

## Corruption and Literacy in the Basic Education Schools in Onueke Education Zone of Ebonyi State

\*Okonkwo A. F., Ngwoke R. I. and Obeka N.  
Department of Arts and Social Science Education  
Faculty of Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki

### Abstracts

The paper focuses on Corruption and Literacy in the Basic Education in Onueke Education Zone of Ebonyi State. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. A purposive sample was used to select a sample of 462 Basic Education Teachers (230 male and 232 females) in all the 56 schools in the Education Zone. A questionnaire titled Corruption and Basic Education Literacy Questionnaire (CLBEQ) was used. The instrument was validated by experts in the field and all the input they made were taken into consideration. The instrument was further subjected to reliability test in a test retest using 20 teachers that were outside the area of study. An index of 0.81 was obtained using Crombach Alpha method. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while Z-test was used to test the hypothesis. The findings indicated that corruption deeply affected literacy lives of pupils as there were no new provision of new buildings, human and material resources and non rehabilitation of the few existing ones and all these adversely affect literacy lives of pupils and teachers. It was also discovered that no significant difference existed in the responses of male and female teachers on how corruption adversely affected the lives of pupils. Based on the findings some of the recommendations were: 1. Peoples especially those in sensitive positions of higher authorities in handling fund meant for literacy should shun greed. 2. The government at all levels should Mount Massive campaign against corruption. Both government, non-governmental organizations and individuals should embark on provision of facilities, materials and funds to improve the education system and better the literacy lives of pupils and teachers for a better society.

**Key Words:** Corruption, Literacy, Education, Facilities, Fund, Teachers

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### Introduction

Education is a beacon and weapon for any nation's development. Literacy is enshrined in education and the extent of development of any nation depends on the level and quality of education of her citizen. Ajuzie and Akukwe (2018) are of the view that education is the process through which an individual acquires necessary knowledge, competencies and capabilities that would enable him adopt positively into the society. It plays a crucial role in the development of manpower which is responsible for effective functioning of different sectors of the economy. This is expressed through effective literacy of the people which starts at an early stage in life. Anyanwu (2012) is of the view that a well developed mind yields a well developed society, that is, a society that is devoid of corruption. A corruption free education provides literacy skills that are required to provide services for maintaining the society and provides a means of livelihood to all the people with the requisite skills, (Ike 2008 and Okeke 2008). Education is the torch bearer of the civilization and it is the foundation on which the future is anchored. The potentials and the endowment of a nation is anchored through education and literacy which is optimized for the advancement of humanity, (Obioma, 2011).

Literacy education in Nigeria especially in Onueke Education Zone seems to have been marred with a lot of problems: Lack of schools, few teachers to teach the ever teaming population of the students, lack of infrastructures and even man power to do the work, lack of fund to ensure the welfare of teachers and other things. Although a lot of money had been budgeted to finance building of schools, to ensure recruitment of teachers and their welfare, the fund meant for all these seems to always been diverted to other use. This seems to have contributed to education crises where an increasing number of children are failing to go to school, teachers' salaries and allowances are not being paid, promotions are withheld, training and retraining of teachers are not done. The result is that children are seen hawking along the major roads of Nigeria selling things when they should be in school, others involve themselves in frivolous activities such as stealing, joining secret cults, killing, maiming, kidnapping, general moral laxity, unwanted pregnancies, rape and sexual harassment.

