Teachers' Perception of Corrupt Practices at Teaching Service Commission in Nigeria

Shaibu Leonard [ID]

Department of Educational Management and Business Education, Faculty of Education,
Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

Abstract

Corruption is a global problem that has affected education in Africa and Nigeria, affecting the system's efficiency. Two research questions guided this study. This study explored teachers' perception of corrupt practices in the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) in Nigeria with particular reference to Ekiti state. A descriptive research design and a quantitative approach were adopted. Random sampling technique was used in this study and 180 participants were selected for this study. The study participants were given a questionnaire known as the Perceived Corrupt Practices Questionnaire (PCPQ) to obtain the views of the participants. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics and percentages. The findings revealed many forms of corruption in the Ekiti State Teachers Service of Nigeria, including collecting official documents, bribery for admission to public schools and access preferences. Teachers also believe that corruption in the Board of Education is responsible for destroying social welfare and poor educational achievement in Nigeria. It was concluded that corruption reduces the resources available to schools, limits access to education, and reduces the quality of services in the state.

Keywords: bribery, corruption, perception, teaching service commission, public secondary schools, Ekiti state

Introduction

The word "corruption" has proven difficult to use, especially in official and legal documents. Corruption is a global crisis affecting business and education worldwide. The most pressing case of educational corruption in Nigeria occurred in 1906 when essential school exams were leaked (Asiyai, 2020). Since then, corruption has resurfaced in the systems and spread to secondary schools and beyond. Research on corruption in sub-Saharan Africa is rich. For over 67% of respondents, bribery is a part of everyday life (Suleiman et al., 2019). The United Nations Development Programme's [UNDP] (2008), Anti-Corruption Practice notes define corruption as ""the abuse of public power, position or, position or authority for the benefit of non-citizens through bribery, extortion, power-peddling, nepotism, fraud, embezzlement or misappropriation." While corruption is common with government and public officials, it can also be found in business (UNDP, 2010).

UNDP has commenced the use of a broader definition of corruption to encompass corruption within the education zone. As a result, corruption is now notably defined as the "misuse of entrusted strength for non-public-private benefit" (UNDP, 2008). Antonowicz et al. (2010) define corruption as the abuse of entrusted electricity energy for non-public advantage. In phrases of what happens inside the TSC and secondary schools, each of those ideas is appropriate. Corruption within the schooling quarter manifests itself in various approaches. As an example, in secondary colleges, corruption is described as the systematic exploitation of public property for personal benefits that impacts

effective instructional delivery (Hallak & Poisson, 2017). Suleiman et al. (2019) came up with a clear definition of corruption as the use of public places for private advantage. This description changed once selected due to the fact it is concise and extensive enough to cover maximum styles of corruption encountered by the usage of the bank, as nicely as is often utilized in distinct academics' writings (Akande, 2017; Farzanegan & Witthuhn, 2017; Khan et al., 2021; Šumah, 2018).

When a principal or trainer takes, solicits, or extorts a bribe from scholars or dad and mom, it is viewed as corruption. Corruption is exploited when secondary college administrators, proprietors, or teachers intentionally furnish bribes to move around education guidelines and approaches to get a competitive aspect and earnings. Even though there may be no bribery, colleges can be abused for personal advantage via patronage and nepotism. That is not to say that corruption does not exist at exclusive ranges or that its consequences are constrained to personal secondary faculties. A few dad and mom take their kids to school primarily to help them acquire the proper grades, whilst others promote malpractices that have reduced the fine and fashionable of education in Nigeria.

Corruption within the TSC cannot be overstated. Teacher promotion practices without ethics and a lack of professional standards contribute to both poor teaching quality and failure. Punitive measures for teacher misconduct and low salaries act as leading factors too. As a result, entire generations have no future. Most instructors being produced by the TSC are engrossed with a poor attitude toward selling indiscipline among college students (Kumah et al., 2023). Such attitudes as the exploitation of college

students via teachers, which include the compulsory sale of handouts and textbooks, as well as sexual harassment and receiving bribes of every type from the students, can promote indiscipline. Furthermore, inadequate commitment to obligation by teachers, incessant industrial moves, insufficient incentives, and a body of workers' welfare rules are additional factors that promote corrupt practices in our tertiary institutions (Ugoani, 2016). However, this research intends to discover the teachers' perception of the exercise of bribery and corruption in the TSC in Ekiti state, Nigeria.

