Assessing the Impact of Corruption in the Management of Educational Infrastructural Projects in Ghana

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Abstract

This study assesses how corruption impacts on the management of educational infrastructural projects in Ghana. Corruption is a constant concern for countries facing economic problems. Increasingly, researchers have devoted research to the discussion of the phenomenon; however, these discussions have focused mainly on the relationship between corruption and variables such as; economic development, social effects, innovation, firm management quality, gross domestic product (GDP), returns on investment, increase in government budget, political discontent, instability and violence, rule-violating intentions, democracy, and inequality. Despite the extensive research devoted to the subject, there is limited research on the potential impact of corruption on the management of educational infrastructural projects in developing countries. We, therefore, contribute to both academia and practice by assessing the potential impact of corruption on these projects using multiple project management success/failure criteria as the assessment tool. Using an in-depth semi-structured interview, we solicit the views of thirty (30) project management practitioners in Ghana on the subject. The findings indicate that corruption impact negatively on the management of Ghanaian educational infrastructural projects on all the performance criteria used as the evaluating tool. The findings indicate that corruption influence government projects failure on all the failure criteria used as the evaluating tool. However, most of the corrupt practices that impact negatively on these projects are traced to partisanship politics, political culture, national culture and institutional system in the country.

Keywords: Corruption; educational infrastructure projects; management criteria; Ghanaian government; political culture

Introduction

This study assesses how corruption impacts on the management of educational infrastructural projects in Ghana. Corruption is a constant concern for countries facing economic problems. Increasingly, researchers have devoted research to the discussion of the phenomenon; however, these discussions have focused mainly on the relationship between corruption and variables such as; economic development, social effects, innovation, firm management, quality, gross domestic product (GDP), returns on investment, increase in government budget, political discontent, instability and violence, rule-violating intentions, democracy, and inequality. Despite the extensive research devoted to the subject, there is limited research on the potential impact of corruption in the management of educational infrastructural projects in developing countries. We, therefore, contribute to both academic and (practice) literature, by assessing the potential impact of corruption on these projects using multiple project management success/failure criteria as the assessment tool. Using an in-depth semi-structured interview, we solicited the views of thirty (30) project management practitioners in Ghana on the subject through snowballing and purposive sampling selection approaches. Content and thematic analytical techniques were used by employing coding systems grounded in the interpretive philosophy and social constructionist paradigm.
The findings indicate that corruption’s impact negatively on the management of Ghanaian educational infrastructural projects on all the performance criteria used as the evaluating tool. The findings indicate that corruption influences government projects to fail on all the failure criteria used as the evaluating tool. However, most of the corrupt practices that impact negatively on these projects are traced to partisan politics, political culture, national culture and institutional system in the country. Findings from this study would not only extend the literature on corruption, public sector management in education sector projects, but, also policymakers, leaders and practitioners in education would be able to use the findings as a guide in order to improve infrastructure project management.

The rest of this paper is presented as follows: the next section reviews related literature and sets the ground for a theoretical framework for the study. Section three presents the methodology whilst section four presents the results and the discussion of the findings. The last section concludes the research by highlighting on the key findings, policy recommendations and suggestions for future research.

**Research Aim and Objectives**

This study assesses how corruption impacts on the management of Ghanaian government educational infrastructural projects. In order to achieve the aim of the study, the following objectives would be achieved:

1. To develop a theoretical framework for the study using literature review.
2. To conduct an in-depth semi-structured interview to solicit the views of public officials and project management practitioners who are involved or have been involved in the implementation of the Ghanaian government educational infrastructure project.
3. To analyse the data using content and thematic analytical techniques based on the theoretical framework developed.
4. To make recommendations based on the findings

