

Lecturers' Perception of Corrupt Practices in Universities in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract- This study investigated lecturers' perception of corrupt practices in Universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. Four hypotheses were formulated and survey design adopted for the study. The population of the study was 2,286 lecturers from the two Universities while 230 of them were sampled using stratified random sampling technique. A researcher's constructed instrument called Lecturers' Perception of Corrupt Practices Questionnaire (LPCPQ) was used for data collection. Data obtained were subjected to statistical techniques with population t-test of single mean and independent t-test statistical techniques. Findings revealed that lecturers' perception of corrupt practices in universities is significantly low. The recommendation among others is that University Management should put measures in place to promote awareness on the eradication of corrupt practices.

Index Terms- Lecturers; perception; corrupt practices.

I. INTRODUCTION

Lecturers are employed to perform three basic functions in the University, namely teaching research and community service. These functions are supposed to be attained with utmost diligence and dedication. While discharging the functions they are supposed to be above board in dealing with the students, other staff and university management. Any lecturer employed to work in the University is believed to be sound in knowledge, display of high level of expertise. Furthermore, they are also expected to stick to the rules and regulations guiding the university operations. The essence of this is to produce high level manpower who are impeccable, resilient and well equipped with skills and attitudes to influence positively their personal growth and development and that of their society. It is only in this that it can be guaranteed that highly responsible citizens are produced by the universities. University is a citadel of learning for producing graduates with sound knowledge with academic integrity and not with academic dishonesty.

Along these lines however, lecturers tend to have deviated from their supposed calling of duty to uphold the tenants of University education and have resorted to unwholesome and undesirable practices-white discharging their responsibilities as such, they no longer uphold the moral fiber required of a molder of character and destinies what seems to trending among them is how to make it big overnight. Cutting corners and bending rules are regarded as normal and acceptable practices. Corruption makes no meaning to them.

In the discharging of their responsibilities they have been observed to be neck-deep in various acts of corruption such as extortion, examination malpractices, manipulation of results, plagiarism, put my name syndrome, nepotism, bribery, sexual harassment, forcing students to buy textbooks over use of power poor attitude to work. Wawo (2015) says that one of the major problems facing Nigeria is how to exterminate corruption in the country to improve the global perception on her. Hallack and Poison (2007) assert that corruption and corrupt practices "pose a threat to the successful achievement of national educational goals. Corruption has the tendency to dwindle the resource available to educational institutions, limit access to education and reduce quality of services offered by the institution". So wide spread are these acts of corruption that they have instilled in students lacadesicals attitude towards learning, to the extent that students see hard work as anathema to their personal wellbeing. Shelley (2003) opines that corruption in academic institutions has the tendency to reduce the ethical values of students. When students realize that personal success depends not on personal effort or performance but on extortion, bribery, favouritism, nepotism, they would then, develop unethical behavior which can be passed on to the next generation. Accordingly, lecturers believed that putting in their best in their work no longer pay. This issue is exacerbated by the poor condition of services they are exposed to. Therefore, they believed that what cannot be gained to rule through dedication and commitment can be gained through involvement in acts of corruption.

This has not gone down well with university education as it seems to be the looser. Today quality education has been sacrificed on the altar of mediocrity to the extent that the university products hardly express themselves effectively. Even at that, some lecturers are products of these abnormalize that having gotten their qualification through short cut are also producing students through the same means. So what goes round turns round having ex-ranged acts of corruption in universities they can believed as conducts or behavioral pattern that work against established norms involved in by individuals (lecturers) for personal gain.

Fasokun (2010) sees corruption as a behavior which exploits human persons, disdainfully uses men and women for selfish interests. The person who exhibits such a behavior gains at the detriment of the other. Transparency international (2016) defined corruption as the abuse of entrusted power or office for private gain. Nwanze (2012) identified some offshoots of corruption. They include bribery, nepotism, misappropriation, fraud and embezzlement: others are extortion, sexual harassment

favoritism, over use of power and plagiarism. Some of the causes of corruption – weak intuitional enforcement framework, lack of ethical standards in governments business, poor rewards system and extended family.

Perception on the other hand is seen as one's opinion or feelings towards a particular thing. Essence therefore, lectures perception of corrupt practices has to do with their opinion or feelings which shape their conduct or involvement. Corrupt practices do not exist on their own, they are promoted by lecturers which as a result of personal gain have perpetuated them not minding their deleterious consequences on students learning, achievement of university goals and objectives and societal wellbeing. This therefore, has call to question the type of education the universities are handling over to students. Having observed the dangerous consequences these corrupt practice are exerting on the integrity of university education, it has become imperative to examine lecturers' perception of these maladies which may inform their level of involvement, hence the need for this investigation.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Corrupt practices have raised a lot of challenges issues in university education to the extent that it is almost becoming difficult among stake holders to have faith in university education and their products. They have threatened to destroy the very fabric of university education having permeated all aspects ranging from staff, facilities, programmes and the administration. However, its manifestation has been so glaring that it is now more or less an integral part of university system. Some of such practices are extortion, examination malpractices, manipulation of results, plagiarism, put my name syndrome, nepotism, bribery, sexual harassment, forcing students to buy textbook academic dishonesty, over use of power.

