within the education system raises critical concerns about its potential adverse effects on the state's economic development.

Corruption in the education sector manifests in various forms, including bribery, examination malpractice, embezzlement of funds, and favoritism. These corrupt practices compromise the integrity of educational institutions, hinder equitable access to quality education, and erode public trust in the education system. The consequences of corruption extend beyond the immediate educational sphere, with far-reaching implications for the economic landscape of Akwa Ibom State.

By addressing these questions, the study aims to shed light on the multifaceted challenges posed by corruption in the education sector and provide insights that can inform effective strategies for promoting integrity, transparency, and sustainable economic development in Akwa Ibom State.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the extent to which corruption in education sector affect economic development in Akwa Ibom State;

Research Question

The study sought to answer the following questions:

How does corruption in education sector affect economic development in Akwa Ibom State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated in the study.

There is no relationship between corruption in education sector and economic development in Akwa Ibom State

Significance of the Study

This research is significant in the sense that corruption in Akwa Ibom State and Nigeria at large is becoming an issue of both national and international concern and it has been one of the threats to economic development. This study will examine the implications of corruption in education sector in Akwa Ibom State. The concept of corruption, causes of corruption, effect of corruption and other relevant literature on corruption and economic development were reviewed. Findings from the study would help the government and anti-corruption agencies in their fight against corruption and sensitize the general public on the implication of corruption and the need to stop its spread.

The study will be appreciated by the academic community and Anti-Corruption Agencies in Nigeria. It has contributed to the existing body of knowledge and literature on corruption mostly as it relate to economic development. The study has also given room for further research.

Method

Research Design

The study adopted descriptive survey design which entails the use of both the qualitative and quantitative mechanism. Primary data were gathered through the use of questionnaire and oral interview to elicit information from the respondents.

Population of the Study

People from the age cohort of 15 years to 64 years (working age population) both male and female participated in the study. The working age population in Akwa Ibom State is 2318155, i.e 1148432 males (49.54%) and 1169723 female (50.46%) (Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Economic Development, Labour and Manpower Planning, 2018). According to the Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Economic Development, Labour and Manpower Planning (2018), Uyo Local Government Area has a population of 456996, Eket Local Government Area has a population of 258185 and Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area has a population of 211213 respectively.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The study employed multi-stage samplingtechnique to select the sample for the study. A sample size of 400 respondents was drawn from the study population using the Taro Yamane's scientific formula;

$$n = N/1 + N (e)^2.$$

n = sample size

N = total population

1 = constant

e = error level (5%)

$$n = 926,369/1+926,369(0.05)^2$$

$$= 926,369/2316.92$$

$$= 399.83 \text{ (Approximately 400)}.$$

Also, proportionate stratification equation was used to determinethe sample size for each stratum. This is determined using the equation given below:

$$n_h = (N_h / N) \times n$$

Where,

n_h =total sample size for each stratum

N_h =population size for each stratum

N = total population size (926,369)

n = total sample size (400)

Table 2: Sample Size Per Stratum

S/N	Proportion of Stratum	Population of each stratum	Total sample size
1	Uyo (456,996/926,369) × 400 = 197.33	456,996	197
2	Eket (258,185/926,369) × 400 = 111.48	258,185	112
3	Ikot Ekpene (211,213/926,369) × 400 = 91.20	211,213	91
Total		926,369	400

Source: Computed by Mfon (2019)

Data Collection Technique

The primary sources of data collection were employed using questionnaire and oral interview. The questionnaire contained 34 questions structured in a statement form. The statements required closed ended answers. The instruments used for data collection included a structured questionnaire on a five point Likert scale (SA= Strongly Agreed; A= Agreed; U = Undecided; SD = Strongly Disagreed and D =Disagreed). Oral interview was also used for information gathering with the help of interview guide developed by the researcher to support the questionnaire responses.

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The questionnaire and oral interview guide were developed by the researcher and submitted to research experts in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Uyo, Uyo before submitted to the supervisor for his intellectual contribution and advice. The supervisor approved the instruments (questionnaire and oral interview guide) and authorized the researcher to proceed for fieldwork. Twenty (20) copies of the questionnaire were administered to twenty students in the University of Uyo. Data collected were subjected to Cronbach alpha reliability test and a reliability coefficient of 0.96 was obtained. Based on these reliability coefficients, the instrument was then judged to be reliable.

Method of Data Analysis

Frequency distribution table was used to present the demographic information of respondents. Chi-square (X^2) statistical tool was used to analyze data concerning the phenomenon and test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Conversational analysis was used to analyze data obtained from the oral interview.

