



## A STUDY OF CORRUPT PRACTICES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN DELTA STATE OF NIGERIA

**DANIEL D. WHAWO.**

Michael and Cecilia Foundation College of Education, Agbarha-Otor, Nigeria

### Article Info:

#### Author(s):

DANIEL D. WHAWO.

#### History:

Received: 12-05-2015

Accepted Date: 19-06-2015

Vol 3 (2), pp, 22-28 June ,2015

#### Corresponding Author:

**DANIEL D. WHAWO.**

Michael and Cecilia Foundation College of Education, Agbarha-Otor, Nigeria.

E-mail: [danduw2006@yahoo.com](mailto:danduw2006@yahoo.com)

#### Article Type:

**Full Length Research**

### Abstract

*This study was undertaken to find out if identifiable corrupt practices exist in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and to ascertain the damage they have done to tertiary education. Students and staff (academic and non-academic) of seven (7) tertiary institutions were randomly chosen as respondents to a validated open-ended questionnaire. The information obtained from them indicated that many corrupt practices are perpetuated by staff and students and these corrupt practices have done many evils to Higher Education in Nigeria. For instance, examination malpractices which are sustained by financial extortion/willing offerers and illicit sexual intercourse with female students result in the production of half-baked graduates and a lowering of academic standard.*

*KeyWord: Corrupt Practices, Tertiary, Academics, universities.*

### INTRODUCTION

The report of initial studies in which staff of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in Delta State of Nigeria opined strongly that there is corruption in Nigeria, has stimulated one to find out if the corrupt situation exists in the institutions too. The tertiary institutions are made up of Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and other post-secondary institutions that require Secondary School Certificate for admission of its students. By implication, teachers at the primary, secondary, including the tertiary levels, are trained in the tertiary institutions. This makes this study a crucial one as vices that prevail in the tertiary level are likely to be perpetuated at the lower levels.

The known vocal critics of social-economic and political vices in Nigeria come mainly from the tertiary institutions. It is the seat of excellence where agitations for the best is emphasized. It is therefore of immense importance to find out if there are any corrupt practices in them. The effective solution to social vices can best be suggested after a thorough knowledge of the vices. For this reason, it is envisaged that the process of breeding of corrupt practices in tertiary institutions, if eventually established, will assist in arresting the situation.

The focus of this investigation is to determine if there are corrupt practices in Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education in Delta State of Nigeria that must have adversely contributed to the poor image of the country in recent times. And if corrupt practices abound in the system, what are the evils they have done to tertiary education in the country? The research is meant to examine these issues.

### Research Questions

**Q<sub>1</sub>:** Do we have identifiable corrupt practices in tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

**Q<sub>2</sub>:** What is the worst corrupt practice in the tertiary school system?

**Q<sub>3</sub>:** What are the evils done to tertiary education in Nigeria by corrupt practices?

### Related Literature

In explaining possible areas where corruption may occur in schools and classroom, Tanako (2001) revealed that offer of bribes/favours to staff/teachers in exchange for contracts often result in substandard services and increase in procurement costs. He also observed that corruption can destroy equal educational opportunities by paying bribes to the disadvantage of poorer students.

To BH (internet), "the vice underlying corruption is not selfishness", but stupidity arising from short-sightedness. The source argued that without corruption, all citizens would, after some years of honesty boost the economy and would become richer. The fear of the evils of corruption can be inferred from the assertion of Vittal (2001) that corruption is anti-national, anti-poor, and anti-economic development. The danger now is that corruption is being taken for granted and "the capacity for making money as much as possible from one's position is welcomed".

Quoting a publication of IIEP (UNESCO), Lipsett (2007)

**TABLE 1a:** Corrupt Practices among Students in Tertiary Institutions Identified By Staff

S/No	Corrupt Practices	c.f	%
1.	Examination malpractice	72	26.47
2.	Sex exchange for marks	39	14.33
3.	Money for marks	36	13.24
4.	Cultism	33	12.13
5.	Stealing from female students	12	4.41
6.	Sorting of Lecturers	10	3.68
7.	Raping of female students	10	3.68
8.	Blocking	9	3.31
9.	Bribery	9	3.31
10.	Not ready to study yet want to pass	8	2.94
11.	Indecent dressing	6	2.21
12.	Forging of receipts	6	2.21
13.	Impersonation	6	2.21
14.	Embezzlement of funds by student leaders	5	1.84
15.	Truancy	4	1.47
16.	Prostitution (Aristo)	3	3.10
17.	False declaration of entry qualification	3	3.10
18.	Extortion of parents	1	0.38
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>272</b>	<b>100.00</b>

revealed that education is plagued by rigged calls for tender, embezzlement, illegal registration fees and academic fraud. Corruption in tertiary education may take the form of fake universities, bogus degrees and accreditation fraud. And as a result of corruption in Higher Education, Nwaze (2012) opined that the admission processes are characterized by shady deals of irregularities and malpractices as candidates of low quality now flood the institutions. This ultimately reduce the quality of graduates.

