
THE EFFECT OF CORRUPTION ON THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

Madaki, Anuwa Kanibin

Department of Educational Foundations
Faculty of Education, University of Portharcourt. Nigeria.

ABSTRACT: *Corruption universally plagues societies and its impact has disastrous effects on national development. It has been established by scholars that no sector is Immune from the fangs of corruption. Corruption however varies; across societies and countries but globally its impact on the educational sector undermines the national advancement of any country. In the Nigerian context, corruption has deep roots in the fabrics of the society, impacting virtually every aspect of the Nigerian economy. Scholars have highlighted the impeding impact on the technological, political, moral development of the country. In the educational sector, it causes infrastructural insufficiencies which leads to poor educational delivery and inaccessibility to education while impacting the empowerment of citizens within the society. This has left the citizens feeling frustrated, disgruntled and disenchanted and possibly inducing the rise in insurgency, kidnapping and militancy in the country. As such, the need to mitigate and tackle the growing trend of corruption in the educational sector because of impact on manpower and national development. The research makes a number of recommendations which include that; Accountability and transparency should be sensitized and imposed on every aspect of the Nigerian society in such a way those public officer holders, contractors, tutors and stakeholders view transparency and accountability as key aspects of carrying out projects and serving the people. Sensitization on the dangerous impact of corruption on education should be carried out by non-governmental agencies and religious bodies. An effective and reliable financial management system should be established to control and monitor the use of educational resources and supervision of programmes and projects embarked in the educational sector to mention but a few.*

KEYWORDS: education, corruption, educational development

INTRODUCTION

Corruption over the years has developed into a “hydra-headed” plague that has become a global and epidemic challenge that contagiously impacts regardless of societal class, educational achievement, technological attainment, religious inclination (Bhargava, 2005; Ola et al., 2014). One of the key features of corruption is its ability to influence, infiltrate and reconfigure the minds of citizens particularly those in power who have been delegated with running the daily social, administrative and financial affairs of the country. According to Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu (2017) it inhibits as well as slows down the drive for uprightness, excellence and hard-work amongst its citizens. This potentially impacts foreign direct investments and slows down sustainable development in the country.

A rather worrisome fact with surrounding the issue of corruption is that no nation in the globe is free from corruption. According to Bhargava (2005), regardless of the level of development of a country there is an element of corruption imbedded in the society. As such, it can be deduced that the magnitude of corruption varies across countries. Sanyal & Samanta (2002)

opine that the level of corruption differs in developed and developing countries. One country currently developing and grasping with the plague of corruption is Nigeria. Researchers observe that despite efforts to tackle and mitigate the growing rise of corruptive practices within the country, the country continues to be devastated by corruption in institutions across the country (Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017).

Analysing the level of corruptive practice in Nigeria, researchers highlights that “corruption is prevalent in Nigeria” (Okeyim, Ejue & Ekanam, 2013; Odo, 2015). Lawal & Tobi (2006) postulates that Nigeria identifies as a typical example of a nation in the African continent that has seen its advancement impaired and stunted by corruption”. The popularity of corruption in the Nigerian context has globally become recognized and this can consequently be reflected in the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index of 1997 that ranked them as “one of the most corrupt country in the world” (Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017). In recent times, Tony Blair, former British Prime Minister described Nigeria to be “fantastically corrupt”, unfortunately this analysis highlights’ that corruption is organized and imbedded deeply in the mind-set of a significant number of citizens. As such, it can be deduced from these suggestions that corruption in the Nigerian context is cultural (Ajie & Wokekoro, 2012; Iyanda, 2012; Nwaokugha, Nyewusira & Nyewusira, 2013). This proposition is further buttressed by the remarks of Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu (2017) who posits that “preventing a Nigerian from being corrupt can be likened to preventing a goat from chewing yam”. It must therefore be highlighted that the small proportion of Nigerian citizens that resist being corrupt in their everyday private and public lives are seen as been disappointment by the society in general.

As a matter of fact, a clear indication of the depth of corruption in the Nigerian consciousness is the reality that corruption has been given nicknames by the three main indigenous languages in Nigeira where the Yoruba ascribe the name “Egunje” the Hausas ascribes it “Chuachua” and the Igbos call it “Igbuozu” (Ndokwu, 2004; Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017). In essence, the popularity of corrupt practice in Nigeria implies that there is barely any section of the Nigerian society that is not impacted. However, one of the sectors significantly impacted by corruption in Nigeria and which has disastrous implications for every sector in the country is the educational sector.

