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MITIGATING CORRUPTION ENTRENCHMENT AND ITS EFFECT IN NIGERIA'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM - THE POLICY INITIATIVE

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Abstract

The problem of corruption appears to have permeated every aspect of the Nigerian society since the end of Colonial rule. Corruption drove the military to incur into governance in Nigeria with subsequent coup d'états. Today, nearly every facet of the Nigerian society appear permeated with corruption inclusive of education at all levels. Common occurrences in educational cycles include; examination malpractices, impersonation in examinations, examination frauds, institutional fraud, admission racketeering, sexual harassments specially sex for grades in higher institutions and the adoption of policies that serve as catalysts to corruption in high places giving an impression and perception that Nigeria is replacing meritocracy with mediocrity. The paper presents a clarification of key concepts on corruption and an overview of perceived policies as 'equal educational opportunity' Federal character policy, quota system and their contributions to the perceived decline of educational standards with attendant consequences on national development. The National common entrance examination to Federal Unity Schools was discussed. The BBC reported sex for grades scandal at the University of Lagos in Nigeria and sex for grade scandal in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ifewere highlighted. The paper examined educational policies as well as the centralization and regulation of the administration of education. Recommendations include that the FGN should decentralize the corruption fighting agencies to have sections for secondary and higher schools. Again, Federal Unity schools should be regionalized to help in the area of quality assurance standards maintenance.

Key words: Corruption, Education Policy Reforms, Nigeria's Education System

Introduction

In recent years, Nigeria has often been branded a corrupt country. Transparency International (TI, 2018), explained that corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Corruption can be classified as; grand, petty, legal, moral and political corruption depending on the amount of money or property lost, stolen, amassed or stashed somewhere. Over the years, Transparency international ranks countries on the basis of certain indices to ascertain their level of corruption globally.

Table 3 of this paper showed that corruption had been on the increase between 2011 and 2017 and is still rising as at 2020. TI (2018), conceptualized types of corruption. The organization described grand corruption as that which takes place in high government circles. The TI (2018), website <https://www.transparencyinternational> described grand corruption as the manipulation of national policies by people entrusted with such powers at national levels for personal gain. On the other hand, petty corruption is described as everyday abuse of

entrusted power by low and middle level public officers in their interaction with ordinary citizens who try to access basic public goods like schools, hospitals, police departments and other agencies. Political corruption involves the manipulation of policies, institutions, rules of procedures for allocation of resources and finances by political decision makers thereby abusing their positions to sustain their hold on power and in essence their ill-gotten wealth (Bryne, 2009). According to TI(2018), the effects of corruption are grave among which includes; loss of lives i.e many people die from the effects of corruption. There is also social loss in public money stolen. Political corruption fights true democracy while economically, it depletes public wealth. TI(2018), has encouraged the fight against corruption in all ways. Another concept of corruption explained in Tanzi (1998), says that though corruption is not new, it had existed for over 2000 years before 1998, but its growth is becoming exponential due to the demand for corruption by ordinary citizens that includes the acts of corruption especially the rush and scramble for few public goods in the hands of, or entrusted to public officials to whom some level of power has been entrusted. Again the Tanzi (1998), paper talked of the supply of corruption that comes from public officials willing to give the public undue privileges or advantages over others in some things as; jobs, tax exemption, production issues and others as a result of gratifications. It is noteworthy that the forementioned corruption indices have found their ways into the Nigerian society and of more significant concern is their permeation into the Nigerian educational system that has become a subject of grave concern to education stakeholders especially those in higher education institutions.

The challenges of corruption fights against the sustainability of development, in that issues such as; financial frauds in the administration of education and higher education institutions are rampant, sex scandals are on the rise in an erstwhile decent educational system, admissions racketeering

on the increase with a whole lot of issues that have been found to be prevalent in Nigerian schools as this study will eventually reveal. Nigeria needs a way forward hence this paper.

Conceptual Clarifications on Types of Corruption

Bryne (2009), described the types of corruption common everywhere inclusive of higher educational institutions to include the following;

- (i) Systemic corruption
- (ii) Sporadic corruption (individual)
- (iii) Grand Political corruption
- (iv) Petty corruption
- (v) Legal and moral corruption

According to Bryne (2009), systemic corruption obtains in a society where the economic, social and political class has enmeshed its institutions (social, political, educational, religious) into a situation that results in sustained corruption. In essence, the whole institutions of that society have been manipulated in such a manner that it results into someone somewhere, taking personal gains from public institutions. Sporadic corruption according to the same document has to do with individuals. It is not as deadly as systemic corruption because not all individuals in the society could be corrupt or corrupted. Again, the institutions are yet to be corrupted. Grand political corruption involves political office holders using their hold to power to sustain, manipulate and convert policies meant for public good to private use. It is an arrangement by the political class that impoverishes nations. Petty corruption has to do with the bureaucratic system commonly called everyday corruption - bribery especially as people come in contact with others in their day to day activities. While Systemic, grand political corruption are high level corruption, petty corruption is termed low level corruption. Bryne (2007), described moral and legal corruption to be such that involves the legislating of corruption into laws, acts and policies. Such corruption demoralizes.

