

BREAKING THE JINX OF ACADEMIC CORRUPTION FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ENUGU STATE: A FOCUS ON THE COVID-19 ORDEAL

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ABSTRACT

The problem of academic corruption has greatly affected educational development and effective management of public secondary schools in Enugu State and it is more serious now that covid-19 pandemic is ravaging the world. On this note, while we focus on the covid-19 ordeal, this study was necessitated sequel to the need to proffer appropriate measures on how to break the jinx of academic corruption for educational development in Enugu State. The study adopts descriptive survey research design. In order to gather necessary primary data for the study, structured questionnaire was administered on the respondents on 5point Likert scale. The study reveals that compliance with the administrative and financial regulations guiding education sector in Enugu State will break the jinx of academic corruption for educational development in Enugu State. In conclusion, compliance with the administrative and financial regulations would help in breaking the jinx of academic corruption in the state and must be reasonably adhered to so as to ameliorate the sufferings imposed on poor parents/guardians in Enugu with respect to educational training of their children/wards. It recommended that since compliance with the administrative and financial regulations would help in breaking

the jinx of academic corruption in the State, the Ministry of Education should be tasked by the public through requisite legislation targeted at curbing corruption in the State's public schools.

Keywords: Academic Corruption, Covid-19 Ordeal, Educational Development, Public Secondary Schools, Enugu State.

Introduction

This study is an attempt to highlight the solutions to the problem of corruption in Enugu State. Hence, the title, breaking the jinx of academic corruption for educational development in Enugu state: A focus on the covid-19 ordeal. As observed, "Corruption in higher education deserves attention for many reasons and particularly because of the negative impact it has on society (Jordan, 2016)." Not just in higher education, corruption has been accused to have undermined development in all systems and subsystems. As such, academic corruption at the secondary school level deserves even more serious attention because quality training and educational development begins at the primary and secondary school levels. In fact, "corruption is inimical to the development of an economic and institutional environment that enhances education expansion and high-quality human capital formation (Dridi, 2014)." Similarly, Ehrlich and Lui (1999) insist that, "the will to benefit from rents caused by government intervention in the economy is likely to alter individual decisions to invest in human capital and can lead people to spend less time in education..."

Generally, corruption was heightened consequent upon the excruciating aftermaths of the coronavirus pandemic. A corollary to this is that the poor masses have been subjected to hardship due to the harsh economic policies and incessant borrowing by the federal government. The foregoing factors (pandemic, hardship, harsh economic policies and borrowing) and more converge to further introduce diverse typologies of corruption here and there. "Nevertheless, it is not unrealistic to consider that corruption can also constitute, for several reasons, a real obstacle to education development and human capital formation and accumulation (Dridi, 2014)." In this study, we conceptually dissect 'academic corruption' and 'education'. Our main interest is to examine ways of breaking the jinx of corruption in education so as to engineer a functional robust education sector in the state through a descriptive survey approach with a sample of public secondary schools in the three Senatorial zones in Enugu state.

Statement of the problem

It has been contended that misappropriation and mismanagement of funds which ought to have been used for effective management of public schools is part of the nagging problems confronting educational development in most of the states in Nigeria (Chioke, 2021). In addition, many scholars have argued that the problem of academic corruption which adversely affected educational development and effective management of public secondary schools in Enugu State when narrowly viewed appears to be more serious now than ever during the covid-19 ordeal that ravaged the whole world. Citizens in Enugu believe that the reason is that Covid-19 negatively impacted on education as some funds mapped out for education were channeled to other areas other than the original purpose which is hinged upon the improvement of education in the state. Germanely, "Measures for dealing with corruption in the education field should include a learning environment that values integrity, well-

designed governance with effective, transparent and accountable management, and a proper system of social control of the way the sector operates and consumes resources (Jordan, 2016).” However, it is believed that compliance with the administrative and financial regulations guiding education sector in Enugu State will eliminate corruption in the system. On this note, while we focus on the covid-19 ordeal, this study was necessitated sequel to the need to proffer appropriate measures on how to comply with the administrative and financial regulations guiding education sector in Enugu State in order to break the jinx of academic corruption for educational development in Enugu State.

Objective of the Study

The specific objective of this study is:

1. To empirically determine appropriate ways of complying with the administrative and financial regulations guiding education sector in Enugu State.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study

1. What are the appropriate ways of complying with the administrative and financial regulations guiding education sector in Enugu State.

Research Hypothesis

The following Null and alternative hypotheses were tested:

HO – Compliance with the administrative and financial regulations guiding education sector in Enugu State will not break the jinx of academic for educational development in Enugu State.
HI – Compliance with the administrative and financial regulations guiding education sector in Enugu State will break the jinx of academic corruption for educational development in Enugu State.

