

# Manifestation of corruption in higher education: the role of the University administrator

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## ABSTRACT

Corruption has infiltrated into the higher education system in different forms and dimensions. The study adopted a number of qualitative research methods to elicit the results. The paper therefore, provides critical discussion on some policy documents, reports from Transparency International, critical discourse analysis to examine the texts from a critical perspective, experiential knowledge which draws on a decade of personal experiences as administrators in the University and the current issues on corruption involving the public sector of Ghana. It reviewed the issues of corruption based on idealism, rational choice and anomie. Two major sources of corruption were identified (administrative and academic) in higher education in Ghana however, manifested in different forms such as through admissions, procurement, leadership influence recruitment, promotions/appointment, academic dishonesty, cheating, leaking examination papers, plagiarism, favoritism and many more. The study revealed that corruption is found almost everywhere; it does not only occur in poor or developing countries but also in developed countries. It concluded by viewing corruption as a complex and ancient phenomenon and its roots lie deep in bureaucratic and political institutions and its effect on development varies from country to country. The paper therefore recommended that the Government should put in place national institutions to take care of the unemployed, aged and destitute and close up the salary gap between the professor and the office clerk paying special attention to the Ghanaian moral values.

**Key words:** Corruption, Higher Education, Manifestation, Transparency, Accountability.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education constitutes the largest element in the public sector in many countries of the world, often accounting for over a fifth of total government public sector expenditure. Education is a fundamental human right and a driver of personal, social and economic development. It is seen as the key to a better future, providing the tools that people need to sustain their livelihoods, live with dignity and contribute to society (Gareth et al., 2013). Education strengthens personal integrity and shapes the societies in which we live. Since education typically

comprises between 20 to 30% of a country's budget, it is critically prone to corruption, from the Ministries of education to Basic Schools and Universities.

According to the Global Corruption report (2013) compiled by Transparency International, education sheds light on the many shapes and forms that corruption in education can take. It shows that, in all cases, corruption in education acts as a dangerous barrier to high-quality education and social and economic development. It jeopardizes the academic benefits of higher education

institutions and may even lead to the reputational collapse of a country's entire higher education system.

University education in Africa is regarded as key to a better future, and has the potential to provide the tools that people need to improve livelihoods and live with dignity. But according to Transparency International, systemic corruption is eroding benefits that could be accrued from higher education. The roots of corrupt practices lie in a lack of transparency and accountability. The inability to access information prevents communities and individuals from being able to monitor budgets and demand answers from those in power. For example, a 2010 Transparency International survey of 8,500 parents and teachers in seven African countries showed that 40% of parents pay illegal fees for education. Education corruption in higher education is also embedded in political and corporate undue influence in research, plagiarism and ghost authorship of academic papers. The Global Corruption Report on Education also cites many examples of bribery in university admissions and administration. The survey also revealed an elaborate system of bribes being paid to hall tutors and porters to secure student accommodation. According to Navanethem Pillay, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights corruption cuts across societies, states and cultures and diverts funding from state budgets that should be dedicated to bringing hope to many young people.

Corruption in education is particularly burdensome for the poor, who, according to the 2010/2011 Global Corruption Barometer, are twice as likely to be asked to pay bribes for basic services as wealthier people. Transparency and strong accountability mechanisms make it harder for corrupt school officials and university staff to disguise this corruption. Identifying and eliminating corruption in the education sector is essential to ensuring that learning opportunities are not undermined. Most African Nations including Ghana have undertaken myriad initiatives to fight corruption in all levels of education. Activities range from providing legal assistance to witnesses of fraud in higher education, to initiating an intensive Public Accounts Committee (PAC), which studies the expenditure of the public sector in Ghana. Corruption, no matter in which spheres it occurs, poses a critical threat to the enjoyment of human rights. It weakens institutions, erodes public trust in government and impairs the ability of states to fulfil their human rights obligations. Corruption and its proceeds are not confined within national borders, nor is its impact on human rights. It typically diverts funding from state budgets that should be dedicated to the advancement of human rights, including the right to education. It also undercuts both access to and the quality of education, and hits hardest at the most vulnerable and marginalized sectors of society: those who have limited possibilities to defend

themselves. Children who are confronted by corruption and a disregard for human rights in their early childhood and within their schools may not develop an appropriate sense of dignity, integrity and respect for social and cultural norms. They may become accustomed to corruption and the disregard for societal norms, and consider these practices a natural part of social interaction.

