

CORRUPTION AND BAD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: AN INSIGHT INTO ASUU STRIKE 2022

By

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Abstract

Nigeria is known as the giant of Africa. The land is blessed with so many mineral resources, yet those involved in managing the affairs of the land cannot take proper care of their people. As a result, the nation suffers insecurity, bad governance, corruption at its peak, poverty, and lack of basic amenities, unemployment and to crown it all poor management of educational system which ranks one of the poorest in the world in the area of education. In educational sector, corruption erodes social trust, promotes mediocrity, and undermines development. The type of corruption in the school systems ranges from academic exploitation of teachers and lecturers' dehumanization by the Nigerian politicians. Bribery and nepotism has taken over our educational system as teaching appointments are based on connections not by merits thereby leading to promoting half baked graduates that cannot compete with their counterparts elsewhere. The ASUU strike has lingered for more than eight months, yet the government cannot resolve the issue. This paper tries to critically look at corruption and bad governance being the cankerworm that is destroying our education. It also examines the causes and demands of ASUU, and tries to find lasting solutions that can promote the educational system in Nigeria. In the same vein, it suggests how to end the ASUU strike and promote our educational system for a better Nigeria.

Key words: Corruption, Bad Governance, Educational system, Strike, underdevelopment

Introduction

The origin of corruption in Nigeria is traceable chiefly to the voracious character of a few among the players who fronted for the people as nationalists prior to independence. They rarely considered the aftermath of the roles they played or the widespread implication of tribal and ethnic oriented politics. Corrupt practices gradually mutated in a lifestyle in the post second republican era while reaching unparalleled proportions during the subsequent military regimes that followed. During the independence morbid ethnocentrism was widespread and created dividing lines among federating units for no justifiable reason and to date these conglomerating units are yet to find basis for a continued staying together and as unfortunate as the situation has become, expectations over the years gone by, that leadership would churn out modalities conducive and requisite for a common basis of unity has not come by (Igwe, 2010).

Corruption is unarguably one of the most typical issues in the discourses of the deepening crisis and contradictions of post independence Nigeria. The level of attention devoted to it may not only be due to its rapid and unprecedented expansion of the menacing consequences, but also because of the seeming fecklessness of successive attempts to combating it into something else. The problem become so pointed out, one can begin to talk about the political culture of corruption in the country. To be sure, transparency international, a non-governmental organization that is reputed for its exploits in its measurement of countries' corruption perception index, ranked Nigeria as the most corrupt among the 52 countries ranked in 2019 (<https://tradingeconomics.com/nigeria/corruption-rank>)

The advent of democracy from the past, including the country's perennial problem of corruption, largely remains in the pipeline. Nigeria is the 154 least corrupt nation out of 180 countries, according to the 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index reported by Transparency International (Transparency International 2022)

These points to the fact that the anti-corruption war was hardly made a positive impact in the country, perhaps due to the depth of the phenomenon. It is important to know that 'corruption acts are displayed at various level and sectors in Nigeria, but this work would focus attention on exposing and proffering solutions to the issue of ASUU strike in our educational system also to proffer way forward.

Conceptual Framework

The concepts of corruption and good governance have a two-way causal relationship with each other and feed off each other in a vicious circle. If good governance principles and structures are not in place, this provides greater opportunity for corruption. Corruption, in turn, can prevent good governance principles and structures from being put in place, or enforced. Violations of the principles of transparency, accountability and rule of law appear to be most closely associated with corruption. In the end, corruption and poor governance are security challenges which undermine democracy, the rule of law and economic development.

Some literature reveals the negative consequences of bad governance, primarily in the form of corruption and lack of property rights, for areas such as population health and people's access to safe water (Swaroop and Rajkumar, 2002; Holmberg and Rothstein, 2011). Gilley (2006: 57) even demonstrates that "general governance (a composite of the rule of law, control of corruption and government effectiveness) has a large, even overarching importance in global citizen evaluations of states".

He further states that these governance variables have a stronger impact on political legitimacy than variables measuring democratic rights and welfare gains.

(<https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/anti-corruption/module-2/key-issues/corruption-and-bad-governance.html>) Researchers and public affairs analysts have revealed that one of the factors contributing to cybercrime and other forms of criminal activity as lack of good leadership and quality education, of which the ASUU strike is an instance. Thus, Nigerian youths are forced to sit at home for months waiting for the government to grant the request of ASSU.

