

## CORRUPTION IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN TERTIARY INSTITUTION THE POSSIBLE WAY OUT

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### Abstract

This paper examined the level of corruption in educational system the paper argues that corruption is a general disease among the parents, students, policymakers, examination councils, teachers, supervisors and invigilators, and all above all, leads to the abuse of the system like other sectors in Nigeria. In all human societies particularly the modern ones, education therefore remains one of the most powerful instruments for both the development of man and transformation of the human society. However, the efficacy and efficiency of education as an instrument of transformation depends entirely on how all the stakeholders, students as individual's, parents, teachers, policymakers, examination council, ministry of education and governmental manage, executive and implement policy on education meant for the upliftment of educational sector. In this study, causes and effect of corruption facing educational sector were examined. Possible solutions were also examined. Therefore concluded that to curb and eradicate in Nigerian education system in tertiary institutions, all schools should return to the teaching of value education, moral education, civic education and citizenship education to empower children with the spirit of stewardship, while adult, teachers and others live anexemplary lives, reflecting truth, kindness, dignity of labor, and integrity.it was recommended that there should be developing a strong and independence monitoring and evaluation system for quality insurance and accreditation. Government should also support the promotion of anti-corruption values and education.

**Keywords:** Educational System, Corruption, Tertiary Institution

### Introduction

Educational in Nigeria is aimed at raising a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect for dignity of labor and appreciate national goals as good citizens. Important considerations with respect to effective citizenship include the production of individuals who are proud and conscious of the nation, self –reliant, disciplined, loyal and patriotic.Nigeria has achieved considerable improvement in some educational quality indicators, such as school enrollment and adult literacy rates, as well as the Human Development Index (HDI). In this sense, it can be said that corruption in the education sector is not only jeopardizing specifically education successes, one of the main achievements by Nigeria authorities in recent decades, but also overall development of the country.Indeed, despite these achievements, the education sector currently seems to faced many hurdles that they have become major challenges for the cause of the development of the society in general, and human resources and capacities in particular. Many of these challenges have been cited by public opinion as well as responsible state agencies-such as inequality in access to education (with poor being excluded from top schools because they cannot afford the cost and cannot meet entrance requirements); uneven quality of education among schools (including the issue of public vs. private schools);geographic inequalities (the urban /rural gap, with an excess of demand in urban

areas); and the changing perception and conception of teachers and education in society (with the Blossoming of the market economy and changes of behaviors from different stakeholders, many people tend to think that “everything can be bought by money).

Challenges related to a lack of transparency and corruption includes leakages in state budget funds allocated to education, waste in the production and procurement of textbooks, bribe –paying related to admittance to favored schools and awarding academic grades, extra classes to cover the official curriculum and secure good marks in school, and extra teaching and extra learning, which have become quite controversial issues and are seen by the public as serious problems. Based on international standards Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Accordingly, in anti-corruption discussion, different forms of corruption do not necessarily receive the appropriate level of attention. This clearly shows that better analysis is needed enhance understanding on what corruption really means in the education sector. This paper will explore such challenges and issues in further details and also proffer possible way- out. Parankimailil (2012), defines education as a systematic process through which a child or an adult acquires knowledge, experience and relevant skills from one generation to another. Fafunwa (1974) is of the opinion that “the end objective of education is to produce an individual who is honest, respectful, skilled, and cooperative and who would conform to the social order.

Scott and Marshall (2005), known as pioneers of Dictionary of Sociology sees education as a philosophical as well as a sociological concept, denoting ideologies curricular techniques of the inculcation and management of knowledge and social reproduction of personalities and culture. From the above explanations of education, one could see that any given definition of the term is contingent upon who is giving it. Notwithstanding, education can be said to be the whole process of the development of an independent and integrated personality. It entails training and acquisition of special skills, knowledge, attitudes and values needed by an individual to be responsible and which would enable him contribute his own quota, to the growth of the society of which he is a member. Onu (2001), says corruption is the reversion of integrity or state of affairs through bribery, favour or moral depravity, Ikeanyibe and imhanlahimi (2006), defines corruption as an antithesis to ethics and accountability.

