



CESSPOOL OF CORRUPTION AND INADEQUATE FUNDING IN FEDERAL TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN KADUNA STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Salvation, Joshua Selven¹, Joshua, Rinarimam², Goje, Hadiza³, & Gong, Chai Deme⁴,
^{1&4},Department of Accounting, Faculty of Management Sciences, Plateau State University, Bokokos,
²National Boundary Commission, Aguiyi-Ironsi Way, Maitama, Abuja,
and
³Bursary Department, Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State
Corresponding Author: jsalvationselven@plasu.edu.ng

Abstract

This study explored how corruption and inadequate funding affect federal tertiary institutions in Kaduna State, Nigeria, and their broader impact on national development. Employing a quantitative survey design, data were collected from 442 respondents across six institutions using a stratified random sampling technique. Analytical tools such as the Relative Importance Index (RII) and regression analysis were applied to evaluate the prevalence of corruption, the effects of funding shortages, and the effectiveness of proposed mitigation strategies. Findings revealed that corruption especially academic fraud, bribery, and embezzlement pose a greater threat to institutional performance and national progress than funding shortages. Drawing on Resource Dependence Theory, Fraud Triangle Theory, and Fraud Diamond Theory, the study links institutional vulnerabilities, financial pressures, and a heavy reliance on inconsistent government funding to an environment ripe for corruption. Additionally, regression analysis shows that implementing anti-corruption measures such as digital reforms, ethical training, and stricter penalties can significantly curb malpractice and bolster institutional integrity. The study concludes by emphasizing the need for coordinated reforms to address both ethical and financial challenges. By focusing on transparency, accountability, and sustainable funding, Nigeria can strengthen its tertiary institutions, improve workforce quality, and drive long-term socioeconomic development enhancing the overall impact of the sector on national progress. These findings offer actionable insights for policymakers, educators, and development stakeholders.

Keywords: Corruption, Inadequate Funding, Tertiary Education, National Development, Kaduna State, Nigeria

1.0 Introduction

Education is universally recognized as a cornerstone of national development, providing individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to drive sustainable economic growth,

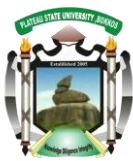


foster innovation, and address societal challenges (Bako et al, 2021; Ayeni & Ezirim, 2023). Among the various levels of education, tertiary education holds a unique position as a strategic investment in human capital. It is designed to produce a skilled workforce capable of assuming managerial, technical, and leadership roles across diverse sectors, including economics, politics, and social development (Ajape et al., 2020). In Nigeria, tertiary institutions are expected to play a pivotal role in national development by equipping graduates with the competencies needed to tackle pressing issues such as unemployment, poverty, and technological backwardness. However, the ability of these institutions to fulfill this mandate is severely undermined by systemic corruption and chronic underfunding, which have led to infrastructural decay, poor student welfare, and frequent industrial actions (Madu, 2020).

The Nigerian government has introduced several policies to address these challenges, including the National Policy on Education (NPE) and increased budgetary allocations to the education sector. For instance, the 2024 budget allocated approximately N2.18 trillion to education, representing about 7.9% of the total budget (Businessday 1 December, 2023). While this marks an improvement, it still falls short of UNESCO's recommendation that developing nations allocate 15-20% of their budgets to education (Oteyi & Nnadiyeze, 2023). Additionally, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has been instrumental in providing financial support to universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. Despite these efforts, the persistent underfunding of tertiary institutions has resulted in inadequate infrastructure, low staff morale, and a decline in the quality of education (Dan'azumi, et al, 2020; Lucky, 2024; Oyeleye et al., 2024). This study focuses on federal tertiary institutions in Kaduna State, exploring the dual challenges of corruption and inadequate funding and their implications for national development.

The problem of corruption and insufficient funding in Nigeria's tertiary education sector has severely undermined the management and delivery of quality education, particularly in federal institutions located in Kaduna State. The lack of adequate funding has led to the deterioration of critical infrastructure, a shortage of instructional materials, and poor welfare conditions for both staff and students. This problem is exacerbated by the misappropriation and mismanagement of allocated funds by institutional leaders, which obstructs effective planning, management, and oversight of these institutions. As a result, the Nigerian tertiary education system is struggling to maintain basic operational standards, prompting many educators to seek opportunities abroad and contributing to a brain drain (Chioke & Agbodike, 2021).

The mismanagement of already limited funds has damaged the reputation of Nigeria's higher education system, leading to a decline in educational quality and frequent strikes by academic and non-academic staff. These strikes disrupt the academic calendar, further eroding the quality of education and hindering the institutions' ability to contribute to national development. Moreover, the diminishing autonomy of tertiary institutions and the lack of motivation among



staff due to inadequate incentives have hindered significant research and innovation. Public tertiary institutions are now struggling to provide even basic amenities, such as sufficient hostels, library spaces, lecture halls, and laboratories. Many academic staff members lack proper office spaces, forcing them to work under subpar conditions, which further undermines their productivity and the quality of education provided. Given these challenges, there is rising concern about whether Nigeria's tertiary education system can effectively contribute to national development by producing the skilled and relevant workforce the country requires.