**Statement of the problem**

Corruption is a constant concern for countries facing economic problems (D’Agostino et al., 2013). This has attracted the attention of researchers, hence, extant literature has been devoted to the discussion of the phenomenon; nevertheless, researchers have focussed their discussion mainly on the relationship between corruption and other variables such as social effects (Saha and Gounder, 2013); economic development (Treisman, 2000; Saha and Gounder, 2013; D’Agostina et al., 2016; Huang, 2016), social effects (Saha and Gounder, 2013), innovation (Paunov, 2016), firm management quality (Athanasiouli and Goujard, 2015), gross domestic product (GDP) (Pellegrini and Gerlagh, 2004), returns on investment (Boycko et al., 1996), increase in government budget (Hessami, 2014), political discontent, instability and violence (Aisen and Veiga, 2013), rule-violating intentions (Sundstrom, 2016), democracy (Jetter et al., 2015), and inequality (Dobson and Ramlogan-Dobson, 2012). In spite of the extant literature devoted to the discussion of the phenomenon, researchers have not paid attention to the relationship between corruption and educational infrastructure projects management in developing countries despite the pervasiveness of corrupt practices in these countries. We, therefore, contribute to the growing research areas of corruption and project management in developing countries by assessing how corruption impacts on the management of Ghana government educational infrastructure.

We focus on Ghanaian government educational infrastructural project management due to several reasons. One, the Ghanaian government context is important due to the essential role that Ghanaian government play in the infrastructural development of the country – particularly within the education sector. Literature indicates that government infrastructure projects play important role in national growth and development (Eichengreen and Vazquez, 1999; Alic, 2008). Government policies are often translated into programmes and projects (Goodman and Love, 1980; Bitler and Karoly, 2015);
and one of the key areas in which such projects/programmes are implemented is within the educational sector and Ghana being a developing country, the need to embark on infrastructure projects in the educational sector cannot be overemphasised. Second, we focus on corruption and the management of Ghanaian government infrastructural projects management due to the pervasiveness of corruption in the country (Gyimah-Boadi, 2002). The attention of many stakeholders have been drawn to the pervasiveness of the practice, hence, many fora and political platforms have been devoted to the discussion of the phenomenon (Bawumia, 2014, 2015; Addo, 2015). Corruption has been used as a campaign tool over the (Bawumia, 2014, 2015; Addo, 2015). Therefore, we propose that this practice would influence the management Ghana government educational infrastructure projects. The main question that this study seeks to address is: how does corruption impact on the management of Ghanaian government educational infrastructural projects.

**Literature Review**

**Ghanaian Government Educational Infrastructure Projects**

Over the years, a significant amount of money has been solicited from taxpayers, IMF, World Bank and donor agencies and countries to embark on infrastructural development projects (Ghana Republic Budget, 2012, 2015). One of the key areas in which such projects are implemented is within the education sector. Despite the improvement in the education since independence from British colonial rule, as a result of the World Bank and IMF-supported projects (World Bank, 2004 for); the sector continues to suffer from an infrastructural deficit. Accordingly, successive government have made it a priority in closing this gap. For instance, one of the key areas of the educational reform programme embarked on by the NPP government in 2007 was to add more infrastructure in the existing secondary schools, so that the increased in the duration of senior high school from 3years to 4years could be sustainable (Daily Graphic, 2008). In 2012 up to 2016, the NDC government also embarked on the building of infrastructure in order to implement free education. The government was of the view that before free education could be possible, there need to be increased in infrastructure as they perceive that free education in the secondary schools would attract more people into education (Nyarko, 2011). Despite this proactiveness in the implementation of infrastructural projects in the education sector, many of these projects suffer several setbacks such as total abandonment, time overrun, cost overrun and requirement deviation. Many reasons could be assigned to these setbacks, however, in this research we focus exclusively on corruption as a source of this setback. We, therefore, propose that corruption could lead to Ghanaian government educational infrastructural project management. Thus, corruption could lead to Ghanaian government educational infrastructural projects abandonment, time overrun (delays), cost overrun (over budget), and wrong quality and quantity of projects deliverables.