Mohammed (2018), states that the government should be held accountable on the issue of out of school children and that corruption is playing a large role in keeping Nigeria children out of school. He further laments that politicians are pocketing funds either through kick backs or through diversion into frivolous projects. There are dilapidated structures in most primary schools, lack of qualified teachers and the few teachers that are available are not motivated. There are no chalk for writing and lack of current reading materials. The whole education system

is in the state of collapse and that is the reason why we are having education crises (Mohammed, 2018). The above however underscores the Federal Government objectives of education in Nigeria. The FRN (2004) states the objectives as; “A free and democratic society; A just and egalitarian society; A united strong and self reliant nation; A great and dynamic economy and; A land full of opportunities for all citizens.” It is worthy to note that the aim of primary education in Nigeria as stated in the National Policy on Education, FRN (2014) is to grow children into productive citizens that use their knowledge, talents and skills to sustain themselves and help others while pushing the human race forward in areas of equality, equity and harmony. Unfortunately the Universal Basic Education in the country especially in Onueke Education Zone of Ebonyi State do not seem to align with this Federal Government objectives in education. Hence, the need for this paper. The main focus of this paper is to investigate corruption in education and literacy in the Onueke Education Zone of Ebonyi State.

### **Statement of Problem**

The objectives of the Federal Government on the Basic Education in Nigeria is to grow children into productive citizens that use their knowledge, talents and learned skills to sustain themselves and help others while pushing the human race forward in areas of equality, equity and harmony. These objectives do not seem to be realized, variables such as facilities to enhance learning, funds for recruitment, payment and general welfare of teachers seem to be far reached. The result seems that most pupils are leaving schools. The crux of this paper is to investigate these short-falls seem to be as a result of corruption in the Basic Education schools in Ebonyi State.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate corruption and literacy in the Basic Education schools. Specifically, the study seeks to find out the following:

1. How corruption affects provision of facilities in the Basic Education schools.
2. How corruption affects literacy lives of students.
3. How corruption affects teachers in the Basic Education.

A null Hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance

Ho: There is no significant difference on the mean responses of male and female teachers on how corruption affects the lives of pupils in the Basic Education schools.

### **Literature Reviewed**

Corruption is a form of dishonesty or criminal activities undertaken by a person or organization entrusted with position of authority, often to acquire illicit benefit. Corruption may include many activities of bribery and embezzlement. It ranges from small favours between a small numbers of people, (Elliot, 1997). The Webster Dictionary explains corruption as illegal behaviour especially by powerful people such as the government officials or police officers. It can be depravity. Corruption is inducement to wrong by improper or unlawful means such as bribery. Example is the corruption of government officials. It is a departure from what is pure or correct. Corruption is a dishonest action that destroys people’s trust. A political corruption occurs when an office holder or other government employee acts in an official capacity for personal gain (Wikipedia 12:29/2019).

Other forms of corruption include petty corruption and grand corruption. Petty corruption occurs at a smaller scale and takes place at the implementation end of public services. When public officials meet the public for example in many small places such as registration offices, police stations, The State Licensing Boards and many other private and government sectors at the highest levels of government, they show significant subversion in the political, legal and economic systems. Such corruption is commonly found in countries with authoritarian or dictator government but also in those without adequate policy on corruption (<https://www.transparency.org> retrieved 2019).

Giorgio, Gracomo, Tristano and Marco (2017) state that corruption in infrastructure is to increase costs and construction time, lower the quality and increase the benefit. Corruption can occur in both public and private or Non Governmental Organizations NGOs especially in the public sector. In public sectors, the politicians allocate public funds for contracts, grant and hiring. The world recent research shows that it is the government who makes policy decision and that they can be critical in determining the level of corruption because of the incentives different policy makers gain (Alexander, 2013). Corruption no doubt, adversely affects literacy, especially in Nigeria and in Ebonyi State.

Corruption includes: bribery, extorting, cronyism, nepotism, parochialism, patronage, influencing, peddling graft and embezzlement and overtime, gift which is a scheme to lure the recipient towards some biases. Corruption can facilitate criminal enterprise such as human trafficking, money laundering, and misuse of government power for

other purposes such as public brutality (Tanzi, 1998). All these lead to disorderliness, lawlessness, rancor, anarchy, economic down turn, poverty among the less privileged, drop out of school, secrete cults and so many unimaginable adverse effects on the people especially the literacy lives of pupils and teachers.