Education, in addition to being an entitlement, is instrumental in promoting development, social justice and other human rights. Education has the potential to instill hope in our children and encourage a spirit of common and shared responsibility for our planet and for humanity. The values imparted through education are perhaps its most important product. By striving to help students to internalize values and principles such as dignity, integrity, liberty, equality and non-discrimination, participation, accountability and transparency, education can play a critical role in anti-corruption efforts and the promotion of social cohesion, and it is therefore crucial that they are reflected in curricula, in textbooks and in practice. Education in particular is an effective tool to make children aware of their dignity and rights and to prepare them to guard against corruption and violation of individual rights within their own societies.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

In recent years corruption is considered a pervasive phenomenon. Of late, Ghana has recorded a huge number of corruption cases cutting across all spheres of the public sector including the Education Ministry. In one case, a businessman, defrauded the State to the tune of GH¢ 51.2 million, nineteen criminal cases were also filed against the former Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency (GYEEDA) boss for defrauding the state of over \$2 million and documents and investigations revealed that from September 2013 to July 2014, the Executive Director of the National Service Scheme paid an amount of GH¢7.9 million to 22,612 nonexistent or "ghost" National Service Personnel monthly implying that annually payment is about GH¢94,970,400 in undeserved allowances paid by the State. In attempt to cover up, he offered the Officials of Bureau of National Investigations (BNI) bribe to conceal his financial fraud.

As if that was not enough, some officials of the Ghana Football Association (GFA) and other individuals were alleged to have misappropriated GH¢4,483,262 at the Brazil 2014 World Cup. In a report released by Transparency International, Ghana scored 48 points to place 61st out of 175 countries in the 2014 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). This does not mean that corruption is not a serious problem in Ghana because,

like two-thirds of the rest of the 175 countries ranked by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, Ghana scored below 50, on a scale of 0 (perceived to be highly corrupt) to 100 (perceived to be very clean). There are also newspaper reports, radio and television news about corruption in the education sector of the country. In view of these incidences of corrupt practices in the public sector, this study sought to unveil how corruption is manifested in higher education in Ghana.

## CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

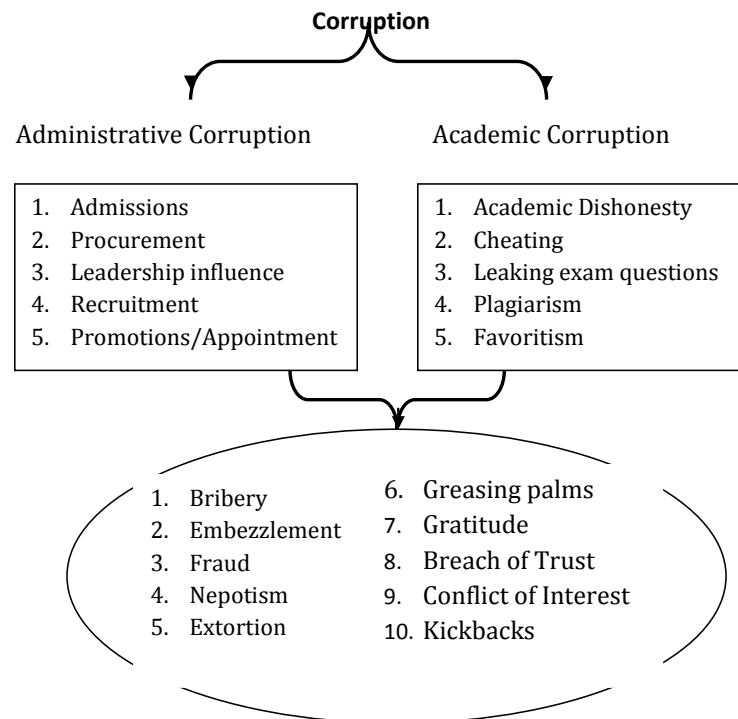
Corruption is a social phenomenon that is difficult to define, and it does not have a universally accepted definition. The definition varies depending on the inclination of the scholar and perception of the concept. Andrig and Fjelstad cited in Mohammed (2013) are of the opinion that corruption is a “complex and multifaceted phenomenon with multiple causes and effects, as it takes on various forms and contexts”. Similarly, Tanzi, (1998) is of the view that while it is hard to define corruption, the crisis that is linked to corruption is not difficult to identify. Azelama (2002) defines corruption as any action or omission enacted by a member of an organization, which is against the rules, regulations, norms, and ethics of the organization, and the purpose is to meet the selfish end of the member at the detriment of the organization. The World Bank (World Bank Independent Evaluation Group, 2006) defines corruption as “the abuse of office for private gains.” Public office is abused for private gain when an official accepts, solicits, or extorts a bribe. Agbu (2003) observes that public office can be abused for selfish gain even if bribery does not take place.

