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SOCIOECONOMIC EFFECTS OF CORRUPTION ON NIGERIA'S INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING: EVIDENCE FROM CAMPUS CULTISM AND STAFF RECRUITMENT PROCESS

BY

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Abstract

Higher institutions of learning are the engine room for human capital development, skills development and leadership process which are instrumental to economic growth of a nation. This lofty ideal of learning institutions is under siege by corrupt practices by all players involved; parents, lecturers, institutions' management and the students. It was against this background that this study employs the social learning theory to investigate the socioeconomic effects of corruption on Nigeria's institutions of learning. This Study measures socioeconomic effects using campus cultism and staff recruitment process. This study adopts exploratory research design using content analysis of publicly available archive documents. The study relies solely on secondary data. The research is conducted by examining literature concerning corruptions and higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. The literature was obtained through searches in publicly available material. Literature from non-serial publications, official reports, and conferences has been included particularly if they have been cited by other references in term of corruption, staff recruitment processes and campus cultism. Results that emanate from this study revealed that corruption in higher institutions of learning negatively aggravate campus cultism amongst students while it also has a negative effect on staff recruitment process of both academic and non academic staff. The study thus concludes that corrupt practices in Higher institutions of learning is a reflection of what plays out in the larger society since the former is not insulated from the latter. The study recommends that Federal and State Government should involve specialised anti-graft agency unit; Anti-corruption & Transparency Units (ACTUs) in the Universities in sanitizing institutions of learning of corrupt practices while whistle bowing acts should be improved upon to remove syndicated corruption from institutions of learning for the safety of all stakeholders and the socioeconomic development of the nation at large.

Keywords: Anti-Graft Agencies, **C**ampus Cultism, Social Learning Theory, Staff Recruitment Process

Introduction

Higher institutions of learning world over are the engine room that provides the needed human capital formation by which the society is driven. Such that the quality of labour force, structural transformation of the society, technological development, production of future leaders levels of entrepreneurial development, civility and ethical standard of the society are all greatly influenced by products of higher institution of learning. It is then worrisome, when corrupt practices that play out in the larger society infiltrate the educational system, this is so because, the educational sectors have remarkable capacity to set in motion an uncontrollable reproductive process of corruption in the larger society and thereby twist the development of structures of a nation. So alarming is the reproductive process of corruption in the larger society by the educational system that Nigeria was ranked 149 of 180 countries surveyed on corruption perception index in 2020 (Transparency International, 2020).

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Corruption is the projection of self, clannish or primordial interest against and above overall interest of the society. Corruption erodes incentives that motivate young people to work hard while teaching them that there are easier ways to achieve success (Rumyantseva, 2005). Corruption in the Nigeria public domain goes beyond looting of revenues accruing to nations but extended to loans on both genuine and spurious ground. The socio-economic effects of corruption on Nigeria's Southwest Institutions could be seen from prevailing corrupt practices that underline activities of stakeholders in higher institutions; the parents, the lecturers, the management and also the students such that parents fraudulent front to get their children admitted through unscrupulous academic, non academic or go between agents while student also sustain themselves through higher learning by been shielded by cultism.

Higher institutions' corruption could be academic corruption or non academic corruption of which same is applicable to all stakeholders in the corruption loop; students, lecturers, administrators and non academic staff, depending on the hierarchy so occupied. Students academic corruption could be seen on examination and admission racketeering, drug abuse, indecent dressing, abortion, purchasing term papers/essays, impersonation, paying bribes for grades, copying into an exam, using girls to sort lecturers via lecture's handle, collusion, machinery, cheating on tests, copying from someone else's examination answer book, stealing a test, university document forgery, plagiarism acts while the student non academic corruption span across unionism, naija sporting bets, hostel run and cultism.

Campus cultism in higher institution is one of the corrupt and perverted mechanisms of acclaimed self defence from management or lecturer exploitative tendency by student through which also lives of their fellow students are destroyed; and so also destruction lives and property of management, staff or the institutions destructions are perpetuated. It is a heinous means of blackmailing management and fellow students into submission. It is a cloak behind which drugs dealing, prostitution, armed robbery, cyber crimes, admission racketeering and lots more are committed. Corruption could also be perceived playing out in staff recruitment processes in higher institution laden with favouritism, nepotism, outright purchase of employment slot which greatly underscore the quality of lecturers employed (Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), 2018). Worrisome, also is the development, of sacked or retired individual who had no stint in education being recruited as lecturers into higher institutions of learning (Alfred & Goodnews, 2015).