That corruption exists in Nigeria's educational sector cannot be denied. Adekeye (2009) decried the types of corruption in the education system in Nigeria. The study of Adekeye (2009), described the Nigerian society as laden with examination malpractices,

electoral malpractices among others. The study described the types of electoral malpractices prevalent in Nigeria. As shown in Figure 1. The same items of corruption were identified by Elaine and Bryne (2007 & 2009)

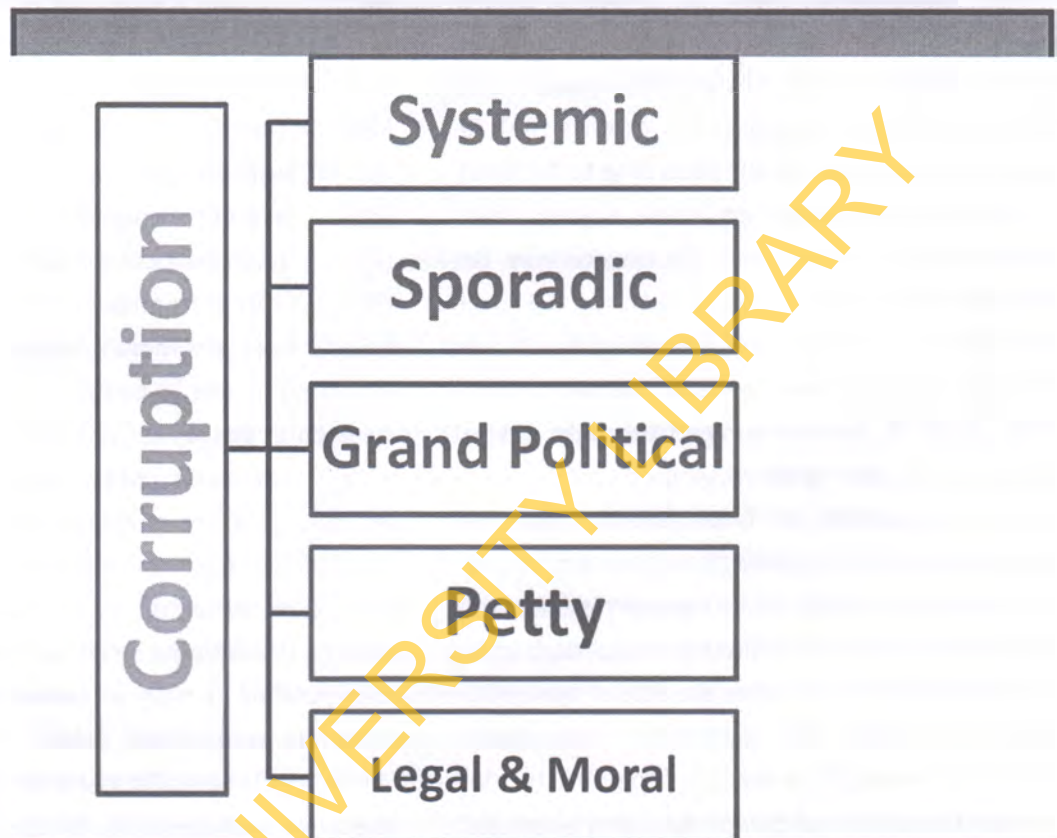


Figure 1: An Overview of the Different Types of Corruption

Source: Researchers Design from Elyne & Bryne (2007 & 2009)-Corruption and Types of Corruption <https://www.elaine.i.e/2009/07/31>

Figure 1 above set for us a conceptual background model of corruption for this study. The conceptual model identified systemic, sporadic, grand, petty and legal or moral corruption.

On the other hand, policy can be described within or out of context. It is clear from the works of Owolabi (2005) and Fabunmi (2003) that policies are no laws. Policies are clear official statements of actions on routine occurrences in any organization and by extension on nations that are used by administrators and planners to facilitate social progress in all spheres of society. In essence, the functions of policies include but are not limited to the following;

- (i) Give clear cut out direction to planners and administrators (educational) on courses of actions when ambiguity arises in the process of implementing laws.
- (ii) serve as regulations to all who are involved in a particular enterprise to avoid duplication of efforts or mar the purposes for different involvement on the same goal attainment.
- (iii) enable equitable distribution of resources (scarce)
- (iv) enable administrators and administrative rationality on issues usually in context or contention at specific periods. Page?

Policies are formulated, planned, implemented as the need arises (Owolabi, 2005). Type of policies could be seen in Figure 2.

