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Corrupt Practices and the Management of Public Primary Schools in Benue State of Nigeria

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Abstract
The study investigated corrupt practices and the management of public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria. The study was guided by three research questions and three null hypotheses. Survey design was used for the study. The population comprised 20,023 teachers from 2,578 public primary schools in the state, out of which a sample of 1020 teachers from 36 public primary schools were proportionately selected from the three senatorial districts of Benue State as respondents. A 15-item questionnaire titled "Corrupt Practices and School Management Questionnaire (CPASMQ) was used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while chi-square (x^2) test of goodness-of-fit was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that corrupt practices have significant influence on the provision of infrastructural facilities, the supply of instructional materials and the maintenance of school plant in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended among other things that a monitoring team be set up by the Ministry of Education to visit schools regularly to ensure that proper execution of projects and that instructional materials supplied were effectively put into use to cater for the needs of the pupils and staff/teachers.

Keywords: Corrupt practices, teachers, management, public primary schools

1. Introduction

Corruption is a global issue. It is one major problem ravaging the whole world, particularly the developing countries. Nigeria as a developing country is suffering from corruption on a large scale that appears to cripple all aspects of national endeavor. It is observed to have adversely affected government's capacity to invest in her people and provide for the realization of their basic human rights. Terfa (2003) notes that corruption in developing countries is a social phenomenon and is fast growing and as a result there is no sophisticated machinery to check this dreaded conduct, consequently, people who are charged with the responsibility of providing fundamental human needs tend to divert and convert such materials for their personal aggrandizement.

Corruption in this sense, is the abuse of public resources to enrich or give unfair advantage to individuals, their families or friends (Ibrahim, 2004). It is concerned with any such abuse of power of position by anyone at any level of government or business.

Corruption according to Obi (2004) is an incentive offered to encourage someone to break the rules of organization in which he normally represents and delivers an unfairly favourable outcome. It is the abuse of public power for private gain. Bribery, misappropriation of public goods, nepotism, and influencing the formulation of laws or regulations for private gains are some examples of corruption.

Corruption practices are acts of activities that tend to vitiate morally or the integrity of a person, group or organization or society in general. Corrupt practices in education sector can be defined as the systematic use of public office for private benefit, the impact appears to be seen in the non-availability of educational goods and services. Ademoye in Ochogwu (2015) posits that corruption in education is not a recent phenomenon but it has been observed in the management

of educational system that misappropriation and embezzlement have affected the provision of funds, infrastructural facilities, instructional materials, affected staff matters, the maintenance of school plant and so on in public primary schools.

Management means different things to different people in different context. Some people use the term to mean a field of study, to others it means an academic discipline. Akpakwu (2012), defines management as guiding human and physical resources into dynamic organization units which attain their objectives to the satisfaction of those who serve and with a high degree of morale and sense of attainment on the part of those rendering services. Ogunu (2000), conceptualizes management as a social process which is designed to ensure the cooperation, participation, intervention and involvement of others in the effective achievement of a given or predetermined goal or objective. Mgbodile in Akpakwu (2012), opines that management is leadership which is aimed at influencing group activity towards goal achievement. Management is the behaviour of the man in leadership position when he is carrying out the vital functions of planning, organizing, directing, controlling, coordinating and evaluating activities at achieving the goals of the establishment (the school). School objectives must be pre-determined and how to execute should be explicitly stated.

For the purpose of this study, the definition by Ocho (2003:13), that management is the "process of coordinating all resources through the process of planning, organizing leading and controlling in order to attain stated objectives" is adopted. From this context, management becomes very crucial for the success or failure of a business (the school).

School management in Benue State of Nigeria however, seems to have been adversely affected by corrupt practices or mismanagement of available resources. It suffices to state that this in many instances, affects the funding, provision of infrastructural facilities, supply of instructional materials, staff matters, the maintenance of school plant and many others in public primary schools in Benue State which prompted this study.

2. Statement of the Problem

The issue of corruption appears to have been the most critical of the problems which seem to be the bane of the development of education in Benue state, Nigeria. In like manner, the problem of the system of education in Nigeria and indeed Benue State is alleged to be an unequal distribution of resources and educational provisions among public primary schools. Looting funds allocated to education has become business as usual and condoned at all levels of government. It has become a common feature of the tiers of government to loot funds released for educational development, capacity building, infrastructural development, modernization and rehabilitation of educational institutions. Money allocated for the provision of infrastructural facilities, supply of instructional materials and maintenance of school plant in particular is usually diverted and poorly managed by persons who are put in charge of these funds (Terfa, 2003).