Theoretical Analysis

The researcher chooses to adopt Leadership style in explaining and relating more about the topic, which has been a theory of interest for centuries. Leadership is of different types of which the researcher shall settle with Situational Leadership as a particular type. Leadership is continuously evolving and more than what it seems to be depending on how you look at it. It is a complex concept, with many applications, and results that it creates depend highly on the content in which it is being observed.

Situational leadership theory (Hersay & Blanchard 1969) Hersay and Blanchard, 1997;) first appeared in training and development Journal as the life cycle of leadership Since its inception in 1969, the model has undergone a number of cosmetic and substantive changes which Blanchard, Zigma & Melson (1993) refers to as "revisions that have since improved the model".

high Relationship/ Willingness	3. Participating	2. Selling
	4. Delegating	1. Telling
low	low Task / Ability high	

<http://www.educational-business-articles.com/situational-leadership-theory/>

Among the four Leadership Styles are as follows:

(S1) **Telling:** Normally at this level of maturity, the individuals or team do not have much task knowledge. They are yet to learn the skills needed to be proficient and so they need clear direction and guidance. As a result, the necessity is to be told how to do something and what to do. To this end, the style reflects much of an autocratic behaviour .

(S2) **Selling:** This is the next step up in the development cycle and although the leadership style is slightly less autocratic, it still requires a good degree of direction from the leader, whereby he/she now begins to explain ideas and the reasons for such. This approach helps the individual / team to start to develop their skills and reasoning. With this style, leaders begin to sell their message to influence and develop the team.

(S3) **Participating:** At this level of development, the leader adjusts their style to reflect a more democratic stance and focuses further on relationships and less on task direction, he/ she allows the team(s) to create their goals but works with them to do this.

The main aim here is to develop the team further to take action and to think more autonomously, releasing the leash, if you like, and giving them greater scope for self-leadership.

(S4) **Delegating:** At this point in the cycle, the team is now competent. Their levels of development are high with the task at hand, and the leadership style reflects a hands-off approach. The manager now delegates goal creation and decision making to the team and as such, they competently get on with the task; setting goals, creating plans and executing them autonomously. The leader is normally kept abreast through regular updates.

Application of Situational Leadership Model

The whole idea of situational leadership is to be able to flex our style to suit the task and the individual's needs. This is based on tasks, so any person can easily be a D1 on one task and a D4 level on another. The people then should be managed differently, depending on their task competency. Knowing what level of competency each individual is at, is the key to the effective use of this model. Once understood, the leader has a good blue print to be able to use to constantly flex their style to suit the situation and the individual's / team's growth.

Task as an effective manager is to keep developing their team through the cycle, so if an individual is at S4 (delegation level) for a specific task, he should try to add an additional level

of responsibility and complexity, so that they can start back at S1, working with and leading them through levels 1-4 again. This pattern is a continuous process, and enacted correctly, the leader can develop empowered, energized and highly skilled teams.

S/N	YEAR	BUDGET (₦TRILLION)	EDUCATIONAL ALLOCATION (₦BILLION)	PERCENTAGE OF BUDGET (%)
1	2010	5.160	249.09	4.83
2	2011	4.972	306.30	6.16
3	2012	4.877	400.15	8.20
4	2013	4.987	426.53	8.55
5	2014	4.962	493.00	9.94
6	2015	5.068	392.20	7.74
7	2016	6.061	369.60	6.10
8	2017	7.444	550.00	7.38
9	2018	8.612	605.80	7.03
10	2019	8.830	620.50	7.03
11	2020	10.33	691.07	6.7
12	2021	13.08	742.5	5.6
13	2022			5.39

Nigeria Budgetary Allocation to Education (2010 - 2020)

Source: Federal Ministry of Education Report 2020

https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Nigerian-Budgetary-Allocation-to-Education-2010-2020_tbl1_344775125

Budget Allocation to Education (2015- 2022) (The UNESCO bench mark for budget allocation to Education is 15 to 20% of public expenditure)

