THE PLACE OF BUSINESS EDUCATORS IN ERADICATING CORRUPTION IN PUBLIC OFFICES IN NIGERIA.

by

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Abstract
This study examined the place of Business Educators in combating corruption in Public Offices in Nigeria. The study sought answers to the three research questions postulated. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population for the study consisted of one hundred (100) Business Educators in Federal College of Education, Abeokuta, Ogun State. This population was used for the study since it was sizeable to handle. The Roles of Business Educators in Combating Corruption in Public Offices Questionnaire (RBEDCCPO), with a 4-Point Likert Scale which was duly validated by three expert in the department of Business Education, FCE, Abeokuta, Ogun State was used to elicit data for the study. One hundred (100) copies of the questionnaire were administered and Ninety-eight (98) copies were retrieved and used for the study. The data collected to answer the research questions were analyzed using simple percentages. The study found among others that Business Educators are the key agents in combating corruptions in public offices in Nigeria in the sense that they are the builders and moulders of workforce in public office through skills, knowledge, attitudes, ethics, values and practices imparted to them in schools. It concluded that Business Educators are agents of change in public offices in Nigeria. Based on the findings and conclusion the following were recommended among others: Association of Business Educators of Nigeria should emphasis more on enlightenment campaign on corruption and all human resources in public offices should imbibe discipline, honesty, integrity and sound moral standard that can influence the society at large.
Introduction

Some of the things that cause non-achievement of organizational predetermined goals is corruption. Corruption is a social problem that has interested many scholars. Corruption is a symptom of numerous difficulties within contemporary society. Gbenga (2008) asserted that corruption is contagious. Corruption is found in the award of contracts, promotion of staff, dispensation of justice, misuse of Public Offices, positions, privileges, nepotism, embezzlement of public funds, payment of salaries to non-existence workers, extortion, over-invoicing of documents, valuable security and accounts (Igboke, 2005).

Ademu (2013) opined that after many years of expectation, Nigeria's social and economic development has remained elusive which is as a result of corruption. This menace (corruption) has led to gross misuse of public funds in Nigeria and her caused untold hardship to her citizens via non-payments of Public Officers benefits and lack of provisions of basic public utilities. In an attempt to eradicate corruption in Public Offices in Nigeria, various anti-corruption agencies were set up such as Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the code of conduct Bureau but the problems still remains.

However, in combating the problem of corruption in public offices in Nigeria, the place of Business Educators cannot be overemphasized. Business Educators hold a lot of promises for government parastatals and establishment as they seek to inject the principles and strategies of business management to the organization for greater efficiency on profitable results.

Education about business in any programme of studies offers information to public officers and advice them about the use of money in various business transactions. Igboke (2005) added that education about business involves preparation for youths and adults for intelligent and effective consumption of economic goods and services in our free enterprise economy.

Ibe and Nwosu (2015) asserted that Business Education is seen as an option to curb corruption by way of acquisition of appropriate knowledge, skills, understanding and attitude to perform in the world of business as producers and or consumers of goods and services that business offers. In other word, business education is of great value to sound moral upbringing through the utilization of skills, attitude, values and competencies acquired to avoid unemployment, to reduce greed, poverty, restiveness, fraud, stealing, corruption and other social vices. The four occupational areas in education for business according to Ezeani and Ogunlade (2015) include Bookkeeping and Accounting; clerical and general office jobs; stereographic and secretarial jobs; and distributive and marketing jobs.

Therefore, a Business Educators is described as a professional who imparts
knowledge, skills and experience at its disposal to stimulate, guide, direct and facilities learning for and about Business. In the same vein, Onasoga and Akinlabi (2012) opined that Business Educator is a person who acquire pedagogical and industrial skills which enable him/her possess the required competencies to impart knowledge and skills in business to learners or teacher trainees. The ethics of business educators include punctuality, integrity, dependability, hard work, accountability, fair play, and confidentiality among others. Thus, there is need for eradication of corruptions in public offices with more emphasis on the significance of Business Educators in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Corruption is obviously a major cankerworm blocking the development of public offices in Nigeria. It restricts economic development, reduces social services and diverts investment in infrastructures, institutions and social services. The practice of corruption in public offices has hindered the growth of the economy such that public officers engage in illicit activities such as bribery, victimization, extortion, embezzlement, staff recruitment fraud, inventory procurement fraud and ineffective taxing systems among others. It is apparent that majority of the member of staff in public offices (male and female, senior and junior), management, governing council members, contractors, and adjoin staff are also involved in corruption in public offices in Nigeria. The effect of this is that the organizational objectives and goals have been vitiated. However, it is high time this situation be curbed. Indeed, if Nigeria is to enjoy her economic resources to the fullest, there is the urgency in curbing corruption in public offices. The perception of the Business Educators in this direction became expedient.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to ascertain the place of Business Educators in eradicating corruption in public offices in Nigeria. Specifically, this study determined:

1. the causes of corruption in public offices in Nigeria;
2. the effects of corruption in public offices in Nigeria; and
3. the roles of Business Educators in eradicating corruption in public offices in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the causes of corruption in public offices in Nigeria?
2. What are the effects of corruption in public offices in Nigeria?
3. What are the roles of Business Educators in eradicating corruption in public offices in Nigeria?
Literature Review

What is corruption?

The Transparency International (2015) defined corruption as using private or public benefits for personal gain. Section 2 of the Anti-corruption Act (2000) says corruption include bribery, fraud and other related offences but in its simplest terms, it means the abuse/misuse of power or position of trust for personal or group benefit (monetary or otherwise). Sharma, Sadara and Kaur (2012) used the term corruption as a general term covering misuse of authority as a result of considerations of personal gain, which need not to be monetary.

Corruption, according to Economic and Financial Crime Commission EFCC (2004), is a non-violent criminal and illicit activity committed with the objective of earning wealth illegally either individually or in a group or organized manner thereby violating existing legislation governing the economic activities of government and its administration. Alege, Adam and Audi (2014) asserted that corruption manifests itself in Nigeria in form of abuse of position and privileges, low levels of transparency and accountability, inflation of contracts, bribery, kick backs, misappropriation or diversion of funds, under and over invoicing, false declaration, audience fee fraud and other deceptive schemes, which include commodity harbouring, illicit smuggling of drugs and arm, human trafficking, child labor, illegal bunkering, foreign exchange malpractices, counterfeiting of currency, theft of intellectual property, open market abuse and prohibited goods. According to Salisu (2000), the simplest definition of corruption is that it is the misapplication of public resources to private ends. For instance, public officials may collect bribes for issuing passports or visa, for providing permits and licenses, for authorizing passage of goods at sea/airport, for awarding contracts or for enacting regulation designed to create artificial scarcity.

Boatright (1999) as cited in Sowunmi, Raufu, Oketokun, Salako and Usifoh (2010) opined that corrupt acts are increasingly regarded as “unfair and indeed criminal by many high-income countries because the bribe-recipient's betrayed of trust with his employer, when practiced systematically by high-ranking public officials, compromises the “development of fair and efficient market”.

The characteristics of corruption include:

- Corruption always involves more than one person.
- Corruption on the whole involves secrecy, except where it has become so rampant and so deeply rooted that some powerful individuals or those under their protection would not bother to hide their activities.
- Corruption involves an element of mutual obligation and mutual benefit.
- Those who practise corrupt methods usually attempt to camouflage their activities by resorting to some form of lawful justification; they avoid any open clash with the law.
- Those who are involved in corruption are those who want definite decisions
and those who are able to influence those decisions.

- Any act of corrupt involves deception, usually of the public body or society at large.
- Any form of corruption is a betrayal of trust.
- Any form of corruption involves a contradictory dual functions of those who are committing the act.
- A corrupt act violates the norms of duty and responsibility within the civic order.

**Who are Business Educators?**

Business Educators are people whose concern is to teach skills, attitudes and knowledge needed for success in a business career (Nkeocha & Nwagu, 2005 cited in Akinlabi, 2017). Business Educators are the people who have acquired the type of education that assist individuals in developing skills and competencies to solve problems in business and offices (Osunniyi, 2008).

Business Educators are people who consciously or systematically administer the teaching learning activities of the Business Education programme to proffer solution to the problem of corruption in an organization. Thus, Business Educators are key individuals in all organizations and public offices whose quality of training could improve the overall outcome of any establishment. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) supported the fact that no system can rise above the quality of teachers.