It is this prevailing threat of corruption to the quality and equal educational opportunity that has prompted the researchers to investigate the influence of corrupt practices on the provision of infrastructural facilities, instructional materials and maintenance of school plant in Public Primary Schools in Benue State of Nigeria.

2.1. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to ascertain the influence of corrupt practices on the management of public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria. Specifically, the study intended to:
- Find out the influence of corrupt practices on the provision of infrastructural facilities in Public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria;
- Determine the influence of corrupt practices on the supply of instructional materials in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria;
- Find out the influence of corrupt practices on the maintenance of school plant in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria.

2.2. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:
- What is the influence of corrupt practices on the provision of infrastructural facilities in Public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria?
- What is the influence of corrupt practices on the supply of instructional materials in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria?
- What is the influence of corrupt practices on the maintenance of school plant in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria?

2.3. Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance
- Corrupt practices have no significant influence on the provision of infrastructural facilities in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria.
- Corrupt practices have no significant influence on the supply of instructional materials in   public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria.

- Corrupt practices have no significant influence on the maintenance of school plant in   Public   primary   schools in Benue State of Nigeria.

3. Methodology

The research design for the study is survey because it collected samples from the population which formed the basis for studying the pact of corrupt practices on the management of public primary schools. According to Emaikwu (2015), survey research is the one in which the researcher collects data from a sample drawn from a given population and describes certain features of the sample as they are at the time of the study without manipulating any independent variables of the study.

3.1. Population of the Study

The target population of the study comprised 20, 023 teachers serving in the 2,578 public primary schools in Benue State (Benue State Universal Basic Education Board, SUBEB, 2017).

3.2. Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample of the study comprised 1,020 teachers from 129 public primary schools sampled from the three (3) senatorial districts of Benue State. Forty-three (43) schools were proportionately sampled from each senatorial district and the number of teachers to serve as the respondents was similarly selected.

3.3. Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for the study was a structured questionnaire titled "Corrupt Practices and School Management Questionnaire (CPASMQ). The questionnaire consisted of two sections, A and B. Section A sought for biodata while section B elicited information on the provision of infrastructural facilities, supply of instructional materials and maintenance of school plant in public primary schools in Benue State.

The questionnaire items in section B were weighted on a four-point rating scale with response mode of: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. The questionnaire was both validated by two experts in educational administration and planning, and one expert in measurement and evaluation, all of the department of Educational Foundations and General Studies, University of Agriculture, Makurdi and trial-tested by the researchers for reliability. The result showed 0.96 reliability co-efficient indicating that the instrument was reliable for the study.

4. Method of Data Analysis

Mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (STD) were used to analyze the data to answer the three (3) research questions. The mean scores of 2.50 and above were considered "Agreed" while scores below 2.50 were considered "Disagreed". Chi-square (X^2) test of goodness-of-fit was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

4.1. Results

The results of the statistical analysis of the data collected are presented as follows:

4.1.1. Research Question 1

What is the influence of corrupt practices on the provision of infrastructural facilities in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria?

The data that provided answer to the research question are presented on Table 1.

Item No	Item Description	N	$\bar{(x)}$	STD	Decision
1.	Mismanagement of school finances influence the provision of adequate classrooms in primary schools	1020	2.85	0.94	Agreed
2.	Embezzlement of school funds affects the provision of sporting facilities in my school	1020	2.67	0.99	Agreed
3.	Diversion of school funds for other purposes has influence on supply of decent furniture in my school	1020	2.62	0.98	Agreed
4.	Misappropriation of school finance affects the development of school libraries	1020	2.88	0.88	Agreed
5.	Embezzlement of school resources has influence on provision of utilities in schools	1020	2.88	0.98	Agreed
	Cluster Mean and STD		2.78	0.95	Agreed

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on the Influence of
Corrupt Practices on Provision of Infrastructural Facilities in Public
Primary Schools in Benue State of Nigeria

On Table 1, all times 1-5 have mean ratings of 285, 2.67, 2.62, 2.88 and 2.88 with corresponding standard deviation of 0.94, 0.99, 0.98, and 0.98 respectively. Based on the mean cut-off point of 2.50, the respondents agreed that all the items are above the cut-off point. The cluster mean of 2.78 with corresponding standard deviation of 0.95 is also above the 2.50 cut –off point. This indicates that corrupt practices have influence on the provision of infrastructural facilities in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria.

