

EFFECT OF CORRUPTION ON INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH WESTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Infrastructural development is a potent tool for economic growth, and development within educational institutions is no exception. This paper examines the impact of corruption on infrastructural development in Nigerian tertiary institutions. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, utilizing a structured questionnaire as the research instrument. The questionnaire was administered to a sample of six hundred (600) respondents randomly selected from six institutions located in six states in South Western Nigeria. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The findings of the study revealed that corruption has a significant negative impact on infrastructural development in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Other factors inhibiting infrastructural development include inadequate funding, poor accountability, lack of transparency, and the improper prosecution of corruption offenders, among others. The study also revealed that proper infrastructural development offers great benefits to Nigerian tertiary institutions, such as enabling students to learn in a conducive environment, enhancing knowledge retention, and attracting qualified staff. The study, therefore, recommends that funds released to higher institutions and their intended purposes be made public. Anti-corruption agencies should be empowered to effectively combat corruption in the education sector. Furthermore, improved welfare packages for workers and adequate funding for Nigerian tertiary institutions should be adopted to reduce the temptation for corrupt practices.

Keyword: Corruption, Infrastructure, Development, Tertiary Institution, South Western, Nigeria.

Introduction

Tertiary education is crucial for a nation's socio-economic advancement, as it nurtures future workforce, leaders, and innovators, and heavily relying on infrastructure like classrooms, laboratories, and libraries to foster effective learning environments. A robust higher education system not only equips individuals with advanced knowledge and skills but also contributes significantly to national competitiveness and global standing. Given its importance, the quality and effectiveness of higher education institutions must be upheld to ensure they fulfill their critical functions (Ajayi & Haastrup, 2022). Infrastructural facilities in higher institutions, such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and accommodation, are vital for creating an environment conducive to learning and research. These facilities support the academic development of students by providing the necessary resources and space for learning and collaboration. Well-maintained infrastructure enhances the educational experience, improves academic outcomes, and attracts both students and faculty members. Well-developed infrastructure in tertiary institutions enhances academic excellence, supports research, attracts talented faculty and students, and boosts institutional reputation (TETFund, 2023). However, deficiencies in these facilities can lead to compromised educational quality and hinder the overall development of the institutions, as well as the country at large.

Despite the need for infrastructures, Nigerian tertiary institutions face challenges such as inadequate funding, poor maintenance, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and significant corruption issues that hinder infrastructural growth (National Planning Commission, 2023; Ogunode, 2021). It has been noted that education sector has been faced with gross underfunding for the past two decades in Nigeria (Ribadu, 2009). The gap between government funding of higher education and students enrolment cum financial responsibilities is noted to be widened on yearly basis. In an attempt to improve the funding of higher education in Nigeria, government introduced policies that could help the tertiary institutions by establishing some funds to support financial growth in our tertiary institutions. TETFUND which is equivalent to about 5% of the total national income is set aside annually to fund specific activities in the educational sector. The larger percentage of the fund is targeted toward infrastructural facilities, but most tertiary institutions in Nigeria are still lacking behind in the area of basic infrastructural facilities. This raises the question of why, which may not be far from the level of corruption in the country, which has also entered into educational institutions.

Emmanuel *et al* (2020) assert that corruption in education is the pervasion of the expected standard of behavior by those in authority in the educational system for their own personal gain to the detriments of others and the system in its pursuit of quality manpower and national development. Therefore, it has recently become an important research discussion that education in Nigerian is facing terrible challenge of corrupt practices (Madaki, 2019). Godwin, (2018) observes that corruption has penetrated into various educational institutions, including the

higher education. Ahmodu & Sofoluwe (2018) posit that Nigerian universities have now become an ivory tower in the thrones of corruption scandals where things are no longer at ease, corruption allegations mounted on top officials of the Nigerian Universities are fingered in financial offensiveness and maladministration. They submitted that corruption is a recurring decimal in Nigerian Universities to socio-economic and political development of the country.

This phenomenon has greatly affected the infrastructural development in the education sector all over the world and particularly in Nigeria as evident from the Transparency International which revealed that Nigeria scored 24 points out of 100 on the 2022 corruption perception index and this ranks Nigeria to be among the most corrupt countries in West Africa. Nigeria was ranked 24th in 2020 out of 54 African countries in the Africa Infrastructure Development Index with 23.26 points and 23.73 in 2021 (Transparency International 2022). According to the reviewed National Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan (2020), Nigeria needs an investment of \$2.3 trillion over the next 30 years to close its public infrastructure deficit. It therefore means that the increasing rate of corruption in Nigeria could be detrimental to both the general infrastructural development in Nigeria and specifically in tertiary institutions. The researcher is therefore motivated to examine the effect of corruption on infrastructural development in tertiary institutions in Southwestern Nigeria.