This implies that corruption could be defined in the form of patronage, manipulation, favoritism in the award of contract, procurement scam, tribalism and nepotism in recruitment and promotion, unfair punishment/sanctions for public officials. Many ordinary people also pay bribes to public servants in order to secure employment, gain school admission for their children, or to quickly obtain a service that is being provided slowly. Some public officials falsely increase the cost of building projects and pocket the difference. In the course of their regular duties, many professionals such as administrators, lecturers, accountants, architects, bankers, doctors, insurers, lawyers, manufacturers and pharmacists engage in illegal practices that cost the nation billions of cedis while enriching them personally. Such behaviour has many negative effects on Ghana's development. Corruption is a complex issue, grounded in a country's social and cultural history, its political and economic development, and its bureaucratic traditions and policies. To generalize, corruption tends to flourish, when institutions are weak and economic policies distort market

place (World Bank, 1997). An alternative definition of corruption is the exchange of wealth for power, where the power is rooted in a public position (Jain, 2001). This definition may be expanded by adding the possibility of exchanging power for power as a form of corruption. This article draws on both definitions of corruption and applies them to education-related corruption. Ruzindana (1999) asserts that corruption is a problem of routine deviation from established standards and norms by public officials and parties with whom they interact. He also identified the types of corruption in higher education as bribery, private gain, and other benefits to non-existent workers and pensioners (called ghost workers) (Figure 1). The dishonest and illegal behavior exhibited especially by people in authority for their personal gain is corruption. Corruption is a social and ethical problem. It's like a disease to a country and only compared with cancer.

Corruption is found almost everywhere; it does not only occur in poor or developing countries but also in developed countries. Corruption is a complex and ancient phenomenon and its roots lie deep in bureaucratic and political institutions and its effect on development varies from country to country. It has been observed that corruption is becoming a cultural problem in Ghana especially in higher educational institutions. Ghanaians and for that matter leadership in higher education have now tolerated corruption to the extent that employees steal in broad day light and yet nothing is done. As a result of this some Departments, Sections, and Units take entrenched positions to the extent they are branded as “you will never win”. This implies that no matter the number of times they are exposed to the Management of the University nothing will be done to them. Corruption has therefore become a habit of institutional culture. It has become a wild fire that has engulfed higher educational institutions such that Leadership no longer condemned those who steal from the public purse but rather praised them. Money has become the greatest value which has traded with integrity, honesty, moral code and so on. In the same vain society respect the rich and do not care how such individuals make their money. According to (Huntington, 1989) corruption is the behavior exhibited by public officials which deviates from accepted norms in order to serve private ends”. What is conspicuously clear about this much-used definition is its emphasis on social constructivism: corrupt is that which is considered corrupt at a certain place and at a certain time. He opines that after all, ‘accepted norms’ change over time. He further argues that corruption in general is wrong and claims corruption is not always a matter of black and white. The norms at a certain place and at a certain time are not shared by everyone.

Corruption in higher education may take multiple forms and permeate all areas of the system. Heynemann (in press) provided an overview of the categories of



**Figure 1.** Manifestation Processes of Corruption in Higher Education. Source: Fieldwork 2015.

corruption in higher education and distinguished between corruption in selection, corruption in accreditation, corruption in procurement, professional misconduct, and corruption in educational property and taxes. However, this study has specifically categorized corruption and have distinguished between two different acts of corruption in higher education. These are the administrative and academic corruptions.

### Administrative Corruption

A set of rules and regulations exist that set a framework for permitted administrative activities in higher education. Any administrative act in breach of the rules and regulations that designed for private gain would be deemed as an example of administrative corruption. Corruption in any society, institution or country is relative and is defined according to the value system. World Bank and Transparency International define administrative corruption as follows: “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain or for family relations and interests” (Jalilkhani, 2010). Administrative corruption is the abuse of roles, powers, or resources found within public bureaucracies. It may be initiated by line or staff officials, their superiors, or the agency clients. The latter will usually be private parties (for example, applicants for

admission), but particularly in large and centralized institutions; clients might also be individuals or institutions from elsewhere in the public sector.

This entry considers the complexities of defining administrative corruption, some common varieties, major causal factors and consequences, the central role of administrative corruption and public administration theories in reform movements, and the effects of changing relationships between the public and private sectors on the basic concepts of administrative corruption. Administrative corruption is a subset of the broader phenomenon of corruption, and is commonly distinguished from political corruption. Corrupt practices in the administrative realm of higher education according to Atalas (1999) draws a distinction between different forms of corruption, namely, nepotism, bribery, extortion, fraud, graft, patronage, ghost worker phenomenon, greasing palms, kickbacks, breach of trust and official theft, to name a few, can occur through offering admissions, procurement scam, recruitment, promotions/appointment and exercise of bureaucratic power (Badie et al., 2011). The Transparency International report highlights illicit payments for admission of students to degree programmes, tribalism and nepotism in recruitment to tenured positions, and bribery in on-campus accommodation and grading (Kigotho, 2013).