Academic Corruption: A Conceptual Synopsis

Academic corruption has been clothed with diverse aprons. Contextually, academic corruption is corruption perpetrated by corrupt stakeholders in the education sector. This occurs in form of ghost teaching, maladministration, property tort such as conversion of teaching aids, sexual abuse of teenage/adult learners, favouritism in the allotment of grades/marks, misappropriation of fund, embezzlement, mismanagement of education funds and associated practices. Commenting on education corruption, Pierre (2014) conveyed this useful impulse:

Corruption in public affairs includes the abuse of authority for material gain. But because education is an important public good, professional standards include more than just material goods; hence the definition of education corruption includes the abuse of authority for both personal as well as material gain. An education system can be corrupt in four ways: (i) through its education functions, (ii) through the supply of goods and services, (iii) through professional misconduct, and (iv) in the treatment of taxation and property. These can include the assessment of student achievement. This includes how grades are assigned, how students are selected to elite training programs and how universities acquire accreditation from government agencies. Students may pay a bribe for a particular grade assigned by a department chair, over

and above the authority of a classroom educator.

Interestingly, Kayode (2013) appeared to be abreast with the matter when he asked, “If education remains one of the main routes leading to a good life and national development, without education, what would be the future of these dependants and the country?” A corollary to the foregoing is that, “This rhetorical question portrays the urgent and cogent need to revitalize the ailing education sector here in Enugu and Nigeria at large. A look at the position of the Public Universities in Enugu in University ranking demonstrates the crucial need for a rethink on academic corruption (Chioke, 2021).”

It should be borne in mind that, “...the education sector in Nigeria and Enugu State in particular is a huge enterprise, because of the existence of an avalanche of both public and private schools. While this is certain, corruption remains a time bomb in the education system waiting to explode and casualties unavoidable. In this dimension, it is clear that academic corruption stultifies national development as it relegates the need to supply students with pedagogical equipment of several colorations, reading and writing materials. Also, we cannot deny the urgent need for andragogical (has to do with adult education) equipment in the State to cater for the significant population of uneducated adults (Chioke, 2021).” Meanwhile, “Corruption is likely to concern all areas of planning and management, i.e., information systems, the building of schools, recruitment, promotion (including systems of incentives) and appointment of teachers, the supply and distribution of equipment and textbooks, the allocation of specific allowances (fellowships, subventions to the private sector, etc.), examinations and diplomas, out-of-school activities and so forth (Pierre, 2014).” At this juncture, we consider a detail examination of the existing typologies of corruption in education as presented in table below:

Typology of opportunities of Corruption in Education Sector

Areas	Corrupt practices	Impact on education
School building, rehabilitation	• Fraud in publictendering • Embezzlement • Schoolmapping	Access Quality <i>Example:</i> bad location of schools; too high or too low use; demand for places unattended
Equipment, Textbooks, Food	• Fraud in publictendering • Embezzlement • Bypass ofcriteria	Equity Quality <i>Example:</i> schoolmealsfreetotherichandn otavailablefor the poor; lack of consistency between textbooksand Curricula
Teacher appointment/ management	• Favouritism • Nepotism • Bribes	Quality <i>Example:</i> less qualified teachers appointed
Teacher behavior	• “Ghostteachers” • Bribes (for schoolentrance, exams, assessment,privat e tutoring, etc.)	Equity Ethics <i>Example:</i> disparity in staffing by schools; discrimination against the poor

Examinations and diplomas	• Selling of information • Favouritism • Nepotism • Bribes • Academic fraud	Equity Ethics <i>Example:</i> unjustified credentials available to students who can afford to pay bribes
Information systems	• Manipulating data • Selecting/suppressing information	Equity Ethics Policy priorities <i>Example:</i> omitting data on repetition/dropout; less priority on quality improvement
Specific allowances (fellowships, subsidies, etc.)	• Favouritism • Nepotism • Bribes • Bypass of criteria	Access Equity <i>Example:</i> inflating enrolment figures to increase financial Transfers
Finance	• Transgressing rules/procedures • Inflation of costs and activities • Opacity of flow • Leakage of funds	Access Quality Equity Policy priorities <i>Example:</i> less resources for quality improvement: textbooks, materials, etc.

Source: Culled from Hallak and Poisson (2002)

Having examined the concept of academic corruption, efforts are thus directed toward the conceptualisation of 'Education.'

