

Quality Education in A Corrupt University System in Nigeria

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.61796/ijss.v2i3.43>



Sections Info

Article history:

Submitted: March 07, 2025

Final Revised: March 14, 2025

Accepted: March 21, 2025

Published: March 28, 2025

Keywords:

Quality education

Typologies of corruption

University system

Challenges

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to evaluate the quality of university education within the context of systemic corruption in Nigerian higher education institutions. **Method:** Using a conceptual and literature-based approach, the paper explores key themes including the definition of quality education, manifestations of corruption, and the typology of corrupt practices in Nigerian universities. It further analyzes challenges confronting the system such as inadequate funding, shortage of qualified personnel, poor infrastructure, and limited ICT resources. **Results:** The findings reveal that corruption – coupled with increasing demand for university education – significantly impairs institutional effectiveness, reduces academic standards, and undermines public trust. Key barriers to quality include insufficient financial support, weak quality assurance mechanisms, and politicization of university leadership. **Novelty:** This paper contributes to the discourse by linking systemic corruption directly to quality degradation in Nigerian universities and by offering actionable recommendations such as policy reform, depoliticization of leadership roles, improved funding, institutionalization of quality assurance practices, and strict sanctions against corrupt actors. These insights provide a roadmap for restoring integrity and enhancing educational outcomes in Nigeria's higher education sector.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of corruption is a significant social issue. In Nigeria, corrupt practices in the educational sector pose a serious threat to the attainment of quality education for all and the fulfillment of national educational objectives. According to Nwachukwu, Idoniboye-Obu, and Odunayo & Olujuwon, corruption depletes educational resources, limits access to formal education – particularly for marginalized groups – and contributes to the decline in educational quality, exacerbating social inequalities [1].

The current state of education in Nigeria demands immediate attention from education professionals and policymakers to ensure sustainable progress and the achievement of national transformation goals. Education, being one of the oldest human endeavors, plays a vital role in the political, social, scientific, technological, and economic growth of the nation [6]. It is through education that individuals acquire knowledge, skills, and competencies for both personal and societal development. Education is the mechanism through which society generates the essential knowledge and skills required for its survival and continuity [2], [3].

Every institution's primary aim is to deliver quality services to society in order to foster ongoing engagement and maintain public trust. Education, in this sense, is no exception. The critical contributions of education to the development of individuals and society are undeniable. Countries, including Nigeria, regard education as a powerful tool for promoting national growth and instigating positive social change. This may explain

the growing concerns among stakeholders in Nigeria's education sector regarding potential changes that could affect it, as well as the implications of such changes for educational management and administration. Consequently, there is an urgent need to assess the future of education in Nigeria, especially in light of the challenges, in order to realize quality education within the country's university system [4].

Concept of Education

Education serves as a tool for enhancing both functional and analytical abilities, creating opportunities for individuals and groups to gain better access to labor markets and improve their livelihoods [5]. A key element of the philosophy of education outlined in the National Policy on Education; is the belief that education is a driving force for national development and social transformation. It is universally acknowledged that no society can advance beyond the educational level of its citizens. Therefore, to foster economic development, the educational system must be strengthened. Education encompasses all the processes through which children and adults develop abilities, attitudes, and behaviors that are valuable to society. It is a means of transmitting knowledge, either to ensure social control, promote rational societal direction, or both [6].

Additionally, education not only enhances efficiency but also serves as a powerful tool for broadening democratic participation and improving the overall quality of individual and societal life [7]. Obiyai & Olisa regard education as a force that promotes moral development and spiritual growth for both individuals and communities. Furthermore, education fosters creativity and enriches life through social interactions. It can be concluded that education is essential for economic and social progress, as it provides individuals with the opportunity for self-employment through intellectual development, skill acquisition, vocational training, and environmental awareness [8], [9].