**Corruption in Ghana**

Corruption is one of the most discussed topics in the country in recent years – especially in the last decades; particularly, corruption in the public sector management continues to attract a lot of discussions during political talk shows, forums and workshops (Bawumia, 2014, 2015; Addo, 2015). Many of these forums have resulted in public demonstrations and agitations by the public and pressure groups (2015, Bawumia, 2014, 2015). Even though finding criminal codes for corruption definition is difficult, corrupt practices such as bribery of local or foreign government officials and private companies, “facilitation of payments”, fraud, embezzlement, theft, collusion, and rent-seeking exist in the country (World Bank, 2017). These practices are pervasive and it has to do with motive and opportunity (Gyimah-Boadi, 2002). Gyimah-Boadi (2002) explains that opportunities to indulge in corruption often occur when institutional systems for accountability are weak and moral decency is very low among public officials. The weak institutional systems are echoed in the work of Killick (2008), Amoako and Lyon (2014) and Asunka (2016).

Transparency International Report on corruption index of countries has often rated Ghana among the most corrupt countries in the World. Consistent with the World Bank definition, the report defines corruption as the abuse of public office for private gain and measured the degree to which corruption
is perceived to exist among a country's public officials and politicians. However, the Tax Justice Network has criticised this definition for creating the impression that it only public officials who may be indulged in these practices (Tax Justice Network (TJN), 2016). Consistent with the World Bank (2017) and TJN (2006) include practices such as market rigging, insider trading, tax dodging, non-disclosure of conflicts of interest, and illicit party funding. To this end, this study adopts the TJN definition of corruption. We adopt this definition because, in the management of Ghanaian government educational infrastructure projects, it is not only the public officials who are involved, but also the private individual companies and therefore, this definition would cover all aspects of corrupt practices within the sector.

Theoretical Antecedents of Public Sector Educational Infrastructure Projects in Ghana

Corrupt practices that may impact on the management of Ghanaian government educational infrastructural projects implementation may be explained in several ways. First, the cultural orientation of Ghanaians towards government sector management. The Ghanaian attitude towards public sector work is poor (Amponsah, 2010; Damoah and Akwei, 2017). Some authors such as Amponsah (2010), Damoah et al. (2015), Damoah (2015) and Damoah and Akwei (2017) trace this poor attitude towards government sector work to cultural orientation of Ghanaians during the colonial rule. For instances, Amponsah (2010) and Damoah and Akwei (2017) found that the fundamental reason for government sector projects failure could be traced to the colonial era; when the public sector work was perceived to belong to the ‘Whiteman’ and as such could be handled haphazardly. Despite the departure of the white man and colonial rule, this sub-cultural mind-set has not changed. Accordingly, people managing the sector perceive that it is an opportunity to take as much as possible from the nation (as their share of the national “cake”), hence, when the opportunity to abuse their power for personal gains presents itself to them, they would take it (Amponsah, 2010; Damoah and Akwei, 2017). Further, this could also be attributed to the national culture as espoused by Hofstede, (1983). Hofstede proposes six cultural dimensions that explain the sub-cultural attributes of the country. They include Power Distance; Individualism; Masculinity; Uncertainty Avoidance; Long-Term Orientation and Indulgence. Accordingly, the Ghanaian cultural attributes have been exposed as presented in Appendix A for further emphasise. We argue that these cultural attributes may have an influence on corrupt practices in the country and may impact on the management of the country’s government educational infrastructural projects implementation.

The political culture within the country could impact on the management of government educational infrastructural projects implementation. Ghana practices multi-party democratic system; which has resulted in partisanship politics in the management of the public sectors (Bob-Milliar, 2012; Damoah et al., 2015; Asunka, 2016; Damoah and Akwei, 2017). It has further resulted in a winner takes all approach in the appointment of leaders of the public sector institutions as the Constitution demands (Ghana constitution, 1992). For instance, the constitution allows the government to appoint a lot of heads of public institutions, hence, appointment often made on partisanship lines rather than on merits (Damoah and Akwei, 2017).

