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ACADEMIC CORRUPTION IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM: LESSONS FOR EDUCATION PLANNERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

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ABSTRACT

Education is one of the best tools to transform societies especially with science and technology. However, the unprecedented increase in academic malpractices has resulted in tertiary institutions graduating incompetent graduates.

The rationale for the review was to examine academic corruption in the education system. In summary, the academic corruption includes examination malpractices, bribes, plagiarism, grades for sex, etc. The causes entail marketization of higher education, government withdrawal of financial support, lack of anti-corruption legislations, large class size, poor study habits, stigma of failing, poverty, poor salaries, etc. The negative impacts encompass tarnishing institutions' images, poor quality education, incompetent graduates, normalization of corruption, development retardation, unemployment, etc. The prevention requires establishing accreditation agencies, levying hefty punishments, strict laws, developing computer soft wares, etc.

In conclusion, the menace is dashing the hopes and aspirations of societies particularly the younger generations who are legally entitle to quality and relevant education for better future and above all, it is literally forcing them into criminal activities as they cannot secure jobs in today's highly competitive and brain economy.

KEYWORDS: academic, corruption, dishonesty, incompetency, universities, education

INTRODUCTION

Universities for decades have been regarded as a peripheral subsector for development, making it beyond the reach of many individuals and even nations (Zezeza, 2017). Recently, access to education is globally recognized as a fundamental human right in which universities have been elevated as places where the desperately needed human capital for development are nurtured. Thus, culminating to the increase of universities and colleges globally even in the least developed nations (Roser, 2019).

Academic corruption at all level of the education system is by all standards becoming a global problem although it is not new but what is seemingly new are the ramifications and the attention it has started to receive and efforts made to eradicate the menace. This unfortunate malpractice is a great

disappointment to all particularly, teachers and parents since it is more rampant during examinations both at national and international level resulting in some schools and nations being disqualified (Feday, 2017). Universities and colleges, the citadel of education are not spared by this alarming dishonesty leading to unprecedented criticisms directed at lecturers and universities' administration and worst of all, eroding the public trust and confident in tertiary institutions (Mulatu Bachore, 2014).

However, for a number of reasons there is not yet a global definition for corruption including the academic one, making the fight against it extremely hard because there is no one-size-fits-all strategy to it. Thus, any approach to be adopted must be context sensitive to win the battle (Eaton, 2018). Therefore, in view of the strategic roles higher learning institutions play in societies, the phenomenon has attracted the attention of all stakeholders both in the public and private sector (Chapman & Lindner, 2014).

Bearing in mind, one of the biggest gifts a nation can offer its children is quality and relevant education since with such, they will be able to create wealth, live better lives; and furthermore, be able to positively contribute in national development efforts (Upali, 2013). Thus, access to quality and relevant education is fundamental in the life of any child. Notwithstanding, series of factors including academic corruption hinder it, leaving many graduates in distress and near-futureless since their certificates are hardly recognized for employment or any other opportunities (Banerjee, 2016).

The fundamental objective for the literature review is to examine the present scale and degree of academic corruption in the education system particularly, in the tertiary institutions, share knowledge to spark and inspire a process that will usher rapid growth from all directions in the fight against the menace.

METHODOLOGY

A systematic review of the literatures using information collected from different sources was actuated. Google search engine, google scholar, web of science; and scopus database were used to search for these articles. During the search numeration combinations of words and phrases were used to ensure articles reflect the most recent knowledge and scholarly works. The systematic searches beget varied and voluminous articles which had to be sieved not only to meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria but to ensure the fundamental objectives of the study are wrangled.

Therefore, only peer-reviewed scholarly publications published after 2000 were selected except extracts perceived to be of basal mileage to the study. However, articles published by staunch international organizations known to have been working in the promotion of access to quality and relevant education for years and has produced indefatigable knowledge in the promotion of access to education were stealthily appraised.

Inclusion and Exclusion Procedures

The underneath procedures were adopted in articles inclusion. That is, only:

1. Peer-reviewed scholarly articles on academic corruption.
2. Peer-reviewed scholarly articles published from 2000 to 2021.
3. Articles on international or regional perspectives on academic corruption.
4. Articles on academic dishonesty published by international organizations with years of meritorious experiences in the promotion of access to quality and relevant education.

To exclude some articles from the review, the below captioned criteria were applied. That is:

1. Non-peer reviewed articles.
2. Articles published before 2000 unless critical and impactful.
3. Media generated articles including newspapers.
4. Articles not published in English language.

In spite of the fact that both qualitative and quantitative articles were trawled, only 61 articles out of 153 were qualified for reviewed which is largely due to a dearth of data.

In essence, only peer-reviewed articles and publications by international organizations considered trustworthy because they occasioned standard, ethical; and robust studies were reviewed.

DISCUSSIONS

The literature review has revealed a wide range of issues pertaining to academic corruption in the education system in general. To discuss these academic dishonesties, they are classified into: types of academic corruption: examination malpractices, bribes, plagiarism, embezzlement and funds diversion, grades for sex, sham journals and research dubbing, illegal appointment, favoritism and ghost employees; and inflating contracts and school charges. While the causes entail marketization of higher education, government withdrawal of financial support, lack of anti-corruption legislations, large class size and poor study habits, stigma of failing, corporatism; and poverty and poor salaries, the negative impacts encompass tarnishing institutions' images, poor quality education and incompetent graduates, normalization of corruption, frustrated youths and soaring in crimes, development retardation, unemployment increment. To prevent the menace, it requires strategies such as establishment of accreditation agencies, levying hefty punishments, strict laws to regulate behaviors, high level of transparency, capacity building, visa and residential permit cancellation; and computer soft wares development.