Concept of Quality Education

According to Paulley & Benwari, quality refers to the degree or level of excellence, conformity to standards, and the enduring positive traits or characteristics that make an acquisition exceptional or superior. Oguntimehn describes quality education as one that addresses relevance, validity, functionality, excellence, and efficiency in achieving educational objectives and practices. Additionally, qualitative education is one that is relevant and valuable, attained through diligent learning and research, producing sound knowledge and creative skills for production and development [10]. Education is a blend of cultural elements, morality, manners, arts, science, technology, creativity, valuable skills, and positive personal values like freedom, hard work, and self-organization. Obara suggests that quality can be defined by three interconnected aspects: (i) efficiency in achieving goals, (ii) significance to human and environmental needs, and (iii) the pursuit of new ideas, excellence, and creativity [11], [12].

Quality in education must reflect the needs of both individuals and society. The quality of education is crucial to the nation's life and economic prosperity. Therefore, the government plays a central role in providing education to its citizens. Since education is a capital-intensive endeavor, it should primarily be funded by the government to meet the nation's manpower requirements for economic development. The ability of a nation

to achieve progress is contingent upon the quality of its education system, especially at the university level. It is clear that the quality of education at all levels significantly impacts the well-being of individuals, society, and the government [13].

Babalola views quality education as the value of education in relation to its inputs, the teaching-learning process, and its outcomes. Expanding on this, Babalola outlined the key components of quality education:

Quality of inputs refers to the value of teachers, lecturers, trainees, textbooks, delivery technology, and curriculum [14], [15].

Quality of process pertains to the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process, including lesson plans, teaching methods, classroom management, student-teacher interaction, student participation, assessment, and evaluation.

Quality of outcome and output involves academic achievement, value added through education, and results from internal and external examinations.

Quality of the environment encompasses all factors and conditions that affect the learning environment.

Oji, Paulley & Benwari identified five critical factors necessary to ensure quality education:

Educational programs must accommodate three core aspects: the cognitive dimension (focused on developing intellectual skills), the affective dimension (which addresses character development and citizenship education, including appreciation of values), and the psychomotor dimension (focused on acquiring mechanical or practical skills) [16].

The required inputs and resources for instruction must meet standards in terms of demographic composition, variety, and quality. The instructional environment should be conducive to learning, promoting emotional balance and comfort for students [2].

Instruction must motivate students to strive for excellence, ensuring that their contributions to knowledge can materialize in the near future [17].

Education must be cost-effective and balanced with the financial demands of other societal needs to maintain harmony in national development.

Education must align with the country's constitution, helping individuals acquire not only knowledge and skills but also an understanding and appreciation of their cultural heritage, enabling them to live fulfilling and functional lives within society.

Concept of Corruption and Corrupt Practices in Nigerian University System

The concept of "corruption" does not have a universally accepted definition in social and classical sciences. Aristotle defined corruption as "the intentional misperformance or neglect of a recognized duty or the unwanted exercise of power, with the motive of gaining some advantage more or less directly personal". In his view, corruption is the perversion of public office for private gain.

For the purposes of this paper, a broader and operational definition of corruption is: "Corruption is a deliberate act of indiscipline against the legalized moral norms of the state and the natural law of justice, which affects the realization of the common good of the citizens. It involves an individual or group misappropriating or diverting the wealth

of the state for personal use, often through political maneuvering". Similarly, Idoniboye-Obu, Odunayo & Olujuwon describe corruption in education as the systematic use of public office for personal gain, significantly impacting the availability and quality of educational resources and services. This, in turn, affects access, quality, and equity in education. In Nigerian universities, corrupt practices are evident in forms such as sex-for-marks, the sale of substandard textbooks like handouts, admission and certificate fraud, exorbitantly priced transcript manipulation, and examination malpractice [18].

Aristotle and Uduigowomen identified seven typologies of corruption: autogenic, defensive, extortive, invective, nepotistic, supportive, and transactive corruption.