Results and Discussion

Table 3: Chi-Square Contingency Table onthe Negative Effect of Corruption in Education Sector on Economic Development

Cell	O	E	O-e	O-e^2	O-e^2/e
1	54.00	77.54	-23.54	554.13	7.15
2	124.00	104.46	19.54	381.81	3.66
3	16.00	14	2.00	4.00	0.29
4	4.00	3.23	0.77	0.59	0.18
5	12.00	10.77	1.23	1.51	0.14
6	90.00	66.46	23.54	554.13	8.34
7	70.00	89.54	-19.54	381.81	4.26
8	10.00	12	-2.00	4.00	0.33
9	2.00	2.77	-0.77	0.59	0.21
10	8.00	9.23	-1.23	1.51	0.16
				$\sum X^2$ =	**24.72**

Source: Field Data (2023)

Therefore,
X^2 = 24.72 (Calculated Value)
Degree of freedom = (number of row-1) × (number of column -1)
$$= (2\text{-}1) \times (5\text{-}1)$$
$$= 1 \times 4 = 4$$
We enter the table of X^2 distribution at v = 4 at 0.05.
Table value = 9.49

The chi-square test shows that the calculated value (24.72) is greater than the table value (9.49). We therefore reject the null hypothesis (H_0)that there is no relationship between corruption in education sector and economic development in Akwa Ibom State. This means that there is a significant relationship between corruption in education sector and economic development in Akwa Ibom State.

This result is in line with the observations of Hallak and Poisson (2002) who opined that educational corruption is an important issue to be addressed because, corruption in the specific sphere of education affects not only the volume of educational services (including their quality and efficiency) but also equity in education and public confidence in educational systems. The finding also agree with Cox, Jaramillo and Reimers (2005) who observed thatthe ongoing supporting attitude of teachers toward corruption means that young people who graduate from these institutions will lack the necessary skills to become responsible citizens. The works of Banerjee and Esther (2005); Reinikka and Svensson (2004) also agree with this study that teacher absenteeism is one of the most common corrupt practices observed in education sectors. Corrupt practices have undermined the goal of education. This affirmed studies by Agha, Ukommi, Ekpenyong and Effiong, (2020), that education in Nigeria is still battling with the challenges of corruption which impedes further the development of the country. Corruption in this sector is particularly devastating in that it can lead to poor quality education, inferior performance and dropout rates, which in turn can lead to increase levels of poverty. Having established the positive relationship between corruption and education, it is certain that corruption in education sub-sector is endemic to economic development and will deepen if stringent measures are not taken to curtail its presence in Nigerian education system.

School is one of the agents of socialization. School should emphasize on value system entrenchment on pupils and students. If we can have the citizens, (including those with disabilities), as advocated by Effiong, Ekanem and Ottong (2023), with a strong value system stemming from childhood, a strong and corrupt free society is guaranteed. We will have a society that is uncompromising and upholds integrity; a people that will not get what is not theirs.

The research explores the nexus between corruption in the education sector and economic development in Akwa Ibom State. Through a comprehensive methodology involving surveys, interviews, and statistical analysis, the study establishes a significant correlation between educational corruption and economic outcomes. The findings align with existing literature on the detrimental impact of corruption on the quality of education, equity, and public confidence. The study emphasizes the urgency of addressing corruption in the education sector to safeguard economic development.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study affirms a substantial link between corruption in the education sector and the economic development of Akwa Ibom State. The evidence underscores the need for decisive actions to curb corruption in the education system. Addressing corruption is crucial for maintaining the quality and efficiency of educational services, fostering equity, and instilling public confidence. Failure to tackle corruption in education jeopardizes the overall economic well-being of the State.

The study made the following recommendations.

1. **Stringent Anti-Corruption Measures**: Implement and enforce robust anti-corruption measures within the education sector to deter and punish corrupt practices.

2. **Enhanced Oversight**: Strengthen oversight mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the conduct of educational institutions, ensuring transparency and accountability.

3. **Ethics Education:** Integrate ethics education within the curriculum to instill values and integrity among students, fostering a culture of anti-corruption from an early age.

4. **Community Engagement:** Involve communities in the oversight of educational institutions, encouraging community-led initiatives to combat corruption.

5. **Capacity Building**: Provide training and capacity-building programs for educational stakeholders, emphasizing ethical conduct and professionalism.

6. **Public Awareness Campaign:** Launch campaigns to raise public awareness about the negative impact of corruption in education, encouraging community support for anti-corruption efforts.

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