### **Common Corruption Practices in the Educational sector**

1. **Collection of illegal, extra school fees/charges:** Many schools collected illegal, extra schools fees in order to compensate for the budget deficits. In other words, parents are forced to pay fees when the services is supposed to be free, or pay more than the official cost. In some African countries despite an exemption of school fees at the primary education level, as many as 44 per cent of parents of primary school children said they still had to pay extra amounts.
2. **Embezzlement and misappropriation of budgets allocated for education:** in most countries surveyed, the education sector is centrally administered by the state. Although the level of corruption in the field of education management is low, leakages of financial resources caused by corruption are considerable simply because resources and funds allocated to education can be huge (often 6-20 per cent of national budget). Moreover decentralization of financial management to local authorities increases corruption risks especially when this is not accompanied by effective control mechanism actual cases show that the more people and levels that participate in education budget management, the more opportunities and risk there are for malfeasance and corruption. Forms of corruption include leakage in the construction of school buildings; procurement of textbooks, schools equipment and supplies; kickbacks; bribery; close relationships and falsification of school enrollment.

3. **Fraud in academic performance:** corruption in academic performance occurs when students or parents bribe teachers in order to obtain good academic marks/scores, or to teachers by talking extra lessons in order to please them or to cover curricula that teachers do not cover in regular classes. Other forms of corruption such as selling of exam papers or students taking for other students are reportedly common practice in Nigeria. the quality of education also fails to meets requirements in many situations. Students who fail to meets academic requirements can still be awarded academic degrees by enrolling or even bribing alternative establishments that have lower quality requirements and/or are managed less carefully. Corruption in academics authorities, leads to poorly educated students who are awarded academic degrees by schools that do not deliver proper education and training services.
4. **Extra-classes:** the organization by teachers of extra classes can be an act of corruption when, in many cases, teachers teach only half of the official curriculum in schools and then force their students to pay for private courses to cover the remaining curriculum, or they pressure students to take extra –classes to secure good grades. In both cases this can be detrimental to students as without taking these extra lessons, they might end up with poor grades.
5. **Corruption in rotating and transferring teachers:** it goes without saying that teachers play a crucial role in education by imparting values and knowledge to their students. This role can be adversely affected due to corruption in managing teachers which can take the form of bias, close relationships, friendship and bribery in appointment, rotation/transfer and promotion.
6. **Parents' Corrupt practices:** this form of corruption is been manipulated by parent and thereby using all various unorthodox means such as given money to influence their children's admission during any external Examination such as; Js1 Entrance examination, Senior Secondary Examination Intake (SS1 class), junior school Certificate Examination (JSCE) or during senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations (WAEC, NECO, GCE, A Level Examinations).
7. **Students' Corruption Practices:** this is a situation by which students uses money to influence their teachers, invigilators or supervisors while some female students use sex to influence their school principal or proprietor to enable them have access to expo- materials into the hall or using hired machinery that will assist them with a duplicate of their documents with money
8. **Examination Councils' Corrupt Practices:** this form of corruption practice involves both the invigilators supervisors, syndicates or examination offices especially during the external examinations ganging up with the proprietors to mobilize the students raise some fund for their transportations so as to allocate them what thay refer as extra \_time. Oyinlola (2009), postulated that the parents also upgrade JAMB score, which is very critical for admission in to university in Nigeria, syndicated now, route candidates to particular centers with the gain of cheating. It has also been observed that they are some expensive coaching centers which now charge exorbitant fees with the view of guarantying a minimum score of 300 in the candidate's UTME score or Post UTME Examinations, which is being orchestrated by coaching centers through aiding and abetting of cheating in JAMB examination with the connivance of JAMB officials
9. **Teachers corrupt practices:** this form of corrupt is dominant in the private schools even in the private university system. Lazy and incomplete students now result to sorting (findings ways of purchasing high and unmerited mark from unpatriotic teachers/lecturers in order to enhance their grades in their final examination. And such students will then say they have gone into the university and having what they did not work for. Teachers/lectures and students print fake receipts, which they use in collecting school fees (Oyinlola, 2009).
10. **Police/security officer/gatekepper corrupt Practices:** this form of corrupt practices exist among the uniform officers, who when assigned, attached or posted to such schools or centres for official

monitoring and investigation may reverse such assignment as a means of harassing the school or the students to settle them or be arrested for examination malpractices

Oyinloha (2009) further opined that the police are also alleged to be collecting an authorized fee before granting to arrested suspect and bail.

Other common forms of corruption in educational system as illustrated by David (2022) include:

- a. Siphoning of school instructional materials and other teaching aids to the black market especially the science teachers, principals and bursars;
- b. Collecting of money for continues assessment and inter exams grades;
- c. Collecting money for change of grades or producing fake result;
- d. Selling admissions without entrance examinations (especially in higher institutions);
- e. Creating the necessity for private lesson to the student and charging compulsory fees; and
- f. Teachers persistence absenteeism to accommodate other income outside their normal assigned duties.