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effect of corruption on infrastructural development in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Specifically, the study intends to:

- i. identify the factors responsible for corruption in Nigerian tertiary institutions.
- ii. investigate the relationship between corruption and infrastructural development in Nigeria tertiary institutions.
- iii. examine the benefits of infrastructural development in tertiary institutions.

To achieve these objectives, the following research questions are formulated:

- i. What are the factors responsible for corruption in Nigerian tertiary Institutions?
- ii. What are the effects of corruption on infrastructural development in Nigeria institutions?
- iii. What are the benefits of infrastructural development in tertiary institutions?

The null hypotheses formulated for the study is:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between corruption and infrastructural development in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions.

Literature Review

Mgboji (2021) defined corruption as any action or inaction deliberately perpetrated by any person or group of persons either in the public or private sector aimed at securing undue advantage for oneself, relation or third party in a way that deviates from the accepted regulations, morals or ethical standards. Corruption in the education sector can be defined as “the systematic use of public office for private benefit, whose impact is significant on the availability and quality of educational goods and services, and, as a consequence on access, quality or equity in education” (Hallak & Poisson, 2002). Corruption covers a wide range of activities, such as: favoritism; nepotism; clientelism; soliciting or extortion of bribes; and embezzlement of public goods, among others. Some of these activities are carried out without following the rules. This can also be related to infrastructural development in higher institutions. According to Frischman (2005), infrastructure generally refers to the notion of physical resource systems made by humans for public consumption. Typical examples which he described as traditional infrastructure include: transportation systems, governance systems, such as courts, communication systems and basic public services and facilities such as school, sewers, and water systems. The non-traditional infrastructure includes environmental resources such as lakes, atmosphere and ecosystem, information resources and internet resources. These were further classified into commercial, public and social infrastructure.

Musa and Shehu (2016) examined the relationship between the level of corruption and infrastructural development in Nigeria. They adopted secondary data from transparency international for corruption and Index of African Governance for infrastructural development. The Pearson Correlation coefficient was used to test the hypothesis and confirmed significant negative relationship, with high incidence of corruption and poor infrastructural development in Nigeria. In the same vein, Uchechi *et al* (2014) examined the link between corruption and infrastructural (electricity and governance) decay in Nigeria. Descriptive and Simple correlation analysis were employed with secondary data sourced from Central Bank of Nigeria and Transparency International. The study showed strong positive link between the variables. Also, Ogunode *et al* (2021) theoretically discussed the effects of corruption on the public university administration in Nigeria, using secondary data sourced from print materials and online resources. They concluded that corruption leads to reduction of funds for administrative functions, shortage of infrastructural facilities, shortage of academic staff, poor quality of education, resources wastage, etc, negatively affect public university administration in Nigeria.

Ogunode and Jegede (2021) evaluated the factors contributing to inadequate infrastructural facilities in selected public universities in North Central Nigeria. The research employed a survey design method, covering four public universities in the region. The sample was selected through random and proportionate sampling techniques, with 50 respondents chosen per university faculty. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were used for data analysis. The results revealed several key factors responsible for the inadequacy of infrastructural facilities in public universities, including inadequate funding, poor planning and projection, institutional corruption, increasing student populations, and poor administration and management. Abiodun-Oyebanji, Faremi and Akinwumi (2022) examined the effect of corruption in the provision of infrastructural facilities and how it affects the service delivery of academic staff in the Nigerian universities and its implication on national development. The study adopted empirical literature reviewed techniques and concluded that corruption leads to infrastructural deficits which deprive many young Nigerians access to quality education.