Basically, it is regarded as normal way of doing business in institutions and a way of life which almost everybody has welcomed and embraced. Despite this posturing, it is yet to be established research wise how lecturers perceive it. Measures had been taken such as establishment of servicom and other measures at the department, faculty and institution put in place to sanction perpetrators, yet it continue to sanction giving this back drop the problem is how do lecturers perceive corrupt practice in universities.

Hypothesis

1. Lecturers perception of corrupt practices in universities is not significantly low.
2. Federal university lecturers do not differ significantly with those in state universities in their perception of corrupt practices.
3. Senior universities do not differ significantly with the junior lecturers in their perception of corrupt practices.
4. Lecturers' university affiliation has no significance influence on their perception of corrupt practices.

In a study carried out by Seniwoliba J. A. and Boahen B. E. (2013) on the manifestation of corruption in higher education. The role of the University administrator. It said that corruption has infiltrated into the higher education system in different forms and dimensions. The study adopted a number of qualitative research

methods to elicit the results. It reviewed the issues of corruption based on idealism, rational choice and anomie. Two major sources of corruption were identified (administrative and academic) in higher education in Ghana. However, manifest in different forms such as through admission, procurement, leadership influence recruitment, promotion/appointment, academic dishonesty, cheating, leaking examination papers, plagiarism, favoritism and many more. It was revealed that corruption was found almost everywhere, it does not only occur in poor or developing countries but also in developed countries. It was recommended that the government should put in place national institutions to take care of the unemployed, aged and destitute and close the gap in salary. Kuranchie, Twene, Mensa and Arthur (2015) conducted a research on the perceived corrupt practices of academics: what conditions promote them? The study was motivated by the paucity of information on where the alleged practice emanates from and the conditions in academic institution perceived to be promoting the practice. The cross sectional survey utilized students from two universities in Ghana. Questionnaire was the main research instrument used for the data gathering. The instrument validated through peer review and pilot testing and the data was analyzed using SPSS version 20. The study disclosed that favoritism, nepotism and examination malpractices to be the major forms that corruption of academics takes tin the institutions and the majority of the respondents perceived staff to be the initiators of the acts. It was also revealed that fear of victimization, fear of school authority and bureaucracy in dealing with such issues are some conditions that promote the perpetuation of the acts in the institutions. It was recommended that enactment and enforcement of codes of conduct in the institutions to ensure high ethical standards.

Another work was conducted by Daniel (2015) on the identifiable corrupt practices among staff and students of secondary schools Delta State of Nigeria. Survey research was conducted to ascertain the corrupt practices and to catalogue the evils which corruption has done to secondary education. Staff and students were randomly selected as respondents to a validated research open-ended questionnaire designed for the investigation. Result revealed that there are several corrupt practice in secondary schools, the most frightening one being examination malpractice and others like cultism, sexual immortality, bribe to pass examination, stealing and cheating, drug abuse, fighting their tutors, and truancy.

Another aspect of corrupt practices is academic dishonesty including plagiarism and put my name syndrome. Bretag (2013) said that academic integrity encompasses the fire values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness and responsibilities. This demands that teaching, research and learning are conducted honesty and fairly by staff and students. The negation of academic integrity include plagiarism, cheating unauthorized collaboration, the theft of others' work, paying for assignment from the internet, the falsification of data, misrepresentation of records, fraudulent publishing and other actions that undermine the integrity of scholarship and research.

Heyneman, Anderson and Nuralyeva (2007) conducted a research on the relationship between corruption and educational outcomes in 50 countries. The investigation revealed that corruption is negatively associated with educational outcomes. Corruption in education explored by leach (2013) is sexual