Forms of Corruption in the Nigerian Education Sector

The wealth and corruption in the Nigerian education industry are more serious than experts suggest. Many factors affect the effective functioning of education and many government social services in Nigeria. According to Akinniyi et al. (2021), forms of corruption in education include ghost teachers, inflation of teacher registration fees, prohibitive fees for students, use of free money for teachers or students, improper use of school funds, etc., funding and distribution of community/parental donations or aid to the school. Medani (2023) believes that forms of corruption such as bribery, nepotism and embezzlement are comparable to forms of corruption in different industries. The major forms of corruption in Nigerian institutions include misuse and abuse of public resources. In a similar study by Okpechi et al. (2018), corruption includes fraud; they interpreted the terms of these numbers as follows:

1. Embezzlement: This includes the theft of public resources by public officials. An example in education would be the use of PTA funds for school improvements or the construction of a secondary school library;
2. Bribery: This includes payment (in cash or in-kind) given or received to act as a teacher in a relationship or where a person is not eligible to participate in the job but has worked as a teacher;
3. Fraud: This refers to a commercial crime that involves some form of deception, fraud, or deception. One of the consequences of this in education is the creation of additional credit or the issuance of certificates by school owners or administrators; education;
4. Extortion: Obtaining money or other resources through the use of force, violence, or the threat of force. There may be fewer instances of violence or the threat of violence in education than in other professions. However, there are cases where teachers commit sexual offenses against students or require parents to pay illegal or unauthorized fees to enroll their children and
5. Nepotism: This is associated with the abuse of power that implies "privatization" and the sale of school resources or equipment. This includes cases of nepotism where public officials favor their family or friends. There are many examples of people showing interest in learning, including recruitment based on peer groups, organizations, or family friends.

The causes of corruption in the Nigerian education area, as stated by Ayobami (2011), consist of the following:

1. Poverty: this can impact specifically when teachers are poorly paid to assertive promotion or were prompted. This may additionally arise due to exploitation from the primary to the students through sorting to upgrade their non-stop assessment (CA) to get better grades in the course of or before the exam.
2. Unemployment: this may impact a scenario wherein the applicant may additionally find it hard to find a job in his career and ultimately discover himself in a coaching subject that might not be his fundamental career due to unemployment inside the labor market.
3. Low-wage people: when instructors' salaries are low, a group of workers can be forced to use respectable positions to collect bribes as a manner of making ends meet.

Other causes of corruption, as highlighted by Nwankwo and Nweke (2016), encompass weak government institutions; poor remuneration and pay incentives; loss of openness and transparency in public and private services; Absence of key anti-corruption equipment; way of life and acceptance of corruption with the aid of the populace; Absence of powerful political financing, Poverty; Ethnic and spiritual difference; and resource scramble. Nwankwo and Nweke (2016) further argued that the reasons why the fight against corruption in Nigeria has not been achieved include the following factors:

1. The insincerity of the government;
2. Pre bargaining and Negotiation, exceptionally located officers caught in corrupt practices are made to component with some of their looted budget and are thereafter let loose;
3. Low deterrent- the punitive measures for corrupt practices want to be reinforced by the loss of virile political and social moves to tackle corruption. The mass humans are but to be mobilized in the combat against corruption;
4. Loss of getting admission to public information. A variety of secrecy nonetheless pervades authorities' documents, and this underlies the need for the passage of the liberty of statistics bill currently before Nigeria's countrywide meeting;
5. Lack of confidence in Informants. There may be a need to enact laws to defend informants as well as praise them;
6. Low public participation in governance. This look intends to envision if the TSC of Ekiti state is infested by using the generality of this menace because the located outcries of teachers in this domain all revolve around the phrase 'corruption' in the region.

Perception of Teachers toward the Practice of Bribery and Corruption in the Teaching Service Commission

Interest has been given to corruption using the usage of the worldwide network and a way to manage it. Globally, corruption is increasingly condemned and seen as an immoral practice. A system of corruption is created when people who are wealthy and connected to public services receive favourable treatment (UNDP, 2010). In the discharging of their obligations, they were located to be neck-deep in a spread of acts of corruption along with extortion, examination malpractices, manipulation of effects, plagiarism, placed-my-name syndrome, nepotism, bribery, sexual harassment, forcing college students to buy textbooks use of energy bad mindset to work. Whawo (2015) says that one of the fundamental issues dealing with Nigeria is how to exterminate corruption inside the United States to enhance its global grasp here. Nwachukwu (2021) asserts that corruption and corrupt practices "pose a threat to the profitable success of country-extensive academic goals.