According to United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), although enrolment in higher education has been growing faster in Sub-Saharan Africa than in any other region of the world, still only around 7% of the age cohort was enrolled in 2010. Subsequently, paying a bribe especially in order to gain admission to a degree programme of choice has been on the increase in most universities in the region.

Administrative Corruption goes beyond giving and taking bribes. In addition to economic crimes, many forms of unlawful and improper conduct negatively affect higher institution development due to Management's: failure to obey the law; wastage/mismanagement of public resources or using them for purposes other than what they were intended for; undermining the administration of justice; destroying the environment; and engaging in actions which threaten or endanger the safety of individuals and the public. These issues are more of Management's roles they play in terms of corruption other than generalizing them as administrative corruption. These are termed as management failures or support for corrupt practices that have engulfed higher education in Ghana.

### **Academic Corruption**

As an increasingly widely recognized higher education (HE) ethical issue, academic corruption encompasses and is done through undue influence in research, plagiarism, ghost authorship of academic papers, fraud (academic dishonesty), cheating, favouritism, leaking examination papers and other such behaviour. It may occur at institutional and systemic levels as well as the individual level. Since the 1990s, academic corruption has had a negative impact on nearly every aspect of the Ghanaian educational System (Transparency International, 2010) cited in (Kigotho, 2013). Commenting on the situation in Nigeria, a senior lecturer at Redeemer's University highlighted that whereas rules for academic promotion are clear, there is a divide between the rules and practices of advancement in academia. "Academics who are loyal to the vice-chancellor are likely to be promoted regardless of merit," said Omotola, who has taught in several public and private universities in Nigeria (Kigotho, 2013). At the international level, academic corruption has become a prominent issue in higher Education; some argue that the world is witnessing a dramatic increase in the phenomenon (Altbach, 2004, 2005; Hallak and Poisson, 2007). There have been numerous instances of academic corruption reported in countries from the US to Russia, from India to Italy and from Nigeria to Georgia (Altbach, 2004; Orkodashvili, 2010).

The Higher Education Corruption Monitor (HECM) (HECM, 2005) reports that academic corruption can be

found in both developed and developing countries, but is especially prevalent in nations whose higher education systems are under severe pressure resulting from economic hardship, or have little external supervision and inadequate quality assurance mechanisms, and also in countries where societal corruption is pervasive. These features are more often found in developing countries, thus highlighting the critical need to address academic corruption in the process of HE development in these nations. The report purported that all these forms of corruption could be manifested through bribery, nepotism, extortion, kickbacks, breach of trust and dishonest behaviour. There is a clear distinction between student-administrator exchanges of any form of breach of norms that sets aside the cases of corruption mediated by administrators as opposed to those initiated by professors or staff members.

Cases involving faculty members deciding to take bribe in exchange for an undeserved grade raises issues regarding norms of academic profession as well as formal and informal codes of conduct (Goode, 1957) and professional misconduct (Braxton and Bayer, 1999). Cases involving the coercion or invitation to collaborate with a faculty member by an administrator to give an undeserved grade demand a discussion on administrative ethics, quality of leadership, and distribution of power between administrators and professionals. A similar but not identical distinction maybe drawn in cases when administrators bypass, coerce, or collaborate with staff members on education-specific corruption. Although both staff and administrators violate the law when engaged in corruption, involvement of an administrator indicates the depth of penetration of corruption in the organization and decayed leadership of the university.

### **Idealistic Theory**

This theory is based on the proposition that it is people's ideas that influence their culture, behaviour, organization of their society; therefore, corruption is the nature of social and moral values prevailing in the society (Nkom, 1982). This theory explains corruption in terms of some selfish ideas, which are prevalent in the value system of the society (Anazodo et al., 2012). A simple extension of this logic leads to perception of corruption as emergent perversion of morality and value system in the society. This argument sets the platform on which the positions of two different schools of thought were built. These are the traditionalist school and the modernist school. The argument of the traditionalist is that corruption and unethical practices in society are symptoms of perversion of traditional values, beliefs, norms, ethics, and so on (Azelama, 2002). This school blames corruption on invasion of African culture by the West. This school

opined that during the colonial era, civilization was highly regarded as Europeanization of African societies, so whether the adopted strategy was that of indirect rule or principle of assimilation, a cultural transformation was aggressively pursued by the colonial masters in the areas of pattern of education, religion, value system, governance, politics, language, administrative and legal systems, and so on. They believed in cleansing the cultural elements and attributes that they saw as substandard to those of European societies; they would enthrone a cultural revolution that was indispensable to the development of African societies (Azelama, 2002).