### **Literacy Education**

Literacy is a process by which one expands one's knowledge of reading and writing in order to develop one's thinking and learning for purpose of understanding oneself and the world. This process is fundamental to achieving human competency in every educational subject. Literacy is important because it is the foundation upon which people are able to interact with the world, educate themselves and thus contribute to society as well as their own well being. We value education and believe that literacy is the key to development (<https://www.encyclopedia.com> retrieved, 2; 45 p m , 2019 ).

Literacy is important to all. It is the keystone that unlocks opportunity for individuals. It matters immensely because higher literacy rate correlates to better socioeconomic, health, and quality of life outcome. Literacy plays a crucial role in the lives of children. Children who live in a learning stimulating environment have better chances of succeeding in life in school and in the world. Teaching, playing greatly help to lay a strong foundation for early language development and literacy and it is the essential skill for children to become successful. Activities such as rhymes, reading, and games are specifically developed and it strengthens reading and general literacy skills which children are required to develop. Reading can be improved through literacy rich environment which emphasizes the importance of the language skills.

Literacy improves individuals and the general society. Okebukola and Jimo (2010) assert that the strategy for fighting poverty has consisted in investing resources in production activities, job creation, income generation and improving literacy rates. Improved literacy can contribute to economic growth, reduces poverty and crime, improves democracy, increases civic engagement, prevents diseases through information provision, enhances cultural diversity through literacy programmers (<https://www.readingrockets.org> Retrieved 2019/ 24/6 1:30 pm). In as much as the fact that the price of literacy can never be over emphasized, effective literacy can only thrive in a corruption free society.

### **Corruption in Education and Literacy Lives of the Children**

Education is a fundamental human right and a major drive of human and economic development. Education is the process or art of imparting knowledge, skills and judgment. Education strengthens personal integrity and shapes the society in which we live. Corruption in education arises when funds or material resources meant for education are diverted either for personal pockets in order to make gain out of the fund. This leaves most Basic Schools in a horrible state: dilapidated and bushy state without human and material teaching aids. Teachers are not been paid their salaries and allowances and they resort to other ways of making money to sustain their lives. The <http://transparency.org> (2019) sees the end result as limited access to and poor quality education and a social acceptance of corruption through a corrupted education system.

Corruption in education means helping oneself through embezzlement from the education budgets. The result of this is children suffer overcrowded classrooms and crumbling schools or no school at all. Textbooks and materials are most often sold instead of giving them out freely (Global corruption Report 2013). Most children read without reading text especially language textbooks. Tuition is said to be free but pupils are forced to pay huge amount of money outside classes. These lead to more children drop out of school and those children that stay receive poor quality education and this affect literacy lives of pupils. Nwagu (2014) and Nwaubani and Nwaubani (2018) observe that there are many schools in Nigeria without classrooms, laboratories, workshops, furniture, playing fields, chalkboards desks etc. this trend had persisted in spite of widely publicized claims of financial support to education sector by the government (Lassa 2014). Most children in schools resort to collaboration during examination periods and engage in exam malpractices. The Global Corruption Report (2013) states that corruption and poor governance are the major impediment to realizing the right to education and reading global development goals.

Children drop out of school seem to be as a result of corruption in the education sector. Most children as a result engage in child labour: hawking, running errands, political thuggery, killings, resorting to cult membership, kidnapping, sex hawkers, load lifters, factory workers and other manual jobs. All these are as a result of evils of corruption.

### **Corruption and Teachers' Productivity**

Corruption affects the teachers as teachers seem not motivated due to non or irregular payment of salaries and allowances as well as non promotion. When these teachers are not motivated, these lead to poor job performances such as coming to school late or leaving the classroom for personal businesses. Studies by Obikwelu & Nwafor (2017) and Ihebereme & Abiahu (2017) show that poor motivated teachers perform poorly and lead to have corresponding low perception of themselves. Okeke (2004) & Isyaku (2014) opine that the extent to which these motivational initiatives prompt payment of salaries and allowances, training and retraining of teachers and good accommodations are achieved depends on how certain challenges to teacher motivation are remedied. Again, Dike (2014) views that it is not enough to produce curriculum, it is even important to put in place machinery that will ensure effective realization of good classroom management.