The objective of this study is to explore the effects of corruption and insufficient funding on tertiary education in Nigeria, with a specific focus on federal institutions in Kaduna State. The study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these challenges impact the quality of education, infrastructure, and research capabilities of these institutions, as well as their broader implications for national development. To achieve this aim, the study is guided by several specific objectives:

First, it seeks to examine the prevalence and types of corruption in federal tertiary institutions in Kaduna State, identifying the various forms of corruption, such as embezzlement, bribery, academic fraud, and sexual harassment, that are prevalent in these institutions.

Second, the study aims to evaluate how inadequate funding influences the quality of education, infrastructure, and research capabilities in these institutions, assessing the impact of funding shortages on the provision of quality education, the maintenance of infrastructure, and the ability of institutions to conduct meaningful research.

Third, the study investigates the broader consequences of corruption and insufficient funding on Nigeria's national development, exploring how the challenges faced by tertiary institutions hinder Nigeria's ability to achieve sustainable economic growth, technological advancement, and social transformation.

Finally, the study proposes effective strategies to reduce corruption and improve funding for tertiary education in Nigeria, focusing on developing actionable recommendations to address corruption and enhance funding mechanisms, ensuring that tertiary institutions can fulfill their role in national development. By addressing these objectives, this study plays a significant role in the ongoing discourse about educational reform in Nigeria. It offers solid, evidence-backed recommendations aimed at enhancing the quality and effectiveness of tertiary education. Its implications stretch far into policy making, educational improvements, and national development.

Specifically, the study provides valuable insights for policymakers looking to tackle corruption and boost funding for higher education institutions. It also highlights key areas that require intervention to elevate educational standards and emphasizes the crucial part education plays in



fostering economic and social progress. Furthermore, this research adds depth to the academic literature on educational management and policy, making it a useful resource for future studies.

This study takes a closer look at federal tertiary institutions in Kaduna State, including universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education as its domain. It dives into the prevalence and types of corruption found within these institutions, evaluates the impact of insufficient funding, and considers the wider implications for national development.

2.0 Conceptual Review

This section reviewed the key concepts that form the foundation of the study, examines the theories supporting the research, and explores relevant literature related to the topic.

2.1 Corruption

Corruption The word "corruption" comes from the Latin term "corruptio," which translates to "to decay," "to rot," or "to degenerate" (Brunnelle-Quaraishi, 2011; Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017). At its essence, corruption is all about breaking ethical or legal standards for personal gain (Olanegan et al., 2022). The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) describes corruption as a variety of illegal activities aimed at creating illicit wealth (Oladele, 2019). To put it simply, corruption is when public power is misused by elected officials, appointed officials, or civil servants for their own benefit (Corruptie.org, n.d.).

Many scholars and organizations (Osipian, 2012; Adebajo, A. 2014; Ahmodu & Sofoluwe, 2018; GIACC, 2020) have characterized corruption as the exploitation of public office for personal benefit. This can manifest in numerous ways, including bribery, extortion, fraud, nepotism, embezzlement, falsification of records, kickbacks, and money laundering. Despite the global focus on corruption, finding a universally accepted definition has proven challenging for scholars, largely due to differing cultural interpretations and understandings. However, the harmful impacts of corruption on individuals, organizations, and nations are widely recognized.

For this paper, we will adopt the definition of corruption provided by Frazier-Moleketi (2007): "a transaction or an attempt to secure illegitimate advantage for national interests, private benefit or enrichment, through subverting or suborning a public official or any person or entity from performing their proper functions with diligence and probity." This definition by Frazier-Moleketi (2007) acknowledges the various forms of corruption that exist within both the public and private sectors of Nigerian society where trust is frequently undermined..

2.1.1 Corruption in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

A growing body of research highlights the widespread nature of corruption in Nigeria's tertiary education system (Okogbule et al., 2025; Ogunbunmi & Adefabi 2024; Ayeni & Andeshi, 2023;



Jerome & Anekwe, 2022; Akinniyi et al., 2021). As noted by Ogunode et al., (2021), corruption in these tertiary institutions manifest in various forms including embezzlement, bribery, academic fraud, and sexual harassment. These unethical practices have eroded the quality of education and undermined public trust in the system.

One disturbing example is the practice known as “sex for marks,” also referred to as “transactional sex” or “sexually transmitted grades.” In such cases, female students engage in sexual relationships to secure academic advantages, while male lecturers take advantage of vulnerable female students to boost their grades (Vanguard, 2021). This troubling trend underscores the moral decline within these institutions (Ogunode & Isaac, 2021). Additionally, fraudulent admissions processes, where students gain entry through bribery or personal connections, have undermined the merit-based system, leaving deserving candidates at a disadvantage (Nwachukwu, 2021).