The cultural contact between Western Europe and African Traditional societies produced a cultural change in Africa. Africans embraced some aspects of the European culture and value. Embracing European culture did not lead to rejection of their traditional values; this led to a "culture conflict." Before the advent of colonization, African societies had their conventional way of preventing and penalizing corrupt practices. Azelama is of the opinion that, to a varied extent, Ghanaians continue to be influenced by traditional religious beliefs, even those who claim to be devoted Christians, Muslims, and educated elites, which is regarded as the "culture conflict." The resultant effect of culture conflict today is that African traditional values have proved too weak while adopted European values proved insufficient in restraining and preventing corrupt practices (Azelama, 2002, 2005).

The African traditional value that was based on communal life was eroded by the western value of monetized economy, materialism, capitalism, without Africans or Ghanaians fully internalizing corruption control mechanisms in the new system evolved in Africa by the West. Therefore, the people's moral value became perverted, leading to endemic corruption. This implies that culture contact led to materialism that occasioned greediness, reduced devotion to communal services, and so on. The modernist perspective is that corruption in Ghana is a remnant of the unyielding attitude, institution of the African traditional societies. The modernist idealists associate corruption with certain traditional practices such as offering of gifts, ethnic loyalty, and other parochial tendencies (the obligation to protect members of your kinship and your nation), which tend to encourage corrupt behaviour and which may be overcome by modern rationalist values (Anazodo et al., 2012; Azelama, 2002).

### **Rational Choice Theory**

This theory is also referred to as the public choice theory. The rational choice theory fundamentally assumes that individuals are fundamentally egoistic and self-seeking who will only enter into relationship or transaction based on rational calculation of benefits and costs. The theory

assumes that individuals act to benefit themselves and not society per se. From the perspective of this theory, public servants work to advance their own interest through a myriad of ways such as forging documents, underestimation and overestimation, taking bribes or stealing from the state coffers. Zey (1992), analyzing the works of Coleman (1990) Friedman and Hechter (1988), observes that the central thesis of the rational choice theory depicts that "social interaction is basically an economic transaction that is guided in its course by the actors" rational choices based on rigorous calculus approach; humans, or man of neoclassical economic theory and its rational derivatives are selfish and greedy, or at least exclusively self-interested" (Zey, 1992).

This calls for the establishment of effective mechanisms to monitor man's activities especially individuals in authority who wield public trust (Zey, 1992; Coleman, 1990; Downs, 1966; Buchanan and Tullock, 1962). This rational choice theory has been identified for this study because it is applicable to the behaviour of individuals who use their authority and power to advance their personal interest. The theory explains why some public officials abuse public trust by engaging in corrupt practices that undermine the efforts of overall national growth and development.

### **The Anomie Theory**

The anomie theory sought to explain the pressures that society exert on its members as many of the reasons individuals are disposed to engage in antisocial and/or illegal behaviors. Those under the societal pressure are conditioned to enact corrupt behaviors. This theory is associated with Merton and Chinoy. Merton (1957) and Chinoy (1967) argue that the society sets goals for groups and individuals and the same society prescribes the means of attaining these goals. There are individuals whose means are not enough to attain the goals set for them by the society, leading to breeding of corrupt and unethical behaviour. Merton is of the opinion that individuals in the society receive messages of what is normal in addition to acceptable behaviour from societal institutions.

From the perspective of Merton as cited in Murphy and Robinson (2008), normal is that which is the "psychologically expectable, if not culturally approved, response to determinate social conditions".

Most people, most of the time, abide by society's rules of behaviour, thereby remaining "normal." Yet, pressures from social institutions, specifically from expectations associated with the societal goal, can lead some "to engage in nonconforming/Unethical behaviour among which is corruption rather than conforming conduct" (Merton, 1957; Murphy and Robinson, 2008). The central theme of Merton's theory with regard to deviance and

criminality asserts that criminality is a function of an overemphasis on the goals associated with accumulation of wealth, as well as a disjuncture between the goals valued by society and the means available to individuals to achieve them (Merton, 1957). Therefore, the primary instrument through which deviance and criminality are fostered has its origin in goals means discrepancies (whether because of an overemphasis on cultural goals or goal blockage; Murphy and Robinson, 2008).