Corruption in institutions of learning, could further endanger the lofty purpose of Section 1, Subsection 9 of the National Policy on Education which explicitly state that the quality of instruction at all levels of education shall be targeted towards inculcating acquisition of competencies and functional skills needed for self-reliance. This value may be undeliverable for unqualified higher institution personnel who got

recruited through the backdoor. Also the practice of Cultism by students of higher institutions which now has roots in the country's post primary education level is a source of concern for this study as most cultist enjoy patronage from politicians or are simply children of the privileged (Omebe & Omebe, 2015).

Literature review across empirical studies; Udoh and Ikezu (2015); Uche (2014); Arop, Ekpang, Nwannunu and Owan (2018) Whawo (2015); Seniwoliba and Boahene (2015); Human Development Initiatives (2018); Ogu and Amakwe (2020) none to the extent of literature review on socioeconomic effect of corruption on higher learning institutions has used the combined constructs of cultism and recruitment process to explain socioeconomic effects of corruptions on higher institutions either country specific, State specific nor region specific studies of which this study intends to do, thereby expand the frontier of knowledge.

This study provides answers to the following research questions;

i. In what remarkable way does corruption aggravates campus cultism in Nigeria's southwest institutions?
ii. To what extent does corruption affect staff recruitment process in Nigeria's southwest institutions?

The paper is structured into five sections. Following this introduction, section two is concerned with literature review. Section three discussed the methodology adopted for the study; section four discussed the results, while section five provides the conclusion and recommendations.

Conceptual Framework

Corruption in Institutions of Learning

Corruption as a composite phenomenon and, most often, adjectivally defined in order to locate the context in which corruption occurs, this study zeroes down on corruption in higher institutions of learning. Corruption increases the uncertainty of success in the labour market after graduation and reduces the economic rate of return on tertiary education investment by public institutions and individual students (Duerrenberger & Warning, 2018; Transparency International, 2013). The complexity of corruption is reflected in the fact that it is simultaneously a moral, legal, social, economic, political, and cultural phenomenon. Efforts to define corruption from moral do lead to ambiguity hence overtime corruption is safely defined in terms of defiance, deviation, violation, or abuse (Kurer, 2005). It refers to those behaviours or actions that work towards breaking certain moral or social codes of conduct or administrative rules (Lawal, 2006).

The International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) defines corruption in education as a "misuse of public office for private gain that influences access, quality, and equity in education" (Stephen, 2004). Assessing corruption risks and designing mitigation strategies must be a locally owned and locally led by

each institution of learning and possibly assisted by relevant anti graft agencies since such approach, can help practitioners spot corruption problems and identify likely allies or opponents of reform. Stakeholders should engage in dialogue and consensus building to agree on which problems to prioritise (Kirya, 2019). Anti-corruption strategies in education can make use of transparency-promoting tools; ICTs, participatory budgeting, University Expenditure Tracking Surveys, and social audits, and accountability-promoting tools; performance-based contracting, teacher codes of conduct, community monitoring, complaints mechanisms, salary reform, procurement reform, and public financial management reforms. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning should be built into anti-corruption reforms so that measures can adapt to changing contextual realities. Including values, integrity, and anti-corruption education in school curricula is a long-term strategy mandated by the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (Kirya, 2019; UNODC, 2017).

Campus Cultism

Corruption has also been conceptualized as cultism among students. This is another dimension of the conceptualization of corruption among students as a social problem. Cultism has been taken to refer to a cohesive social group devoted to beliefs and practice that the surrounding population considers, being outside the mainstream or that which runs counter to generally accepted norms and values. Cults may have a positive or negative connotation depending on what separates them from their environment with which they tend to have a "high degree of tension combined with novel religious beliefs (Okunola & Oke, 2013).

Though the 1999 Nigerian Constitution criminalizes cultism, however, many scholars such as Smah (2011), Rotimi (2005), and Popoola and Alao (2006) regard secret cult membership or cultism as a social vice or social problem which signals moral decay in the universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. In other words, the emergence of cult sub-cultures is a response to the decay in the quality of higher education in Nigeria over the past three decades. This is a form of coping strategy by youth to the societal decay and apprehension in the national objective of self-reliance drive (Smah, 2011). Similarly, cultism is a product of the prevailing social climate on the campuses of higher education institutions (Rotimi, 2005).