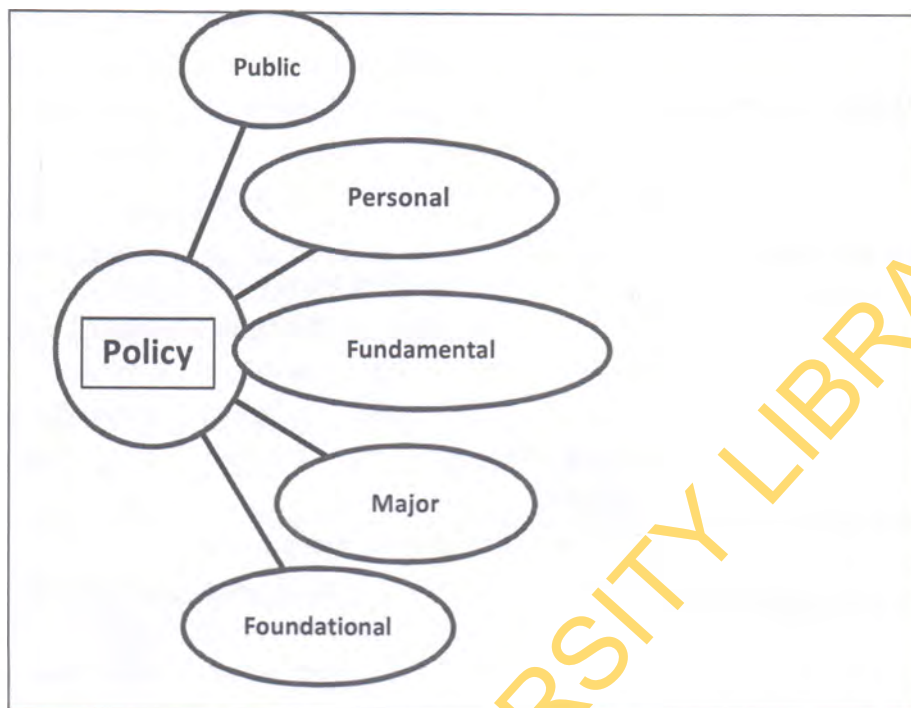


Figure 2: Types of Policies Source: Created by researcher

From Figure 2, it is clear that public policy is associated with facilitating rules and procedures in large organizations and schools and institutions are in this category. Personal policy has to do with created principles created by individuals and organizations for the smooth running of their enterprises. Fundamental policy involves such routines that must be accomplished ahead of others in a hierarchical manner while major policies refer to the same in an order that denotes importance. Foundational policy deals with the basic rules of precedent to other policies

Fighting corruption in Nigeria has been a hydra headed problem. While it is agreed that corruption is detested all over the world, eliminating it is a big challenge. Nigeria from its historical view point was amalgamated into one country in 1914 before gaining political independence from the Britons in 1960. Since 1960, the term corruption has

often resonated in our historical journey for example let's look at well-known contemporary battles against corruption in Nigeria beginning from when this researcher became conscious that corruption was being fought. The issue of corruption affects so many decisions in Nigeria as it makes resources for distribution insufficient especially the funding of higher educational institutions. Funding higher education institutions has become a recurring issue with the Federal government of Nigeria since 1996 (Academic Staff of Universities Union – ASUU, 2009). Core issues affecting the implementation of the contents of that document centres around corruption (systemic corruption) either on the part of the government or the part of the Higher institutions involved. Its either the corruption makes it impossible to release funds or funds are released but not used for the purpose for which they are released or they are diverted t different other

sources and for quite some years, Academic Staff Union of Universities have been calling on the Federal Government of Nigeria to institute visitation panels to all its Universities. This is yet to be done.

Table 1: History of Government Crusades against Corruption in Nigeria

S/N	Year	Government	Corruption	Remarks
1	1975	Muritala/Obasanjo Military Regime	Accused and described the previous regime whom they over threw in a military coup (Gowon's) regime as corrupt and probed that government as well as its actors source?	Many government officials including governors were indicted
2.	1984	Muhamadu Buhari/Tunde Idiagbon Regime	Accused and described the previous regime whom they over threw in a coup d'état (Shagari) regime as corrupt and probed its actors. Established military tribunals. Source?	Many were indicted including governors who eventually went to jail and some died in jail
3	1999	Obasanjo Civilian Administration	Accused and probed the previous military regime (Abacha) Regime, set up the popular Oputa panel to establish the veracity of several accusation. Began the recovery of huge sums of money dollars starched by the regime and its players in foreign banks especially Swiss banks. Till date, the recovery is on. Source?	Sacked all high profile military brass then found culpable and any military officer who had tasted political power.
4.	2015	Muhamadu Buhari Civilian Regime	Has been probing and continues in the probe process till now with several previous government officials culpable. At this time, new corruption fighting bodies have been equipped to detect, prosecute and punish corruption (EFCC & ICPC)	Many have been indicted
5.	2019	Muhammadu Buhari	New frontiers in corrupt enrichments. More recoveries in Abacha regime loot of 1993-1998. Currently retrieved sums of monies from other countries since 1999 has exceeded \$1.5b	Former SGF found corrupt, sacked and being prosecuted (2016) several former Governors indicted, currently, head of