Types of Academic Corruption

Examination Malpractices

Examination although often claimed not to be the best method of measuring the level of knowledge and skills of a person, academic institutions are left with no other perfect substitute. Because students must be graded to enable society to allocate talents among others fairly, examination is almost

unavoidable at all levels of education (Van den Brink et al., 2013). The methods of examination could be different but seemingly what is common is; it comes with fear and anxiety. To circumvent this, and for students to score good grades without toiling hard for them, schools from the kindergarten to universities, are inundated with all categories of examination malpractices consistent with: common practices in academic corruption in Nigerian universities include alteration of examination grades by professors and lecturers and aiding and abetting students in examination fraud (Dimkpa, 2011). In Thailand Police Academy, students are asked to pay \$10,000.00 for examination papers in order to pass cadets examination (Ludpa, 2016). Similarly, in some Ethiopian universities where academic dishonesty is as high as 84%, lecturers, although do not award grades based on sex, ethnicity, religion, political affiliation; payment of gifts, leaking examination questions and giving information about examination in advance are malpractice on the increase (Feday, 2017). The single and simple act of scholarly dishonesty like cheating during examinations happens in all educational institutions in all nations (Tierney & Sabharwal, 2017).

Taking Bribes

In spite of the limited resources, societies are expected to make progress socially, economically; and politically. To attain this critical goal, there must be some well-articulated procedures to regulate behaviors and proper access to scarce resources with the ultimate objective of ensuring peace, stability; and equity. However, it is not uncommon for one to stumble on cases of deviation especially in the public sector in accessing some of these resources including the legitimate means ranging from spoken words to documents from the people entrusted with their management which does not only handicap the institutions alone, but erode public confidence in them and their management (Clausen et al., 2011). Of recent times, there have been some monumental increment in the illegal acquisition of these resources through taking bribes which did not spare higher learning institutions, the citadel of knowledge concurring with: in some cases, parents ventilate academic corruption and dishonesty by engaging in dubious activities like bribery, extortion, giving unnecessary gifts, etc., to ensure their children gain admission (Ludpa, 2016). In Russia, annually, parents spend between two to five billion dollars on academic bribes both to ensure their children are accepted in universities and enrolled to pursue their dreams (Altbach & Vest, 2005).

Plagiarism

It appears by all indications that the brain economy is globally dominating all sectors. Since we all want to be successful and above all, to be part of the development progresses of our respective communities and nations, it is imperative that we possess knowledge and skills especially, the cutting edge one. However, the first evident to proof we are knowledgeable and skillful to be engage is our academic or vocational certificates (Xu & Trimble, 2016). Thus, certificates have become a visa for trust and subsequent engagement by resource holders. In view of this, among others, quality education has become competitive and hard to acquire. To survive the academic heat by scoring good grades, lazy and dishonest tutors and students in most tertiary institutions, have resorted to plagiarisms among other forms of academic dishonesty as revealed: the three most common forms of academic dishonesty

in Ethiopian universities include submitting someone's assignment, copying and pasting without acknowledgement; and copying from a colleague during examination or test (Bachore, 2016). The common types of plagiarism university students are involved in to pedal academic corruption include sham paraphrasing (verbatim copy), illicit paraphrasing (no in-line acknowledgement), verbatim copying, recycling, ghostwriting; and purloining (Denisova-Schmidt, 2017).

Similarly, in academic corruption, students are great contributors via buying admissions letters, paying for examination and test questions, plagiarizing; and cheating during examinations and tests (Nabaho & Turyasingura, 2019). In Ethiopia, academic dishonesty has reached an alarming stage due to cheating in examinations and plagiarism eroding the pride families and societies take in seeing their children enrolled in universities (Feday, 2017). Common in Russian and Nigerian universities is cheating during examination, falsification of academic grades; and admission with false secondary school certificates (Altbach & Vest, 2005).

Embezzlement and Funds Diversion

Apparently, in most communities some people are not only materialistic and consumerists, but are living false life by trying to live far beyond their incomes. To sustain such life styles, some have resorted to all kind of dubious activities including corruption and accepting bribes more especially, those in the public and even private sector (Liang et al., 2016). In the case of those in public sector including higher learning institutions, abuse of office has become the order of the day. Thus, embezzlement, funds diversion; and related corrupt practices are becoming rampant in universities dovetailing with some scholarly findings: academic corruption can be in the form of fraud, embezzlement, funds misappropriation, contract inflation, sexual harassment, bribery, and so on (Nwaokugha & Chinyere Ezeugwu, 2017). Academic corruption among others, entails embezzlement, bribery, fraud, extortion; and favoritism (Ludpa, 2016).

Similarly, in South Korea, faculty members and administrators in private universities, are mostly guilty of embezzlement, mismanagement of funds, bribery; and diversion of funds in the tune of 9.5 million dollars (Altbach & Vest, 2005). In some higher learning institutions, wide range of academic corruption do prevail which include sextortion, diversion of monies, administrative favoritism and nepotism in appointment, licensing and accreditation, admission, likewise procurement fraud, political patronage, granting unearned credentials to politicians, plagiarism, essay mills, sham research, examination fraud, fake certificates; and other serious acts of dishonesty (Kirya, 2019).