## METHODOLOGY

This is a follow-up survey study to an earlier one in which the workers in tertiary institutions agreed that there is corruption in Nigeria but that not all Nigerians are corrupt. The population of study was all the Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and the University in Delta State of Nigeria. They were seven (7) in all. A total of 30 staff and 20 students in each of the seven (7) institutions were randomly selected as respondents, using nine (9) Research Assistants. An open-ended questionnaire to obtain opinion information was administered to the respondents.

Three (3) months were spent to retrieve 143 or 68.10 % of the questionnaires to 210 staff and 121 or 86.43 % of the 140 to the students.

## Presentation of Data

The data obtained from retrieved questionnaires are

presented below to answer the research questions drawn up for the study.

**Q<sub>1</sub>:** Do we have identifiable corrupt practices in tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

The identified corrupt practices among students, academic and non-academic staff are separately shown in tables 1-5 for clarity.

The responses in these Tables and in all other ones are presented in cumulative frequencies (c.f) in decreasing order and expressed in percentages. All responses, irrespective of their frequencies, were recorded as a way to obtain in-depth knowledge of the subject investigated.

In Tables 1a and 1b, both lecturers and students independently agreed very strongly that students engage in examination malpractice, use financial inducement to obtain marks, involve themselves in sex abuse for marks and in cultism. Probably as a result of drug abuse and cultism, their female colleagues are criminally raped and forcibly dispossessed of their belongings. Forging of official receipts, impersonation and embezzlement of funds are also criminal offences found among students of tertiary institutions.

In Tables 2a and 2b, the most noticeable corrupt practices among administrative staff in tertiary institutions are illegal collections of money from students and staff, poor attitude/lateness to work and falsification and alteration of documents. While money is extorted from subordinates for their promotion, they themselves offer bribe to "occupy lucrative positions". Embezzlement

**TABLE 1b:** CORRUPT PRACTICES AMONG STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IDENTIFIED BY STUDENTS

<b>S/No.</b>	<b>Corrupt Practices</b>	<b>c.f</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Sorting/blocking/pay money to lecturers for marks	102	34.34
2.	Examination malpractice	66	22.22
3.	Cultism	48	16.16
4.	Sex abuse/prostitution/sexuality	45	15.15
5.	Stealing	9	3.03
6.	Drug abuse/smoking	8	2.69
7.	Indecent dressing	6	2.02
8.	Running away from classes	6	2.02
9.	Using girls to sort Lecturers	3	1.01
10.	Club dance	2	0.67
11.	Vandalization of school properties	2	0.67
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>297</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**TABLE 2a:** Corrupt Practices among Administrative Staff in Tertiary Institutions Identified By Staff

<b>S/No.</b>	<b>Corrupt Practices</b>	<b>c.f</b>	<b>%</b>
1.	Illegal collection of money from students	57	34.97
2.	Extortion of money from staff	30	18.40
3.	Lateness to work	18	11.04
4.	Falsification of documents	9	5.52
5.	Absence from work	6	3.68
6.	Laziness at work/delay in preparation of documents	6	3.68
7.	Official misconduct	6	3.68
8.	Lobbying with money for offices	4	2.45
9.	Alteration of official documents	4	2.45
10.	Obstacle to free flow of administrative process	4	2.45
11.	Not adhering to due process	3	1.84
12.	Sale of examination questions handled by them	3	1.84
13.	Working less than official hours	2	1.23
14.	Inflation of expenses	2	1.23
15.	Collection of work expenses without doing it.	2	1.23
16.	Using unnecessary delay to take undue advantage	2	1.23
17.	Suppression of records	2	1.23
18.	Misappropriation of funds	1	0.61
19.	Oppression and suppression of students	1	0.61
20.	Aiding and abetting examination malpractice	1	0.61
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>163</b>	<b>100.00</b>

and misappropriation of funds, sale of examination questions and inflation of expenses, including collection of money for expenses not made, are financial crimes.

Information in Tables 3a and 3b indicate that corrupt lecturers engage in criminal activities that are launched to milk helpless students. The majority of revealed corrupt practices against them are meant to extort

money from students while female students are often sexually defiled in exchange for undeserved scores. These unwholesome practices are most likely to lower the quality of credentials awarded to graduands.