S/N	Year	Government	Corruption	Remarks
				the EFCC is under probe for corrupt enrichment i.e accused of looting looted and recovered funds – Abuse of office (2020)

Source: Authors personal knowledge

<http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org> Switzerland hands back nearly \$500m of Abacha Loot

Transparency International (TI, 2020) Abacha Loot Recovered by Nigeria Government

www.guardian.ng (2020) EFCC Boss, Magu Suspended. July 8, 2020

Arising from the discusses heretofore in Table 1, it is clear that corruption has existed and been in Nigeria for a long time. Again, Table 2 identifies some

contentious laws and policies in Nigeria that has helped corruption to thrive and in no other place but in the educational system.

Table 2: Sundry Laws and Policies that Influence Decisions and Higher Education in Nigeria

S/N	Laws	Policies	Effect
1.	The Law of Federal Character	Federal Character commission & Federal Spread in human and resource allocations	Employments, Admissions etc
2.	The Federal Structure of Nigeria	Resources allocation policies and equitable resources distribution	Centralization of all resources
3.	Quota System	<u>State of Origin</u> The Policy of Equal Educational Opportunity, Educationally disadvantaged states and sundry policies	Differentiated and segregated admission policy to Federal schools in Nigeria
4.	Population Laws	Population censuses contentious and forms the basis for national allocation of resources	Nationalism in coma - allocation of scholarships etc on the basis of state of origin

Source: Extracted from the descriptions of quota system, catchment areas as given by; Moti (2010); Ifedili and Ifedili (2010); Akpaku (2013)

These laws and policies have been highly contentious in Nigeria but have continued to exist causing much harm to our educational system.

The Final term that needs be discussed here is the System. What is a system and by extension the educational system?

A system comprises of different parts that are interdependent and inter-related in such a way that what affects one part affects the whole (Nwankwo, 1982). It is noted that educational management studies got the systems approach from the field of psychology. It cannot be argued that the educational system of any nation is so interwoven and interdependent that what happens to one level affects the others. Take Nigeria for an example, we have; preprimary, primary, secondary and tertiary education. If the quality passed out from the primary schools are poor, the same product will run through the system and the same is the reverse. Several stake holders in education have over the years decried poor policy performance, corruption in the educational system. Among the cries are certificated teachers that lack the requisite capacity to deliver basic pedagogy in classrooms. The recent case of Kaduna where teachers of primary schools could not pass primary 4 examinations tells what has become of the educational system. From the point of view of this study, the problem could be attributed to that of examination malpractices.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study revolves around the challenges currently been experienced by the Nigerian people, which from all indications ought not to be. It is well known that heretofore between 1980 and 2001, Nigeria was riddled with the debt burden, which ushered in a period of austerity, recession, hardship and challenges leading to so many unwanted economic ailments as unemployment, poor funding of educational institutions especially primary and higher education as well as poor ranking of Nigeria's educational products from outside the country. The incidences diminished Nigeria's academic status labored for over the years and till now has not been redeemed. Nigeria also is a country well-endowed with abundant natural resources especially crude oil. It is being alleged that corruption is the major catalyst to these problems in Nigeria. Previous studies have

identified corruption but not as a comprehensive study of this manner tracing it from its roots in Nigeria with the result that new generation of youth know that there is corruption but most of them do not understand the constituents of corruption hence they are easily co-opted into the activities of corruption with some of it being unintentional on the side of the youth. This study investigated the reality of the existence of corruption both in the national economy/society and its perceived influence on the activities (laws and policies) guiding the activities of both levels of education in the country i.e. primary through to tertiary. The study is using secondary sources of data. The study describes corruption and traces its roots in Nigeria as well as its influence on education.

Research Questions

This paper will be guided by asking the following research questions:

1. Can Nigeria be described as a corrupt nation?
2. What are the evidences of corruption in Nigeria?
3. Are there corrupt policies in Nigeria's educational system?
4. What are the effects of corruption on the educational system and the nation at large?

Methodology

The study adopted different methods to establish its objective. Specifically the study used secondary and qualitative data that was verified from literature to show the levels of corruption, its effects in Nigeria and on the educational system as well as society. The study was guided by the design of its research questions and answers sought from existing data (secondary data). Results are presented in Tables, Charts, graphs and other pictorial formats for quick understanding.

Results

Research Question 1

Can Nigeria be described as a corrupt nation?