Corruption tends to dwindle the beneficial aid available to instructional institutions, restrict proper entry to education, and limit the remarkable services provided through the group." So widespread are these acts of corruption that they have instilled in students' academic attitudes towards learning, to the extent that students see hard work as anathema to their personal well-being. Kumah et al. (2023) opine that corruption in educational establishments tends to limit the moral values of college students. While students remember the fact that personal achievement is predicated upon not on personal effort or overall performance but on extortion, bribery, favoritism, and nepotism, they might then develop unethical behavior, which can be exceeded directly by the subsequent generation (Aramide, 2024). As a result, academics believed that placing their first magnificence in their paintings would not pay. This issue is exacerbated by the resource of the horrific situations of offerings they may be exposed to. Therefore, they believed that what cannot be won to rule through willpower and dedication may be received through involvement in acts of corruption.

This has not gone down well with secondary 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, a few teachers are merchandise of those abnormalities that, having gotten their qualification via shortcuts, are equally generating students through equal means. So what goes round

turns round having ex-ranged acts of corruption in universities they can believe as conducts or behavioural patterns that work against established norms involved by individuals (lecturers) for personal gain.

Perception alternatively takes into consideration one's opinion or feelings inside the route of a selected issue. Essence, therefore, academics' understanding of corrupt practices has to do with their reviews or emotions, which shape their behavior or involvement. Corrupt practices do not exist on their own; they're promoted via teachers who, as a result of non-public benefit, have perpetuated them, no longer minding their deleterious consequences on college students' learning, fulfillment of university desires and targets, and societal properly-being. Mbah (2020) printed that worry of victimization, worry of school authority, and paperwork in handling such troubles are conditions that sell the perpetuation of the acts inside the establishments. Zanyar (2024) advocated the enforcement of codes of conduct in institutions to make certain excessive moral requirements. However, the appreciation of instructors toward the exercising of corruption within the TSC in Ekiti state, Nigeria, which is yet to be known, remains the basis for the worry in this study.

Objectives

The purpose of this paper, 'Teachers' Perception of Corrupt Practices at Teaching Service Commission in Nigeria', is to examine and discuss teachers' perceptions of prevalent corrupt practices at the TSC in Ekiti State. This study seeks to establish the forms of corruption affecting the education sector, review the implication of such corrupt practices on the quality of education, and also assess teachers' perception of how corruption within the TSC hinders educational development and welfare in public secondary schools.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design and a quantitative approach. Descriptive research design is useful in this type of research because it uses samples to collect and analyze data as a representative of the population.

The population of the study consisted of all teachers serving in public secondary schools in Ekiti State. The number of teachers in secondary schools in Ekiti State was estimated to be 7,237 (Source: Ekiti State Teaching Commission). The study participants were selected using a random sampling technique from three local government areas of Ekiti State, including Addo-Ekiti, Oye-Ekiti and Ikole-Ekiti local government areas. Therefore, two public secondary schools were selected from each local government area. The sample size used was 180 teachers from the selected secondary schools. Data collection was done through the Perceived Corrupt Practices Questionnaire (PCPQ). The PCPQ uses a 4-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Participants from all secondary schools were invited to

participate in the research process. Copies of the questionnaire were personally administered by each participant and returned immediately. The data collected for the study were analyzed using percentage and frequency distribution tables.

Results

Table 1 shows that 75% of respondents approved that it takes the form of keeping files of ghost staff in the TSC, while 25% disapproved. 73.9% of respondents agreed that bribery for enrolment into public schools formed part of corruption prevalent in the TSC, 70.6% of respondents approved that withholding of books allotted to schools is a form of corruption existing in the TSC, 70% of respondents approved that registration corruption is a form of corruption prevalent in the teaching service commission, while 69.4% agreed that favoritism in admission is a form of corruption prevalent in the TSC.