violence in schools. Majority of teachers were proud of their profession, a small proportion of them were involved in sexual misconduct like “heterosexual behaviours with male perpetrators targeting female victims and homosexuality in single-sex schools. And in tertiary institutions, female staff are often harassed by male colleagues and sometime by daring mal students.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted in Cross River State, Nigeria. The state is located in south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria and it is one of the sates that make up the oil-rich Niger Delta Region. The states political and economic capital is Calabar. It has two public universities. The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study was 2,286 lectures from university of Calabar and Cross River University of Technology respectively. Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw 230 lectures. A breakdown of the sample size indicated 150 were from University of Calabar while 80 were from Cross River University of Technology altogether about 10 percent of the entire population. In the course of sampling, there was an equal representation of male and female lectures. A researcher’s constructed instruments titled “Lecturers Perception of Corrupt Practices Questionnaire”. (LPCPQ) was used to collect data. The instrument has two section A and B. section A was for demographic variables while section B had 40 items with 5 point rating scale, 4 of which measured each of the 10 variables isolated for the study. Validity of the instrument was established by experts in measurement and evaluation. Reliability of the instrument was conducted using Cronbach Alpha method which yielded a coefficient index of .82, a confirmation that the instrument is reliable enough for use in achieving the study’s objectives. Data obtained were subjected to statistical analysis using population t-test of single mean and independent t-test statistical analysis. Results obtained were presented in the tables.

IV. RESULTS

Hypothesis one: Lecturers’ perception of corrupt practices in universities is not significantly low. The only variable is lecturers’ perception of corrupt practices. Population t-test of single mean was used to analyze the data obtained. Summaries of the result are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summaries of population t-test of single mean lecturers’ perception of corrupt practices in Universities. N = 230

Variables	X	U	SD	t-value
Extortion	13.23	12.00	3.75	61.518
Examination malpractice	12.63	12.00	3.40	64.421
Manipulation of results	12.90	12.00	3.56	62.832
Plagiarism	12.95	12.00	3.58	62.620
Put my name syndrome	12.35	12.00	3.45	62.004
Nepotism	12.66	12.00	3.81	57.494
Bribery	13.32	12.00	4.08	56.546
Sexual harassment	12.62	12.00	3.69	59.215

Forcing to buy textbook	13.03	12.00	3.50	64.473
Over use of power	12.59	12.00	3.72	61.518

Significant at 0.05, df = 229, critical t-value = 1.968.

Results presented in Table 1 revealed that the calculated t-value obtained was found to be higher than the critical t-value at 0.05 level of significance and 229 degree of freedom. On the basis of these findings, the null hypothesis is rejected, meaning that lecturers’ perception of corrupt practices in universities is significantly low. It is clearly revealed that the observed mean X in all ramification was found to be higher than the assured mean value of 12.00 statistical comparism of the 2 mean (X) results yielded a significant result.

Hypothesis two

Gender has no significant influence on the lecturers’ perception of corrupt practices in universities. Independent t-test statistical analysis was used to compare the mean scores obtained from the two groups. Summaries of the result are presented in Table 2.

Table 2:

Variables	Male = 115 X	SD	Female = 115 X	SD	t-value
Extortion	13.17	3.40	13.02	3.67	.806
Examination malpractice	12.95	3.43	12.48	3.96	.817
Manipulation of results	12.85	3.66	12.51	3.57	.814
Plagiarism	12.75	3.22	12.96	3.71	.611
Put my name syndrome	12.35	3.40	12.75	3.71	.578
Nepotism	12.85	3.	12.36	3.51	.603
Bribery	12.05	3.56	13.13	4.22	.728
Sexual harassment	12.50	3.58	12.86	3.64	.631
Forcing to buy textbook	13.51	3.94	12.85	3.69	.611
Over use of power	12.95	3.43	12.85	3.64	.464

Not Significant at 0.05, df = 229, critical t-value = 1.968.

Results presented in Table 2 revealed that the calculate t-values obtained were found to be lower when compared with the critical t-value at 0.05 significance and 228 degree of freedom. On the basis of this finding, the null hypothesis is not rejected, meaning that gender has no significant influence on the lecturers’ perception of corrupt practices in universities.

Hypothesis three

Senior university lecturers do not differ significantly with junior lecturers in the perception of corrupt practices.

Table 3: Summaries of independent t-test statistical analysis of influence of senior and junior lecturers’ perception of corrupt practices in universities.

Variables	Senior = 115 X	SD	Junior = 115 X	SD	t-value
Extortion	12.86	3.66	12.60	4.03	2.210

Examination malpractice	12.90	3.72	12.28	3.41	2.376
Manipulation of results	12.32	3.40	12.49	3.26	2.406
Plagiarism	12.35	3.45	12.52	2.76	2.697
Put my name syndrome	13.08	3.89	11.82	3.01	2.289
Nepotism	12.96	3.62	12.52	3.41	2.462
Bribery	13.58	3.88	11.85	3.34	2.341
Sexual harassment	13.12	3.58	12.74	3.02	2.483
Forcing to buy textbook	12.46	3.66	12.14	2.97	2.406
Over use of power	13.08	3.75	12.48	3.20	2.346

Not Significant at 0.05, df = 229, critical t-value = 1.968.