1. **Autogenic corruption** involves only the perpetrator, who often takes advantage of others' ignorance to succeed.
2. **Defensive corruption** occurs when an individual seeks a way out of an unpleasant situation, often resorting to bribery.
3. **Extortive corruption** is characterized by coercive demands for something in exchange for services, such as soliciting tips from a customer.
4. **Invective corruption** refers to actions taken to lay the groundwork for future favors.
5. **Nepotistic corruption** involves the unjust appointment of friends, family, and political allies to public positions, bypassing established guidelines.
6. **Supportive corruption** consists of actions aimed at protecting existing corrupt systems. Political leaders may use laws to target corrupt opponents while themselves remaining complicit in corruption.
7. **Transactive corruption** involves two parties who willingly engage in corrupt acts as long as they both benefit from the arrangement.

University Education and its Quality

University education in Nigeria represents the highest level of education in the country, and it is highly sought after by secondary school graduates who strive to gain admission to university. This mindset is deeply rooted in the belief among Nigerians that only a university degree guarantees a prosperous future. The demand for university education has surged to unprecedented levels, with projections indicating that double the current number of universities would be needed to meet this demand. The purpose of university education is to develop human capacity that can drive the nation's economy and contribute significantly to societal growth and development. It is designed to educate and train future leaders who possess the technical skills necessary for the economic advancement of the nation. Nigerian universities, therefore, are tasked with providing the manpower needed to accelerate the socio-economic progress of the country. The objectives of university education, as outlined in the National Policy on Education, are as follows:

1. To contribute to national development through high-level relevant manpower training;
2. To develop the intellectual capacity of individuals to understand and appreciate both local and global environments;

3. To develop and instill proper values for the survival of individuals and society;
4. To acquire both physical and intellectual skills enabling individuals to be self-reliant and valuable members of society;
5. To promote and encourage scholarship and community service;
6. To foster and strengthen national unity; and
7. To enhance national and international understanding and interaction.

However, despite these outlined objectives, they remain largely unrealized due to several challenges that hinder their achievement. The consequences of these challenges on the quality of education provided by Nigerian universities were effectively summarized by Obera and Okoli, who noted: "the academic environment is deplorable, with inadequate lecture theatres, lack of 21st-century technological equipment, libraries filled with obsolete books, deteriorating buildings, insufficient office space for lecturers, lack of funding for research, no overseas training opportunities for lecturers, and, most notably, quality assurance is only in name... Nigerian universities do not meet international standards, and any university worth its name should meet such standards."

Unfortunately, efforts to reverse this trend are insufficient, as the government's attitude toward funding education has been discouraging, failing to meet UNESCO's recommended budgetary allocation of 26%. The administration from 2015-2022 oversaw the longest industrial strike by ASUU in Nigerian history [19]. Additionally, the practice of wealthy politicians and business elites sending their children abroad for university education, leaving only the children of the average and poor to attend Nigerian universities, has further exacerbated the situation. Therefore, there is a pressing need to reposition Nigeria's university education system and eliminate the corrupt practices that have taken root within it.

Theoretical Framework on Quality Education and Corrupt University System in Nigeria.

Corruption is a multifaceted phenomenon that spans economic, political, criminal, and sociological dimensions. For this paper, several theories—namely the Bad Apple Theory (BAT), Public Choice Theory (PCT), Corruption Permissiveness Theory (CPT), and Organizational Culture Theory (OCT)—serve as useful lenses to examine the institutionalization of corruption in Nigeria and its impact on values and behavioral norms in the Nigerian university system. These theories, presented in an eclectic manner, help explain the individual, organizational, and environmental factors that contribute to corrupt practices in Nigerian universities [20].