Generally the social atmosphere prevailing in the Nigerian universities provides an inspiring environment for secret cults to thrive. This may include, lack of virile student unionism, erosion of the traditional academic culture, absence of intellectual debates and all other activities that are components of traditional campus culture (Rotimi, 2005). In many Nigerian Universities, students cultists seek to acquire or exercise a great deal of power so as to compel and coerce university administrators, professors, lecturers and students to do their will in immoral and criminal circumstances such as examination fraud disciplinary offence, rigging election, extortion of money and property from fellow students as well as monopoly of by girlfriends to both indigent and source of income, and the new and junior members are expelled and forced

to bring large sums of money and property from their fellow students, parents, relatives and the general public (Beckman, 2005).

However, in the context of higher education institutions in Nigeria, cults have come to take on only negative connotations. Though, now a common phenomenon on the campuses of higher education institutions in the country, cults are still regarded as an aberration, an unhealthy and harmful deviation from expected standards of conduct among students. Cultism is seen as a social vice, a manifestation of indiscipline in our institutions.

Staff Recruitment Process

Gone are the days when lecturers were employed strictly on merit, when search teams went to the uttermost of the world, to recruit the brightest and the best, with passion and interest, aptitude and acumen. Nowadays, employment is by way of nepotism, favouritism, ethnicity and political party patronage and more often, it is the intellectually weak ones who gain from such connections (Hallack & Poisson, 2007). Favoritism imperils the appointment of high quality staff and give preference to the appointment of second rate ones. Some of whom are the very ones who engaged in corrupt practices when they were students, who neither have the intellectual capacity nor the interest in academia. Therefore, when appointed, they continue with their cult activities which they started as undergraduate, to harass and intimidate others to submission, sexually harass young females with impunity since they came in through god-fathers, they are absent from class most of the time, they exhort, exploit and engage in diverse forms of sharp and corrupt practices (Obijiofor, 2012).

Importance Of Anti Corruption Education in Nigeria

Anti-Corruption education is expected to give awareness and change to all the younger generation to understand and realize the importance of having the character of anti-corruption and stay above board even as corruption is considered a major disadvantage to development. Not only does corruption weaken human capital development. Retard economic growth, constrict investment and undermines the rule of law, cost of corruption has been estimated by the World Economic Forum to stand at about US$2.6 trillion a year (UNO, 2018). The impacts of corruption disproportionately affect the most vulnerable people in society hence it becomes central to introduce anti-corruption education.

The importance of Anti -corruption education at all levels of learning could be seen in the effects it will give by evolving a firm rule of law with appropriate sanction against the rulers and the ruled, the corruption mechanism that will evolve to safeguard public administration and systems coupled with enthroning transparency and accountability from all duty bearers and rights holders, non-state actors, how it will heighten information awareness such that corruption that thrives in secrecy can be lightened up.

The importance of anti-corruption education teaching materials for the younger generation cannot be overemphasised particularly teaching materials in Social Studies with rich contents that contain the value of anti-corruption character as such is expected to give awareness and change to all the younger generation to understand and realize the importance of having the character of anti-corruption (Sarmini & Ulin, 2017).

The Anti-corruption education is not just a means for the transmission of knowledge, but also an emphasis on character formation, moral awareness and anti-corruption values in the resistance against corruption. Anti-corruption education is also a mechanism to develop study skills in capturing configuration problems and difficulties of nationality issues that triggered the corruption, the impact, prevention, and resolution (Kirya, 2019).

The model of Anti-corruption education is expected to instill and disseminate anti-corruption values across all levels of learning, so they understand about it early that corruption is contrary to legal norms or religious norms. It is a good thing, if the government establishes the educational institution as a repair workshop of nation's morality. Educational institution is the right choice as the frontline formation of national character. In its application, there should be particular anti-corruption education materials in the curriculum at the primary level to college. Anti-corruption education emphasizes more on the moral formation of anti-corruption efforts than the transformation of knowledge and the ins and outs of anti-corruption theory to students.

Combating corruption requires the role of teachers / lecturers to begin serious in combating corruption. Efforts to eradicate corruption should be implemented as early as possible from the level of elementary school education up to the university level by implementing subjects or courses of anti-corruption education. Now is the time required for the development of the idea of learning a course of anti-corruption education for students of Primary School Teacher Education because the output is a teacher candidate who is expected later to provide understanding, planting, and delivering anti-corruption values to students. As the starting point to repair manners, the learning value investment of anti-corruption culture must start from the basic education level, though it certainly cannot be done in a short time. It is very likely that education is the only possible path most likely to be taken in order to provide public awareness (Indawati, 2015).