The Ghanaian society institutes value system and attitudes, which dictate expectation from its citizens and employees without considering income differential. This pressure could lead to the sufferers enacting corrupt and unethical behaviour in an attempt to meet the expectations of the society. Educational elite, politicians, bureaucrats, religious elite, traditional rulers, managers of public enterprises, contractors, and so on are sufferers of this phenomenon in society (Azelama, 2002). In Ghana, the society does not accept any reason as good enough for an employed graduate not to have a good car and a good visiting home. Political leaders, contractors, managers in a public sector, and other professionals have no acceptable reason to the society for not living in affluence, donating much money at launchings (Azelama cited in Ijewereme, 2013). Society tends to overemphasize the individual goal attainment at the expense of the legitimate means of achieving these set goals (Anazodo et al., 2012).

In Ghana, people hail you when you have accumulated wealth, material acquisition has virtually become the ultimate goal and the society does not appear to be concerned with how one "makes" it. "Born again Christians" say it is a break through. They pretend not to know that you have acquired the wealth through illegitimate means. Those who are yet to make it are regarded as those whose miracles are on the way if they are "born again Christian." These value systems in our society invariably exert pressure on people, which leads to various forms of corruption such as embezzlement and misappropriation of public fund, offering and acceptance of bribe, over invoicing, armed robbery, illegal road blocks by police officers, rigging of elections, examination malpractice, resorting to magical practices by many pastors of new generation churches to attract crowd for monetary gains, and so on, which in all acts as a clog in the wheel of development in Ghana. Merton anomie is highly operational in Ghana, but the theory mainly attributes criminality/corruption to an array of social causes/societal pressures. The theory fails to explicitly link criminality as a function of personal states of egoism and selfishness.

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The focus of the study is on how corruption is manifested

in higher education in Ghana, with special attention given to various authors on corruption. In respect to this objective, a number of qualitative research methods were used in this study: document analysis to look at relevant African documents especially Ghanaian policy documents and gain an in-depth understanding of them; critical discourse analysis to examine the texts from a critical perspective; experiential knowledge which draws on a decade of personal experience as administrators in the University for Development Studies and researchers who have worked in the Academic Affairs Section of the University. The study also interviewed long serving staff from Faculties, Schools and the Central Administration in Tamale which is the main seat of administration of the University using the purposive sampling approach. It must however, be made clear that irrespective of the fact that the interviews focused on the role of the administrator in curbing corruption, the paper dwelt most on the critical analysis of the policy documents, reports on corruption from Transparent International and published articles on corruption. The blend of approaches is intended to unearth how corruption is manifested in higher education.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents contended that the culture of the Ghanaian society has made almost every citizen more prone to corrupt activities. This assertion was supported by the concerns of the Centre for African Democratic Affairs (CADA) which is of the view that the fundamental factors that engendered corrupt practices in Ghana include: great inequality in the distribution of wealth; political office serving as the primary means of gaining access to wealth; conflict between changing moral codes; the weakness of social and governmental enforcement mechanisms; and the absence of a strong sense of national community (CADA, 2015). Either of these sources spread to other areas of the public sector including higher education. The salary gap between the professor and the office clerk is so enormous that, any vacuums created for the office clerk serves as a prominent point to close up this wealth gap. It is further supported by Azelama (2010) assertion that the Ghanaian society does not accept any reason as good enough for an employed graduate not to have a good car and a good visiting home.

Political leaders, contractors, managers in a public sector, and other professionals have no acceptable reason to the society for not living in affluence, donating much money at launchings. Based on this assertion, junior and senior staff extort money, take bribes and sometimes defraud parents/guardians and job seekers under the pretense of seeking admissions or employment for them. Most of the staff interviewed were of the view

that, the lack of ethical standards in the higher education system and other public sector departments and agencies in Ghana is a serious drawback. The issue of ethics in public sector and in private life encompasses a broad range, including a stress on obedience to authority, on the necessity of logic in moral reasoning, and on the necessity of putting moral judgment into practice. All these are as a result of poor reward systems, greed, peer community and extended family pressures, and polygamous household. The influence of extended family system and pressure to meet family obligations are more in less developed societies. This supports the rational choice theory where Coleman (1990) observes that the central thesis of the rational choice theory depicts that "social interaction is basically an economic transaction that is guided in its course by the actors" rational choices based on rigorous calculus approach; humans, or man of neoclassical economic theory and its rational derivatives are selfish and greedy, or at least exclusively self-interested".