The meaning of Education

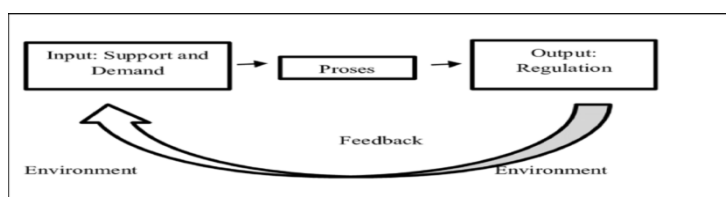
Education is characterized by the need to inculcate new ideas in the learner. So, "Education is the generic processes involved in instilling the societal values, assimilation of values and the resultant use of such values/knowledge to usher in sustainable development in such society and beyond where such values have been imported, assimilated and practiced. Therefore, education in the above sense is an agent of social mobility and social engineering (Chioke, 2021)." Also, "Education is the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or adult develops the abilities, the attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he lives. That is to say, it is a process of disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee rational direction of society or both (Tambawal, 2013)." Now, "From the foregoing perspective, it is clear that education is meant to create abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviors of **positive value** in man and the society at large. However, it pitiable to note that virtually all societies in this side of the globe is heavily fraught with the reverse, which is negative value. The education system here has done nothing or little to positively influence the nation's value system (Chioke, 2021)."

Viewed from another angle, "Education in the broadest sense of the term is meant to aid the human being in his/her pursuit of wholeness. Wholeness here implies the harmonious development of all the potentialities God has given to a human person (Nwankwo & Nweke,

2016).” Parankimailil (2012) notes that, “education is a systematic process through which a child or an adult acquires knowledge, experience and relevant skills from one generation to another.” Fafunwa (2004) is of the opinion that “the end objective of education is to produce an individual who is honest, respectful, skilled, and cooperative and who would conform to the social order.”

Theoretical Framework

To theoretically underpin and demonstrate the relevance of this study, we anchor the research on system theory on the basis that education sector is a subsystem of the general system. “Systems theory was proposed by a Biologist, Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in 1940s (Chioke and Agbodike, 2021).” “In the systems approach, a system is defined as a set of inter-related and interdependent parts arranged in a manner that produces a unified whole (Sapru, 2013).” Examining the education sector here which is seriously troubled by ‘*corruption*,’ we agree this affects other parts/sector in the state. “It is against this backdrop that it should be noted that corrupt practices within the ecology of education sector affects the nation’s development as well as the component units. This being the case, the logic is that, there is no sustainable development in the State and by implication the country at large. Thus, systems theory provides us with a general analytical tool for diagnosing an organization (Chioke, 2021).” Further, we examine this theory from the lens of the following diagram:



Source: www.researchgate.net

From the above diagram, one could see how the forces that interplay in a system interact. The people support and demand remedial measures necessary for breaking the jinx in the society from the system, which when processed develop into an output in form of regulation. “Therefore, we suffice it to note that the principle of systems theory is the interrelatedness of parts (Chioke, 2016).”

Application of the theory

Then how does this theory correlate with this research topic? Applying this theory, the study shows the demands from the environment which are thrown up in form of appropriate measures to be injected into the system for proper functioning of secondary schools in the area of this study. This determines how the sector has been able to incorporate education development in the system (Enugu State).

Methodology

This study is established through a quantitative approach. To achieve the specific objective of this study, structured questionnaire was used as research instrument for data collection. The sampling technique adopted for this study is simple random sampling technique. The scope of the study is public secondary schools in Enugu State and two schools from each of the three Senatorial Zones were selected. The total staff strength of the schools selected from Post Primary School Management Board (PPSMB) Enugu state record is 362. Using Taro Yamani

formular for sample size, we arrived at 190 as the sample size. Thus 190 structured questionnaires were distributed to teachers in the selected schools. However, a total of 155 questionnaires were rightly filled and found useful.

Data Presentation

This section presents the demographic details of the respondents.

Marital Status of respondents

Table 1 Responses on Marital Status of respondents

S/No	Options	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
A	Married	88	56.7
B	Single	29	18.7
C	Divorced	-	-
D	Separated	-	-
E	Widowed	38	24.5
Total		155	100

Source: Field Work (2021)

Data on marital status of respondents show that eighty-eight (88) respondents representing 56.7% are married, thirty one (31) respondents representing 18.7% are single, zero respondents representing 0% of the sample size is neither divorced nor separated and thirty (38) respondent representing (24.5%) are widowed. The percentage of those married is the highest. This helps us to understand that the respondents are responsible teachers with their families. This suggests that they are in position to understand the implications of corruption on the education sector.