The **Bad Apple Theory (BAT)**, as proposed by De Graaf, Trevino, Klebe, and Youngblood, focuses on corruption at the level of the individual agent. The theory suggests that corruption arises from "defective human character and predisposition toward criminal activity". Corruption is attributed to individuals who possess poor moral values, such as greed, and the theory argues that corrupt practices in organizations stem from "a few unsavory individuals lacking some personal quality, such as moral attitude". Criminological approaches to corruption often align with the Bad Apple Theory. However, De Graaf critiques this theory, stating that bad apple theories lack empirical

foundations. He argues that corruption is not solely driven by material gain, as individuals may also seek social standing, pleasure from their work, or relief from frustration. Moreover, BAT is criticized for its lack of universal morality, making it difficult to define what is considered corrupt, which can lead to a denial of wrongdoing, even in the face of legal prosecution [21], [22].

The **Public Choice Theory (PCT)**, championed by Rose-Ackerman, Klitgaard, and Tanzi, is one of the major frameworks used to analyze corruption. PCT applies economic methods to understand political behavior and government actions. Idoniboye-Obu highlights that PCT is distinct from political economy, Marxism, and non-Marxism, as it does not aim to study economic phenomena through a political lens. Instead, it uses economic analysis to explore political issues. According to PCT, corruption occurs when an individual acts "rationally" by weighing the opportunity for corrupt gain against the risk involved. Scholars like Rose-Ackerman, Klitgaard, and Tanzi argue that corruption becomes more appealing when public trust in officials erodes. De Graaf further explains that trust in personal relationships increases the likelihood of receiving corrupt benefits while reducing the risk of getting caught. In the context of Nigerian universities, PCT suggests that corrupt behavior arises from individuals' rational calculations when the potential reward exceeds the perceived risks [23].

However, PCT has been critiqued for its emphasis on individual corrupt behavior, often overlooking the broader social and structural factors that influence corruption. Critics argue that PCT's focus on the individual fails to account for the larger societal context and the triggers of corrupt actions. This limitation makes the theory less sensitive to the underlying systemic issues that foster corruption in Nigerian universities.

In sum, these theories offer different perspectives on the causes and dynamics of corruption in Nigerian universities. While the Bad Apple Theory focuses on the moral failings of individuals, Public Choice Theory emphasizes rational decision-making in the face of opportunity and risk. Both theories provide insights into understanding how corruption is entrenched in the university system but also have limitations that must be considered when analyzing corruption in a broader institutional and societal context [24].

Third, the **Corruption Permissiveness Theory (CPT)**, introduced by Aristotle Jacobs in 2019, draws on the work of Cecilia Lavena (2013) in her article, *"What Determines Permissiveness Toward Corruption? A Study of Attitudes in Latin America."* This theory examines how corruption erodes public trust, damages institutions, and threatens the public ethos. A key focus of the theory is understanding the permissiveness toward corruption, which includes the cultural values and attitudes that justify rule-breaking behavior among citizens. The theory assumes that factors such as social characteristics, cultural values, and political beliefs significantly influence the level of corruption in different societies. These factors include class structures, gender norms, age differences, and educational levels, which may either increase or decrease an individual's willingness to justify corrupt behavior. According to CPT, public knowledge of written codes of conduct and laws helps reduce corruption, as education fosters a critical understanding of the political system and discourages tolerance of corruption. Additionally, the theory

posits that ethnic and linguistic diversity may influence individuals' attitudes toward corruption. Societies with low subjective well-being, low interpersonal trust, and materialistic values are more likely to exhibit higher levels of corruption permissiveness, while those that emphasize freedom, well-being, and self-expression are expected to show lower levels of corrupt behavior. Individuals who feel they can control their lives and make their own choices are more prone to engage in corrupt practices, as this sense of freedom encourages rule-breaking behavior [4].