S/N	YEAR	BUDGET ALLOCATION BY TRILLION	BUDGET ALLOCATION BY BILLION	PERCENTAGE OF THEBUDGET
1	2015	₦4.5	₦492.038	10.79%
2	2016	₦6.06	₦369.60	6.7%
3	2017	₦7.29	₦550.00	7.38%
4	2018	₦9.12	₦605.80	7.04%
5	2019	₦8.92	₦620.50	7.05%
6	2020	₦10.33	₦671.07	6.7%
7	2021	₦3.59	₦742.52	5.68%
8	2022	₦17.13	₦923.79	5.39%

The table depicts that only in 2015 was when Nigeria have the highest increase in educational budget. Then it kept decreasing till 2022 when the lowest budget allocation was made. It then now shows that federal government has no value on education. The outcome of it was the ASUU strike that lingered for 8 months.

The above data indicates that there has been inadequate funding of Education. This, undoubtedly, will occasion low morale among staff leading to brain drain, persistent crisis arising from neoliberal policies of government, among other problems which have also brought the higher education sub-sector to its knees.

The 5.39 percent allocation is not only a minuscule 0.29 percent increase from the 2021 budget in which 5.68 percent was allocated to the sector; it is the lowest percentage allocation to education by the Federal Government in the last ten years. Moreover, considering that the 5.39 percent is a 50 percent reduction from the 10.79 percent allocated to education in 2015, a comparative estimate of the Naira value of these percentages, when subjected to dollar exchange, shows only a slight difference between the 2015 allocation and that of 2022 (Vanguard, August 9; 2022)

Strike is a situation in which a group of workers refuse to work because they are not satisfied with their pay, working conditions, etc.: White-collar workers are expected to announce strike action today after a breakdown in talks to resolve a pay dispute. (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/strike-action>) To refuse to continue working because of an argument with an employer about working conditions, pay levels, or job losses: Democratization has brought workers the right to strike and join a trade union.

ASUU was formed in 1978, the primary cause of ASUU's strikes, virtually annually since 1999, has been the government's failure to concede to the union's demands. Thus, ASUU's arguments about the strike are mostly focused on the funding and resuscitation of Nigeria's public universities as well as a specific earned allowance that it asserts is over 92 billion Naira in arrears. Before the ASUU strike was called, some Nigerian students claimed the strike was a curse, while others claimed it was a godsend. They have continued to strike from 1999 till date, university students have started to see education as irrelevant in the Nigerian system, and they are beginning to ask if the government is interested in investing in education.

ASUU Strike from 1999-2022

Year	Days	Weeks	Months
1999			5
2001			3
2002		2	
2003			6
2005		2	
2006	3		
2007			3
2008		1	
2009			4
2010			5
2011	59		
2013			5
2017			1
2018			3
2020			9
2022			8

<https://naijabibliography.com/history-culture/history-of-asuu-strike-in-nigeria/#:~:text=History%20of%20ASUU%20Strikes,pay%20and%20autonomy%20for%20universities.>

The above table shows that Nigeria government is not ready to put education in order. Almost every year ASUU must go on strike why? The table above shows that Nigerian education does not matter to our leaders since they have sent their children abroad to study.

ASUU Reasons for going on Strike:

1. ASUU embarked on strike action in March 2020, following its disagreement with the Federal Government over the funding of the universities.
2. Implementation of the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS), which according to the Union, negates the autonomy policy for the universities, among other issues.
3. The Union called off its 9-month old strike in December 2020 after the Federal Government agreed to some of its conditions.
4. These include the deployment of University Transparency and Accountability Solution (UTAS) software for payment of its salaries and allowances.
5. However, a year after signing the MOU, ASUU accused the government of failing to fulfill its side of the bargain and threatened to mobilise for another actions immediately.
6. The government quickly moved to pay N55bn as part-payment for the Earned Academic Allowance and Revitalisation Fund, but the union was unmoved until the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council and other dignitaries waded in.
7. ASUU said the federal government has only addressed 2 out of its 8 demands, including the visitation panel to federal universities and described the release of funds for the Earned Academic Allowance and revitalisation funds as partial.
8. Some of the demands of ASUU include the sustainability of the university autonomy, which it said the introduction of IPPIS violates.
9. Immediate deployment of UTAS to replace IPPIS; renegotiation of the 2009 ASUU-FGN agreement.
10. Release of the reports of visitation panels to federal universities and distortions in salary payment challenges.
11. Others include funding for revitalisation of public universities, earned academic allowance, poor funding of state universities and promotion arrears.