Amoor (2010) noted that Business Educators play a significant role in the economic development of any nation by providing knowledge and skills to public officers, thereby handling sophisticated office activities free of corruption. Osuala (2004) also posited that Business Educators are people who are knowledgeable in the six components that make up a Business Education programme. The six components are:

i. General Education Component

ii. General Business Subject Components

iii. Secretarial Components

iv. Marketing and Distribution Subjects

v. Professional Education Component

vi. Accounting as well as Teaching Practice and Industrial Work Experience

Association of Business Educators of Nigeria, (2017) submitted that the ethics of a well grounded Business Educators include punctuality, integrity, dependability, hard work and fair play among others. These ethical standards of a Business Educator will in no small measure guide in an effort to eradicate or curb corrupt practices in public offices in Nigeria.

This implies that Business Educators are not only found in classroom but in Public Offices such as Secretaries, Clerks, Accountants, Auditors, Administrators
who impart and instill practical experiences, skills, attitudes, values etc. to students who are undergoing industrial attachment as it relates to their programme.

**Causes of Corruption**

Several reasons have been adduced for corruption in Nigeria, one of which is the sudden disappearance of good moral and ethical values. Oyinlola (2011) posited that one of the major causes of corruption in public office in Nigeria is low salaries and wages in civil service. When public servants may be compelled to use their official positions to collect bribes as a way of making ends meet, particularly when the chances of being caught are stressed further that sociological factors are also causes of corruption in public offices in Nigeria. Multi ethnic society may be more likely to fall prey to corruption as a result of failure to manage ethnic conflict in a way that is fair to everyone. Ademu (2013) submitted that corruption may be cause by any of the following in public offices:

1. Political factors, including patronage, patron-client relationships, unequal access to public resources, abuse and misuse of office and political position and administrative.
2. Economic factors including the worsening situation of poverty and desire to be wealthy, and the mismatch between expectations and available resources.
3. Social factors including the cultural basis of socio economic and political organizations, pressure from the extended family and friends, and the lack of distinction between personal and private property.
4. Another cause could be the uncertain ties of politics and the absence of insurance schemes to provide for their future after retirement from office. In Nigeria, many of these acts of corruption are in practice. What is worrisome is that public offices that are meant to deliver public goods to the people are also engaged in these notorious practices. This results in misuse and wastage of public funds that are meant to be used to deliver services to the people.

Sharma et al (2012) cited in Baltai (2016) identified the following as causes of corruption in the workplace:

- Lack of proper education and training of civil servants
- Low salaries
- Inadequate and inefficient supervision
- Political patronage of officials
- Complicated procedures
- Collection of funds through officials
- Poor public opinions
- Lack of examples from above
- Lack of willingness of people to complain against corrupt officials for various reason.
- Inadequate or inefficient action against corrupt officials.
Different standards of conduct for officials and Politicians
- Ineffective machinery to bring corrupt officials to book
- The tortuous and costly judicial procedure
- Envy and jealousy
- Hatred
- Greed
- Unhealthy competition/cravings for quick riches
- Poverty
- Covetousness etc.

In the same vein, Arikwandu (2017) opined that the prevalence of corruption in public offices resulted from:
- Great inequality in distribution of wealth
- Poor reward system
- Ineffective taxing system

While the causes of corruption were put forward by different school of thoughts, the World Bank Report of 1997 on World Development (WD) has identified the causes of corruption which include:
1. The greater the policy distortion through controls, the greater the corruption;
2. The more predictable the judiciary, the less the corruption;
3. The better civil servants are paid, the less the corruption; and
4. Corruption is equal to monopoly windfalls plus discretion in decision making minus accountability.

Effects of Corruption on Public Offices in Nigeria

Idise (2011) in Arikwandu (2017) provided his views on the effect of corruption when he stated that corruption has reached a cancerous proportion and has a demonstrably negative impact on the development process in public offices. He concluded that corruption restricts economic development, reduces social services and diverts investments in infrastructure, institutions and social services.

Oyinlola (2011) stated that corruption has an adverse effect on social and economic development of a nation. The effects include:
- Diversion of development resources for private gain;
- Misallocation of talents; and
- Slowing of economic growth.