RESEARCH METHOD

The research design employed qualitative methods to evaluate how corruption affects university education quality in Nigeria. The researchers depended heavily on secondary data consisting mainly of scholarly articles and empirical studies and national policy documents focusing on corruption and educational policy and university quality assurance within Nigerian universities. The paper employed content analysis to merge findings from multiple authors which identified corruption patterns alongside their effect on educational service delivery. Researchers base their work on the Bad Apple Theory as well as Public Choice Theory together with Organizational Culture Theory and Corruption Permissiveness Theory to explain both institutional and personal factors leading to academic corruption. The study relies on these theoretical perspectives to determine the impact that personal actions and institutional environments and community traditions have on educational standard decline. An analytical categorization of quality education challenges utilized thematic classifications from literature where poverty of infrastructure matched with workforce shortages and funding shortages and lack of ICT implementation. For the illustration of corruption patterns across educational domains the author used tables with accompanying conceptual frameworks. The study did not utilize data collected in the field because it delivered well-documented evaluative synthesis findings which presented reform recommendations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Finally, **Organizational Culture Theory (OCT)**, advocated by Gallant and Drinan, focuses on corruption at the meso or intermediate level within organizations. This theory argues that corruption results not from individual moral failings but from the deviant mental states of individuals shaped by group culture. It emphasizes that the context and organizational dynamics significantly influence corrupt behavior. OCT seeks to explain the conditions under which corruption arises but does not clarify why specific individuals, as opposed to others, engage in corrupt actions. It assumes that behavior in organizations is largely determined by the organizational culture and the specific dynamics at play within that environment.

When applied to student malpractice in Nigerian universities, Organizational Culture Theory provides a robust framework for understanding acts of examination malpractice and other tendencies to cheat in an educational setting. As educational institutions are complex organizations influenced by various social forces, the theory

highlights that the organizational culture in these institutions plays a critical role in fostering or preventing corrupt behaviors. Educational institutions, being made up of multiple subgroups, are inherently driven by the need to survive and adapt. This makes them susceptible to behaviors that reflect broader organizational dynamics, including corruption and academic dishonesty.

Typologies of Corruption Within the Nigerian Universities

Table 1 describes various typologies of corruption in higher education, as identified by Chapman, Tanaka, Heynemann, and Rumyantseva. It compares forms such as bribery, procurement fraud, administrative misconduct, academic corruption, and professional misconduct. The table highlights how corruption affects both institutional operations and student outcomes across different frameworks.

Table 1.

Chapman	Tanaka	Heynemann	Rumyantseva
Blatantly illegal acts of bribery and fraud.	Procurement issues	Corrupt practice in procurement	Corrupt practice that does not involve students as objects and has limited effect on them.
Acts to secure a modest income by people paid too little or too late.	Educational administrative issues	Corrupt practice on educational property and taxes	Corrupt practice that involves the students as agent and has a direct effect on other values, beliefs and life chances, eg. Payment of bribes to obtain certificates
Sabotaged acts to get work done in difficult circumstances.	Lecturers'/Teachers' corrupt practices in lecture hall.	Corrupt practice in selection	
Differences in cultural affinity (eg. Gift-giving)		Corrupt practice in accreditation, marking and admission	
Behaviour resulting leadership ineptitude		Issue of professional misconduct.	

Corrupt practice in
services/ academic
corruption

Source: (Odunayo & Olujuwon, 2010).

From the above table, corruption and corrupt practices in the university system in Nigeria if not checked can lead to “culture of corruption”.

Furthermore, Nwachukwu, Aristotle et al., Idoniboye-Obu, Odunayo & Olujuwon, Hallack & Poisson identified a culture of corruption in areas of planning and management where malpractice occurs, as shown in Table two below:

Table 2. Describes Major Opportunities for Corruption in Educational Planning and Management