### **Gender and Opinion and Learning Implementation**

Literature shows that male and female teachers show no significant difference in application of material teaching aids. In issues relating to opinion, there may be no significant difference in both male and female teachers on issues of corruption in education. Okonkwo (2017) discovered no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers in effectiveness of method used in enhancing poetry teaching. Ofodu (2011) discovered no significant difference in the male and female student reading pattern. While Ochogwu (2014) and Muodumogu and Terwase (2016) found out that girls achieve better than boys in English topics of interest. However opinions of teachers are likely to be the same in the issue of corruption and mismanagement of schools in Nigeria especially in Onueke Education Zone.

### **Methodology**

The study was carried out in Onueke Education Zone of Ebonyi State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study consists of 1552 teachers in the Basic Schools. A sample of 462 respondents were selected using purposive sampling technique to represent 230 males and 232 females teachers in both Lower and the upper Basic Schools. A self made structured questionnaire titled "Corruption and Literacy in the Basic Education Questionnaire (CLBEQ). The instrument was validated by experts in the field and their contributions and opinions were taken into consideration. The instrument was further subjected to a reliability test and was administered to 20 teachers that were not part of the study. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section A: consists of demographic information of the respondent, sections B, C, and D consist of the question items based on the three (3) purposes of the study. All the 36 items were isolated. A reliability index of 0.81 was realized which warrants the use of the instrument. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data with an upper limit of 2.5 and above as being accepted while anything below it was regarded as being low. A null Hypothesis was tested using Z-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

## Presentation of Results

### How does corruption affect provision of facilities in the Basic Education schools?

Table 1: Mean responses of teachers on corruption and provision of facilities

S/N	Corruption and Provision of Facilities	$\bar{X}$	SD	REMARK
1	Most schools have very poor environment that are without fence	3.4	0.65	Accept
2	Most schools environment are in a bushy state	3.3	0.70	Accept
3	There are so many dilapidated buildings in schools	3.4	0.65	Accept
4	New buildings are being constructed	1.2	1.75	Accept
5	There is absence of computer and internet facilities in most schools	3.5	0.60	Accept
6	There is absence of toilet facilities in most schools	3.3	0.70	Accept
7	There is absence of audio visual aids in most schools	3.2	0.75	Accept
8	There is absence of textbooks especially English Language text books	3.4	0.65	Accept
9	Seats and desks are not in many schools	3.3	0.75	Accept
10	Water and electricity are not in most schools	3.4	0.65	Accept
11	There is shortage of teachers especially English language teachers.	2.1	1.21	Accept
12	There is delay in payment of teachers' salaries, and non promotion	3.3	0.75	Accept
13	There are no security personnel that protect the pupils.	3.4	.65	Accept
14	Staff quarters are not built in schools	3.4	0.63	Accepted
	Grand mean	2.98		

A grand mean of 2.98 was realized. All the items, each has 3.2 and above with the exception of items 11 on language teachers with a has mean of 2.1 which shows that no new buildings are being constructed in most schools.