It has been echoed by both staff and students that a myriad of corrupt and criminal activities go on in tertiary institutions. Many of them are directed at extorting

**TABLE 2b:** Corrupt Practices among Administrative Staff in Tertiary Institutions Identified By Students

S/No.	Corrupt Practices	c.f	%
1.	Collection of money illegally from students	63	39.13
2.	Poor attitude to work	24	14.91
3.	Collection of money for admission	15	9.32
4.	Sex among themselves and harassment of female students	12	7.45
5.	Receive money to promote people	6	3.73
6.	Unnecessary delay in carrying out their duties	6	3.73
7.	Cultism	6	3.73
8.	Not attending to student's files	6	3.73
9.	Embezzlement/misappropriation of funds	6	3.73
10.	Sitting on people's promotion	3	1.86
11.	Stealing items from the store	3	1.86
12.	Falsification of official receipts/use of invalid credentials	3	1.86
13.	Killing colleagues to take over their positions	2	1.24
14.	Tribalism for positions	2	1.24
15.	Intimidation of Junior Staff	2	1.24
16.	Payments without receipts	2	1.24
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>161</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**TABLE 3a:** Corrupt Practices among Lecturers in Tertiary Institutions Identified By Staff

S/No.	Corrupt Practices	C.f	%
1.	Money for grab; extortion of money from students	45	20.54
2.	Selling of marks to highest bidders	30	13.70
3.	Forcing female students to sexual intercourse	30	13.70
4.	Selling of dubbed materials/reduction of students' marks	21	9.59
5.	Sorting of lecturers by students	18	8.22
6.	Inflation of/reduction of students' marks	18	8.22
7.	Sex exchange for marks	12	5.48
8.	Poor attitude to work/many do not go to classes	9	4.40
9.	Cultism	6	2.74
10.	Crave to get rich quickly	6	2.74
11.	Accepting bribe/gratification from students	6	2.74
12.	Aid students to cheat in examinations	6	2.74
13.	God-fatherism	4	1.83
14.	Admission racketeering	3	1.37
15.	Leak examination questions	3	1.37
16.	Alteration of scores	2	0.91
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>219</b>	<b>100.00</b>

money from students by staff (academic and non-academic) for personal gain.

**Q<sub>2</sub>:** What is the worst corrupt practice in the tertiary school system?

Table 4 is made up of Sections A and B: responses from staff are in A while those from students are in B.

To the staff, the worst corrupt practice in tertiary institutions in Nigeria is examination malpractice. This is closely followed by extortion of money from students.

The students also indicated these two evils as uppermost but in reverse order. It is heart-warning to note that even the students are grieved at examination malpractice on campuses.

**Q<sub>3</sub>:** What are the evils done to tertiary education in Nigeria by corrupt practices?

Two Tables are presented below to separately catalogue the submissions of staff and students.

**TABLE 3b:** Corrupt Practices among Lecturers in Tertiary Institutions Identified By Students

S/No.	Corrupt Practices	C.f	%
1.	"Brown envelopes"/collection of bribes to pass exams	72	42.60
2.	Sexual harassment ("dating of female students")	15	8.88
3.	Fail to complete course outlines	15	8.88
4.	Some do not attend classes	12	7.10
5.	Textbooks/hand-outs are made compulsory	12	7.10
6.	Selling of books at high prices	10	5.92
7.	They promote cultism	9	5.33
8.	Compel students to pay them to write projects for them	6	3.55
9.	Fail students who could not buy their textbooks	4	2.37
10.	Undue intimidation of students to demand money from them	3	1.78
11.	Partiality in the marking of scripts	3	1.78
12.	Aid and abet examination malpractice	2	1.18
13.	Some are not capable of teaching	2	1.18
14.	Hiding of examination scores to punish students	2	1.18
15.	Sale of prohibited hand-outs	2	1.18
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>169</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**TABLE 4:** Worst Corrupt Practice in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria Identified By Staff and Students

S/No.	Worst Corrupt Practice	C.f	%
<b>Section A: STAFF</b>			
1.	Examination malpractice	33	22.45
2.	Extortion of money from students	28	19.05
3.	Bribery for blocking	21	14.29
4.	Trading of marks for money	18	12.24
5.	Sorting of lecturers by students	18	12.24
6.	Sexual intimidation of female students	18	12.24
7.	Sex for marks	6	4.08
8.	Inflation/deflation of marks	4	2.72
9.	Governing Council members draw underserved allowances without adding value to the system	1	0.68
<b>Sub- Total</b>		<b>147</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Section B: STUDENTS</b>			
1.	Extortion of money from students	45	43.27
2.	Examination malpractice	24	23.08
3.	Cultism	24	23.08
4.	Covetousness	3	2.88
5.	Sexual abuse	3	2.88
6.	Indecent dressing	3	2.88
7.	Students bribing lecturers	2	1.92
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>104</b>	<b>100.00</b>

In Table 5a, the staff respondents strongly opined that half-baked graduates are being produced and education standard is falling as students are no longer interested in reading, all as a result of corruption in tertiary institutions. Attendant problems include the low rating of credentials from academic institutions in Nigeria, rise in moral decadence, cultism and a reduction in level of national development.