In conclusion, most studies on this subject matter rely heavily on quantitative or secondary data, indicating a gap in the use of mixed methods that could provide a more holistic view of the issues. This study adopts primary data to examine the effect of corruption on infrastructural development in tertiary institutions in Southwestern Nigeria.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the conduct of this research work in order to get detailed factual information that describes the nature of existing conditions on the subject matter in the study area. Simple random sampling technique was used to select One Hundred (100) students each from six selected higher institutions in Southwestern Nigeria to make Six Hundred (600) respondents for the study. The selected schools include Adeyemi Federal University of Education (AFUED), Ondo; Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti; University of Lagos; Federal College of Education, Osiele, Abeokuta; University of Ibadan, Ibadan; and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, to cover the six (6) states in Southwestern Nigeria. The research instrument used for the study was a self-structured questionnaire, with two sections, where section A sought for the demographic variables of the respondents while section B elicited information on the subject matter. The instrument was given to specialists in the area of concern for assessment. The criticism and suggestions raised were incorporated into the final instruments which deem to possess both face and content validity. The instrument was uploaded to Google form and the link was sent to social media platforms of the targeted students in the selected institutions. The responses of the respondents were collated by the researcher after successful submission. The responses were in a 4-point Likert scale indicated by Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4, Agreed (A) = 3, Disagreed (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1. The decision rule on the findings was guided by the use of mean score of 2.5 as cut-off point. The data collected through the Google form were analyzed using tables, charts and descriptive statistics method of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypothesis of the study.

Results and Discussion

The results were presented in an orderly manner, beginning with demographic statistics, followed by responses to the research questions and the testing of the stated hypotheses. A discussion of the findings follows thereafter.

Demographic distribution

Institutional distribution of respondent was evenly spread, that is, one hundred respondents for each of the six institutions. The sex distribution shows that 46.7% of the respondents were male while the remaining 53.3% were female. For level distribution, 16.7% of the respondents were 100level students, 21.7% were 200level students, 15% were 300level students, 41.7% were 400 level students while the remaining 5% were other levels of students. There are various categories of programmes in the selected institutions, and the distribution reveals that 73.3% of the respondents were B.Sc/B.A/B.Tech. students, 6.7% were M.Sc/M.A. students while the remaining 20% were in other programmes of study. Age distribution of the respondents shows that 19.2% of the respondents were between 16 and 20 years old, 50% were between 21 and 25 years old, 25% were also between 26 and 30 years old while the remaining 5.8% were 31 years old and above as at the time of this study.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1: Factors responsible for corruption in Nigerian tertiary Institutions

Table 1: Factors responsible for corruption in Nigerian tertiary Institutions

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	X	St.D	REMARK
1	Poor governance	386	194	18	2	3.6	1.2	Agreed
2	Inadequate funding	262	288	44	6	3.3	0.9	Agreed
3	Lack of accountability and transparency	375	190	30	5	3.6	1.2	Agreed
4	Inadequate job opportunities	255	250	80	15	3.2	0.8	Agreed
5	Improper prosecution of offenders on corruption cases	318	252	19	11	3.5	1.0	Agreed
								N = 600, C = 2.50

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2025

Key: X = Mean, St.D = Standard Deviation, C = Cut-off Point, N = Number of Sample.

The table above shows the factors responsible for corruption in Nigerian tertiary Institutions. Majority of the respondents agreed that poor governance contributes to corruption in tertiary institutions with a mean value of 3.6. The results also reveal that inadequate funding plays major role in fostering corruption with a mean value of 3.3. In addition, majority of the respondents agreed that lack of accountability and transparency foster corruption with a mean value of 3.6. The respondents also agreed, with a mean value of 3.3, that people engage in corrupt practices as a result of inadequate job opportunities in the country. In the same vein, majority of the respondents agreed with the notion that lack of proper prosecution of offenders on corruption cases could give others ground to indulge in corrupt practices with a mean value of 3.5. The standard deviations for show slight variations in the responses of the respondents which cluster around the mean.

Research Question 2: Effects of corruption on infrastructural development in Nigeria institutions

Table 2: Effect of corruption on infrastructural development in Nigeria institutions

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	X	St.D	REMARK
1	Use of substandard materials for projects within Nigerian institutions	364	186	39	11	3.5	1.1	Agreed
2	Abandonment of infrastructure projects in Nigerian institutions	350	215	25	10	3.5	1.1	Agreed
3	Inappropriate infrastructures in Nigerian institutions	301	269	25	5	3.5	1.0	Agreed
4	Inflated cost of infrastructural project	276	284	33	7	3.4	0.9	Agreed
5	Low academic performance of students	274	271	49	6	3.4	0.9	Agreed
								N = 600, C = 2.50

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2025

Key: X = Mean, St.D = Standard Deviation, C = Cut-off Point, N = Number of Sample

The table above shows the effects of corruption on infrastructural development in Nigerian institutions. It reveals that majority of the respondents subscribed to it that corruption leads to the use of substandard materials in construction projects within Nigerian institutions with a mean value of 3.5. Also, the respondents agreed that corruption can lead to abandonment of infrastructure projects in Nigerian institutions with a mean value of 3.5. Majority of the respondents also agreed that corruption can lead to development of inappropriate infrastructures in Nigerian institutions with a mean value of 3.5. Also, majority of the respondents agreed that costs of infrastructural projects in Nigerian institutions are inflated due to corruption with a mean value of 3.4. Moreover, the results reveal that lack of adequate infrastructure as a result of corruption could lead to low academic performance of students, with a mean value of 3.4. The standard deviations show that the variations in the responses of the respondents cluster around the mean.