The mismanagement of funds, often involving embezzlement by certain administrators in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, has further exacerbated the problem, leading to substandard facilities and poorly paid academic staff (Okebukola, 2020). These corrupt practices not only hinder the institutions' ability to deliver quality education but also contribute to a brain drain, as talented academics and students seek opportunities abroad (Chioke & Agbodike, 2021). The normalization of corruption in Nigerian tertiary institutions is reflected in cultural expressions such as “Egunje” (Yoruba), “Chuachua” (Hausa), and “Igbuozu” (Igbo), which signify the entrenchment of corrupt practices in societal norms (Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017). This systemic corruption has far-reaching implications for national development, as it undermines the production of a skilled and ethical workforce capable of driving economic growth and innovation (PremiumTimes, 2023).

Also, Academic corruption in Nigerian universities includes a range of unethical behaviors, such as manipulating grades, plagiarism, sexual harassment, and cheating during exams. Terms like “sorting” or “blocking” describe situations where students offer money or favors to lecturers in exchange for higher grades. On the other hand, “upgrading,” “jack-it-up,” or the phrase “miracle no dey taya Jesus” refers to unauthorized changes to grades made by exam officials, sometimes at the request of higher-ups. Other dishonest practices involve helping students cheat, impersonating others during exams, and pressuring students to purchase handouts or materials, often benefiting only those who comply. These actions seriously damage academic integrity and create a harmful learning atmosphere (Ogummokun, 2019; Akinniyi et al., 2021).

Furthermore, corruption in accreditation is also a significant issue. Regulatory bodies like the NUC, NBTE, NCCE, and MLSCN are tasked with ensuring that programs in Nigerian tertiary institutions meet quality and global standards. Unfortunately, some institutions find ways to



game the system. They might list fake staff members, borrow facilities, or hire temporary lecturers just to tick the boxes for accreditation. Sometimes, the oversight panels are aware of these irregularities but choose to turn a blind eye, which really undermines the credibility of the whole process (Nwachukwu, 2021). Other corruption issues in tertiary institutions include students extorting their peers on behalf of lecturers, ghost worker schemes, hostel profiteering, and even certificate forgery. Lecturers often push to supervise projects for students from wealthy families, all while lobbying for high-enrollment courses to boost their Earned Academic Allowance (EAA). These practices not only compromise educational standards but also hinder national development (Olugbamila, 2019; Ahaotu & Ogunode, 2021).

2.2 Inadequate Funding

Inadequate funding is another significant challenge facing Nigerian tertiary institutions. Despite the government's recognition of education as a crucial driver of national development, funding allocations have consistently fallen short of international standards. For example, Nigeria's 2024 budget allocated only 7.9% to education, far below UNESCO's recommended 15-20% (Oteyi & Nnadijeze, 2023). This chronic underfunding has resulted in severe infrastructural deficits, with many institutions lacking adequate lecture halls, laboratories, and student hostels (Akinniyi et al., 2021). Poor student welfare, characterized by overcrowded hostels and inadequate healthcare facilities, has also been a recurring issue, leading to dissatisfaction and high dropout rates (The Guardian Nigeria Newspaper, 2024). Furthermore, the lack of funding has hindered research and innovation, as researchers often lack the necessary resources to conduct meaningful studies (Ogunode et al., 2021). The combination of corruption and inadequate funding has created a vicious cycle, where limited resources are further depleted by mismanagement, leaving institutions unable to fulfill their mandate of producing skilled graduates for national development. For instance, the misappropriation of TETFund allocations by university administrators has been widely reported, with funds meant for infrastructural development and staff welfare being diverted for personal gain (Punch Newspaper, 2020). This mismanagement not only exacerbates the funding crisis but also erodes public trust in the education system, discouraging private and international investments in the sector.

2.3 Implications for National Development

The combined effects of corruption and inadequate funding in Nigerian tertiary institutions have far-reaching implications for national development. A poorly educated workforce is less capable of driving economic growth, technological advancement, and social progress. For instance, the lack of skilled graduates in critical sectors such as engineering, medicine, and information technology has hindered Nigeria's ability to compete in the global economy (Madu et al., 2016). Moreover, the brain drain caused by the exodus of talented academics and students to foreign institutions further depletes the country's intellectual resources, limiting its capacity for innovation and development (Chioke & Agbodike, 2021). The persistence of corruption in



tertiary institutions also erodes public trust in the education system, discouraging investment in education and reducing the overall quality of life for Nigerians. When education fails to fulfill its role as a tool for social and economic mobility, the broader goals of national development become increasingly difficult to achieve. For example, the inability of tertiary institutions to produce competent professionals has led to a reliance on expatriates in key industries, further straining the economy and perpetuating underdevelopment (Ogunbunmi & Adefabi, 2024). Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort to enhance transparency, accountability, and funding in Nigeria's tertiary education sector, ensuring that these institutions can fulfill their role as drivers of national development.