**Research Question 2:** How has corruption affected literacy lives of pupil in the Basic Education Schools?

Table 2: Mean responses of teachers on corruption and literacy lives of pupils

S/N	Corruption on Students' Lives	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1	Pupil drop out of school on account of high school fees	3.2	0.74	Accept
2	corruption leads to non payment/late payment of teachers salaries	3.4	0.65	Accept
3	Teachers combine teaching and petty trading and so, do not give their best and this adversely affects the students.	3.3	0.70	Accept
4	Pupils join cult groups as they become truants.	3.1	0.80	Accept
5	Corruption makes pupils to maim and kill	3.2	0.74	Accept
6	Corruption makes some pupils to steal	3.2	0.74	Accept
7	Most pupils turn to hawkers and sell things along the road and most are knocked down by moving vehicles.	3.5	0.61	Accept
8	Corruption leads some pupils into drug abuse in schools	3.3	0.70	Accept
9	Corruption leads girls to unwanted pregnancy and early marriage	3.1	0.79	Accept
10	Corruption leads pupils to serious psychological problems	3.1	0.80	Accept
11	Corruption leads some pupils to untimely death	3.2	0.74	Accept
12	Corruption enriches people and leads to prompt payment of their children's school fees.	1.5	2.21	Reject
13	Corruption leads the pupils to obey school rules and regulations	1.7	1.62	Reject
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.94</b>		

The grand mean shows 2.94 and all the items 1-10 have very high mean of 3.1 and above with the exception of item 12 on corruption enriches parents and leads to prompt payment of children's school fees has very low Mean of 1.5 and S.D of 2.2.

**Research Questions 3:** How has corruption affected teachers in the implementation of literacy in the Basic Education?

**Table 3:** corruption and teachers in the implementation of literacy in the Basic Education

S/N	Corruption and teachers in basic education	N	X	SD	Resolute
1	Corruption leads to illegal collection of money as hand work	3.3		0.70	
2	Corruption leads to teachers seeking alternative work to support their poor finances	3.2		0.74	
3	Corruption leads to some teachers using pupil as cheap labour in their farms	3.3		0.70	
4	Corruption leads to some teachers not committed to duty	3.5		0.61	
5	Corruption leads to some teachers not giving their best.	3.1		0.80	
6	Corruption leads to teachers not having enough times to prepare their lessons	3.2		0.74	
7	Corruption leads some teachers not having to embrace new instructional strategies	3.1		0.80	
8	Corruption leads the best brain to leave teaching field	3.4		0.64	
9	Corruption leads to most teachers stressing themselves more than required leaving the business of teaching	3.4		0.64	
10	Corruption leads to most teachers dying early because, they are not giving good welfare packages at retirement	2.4		1.2	
	Grand Mean	3.19			Accept

All the items have mean of 3.1 and above except item 10 on corruption leads to early death of teachers has 2.4. The grand mean indicates 3.19

**Hypothesis:** there is no significant difference on the responses of male and female teachers on how corruption has affected lives of pupil in the Basic Education Schools

**Table 4:** Z- test statistics of male and female responses on how corruption affects literacy lives of pupil in the Basic Education Schools

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Z- cal	Z crit	
Male	230	2.91	0.76	0.942	0.05	0.96
Female	232	2.94	0.77	0.77		Accepted Ho

The results on table 4 indicate that hypothesis is accepted. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on how corruption affects literacy lives of pupil in the Basic Education literacy. The Z – critical of 1.96 is greater than the Z-cal of 0.942 at 0.05 level of significance.

**Discussion of Findings**

Results on table I show grand mean of 2.98 which is a high mean of corruption on literacy in the Basic Education Schools. Poor environment, bushes around the school compound, dilapidated structures, absence of computer, lack of electricity and pipe born water, absence of textbooks, absence of toilet facilities etc are hindrances to achieving effective literacy in the Basic Education schools. This finding supports Mohammed (2018) that the fund earmarked for facilities and human resources are pocketed by greedy politicians. Although the findings show that inadequate number of teachers has low mean of 2.1, This is worrisome and this could mean that teachers are not motivated and they are denied of their salaries and allowances and promotions most of the time. This no doubt would make them show less commitment to teaching of pupils while pursuing their personal business.