Research Question 3: Benefits of adequate infrastructural development in tertiary institutions

Table 3: Benefits of adequate infrastructural development in tertiary institutions

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	X	St.D	REMARK
1	It will attract qualified staff	302	248	41	9	3.4	1.0	Agreed
2	It boosts students learning in a conducive environment	349	231	14	6	3.5	1.1	Agreed
3	It could enhance students' practical understanding of any subject matter	382	203	10	5	3.6	1.2	Agreed
4	It could increase students' extra-curricular engagement in the institution.	310	265	23	2	3.5	1.0	Agreed
5	It increases productivity of staff as well as academic performance of students	362	223	12	3	3.6	1.1	Agreed
								N = 600, C = 2.50

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2025

Key: X = Mean, St.D = Standard Deviation, C = Cut-off Point, N = Number of Sample

Table 3 above reveals the benefits of adequate infrastructural development in tertiary institutions. It could be seen as reported on the table that majority of the respondents agreed to all the items as follows: proper infrastructure development will attract qualified staff into the Nigerian institutions with a mean value of 3.4; adequate infrastructure development will enable students to learn in a conducive environment and retain what is learnt with a mean value of 3.5; improved infrastructure could enhance students' practical understanding of a subject matter with a mean value of 3.6; infrastructure development could increase students' extra-curricular engagement in the institution with a mean value of 3.5. Furthermore, majority of the respondents agreed that infrastructure development could increase the productivity of the staff as well as the academic performance of the students with a mean value of 3.6. Standard deviations reveals that the variations in the responses of the respondents clusters around the mean.

Hypothesis Testing

H₀: There is no significant relationship between corruption and infrastructural development in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

Table 4: T-test Summary Table on the Relationship between Corruption and Infrastructural Development in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions.

VARIABLES	N	\bar{X}	St.D	df	Alpha level	t-tab	t-cal	Decision
AGREED	5	111.6	2.07	8	0.05	2.31	78.69	Reject null hypothesis
DISAGREED	5	8.4						

Author's Computation, 2025

Where: N = No of Items; X = Mean; St.D = standard Deviation; df = Degree of Freedom; t-tab = tabulated value; t-cal = calculated value.

From the above table, t-test calculated is 78.69 while t-test tabulated is 2.31. Since the t-test calculated (78.69) is greater than the tabulated t-test (2.31), we therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between corruption and infrastructural development in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed some of the major factors responsible for corruption in Nigerian tertiary institutions to include poor governance. Governance in this context refers to the policies, processes, and leadership that shape how institutions operate. When governance structures are weak or ineffective, they create an environment where corrupt practices can thrive. Poor leadership, lack of oversight, and absence of strict enforcement of regulations allow individuals to exploit loopholes for personal gain. This aligns with the findings of Ogunode *et al.* (2021), who identified corrupt school administrators, lecturers, and students as key drivers of financial corruption in Nigerian public universities. Inadequate funding was also shown to play a critical role in fostering corruption within tertiary institutions. When institutions lack the necessary financial resources to maintain operations and improve infrastructure, administrators may divert or mismanage funds in an attempt to cover shortfalls, or simply to enrich themselves. The absence of transparency and accountability in how funds are allocated and used exacerbates the situation. This finding resonates with the work of Uchechi *et al.* (2014), who argued that the infrastructural decay in Nigeria could be linked to lack of funds, mismanagement and corruption. The misuse of funds results in unfinished projects, substandard construction, and inflated costs, further weaken the educational infrastructure. The study also revealed that a lack of accountability and transparency is central to fostering corruption in institutions. Corruption thrives in environments where there are no checks and balances, and where offenders are not properly prosecuted. The findings revealed that when individuals who engage in corrupt practices face little to no consequence, it emboldens others to follow suit. This is particularly true in the Nigerian context, where the legal system often fails to adequately prosecute corruption cases, leaving room for further misconduct. As Musa and Shehu (2016) noted, without strong anti-corruption agencies and judicial reforms, corruption will continue to erode the integrity of public institutions.

