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CORRUPTION AND CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN THE NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: EFFECTS AND THE WAY FORWARD

Dr. Athanatius, Ifeanyi IBEH
Department of Educational Foundations,
Ebonyi State College of Education, Ikwo, Ebonyi State
ifeanyiathanatius@yahoo.com,
doctorathanatiusibeh@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the corruption in the implementation of curriculum in Nigerian Educational System. It identifies corruption as an obstacle to the set objectives of the sector. The work is arranged in the following order; education, curriculum, corruption, curriculum implementation, corrupt practices and its consequences, challenges of curriculum implementation, conclusion and suggestion cum way forward.

Introduction

Education having been described by the National Policy on Education (2004) as an instrument of Par Excellence is an effect tool for economic, social, cultural and political transformation and national development. It encourages social and cultural integration by inculcating an attitude of social cooperation of consciousness. The Nigerian educational system has made provision of various levels of education from the primary school level (basic education secondary school to the tertiary education) Universities inclusive) in order to service the entire populace for manpower and national development.

Education is essential for economic growth and social development and for reducing the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Education also interacts with other resources to increase productivity. For example, education helps to make health and nutrition investments more effective.

In Nigeria for example, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme on 29th September, 1999 in Sokoto, Sokoto State, as part of its foundational national development agenda. The UBE Act was passed in April 2004, to support an educational programme of the Nigerian Government that provides free, compulsory, and continuous 9-year education in two levels: 6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary education for all school-aged children.

But this idea of the government has not been realized because of endemic corruption in the education sector and weak political governance from the federal through the local government levels in Nigeria for the last many years

In some states in Nigeria, gratuity for teachers who retired for up to ten years is yet to be paid, not to talk of pensions, despite annual budgetary allocations. Corrupt education practices around the world continue to manifest in inefficient use of resources, and ultimately prohibit the achievement of a quality education for all children.

The evidence of institutions without walls and roofs, classes without desks chairs and books, poor quality of graduated students. Empty labouratories, obsolete teaching materials. Not forgetting underpaid and unpaid teachers, decline in standards, overstaffing, exam malpractice, cultism, politicization of academic positions/merits awards and encomium to mediocres and imposters and so on. Meanwhile, an important issue that need to be addressed in line with the attainment of the set goals of the Nigerian educational sector which is majorly capacity building of the country's human resources for sustainable national development is currently been thwarted by corrupt practices by those in charge of the sector.

Nigerian educational sector which is majorly capacity building of the country's human resources for sustainable national development is currently been thwarted by corrupt practices by those in charge of the sector. Corruption is shown to be linked to the climate of unethical leadership and bad governance which have especially on the implementation of curriculum at the tertiary level. After independence, Nigeria drifted shamelessly from a bureaucratic administration that

emphasized good governance to one that emphasized the sovereignty of politics. This resulted in the emergence of politicized bureaucracy in Nigeria which began to engage in centralized economic decision- making and patrimonialism.

Corruption exists at local, national and international levels and at any level of its existence not only in tertiary institutions, it has in-built devastating and disabling potentials to infest and reconfigure the psyche of the individuals, the state and those entrusted with the day to day affairs of the state at its social, political, economic, religious, moral, educational and general development levels with terrible viruses that in addition undermining the advancement and sustainable development of the country, corruption impairs and cripples the zeal for honesty, hard work and merit students admission in tertiary institutions. These are possible because corruption in any of its multi-dimensional forms has terrible potentials that can neutralize and bring to zero point the developmental aspirations of honest and hardworking individuals and institutions in country in the form of causing general disenchantment and instability, making nonsense to curriculum of the institutions, discouraging and eroding genuine value system upon which the sustainable development of country is laid. (Nwaokugha and Ezeugwu 2017).

According to Okorafor and Wogu (2017), Nigeria like most countries has adopted education as the instrument par excellence for achieving national objectives which the goal can only be realized through a well designed and implemented curriculum . Owing to the critical position of curriculum in driving sustainable development in tertiary institutions, commitment in curriculum determines the success or failure of such objectives.