Area of Planning and Management	Major Opportunities for Corrupt Practices.
Finance	a. Transgression of rules and procedures/ By passing laid down criteria. b. Inflating costs and activities. c. Embezzlement d. Budget paddling.
Allocating of specific allowances (Fellowships, subsidies, etc.)	a. Nepotism and Favouritism b. Bribes c. Discrimination (political, religion, sex, social, ethnic etc.) d. By-pass of criteria
Construction, Maintenance and School Repairs	a. Manipulation of contract data. b. Ghost deliveries at site c. By-pass of school mapping to personal site. d. Embezzlement e. Fraud in public tendering (pay offs, gifts, favouritism).
Distribution of equipment, furniture and materials (including transport, boarding, textbooks, canteens, health insurance plan and school meal.	a. Collusion among supplies b. Fraud in public tendering c. Purchase of unnecessary equipment. d. Manipulation of data e. Ghost deliveries f. Diversion
Writing of Textbooks	a. By-pass of copyright laws b. Fraud in the selection of authors (bribe, gifts and favouritism). c. Plagiarism d. Students forced to buy materials plagiarized by instructors e. Sales of irrelevant textbooks in relation to the course in-view.

Area of Planning and Management	Major Opportunities for Corrupt Practices.
Lecturers/Teachers' appointment, Payment and training, Management (transfer, promotion).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Discrimination (political, religion, sex, social, ethnic etc.). b. Fraud in the appointment and deployment of lecturers (favouritism, gift and bribes). c. By-pass of criteria d. Forceful payment of money for supervision. e. Falsification of credentials and use of fake certificates. f. Bias in course allocation.
Lecturers' behaviour (professional misconduct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Absenteeism b. Sexual harassment and exploitation. c. Vawlnce (use of abusive and derogatory words on the student). d. Illegal fees (for school entrance, examination, assessment, private tutoring). e. Favouritism/Nepotism and soliciting for gifts as well as bribe taking. f. Discrimination (political, religion, sex, social, ethnic etc.). g. Bribes of favour during NUC inspections and visit. h. Persuasion of external examiners' to either favour or punish students during defense. i. Illegal payment platforms j. Manipulation of students' scores k. General victimization
Ict system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Data manipulation b. Suppression/selecting of information c. Dry-posting of fees receipts d. Payment for information that should be provided free. e. Inequality in producing and publishing information. f. Plagiarism g. Duplication of receipts etc.
Examinations/ Certification to Access Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Illegal diversion of information b. Examination fraud (impersonation, cheating, favouritism, gifts). c. Certificate forgery d. Fraudulent research e. Plagiarism f. Delay in giving-out certificates to graduants
Institution accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fraud in the accreditation process b. Data manipulation c. Suppression/selecting of information

Area of Planning and Management	Major Opportunities for Corrupt Practices.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Discrimination (political, religion, sex, social, ethnic etc.). e. General victimization in some universities perceived to be uncooperative. f. Government interference
Government factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Undue interference b. Employment interference c. Poor/slow implementation of educational policy d. Unnecessary curriculum review e. Withholding of educational funds f. Admission racketeering
Jamb favour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Data manipulation b. Government interference c. General victimization d. Suppression/selecting of information e. Discrimination (political, religion, sex, social, ethnic etc.), f. Admission racketeering in Post-UME Examination. g. Withholding of results h. Litigations
Parental/societal factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Bribe aiding b. Favouritism c. Influence on foreign culture d. Transgression of rules and procedures/ By passing laid down criteria. e. Collusion.
Student factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Examination malpractice b. Impersonation c. Sorting d. Fraudulent conduct e. Theft/stealing f. Absenteeism g. Activism h. Indecent dressing i. Unruly behaviour j. Drug/alcohol abuse k. Precipitation of sexual inducement by female students l. Gifts/ bribery m. Indiscipline n. Cultism
University factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Leadership ineptitude b. General victimization c. Data manipulation

Area of Planning and Management	Major Opportunities for Corrupt Practices.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Suppression/selecting of information e. Discrimination (political, religion, sex, social, ethnic etc.). f. Governmental interference in student unionism etc. g. Poorly trained staff h. Lack of reward system i. Poor planning, monitoring and evaluation process.