Table 2 on how corruption affects literacy lives of pupils show that corruption has so many adverse effects on the lives of pupils and this constitutes bottleneck for pupil in achieving effective literacy. Nonpayment of teachers' salaries and allowances, teachers do not give their best as they engage in petty business to meet up, pupil join cult groups. Corruption leads to killing of people, most pupil turn to be hawkers, it leads them to drug abuse, it leads the girl child to unwanted pregnancy and to early marriage, corruption leads them to serious psychological trauma, it leads pupil to untimely death and each has mean not less than 3.1 above. These were as a result of corruption. Items 12 and 13 have 1.5, mean, standard deviation of 1.21 and 1.7 mean with standard deviations of 1.62 respectively on corruption enriching parents and lead to prompt payment of pupils' school fees and corruptions leading pupil to obey rules and regulations in schools were all rejected. This shows that corruption destroys the pupil and does no good to the society. These findings are contrary to the aims and views of the FGN (2004) on education of the child in Nigeria which is to grow the child into productive citizens that use their knowledge, talents and learned skills to sustain themselves and help others while pushing human race forward in areas of equality equity and harmony.

Table 3 on how corruption affected teachers in the implementation of literacy in the Basic Education indicates that poor salary/ nonpayment/late salary reveal 3.19, illegal collection of money from pupil, teachers engage in petty trading during school period, use of pupils as cheap labour, non commitment to duty, not adopting to new instructional strategies all have mean of 3.1 and above except item on dying early as a result of poor welfare. These conjugate to non or irregular payment of salaries and allowances. Okeke 2004 and Isyiaku (2014) opined that the extent to which motivational initiatives as payment of salaries and allowances are provided determine how certain challenges to teacher motivation are remedied.

The (FRN, 2004) in the National Policy on Education in Nigeria states that the aim of Education in Nigeria is to grow the children into productive citizens that use their knowledge, talents and learned skills to sustain themselves, help others in pushing the human race forward in areas of equity and harmony. When an enabling environment is not provided, the pupil cannot achieve the Federal Government goals of Education for the child in the country.

Table 4 on Z test statistics of male and female responses on how corruption affects pupils' lives reveals that the Z-value of 0.942 is lower than the Z- critical value of 0.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypotheses is therefore accepted showing that there is no significant difference in the opinion of male and female respondents on the way corruption affected the literacy lives of pupils in the Basic Education Schools. This shows that literacy lives of pupil are not encouraged as corruption had lead to non provision of basic teaching materials and a lot of demands are being indirectly heaped on parents of the pupil and this leads to withdrawal of most pupils from schools and makes them to undertake manual jobs which are child labour. This, sometimes exposes them to all sorts of danger; cultism, rape, unwanted pregnancies for girls, stealing and all forms of nefarious activities such as maiming and killing of peoples, kidnapping and general breakdown of law and order in the society.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Corruption is a disease that destroys any nation's economy especially in the education sector. Corruption seals people's consciences and leads them out of their senses. Based on the findings of the study, it reveals that although education is a fundamental human right in Nigeria and a means of economic development, corruption has weakened the foundation of literacy and learning. These include non provision of facilities, leaving most basic education facilities in a dilapidated state, poor payment/ nonpayment of salaries and allowances to teachers and non provision of facilities leading to non commitment to duty on the part of the teachers. Most pupil in turn are out of school or indirectly not seriously attending school as most are involve in child labour – hawking and fending for themselves, others are into so many nefarious activities, bring disorderliness to the society. All these make jest of the education system in Nigeria especially in the Onueke Education zone. It is therefore recommended that: people should have a rethink on the need to avert greed and stop fund diversion. Campaign against dishonest massive acquisition of wealth should be embarked on by all levels of government and non-governmental organizations. The government and the Parents Teachers' Association as a matter of urgency should pay great attention to education by reconstruction of schools and provision of facilities. The government should upgrade the status of teachers through good welfare packages and promotions. Teachers should commit themselves to teaching and adopt new and improved strategies that would lead to effective teaching and learning. Parents should avoid subjecting their children and wards to child labour and commit them to serious academic work. Pupils should be made to be dedicated to their studies, be obedient and disciplined children and refrain from nefarious activities for a better performance in their academics and a better society.



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