Globally the forms corruption takes in environments and societies where it has become a practical, trending, fashionable and cherishable value system for the survival of the people have been so complex so much that local, national and international efforts and actions to check or contain it has consistently failed or defiled solutions. However, a ray of hope came in sight when the United Nations through General Assembly Resolution 58/4 of 31 October 2003 which became operational on 14 December 2005 initiated actions which in addition to creating awareness on

strategies for preventing corruption also targets criminalizing corruption in any form it manifests

A close examination of the efforts of the United Nations in this direction can point in two ways namely creating awareness and sensitizing members of the global community on the existence of corruption and its global condemnation and the establishment of a global network of framework upon which conscious fight against corruption can be mounted, initiated or put on global agenda. These are in view of the fact that the free flourishing of corruption at any level can turn out to be a torn in the flesh of members of the global community.

A worrisome trend in the discussion of corruption is that there is no country under the sun that can claim that it is corruption free or that its citizens and institutions do not indulge in corruption and corrupt practices. The simple truth is that there may be marked differences in the involvement or magnitude of corruption in countries. Be this as it may, the magnitudes of corruption in developing and underdeveloped countries may be higher. Describing the extent of corruption in Nigeria, Okeyim, Ejue and Ekanam (2013:24) write that "corruption is pervasive in Nigeria" and analyzing the consequences of this, Lawal and Tobi (2006:642) write that "Nigeria presents a typical case of a country in Africa whose development has been undermined and retarded by the menace of corrupt practices".

Concept of corruption

Corruption has crept into virtually all aspects of the country's economy where education is having its share of it. Money meant for educational programmes are often diverted into private coffers by some of those in power. In Nigeria, government money is regarded as 'national cake' which every individual wishes to cut his/her share of the cake. Corruption is a worldwide phenomenon, which has been with all kinds of society throughout history as a global crime. It is a universal phenomenon which presents itself in different colorations and dimensions depending on where it rears its ugly head. Because of its wide spread it terms of its coverage, the concept attracts different meanings from different scholars particularly the social scientist. According to Begovic (2015) the most promising definition of corruption is the

one made by Vito Tanzi which stated that corruption is the intentional non-compliance with the arm's length principle aimed at deriving some advantage for oneself.

Akindele and Fasakin (2014) [1] supported that the underlying motivation for corruption globally is human nature, fanned, watered and triggered by greed as well as the cherished views or desires of some individuals usually, the influential minority who do not allow the majority access to the good things of life. Unfortunately this unfolding development creates a vicious cycle that in addition to posing as life threatening threats to the wealthy minority also inherently promotes poverty, crisis and the intensification of corruption will not give room for the implementation of curriculum at the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. In the African countries, most people see corruption in more practical terms: theft of public resources, embezzlement of public funds, illegal appropriation of public property, nepotism, favouring relatives and Mends in the distribution of public goods, employment in the public sector etc.; abuse of ones office in an effort to generate- benefits for the office holders, and his family capricious and selective enforcement of government laws and regulations in an effort to benefit the office holder; differential treatment of private enterprises in the expectations of a bribe from the entrepreneur whose business is enjoying preferential or favourable treatment, and illegal taxation of economic activity with benefits accruing to the bureaucrat (Harsch, 2018).

Corruption in education is the pervasion of the expected standard of behaviour by those in authority in the educational system for their own personal gain to the detriments of others and the system in its pursuit of quality manpower and national development. Corruption in the system has made it easy for some scholars to describe schools are no longer institutions of learning but instead as money exchange department to help students pass examination and gain admission into higher institutions. Onwuka, (2019) stated that corruption in the political life of a nation is a tragedy while corruption in the educational sector is a double tragedy. Because the educational sectors has tremendous capacity to set in motion an uncontrollable reproductive process of corruption in the larger society

and thereby mare the development structures.

Education as identified by some scholars is the single most important sector that defines the life, values, political culture and economic power of a nation. It is through educational institutions that a nation's human resource capacity is developed, harnessed and deployed for national development. Without these educational institutions designed for the educational sector, we have no society or future as a nation. Nigeria's ability to realize its vision of becoming one of the top 20 economies in the world by the 2020, is dependent on its educational system to transform our youths into a highly skilled and competent work force capable of competing globally. The strength or weakness of an educational system is measured in terms of how it satisfied it recipients. Hence the Nigerian educational system has been explained as the sector assigned with the authority to draw out a curriculum that combines both intellectual and vocational training. It is also characterize by control, evaluation, exams, regular financing, staffing, and researches publication. The control the main objective is done through the national policy, while the curriculum evaluation and examination falls under classroom examination, regular financing and staffing which comes under administrative management. Because the educational sectors has tremendous capacity to set in motion an uncontrollable reproductive process of corruption in the larger society.