David (2022), further cited other forms of corrupt practices in educational sectors such as : ghost teachers, diversion of school fees by the bursar or principals, inflation of schools enrollment data, imposition of authorized fees on the students, diversion of scholarship allocated to the schools or to the students, diversion of monies in revolving textbook fund and diversion of community /parents contributions or supports to the school. Katharina(2004) in his opinion postulated forms of corruption as bribery; nepotism and embezzlement are similar to those founds in other sectors. Forms of corruption outlined by Hallak and poisson (2007) in their short glossary of terms include: Bribe, Bypass of criteria Non use of legal criteria; capture, leakage illegal use of public resources; Diversion of funds illegal use of public resources; Favourism, Fraud, Ghost worker, and Nepotism.

### **Effects of corruption in Educational sector**

Most consequences of corruption in education are obvious. there is a strong consensus amongst international researchers that it negatively affects economic development (productivity),hunger elimination and poverty reduction and social justice.Kirma,M.(2019). Specific effects include-

1. Social inequality: Moreover, corruption particularly affects the poor and the most vulnerable group's including women. These groups rely more on public services and can hardly afford informal payments to access education (or to be protected by the law). Therefore they are more affected by high dropout rates, poor teaching quality and vulnerability to outside-of-school influences(politics, religion and ethnicity). Corruption in education, then widens the gap between rich and poor, and increases poverty. Research conducted in Nigeria Adebayo,T.A.Oluwaseun.A.O (2020) shows that the completion rate in primary education was just 40 per cent, and that the main causes identified were insufficient textbook supplies and poor quality assurance mechanism. Here again, the poor are more affected by corrupt practices.

2. Affect the quality of public service delivery: corruption affects the returns to education ( i e the fact that students do not miss schools and attends classes continuously)in general, and especially equality/equity in access to education. Children lose opportunities to attend school due to corruption in the enrollment process; the high burden of illegal school fees for families, which leads to high dropout rates; corruption in management, and selecting and recruiting teacher's which leads to lower teaching quality; and corruption in procuring Educational equipment and supplies, which leads to shortages of classrooms, teaching equipment and supplies,and textbooks.

3. Affects the overall values of society and its future: Corruption in education directly threatens the

integrity and accountability of the entire society by bringing skepticism and doubt about the fairness of social success. This is especially true for academic fraud, as academic performance is an important tool for selecting leaders. In other words, corruption in education deteriorates young generations' values of integrity and social justice by demonstrating that corruption and fraud can easily buy academic diploma, then promotions and advancements, and careers.

The 2006 corruption perception index (CPI) by Transparency International (TI) points to a strong correlation between corruption poverty, with a concentration of impoverished states at the bottom of the ranking. The 2007 rating of Nigeria stood at 2.2 indicating the country is still one of the most corrupt in the world. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report on corruption in Nigeria, corruption in government increases poverty by diverting resources to the rich people who can afford to pay bribes while such resources are taken away from the poor people who can not afford to pay bribe (UNDP Report, 1998). 2022-23

Philips (1999), saw this as an explanation for the plight of the poor in Nigeria which appears not to have been significantly influenced by the various poverty alleviation programmes being hijacked by the elite's and rich in the society. The Catholic Bishop's Conference of Nigeria (1998) identified some of the effects of corruption on Nigeria: it reduces the degree of dedication and commitment of workers to duty, increased poverty level, made the economy to become distressed thereby getting people discouraged from investing, lowered moral and ethical standards and that it has given Nigeria and Nigerians a bad image in the eye of the international community. The above findings are confirmation of some studies including those of Niyi (1998) and Aderogba (1998). Some scholars would have us believe that there are positive consequences of corruption. Corruption poses a social problem which should be properly addressed so as not to bring about the demise of the nation. According to section 15, subsection (5)-political objectives - of the Nigerian 1979 Constitution, "The state shall abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power".