2.4 Theoretical Underpinnings

This study employs three interrelated theories to explain how corruption and inadequate funding hinder the performance of Nigerian tertiary institutions. The Resource Dependence Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) points out that when institutions rely heavily on external resources like government funding, they become vulnerable, especially if those resources are lacking or poorly managed. The Fraud Triangle Theory (Cressey, 1953) shows that underfunding creates both pressure and opportunities for fraud, with individuals often justifying unethical behavior as a necessary response. Building on this, the Fraud Diamond Theory (Wolfe & Hermanson, 2004) introduces the idea of capability, suggesting that those in positions of power typically have the means and access to commit fraud. Together, these theories highlight how structural weaknesses and ethical failures contribute to corruption and inefficiency in Nigeria's higher education system.

2.5 Literature Review

A substantial body of literature consistently identifies corruption and insufficient funding as the most pressing challenges confronting Nigeria's higher education system, with far-reaching implications for national development. Ahaotu and Ogunode (2021) examined administrative bottlenecks within Nigerian tertiary institutions, highlighting issues such as corruption, political interference, recurrent industrial actions, and limited institutional autonomy. They argue that resolving these challenges demands increased government funding and targeted policy reforms aimed at enhancing institutional effectiveness. Similarly, Chioke and Chinedu (2021) addressed the broader consequences of corruption on Nigeria's pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). According to them, corruption undermines institutional resilience, distorts policy implementation, and erodes governance structures. Hence, eliminating corruption is crucial for national transformation, particularly within the education sector.

Extending the conversation on governance, Nwafor and Isuku (2021) explored specific instances of corruption in universities, including bribery in admissions, embezzlement of funds, and nepotism in recruitment. They also noted that political interference, diminished staff



morale, and weak oversight mechanisms exacerbate these problems. Their findings call for structural reforms and a cultural shift within institutions to regain credibility and global competitiveness. In a similar vein, Ogunode et al. (2022) analyzed the financial dimensions of corruption in public universities, identifying inadequate funding, ineffective internal controls, and poor leadership as root causes. They advocate for immediate financial audits and institutional reforms to address these systemic flaws and rebuild public confidence in higher education.

Furthermore, Evans and Christopher (2023) investigated the effect of corruption on university education between 2004 and 2022. The researchers identified issues such as fund mismanagement, infrastructural decay, and academic staff shortages and recommended that, integrity-driven NGOs could help monitor university operations and curb corruption, especially in procurement, promotions, and contract administration. In concurrence, Eze (2024) investigated the impact of corruption on the availability of academic staff and infrastructure in Nigerian tertiary institutions using secondary data from both print and online sources. The study found a significant relationship between corruption and the persistent shortage of academic personnel as well as inadequate infrastructure. This, the paper argues, directly undermines the quality of tertiary education in the country. Additionally, Okogbule and Nkanee (2025) outlined the various forms corruption takes in the Nigerian educational context ranging from bribery and misallocation of resources to favoritism and examination fraud. They emphasized how such unethical practices demoralize educators, erode public trust, and ultimately impair national development. Their study stresses the importance of transparency, robust oversight, and ethical reforms to revitalize the education sector.

On the issue of underfunding, Ogunode (2020) identified several critical concerns including inadequate financial support, scarcity of qualified personnel, deteriorating infrastructure, academic instability, brain drain, and widespread academic misconduct. He also noted that the COVID-19 pandemic and restricted professional development opportunities have compounded these problems. Building on these insights, Akinrinade (2020) and Okebukola (2020) argued that persistent underfunding lies at the core of unethical behavior in tertiary institutions. Okebukola further emphasized that limited resources create adverse learning environments, thereby institutionalizing unethical conduct among both staff and students. Similarly, Salihu and Gambo (2022) contended that underfunding facilitates systemic corruption, particularly in environments plagued by poor infrastructure and inadequate remuneration.

Supporting this stance, Umudike Patricia Mbah in *The Guardian* (2022) opined that poor quality of teaching staff, poor staff welfare, lack of educational opportunities and poor academic attainment are major problems affecting Educational sector as a result of inadequate funding. In line with these observations; Maiyaki (2024) noted that the National Universities Commission (NUC) has recognized poor governance and inadequate funding as significant constraints to the quality and integrity of Nigerian universities. He advocated for policy reforms that emphasize institutional autonomy, transparency, and sustained investment in higher education. Lastly, Lucky (2024) echoed these concerns by criticizing Nigeria's consistent failure to meet



UNESCO’s benchmark of allocating 26% of the national budget to education. Instead, the country has persistently spent less than 15%, thereby significantly undermining the capacity of universities to deliver quality education.

3.0 Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative survey design to examine the impact of corruption and inadequate funding on national development in federal tertiary institutions in Kaduna State, Nigeria. This design enabled the collection and statistical analysis of numerical data to identify patterns and relationships among variables.

The study population comprised students, lecturers, and administrators across six selected institutions: Kaduna Polytechnic, Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria, Federal College of Education (FCE) Zaria, Federal College of Forestry Afaka, Airforce Institute of Technology (AFIT), and the Federal Cooperative College, Kaduna. These institutions were selected based on their size, prominence, and representation of various categories of federal tertiary education.