4.1.2. Research Question 2

What is the influence of corrupt practices on the supply of instructional materials in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria?

On Table 2 are presented data that provided answer to the research question.

Item No	Item Description	N	⁻(x)	STD	Decision
6.	Mismanagement of available funds, to schools may impact on supply of quality textbooks to my school	1020	2.90	0.89	Agreed
7.	Diversion of school funds has impact on the supply writing materials in my school	1020	2.86	0.91	Agreed
8.	Embezzlement of school resources has influence on supply of audio-visual facilities in my school	1020	2.71	0.84	Agreed
9.	Embezzlement of funds released to schools has impact on supply of ICT facilities in my school	1020	2.69	0.92	Agreed
10.	Mismanagement of school finances has impact on the quality of chalkboards in my school	1020	2.77	0.99	Agreed
	Cluster Mean and STD		2.79	0.91	Agreed

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on the
Influence of Corrupt Practices on the Supply of Instructional
Materials in Benue State of Nigeria

Analysis on Table 2 reveals that the mean ratings for items 6-10 are 2.90, 2.86, 2.71, 2.69 and 2.77 with corresponding standard deviation 0.89, 0.91, 0.84, 0.92 and 0.97 respectively. Based on the cut-off mark of 2.50, the respondents have agreed to all the items.

The Cluster mean of 2.79 with standard deviation of 0.91 is rated above the cut-off mark of 2.50. This indicates that corrupt practices have influence on the supply of instructional materials in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria.

4.1.3. Research Question 3

What is the influence of corrupt practices on the maintenance of school plant in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria?

The data that provided answer to the research question are presented on table 3.

Item No	Item Description	N	⁻(x)	STD	Decision
11.	Misuse of funds released for the repair and general maintenance of buildings has impact on their poor state	1020	2.92	0.92	Agreed
12.	Diversion of school funds has impact on lack of renovation of classrooms in my school	1020	2.82	0.93	Agreed
13.	Misappropriation of school finances has impact on the regular maintenance of school equipment	1020	2,92	0.93	Agreed
14.	The unkept condition of my school is due to embezzlement of school resources	1020	2.89	0.94	Agreed
15.	Corrupt method in the award of contract for school maintenance has impact on the dilapidation of school facilities	1020	2.88	0.95	Agreed
	Cluster Mean and STD		2.89	0.93	Agreed

Table 3: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on the Influence of
Corrupt Practices on the Maintenance of School Plant in Public
Primary Schools in Benue State of Nigeria

The result of Table 3 shows that the mean ratings and standard deviations of items 11 to 15 are 2.92, 2.82, 2.92, 2.99 and 2.88 with corresponding standard deviations of 0.92, 0.93, 0.93, 0.94 and 0.95 respectively which are above the cut-off

point of 2.50. The cluster mean of 2.89 with standard deviation of 0.93 is rated above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that corrupt practices have influence on the maintenance of school plant in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria.

4.2. Hypotheses Testing
The hypotheses for this study are tested using chi-square (X^2) test of goodness-of-fit at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented on Tables 4 to 6.

4.2.1. Hypothesis 1
Corrupt practices have no significant influence on the provision of infrastructural facilities in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria.

Opinion	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Df	$X2^{-cal}$	$X2^{-Crit}$	Significance	Level of Decision
No Influence	163(16%)	510(50%)	1	143.53	3.84	0.05	Rejected
Influence	857(84%)	510(50%)					

Table 4: Chi-Square Test of Influence of Corrupt Practices on the
Provision of Infrastructural Facilities in Public Primary Schools in
Benue State of Nigeria
Values in Parentheses Are Percentages, $X2^{-Cal}$ = 143.53, $X2^{-Crit}$ = 3.84, Df = 1, P = 0.05>0.00

Table 4 showed that chi-square (X^2) calculated value of 143.53 is greater than chi-square (X^2) critical value of 3.84 checked at 0.05 level of significance and at 1 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that corrupt practices have significant influence on the provision of infrastructural facilities in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria.

4.2.2. Hypothesis 2
Corrupt practices have no significant influence on the supply of instructional materials in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria.