We argue that these practices would lead to corrupt practices in the management of Ghanaian government educational infrastructural projects implementation. This is premised on previous research that indicates that partisanship politics have a positive relationship with corruption. For instance, empirical studies on politics show that electoral control of politicians suffer when voters are attached to political parties (Hellwig and Samuels, 2008; Kayser and Wlezien, 2011). Further, standardised political agency theory also predicts a positive relationship between partisanship politics and accountability of public officials (Besley, 2007). Accordingly, Bob-Milliar (2012) and Asunka (2016) found that, in Ghana, voters fail to hold their public officials, who are politicians, accountable in districts where they are attached to a particular political party and therefore politicians are able to manipulate the system for their personal gains. We, therefore, argue that due to the political culture of the country and the public sector management, it could impact on corruption and its subsequent impact on the management of educational infrastructural projects implementation. Third, the
Ghanaian public administration system is very weak and this may have significant implications for the implementation and management of educational infrastructural projects within the public sectors. The Ghanaian national and political culture have led to a very weak public administration system (Killick, 2008; Amoako and Lyon, 2014; Damoah and Akwei, 2017). For example, in the assessment of factors that affect the management and operations of SMEs in Ghana, Amoako and Lyon (2014) found that one of the major factors is public administration system. Among others, they found that the system is very weak, with institutional bottlenecks and this stifles the operations. Similarly, in the assessment of the Ghanaian political-economic system, Killick (2008) identified weak institutional systems and bottlenecks as the fundamental reasons for the smooth running of businesses in the country. Damoah et al. (2015) and Damoah and Akwei (2017) also assert that the weak institutional systems and bottlenecks create unnecessary bureaucracies that hinder the success of projects within the public sector. We argue that since the implementation of the Ghanaian government educational infrastructure projects is within the public administration, this weak system may breed corruption, hence, affecting the success of such projects.

**Previous Research on Corruption**

Corruption is a constant concern for countries that face economic problems (D’Agostino et al., 2013). This has attracted extant research devoted to investigating the relationship between corruption and other variables. For example, a cross-country study of corruption by Saha and Gounder (2013) indicates that corruption is more pervasive in countries with lower levels of income than their counterparts with high levels of income and this has a significant social impact on these countries. Similarly, Treisman (2000) identified similar trend among countries when he used Transparency International Corrupt perception index to compare countries. This impedes economic growth (Farooq et al., 2013). Paunov (2016) identified corruption as the major factor that stifles innovation in businesses. In relation to firms’ policy, the impact of corruption is not different (Athanasouli and Goujard, 2015). In an assessment of the relationship between corruption and Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Pellegrini and Gerlagh (2004) found a positive relationship. Corruption also impacts on Return on Investment (Boycko et al., 1996). Hessami (2014) identified corruption as the underlying reason for increment in government budgets. In a similar research, Aisen and Veiga (2013) found that corruption leads to political discontent, instability and violence. It also leads to rule-violating intentions (Sundstrom, 2016). Jetter et al. (2015) found that there is a relationship between corruption and democracy. Corruption also leads to inequality (Dobson and Ramlogan-Dobson, 2012).

In this study, we move away from the aforementioned variables to focus on the relationship between corruption and Ghanaian government educational infrastructural projects management. The framework presented in next section sheds light on how this relationship would be assessed.