A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure balanced representation across the three stakeholder groups. Participants were proportionately selected from each stratum to reflect the diversity of roles and experiences. Data were collected using a structured online questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), distributed via institutional mailing lists, WhatsApp groups, and academic forums. Of the 600 questionnaires distributed, 540 were returned, and 442 valid responses (representing 82%) were used for analysis after thorough screening for completeness, coherence and correctness. Responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Relative Importance Index (RII) to rank items based on perceived significance. The RII was calculated using the following formula:

$$RII = \sum \frac{w}{A * N} \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

where w is the weighting as assigned by each respondent on a scale of one to five with one implying the least and five the highest. A is the highest weight and N is the total number of the sample. Based on the ranking (R) of relative indices (RI), the weighted average for the two groups will be determined. According to Akadiri (2011), five important levels are transformed from RI values: high (H) ($0.8 \leq RI \leq 1$), high- medium (H-M) ($0.6 \leq RI \leq 0.8$), medium (M) ($0.4 \leq RI \leq 0.6$), medium-low (M-L) ($0.2 \leq RI \leq 0.4$) and low (L) ($0 \leq RI \leq 0.2$). To test the hypotheses and examine the relationships between corruption, inadequate funding, and national development, regression analysis was conducted using Minitab v19. The regression model assessed the impact of corruption and inadequate funding on national development, while also evaluating the effectiveness of mitigation strategies. The model's significance was determined using p-values, and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was used to check for multi-collinearity among the predictors.



4.0 Data presentation and Analysis

This section analyses data from 442 valid responses across six federal tertiary institutions in Kaduna State. Descriptive statistics summarize demographics and trends, while the Relative Importance Index (RII) ranks key issues on corruption and funding. Tables and charts highlight patterns, relationships, and stakeholder perceptions affecting national development.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents' demographic

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	192	43%
	Male	250	57%
Status	Student	211	48%
	Lecturer	120	27%
	Administrator	111	25%
Institution	Kaduna polytechnic	92	21%
	ABU Zaria	81	18%
	FCE, Zaria	85	19%
	Federal College of Forestry, Afaka	84	19%
	AFIT	57	13%
	Federal Cooperative College	43	10%
Years In Institution	Less than 1 year	67	15%
	1-5 years	135	31%
	6-10years	116	26%
	Above 10years	124	28%

Source: Researcher's Computation 2025

The demographic distribution of respondents shows a fairly balanced gender representation, with 57% male and 43% female participants. The majority (48%) are students, followed by lecturers (27%) and administrators (25%), indicating that the study captures insights from key stakeholders in federal tertiary institutions. The respondents come from six institutions, with Kaduna Polytechnic having the highest representation (21%), while the Federal Cooperative College Kaduna has the lowest (10%). This diverse institutional spread ensures that the findings reflect a broad range of experiences and perspectives.

Regarding experience, 59% of respondents have spent more than six years in their respective institutions, suggesting that a significant portion of the sample possesses deep institutional knowledge. Those with less than one year of experience (15%) provide fresh perspectives,

balancing the data set. The variation in institutional affiliation and years of experience enhances the study's credibility, ensuring a mix of insights from both seasoned and newer members of the academic community.

Table 2: Ranking results of prevalent of respondents' corruption and inadequate funding

Opinions	Mean	RII	Importance Level
Prevalent of Corruption		0.818	
Bribery influences student admissions and staff recruitment in the institution.	4.161	0.832	H
Embezzlement and misappropriation of funds are common in tertiary institutions.	3.994	0.799	H-M
Academic fraud, such as result manipulation and plagiarism, is a major concern.	4.288	0.858	H
Nepotism affects staff recruitment, promotions, and scholarship awards.	4.142	0.828	H
Some students offer financial or material incentives to obtain better grades.	3.742	0.748	H-M
Lecturers sometimes demand sexual favors from students in exchange for grades.	4.226	0.845	H
Ghost workers and fake employment schemes are prevalent in institution	2.39	0.711	H-M
Exam malpractice, including leaked papers and impersonation, is on the rise	4.03	0.811	H
Inadequate Funding		0.722	
Insufficient funding leads to unavailability of modern teaching materials, methods and outdated curriculum	4.106	0.811	H
Poor funding leads to inadequate infrastructure (e.g., lecture halls, libraries, and hostels).	4.047	0.809	H
Lack of funds negatively impacts research and innovation in my institution.	4.234	0.847	H

Inadequate funding contributes to poor staff welfare and frequent strikes.	4.273	0.855	H
Government funding policies are insufficient to meet the needs of tertiary institutions.	3.564	0.713	H-M
Limited funding reduces access to scholarships and financial aid programs.	3.389	0.678	H-M
Low budget allocations restrict international collaborations and exchange programs.	3.724	0.745	H-M
The lack of funding limits the expansion and accreditation of new academic programs.	3.946	0.789	H-M