The answer to the question will be decided from the rankings of corruption fighting organizations such as the corruption perception index (CPI) from Transparency International (TI) index for a number of years

Table 3: Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for Nigeria (2011-2017)

S/N	Year	Rank	Score	Remark
1.	2011	143/175	-	
2.	2012	139/175	-	
3.	2013	144/175	25/100	Corruption on the increase
4.	2014	144/175	27/100	Corruption on the increase
5.	2015	136/176	26/100	Reduction in corruption
7	2016	136/180	27/100	Corruption increases again
8.	2017	148/180	28/100	Corruption more than ever before

Source: Compiled from several years from the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of Transparency International (<https://www.thecable.ng.nigeria-improv>)

From the data Table 3, it is clear that corruption is increasing daily in Nigeria. In the last 8 years, TI showed Nigeria's ranking with 2015 being the year with significant changes. According to TI, scores are allocated with the level of business that goes on in a country. Nigeria has consistently failed. In 2017 ranking, Nigeria came as no. 148 from a total of 180 countries with a score of 28. It shows that in Nigeria, there is corruption.

Research Question 2

What are the evidences of corruption in Nigeria?

This research question relied heavily on authentic secondary data sources from all aspects of Nigeria's social and educational cycles as shown in Table 3. Nigeria's educational sector will be most emphasized from the gleanings.

Table 4: Evidences of Corruption in Various Sectors of Nigeria

S/N	Sector	Corruption Cases	Effects	Remarks & Source
1	Politics & Governance	Allegations of corrupt enrichment and amassment of wealth from one generation of politicians to the other.	Military coups and constant changes in government. Political Instability for many years that affected education adversely	Published by Madiebo, A (1980). Fourth Dimension Publishers. Retrieved from https://googlebooks.com.ng Retrieved 1/12/2018

S/N	Sector	Corruption Cases	Effects	Remarks & Source
		<p>Record of Nigeria’s EFCC: Corruption on trial (2011)- Recovered \$11b from the political class stolen, arraigned 30 top political figures. In 2016, massive looting discovered in the Nigeria’s oil industry, Defence sector and others</p> <p>In 2020, there are probes still on-going, recovery of ill gotten wealth still being pursued by the FGN with the head of EFCC in Nigeria currently under investigation in year 2020 and suspended from office.</p> <p>In 2020, there are still probes such as revelations emanating from the NDDC probes, showing massive looting but results of probe yet to be concluded.</p>	<p>No money to fund education and distribution of extreme poverty. Nigerians are now disillusioned, lost hope in government and governance.</p> <p>Discouraging to hardworking nationals.</p> <p>Pending National Disaster and ruinous to the Nigerian Economy.</p>	<p>Corruption on Trial? The Record of Nigeria’s Economic and Financial Crimes Commission retrieved from https://hrw.org</p>
2..	Education	<p><u>Certificate Forgery</u></p> <p>There have been several cases of political office holders claiming to have certificates they do not possess and in some cases outright forgery. Recent cases involves high profile political ministers with recent examples coming from the former National Minister of Finance.</p>	<p>Destroys the nationalist spirit, demoralizes the youth and encourages the sustenance of corruption in education, encourages cheating and improper national behavior of younger persons. It discourages hard work.</p> <p>Production of</p>	<p>Encourages examination malpractices, violence in examination venues and certification without knowledge. Its effects in a world of knowledge competition relegates our competencies and worth of certificates issued in our institutions</p> <p>https://punchng.com</p>

S/N	Sector	Corruption Cases	Effects	Remarks & Source
		<p><u>Schools Admission Policy</u> Premised on the Federal Government National Character Commission Act/Policy</p>	unemployable graduates who are liabilities to the national economy. Most times, such graduates are rejected by foreign organizations.	Yusuf, Ajidagba, Agbonna and Olumorin (2010), Otokunefor, (2011), Aluede, Idogho&Imonike (2012).
		<p><u>B.Sc/HND Controversy</u> Premised on several policies that have been released from the Federal Government of Nigeria, equating HND and Bachelors Degree.</p>	Destroys the youthful zeal of hardworking persons in a nation	
		<p><u>Examinations Malpractices</u> Examination malpractices has been with Nigeria for many years. The issue of examination malpractices and certificate forgery are closely related.</p>	Recent nullification of the 2019 Bayelsa state governorship elections in connection with both certificate forgery and examination malpractices. Discourages hardwork	BBC News Pidgin (2020) Bayelsa Governorship Election 2019: Supreme Court Cancel David Lyon Election, Declares DuoyeDiri of PDP Winner http://www.bbc.com/pidgin/ton-51491348
3.1	Economic Sabotage	<p>Unending Fight of Insurgency, Banditry and kidnapers, armed robbery and internet fraudsters</p>	Citizens disillusioned	www.channelstv.org news of 17/9/2020. Report of Nigerian refugees in Niger Republic eager to return home.
		<p><u>Oil Pipeline Vandalization</u> This has been on-going for years and appear to be defeating security agencies. In Lagos state Nigeria, several houses have been burnt ad property worth</p>	Destruction of our national economy	