**Theoretical Framework**

The main question that this study seeks to answer is: how does corruption impact on the management of Ghanaian government educational infrastructural projects. However, project management in this context is broad and vague and therefore, there must be evaluating criteria. In this research, we restrict ourselves to the management of the projects to the traditional triple constraints of projects management (Iron Triangle) (Atkinson, 1999). In the following assessment criteria, projects are assessed on time (schedule), cost (budget) and requirement (deliverables). Therefore, we investigate the relationship between corruption and the three variables. Thus, how does corruption impact on the project duration, budget and the quality and quantity of the project output? A working framework is presented in the figure below.
Methodology

In this research, the interpretivist philosophy and social constructionist paradigm are adopted. This is adopted due to the lack of studies in this study area in developing countries – these are considered the most appropriate since the practical knowledge sought after in this research is embedded in the context of the developing country and the stakeholders’ interactions and meanings (Crotty, 1998; Bryman, 2012). The social constructionism helps the researchers to generate an understanding of the influence of corruption on educational infrastructural projects within the Ghanaian government context in a unique way, which are dependent on the Ghanaian context, experience and frames (Crotty, 1998; Silverman, 2013).

The study gathered data from project management practitioners and educational institutional leaders who are directly responsible for the implementation of Ghana government educational infrastructural projects. A combination of both purposive and snow-balling data collection techniques was used. The sparse nature of the population meant that the snow-balling sample selection was the most appropriate. However, because we needed respondents who have knowledge about these projects, not all the recommended prospective participants were contacted to take part in the research. Accordingly, only practitioners and educational leaders who have been involved in infrastructural projects are targeted. In addition, they should have had a stint of about five years, within the government sector; their academic and professional backgrounds are considered as crucial in this exercise. To do so, we checked their company’s websites, Google search engine, and their published work and LinkedIn profile. In some cases, word of mouth from their colleagues played a role.

Research Approach

An in-depth semi-structured interview was used to gather information from the participants. To improve the validity of the data collection, pilot interviews consisting of three participants were conducted. This included civil engineer, contractor and director of physical works development in educational institutions. This was to ensure that the interview questions guide was appropriate for the audience and would capture all the necessary information. By pre-testing, we followed the steps prescribed by (Foddy, 1994) that should be followed in order to ensure validity and reliability of
questions. This is also in agreement with Saunders et al., (2012) on the three common approaches to ensuring the reliability of questions: tests re-test, internal consistency and alternative form.

The full interview consisted of 30 participants. The number was not pre-determined at the start of the interview but was arrived at when the data reached a saturated point. Thus, at that point no new information emerges from participants. This is in agreement with prior studies that adopted the same approach and recommendations (Morse, 2000; Hill et al., 2005; Guest et al., 2006; Silverman, 2013). Interviews were conducted at their homes, offices, restaurants and working sites in English (the official language of Ghana). Each interview lasted between thirty (30) to sixty (60) minutes.

Content and thematic analysis techniques were used for the data analysis. We followed the coding system prescribed by Corbin and Strauss (2008). The transcribed data were analysed with the help of Microsoft Word and NVivo 10. Two levels of codes – lower and higher were used. Higher levels of codes were used to represent the main themes whilst the lower levels codes were used to explain the higher levels codes further. The main themes were developed based on the assessment framework (evaluating tool) presented in section 2, figure 1; thus, the management criteria of Time, cost and requirement.

Findings and Discussions

The main question was: how does corruption impact on the management of Ghanaian government educational infrastructural project at the following management levels: cost, time and requirement? Each of the assessment criteria was used to re-phrase the question so that participants would understand the questions thoroughly. The findings indicated that corruption has an impact on all the criteria used however they are interrelated and cyclical in nature.

Corruption and Project Cost

All the respondents agreed that corruption impacts on the cost of Ghana government educational infrastructure projects. However, they said that the impact is always negative, in that it brings about cost overrun. They mentioned that, corrupt practices such as project price inflation have become a norm in the country and that only a few government projects are not inflated. For instance, R1 said,

“This is an open-secret, over pricing of government projects is common and normal practice in Ghana but no one would admit it for fear of public persecution. Sometimes, you can’t blame the contractors or the government officials involved… because if you don’t take it or do it, others will do it. My brother, you would not even get any contract if you are not willing to pay. Obviously, as a contractor, you need to add the money to the contract sum. Sometimes, you can’t add everything, especially in a local community project, where most of the community members know how much the project should cost.”