Source: Researcher's Computation 2025

The Relative Importance Index (RII) values reveal that corruption is a significant issue in federal tertiary institutions in Kaduna State. The most critical corruption-related problems, rated as high importance (H) ($RII \geq 0.8$), include academic fraud such as result manipulation and plagiarism (0.858), sexual favors for grades (0.845), bribery in admissions and staff recruitment (0.832), nepotism in recruitment and promotions (0.828), and exam malpractice (0.811). These findings suggest that corruption is deeply rooted in various aspects of institutional operations, affecting both staff and students. Additionally, embezzlement and misappropriation of funds (0.799), ghost workers (0.711), and financial inducements for better grades (0.748) fall within the high-medium (H-M) importance category, indicating that while these forms of corruption are still prevalent, they are slightly less impactful than academic fraud and bribery. The persistence of these unethical practices undermines the integrity of higher education, producing graduates whose qualifications may not reflect true academic merit.

Inadequate funding is another pressing challenge, with several issues ranked under high importance (H). The most critical include the negative impact of poor funding on staff welfare and frequent strikes (0.855), lack of research and innovation due to insufficient funding (0.847), inadequate infrastructure (0.809), and outdated teaching materials and curriculum (0.811). These results indicate that the financial struggles of institutions directly affect the quality of education, making it difficult for both students and lecturers to perform at an optimal level. Furthermore, government funding policies (0.713), limited access to scholarships (0.678), and restrictions on international collaborations (0.745) were categorized as high-medium (H-M) importance, showing that financial constraints extend beyond just infrastructure and staff welfare, affecting broader academic opportunities. These funding challenges limit the global competitiveness of institutions, preventing necessary improvements and expansions.

When comparing corruption and inadequate funding, corruption-related issues compared to funding-related issues This suggests that while financial constraints are a major issue,



corruption exacerbates the situation by diverting or mismanaging the limited resources available. Institutions not only suffer from a lack of funding but also from the misuse of the funds that are allocated. Both factors severely impact the quality of education and national development, but corruption appears to have a more immediate and widespread effect, as it directly influences the fairness, credibility, and operational efficiency of these institutions. Addressing these issues requires a dual approach: increasing funding while implementing strict accountability measures to curb corruption.

Table 3: Opinions on National Development

Opinions	Mean	SD	Remark
Quality tertiary education enhances human capital development in Nigeria.	3.79	1.70	Agreed
Well-funded higher education institutions contribute to technological innovation.	4.67	1.55	Agreed
A strong academic system promotes entrepreneurship and job creation.	4.60	1.49	Agreed
Improved research funding leads to advancements in healthcare and industry.	4.56	1.42	Agreed
Properly funded education enhances Nigeria's competitiveness in the global economy.	4.64	1.34	Agreed

Source: Researcher's Computation 2025

The findings in Table 3 above show a strong agreement among respondents on the role of quality tertiary education in national development, as all mean values exceed the threshold of 3. The highest-rated opinion, "Well-funded higher education institutions contribute to technological innovation" (Mean = 4.67), emphasizes the importance of adequate financial support in driving scientific and technological advancements. Similarly, respondents strongly agreed that a strong academic system fosters entrepreneurship and job creation (Mean = 4.60) and that improved research funding leads to advancements in healthcare and industry (Mean = 4.56). These results highlight the need for sustained investment in research and education to enhance industrial growth, innovation, and economic sustainability.

Additionally, the belief that "Properly funded education enhances Nigeria's competitiveness in the global economy" (Mean = 4.64) suggests that respondents recognize the global impact of a well-financed education system. While "Quality tertiary education enhances human capital development in Nigeria" (Mean = 3.79) received the lowest score, it still falls within the agreement range, indicating that respondents acknowledge its significance, albeit with some reservations. The overall implication of these findings is that under-funding in higher education

could hinder Nigeria’s progress in key sectors, reducing its ability to produce skilled graduates and compete on a global scale. Thus, policymakers must prioritize education funding, strengthen academic institutions, and support research initiatives to drive sustainable national development.

Table 4: Effective strategies to reduce corruption and improve funding for tertiary education in Nigeria

Opinion	Mean	S. D	Remark
Regular financial audits and external oversight will help reduce corruption in tertiary institutions.	3.72	1.41	Agreed
Implementing digital payment and grading systems will prevent bribery and fraud.	4.67	1.44	Agreed
Stronger penalties should be enforced for academic fraud, bribery, and embezzlement.	4.68	1.53	Agreed
Establishing whistle-blower protection policies will encourage people to report corruption.	3.61	1.49	Agreed
Increasing government funding for tertiary education will reduce financial pressure that leads to corruption.	4.51	1.56	Agreed
Public-private partnerships (PPP) can help support infrastructure and research funding.	3.50	1.33	Agreed
Ethics and integrity training should be mandatory for students and lecturers.	4.32	1.47	Agreed
Strict policies on sexual harassment and bribery should be enforced to protect students and staff.	4.66	1.525	Agreed
Computer-based examinations will help reduce exam malpractice and result manipulation.	2.73	1.46	Disagreed
Online portals for corruption complaints and monitoring will improve accountability in tertiary institutions	3.76	1.59	Agreed