Opinion	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Df	$X2^{-cal}$	$X2^{-Crit}$	Significance	Level of Decision
No Influence	153(15%)	510(50%)	1	126.17	3.84	0.05	Rejected
Influence	867(85%)	510(50%)					

Table 5: Chi-Square Test of Influence of Corrupt Practices on the Supply of
Instructional Materials in Public Primary Schools in Benue State of Nigeria
Values in Parentheses Are Percentages, $X2^{-Cal}$ = 126.17, $X2^{-Crit}$ = 3.84, Df = 1, P = 0.05>0.00

Table 5 revealed that chi-square (X^2) calculated value of 126.17 is greater than chi-square (X^2) critical value of 3.84 checked at 0.05 level of significance and at 1 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that corrupt practice has significant influence on the supply of instructional materials in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria.

4.2.3. Hypothesis 3
Corrupt practices have no significant influence on the maintenance of school plant in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria.

Opinion	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Df	$X2^{-cal}$	$X2^{-Crit}$	Significance	Level of Decision
No Influence	133(13%)	510(50%)	1	106.11	3.84	0.05	Rejected
Influence	887(87%)	510(50%)					

Table 6: Chi-Square Test Influence of Maintenance of School Plant in
Public Primary Schools in Benue State of Nigeria
Values in Parentheses Are Percentages, $X2^{-Cal}$ = 106.11, $X2^{-Crit}$ = 3.84, Df = 1, P = 0.05>0.00

Table 6 showed that the value of Chi-square (X^2) calculated of 106.11 is greater than the value of chi-square (X^2) critical value of 3.84 checked at 0.05 level of significance at 1 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis is thus rejected. This implies that corrupt practices have significant influence on the maintenance of school plant in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria.

4.3. Major Findings
- Corrupt practices have significant influence on the provision of infrastructural facilities in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria.
- Corrupt practices have significant influence on the supply of instructional materials in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria.
- Corrupt practices have significant influence on the maintenance of school plant in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria.

5. Discussion of Findings

The first finding of this study has revealed that corrupt practices have significant influence on the provision of infrastructural facilities in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria. This finding confirms the earlier finding by Obanya (2004) that people who are saddled with the responsibility of providing infrastructural facilities for the benefit of the public end up diverting or converting the cash for their personal use. These have tampered with the quality and standard of education in Nigeria. In similar vein, Ochogwu (2015) found that corrupt practices have significant influence on the provision of infrastructural facilities in Zone "B" Senatorial District of Benue State.

The second finding of this study revealed that corrupt practices have significant influence on the supply of instructional materials in public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria. The finding is in consonance with Ibrahim (2004) who found that instructional materials allocated to post-primary schools in Taraba State by the government do not reach the schools, as people in-charge divert them and sell to private institutions. Even when such materials reach the schools, the school principals do take such materials (computers) to their houses for private use. On the other hand, Asen (2012) reported that Benue State Universal Basic Education Board procured 564,926 textbooks and other instructional materials in the four core subjects from reputable books publishers such as Evans, Longman, Macmillan and supplied to ECCDE, public primary and junior secondary schools. Nevertheless, within the findings of this study, it is clear that corruption significantly influence the supply of instructional materials in public primary schools in Benue State.

The last finding of this study revealed that corrupt practices have significant influence on the maintenance of school plant in public primary schools in Benue State. This confirms the finding by Ochohwu (2015) who established that school administrators divert the funds sent to them particularly for maintenance, because nobody would tell if the funds had been used or not over time. That the ministries and departments which are charged with the responsibility of disbursing these funds to the schools do end up not giving in time or not giving as supposed or not giving at all, as they feel that the school administrators have no idea of what they are supposed to collect. This in effect has lowered the standards of schools as facilities are not maintained as and when due.

6. Conclusion

The study was conducted on corrupt practices and the management of public primary schools in Benue State of Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was concluded that corrupt practices have significant impact on the provision of infrastructural facilities, supply of instructional materials and the maintenance of school plant in public primary schools in Benue State.

7. Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:
- To check corrupt practices in schools in terms of provision of infrastructural facilities, a   monitoring team should be set up to visit schools regularly and monitor projects allocated   to schools to ensure proper execution of such projects.
- The inspectorate unit in the Ministry of Education should visit schools more regularly to   ensure that instructional materials allocated to schools are received and effectively put   into use by school administrators and the teachers.
- School administrators should be put on edge to ensure that they develop maintenance   culture   for   healthy school plant that will suitably cater for the occupants for efficient   school activities.
- Proper recording and accounting process be introduced in the distribution and utilization   of   infrastructural   and instructional facilities in public primary schools to enhance checks and balances.

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