Academic qualification of respondents

Table 2 Responses on academic qualification of respondents

S/No	Options	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
A	NCE	32	20.65
B	B.Ed/PGDE	99	63.87
C	MA/M.Ed	18	11.61
D	Others	6	3.87
	Total	155	100

Source: Field Work (2021)

This table shows that thirty-two (32) respondents representing 20.65% of the sample size are NCE holders. Ninety-nine (99) respondents equivalent to 63.87% are B.Ed/PGDE holders. Eighteen (18) respondents representing 11.61% are MA/M.Ed holders, and six respondents representing 3.87% of the sample size fall within other category. From the data it is clear that those with B.Ed/PGDE degree had the highest respondents in the sample size. From this, one could infer that the minimum entry qualification into the education sector of Enugu State is B.Ed/PGDE degree from a recognized university. Based on this, the majority of the sample has the paper qualification to be teachers in Enugu State.

Data Analysis

This section presents the analysis of the research items that comprised the research question.

Research question 1: What are the appropriate ways of complying with the administrative and financial regulations guiding education sector in Enugu State?

Table 3. Responses on the appropriate ways of complying with the administrative and financial regulations guiding education sector in Enugu State

S/N	ITEMS	SA (5)	A (4)	SD (3)	D (2)	U D (1)	$\bar{X}$	Std.Dev iation	Varia nce	Decision
1	Disregard for godfatherism in staff recruitment and selection processes.	67	50	3	20	15	3.8645	1.35358	1.832	Accepted
2	Misappropriation of fund meant for public schools should be jettisoned.	81	35	8	25	6	4.0323	1.25574	1.577	Accepted
3	Faulty recruitment through bribery must be avoided in order to develop the education system.	100	5	11	19	20	3.9419	1.54264	2.380	Accepted
4	Favouritism in the allotment of marks and in promotion of staff must be eliminated for improved educational development free from corruption.	45	76	4	12	18	3.7613	1.27455	1.624	Accepted
5	Illegal fees/charges by teachers should be stopped in public schools to help ameliorate corruption in the covid-19 era.	92	4	2	17	40	3.5871	1.79388	3.218	Accepted

6	Installation of CCTV cameras in exam halls, libraries and laboratories are part of the measures that will mitigate corruption.	71	22	6	6	50	3.3742	1.78431	3.184	Accepted
	Grand Total						3.7602	1.5008	2.303	

Source:Field work(2021)

Six statements make up this subset. The respondents in the above table accepted all the statements in this subset. With a mean score of 3.8645, respondents agreed to the assertion in the first variable which suggests that disregard for godfatherism in staff recruitment and selection processes will be appropriate way of breaking the jinx of academic corruption for educational development in Enugu State. Respondents also subscribe to the view that misappropriation of fund meant for public schools should be jettisoned. The issue of faulty recruitment through bribery was the focus of the third statement and they agreed that it must be avoided in order to develop the education system. Another panacea – that is favouritism in the allotment of marks and in promotion of staff was the focus of the fourth item and with a mean score of 3.7613 respondents agreed that it must be eliminated for improved education development free from corruption to be in place in Enugu Education sector. Respondents, in the fifth item, were asked whether a move to stop illegal fees/charges by teachers in public schools will help to ameliorate the effects of corruption on the development of education in the state in the covid-19 era. Their response was positive as indicated by the mean score of 3.5871. The last statement also received a positive response that the installation of CCTV cameras in exam halls, libraries and laboratories are part of the measures that will mitigate corruption. The implication of the responses of the respondents to the statements in the above table is that it has provided the answers to the research problem. As such, items 1 – 6 are appropriate ways of breaking the jinx of academic corruption for educational development in Enugu State.

Test of Hypothesis

This section presents us with the test of formulated hypothesis using Chi Square at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One: Compliance with the administrative and financial regulations guiding education Sector in Enugu State will not break the jinx of academic for educational development in Enugu State.

Observed frequency

For hypothesis one, the researcher uses responses of respondents on items, 1, 2, 3 and 4 to test the hypothesis.