They also said that contractors and other government agencies in charge of procurement process sometimes connive to increase the pricing quotations and then later share the money. One of the most cited issues by respondents is about Sole Sourcing. They argue that this is supposed to be used in an emergency or when there are no other alternative companies to bid for a contract, but, this is gradually becoming the norm rather than the exception. They link this to politics. For instance, R10 said that,

“This issue of sole sourcing is a major avenue for politicians and civil servant and public servants to engage in corruption. Why is it that of late almost every government project contract is sole sourcing? I am not mentioning educational infrastructure projects as you indicated because of this cut across all government projects. Trust me, they increase the prices and then give part of the money back to their political party. Have you asked how they are able to fund their party, or you think this small money they get from their party members can
fund their party? Look, corruption in the implementation of educational infrastructure projects is real and obviously, this increases the cost of the project.”

These findings are not surprising, given the cultural orientation of Ghanaians towards public sector job. The sector is regarded by many as the avenue to cut their share of the national cake (Amponsah, 2010; Damoah and Akwei, 2017), therefore, when the opportunity comes, you need to grab as much as possible. They also opined that there are too much bureaucracy and administrative lapses that foster corruption. They argue that because of the cumbersome nature of the implementation process of these projects, contractors are compelled to pay bribes and use unauthorised routes to get their paperwork done. They cited that, in most cases, when you want your money to be paid after execution of these contracts, all the paperwork has to go to the central government located in Accra and when that happens, it takes a short time to get it through. Some (R2, R5, R7, R29, R30) even added that sometimes government officials deliberately delay the payment process, so that they can get “brown envelopes” before they sign the contractors’ cheques. So if this happens, the contractors do not have any other option than to add the ‘illegal cost’ to total project cost.

“My brother, they always accuse the politicians of being corrupt in the execution of these government infrastructural projects, but believe you me, in most cases the politicians are innocent; it is the civil servants. Go and check the Auditor General’s report and you would see that all the corrupt deals and malpractices are from the civil servants and not the politicians. So what do you expect the contractors to do – just add the cost to the projects … the contractors are not Father Christmas (R30).

Even though prior studies within infrastructural development projects, particularly construction projects, have cited a lot of factors that lead to cost escalation (Kaliba et al., 2009; Ahsan and Gunawan, 2010; Aziz, 2013), they have not been discussed in relation to corruption. The implication of this finding is that the Ghanaian government would have to incur more cost in the implementation of these projects, hence, affecting the national budget. Further, what it means is that the government would need to devise mechanisms to curb these corrupt practices and these mechanisms also come with a further cost to the nation.

**Corruption and Project Time**

The respondents perceive that corruption is one of the fundamental reasons for delays in Ghana government educational infrastructure projects implementation. The majority of them (R1-R10, R15, R18, R21, R23, R24 & 28) link this to the projects’ consultants who are civil servants that are at the various Assemblies. These are people who have oversight responsibilities over the implementation of these projects, they would have to inspect projects and sign them off. They also have to make sure that the projects are monitored and signed off at various stages of the project lifecycle. They argue that in most cases, these consultants demand ‘fuel money’ from the contractors before they go and inspect the projects (R24, R28) and failure to do so – pay ‘fuel money’ - means the project has to come to a standstill, hence, delay in the overall delivery time. Others also link these delays to partisanship politics (R1, R2, R7, R20, R21). In their view, some of the civil servants (consultants),