Grades for Sex

Globally, sexual abuse of women and other vulnerable groups including the children is on the increase (Singh et al., 2014). The sexual abuse of women are perpetrated for many reasons according to perpetrators, all which are baseless and blatant violation of women rights as they are grounded on erroneous beliefs and traditional practices such as having sex with children can cure STIs including HIV/AIDS (Meel, 2016). Thus, what is obvious is, they are barbaric and betrayers of trust and

confidence bestow on them especially when it comes to the children (Zm, 2011). This betrayal, is now becoming common in higher learning institutions where professionals who should set exemplary characters are asking sex for grades. This is substantiated by corruption in the higher education system include admission manipulation, examination cheating, plagiarism, outsourcing of home works, ghostwriting of dissertations, purchasing of grades, sextortion, falsification of data, misappropriation of funds, degree mills, fake certificates, nepotism; and cronyism in appointment and promotion (Denisova-Schmidt, 2017). Administrators as one of the greatest perpetrators of academic corruption are mostly engaged in charging students for their grades, asking for favors including sexual ones, staff promotion based on dubious criteria, operating sham journals, promotion of nepotism and favoritism, granting degrees for favors, owning or supporting degree mills; and awarding fake degrees (Nabaho & Turyasingura, 2019). Similarly, academic malpractices in universities are broad in nature and include, cheating during examinations and tests, plagiarism, stealing books, damaging equipment, tarring books, grades for sex, leaking examination questions, invigilators assisting students, students taking examination for their fellows, turning in fellows' assignments, purchasing papers from ghostwriters, etc. and sadly most of these corrupt practices are done with the support of academic staff and administrators (Feday, 2017).

Sham Journals and Research Dubbing

To be successful in life one must face some challenges that are expected to be addressed with high level of honesty otherwise one will be a social betrayer and worst of all, be shunned. Thus, to be successful, honorable; and innovative academically, one must ultimately work hard and maintain high level of discipline by not associating oneself with dishonesty as commanded by universities' traditional values in addition to that of societal expectations (Mohd et al., 2015). However, unfortunately, some academics have chosen to deviate from these values by engaging in some academic malpractices by establishing, maintaining; and publishing in fake journals. Thus, it is not uncommon for academic staff to publish in sham journals and/or be engaging in ghostwriting, data mining or manipulation at the expense of science creating havoc in the novel profession. For example, some faculty members in addition to instigating students, are involved in the academic corruption either by publishing in fake journals, falsifying data, bribing coauthors, paying ghostwriters, or even stealing manuscripts for review and publishing them as their own work (Denisova-Schmidt, 2017). With the dictum of 'publish or perish' more doctoral students are being obligated to publish articles from their dissertations; and journals focusing more on fees than quality. These activities have significantly contributed to the flourishing of sham and predatory journals (Nabaho & Turyasingura, 2019). Some journals in recent years have been caught in academic corruption by manipulating impact factors, encouraging researchers mining publishable results, rigging peer-review processes; and over citations (Edwards & Roy, 2017).

Similarly, lecturers are usually engage in academic corruption in terms of teaching, student admission and recruitment, assessing students' credentials and qualifications, conducting research, article publications; and supervising dissertations (Nabaho & Turyasingura, 2019). With the introduction of

lucrative incentives in research, there is a rise in research dubbing or falsification creating a culture of corruption and ventilating its normalization (Edwards & Roy, 2017). Academics, mostly are engage in selling admissions letters, falsifying data, plagiarizing, ghostwriting; and ghost authorship (Nabaho & Turyasingura, 2019).

Illegal Appointment, Favoritism and Ghost Employees

With the advent of the economic meltdown and Covid-19 most economies are nearly on their knees resulting in many socio-economic and political problems such as retrenchment, closing of companies, slicing of take home salary, unemployment, etc. (Tu et al., 2021). However, in spite of all these, cost of living is sky rocketing with no hope for stabilization in the near future. Thus, some job hunters are readily willing to offer whatever they can to secure a job in addition to paying bribes and lobbying friends and relatives. In these chaotic situations, it is tempting for a person to be engaged in illegal activities either to earn a living, sustain bogus lifestyle or support others. In higher learning institutions, favoritism, illegal appointment, promotion and maintaining of payroll ghost employees are common practices as substantiated: for decades, the education system has suffered some corrupt practices like distortion in the application of resources, appointment, deployment, payment of teachers, ghost teachers, production, management and distribution of learning materials, private classes, abuse of official properties including cars; and embezzlement of educational aid (Hallak, 2007). In higher learning institutions academic malpractices in the form of illegal and irrelevant purchasing of materials, inflation of fees, employment bribery; and lecturers accepting and requesting gifts is becoming a common phenomenon (Ludpa, 2016).

Similarly, in Thailand academic dishonesty like cheating during examination and illegally acquiring academic positions is not uncommon (Ludpa, 2016). The common types of corruption prevailing in higher learning institutions include bribery, collusion, conflict of interest, favoritism, fraud, lobbying; and revolving doors (Denisova-Schmidt, 2017). Additionally, corruption in the universities exists in different forms like poor quality education delivery, unfair recruitment and promotion of staff, cronyism, nepotism, unfair selection of staff for training and allowance allocation, improper purchasing and allocation of equipment, learning and teaching materials, malicious selection of contractors and outsourcing methods, professional misconduct, abuse of facilities and properties; and promotion of monopoly (Deliversky, 2016). Corruption in the school systems include embezzlement, bribery, fraud, extortion; and favoritism (Hallak, 2007).