<https://www.schoolbeginner.com.ng/asuu-demands-2022/>

Conclusion

The visionless cabals who run the affairs of the state prefer to send their children and wards to schools in Europe and America. Others send them to Ghana, South Africa and elsewhere in Africa. It is the children of the downtrodden who are left in the Nigerian universities, which have been reduced to shadows of their former selves. It is only Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) that continues to wage wars against the debasement of university education. In fact ASUU is the strongest labour union that has survived till date and more respect and support must be accorded to them by the populace.

The present government enter into negotiation with ASUU and unilaterally back out without cogent reasons. Because the union believes it is dealing with people without ears, it embarks on incessant strikes to hit home its point. In a school calendar year of eight months for the past decades, the union goes on strike for months. The situation takes its toll on all departments and faculties in all Nigerian higher institutions.

If we are to succeed in building up our economy stronger we must have a leadership that is committed to the rule of law and has a demonstrable sense of fair play and democratic tolerance; a leadership with ability and integrity; above all else, we must have a leadership that can see beyond the ostentatious pomp of office (Fadayomi, 1996). Once one is envisaged to possess wisdom, he automatically attracts followers who flock around him to tap from his knowledge (David W. 1980). Corruption is the abuse of public trust for private gain; it is outright stealing; in fact, it is the main cause of our dilapidated state of our education. An absence of corruption encourages investment and efforts to expand the pie rather than merely fight over its distribution and thus encourage growth. To this extent, improvements in governance in general and reduction of corruption in particular could be means to accelerate the process of development. In addition, as society grows wealthier, good governance becomes more widely demanded by the public (Todaro & Smith 2006: 552).

The high incidence of corruption has continued to attract growing interest and great concern. Bureaucratic organizations in Nigeria are no exception to this devastating syndrome. Over the past decades, most organizations, private or public, are closed down because of the worst excess of brigandage of economic form of corruption which has obstructed the normal institutional rules and regulations (Katuka, 2009). The Nigerian institutions have been linked seriously with corruption. The World Bank Report (1997) defines corruption as “the abuse of public power for private gains”. Political corruption takes three basic forms: embezzlement, bribery and nepotism.

Every nation needs good leader. Until a good leader emerges that drastically change will be affected in our educational system. No country will move forward without having a good leader. Leadership can be seen as the ability of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of an organization (House, et al, cited in Shama et al, 2011: 719)

Recommendations

- Ban public office holders, children and wards from schooling abroad and also receiving treatment abroad: It is obvious that our public office holders do not mean well for the generality of the citizenry. They are self-centered. We need to make a law banning public officers, their children and wards from schooling outside the country. Our public office holders are not interested in maintaining and improving our education system. They siphon public funds to train their children and wards abroad while our education sector has collapsed. It is the same situation with our health system. They go abroad for solutions to their health challenges while our public hospitals are in a state of shamble. This ban should continue until our education sector improves.
- Make education a fundamental human right: Beyond this, we should make education at all levels compulsory to every Nigerian child . The recently proposed amendment by the 9th national assembly to make education free and compulsory only at the basic level should exceed to secondary school level Education should be made a fundamental human right like other rights in Chapter IV of our constitution.
- Budgetary allocation must be raised high to promote our education: The current situation where only about 8% of our national budget is allocated to education should be as a matter of urgency and be reviewed. Serious minded countries allocate higher percentages of their budgets to education. For instance, China, is about 10.5% while Cuba allocates about 12.85. Even some African countries allocate more to education than Nigeria. It is 15% in Egypt and more than 17% in Ghana. Apart from the meager allocation, it is obvious that resources are not applied for the purpose they are meant for in this country. The probability that they will be embezzled by public office holders and their cohorts is

very high. At the end of the day, it is the ordinary Nigerians that will suffer the consequences.

- Proliferation of universities must stop: Governments at both the federal and state levels must stop establishing more universities when the existing ones are not properly funded. (<https://www.thecable.ng/how-to-end-asuu-stri>).

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