“are highly political and in fact, are appointed on partisanship basis, and therefore, they would want to do anything possible to ensure that the project does not come to completion on time if the contract was not awarded to their party member. They can demand certain monies and favours you cannot honour, then they would use that against you. Being a contractor in this corrupt environment is not easy, elsewhere, like Europe, you hardly hear all these things…the police would arrest them but here, they would deny and ask you to bring evidence, where are you going to get the evidence? So if you cannot pay, you delay the project. I have one school project that has been delayed for seven years because the consultant thinks I am not in his party and therefore wants to re-award the contract to someone else but until I agree to sign for non-performance, he cannot do it (R20).
These findings could be linked to the political culture of winner takes all and the political nature of the management of the public sector (Bob-Milliar, 2012; Damoah et al., 2015; Asunka, 2016; Damoah and Akwei, 2017). The implication is that if civil and public servants are appointed on partisanship basis and government projects performance can influence general elections (see Damoah, 2015; Damoah et al., 2015; Asunka, 2016; Damoah and Akwei, 2017), then these appointed officials have no other options than to indulge in such corrupt practices in order to stifle their political opponents’ supposed contractors.

The implications for these delays are that cost would escalate, hence, a financial burden on the government. Even though, the relationship between time deviation and other variable have been discussed extensively (see Sambasivan and Soon, 2007; Sweis et al., 2008; Kaliba et al., 2009; Ahsan and Gunawan, 2010; Kaliba et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2011), none has looked at it from corruption perspective, hence, it adds another dimension to the factors that affect project management within government sector in developing countries. This finding is surprising, given that in developing countries, corruption is often associated with politicians (Damoah and Akwei, 2017).

**Corruption and Project Requirement**

All the respondents said that corruption affects the project requirement (both quality and quantity). However, fourteen of them (R2-R7, R11-R16, R23&R25) said that it is not all the time that corruption leads to requirement deviation (mainly shoddy work) but it depends on certain factors. They said that usually, the contractors would either increase the price of the project or reduce the quality and quantity of the project. For instance, R25 is of the view that,

“There are some projects, you cannot reduce the quality or the quantity of the output because it is standardised and therefore, you must produce the exact quantity or quality and just pass the cost on to the total cost of the project like I said earlier. Let me give you an example, if you have been tasked to do six classroom block, how can you deliver four? For the quality, maybe you can but these days, in some areas, the local community and the media would monitor the project, so you cannot reduce the quality…they would name and shame you, so the best bet is to increase the cost. In areas such as roads and walls around schools and other infrastructure development, you can reduce them. If you monitor the radio stations, they always talk about shoddy work of some contractors but don’t blame them, it is not their fault.”

The implication is that once they have used part of the contract money to pay bribes, they also need to reduce the quality so that they can make a profit. The implication is that these projects would not last long and the implication for the government is that they would need to re-do these projects for the educational establishment. These findings are not surprising, given the cultural orientation of Ghanaians towards public sector jobs. The sector is regarded by many as the avenue to cut their share of the national cake (Amponsah, 2010; Damoah and Akwei, 2017). In the colonial era, the sector was perceived to belong to the white colonial masters and as such, the work could be handled haphazardly.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

This study assessed how corruption impacts on the management of Ghanaian government educational infrastructural projects implementation by using multiple management criteria. Thus, how corruption impacts on the cost (budget), time (duration/schedule) and requirement (quality and quantity) of the projects’ deliverables. Using an in-depth semi-structured interview to solicit the views of Ghana government educational leadership and project management practitioners who are involved or have been involved in the implementation of such projects, we found that corruption impacts on the all the...
criteria used as the assessment criteria (tool). However, how they are impacted on the management criteria used are direct and indirect; and are cyclical in nature.

In the management of project cost, corruption has impacts on the overall cost projects due to corrupt practices such as inflation of prices by contractors. This is traced to the connivance of contractors, public servants and civil servants who eventually share the inflated sum. Others could be traced to extortion of money from contractors by projects consultants through bribes before certification and/or signing of projects’ documents. In the end, contractors pass on the extra monies incurred unto the projects sum. This may sometimes lead to project delays if one party is unwilling to fulfil their part of the ‘deal’.