Inflating Contracts and School Charges

The education sector like all other sectors in most countries is public funded if not, subsidized, and as such most of their activities including assets acquisition are state regulated to ensure fair and open procurement procedures while promoting quality, effectiveness and efficiency of government procurement mechanisms (China, 2019). Thus, to construct facilities for example, universities' management must follow procurement laws in which opening it for competition is mandatory. In some competitions, bidders don't play by the rule inviting corrupt practices such as paying unconventional

extra charges, kickbacks, inflating charges, etc. (Soreide, 2002). Similarly, unscrupulous lecturers and other cadet of the administrative staff obtain money through inflation of school charges and irregularly attending classes to mount extra classes at some charges to complete syllabus as affirmed: in Nigerian schools, it is not uncommon for principals and administrative staff to be engage in collecting monies from students and teachers, inflating contracts and school fees; and collecting salaries of ghost workers, dead and retired teachers and even those who have resigned years back (Nwaokugha & Chinyere Ezeugwu, 2017). In some academic institutions, staff are engage in the distortion of resources, inflating the cost of education, collecting salaries of fully paid ghost teachers, illegal production and distribution of teaching and learning materials; and the commitment of universities' facilities for personal enrichment (Ludpa, 2016).

Similarly, academic corruption can be committed via cash and kind, especially during staff appointment and promotion, contract awarding; and grade allocation (Nwaokugha & Chinyere Ezeugwu, 2017). In some academic institutions, teachers teach only half the syllabus requesting students to register for special classes at some charges in order to complete the syllabus (Ludpa, 2016).

Causes of Academic Corruption

Schools and societies are split on causes of academic corruption in the education system especially at the tertiary level with students often blaming the schools authorities for not taking stringent measures against the alleged perpetrators and schools harping on government and society for not giving them the necessary support. Others strongly believed students are no longer serious with their education and as such to pass examinations they resort to multiple academic malpractices. In all fairness, there are multitude factors responsible for the menace.

Marketization of Higher Education

Traditionally, the provision of education and other critical social services has always been the duty of the state occasionally for free or at an affordable cost to the vast majority of the populace. However, with the introduction of the privatization of some social services, education, like other social services which has solely been under the state is now being provided by the private sector. The private sector which is purely profit driven does, all within its purview to make profit and in the process, knowing or unknowingly, some traditional education values fall victims of the market forces and worst of all, education losing that democratic control for the benefit of all (Rizvi, 2016). Thus, unlicensed, unaccredited; and unregulated universities are not uncommon in the education sector of many countries resulting in fraud in student admission, production and distribution of teaching and learning materials; and the unprecedented increase in unscrupulous online universities as corroborated: with the introduction of online and hybrid learning, the market forces have hugely influenced universities administration both in terms of surrendering their principal domains including production of textbooks, courses, other training materials; and even students for corporations searching for profits in the world of education (Waite, 2010). Unprecedented increase in academic corruption can be due to soaring online institutions, commercialization and privatization of education, high competition among students

and institutions; and easy access to private international accreditation agencies as cited in (Martin, 2016) and (Nabaho & Turyasingura, 2019). The academic corruption existing in universities is highly ventilated by the marketization of higher education resulting in commercialization of values and furthermore, higher institutions distancing away from the traditional academic values (Altbach & Vest, 2005).

Abandonment of Traditional Academic Values

Globally, universities are known to be highly principled in terms of maintaining high level of standards through the formulation and implementation of strict legislations and policies in addition to the relentless pursue of their centenary old known higher education core traditional values as citadel of learning (SAR, 2017). Thus, with such, universities have effortlessly earned themselves high reputation. However, with universities gradually loosing grip of such values, academic corruption is on the increase in most reputable universities as highlighted: academic corruption is on the increase because of the normalization of corruption in certain societies, wide spread of poverty among civil servants; and above all, the maintaining of reputation of universities and their traditional values becoming a secondary agenda in higher education administrative priorities (Deliversky, 2016). With higher education losing objectivity, honesty; and high ethical standard, most governments and donors could no longer understand the rationale for supporting them (Altbach & Vest, 2005).

Government Withdrawal of Financial Support

Establishing and maintaining universities is not a cheap business and as such before the unprecedented increase in private universities most universities, were public institutions funded from taxpayers' pockets. In addition, to maintain hard earned reputation and above all, to facilitate sustenance financially, with the ultimate objective of making higher education quality, accessible; and affordable for all, especially, for those from disadvantaged communities, it was necessary that universities are continuously publicly funded like all other public institutions (Mgaiwa, 2018). However, with governments gradually drawing their funding, higher education quality is not only negatively affected but most universities are forced to commercialize some of their services including the critical ones exposing them to varying types of malpractices including academic corruption concurring with: with unprecedented increase in government withdrawal from supporting universities, most universities are moving commercial, exposing themselves to all types of temptations including corrupt practices (Altbach & Vest, 2005).

Access to Modern Technologies

It seems modern technologies especially that of information and communication technology are indispensable in the modern world. This has become so apparent with the Covid-19 pandemic, literally forcing people especially those in developed world to conduct nearly everything online ranging from modest transactions to the most complex ones including teaching and learning, consultation; and provision of healthcare services by medical professionals (Ventola, 2014). Though, to some extent it has made life easier, including the earning of a degree while at home, it has also contributed to the

increase in academic corruption and worst of all, making it more difficult to eliminate in the education system as affirmed: students easy access to modern technologies like mobile phones, iPods, internets, scientific calculators, etc. has significantly enhanced academic corruption in higher learning institutions (Feday, 2017).