Table 4 Observed frequency for hypothesis one

S/N	SA	A	SD	D	UD	TOTAL
19	67	50	3	20	15	155
20	81	35	8	25	6	155
21	100	5	11	19	20	155
22	45	76	4	12	18	155
TOTAL	293	166	26	76	59	620

Source: Field data 2021

Expected frequency: This is calculated using the formula below:

Row total X column Total

Grand Total

Workings:

$$SA = \frac{293 \times 155}{620} = 73.25$$

$$A = \frac{166 \times 155}{620} = 41.5$$

$$SD = \frac{26 \times 155}{620} = 6.5$$

$$D = \frac{76 \times 155}{620} = 19$$

$$UD = \frac{59 \times 155}{620} = 14.75$$

Table 5: Calculation of Chi Square value for hypothesis one

Fo	Fe	Fo – Fe	(Fo – Fe) ²	$\frac{(Fo - Fe)^2}{Fe}$
67	73.25	-6.25	39.0625	0.5333
50	41.5	8.5	72.25	1.7409
3	6.5	12.25	150.0625	23.0865
20	19	1	1	0.0526
15	14.75	0.25	0.0625	0.0042
81	73.25	7.75	60.0625	0.8110
35	41.5	-6.5	42.25	1.0181
8	6.5	1.5	2.25	0.3461
25	19	6	36	1.8947
6	14.75	-8.75	76.5625	5.1907
100	73.25	26.75	715.5625	9.7688
5	41.5	-36.5	1332.25	32.1024
11	6.5	4.5	20.25	3.1154
19	19	0	0	0

20	14.75	5.25	27.5625	1.8686
45	73.25	-28.25	798.0625	10.8951
76	41.5	34.5	1190.25	28.6807
4	6.5	-2.5	6.25	0.9615
12	19	-7	49	2.5789
18	14.75	3.25	10.5625	0.7161
TOTAL				125.3656

Therefore, the X^2 calculated is 125.3656

Degree of freedom (df) = (4 – 1) (5 – 1)

Where r = number of rows

c = number of columns

df = (4-1) (5-1)

= 3 X 4 = 12

With assumed 5% (0.05) level of significance = 21.0 26

Decision: Since the calculated value of Chi Square (125.3656) is greater than the table value (21.026), we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that, compliance with the administrative and financial regulations guiding education sector in Enugu State will break the jinx of academic corruption for educational development in Enugu State.

Discussion of findings

The study discovered that there are ways to break the jinx of academic corruption for educational development in Enugu State. This was evidenced by the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. Indeed, godfatherism has affected the rubrics of Enugu State as a political entity and her education system is not an exception. Thus, “The godfather phenomenon as a structure in Nigeria’s democracy should rather be described as unfortunate (Umahi, 2013).” Secondly, misappropriation of fund meant for public schools should be jettisoned. This view has been corroborated by other scholars with similar research interest in other climes. Thirdly, faulty recruitment through bribery must be avoided in order to develop the system. Sadly, the Enugu method of staff recruitment via bribery has injected several anomalies which its output is educational underdevelopment and decay. Therefore, one cannot remain silence with the notion that Enugu State is in the hands of God whereas in reality, the development of human resources in Enugu State is truly in the hands of quacks who wangled their ways to the State’s public schools and the entire civil service. Fourthly, favouritism in the allotment of marks and in promotion of staff must be eliminated for improved educational development free from corruption. No wonder, “political favouritism in appointing educational managers” was captured as part of the definition of corruption in the study carried out by Abdullahi (2018). Fifthly, illegal fees/charges by teachers should be stopped in public schools. The essence of this is to enable a robust access to education

by the citizens of Enugu State. Finally, the study shows that installation of CCTV cameras in Exam halls, libraries and laboratories are part of the administrative measures that will mitigate corruption in public schools. The disappearance and conversion of books and apparatuses in the public schools libraries and laboratories provided for the general use of teachers and learners makes learning cumbersome. It has made teachers to resort to improvisation and those who cannot improvise go into the classrooms and laboratories to teach the students without these essential teaching aids which its end product is poor learning and attendant poor academic performance of learners in both internal and external examinations.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Academic corruption affects the general system in the area of development of education especially in the covid-19 era. Precisely, it is an addition to the ordeals of the pandemic era faced by most poor and indigent families in Enugu in terms of the educational training of their children and wards. In conclusion, this study has shown that compliance with the administrative and financial regulations would help in breaking the jinx of academic corruption in the state and must be reasonably and seriously adhered to so as to ameliorate the sufferings imposed on poor parents/guardians in Enugu State with respect to educational training of their children/wards.

Based on the finding and conclusion of this study, we suggest that since compliance with the administrative and financial regulations would help in breaking the jinx of academic corruption in the State, the Ministry of Education should be tasked by the public through requisite legislation targeted at curbing corruption in the State's public schools.

Implication of the Study

The implications for this study are that the issue of godfatherism in staff recruitment, favouritism in allocation of marks to students and misappropriation of funds meant for public schools should all be fought with concerted efforts to achieve educational development in Enugu State.

Suggestion for further studies

The following area is recommended for further empirical study:

- Causes and Effects of Academic Corruption in Private Schools in Enugu State

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