Results presented in Table 3 showed that the calculated t-values obtained were found to be higher than the critical t-value of 0.05 level of significance and 228 degree of freedom. On the basis of these findings, the null hypothesis is rejected, meaning that senior universities lecturers differ significantly in their university lecturers.

Hypothesis four

Lecturers’ university affiliation has no significantly on their perception of corrupt practices. The independent variable is lecturers’ university affiliation while the dependent variable is their perception of corrupt practices. Independent t-test statistical analysis was used to compare the mean scores from the two groups. Summaries of the results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Summaries of independent t-test statistical analysis of influence of lecturers’ university affiliation perception of corrupt practices in universities.

Variables	Senior = 115		Junior = 115		t-value
	X	SD	X	SD	
Extortion	12.26	3.46	12.36	3.51	.806
Examination malpractice	12.30	3.32	12.48	3.96	.742
Manipulation of results	12.48	3.78	12.33	3.51	.817
Plagiarism	12.95	3.27	12.84	2.88	.961
Put my name syndrome	13.60	3.46	11.95	3.43	.611
Nepotism	12.35	3.78	12.38	3.78	.678
Bribery	13.08	3.48	11.84	3.46	.581
Sexual harassment	13.06	3.32	12.56	3.40	.942
Forcing to buy textbook	12.84	3.66	12.66	2.36	.646
Over use of power	13.46	3.72	12.46	3.64	.804

Not Significant at 0.05, df = 228, critical t-value = 1.968.

Results as presented in table 4 revealed that the calculated t-values obtained were found to be lower when compared with the critical t-value at 0.05 level of significance and 228 degree of

freedom. On the basis of this finding, the null hypothesis is not rejected, meaning that lecturers’ university affiliation has no significant influence on their perception of corrupt practices.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Results of hypothesis one indicated that lecturers’ perception of corrupt practices in universities is significantly low. This necessitated the rejection of the null hypothesis. The findings show that the way university lecturers see, feel and view corrupt practices is significantly low. This shows that they don’t view it high, which means that their participation or involvement in it is equally and likely to be low. These findings are contrary to the widely held view about lecturers and corrupt practices. As average Nigerian believed that lecturers are neck deep into society even though this is a widely held opinion or view, it is not true as this findings has contradicted it. It therefore followed that opinion may beheld by people which may not necessarily be true. The findings is in line with Seniwoliba and Boahen (2015) that corruption was found almost everywhere. It does not only occur in poor or developing countries but also in developed countries.

Gender has no significance on the lecturers’ perception of corrupt practices in universities. The result indicated that male and female lecturers perceived that corrupt practices the same way. This means that they do not differ in their views of corrupt practices in universities. The reason for this finding may be that lecturers irrespective of their gender work in the same environment exposed to the same condition of service and live in the same environment with either members of the society, the result does not agree with previous findings like Dimkpa (2011) that corruption exists more in male than female lecturers, meaning that women are less corrupt than male.

Senior academics staff do not differ significantly in their perception of corrupt practices. The hypothesis was rejected which means that they differ in their perception. Results of this hypothesis indicated that academic staff differ in their opinion from that of their junior counterparts. It therefore means that, they don’t look at it the same way. Senior academic staff may perceive corrupt practices negatively while their junior counterparts may have a different opinion. This finding may be explained the angle that most of them grow up when corrupt practices have and permeated or influenced society as a way of life. That upbringing may have contributed to the having a negative perception on corrupt practices. On the other way round, most junior academic staff were born when corruption has permeated Nigerian society in such a way that it is a normal way of life. As a result, there is tendency that the class of academic staff might be favourably disposed towards corrupt practices.

Lecturers’ university affiliation has no significant influence on their perception of corrupt practices. This means that the way federal university lecturer view corrupt practices is not different from lecturers in the stat owned university. This findings is not surprising because the two categories of lecturers are exposed to the same society where corrupt practices. Even though corrupt practices permeated the society, there are individuals who abhor them. In this case, such individuals may not perceive it positively. Furthermore, from this finding there is the tendency that where lecturers from federal university perceive negatively,

their state university counterparts may likely follow suit. The same is applicable to positive perception.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper investigated lecturers' perception of corrupt practices in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. It was revealed that their perception is significantly low which implies that university lecturers' involvement or participation in corrupt practices is equally low. It was also concluded that gender and university affiliation do not influence lecturers perception of corrupt practices. There is a significant difference between the academic staff and their junior counterparts in their perception of corrupt practices in the university.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

University management should put measures in place to promote awareness on the eradication of corrupt practices.

Federal and state government should revisit lecturers' condition of service and equip universities to standard.

University management should promote mentoring for the senior academic staff to help to help the junior to live up to expectation in universities.

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