### **Possible solutions to the problem of corruption in the Educational sector**

In order to prevent corruption from happening at all and to also to find a lasting solution to corrupt practices in our educational system, Nigerians should emphasize transparency, integrity, and accountability in all their private and public transactions. Other possible ways out include;

1. **Social Transformation:** transformation in education of the public is a necessary factor in social transformation. There is need for formation and reformation, orientation and re-orientation of the minds and heart of Nigerians, for them to see that corruption is the enemy of development.
2. **Enforcement of Anti - corruption law:** The law should be enforced to its fullest and without fear and favor.
3. **Improvement of sociopolitical and Economic Life:** This is another weapon against corruption in Nigeria. The multiplying effects of this improvement will reduce the tendency of public servants to demand and take bribes and get involved in other corrupt practices. Basically, one of the major ways by which the Nigerian Ministry of education, Examination Councils, policymakers and other agencies on education can tackle corruption in educational system can be through character and moral education. Corruption is a human behavior that has negatively affected the minds and heart of the policymakers, proprietors of private secondary schools, parents, principals, teachers and officials in implementing the laws and rendered them impotent. In other words, corruption has destroyed the morality of Educational inspectors in schools - those who coordinate, assess and implement the laws guiding schools in Nigeria.



Dike(2007) postulated that character and moral education should be made compulsory in Nigerian schools and it should become law based. He further explained that through good characters moral education the society would help the young ones develop good judgment, integrity, trustworthiness, and essential virtues.

Lickona(2004) is of the opinion that if their minds and hearts are disabused of corruption they will grow up knowing what is Right and wrong, and knowing their social responsibilities and limitations. The absence of good moral character could be the cause of greed, selfishness and corruption among proprietors of private schools. Good character and moral education goes beneath the symptoms of corruption to the root cause of the nation's social ills. It is not obvious to say that Nigerian system of education can tackle corruption through managing and strictly supervising schools morality and integrity and mold them to be honest and trustworthy in their service delivery in the nation. As Douglas (2021) has Rightly noted, " The life of the nation is secure only while the nation is honest, truthful, and virtuous."

David (2022) suggest that another possible strategy to tackle and minimize corruption whether in private or public schools is that the ministry of educations, government agencies on the education and policymakers must provide a clear code of conduct. Teachers who violate it can lose their teaching license. At the same time, professional organizations have codes of conduct that apply to the specific activities promoted by those professions, such as Engineers, Medical Doctors, Lawyers etc. for instance, like Nigerian bar Association had a code of conduct for lawyers; American Evaluation Association has a code for ethnics for conducting evaluation.

Training Nigerian students in sound morals, sense of civic duty and service to humanity are at the root of addressing a while range of social ills, many of which go beyond corruption. Enhancing the participation of women in public life and in decision making in all sphere of human activity will also make a difference.

Corruption is not an inevitable evil. It. Is something that will, in due course. Yield to education and the inculcation of moral values, such as those that can be found at the foundation of most major Faiths (Augusto,2014).

## **Conclusion**

Corruption in Nigerian education system in tertiary institutions is systematic, and to address the problem a systematic approach is needed. To curb and eventually eradicate corruption in this sector, children, youth, stakeholders and adults must be given the power to distinguish right from wrong. All schools should return to the teaching of value education, moral education, civic education and citizenship education to empower children with the spirit of stewardship, while adult live exemplary lives, reflecting truth, kindness, dignity of labor, and integrity. In other to curb and eventually eradicate corruption in any levels of education, the students, stakeholders, teachers and proprietors among others need to be enriched with the power of distinguishing right from wrongs. School should returns to the teaching moral education, in order to empower student with the spirit of stewardship while teachers and others live an exemplary life, reflecting the truth, kindness, dignity of labour and integrity in educational system in line with national policy of education. This study also discovered that all forms of corruption manifested in bribery, frauds, embezzlement, favouratism, nepotism, examination malpractice etc are noticeable in our educational systems.

## Recommendations

Combating and preventing corruption in general and corruption in education in particular require participation of the entire society, including the state, schools teachers, parents, citizens and students. This is because the education sector involves all Nigerian families whose children attends school. To effectively combat and prevent corruption, the following are recommended:

1. Corruption should be called by its name.
2. The general public should say “no” to corruption.
3. They should be a new criteria to better allocate state budget funds and fight improper incentives.
4. Developing a strong and independence monitoring and evaluation system for quality insurance and accreditation
5. Whistle blower protection should be strengthened
6. Strengthening inspection, oversight and monitoring, especially those conducted by services users
7. Continuing the reform of civil servants salaries (particularly teachers) and standards
8. Improving transparency of schools
9. Clarifying and monitoring official and informal school fees
10. Supporting the promotion of anti- corruption values and education

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