In response to the effects of corruption, respondents emphatically stated that corruption is no doubt negatively impacting on Ghana's economic growth and increasing public spending on education and other sectors. The effect of corruption on education comes from the fact that the government deliberately allocates relatively more funds towards specific sectors to make room for graft. And corrupt government officials would shift government expenditures to areas in which they can collect bribes easily. This buttresses the new report published by Transparency International which indicates that Ghana's educational sector, for instance is riddled with corruption. The 2013 Global Corruption Report predicts that the standard of education is falling in Ghana because corruption has tainted schools and universities in the country. Respondents expressed dismay about how the extended family system in Ghana places a heavy dependency load on the single individual who might have made it in life. This is because Ghana lacks national institutions to take care of the unemployed, aged and destitute. The Social Security and National Insurance Trust and Pension Funds are full of heavy doses of corruption as the workers there are now the supposed beneficiaries and the actual beneficiaries are relegated into limbo.

A poor Ghanaian in Ghana with meagre pay has to fend for himself and a host of dependants whose expectations are high. This coupled with the Ghanaian materialistic craving to build extravagant mansions and to buy expensive cars and clothing to show off. In view of this cultural norm, Murphy and Robinson (2008) opines that, normal is that which is the "psychologically expectable, if not culturally approved, response to determinate social conditions". Most people, most of the time, abide by society's rules of behaviour, thereby remaining "normal."

Yet, pressures from social institutions, specifically from expectations associated with the societal goal, can lead some "to engage in nonconforming/Unethical behaviours among which is corruption rather than conforming conduct" (Merton, 1957; Murphy and Robinson, 2008).

### **The Role of the University Administrator in Curbing Corruption**

Corruption requires a multifaceted attack. Respondents were therefore of the opinion that it requires, for example, a set of regulations against corrupt practices, a code of conduct for employees and clients, awareness raising campaigns, training of staff, internal controls, sanctions and incentives, protection of whistleblowers and an open approach towards information reporting. The respondents argued that administrators as part of their official responsibilities are a pivot around which corruption can be fought. However, the administrators can succeed only if the enabling environment exists for fighting corruption. Khan (2006) in support of this view, he opines that "as a starting point for administrators to fight corruption is to hold on to the traditional assumptions about the behaviour of the staff with respect to the university's business and should not commence audit planning with the suspicion of corruption". He posited that the administrator should remain alert to the opportunities for corruption at the stage of familiarization of the university and its operations and therefore, proceed cautiously. Performance audits can be an especially powerful instrument to help prevent corruption.

Respondents were also of the view that University Administrators can help to create such social cohesion and internalize norms and mores that should be strictly adhere to and they have an ethical responsibility to do so: There are many universities where corruption is almost unknown and there are millions of students who, if given the opportunity to cheat, would not because of their adherence to the social norms and mores. To turn around a circumstance from one in which corruption is common to one in which it is unknown requires consistency in action and diligence in policy formulation, interpretation and effective implementation which are the tenets of a good administrator. In crutch of this assertion Andrew and Arjan (2013) posit that any degree of social consensus involves norms around fairness and equity. Different societies have different levels of tolerance for inequality and for varying equality of opportunity and social mobility. Such norms are dynamic and tolerance for increasing inequality is likely to be greater in societies which are experiencing sustained improvements in living standards for all than under conditions of recession. In response to the role of Administrators in curbing corruption, respondents stated that administrators should lead by virtue of moral principles, rise to the occasion and



lead on the basis of practical assessment of risks and benefits regardless of the source of strength, given the commonality of their resistance, by so doing, it can be said that there is in fact a universally accepted standard of managing the university.

The standard should encompass promising to treat staff and students with fairness and impartiality. It should also include recruitment and selection, promotion and appointments and investigate rumors and cases to the latter before implementing sanctions. In line with this assertion, Nkom (1982) states that people's ideas influence their culture, behaviour, organization of their society; therefore, adhering to the moral principles could make corruption unattractive in the society. It is generally understood that performance auditing can help detect corruption (Dye and Rick, 1998). A properly planned and executed performance audit would highlight areas of mismanagement, inefficiency and failure to achieve results and impact. The argument is that if a project or programme has been planned properly, it should be possible to implement it with due regard for effective and efficient management and it should achieve its results. If it exceeds its planned costs significantly or takes much longer than envisaged or does not achieve what was intended, then there is a possibility that the people involved in its management may have indulged in corruption. Although the above argument is plausible, yet the existence of mismanagement, inefficiency or ineffectiveness is not a conclusive proof of corruption. There could be genuine reasons of human failings, or complex and difficult environmental factors which inhibited the achievement of objectives. There could, simply, be a case of unintentional human negligence, not taking into account all the risks and costs.