Lack of Anti-Corruption Legislations

Laws are critical in society both to regulate behaviors and the fair distribution of resources of all types to ensure sustainable development and development for all. Thus, to ensure institutions deliver effectively and efficiently, they must be regulated by well-thought and fully enforced laws and regulation (Sari, 2017). However, any failure will not only result in poor services delivery but serious malpractices including corruption that are capable of threatening the very existence of the institutions. To avert institutions including universities sinking into dishonesty at the detriment of all, anti-corruption laws must not only be promulgated but enforced to the maximum concurring with: in Ethiopia, the prevalence of academic dishonesty particularly plagiarism, examination, tests, assignment; and term papers cheating can be associated with many causes such as difficulty tests and examinations, time scarcity, irrelevant course materials, pressure for high grades; and lack of implementation and clarity on the policy regarding dishonesty (Bachore, 2016). Academic corruption is flourishing due to many factors namely; lack of transparency and effective supervision, inadequate internal and external financial control mechanisms, lack of effective anti-corruption legislations; and insufficient procurement regulations that ensure fair and competitive bidding for the award of contracts (Deliversky, 2016).

Large Class Size and Poor Study Habits

Accessing quality and relevant education is a fundamental human right to be enjoyed by all, particularly, the younger generations. Therefore, it is obligatory on all duty bearers not only to promote it but ensure it is enjoyed without any restriction. However, in highly resource constrained nations and communities, students are forced to learn in overcrowded classes resulting in both poor teaching and learning (Olaleye, 2017). Poor learning couple with poor study habits, many students are forced to resort to academic cheating to earn pass grades as corroborated: in Ukraine, different students are involved in academic dishonesty but it is mostly committed by students who do not have enough time to study due to domestic chores, those who live in dormitories and don't have enough privacy to study; and those coming from small towns and villages where the quality of education is poor because of lack of quality and relevant teaching and learning materials plus highly demotivated teachers due to poor salaries and allowances (Denisova-Schmidt & Prytula, 2017). The Nigerian education system is encountering soaring academic fraud because of below standard lecturers, poor and inadequate learning and teaching materials, curricular content, teaching methodologies, infrastructural facilities; and admission of unqualified and unwilling to study students, poorly motivated and highly corrupt students (Babalola, 2010) as cited in (Dimkpa, 2011).

Similarly, in the Nigerian higher learning institutions academic corruption and dishonesty is mostly due to students' poor reading habits and illegal entry into the university system (Dimkpa, 2011). Students are engaged in academic corruption because of many reasons such as wanting high grades, peer pressure, wanting good jobs in the future, large class size, high demand for higher education, they are academically weak; and above all, they feel it is not a serious infringement since no law is violated since corruption is a common practice in the societies (Feday, 2017).

Stigma of Failing

In some societies, being a university student is a great achievement not only for the student but also for the family and by extension the entire community as they are more likely to obtain good jobs to support their extended families and communities, have stable families and be more active in communities and national development issues (Mitra, n.d.). Therefore, to maintain this great social standing in the communities, it requires great efforts both to stay in the university, graduate with excellent grades, and above all, to avert the social stigma associated with failing examinations. Thus, under such social pressure, it is not uncommon for students to be engaged in different academic malpractices to secure good grades as substantiated: academic corruption is rising due to many factors such as, stigma associated with failing to graduate, higher education becoming a mean to an end, higher education determining one's success in the labor market and enjoyment of privileges. Increasingly, it is becoming a mean for acquiring power, authority, prestige and above all, it is edging to be either a public or private good paying huge rewards to individuals despite societal benefits (Nabaho & Turyasingura, 2019). Academic dishonesty is caused by many factors such as difficult examinations, students having small time for their books because of other engagements, lecturers always repeating examination questions, unimportant course materials, lack of clear and strict policies on dishonesty; and undue pressure for good grade and grade average point (Bachore, 2016).

Corporatism

Universities, in addition to producing highly trained graduates to serve communities and nations, are highly engage in research and development to push the frontiers of innovation and invention. To fund some of these activities where state support is limited or doesn't exist at all, universities have resorted to partnering with business entities (Lima et al., 2021). However, of recent, because of the time and resources devoted to these partnerships, universities' administrations have been failing in creating conducive teaching and learning environment resulting in some academic malpractices as encapsulated in some scholarly findings: some universities because of the nature of partnership with big business entities, they spend lot of money on administrative costs instead of on instructional and learning materials placing a huge burden on students without the corresponding quality education (Waite, 2010). Corporatism significantly contributed to academic corruption in higher learning institutions since in some cases, institutions would tend to concentrate more on the interests of business entities that support them instead of focusing on the main goals of the universities particularly during research (Waite, 2010).

Poverty and Poor Salaries

With the economic meltdown, insurgency of Covid-19 and poor financial management in some institutions including the governments, poverty is seemingly on the increase especially in developing nations (Rassanjani et al., 2021). Thus, with poverty on the increase, cost of living soaring unabated, and salaries remaining stagnant, it is becoming normal to hear or read malpractices occurring in different institutions including universities concurring with: the unprecedented increase in academic corruption in Nigeria is attributable to many factors such as illegal students admission, dishonest lecturers, poorly enumerated staff, students' poor study habit; and the admission of poorly home trained candidates (Dimkpa, 2011). In Nigeria, academic dishonesty is on the increase because lecturers like others in the service delivery are not well paid among other reasons (Dimkpa, 2011).

Similarly, the factors that make academic corruption conducive can be internal and external, while the internal factor include lack of clear regulations, transparency, professional norms, monopoly and discretionary power usage, poor salaries and incentives, inadequate management capacity; and not being interactive with the general public; the external factors include lack of political will, ethical values, external audit, ineffective judiciary system; and poor salaries in the public service and so on (Hallak, 2007). Some parents and poverty, significantly contribute to the continuity of academic corruption since most parents feel that with higher education for their children, they will be spared the lashes of object poverty (Ludpa, 2016).