Corrupt Practices and its Dialectical Consequences on Nigeria Educational System

Corruption in the educational system has made it easy for some scholars to describe schools as no longer institutions of learning but instead as money exchange department to help students pass examination and gain admission into higher institutions. Onwuka (2019) stated that corruption in the political life of a nation is a tragedy while corruption in the educational sector is a double tragedy. Because the educational sectors has tremendous capacity to set in motion an uncontrollable reproductive process of corruption in the larger society. These corrupt practices in the educational system can be examined under four main headings.

Educational Administration

Educational Administration has to do with recruitment, admission and promotion. Corruption take places in various forms, for instance entrance examination into institutions most times is not on merit but on who is actually seeking the admission. In the area of recruitment and promotion of staff, academic and non-academic into the educational system is done by who is pushing the file giving chance to unqualified persons as well as depriving good hands the opportunity to contribute to the body of knowledge, the effect is felt in the quality of students produced. The issue of fake certificates is now so much in the system, that even those of the higher ladder are affected.

Educational Management

The senior staffs such as the Head Teachers, Principals, Rectors, Provost and Vice-Chancellors who happen to be in charge of their institutions fund are found of transferring these fund to their personal bank account for their personal use. They are also involved in placing ghost workers on salaries and over invoicing of given contracts.

Classroom Examination and Corruption

Students are expected to be evaluated based on the curriculum and set objectives. However corrupt practices frustrate this more since students are exploited in so many ways such as giving bribe to gain some educational opportunities, students giving into sexual favour in order to gain good grades. Student buying examination question papers before the exams and even the case of students writing for each other. Another form of classroom corruption is the involvement of teachers in grade changing or even the forgery of academic credential (Moreno, 2019).

National Policy

National Policy (2013) tries to unify what goes on in the entire institutions nationwide. The policy of 'quota system', 'catchment areas' or 'less advantaged areas' according to Osahon 1999 is one of the major factor that causes and promotes the admission of lower scores, in that candidate with low scores can be given admission based on low cut off mark. This downgrades merit as well as promotes bribery favoritism and nepotism in the institutions. All this corrupt practices put together poses as an

obstacle to the educational system in the attainment of manpower building and national development in the era of globalization.

The dialectical consequences of corrupt practices on the Nigeria educational system have over the years attracted the attention and exploration of scholars and international development agencies and institutions.

Consequences of corruption

Corruption has enormous negative consequences on the Nigerian educational system. Alli (2004) citing the Educator (2016), indicates that the cost of corruption to the Nigerian educational system represent about 15½% of its GDP. Experiences of other countries reveal that corruption increases the cost of education, materials and training of staff.

The general effects of corruption on the educational sector are enormous and incapacitating. As Suleiman (2015) notes, corruption direct resources from the designed projects to white elephant projects are heavily over invoiced, it increases the costs of running the schools, distort public expenditures and defers private-public partnership investments. It also erodes the consistency for grants and funding. In Nigeria institutions of learning, corruption has undermined the normal functioning of their social economic and academic systems.

Suleiman,(2015) also notes that corruption coupled with economic and political mismanagement has led to instability and gross abuse of power, led to the decaying infrastructure, inadequate staffing, poor and failing education standards, the disappearance of grants, trust funds, loans and of entire project without a trace.

Another consequence of corruption in the educational system is that of poor leadership which has brought about poor and un-purposeful leadership.

Corruption in the educational sector has created a wide gulf between the rich and the poor. This has created a situation where Nigerian's wealth and resources earmarked for capacity building for sustained development have been unduly concentrated in the hands of a few callous people and their allies including foreign collaborators. These

privileged 'few' influence every political decisions, such that they remain the exclusive beneficiaries from policies in public frustrations, anger and induced negative emotions towards destructive ends.