In relation to time, corruption impacts on this management criterion in different ways. Whilst some are political in nature (partisanship political culture), others could be traced to cultural orientation inherited from British colonial rule when the public sector work was perceived to belonging to the white man and as such could be handled haphazardly. Politically, some public officials who perceive that contractors are from political opponents, they deliberately stifle the progress of the projects through corrupt practices, hence, project delay. These practices may often time lead to cost escalation of the cost of the total project.

Lastly, corruption impacts on the quality and quantity (requirement) of the deliverables of the project (output), however, corruption might not necessarily lead to requirement deviation. The findings indicate that, in educational projects where local community are directly involved in the implementation process, contractors are unable to deviate from the projects’ requirement due to close monitoring by locals. However, they are able to inflate the cost rather – as the locals might not able to know the full details of the contract sum. On the other hand, if the projects are not locally monitored, then contractors are able to connive with the consultants and public officials to change the requirement.

**Contributions**

This study offers academic and practical contributions in several ways. One, this research extends the growing research in the area of corruption in the management of government projects in developing countries. Even though extant literature has been devoted to the discussion of the relationship between corruption and other variables such as economic development (Treisman, 2000; Saha and Gounder, 2013; D’Agostina et al., 2016; Huang, 2016), social effects (Saha and Gounder, 2013), democracy (Jetter et al., 2015) innovation (Paunov, 2016), firm management quality (Athanasouli and Goujard, 2015), gross domestic product (GDP) (Pellegrini and Gerlagh, 2004), returns on investment (Boycko et al., 1996), increase in government budget (Hessami, 2014), political discontent, instability and violence (Aisen and Veiga, 2013), rule-violating intentions (Sundstrom, 2016), inequality (Dobson and Ramlogan-Dobson, 2012); none has looked at educational infrastructure projects implementation. This research, therefore, set the pace for further research in this direction.

Second, this study also extends factors (causes) of project management failure in the government sector in developing using multiple management criteria. Even though extant literature (Kaliba et al., 2009; Ahsan and Gunawan, 2010; Aziz, 2013; Damoah et al. 2015; Damoah and Akwei, 2017) have assessed factors that impacts on projects management in many economies including developing countries, at present none discusses how corruption can impact on these projects despite the pervasiveness of the practice in developing countries as the Transparency International Reports indicate.

Thirdly, project management practitioners implementing the Ghanaian government educational infrastructure projects could use findings as a guide in order to avoid failure within the management criteria used through avoidance of corrupt practices.
Fourth, policymakers and the government of Ghana could use findings as a guide to devise strategies to reduce and/or avoid some of these corrupt practices in order to reduce projects cost in this sector. Further, even though, we do not seek to generalise the findings but other governments in other developing countries with a similar local context can use findings to guide them during educational infrastructure projects implementation.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that since the findings show that most of these corrupt practices happen through connivance between contractors and public officials, it is recommended that government provide e-platforms where every citizen would have access to information about each project being implemented within each sector. Further, access to the information bill being discussed at parliament should speed up, so that, not only local government projects’ information could be accessible to the general public but also those at the national level.

**Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

Even though the use of both snowballing and purposive in the sample selection, this may not cover all the views of the industry practitioners and therefore, this study cannot be generalised as data covers only thirty participants. A further confirmatory study would be needed to assess the extent to which corruption could influence Ghanaian government educational infrastructure projects failure, using the multiple failure criteria identified in the framework.

**References**


### Appendix

#### Ghanaian Cultural Dimension

Table 1. Hofstede 6-D Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural dimensions</th>
<th>Scores (%)</th>
<th>Ghanaian cultural attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power Distance</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Acceptance of hierarchical order in society and organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualism</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Collectivist society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Relatively feminine society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty Avoidance</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Prefer to avoid uncertainty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Term Orientation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indulgence</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Willingness to realise their impulses Desires to enjoy life and having fun Places a higher degree of importance on leisure time, act as they please and spend money as they wish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* The Hofstede Centre (2016)