NEGATIVE IMPACTS

Tarnishing Institutions' Images

In a competitive world like today, the image of an institution matters a lot. Interestingly, for some people even if they are purchasing simple office equipment, for example, they pay more attention to the name of the company that produced than the item. Seemingly, it is like people are buying names rather than items (Wu et al., 2018). Thus, good name is critical in business and for its sustenance. In the same vein, for universities to maintain their social standing in societies, they must eliminate academic dishonesty, otherwise, people and even other public institutions will not hesitate to distant themselves away from them since corruption among others things tarnishes name of institutions dovetailing with: lecturers partnering with students to cheat has changed public perception toward universities which does not only affect the novel teaching profession, but equally negatively affecting other critical sectors as there is a solid correlation between academic corruption and embezzlement at work places (Feday, 2017). Corruption in the academia has in several ways negatively affected universities such as battering their images, losing public support for academic freedom, autonomy; and public funding (Altbach & Vest, 2005).

Poor Quality Education and Incompetent Graduates

The socio-economic and political development of all societies depends on its factors of production undoubtedly, the human capital being the most critical one. For the human capital to effectively and efficiently deliver in communities' and national development endeavors, competency is fundamental which requires some trainings, be it short or long term (Hidayat et al., 2017) and (Garaika, 2020). The

training of human resources is within the arm pits of higher learning institutions, universities being lead agent. However, there can only be competence if the education offered is of quality and relevance. Therefore, for universities to fulfil this social contract with societies, they must eradicate academic dishonesty without which, they will end up producing bunch of incompetent graduates as uphold: the negative impacts of academic corruption include production of poorly trained graduates, immoral graduates, poor task performing graduates, unemployable graduates; and worse of all, graduates with no proper communication skills (Dimkpa, 2011). The impacts of academic corruption is not only a threat to the attainment of Education for All (EFA) but is a great obstacle to access to educational resources, disadvantaged community accessing education, deterioration in the quality of education, allocation of talents, reduction in social inequality; and above all, increase in the propagation of the culture of corruption (Hallak, 2007).

Similarly, universities and colleges academically exploit athletes by providing them with scholarships since they tend to focus more on the economic gains and related awards rather than their education, thus, resulting in students cheating during examination, turning in friends' works, etc. and worst of all, graduating with poor grades (Gatmen, 2011). With academic corruption, universities undoubtedly, ends up graduating corrupt, incompetent; and unethical graduates who in the future becomes a burden to society (Feday, 2017).

Normalization of Corruption

Corruption, despite its negative consequences has been around for years. To eliminate it, lot of efforts have been made by societies and governments, however, it seems to be on the increase especially in developing countries (Ighodaro & Igbinedion, 2020). To effectively address it, everyone is needed particularly the fundamental socializing agencies including schools and universities. However, when such institutions don't only failed in their effort to eradicate it but have turn to be one of the principal perpetrators by tolerating academic dishonesty for example, students will automatically conceptualized it as a normal behavior concurring with: the impacts of academic corruption include denying children access to quality and relevant education, making admission and university degree out of reached for the disadvantaged communities, misallocation of talents, replacing hard work to earn a degree with cheating; and the promotion of culture of corruption, manipulation; and favoritism among the younger generations and society at large (Deliversky, 2016). The Russian higher education system favors compliance with corruption and dishonesty as the more a student stays in the education system the more s/he becomes academically corrupt (Denisova-Schmidt, 2017). In a corrupt education system, students are not taught meaningful knowledge and skills to participate in national developments but rather socializing them to be corrupt which subsequently they accept and believed to be the norm of the society (Ludpa, 2016).

Frustrated Youths and Soaring Crimes

Inevitably, access to quality and relevant education is now a fundamental human right especially for children and young persons. With access to quality and relevant education, their future is seemingly

bright as they can be gainful employed either in the public or private sector or be self-employed (Ali & Jalal, 2018). With soaring unemployment, the youths are claimed to be a criminal time bomb as affirmed: scholarly corruption plants the seeds of hate, insurgency, criminality and militancy because the education sector can no longer execute some of its traditional roles by supporting governments to promote and maintain social equality, fair competition, selection and hiring based on competence and merit (Nwaokugha & Chinyere Ezeugwu, 2017). The impacts of academic corruption are numerous and threatening in nature and they include infrastructural deficiency, denial to access quality and relevant education, lack of emancipation and empowerment, talent deficit, frustrated and disgruntled citizens, increase in immorality, militancy; and insurgency (Nwaokugha & Chinyere Ezeugwu, 2017).

Development Retardation

With the advent of brain economy due to the unprecedented growth of the information and communication technology sector, any community or nation that failed to provide accessible, affordable, quality and relevant education to its citizens especially the youthful ones is highly at risk to development retardation and worst of all, decline in developmental gains (Nasab, 2017). This has become more apparent when almost all the sectors are hooked to modern technology which requires highly trained and skillful persons concurring with: the impacts of academic corruption do not only affect the lecturers-students relationship but it profoundly affects development of an entire nation and even a continent because of the fact that a whole generation is affected (Petrescu, 2019). With students graduating with poor grades and being socialized by learning different corruption methods, society will have to pay the cost since they will transfer these malpractices to their workplaces retarding societal socio-economic and political development (Denisova-Schmidt, 2017).