Thus, performance auditing carried out in a routine manner may not indicate a concrete evidence of corruption. Performance auditing can, however, provide some clue to corruption if it exists. For this purpose, the performance auditors need to go a step deeper into the issues identified during the audit planning stage (Khan, 2006). Respondents contended that to strengthen the higher educational structure of the country, there are four measures that seem to be necessary for the effective elimination of corruption which are principles administrators ought to implement. The four measures are institutionalization of structural reforms, which may be necessary to change the environment that makes corruption more common; measures to isolate and prevent corruption behaviour; measures to adjudicate cases in which infractions may have occurred; and finally measures to inflict sanctions and effectively translate the implications of those sanctions to the university community and the public at large. Administrators as a matter of policy requirement should use the Procurement Act 2003 and Act 663 as a tool to strengthen the weak

systems and/or institutions of accountability, and regularly ensure checks and balances. It is worth noting that section 93 of the Act states that "entities and participants in a procurement process shall, in undertaking procurement activities, abide by the provisions of article 284 of the Constitution".

The act stipulates that institutions go through National and International Tendering procedures depending on the amount involved in a particular procurement. These are very transparent procurement processes which help in the fight against corruption in the sense that contracts are not just awarded to individuals or institutions but qualified suppliers win contracts only after going through a competitive procurement process. This is to ensure fairness and transparency which the Act seeks to promote. It is therefore a mandatory responsibility of administrators to ensure that these underlying principles are strictly followed. The Act notwithstanding all odds is a very effective tool for the fight against corruption in Ghana. Practitioners and entities therefore need to be educated on the provisions of the act and the consequences of breaching those provisions for both the practitioners and entities and service providers.

Staff and students should be encouraged to tip off and whistle-blow on wrongdoings: If decent employees and students have the necessary motivation to re-veal offenses, the costs of administrative corruption will increase for both sides and this helps reduce the supply and demand of administrative corruption. Freedom of the press is another effective way of exposing corrupt employees. Management must therefore accept that information dissemination is the number one enemy of corruption and that a powerful mechanism for giving information about corruption are the media, then freedom of the press will have significant effects on minimizing the expansion of corruption (Farhadi, 2011) as cited in (Parvaneh and Masoud, 2013).

### Conclusions and Recommendations

For the effective control of corruption in higher educational institutions, management must develop a culture of relative openness, in contrast to the current bureaucratic climate of secrecy. A merit system of awarding contracts instead of the tribal bias, linkages, nepotism and favouritism, which have coloured the institutional landscape should be adopted in employment and equity distribution of resources to all offices, units, sections and department of the university. More importantly, the leadership must muster the leadership will to tackle the problem head-on regardless of where it occurs, what causes it or the form it takes, the simple fact remains that corruption is likely to have a more profound and different effects on higher education in terms of graduate output and procurement of quality materials and

resources.

This is due to a variety of conditions, which cannot deviate significantly from the nature of their underdevelopment. Corruption has a corrosive effect on institutional development if the canker is not stopped and considering the economic down-trend of the country with her relative limited resources. The Public Procurement Act is a very effective tool for the fight against corruption in Ghana. Practitioners and entities therefore need to be educated on the provisions of the act and the consequences of breaching those provisions for both the practitioners and entities and service provider's. If the Act is allowed to work without the perceived manipulations it will be one of the most effective tools with which to win the battle against corruption. It has been presumed that the antidote and recipe to the diseases of corruption are crystal clear. It is to go back to the African traditional values of hard work, honesty, communal lifestyle, neighborliness and celebration of good characters and track record in governance, and so on.

Corruption has a moral dimension, but it can be understood and combated through the application of political-economic principles. A first step in the understanding of corruption is the documentation of the incentives for private gain built into institutional and administrative processes. Next is an evaluation of the social costs when officials and private citizens succumb to these incentives. Part of the reform agenda should involve explaining the social harm of corruption and trying to change a culture of tolerance both within government and in the citizenry and the business community. Moral persuasion may work if backed up by concrete arguments for why corruption is harmful to society. Reformers should not simply point to corruption and appeal for people to change their behaviour; rather they should demonstrate that reducing corruption provides real gains, not just symbolic victories. The key point is to encourage people to look beyond the net gains from any particular corrupt deal to see how tolerance of corruption has negative systemic effects. Adopting the rational choice theory as a matter of principle is one of the surest approaches to reducing corruption because it teaches people to behave well because such actions are in the public interest. A change in behaviour needs to be in their interest as well. A political-economic approach can go beyond documenting the costs of corruption to suggest ways to lower its incidence and impact by constantly monitoring programmes and activities to increase transparency and accountability. That strategy both reduces the corrupt incentives facing bribe payers and recipients and facilitates effective public oversight by the population.

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