Source: Nwachukwu, Aristotle et al., Idoniboye-Obu, Odunayo & Olujuwon, Hallack & Poisson.

Discussion

Other Challenges of Quality Education in Nigerian University System

The challenges hindering the delivery of quality university education in Nigeria are multifaceted. According to Ober] and Babalola, Nigerian universities are currently facing a crisis. There is a noticeable reduction in funds allocated to teaching, research, and community services. Key facilities such as libraries are poorly equipped, laboratories lack essential equipment, classrooms are in poor condition, and office space is inadequate. Furthermore, many universities suffer from a shortage of qualified lecturers, both in terms of quantity and quality. The failure of Nigerian universities to meet expectations, particularly in terms of quality teaching and research, is primarily attributed to insufficient funding, which has led to reduced teacher productivity and frustration among faculty members. Below are some of the key challenges identified as barriers to the effective implementation of quality university education in Nigeria:

a) Shortage of Manpower: The quality and quantity of both academic and non-academic staff play a significant role in the internal effectiveness of universities' quality assurance policies. There is a significant shortage of academic staff in Nigerian universities, particularly in federal institutions from 2016-2022. This shortage directly impacts the quality of student output, with fewer lecturers available to adequately monitor, evaluate, and supervise students. To address this, there is a need to employ more qualified academic staff to improve the overall academic experience.

b) Inadequate Funding: Adequate funding is essential for the survival of any institution, and university education is no exception. Universities require significant financial resources for daily administration, infrastructure maintenance (such as offices, classrooms, and accommodations), staff salaries, and operational costs. Nigerian universities primarily rely on government funding, with little support from internally generated revenue. However, when governments fail to maintain adequate funding, it leads to financial shortages, which can trigger unrest among university staff and

students, as witnessed in the prolonged industrial strike during the current administration.

c) Increased Demand for University Education: The rapid population growth in Nigeria has led to an increased demand for university education, as it is perceived as the primary route to securing white-collar jobs. This societal mindset pushes more students to seek university admissions, but the available infrastructure is insufficient to accommodate the growing number of applicants. This imbalance has negatively affected the quality and standards of education, as universities are unable to provide adequate facilities to meet the increasing demand.

d) Inadequate School Facilities: Many universities in Nigeria suffer from a lack of adequate facilities, which undermines the motivation of both lecturers and students in their pursuit of academic excellence. According to Paulley & Benwari, Okoli, and the National Universities Commission (NUC), the physical condition of facilities in many universities is poor, with existing facilities often overstretched and poorly maintained. Furthermore, there is a lack of a maintenance culture, making the situation even worse.

e) Lack of Cutting-edge ICT Facilities: Most Nigerian universities lack sufficient Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure to enhance teaching and learning. The integration of technology into education has the potential to revolutionize learning, allowing students to access educational materials and participate in lectures remotely through platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, YouTube, and WhatsApp. Additionally, the financial burden on students for printing and typing project work can be alleviated by using email and soft copies, reducing costs and improving the overall academic experience.

In summary, these challenges highlight the systemic issues that undermine the quality of university education in Nigeria, requiring urgent attention and intervention to ensure the country's universities can meet the expectations of students and the demands of the evolving global education landscape.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : This study concludes that the persistent decline in the quality of university education in Nigeria is deeply rooted in systemic corruption, inadequate funding, ineffective leadership, and weak implementation of quality assurance mechanisms. **Implication :** These challenges collectively undermine institutional credibility and educational outcomes, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive policy reform, enhanced accountability structures, and strategic investment in infrastructure and human capital. **Limitation :** A key limitation of this study is its reliance on conceptual and qualitative data, which, while insightful, may benefit from empirical validation through large-scale field studies. **Future Research :** Further investigations should adopt mixed-method approaches to assess the effectiveness of anti-corruption interventions and quality assurance frameworks in Nigerian universities, with particular attention to the role of governance, funding models, and stakeholder engagement in shaping educational reform.

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