Empirical Review

Campus Cultism and Corruption in Nigeria's Learning Institutions

Abdu-Raheem (2020) deployed triangulation method to examine causes, effects and solutions to cultism in tertiary institutions in Southwest, Nigeria. The study engaged multistage sampling procedure on both federal State and private institutions while structured questionnaire elicited data from 500 sampled lecturers. Results from analysis established that effects of cultism in corrupts attitude to use cultism to get a

better result after a poor academic performance, or usage of cultism to avoid suspension, or rustication not excluding wanton loss of innocent lives of students and staff in the universities is grave. The study was only on cultism in Southwest while this study uses cultism and poor recruitment standard as constructs to measure the socioeconomic effect of corruption on Nigeria institutions of learning

Ajitoni and Olaniyan (2018) employed a qualitative study approach to analyse predictors and way out of the festering effects of cultism, on the Nigerian education system. The study was a thematic study with reliance on textbooks, related journals, and extant publications. Study submitted that there exists a link between corruptions in larger society with institution and military administrator using cult group for intelligence report on academic staff who were agitating for better condition of service. Study thus submitted that same monster of cultism could now be seen also in primary school. Study used cultism to study socioeconomic issues while this study considers staff recruitment process in addition.

Amini-Philips and Ogbuagwu (2017) thematically examined variants of corruption from students, academic and non academic staff, and administration of Nigeria's higher institutions of learning. Study adopted qualitative research design with reliance on related journals and extant literature to draw valid conclusion. Findings from the study established cultism a form of corruption prevalent on higher institutions of learning. Study also showed the leading corrupt practices role of the lecturer boys on campuses of higher learning as a conduit through most corrupt practices are carried out. Study submitted that the prevalence of corruption in higher institutions of learning extensively negate the core values of education and national development. The study though country specific and did not consider socioeconomic effect of corruption at recruitment level hence the need for similar study to be carried out.

Staff Recruitment Process and Corruption in Nigeria's Learning Institutions

Ogu and Amakwe (2020) employed thematic study approach to assess recipe for combating corruption in Nigeria tertiary institutions. The study leveraged on related academic journals, extant literature and relevant publications. Study showed that recruitment into higher institution of learning is highly skewed in favour of the unqualified with various agents; parents, lecturers, non academic staff participating to bring onboard unqualified candidate stripping the qualified the needed opportunity to be recruited. The study focused on both effects of corruption on recruitment and admission process but did not consider effects of cultism as act of corruption

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2017) engaged a survey to showcase the prevalence of corruption when applying for employment in the civil service. The study deployed a randomly sampled questionnaire on selected household member on attitudes and opinions on corruption. Analysis from the findings showed that many Nigerians distrust the procedures of selection to a civil service position as

largely based on nepotism or other types of favouritism which undermine both the reputation and the integrity of the public administration and need to be vigorously countered through greater transparency and accountability in the recruitment process. Findings of the study revealed that corruptions among lecturers and teacher in Ekiti State ranked 3rd after police officer& public official. The study, though a nationwide did not capture cultism, which this study will extend to.

Seniwoliba and Boahene (2015) leveraged on anomie theory to qualitatively explain presence of corruption in higher education and the roles of the university administrator in Ghana. The study was a thematic research approach with reliance on extant literature, Ghanaian policy documents, experiential knowledge from decade of personal experience as administrator. Findings of the study submitted that corruption in higher institution played out in recruitment, promotions cheating, leaking examination papers, plagiarism, favouritism. The study demanded that moral values should be projected strongly as corruption is eroding the relevance of higher education. The study used Ghanaian data but did not examined cultism as corrupt practices which this study intends to project with its socioeconomic effect on Nigeria higher institution.

Theoretical Framework

The Social learning theory

The Social learning theory which underpins this study was developed by Albert Bandura (1977). The theory suggests that social behavior is learned by observing and imitating the behavior of others. The social learning theory assumes that a person's environment greatly affects his or her behaviour and that weak mechanism of social control enables corruption, criminal and other deviant behaviour in the society. Bandura proposes five essential steps in order for the learning to take place: observation, attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (Bandura, 1977). This theory has often been called a bridge between behaviorist learning theories and cognitive learning theories because it encompasses attention, memory, and motivation (Muro & Jeffrey, 2008).

Student who saw the acts of their parents in influencing their passage of exams and academic assessment through primary and post primary education could hardly be convince otherwise that such maneuvering are counterproductive rather such illicit acts of corruption is then seen as a strength believing that there is always a price tag to anything desired. This belief is further reinforced in the higher institution

The Nigerian educational sector is an integral part of the whole Nigerian society and having been overwhelmed by corruption, the individuals in this case; parents, students, administrator, lecturers are not insulated neither are they isolated from their corrupt environment and therefore will possibly assimilate negative tendencies. Using Bandura's social learning theory in the higher institution of learning showed the

link between students not only imitating each other but also the lecturer, non academic staff in the ill practices of corruption or otherwise as amplified by the environment. Being a good role model, open to all the students, and holding the students to a level of responsibility will be imitated by the students accordingly.