S/N	Sector	Corruption Cases	Effects	Remarks & Source
		trillions of Naira destroyed by the activities of oil pipeline vandals		
		<p><u>Forex Fraud in Nigeria</u></p> <p>This involves 2 brothers Bonifade Adewuyi and Adedotun Adewuyi both graduate from Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) Ile-Ife who established wonder banks to pay 20% interest. The 2 siblings are graduates of Nigerian Universities. This shows the effect and extent of decadence and corruption in Nigeria.</p>	Defrauded 3,500 Nigerians of hard earned money	Two Men Suspected of Alleged Nigerian Fraud – Jacob Friedman in www.forextraders.com 11 th December, 2019
4.	Corruption in Higher Education	<p><u>Sex for Grades – University of Lagos, Nigeria</u></p> <p>This is the celebrated case of a Nigerian lecturer investigated and found guilty of requesting for sexual gratification from prospective students into the University of Lagos by a BBC under cover journalist. The misdemeanor of this lecturer is not supported by policy but was singled out of several male lecturers who indulge in such activities. Though this has been caught, there are several still out there</p>	A disappointment to the academic community, the Nigerian nation and the world at large	Source: www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-49971067
		<p><u>Sex Scandal-Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria</u></p> <p>A Nigerian lecturer demanded sex for high</p>	Demoralizing to academics and potential academics. It is a	www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines37268 Saturday 18th January, 2020

S/N	Sector	Corruption Cases	Effects	Remarks & Source
		grades from his student at Obafemi Awolowo University and student cried out.	very bad example for a developing nation	
		<p>Other Tertiary Schools</p> <p>There are still Universities where such practices on sexual harassment still exists. Examples of where these have happened is the University of Port Harcourt – a second generation University. Such cries were not official but on face book.</p>	Ditto	<p>Kelechi Ewuzie (2019). Educationists Condemn Sex fro Grades Scandal in Universities. Business Day Oct. 8, 2019 www.businessday.ng/educaion/Article/educations-condemn-sex-for-grades-in-universities/</p>
5.	Moral Corruption in Nigeria	<p>Incidences of Rape, Theft among others: Recent cases of 100 Level student Uwaila Omozuwa, murdered after been raped. Omozuwa was a 100 level student at the University of Benin.</p> <p>Recent accusations to the Minister of the Niger Delta Development Commission NDDC by a female Director . The case a N40b scandal which is under investigation by the Nigerian House of Representatives currently. It was also alleged that the Minister of Niger Delta requested for sex from one of the Director.</p>	<p>National Disgrace and demoralizing to aspiring Nigerians who are young. Bad example. He might not be prosecuted.</p>	<p>The Guardian Newspaper in www.guardian.ng/news/Egbejule M (2020). 1st June 2020-How 100 level UNIBEN Student was Gang-raped and Murdered inside Church</p> <p>Commerc10 Partners (2020). Acting MD NDDC faints During Public Hearing. www.nairametrics.com 20/07/2020</p>

Table 5: Cut off Marks for Federal Unity Schools since 2012 (average or lowest samples from the 6 Geopolitical Zones) of Nigeria

Zones	North West		North Central		North East		South West		South East		South South	
States	Kebbi		Nassarawa		Yobe		Ekiti		Ebonyi		Bayelsa	
Data	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
2018	9	20	58	58	2	27	119	119	112	112	72	72
States	Zamfara		Nassarawa		Bauchi		Ekiti		Ebonyi		Bayelsa	
2017	14	14	42	42	18	18	62	62	60	60	51	51
States	Zamfara		Nassarawa		Taraba		Ekiti		Ebonyi		Bayelsa	
2016	4	2	58	58	3	11	119	119	112	112	72	72
States	Zamfara		Nassarawa		Taraba		Ekiti		Ebonyi		Bayelsa	
2015	4	2	58	58	3	11	119	119	112	112	72	72

Source: 2018 data extracted from <https://www.nairaland.com/2562674/shocking-cut-off-marks-federal>

2017 data extracted from <http://www.ncsarena.com> NCEE 2017/2018 Exam Cut-off Marks

2016 data extracted from <http://www.thescoopingng.com/2013/06/08/Shocking-Cut-off-points-into>

2015, 2014 & 2013 data extracted from <http://www.nairaland.com> Data not presented as shown above
cos cut off marks are the same

The data in Table 5 which serve as least cut marks for states within the geopolitical zones will shock anyone who understands the concept of both quality, quality assurance and quality values in Education. For example in the Northwest Zone of Nigeria that contains states such as Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina, Kano, Niger and Zamfara, states like Kebbi have cut off points as; Female 9 and male 20 in 2018 and sometime are unable to meet those cut off points where states like Ebonyi in the South East region for the same examination lowest cut off was 112. In the same vein, in 2016, Zamfara had 4 for male and 2 for female from the Northwest while Ebonyi had 112. From the South South, you can see the trail of Bayelsa state. These are lowest cut off points in those regions but in a supposedly highly competitive examinations. No one can carry out a national exercise of this nature without a policy back-up. The great question then is that 'are policies instruments for quality reduction in Nigeria?'