The responses of the students in Table 5b corroborate that of the staff. In addition, involvement of students in corruption has given rise to cultism and the killing of their colleagues. The evil culture of bribing to obtain scores has eroded the determination to achieve success through hard work in academics.

It is therefore safe to conclude that corruption has introduced many evils in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

**TABLE 5a:** Evils Corruption has done to Tertiary Education Identified by Students

S/No.	Identified Evils	C.f	%
1.	Production of half-baked graduates	66	22.45
2.	Lowering of education standard	66	22.45
3.	Lack of zeal to study among students	42	14.29
4.	Low academic performance	24	8.16
5.	Lack of respect for teachers	18	6.12
6.	Degrees and certificates from Nigeria are rated low outside the country	15	5.10
7.	Rise in cultism	12	4.08
8.	Low productivity	9	3.06
9.	Unqualified teaching staff are employed	6	2.04
10.	Discrimination	6	2.04
11.	Reduces the level of national development	6	2.04
12.	High rate of moral decadence	6	2.04
13.	Mediocrity	3	1.02
14.	Quest for materialism instead of excellence	3	1.02
15.	Inability to defend certificates, diplomas and degrees	3	1.02
16.	Production of not employable graduates	2	0.68
17.	Laziness at work	2	0.68
18.	Serious students are discouraged by lazy ones	2	0.68
19.	Erosion of moral values	1	0.34
20.	Decay of infrastructure	1	0.34
21.	Poor instructional materials	1	0.34
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>294</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**TABLE 5b:** Evils Corruption has done to Tertiary Education Identified by Students

S/No.	Identified Evils	C.f	%
1.	Half-baked graduates	33	17.10
2.	Students are not serious in reading again	30	15.54
3.	Poor academic achievement	18	9.33
4.	Lowering/falling/standard of education	15	7.77
5.	Fighting and killing fellow students in cultism	15	7.77
6.	Promotion of cultism	12	6.22
7.	Increase in school drop-out	12	6.22
8.	Our certificates are not valued by society	9	4.66
9.	Promotion of corruption and social evils	9	4.66
10.	Employment of staff not qualified	8	4.15
11.	Promotion of bribery and corruption among youths	6	3.11
12.	Indiscipline behaviour	6	3.11
13.	Promotion of illicit sexual intercourse	4	2.07
14.	Sale of poorly written textbooks	4	2.07
15.	Rustication for examination malpractice	3	1.55
16.	Perpetuation of examination malpractice	3	1.55
17.	Unwanted pregnancies among female students	2	1.04
18.	No more respect for lecturers	2	1.04
19.	Decay of education system	1	0.52
20.	Gives the institutions bad image	1	0.52
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>193</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Summary of Findings

The analyses of data have revealed the underlisted.

1. There is a host of corrupt practices in tertiary

institutions in Nigeria. The objective of the corrupt practices is to use money, sexual intercourse and cultism to distort the due process of academic pursuit and obtain certificates, diplomas and degrees without serious academic work.

2. The two worst corrupt practices, whose order was simply interchanged in the opinions of staff and students, are examination malpractices and extortion of money from students by staff.

3 Corrupt practices have brought serious attendant evils to tertiary education, prominent among them are production of half-baked students, lowering of education standard /quality of credentials and moral decadence.

### **Implications for Educational Planning**

The strategies suggested below are capable of curbing corruption if effectively utilised.

1. Adequate measures should be taken in the issues of admission of students and employment of staff. Only qualified candidates with good character should be considered.

2. Enlightenment campaigns/sensitisation adverts should be made in campuses on a regular basis to dissuade people in getting involved in corrupt practices.

3. Advanced ICT techniques that use forensic investigative approaches should be developed for use in tertiary education.

4. Proven cases of corrupt practices should be adequately sanctioned to deter others.

### **REFERENCES**

- BH (2008), "What is corruption?", <http://mindphiles.com/floor/philes/corruption/what%20is%20corruption.htm>
- Lipsett, Anthea (2007), "Corruption Rife in World's Schools and Universities", Education Guardian, June 7.
- Nwanze, Chuks (2012), Corruption in Nigeria Exposed. Lagos: CSP Publication.
- Tanaka, Shinichiro (2001), "Corruption in Education Sector Development: A Suggestion for Anticipatory Strategy", The International Journal of Educational Management, Vol. 15:14, pp. 158- 166.
- Vittal, N. (2001), "Corruption in Society", 8<sup>th</sup> Silver Jubilee Lecture of APARM, Pune.