Source: Researcher’s Computation 2025

The findings in Table 4 indicate strong agreement among respondents on various strategies to reduce corruption and improve funding in tertiary institutions. The highest-rated strategies include stronger penalties for academic fraud, bribery, and embezzlement (Mean = 4.68),



implementing digital payment and grading systems to prevent bribery and fraud (Mean = 4.67), and enforcing strict policies on sexual harassment and bribery (Mean = 4.66). These results suggest that respondents believe stricter enforcement measures, transparency in financial and academic transactions, and policies to protect students and staff are essential in combating corruption. Additionally, increasing government funding (Mean = 4.51) and mandatory ethics and integrity training (Mean = 4.32) were also rated highly, highlighting the need for both financial intervention and moral education to address corruption in tertiary institutions.

Interestingly, while most proposed strategies were agreed upon, computer-based examinations (Mean = 2.73) were disagreed with, indicating that respondents do not see this as an effective solution for reducing exam malpractice and result manipulation. However, public-private partnerships (Mean = 3.50) and whistle-blower protection policies (Mean = 3.61) received moderate agreement, suggesting that while these approaches could be beneficial, they may require better implementation frameworks to gain stronger support. Overall, the findings emphasize the need for a combination of financial oversight, stricter enforcement of penalties, digital reforms, and improved funding to curb corruption and enhance the quality of education in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Table 5: Regression Analysis on effect of corruption and inadequate on National Development.

Term	Coef	SE Coef	T-Value	P-Value	VIF
Constant	1.256	0.251	5.01	0.000	
Corruption Mean_score	-0.1523	0.0377	-4.04	0.000	1.06
Inadequate Funding Mean_score	-0.0512	0.0223	-2.30	0.022	1.01
Mitigation Mean score	0.8533	0.0389	21.92	0.000	1.06

Model Significant: p-value <0.0001 ; R-Sq =63.55%; Lack of fit; P-value=0.0714

Source: Researcher's Computation 2025

The regression analysis results in Table 5 provide key insights into the effects of corruption and inadequate funding on national development. The negative coefficient for corruption (-0.1523, p-value = 0.000) indicates that an increase in corruption significantly hinders national development. Since the p-value is below 0.05, this effect is statistically significant. Similarly, inadequate funding also negatively impacts national development (-0.0512, p-value = 0.022), though its effect is smaller compared to corruption. This suggests that while lack of funding is a challenge, corruption poses a more severe threat to progress. The low Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values (all close to 1) indicate that multicollinearity is not a concern, meaning the predictors independently influence national development.



On the other hand, the mitigation strategies (0.8533, p-value = 0.000) show a strong positive relationship with national development, meaning that implementing effective reforms can significantly improve the system. The fact that the coefficient for mitigation is higher than the negative effects of corruption and inadequate funding suggests that strategic interventions such as stricter policies, increased oversight, and ethical training can counteract the damage caused by corruption and poor funding. The model significance (p-value < 0.0001) and R-squared value of 63.55% indicate that the regression model explains a substantial proportion of the variation in national development. However, the lack-of-fit p-value (0.0714) suggests that while the model fits well, some unexplained variability still exists, possibly due to external factors not included in the analysis.

The implication of these findings is that tackling corruption should be a priority, as it has a greater negative impact than inadequate funding. While increasing financial support for tertiary institutions is necessary, it will not be fully effective if corruption continues to divert resources. The strong positive effect of mitigation strategies highlights the need for policy reforms, accountability mechanisms, and ethical training to restore integrity in the education system. To achieve meaningful national development, governments, academic institutions, and policymakers must focus on reducing corruption while improving financial resources and implementing strict regulatory measures.