In a good society, Social and educational planners who use the criteria shown in Table 4 to admit students in a competitive examination are eligible to serving some time in jail but in this case, the policies being implemented are legal. At these

levels they are not corrupt but the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) calls them certain names such as; 'educationally disadvantaged states', application of the 'Federal Character Commission' law/regulation and other such names as 'equal educational opportunities'. From evidences so shown, you will agree from these admissions that in some states of the Federation, it is not unlikely that some of the admitted candidates will not be able to write their names before admission. Can anyone query then the rationale behind the failure of 33,000 teachers in a particular state given primary 4 examination during a routine teachers test? What do those teachers teach in that state? What is the standard of the schools in those state? How then do we intend to carry on development in a Nigeria of the 21st century? Do these issues sound a note of warning that something is obviously wrong with our system. Without mincing words, Nigeria has the best and the worst in terms of students and teachers but the curious issue is that the society appear to be breeding such abnormalities through policies.

Research Question 3

Are there corrupt policies in Nigeria's educational system?

The answer to this research question can easily be deduced from Tables 2,3 and 4. Table 2 shows global perception and ranking of Nigeria on corruption between 2013 and 2018. Till now, the level of corruption does not seem to have abated due to findings of relevant government agencies in 2020. Currently, the FGN is battling with revelations from the House of Representatives inquest into the activities of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). While the findings of the Committee by the House of Representatives is not yet out, revelations from the inquest through the mass media show that, activities of the NDDC which is a government agency has been corrupted. In the inquest shown at various times on the Federal Government owned mass media, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), School fees for higher education students from the Niger Delta region which ought to have been paid since 2019 for the 2020 academic session for students studying outside Nigeria from the region though released cannot be accounted for which is an evident of both systemic and public corruption (NTA, 2020). The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was created in the year 2010 to ameliorate the agitations of people from that region (Isah and Babyemi, 2009), where the 'black gold' was being mined for the progress of Nigeria but today, events appear to be on the contrary as the commission is now fulfilling purposes for which it was not set up for (grand corruption). Also in Table 3, Admission policies into Higher education institutions are backed with policies with legal connotations. The same with Table 4 that has to do with admission into Federal Government sponsored secondary schools. Corrupt FGN and States government officials usually hide under the guise of these legal provisions to wreck havoc on both the educational system and our society at large.

Research Question 4

What are the effects of corruption on the educational system and the nation at large?

The effects of corruption are quite many on the Nigerian educational sector that could be listed.

- (i) Agitations, counter agitations, embezzlement of funds meant for educational development, inability of the FGN to meet its obligations due to stealing in high places and consequent strikes (Isah and Alao, 2016) as currently exists in all Universities in Nigeria. In 2020, inspite of the COVID-19 forced break in educational institutions, university lecturers are on another strike which has spanned a period of 7 months and likely to exceed. The strike commenced in February, 2020 and has not abated as at September 2020. Cause of strike is not unconnected with unfulfilled financial promises to lecturers and the educational system by the FGN. Its effect can be imagined on teaching, research and community services.
- (ii) The results in Table 4 should shock anyone in educational administration, planning and management that has an idea of the concept of quality, quality assurance and quality management. The effect of garbage in, garbage out has adversely affected the products of Nigeria's educational system at any level. The data presented in Table 4 are least state cutoff mark disparities in admission to Federal Unity Schools (FUS) which forms the foundation for nationalism. Look at the discriminated marks for same school from different states and to obtain the same certificate? Young Nigerians feel discriminated killing their zeal for Nigeria and Nationalism is at danger.
- (iii) The Funding of education has generally been decried as weak. In the first instance is the inability of both national leadership and higher education institution leadership to

muster the political and moral will to address the issue of poor funding in schools perceived to be the result of corruption (Onuka, Odinko, Ibode, Isuku, Isah & Oladele, 2020). The effect is that we now produce graduates who are not fit for the labour market. Addressing corruption will make enough funds available for the educational sector.

- (iv) The effect of the result on Table 4 will definitely affect national development as the products of the institutions cannot be the best as expected from the vision and mission of the establishment of such schools. The challenges being faced by Nigerians might not be unconnected with such having square pegs in round holes that will no longer be possible to detect when they join the large labour markets. The case of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and the Abdurashheed Maina on funds looted from the National Health Insurance programme is another one. Though the man has not been certified by a court of competent Jurisdiction as a thief, the menace to the health of Nigerians is one issue too difficult to cope with. Its effects goes as far as to hindering the development of National Teaching Hospitals.

Discussion of Findings

This study has been able to establish that there is wide spread corruption in Nigeria from evidences and data shown in the research questions. Table 1 showed and the discussed the history of the fight of corruption to as far back as 1975 when several military coup deta't were the perceived evidences of forthrightness. Still on into the issue of corruption, it was observed that there is no aspect of Nigeria that corruption has not permeated inclusive of higher education. Table 2 showed that Transparency International from (TI, 2011-2019) consistently ranked Nigeria high on the issue of corruption.