Table 1
Frequency and Percentage of forms of corruption prevalent in the TSC

Items	Yes		No	
	f	%	*f*	%
Recruitment corruption	120	66.7	60	33.3
Bribery for admission into public schools	133	73.9	47	26.1
Favouritism in admission	125	69.4	55	30.6
Examination malpractices	118	65.6	62	34.4
Keeping files of ghost staff	135	75	45	25
Absenteeism by teachers	116	64.4	64	35.6
Withholding of books allocated to schools	127	70.6	53	29.4
Registration corruption	126	70	54	30

Note. Data collected by the author in 2024.

Table 2 shows that 48.9% of respondents strongly agreed that teachers are involved in corrupt practices to add to their low salaries, 20.6% agreed, 15% disagreed, and 15.6% of respondents strongly disagreed. Respondents who strongly agreed that bribery and corruption are widespread because of the government's insensitivity to teachers' demands were 43.3%, 21.7% agreed, 17.8% of respondents disagreed, and 17.2% strongly disagreed. 40.6% of respondents strongly agreed that nepotism and favoritism are high in the Teaching Service Commission, 32.8% agreed, 13.9% disagreed, and 12.8% strongly disagreed; however, 33.9% of respondents strongly agreed that bribing during teachers' employment process is needed to get selected, 34.4% agreed, 17.2% disagreed, while 14.4% of respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 2
Frequency and Percentage of Perception of Teachers towards the Practice of Bribery and Corruption in the TSC

Items	SA		A		D		SD	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Teachers engage in corruption to augment their low salaries	88	48.9	37	20.6	27	15	28	15.6
Bribery and corruption are rampant because of the government's insensitive nature to teacher's demands	78	43.3	39	21.7	32	17.8	31	17.2
Corruption is a common phenomenon in the education sector and cannot be eradicated	44	24.4	23	12.8	64	35.6	49	27.2
Bribing during the teachers' recruitment process is needed to get selected	61	33.9	62	34.4	31	17.2	26	14.4
Favoritism and nepotism are high in the teaching service commission	73	40.6	59	32.8	25	13.9	23	12.8

Note. Note. SA = *strongly agree*; A = *agree*; D = *disagree*; SD = *strongly disagree*.
Data collected by the author in 2024.

Discussion

The findings of this study in Table 1 show the high level of corruption in the Ekiti State T SC. The prevailing pattern of corruption is in the form of keeping records of ghost workers, bribery for admission to public schools, removal of textbooks distributed to schools, support for access and recording corruption. It was reported that teachers believe that corruption in the Board of Education is responsible for the destruction of social welfare and declining standards of education in Nigeria. The findings are consistent with Whawo's (2015) finding that illegal examinations, bribery, fraud during admissions, and extortion of money from students for false results are corruption. Idiong et al. (2023) stated that corruption takes many forms, primarily corruption, bribery, fraud, and dishonesty, which negatively affect the study. This finding is exemplified by Ahiauzu and Emmanuel (2019), who reported that it is corrupt for government agencies to withhold part of the resources allocated to schools. The findings of this study also confirmed the view of Kumah (2023), who reported that the recruitment, promotion, and induction of teachers in Kenya is hampered by national corruption and nepotism, with some leaders admitting to the corruption of their relatives, church members, and clans during the induction. This finding is also supported by Chinyere and Chukwuma (2017), who found that extortion, cheating in examinations, and bribery by teachers are forms of corruption.

It was also revealed that teachers engage in corruption to supplement the meager income resulting from the government's failure to respect teachers' rights. Akinniyi et al. (2021) confirmed that low teacher salaries reduce the quality of education in the country. The current findings are consistent with Johnson (2023), who reported that teachers are heavily involved in corruption because the government does not heed their demands.

Conclusion

The study concluded that corruption in the TSC in Ekiti State, Nigeria, takes many forms, including monitoring of official documents, bribery for admission to public schools, and favoritism in recognition. The survey also found that perceived corrupt practices by the TSC are responsible for the destruction of social welfare and the decline in educational standards in Nigeria. The researchers concluded that corruption leads to a lack of capacity in schools, limits access to education, and reduces the quality of services provided by the education sector.

Recommendations

1. The management of public secondary schools should take steps to create awareness to eliminate corrupt practices.
2. The federal and state governments should review the teachers' programs and provide public schools as models.
3. The management of public secondary schools should support the training of senior teaching staff to help junior staff meet the expectations of secondary education.
4. A complete value re-orientation is the best practice that can be adopted to address corruption in Nigerian public secondary schools.

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