Corruption has brought about the underdevelopment of the Educational sector, for instance, Okoli (1995) explains that huge sums of money stocked in foreign banks by some ministers, commissioners of education, vice-chancellors through money laundering are used by those nations for developmental purposes and taking care of their people, while the official who loot the money met for the educational development owe staff in their countries four to six months areas of salaries allowances. He reasoned that this is man's inhumanity to man. Corruption in the educational sector has created a wide gulf between the rich and the poor. This has created a situation where Nigerian's wealth and resources earmarked for capacity building for sustained development have been unduly concentrated in the hands of a few callous people and their allies including foreign collaborators. These privileged 'few' influence every political decisions, such that they remain the exclusive beneficiaries from policies in public frustrations, anger and induced negative emotions towards destructive ends.
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Davies (2001) blaming the woes of Nigerian educational sector to the past political leaders of military rule and civil rule which have left the educational institutions in shamble today as a result of oppositions to government misconducts. Political leaders politicize education especially at the tertiary/higher level. The underfunding of this sector affects the appropriate quality academic training that should be given to the youths and an environment that would enable them reach their full potential. Nigeria has a weird value system: a society where priorities are turned to their heads and educational institutions not taken seriously. Corruption persists and the educational institutions left to rot away. Were such monies used judiciously, the Nigerian educational sector could be efficient and decaying infrastructure.

Corruption in curriculum implementation

Okorafor (2003) [16] has regarded curriculum as the life wire and the heart

of every educational program. It is an embodiment of all the knowledge, skills and attitudes which a nation, through her schools, imparts to her citizens. He also viewed curriculum as the vehicle through which the school strives to achieve educational ends, be they, those of the nation, state, local government or even community, Which makes curriculum a planned and unplanned experiences which learners receive in the process of their formal or semi-formal education for the purpose of becoming rounded persons who can make meaningful contributions to the betterment of their society and the world. It is therefore the blue-print or instrument by which school seeks to translate the hope and values of the society in which it operates into concrete reality. However, Ogar and Awhen (2015) explained the term curriculum implementation as the process of putting the curriculum into work for the achievement of the goals for which the curriculum is designed. It is also the translation of the objectives of the curriculum from paper to practice as well as as the translation of "theory into practice", or "proposal into action", the actual engagement of learners with planned learning opportunities. Meaning that the actual carrying-out of societal culture and/or government policies are spelt out in the curriculum. In addition, Lambert and Morgan (2009) [9] opined that over the past two decades the school curriculum has become estranged from the challenge of corruption in educating children because of government intervention in the school curriculum, for teachers are no longer free to 'impart a body of academic knowledge to their students. The school curriculum has become a battleground for zealous campaigners and entrepreneurs keen to promote their message, meanwhile, the content of the curriculum is not determined by its academic weight, but according to whether it promotes particular values about what it means to be a good citizen. This is as a result of the government coming out with any curriculum development according to their periodic tenure, no continuity, just for their pocket interest.

Meanwhile, Nwiyi and Okorie (2014) noted that teachers are stagnated and denied promotion, hence some spend nearly eight years without promotion and those promoted are not implemented in terms of payment of the new salaries and allowances. This situation is highly demoralizing and has negative impacts on the implementation of the curriculum

in the tertiary institutions as a result of corruption, people in charge sitting on other people's progress and sufferings. Most of the equipment's, tools and workshop facilities in the institutions are either broken down, damaged or dilapidate and they are not replaced or renovated. While the primarily goal of developing curriculum is to teach the students both practical and theoretical aspect of subject matter, but unfortunately, it is not so in the Nigerian institutions because of lack of adequate instructional materials and ineffective teaching method as factors responsible for poor implementation of curriculum. Therefore, the result implies that without the availability of functional infrastructure in the school, the skilled – based curriculum will not be effectively implemented in Nigeria and the youths would lack skills and economic empowerment.

Challenges of curriculum implementation on Educational System

According to Mkandawire (2010) it is very difficult to implement a curriculum successfully if the education system has limited funding capacities and bedeviled by corruption. Under funding raise a lot of other implications on the part of curriculum. Arthur (2016) supported that the quality of educational curriculum in any country is one of the major keys to sustainable national development. He sees curriculum as a set of courses, course work and topics, offered in schools. It is the aggregate of subjects/courses and topics that are being or should be offered in schools. In Nigeria, poor curriculum implementation is a major problem. There is a great disparity between policies formulated by government and the actual implementation of these policies. Policy makers often vary from policy implementers, hence, this gaps becomes a problem in course of implementation.

However, Nigeria is ladened by a number of problems when curriculum implementation is concerned. Here are some of the problems declining in the quality and standard of education in Nigeria, and it has its challenges in the implementation of curriculum in Nigeria as follows:

1. Lack of teacher participation in decision making and curriculum planning: The teacher has a crucial role to play in the success of any educational programme in the nation

and as such should be in the center and take an active part in the planning and development of the curriculum. When teachers are not actively involved in the planning of the curriculum, a problem builds up since it is these teachers that interact with the students, know what they need and in what proportion, and actually make use of the curriculum.