Bad Apple Theories

Bad apple theories posit that corruption is rooted in "defective human character and predisposition toward criminal activity". This theory studies corruption at the level of the individual as corrupt agent for the causes of corruption (Graaf, 2007). People act corruptly because they have wrong moral values such as greed. Bad apple theories attribute corruption in organizations to "a few unsavoury individuals…lacking in some personal quality, such as moral character" (Trevino & Youngblood, 1990).

Criminological approaches to corruption are relatives of bad apple theories. De Graaf informs us that bad apple theories have no empirical bases of support. He also argues that it is an oversimplification to hold that corruption results only or mainly from desire for material gain as the official could "be seeking a higher social standing, excitement, work pleasure or a cure for frustration (De Graaf, 2007) and that perpetrators of crime pursue a variety of different goals. Lacking an absolute universal morality, it will be difficult to even agree on what is corrupt. And in the absence of agreement as to what is corrupt, those who are prosecuted, even when pronounced guilty by a competent court of law, may continue to deny any wrongdoing.

A question could be posed as follows: Do students view corruption from this perspective? As, many of them attribute corruption among students to lack of moral upbringing and family background. Their concepts of corruption also demonstrate a subscription to this viewpoint. In a deeply religious society such as Nigeria, this should not be a surprise. However, empirical studies have shown that morality operates in the lives of students at two levels: declaratory and practical levels and that there are differences between these two. According to Olasehinde-Williams, Abdullah, and Owolabi (2003), the high rate of cheating manifested by the students was not consistent with their uttered negative attitude to cheating.

Methodology

This study adopts exploratory research design; it tries to examine socioeconomic effects of corruption on Nigeria's institutions of learning using evidence from campus cultism and staff recruitment process in Nigeria using content analysis of publicly available archive documents. The study relies solely on secondary data. The literature was obtained through searches in publicly available material. Literature from non-serial publications, official reports, and conferences has been included particularly if they have been cited by other references in term of corruption and institutions of learning.

Discussion of Findings

The review of literature reveals that corruptions as perpetuated by all the multilayered stakeholders; management, academic staff, non academic staff, parents, students, students union bodies, politicians, in higher institutions of learning aggravates campus cultism. The rational for this finding could be that cultism as a reaction to intimidations; academic intimidation and non academic intimidation; hence students seek refuge under cultism and its violence to shield them. Weak as these rationale could be, it calls for concern and review from all parties involved. The finding is in tandem with the findings in the previous works of Abdu-Raheem (2020); Ajitoni and Olaniyan (2018); Amini-Philips and Ogbuagwu (2017) who found that campus cultism stems from corrupt practices within and without of higher institutions of learning.

The result from prior empirical studies is that corruption negatively impacted on staff recruitment; both academic and non academic staff, whereby most unqualified resource persons but with right connections are finding their ways through the back door into the higher institution of learning. This development thus gravely endangers the quality of human capital churned out from higher institutions of learning. This finding is consistent with the findings in the previous work of Ogu and Amakwe (2020); United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2017); Seniwoliba and Boahene (2015).

1.1.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concludes that a corrupt immune higher institution of learning will extensively slow down and eradicate campus cultism which has claimed lots of lives and properties both on campuses and off campuses of learning institutions. That the earlier stakeholders of higher institutions of learning come to terms that without cessation of corrupt practices, campus cultism will endures, the better.

The study equally concludes that a corrupt recruitment process particularly of higher institution of learning is enemy and threat to potential human capital development of a nation so much so that, with corruption situated in higher institution of learning, the risk of higher institutions of learning, reproducing and extending corruption in all walks of life of the nation is high.

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made;

The study recommends that Federal Government, State Government, private and institutional ownership of higher institution of learning, should evolve, encourage and protect whistleblowers in all tertiary institutions of learning to aggressively expose corrupt practices of all stakeholders. While efforts should be made for learning and relearning of anti corruption as a subject and orientation cannot be overemphasised.

The study recommends that since government is the most culpable in employment racketeering through skewed and non transparent employment processes. Government should encourage the process of prosecuting those involved in employment racketeering under stiffer measures as this will go a long way to communicate to parties contemplating it to desist. This study thus submit of the need to evolve a parent-

lecturer-institutions meeting; a replica of Parents Teachers Association (PTA) which will further check corruptions of academic, management, non academic and student.

Compliance with ethical standards

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