Similarly, academic corruption result in development retardation since the education system that produces that required skillful and highly educated human capital has ended producing incapable and corrupt graduates (Nwaokugha & Chinyere Ezeugwu, 2017). Additionally, academic corruption in any form is dangerous to the society be it, the wasteful and unequal application of educational resources, bribe to get admission, awarding unearned degrees, illegal appointment of teachers, illegal purchasing of equipment and materials, poor construction of facilities; and misallocation of talent significantly distorting development (Hallak, 2007).

Unemployment Increment

Unemployment is one of the biggest problems communities and nations are battling with. Thus, securing a job in a highly competitive labor market like today, is not an easy task especially, when the seeker is inadequately or poorly trained (Ukandu & Ukpere, 2013). Therefore, any failure by the education system to deliver quality and relevant education will unavoidably contribute to the increase in unemployment since all sectors are customers' satisfaction driven which is impossible to attain by poorly trained workforce as upheld: academic corruption hugely affect graduates because they end up not getting the required training, the fundamental objective of going to the universities and colleges;

and worse of all, they will not be employed since they don't have the capacity to practically deliver (Dimkpa, 2011).

Drivers of Academic Corruption

Corruption of any type is dangerous for the socio-economic and political development of any society as it entails among others things, few individuals illegally depriving society of its highly needed but scarce financial resources resulting in multiple social problems including political instability like military takeovers/coups and civil wars (Dawood, 2014) and (Neudorfer & Theuerkauf, 2014). However, for corruption of any nature to exist in society, particularly in highly placed institutions, it must be driven and/or committed by skillful people and worst of all, supported by highly trusted people in authority. Literature review has revealed that academic dishonesty has been existing in most education systems for decades and is committed by people of varying strata as vindicated: non-academic and administrative staff like other employees, have contributed significantly in academic corruption by ignoring students' inappropriate behaviors, selling admission letters, manipulating accreditation; and/or establishing degree/certificate mills (Denisova-Schmidt, 2017). Students contribute largely to the continuity of corruption in the education system via numerous ways like examination cheating, plagiarism, attending classes or examination on behalf of a colleague, giving gifts or making payment in exchange for admission, grades, copies of examination and test papers, preferential treatment, graduation; and fake credentials (Denisova-Schmidt, 2017). In general terms, academic corruption can happen at any level of the service delivery such as, at the macro, meso; and micro level and broadly they can be classified as grand corruption, mostly occurring in constructions and petty corruption, mostly happening in the classroom and basic administration level, thus, all categories of staff are in one way or the other involved (Deliversky, 2016).

Similarly, in Nigerian's universities, academic corruption is a reality and it involves students, lecturers, gate security officers, parents; and administrators (Dimkpa, 2011). The corruption in the academia can be either administrators driven, faculty-driven, non-academic staff-driven, student-driven, or a combination of some or at worst, all of them (Hallak, 2007). In Nigeria, academic corruption starts with the security officers at the gate who collect money from parents just to allow them to meet the school authorities (Nwaokugha & Chinyere Ezeugwu, 2017).

Prevention of Academic Corruption

Establishing Competent Accreditation Agencies

Development of any community is closely tied to its resources especially the human capital for the simple fact that it is the human capital that discovers, utilizes and manages the others for society to benefit. To perform this critical function, the human capital must be highly and well trained (Nda, 2013). However, with rampant academic corruption, this is seemingly becoming unattainable unless among other things, higher learning institutions are accredited by well-functioning quality assurance institutions concurring with: to eliminate academic corruption, it is critical that there is institutional

and programs accreditation, academic journal accreditation, information sharing and whistleblowing, institutions monitoring, levying hefty punishments, ranking institutions based on honesty and integrity; and allowing and encouraging quality assurance institutions to take leadership in the crusade (Nabaho & Turyasingura, 2019).

Levying Hefty Punishments

It seems for some people, in spite of unshakeable evidence, believe that honesty and hardworking doesn't usher in any success instead backwardness (Kusuma et al., 2019). Therefore, for them, the best option for success is getting involved in crime and criminal activities. However, committing crime is not an easy task in view of the fact that it entails taking huge risk especially in the academia. Most people including the dishonest ones get involved in certain activities if not in all, after weighing the cost and benefit. In academic corruption, like all other fraudulent activities, if the benefits outweighed the cost, the tendency of engaging in it, is heightened. However, with hefty punishment being in store most will be reluctant to get involve thus, deterring crime concurring with: to salvage the image of universities in societies, the government of South Africa shut down 42 bogus colleges and universities that were awarding sham degrees and running unaccredited programs, including three bogus, supposedly US-based universities awarding degrees in 15 days (Mohamedbhai, 2016). To reduce academic dishonesty in universities, it calls for among others, supporting students to develop self-esteem and confidence, implementing rules and regulations without compromise, levying tough sanctions, reviewing and updating existing laws to catch up with recent forms of sophisticated cheating technologies, developing and implementing technology based cheating detection strategies; plus revisiting and improving lecturers earnings and living conditions (Bachore, 2016).

Imposing Strict Laws to Regulate Behaviors

For societies to develop there must be peace and stability which among other means can be attained by regulating behaviors. Thus, behaviors especially, the abnormal ones can be destructive as they result into social incompetence and as such, laws need to be enacted and enforced to ensure people desist from behaving badly (Hukkelberg et al., 2019). Academic corruption no doubt is a destructive behavior and deserves to be eliminated particularly by applying strict laws as affirmed: to fight corruption in the academia, it demands the promulgation and popularization of strict anticorruption laws and policies in all universities and colleges (Denisova-Schmidt & Prytula, 2017). Academic corruption can be reduced via formulation and implementation of strong codes of conduct, anti-corruption laws, standard transparency criteria and procedures implementation; and establishment of monitoring and evaluation units with the right equipment and logistic support including competent and highly motivated staff (Deliversky, 2016).