Further to this, Table showed data of actual presence and case studies of corruption perception in all aspects of public life in Nigeria inclusive of Higher Education. From the evidences heretofore corruption has dealt a savage blow to the Nigerian economy in such a way that majority of public infrastructure have not only ceased to work out of poor maintenance but new infrastructure have not been established for years. Again, institutional establishments against corruption have also been found to be corrupt making the problem complex. Recent celebrated cases of corruption in first generation Universities are still fresh. Most probably fresh is the celebrated sex for grades scandal that occurred at the University of Lagos in Nigeria (BBC, 2019). In another report on sex for grades in a first generation Nigerian University precisely Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) in Ile-Ife, Premium Times of Saturday, January 18, reported the case of Mr. Olaleye, a lecturer in the Department of International Relations of the University and Miss Afolayan a 400 level student. Mr. Afolayan was accused of demanding for sex from Miss Afolayan and also carrying out some level of financial extortion on her from pocket money given to her by her sponsors. Ewuzie (2019) as shown in Table 3 chronicled the challenge and the response of educationist in Nigeria who decried the rise in sex for grades blaming both parties i.e the lecturers and students. Students were blamed for two reasons, seeking high grades when they did not study and secondly for refusing to cry out when such misdemeanors are still within the stages of being aborted. On the other hand, the lecturers were blamed all through as they were the originators who had thrown caution and ethical standards to the dust bin of moral decadence. The educationists recommended stiffer sanctions for anyone caught or involved in such acts.

There are other cases of poor governance, financial mismanagement in higher education institutions and the great challenge associated with National common entrance examinations. The fore

mentioned are just a tip in the ice-berg of corruption in Nigeria. Most of these indices are often captured by Transparency International.

Also of extreme pain is the fact that it appears corruption has been legalized as politicians seek every avenue/opportunity to entrench it into national policies. An overview of Table 4 which discusses cut-off marks to Federal Unity Schools (FUT)s in Nigeria speaks volumes. It is an assassination of merit in a plural, multi-ethnic and highly populated country as Nigeria seeking good human capital for ideal national development. The Federal Character Commission though with some level of political merit, its execution as shown in Table 4 portends great dangers for the future.

In another moral related corruption issue currently trending in Nigeria, it is alleged that the Minister in charge of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) mis-appropriated N40b. During the initial aspect of the Federal House of Representative probe into the issue, a lot things were unearthed. Commerc10 partners (2020) explained that during a 45minutes grill of key actors in the saga, the Director of the Commission Professor Daniel Pondei fainted and had to be rushed to hospital. Another female director alleged that she was asked to submit herself for sexual intercourse or be sacked. Such are the issues that baffle Nigerians, Nigerian academics and other stakeholders in the Nigerian project.

Conclusion

It is clear from the findings and discussions of this paper that there is great danger ahead if certain items of policy are not corrected. The correction of the items of policy are also a big challenge in the sense that quite a number of people in government capable of influencing policy enjoyed these negatively skewed policies that fight standards, quality and entrench corruption. Such persons will constitute a clog in the wheel of progress of trying to correct those policies. It has been revealed that majority of the policies in question actually emanate

from the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 1999) and the FRN (2013). Examples are the fact that the Federal Character, equal Educational Opportunities are statutory. The herculean task of having to review the constitution sometime make Nigerians appear docile. Corruption however, might be very difficult to mitigate in the light of the revelations of this paper. Leadership appears to try as shown in Table 1 but it is hardly enough. Most worrisome according to this paper is the infiltration of scandals into higher education institutions. This paper has not looked succinctly into scams in Universities that have beaten Universities administrations hands down. This might be done in subsequent studies specially sale of handouts to students by lecturers, financial inducements strategies by lecturers in higher education institutions among others.

Recommendation

The following recommendations are proffered to ameliorate corruption in Nigeria and in our higher education institutions:

1. Government should begin as a matter of urgency the review and reform the implementation of the policies guiding the national character commission and equal educational opportunities into Federal Unity Schools (FUS) and Universities.
2. Again, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) should as a matter of urgency establish other schools of coordinate Jurisdiction with (FUS) but on a geographical basis to avoid the centralization of mediocrity all over Nigeria. With such an action, standards will not only be maintained but known. The centralization of these standards reduces the educational quality assurance for all Nigerian schools internationally.
3. This paper recommends that for the sake of mitigating corruption, attention on corruption should not be concentrated on

politicians at top level only which is what the EFCC in Nigeria has successfully done in the past years of its inauguration. It is recommended that the EFCC be decentralized to involve schools, school heads, teachers, lecturers and all in higher education institutions. The processes before getting to the current EFCC is so cumbersome that in most cases, corruption will meet and shake hands with corruption. A key error currently is that due to the consideration of cost of administration without counting loses involved, ICPC has been merged with other organizations (FGN, 2014) and This Day News Paper (2020).

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