Additionally, findings of the study showed that corruption in Nigerian tertiary institutions leads to the use of substandard materials in construction of projects, resulting in poor infrastructure. This has far-reaching consequences for the quality of education, as poorly constructed or incomplete facilities hinder both students and staff from performing at their best. Eze (2024) reinforced this by identifying a significant relationship between corruption and infrastructure inadequacies, emphasizing that corruption not only leads to staff shortages but also impacts the physical conditions under which education is delivered. Moreover, the study highlighted that corruption-related infrastructure deficits negatively affect students' academic performance. Inadequate infrastructure, such as poorly equipped classrooms and laboratories, and libraries reduces students' ability to learn and retain information effectively. These findings align with those of Abiodun-Oyebanji, Faremi, and Akinwumi (2022), who concluded that corruption-driven infrastructural deficits deprive many young Nigerians of access to quality education. When students lack access to proper learning environments, their educational outcomes suffer, which in turn limits their potential in the job market and broader society. It was also revealed that the costs of infrastructure projects in Nigerian institutions are often inflated due to corruption. This means that funds that could have been used for additional projects or improvements are wasted on inflated contracts, reducing the overall quality and quantity of infrastructure development. This is in line with the position of Musa and Shehu (2016), who concluded that reducing the rate of corruption would likely lead to more efficient use of resources, improving both the quantity and quality of infrastructure in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the study identified that infrastructural development will positively impacts on both staff and students. Adequate infrastructure attracts qualified staff to Nigerian institutions, as it provides them with the resources needed to effectively perform their roles. A well-developed infrastructure also creates a conducive learning environment for students, which enhances their ability to understand and retain what they learn. This

finding is supported by Mattieu (2023), who noted that the school environment, including infrastructure, plays a critical role in student's performance and success. When students are provided with the necessary tools and a supportive environment, their academic performance and overall development improve. In addition, the development of infrastructure could increase students' engagement in extracurricular activities, which are essential for their holistic development. Better facilities provide students with opportunities to participate in sports, clubs, and other activities that build leadership, teamwork, and other soft skills that are vital for success in the modern world.

The study conclusively revealed that there is a strong relationship among between infrastructural development and corruption in Nigerian higher institutions. It showed that when corruption is checked and reduced, infrastructural development improves in Nigerian higher institutions, which leads to better educational achievements.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The investigation of the effect of corruption on infrastructural development in Nigerian tertiary institutions has shed light on the significant challenges facing the education sector and the broader implications of corruption on economic growth of Nigeria. From the discussion above, it is obvious that corruption is like a virus to infrastructural development in Nigerian higher institutions. The findings of the study revealed factors responsible for corruption in Nigerian higher institutions, among others, to include poor governance, inadequate funding, poor accountability and transparency, inadequate job opportunities and lack of proper prosecution of corruption offenders. This study also identified use of substandard materials for infrastructures, abandonment of projects, inappropriate/inadequate infrastructure, inflated costs of project and low academic performance of students due to inadequate infrastructure as effects of corruption on infrastructure in Nigerian higher institutions. Finally, the findings of the study showed that proper infrastructure development will attract qualified staff into the Nigerian institutions, and adequate useful infrastructural development will create a conducive learning environment and improving educational outcomes for better economic development.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby proposed

- i. There is a need for University administrators to improve the governance and management systems in Nigerian tertiary institutions. This can be achieved through the implementation of stronger accountability and transparency measures. Funds released to higher institutions and the purpose should be made public to improve transparency and accountability in spending.
- ii. Nigerian government should consider allocating adequate fund to Nigerian tertiary institutions to reduce the temptation for corrupt practices. However, it is equally important that these funds are properly utilized. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that funds allocated for infrastructure and other development projects are not mismanaged or diverted.
- iii. Anti-corruption agencies should be empowered by Nigerian government to effectively combat corruption in the education sector. This could involve reforms to make these agencies more independent and efficient, with enhanced powers for investigating and prosecuting corruption cases. Additionally, there should be a robust system for reporting corruption, with protections in place for whistleblowers.
- iv. It is recommended that the Nigerian legal system should be reformed by Nigerian leaders to ensure that cases of corruption are swiftly and effectively prosecuted, and culprits are allowed to face the full wrath of the law.
- v. Adequate and sustainable investments in infrastructure are critical to improving the educational environment. It is recommended that the government and stakeholders prioritize infrastructure development in tertiary institutions, ensuring that projects are completed on time and meet quality standards.

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