According to Maduegbuna (2005), effects of corruption in Nigeria include loss of government revenue, negative national image, poor governance, brain drain, electoral malpractices, poor investment climate, business failure, unemployment and poverty. He stressed further that corruption is responsible for perpetual collapse of infrastructural facilities in public offices such that funds allotted for projects are diverted for personal interest.

We can summarize the consequences of corruption as follows:
• Lower investment including foreign direct investment,
• Reduced economic growth,
• Loss of tax revenue,
• Negative impact on quality of infrastructure and public services,
• Greater inequality and high incidence of poverty,
• Discouragement of new ideas and innovations,
• Exposing the country to currency arises,
• Diversion of funds from investment and other production activities,
• Undermines competitiveness of national economies, and
• Growing gap between the rich and the poor.

The Role of Business Educators in Combating Corruption

It is believed that corruption has grievous consequences on both the public offices and the nation as a whole and for this reason all efforts must be made to curb corruption in the country. Ribadu (2016) asserted that if people are better educated, their ability to fit right from wrongdoing would attain an appreciable level. Citizens need to be sufficiently educated to be able to sieve right from wrong and demand for what is right. Hence, Business Educators have roles to play in eradicating this menace because they have acquired skills and knowledge in bookkeeping and accounting: clerical and managerial office skills, secretarial and confidentiality skills, auditing and moral knowledge that will help public offices to refrain from all forms of social vices and to become useful citizens in the community.

According to Aderonmu (2012), the following constitutes the relevance of Business Educator in eradicating corruption in public offices in Nigeria
• Business Educators are builders and they also mould the future of people. It is only an educator that is well trained and has been encouraged with good working conditions that will impart adequate knowledge and skills in the people.
• Imparting training to be self-relevance through entrepreneurial courses and business practicum courses.
• Imparting financial integrity in students through the skills given to them in Book-Keeping, Accounting, and Financial Auditing will assist office workers to minimize or erase all accounting errors and high rate of risks in their office endeavors.
• Inculcating appropriate values and attitudes in accordance with the laid down principles, rules and regulation through the knowledge imparted on them in Office Practice, Business Law, Business Education Practicum, Office Technology and Management, etc.
• Serving as agent of change in public offices in Nigeria through relaying of knowledge of Office Technology and Management Education which will
enable public officers to develop human relations skills that will enable them to work harmoniously.

- Provision of capacity building, technical assistance and information through organizing seminars, workshops, conferences and invitation of resource people that will keep them (intending workforce) abreast of the latest trends in the world of work.
- Inculcating the spirit of punctuality, hardwork, honesty, receptivity of change, attendance to duty, self control, trust and dependability that will enable them to shun corruption.
- Developing professionalism in student through demonstration of expertise (mentor and mentoring techniques)

**Methodology**

Descriptive Survey research design was adopted for the study. The researchers considered this design appropriate for the study since it involved exploring people's opinion by the use of questionnaire. This study was carried out in different offices in Federal College of Education, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. The population for the study comprised all Business Educators in the College which comprises Lecturers in Business Education Department, Professional Secretaries, Accountants, Internal Auditors, Administrators and Clerks. A sample of 100 respondents was selected from the entire population for the study out of which 98 were retrieved.

Structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents on the causes, effects and roles of Business Educators in combating corruption in public offices in Nigeria. The questionnaire contained twenty (20) items statements on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A); Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). The researchers directly administered the questionnaire to the respondents and the completed questionnaires were collected on the spot. The data were analyzed using simple percentages.

**Data Analysis and Discussion**

The data obtained from the field were presented and analyzed using frequency table and simple percentage to provide answer to the research questions.

**RQ. 1 :** What are the causes of corruption in public offices in Nigeria?
Table 1: Cause of Corruption in Public Offices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Agreed</th>
<th>Disagreed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Failure to manage ethnicity conflict in a way that is fair to everyone</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>87.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Low salaries and wages of public servants</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>74.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>81.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Fieldwork 2018*

Table 1 revealed that 159 (81%) of the respondents agreed while 37 (18.9%) disagreed that items 1 and 2 are the major causes of corruption in Public offices. Therefore, it was concluded that failure to manage ethnicity conflict in a way that is fair to everyone and low salaries/wages of public servants are the causes of corruption in public offices in Nigeria. This finding is in consonance with Oyinlola (2011) that one of the major causes of corruption in public offices in Nigeria is low salaries and wages in civil service.