2. Lack of sufficient finance: Curriculum implementation is greatly drawn back by the lack of finance because workshops and seminars that are necessary to sensitize teachers and educationists across the country cost a lot of money. Hence the teachers are not properly tutored on every corner of the curriculum.

3. Frequent turnover of teachers: The frequent turnover of teachers in the education cum school system is caused by so many factors. One factor that plays a primary role is the excessive number of temporary and or part time teachers. For example, Youth Corpers are posted to secondary schools across the country. They teach for less than a year and a new set of core members replace them. There is no time to settle into the system and work with the curriculum properly. Also, a host of these temporary teachers are usually not dedicated, while others don't have the zeal and skill to teach.

4. Lack of trained and well informed teachers: you cannot give what you do not have. Hence, when the teachers and facilitators of the curriculum do not have the required skill level to teach correctly in accordance with the growing technology. Then the students cannot learn. This makes the curriculum useless.

5. Many examination bodies: different examination bodies have their different standards and techniques, not to talk of approaches to questions. For instance we have WAEC, NECO, JAMB, NUC etc. There is a problem on how to adequately meet the needs of these bodies.

6. Rapid increase in knowledge: The world is growing at a tremendous rate when knowledge is concerned. Due to the development of science and technology, it become more tasking for the curriculum development process as knowledge becomes obsolete quickly hence the need for constant review for the

curriculum, the method and materials of instruction. It therefore becomes difficult to stay in line with these continuous changes. For example, we were used to 9 planets in the solar system. But right now, Pluto has been removed from the list of planets because it is simply too small to be called a planet. However, in schools today, teachers still tell their students that there are 9 planets and still include Pluto.

7. Poor ICT: The world is developing at a rapid rate and therefore, even when the curriculum is updated, a new problem of meeting the requirements of the new elements added to the curriculum develops. Since the world is advancing technologically, the new trends of curriculums require students to be familiar with computers and make use of them.
8. Lack of trained and well informed teachers: you cannot give what you do not have. Hence, when the teachers and facilitators of the curriculum do not have the required skill level to teach correctly in accordance with the growing technology. Then the students cannot learn. This makes the curriculum useless.

Conclusion

This paper has established that there is dialectical link or relationship between corruption and the educational system. Corruption must be stopped not just by punishing the culprit but also by disinfesting the system to make it extremely difficult for corruption to breed in the system. This can be done through effective education, by enlightening everyone on the dangerous effects of educational corruption should be addressed which could be traced to poverty, politicization of the educational systems and uncertainly not having faith in the system enough to wait for the future. Also an effective and reliable financial management system can be established to control the use of educational resources. Financial incentives could also be given to officials who have been proven to be 'immunized' to corruption because the educational institutions have critical role in supporting knowledge driven economic growth strategies an obvious requirement for global competition.

Suggestions and way forward

The following suggestions are possible ways of addressing corruption in our educational system:

- ✓ Provide standard teaching materials and infrastructure
- ✓ Proper school supervision
- ✓ Pay teachers regularly and at the end of each month
- ✓ Enforce rules and regulations /examination ethics
- ✓ Punish/sack those found to be corrupt
- ✓ Provide incentives/good conditions of service to teachers
- ✓ Government to look at the welfare of teachers
- ✓ Prompt up teachers to be serious with their jobs
- ✓ Good governance
- ✓ Combat examination malpractice to extinction
- ✓ Encourage pupils to be self-reliant
- ✓ Improve moral education/reward good morals
- ✓ Federal Government should implement Teacher Salary Structure
- ✓ Provide free primary education
- ✓ Ensure completion of Scheme of Work by teachers
- ✓ Verify properly the credentials of teachers
- ✓ Employ only qualified teachers
- ✓ Assign jobs to teachers on the basis of their specialization
- ✓ Educationists should be in charge of distributions to schools
- ✓ Appoint Head teachers based on merit
- ✓ Committee of PTA to monitor school activities
- ✓ The Nigeria educational system must be adequately founded and equipped in order to compete favourably with those in other developing countries. Provision of adequate human and material resources and establishment of more educational institutions capable of serving the entire estimated 140 million populations in Nigeria.
- ✓ All cases of corruption currently under the ICPC and EFCC must be concluded so that those convicted as a result of the investigation will serve as deterrent to others.

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