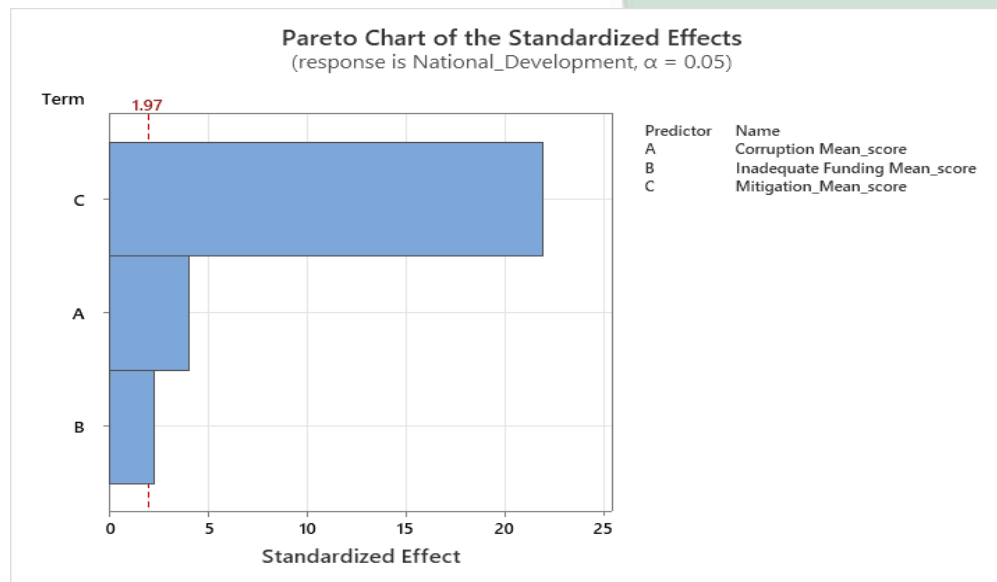


Figure 1: Pareto Chart for Standardized Effects of the Independent variables



5. 0 Discussion of Findings

This study underscores that corruption and inadequate funding are critical impediments to the performance of federal tertiary institutions in Kaduna State, Nigeria, with substantial consequences for national development. Although both issues are deeply problematic, findings reveal that corruption particularly in the form of academic fraud, bribery, and embezzlement has a more systemic and far-reaching impact than funding deficiencies. This outcome is consistent with the work of Ogunode et al. (2021), who emphasized the role of corruption in fostering brain drain and eroding academic quality in Nigerian universities.

The theoretical frameworks of the Fraud Triangle Theory (FTT) and Fraud Diamond Theory (FDT) provide strong support for these findings. FTT posits that corruption emerges when individuals face pressure (e.g., financial stress), perceive opportunities (e.g., weak oversight), and rationalize unethical actions. FDT expands on this model by adding the element of *capability*, suggesting that individuals with the necessary skills and access can exploit systemic weaknesses for personal gain (Wolfe & Hermanson, 2004). In the context of this study, widespread institutional weaknesses such as ineffective monitoring and lax enforcement mechanisms created fertile ground for such exploitation.

Moreover, corruption not only erodes public trust but also diverts limited resources, worsening the funding situation and further diminishing the quality of education and institutional performance. This finding aligns with Madu (2020), who noted that a decline in educational standards leads to the production of under-skilled graduates, thereby impeding national productivity and innovation.

Regression analysis from this study confirms that specific anti-corruption measures such as digital reforms (e.g., electronic payment systems, computer-based grading), stricter penalties, and ethical training significantly reduce the incidence of corrupt practices. These findings echo the recommendations of Akinniyi et al. (2021), who stressed the importance of transparency and accountability in academic institutions.

Although increasing government funding and encouraging public-private partnerships are essential for addressing infrastructural and research deficits, this study cautions that such financial interventions will be ineffective unless corruption is concurrently addressed. This conclusion is supported by Resource Dependency Theory (RDT), which highlights the vulnerability of institutions that depend heavily on inconsistent government funding (Pfeffer &



Salancik, 1978). This dependency, when coupled with underfunding, heightens susceptibility to corrupt practices as institutions seek alternative means of survival, often through unethical actions.

5.1 Conclusion

This study concludes that although inadequate funding poses a significant challenge to the effective functioning of federal tertiary institutions in Kaduna State, corruption presents an even more urgent and damaging threat. Corruption not only compounds funding shortages but also undermines institutional integrity, academic standards, and the development of a competent workforce. A comprehensive and integrated strategy that addresses both financial and ethical challenges is essential to reposition tertiary education as a driver of sustainable national development.

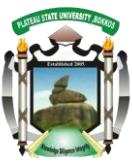
5.2 Recommendations

The following policy recommendations are proposed based on the study's findings:

- i. Dual Intervention Strategy: Develop integrated policies that address both corruption and funding issues concurrently.
- ii. Digital Transformation: Implement electronic systems for payments, registration, and examinations to enhance transparency and reduce opportunities for fraud.
- iii. Strengthened Oversight and Penalties: Enforce stricter sanctions against corrupt practices and establish reliable whistle-blower channels.
- iv. Ethics and Accountability Training: Institutionalize regular ethics training programs for both academic and non-academic staff, as well as students.
- v. Public-Private Partnerships (PPP): Promote collaborations with the private sector to diversify funding sources and enhance institutional innovation.
- vi. Sustainable Government Funding: Increase and monitor government allocations to education, ensuring timely and efficient fund disbursement.

5.3 Implications of the Study

The findings have critical implications for educational policymakers, institutional administrators, and development stakeholders. Corruption not only weakens the quality of education but also restricts Nigeria's capacity to leverage human capital for national progress. Establishing a transparent and well-resourced higher education system is essential for producing a workforce capable of driving innovation, economic diversification, and good governance. Failure to address these twin challenges will lead to further deterioration in educational outcomes and hinder national development.



5.4 Areas for Further Research

To build on the current study, future research should consider the following:

- Assess the effectiveness of computer-based testing and other digital solutions in reducing academic fraud.
- Examine the influence of whistle-blower protection laws and institutional autonomy on combating corruption.
- Conduct regional comparative studies to understand geographical disparities in corruption and funding challenges.
- Explore the long-term impacts of anti-corruption reforms on educational quality and institutional performance.



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