RQ. 2 : What are the effects of corruption in public offices in Nigeria?

Table 2: Effects of Corruption in Public Offices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Agreed</th>
<th>Disagreed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Perpetual collapse of infrastructural facilities</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Reduces economic growth of a nation</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>90.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Exposes the country to currency crisis</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>82.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Discourages new ideas and innovation</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Massive neglect of quality human resources</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>93.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Diverts public funds from investments and other production activities to other unprofitable areas</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>90.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Promotes inequality among public officers in Nigeria</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Violates human rights and denies people from enjoying the fruits of growth of public organisation</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Loss of faith on the part of Public Officers</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>795</td>
<td>90.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Fieldwork, 2018*
It is evident from Table 2 that 795 (90.1%) of the respondents agreed while 87 (9.9%) disagreed that corruption has negative effects in public offices ranging from perpetual collapse of facilities, massive neglect of quality human resources and loss of faith on the part of public officers. This finding is in line with the positions of Maduegbuna (2005) in Sowunmi et al (2010) and Arikwandum (2017).

**RQ. 3 :** What are the roles of Business Educators in eradicating corruption in Public Offices in Nigeria?

**Table 3: Roles of Business Educators in Eradicating Corruption**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Agreed</th>
<th>Disagreed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Moulding public officers to become a better citizen</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Employment generation and Poverty eradication training to be self reliant</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Imparting Financial Integrity in Students</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>87.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Inculcating appropriate values and attitudes in accordance with the laid down principles, rules and regulations</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>90.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Imparting of entrepreneurial skills in students</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>93.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Serving as Agent of change in Public Offices</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Provision of building, technical assistance and information</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>90.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Inculcating spirit of punctuality, hardworking, honesty, receptive to change and self control</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>91.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Developing in students Professionalism through demonstration of expertise</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>789</td>
<td>89.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Fieldwork, 2018*

It is obvious from Table 3 that 789 representing 89.5% of the respondents agreed while 93 representing 10.5% disagreed that the role of Business Educators in combating corruption in public offices in Nigeria is inevitable. The roles played by Business Educators include: attracting economic boom and social recognition; professionalism through demonstration of expertise and fame towards ones career;
and appropriating values, attitudes in accordance with the laid down rules and regulations among others. This finding supports the proposition of ABEN (2017), who submitted that Business Educators develop appropriate work ethics like punctuality, integrity and dependability in decisions and actions.

Conclusion
The paper has discussed the issue of corruption in public offices in Nigeria. Various definition of the term, corruption, were postulated. Causes and effects of the menace were also discussed. The way out of this social vice rests mostly on Business Educators who are builder and moulder of the majority pubic officers working in public offices in Nigeria such as Secretary, Administrators, Accountants, Clerks, etc. The Business Educators are responsible for imparting right skills, knowledge, experience, values and attitudes to his/her students through various courses available in their programmes such as Accounting, Secretarial duties, Business-law, Office Practices and Management which are needed for students (labor force) to be able to live free of corruption and meaningfully within the limits of his potentials in the society.

Recommendations
Based on the foregoing discussion, the following recommendations on how to curb corruption in the public offices through Business Educators were made:
1. Association of Business Educators of Nigeria should emphasis more on enlightenment campaign on corruption
2. Professional Association that relates to Business Educators of Nigeria should join hands together to monitor the activities of their members in the public offices.
3. Tertiary Institutions, Management and Curriculum Planners should include in their Curriculum more courses that can help curb corruption in the society.
4. Association of Business Educators of Nigeria should apply appropriate sanctions on members who are offenders to curb corruption in public offices.
5. All human resources in public offices should imbibe discipline, honesty, integrity and sound moral standard that can influence the society at large.
6. The leadership in public offices must display high moral standard and affective managerial qualities and be courageous.
7. Moral instruction and business ethics should be emphasized more in the nursery, primary, secondary and even tertiary institutions and should never be overlooked.

References


*Corporate Mirror, 1*(10), 16-18, 48