Similarly, academic corruption can be decreased if the rules and regulations pertinent to human, financial; and material resources management are well documented, transparent, accessible and firmly understood by all relevant stakeholders (Poisson, 2010). To eliminate corruption in the school system, it is critical that the following areas are regulated by strict legislations and policies: finance, allowances

allocation, construction, equipment purchasing and distribution, textbooks writing and production, appointment and training of staff, lecturers' behaviors, information system, examinations; and accreditation (Hallak, 2007).

Promoting High Level of Transparency

Efficient public institutions are fundamental in any rapid national development endeavor. However, if they are not strictly managed they can be abused by selfish individuals and groups. To avert such, many strategies have been adopted including the promotion of transparency and accountability (Lederman et al., 2005). With transparent and accountable governance system, tax payers, human rights activists, whistle blowers, etc. are hardly restrained in accessing information regarding the operation of these institutions including universities reducing dishonesty if not eliminating it as malpractices are easily and quickly discerned and exposed for immediate actions as scholarly unearthed: to save the higher education system from academic dishonesty, it is important that among other things, transparency and administrative fairness, quality governance, academic accuracy; and strict financial management is never compromised at any cost and level (Petrescu, 2019). Corruption in the academia can be eliminated if there is high level of transparency, automation; and computerization of transactions in the all systems of administration (Poisson, 2010).

Enabling Capacity Building

For people to effectively participate in community and national development, they need the required knowledge, skills; and experiences. Fighting and subsequently eliminating corruption in most societies, especially in developing nations is not only difficult but risky as in most cases the people engage in such are well connected and above all, ready to eliminate any whistleblower as in some jurisdictions guilty perpetrators or corruptors face the death penalty as it is perceived to be the most serious crime (Fajrin et al., 2020). Thus, to eradicate corruption in societies including public institutions moreover, in universities and colleges, it is critical that quality assurance officials and journalists are highly empowered as asserted: to eliminate academic corruption in the education system, it requires among others, establishing and maintaining standards pegged on the world standard, increasing budgetary allocations; and the strengthening of different management levels in the whole system (Deliversky, 2016). To reduce academic corruption donors and governments should support universities through funding and capacity building to strengthen accreditation institutions, development and production of information technology solutions like anti-plagiarism and fraud-proof certificates softwares and so forth (Kirya, 2019). Corruption in the education system requires transparency and standardized regulations, developing management capacities; and encouraging greater public participation in the schools and universities management (Poisson, 2010).

Cancellation of Visa and Residential Permit

A valid visa and residential permit is fundamental in the life and living conditions of travelers and foreigners for without them, one cannot in the first place enter some countries where visa is required. In the same vein, without valid residential permit, a foreigner/immigrant is illegally staying in a host

country exposing him or her to all kind of risks and problems including being deported, imprisoned and worst of all, unlawful death (Ry, 2017). Thus, the refusal of issuing visas and residential permits to international students and academics guilty of academic dishonesty can be very resourceful in the fight against academic corruption in higher learning institutions as authenticated: to reduce academic corruption among the international students, cancelling their visas, is an excellent option and for the national students, the introduction of national examinations under strict supervision for admission can be another good practice (Denisova-Schmidt, 2017).

Developing Proper Computer Soft Wares

Ensuring the security of lives and properties is one of the cardinal civil contracts citizens have signed with their respective governments. Thus, to deliver and on time, governments are legally bonded to explore all avenues. Without doubts, science and technology has played significant roles in discerning and reporting abnormalities ranging from natural to manmade disasters (Fatih & Bekir, 2015). Developing and installing computer soft wares has proven useful in the battle against criminal activities including academic dishonesty as attested: the fight against academic corruption requires formulation and implementation of anti-corruption policies, developing computer soft wares to detect fake credentials, promotion of transparency among all universities, establishment of association of universities and all stakeholders conversant with the fight against corruption in education establishments; and the continuous propagation that university education is neither a business nor an industry, but social commodity impregnated with strict values (Mohamedbhai, 2016).

Summary and conclusion

Academic corruption in education system especially in the tertiary institutions is severely dashing the hopes and aspirations of societies particularly the younger generations who are legally entitle to quality and relevant education for better future and above all, to effectively take part in future national developments.

The results indicate that there are various types of academic corruption, cause by different factors and are negatively impacting societies. The most common types include examination malpractices, taking bribes, plagiarism, embezzlement and funds diversion, grades for sex, sham journals and research dubbing, illegal appointment, favoritism and ghost employees; and inflating contracts and school charges. While the causes entail marketization of higher education, government withdrawal of financial support, lack of anti-corruption legislations, large class size and poor study habits, stigma of failing, corporatism, poverty; and poor salaries, the negative impacts encompass tarnishing institutions' images, poor quality education and incompetent graduates, normalization of corruption, frustrated youths and soaring in crimes, development retardation; and unemployment increment. To prevent the menace, it requires the establishment of accreditation agencies, levying hefty punishments, strict laws to regulate behaviors, high level of transparency, capacity building, visa and residential permit cancellation; and computer soft wares development.

Undoubtedly, the lack of required education and skills due to the unprecedented increase in academic corruption is not only denying young people access to employment and other opportunities, it is literally forcing them into criminal activities as they cannot secure jobs in the highly competitive and brain based economy. Thus, urgent actions are needed to address the phenomenon.

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I declare that there is no conflict of interest with respect to the study, authorship and/or publication of the manuscript.

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