Education having been described by the National Policy on Education (2004) as an “instrument of par-excellence is an effective tool for economic, social, cultural as well political transformation and national development” (Egbefo, 2012; Abiogu, 2014). Furthermore it stimulates societal and cultural oneness by instigating a philosophy of societal collaboration of awareness as such, the impact of education on any nation or society particularly during this period of globalisation cannot be over-looked (Egbefo, 2012). Nigeria however, which was ranked amongst the wealthiest nations during the early 1970s has regressed to be ranked amongst the poorest nations (Chukwuemeka, Okechukwu & Okafor, 2014; Ibietan, Chidozie & Ujara, 2014). Ironically, the country is the sixth largest exporter of oil but has one of the largest populations of poor people in the world after China and India (Chukwuemeka et al., 2014). This can be attributed to corruption as it breeds unproductivity and this is clear in the educational sector. The evidence of this is seen in institutions without walls, roods, empty workshops, out-dated teaching tools, examination malpractice, under paid teachers which subsequently impacts the quality of graduated students and standard of education practiced in

the country (Egbefo, 2012). It can therefore be deduced that, these has implication on capacity building in the country. Researchers observe that human resource development is key to sustainable national development and the corrupt practices currently plaguing the Nigerian educational sector is thwarting this development (Ajie & Wokekoro, 2012). On the basis of these discussions mentioned above, the objective of this research is basically to assess te impact of corruption on the Nigerian educational sector.

CORRUPTION

The term corruption is open to various interpretations, understanding due to the fact that individuals understand corruption based on the cultural interpretations (Brunnelle-Quaraishi, 2011; Ganahl, 2013). But all these interpretations the effect of corruption on individuals, organisations as well as the economy remains the same. The deduction from the various as well as different natures of the descriptions of corruption is that can be classified from governmental, financial, cultural and ethical perspectives and any definition is acceptable based on the viewpoint provided (Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017).

Scholars raise the notion that corruption was obtained from the Latin word “Corrupt us” which means” to break” (Brunnelle-Quaraishi, 2011; Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017). It includes actions that deviate from regulations that govern that govern the actions of individuals particularly those in power (Khan, 1996; Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017). According to Lawal & Tobi (2006) it is any act that is deliberate in nature aimed at diverting public resources for personal use. Being more inclusive in the description of corruption, it can be highlighted that corruption is any methodically propagated vice that is carried out by individuals, organisations that has the ability to impact social harmony and equality. For instance, nepotism, sectionalism, ethnicity, wealth amassment and abuse of power (Ojiade, 2000; Arop et al., 2018).

Equally, scholars observe that the “Economic and Financial Crimes Commission” EFCC classify corruption based on the viewpoint of the economy as the nonaggressive illegal and illegitimate activities by organisations, individuals that stimulate or brings about illegal wealth (Iyanda, 2012; Ngwake, 2009, Oladele, 2019).

The classification or description of corruption therefore has proved challenging especially based on legal and formal document. According to Wood & Antonowicz (2011) the UNDP defines corruption as the misappropriation of office, public power or authority for personal privileged through bribery, misuse, scam, nepotism to mention but a few. In recent times, UNDP employed a broader definition of corruption in the bed to accommodate corruption practiced in the private educational sector as such, the definition offered corruption as the misappropriation of delegated power in order to get private privileges (UNDP Primer on Corruption and Development, 2008). Scholars observe that corruption in the educational sector can be described as the systematical employment of public office for private privileged that impact the access, standard and impartiality in education (Hallak & Poisson, 2002; Ghukasyan, 2003; Bajracharya, 2003; Altinyelken, 2004; Osipian, 2007). It can be deduced thus, that corruption in the educational sector is basically the inappropriate behaviour of individuals’ holding authoritative position in this sector that bring about personal gain and is detrimental to the standard of education and national advancement. This has seen the Nigerian educational sector referred to as money exchange department where funds are exchange for

admission and examinations (Egbefo & Ibbu, 2012; Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017). Researchers highlight that when corruption is practiced in politics it is “tragedy” and when it is practiced in the educational sector it is a “double tragedy” this is because of the impact of educational sector on capacity building and national development (Egbefo, 2012).

Education

Education can be largely defined as process that aids individuals in their pursuit of human development. According to Parankimalil (2012) it is a process that systematically aids an individual gather competencies and experiences. The main objective of education therefore, is to produce individuals who are down to earth, cooperative, enlightened and conform with the norms of the society they find themselves (Fafunwa, 1974; Arome & Rabi, 2017). It can therefore be inferred that the definition of education varies based on point of view. Nevertheless, education is the total process of training, gaining of special competencies, knowledge, behaviours and morals required by an individual to be responsible while contributing to societal development.

Nigerian Educational System

Numerous researchers have identified education as a critical instrument that determines the political, cultural and economic power of a country. It is based on these educational institutions that human capacity is advanced, harnessed for national development as no nation can experience growth without educational institutions (Egbefo, 2012). The capability of Nigerian to identify the importance of education and meets it vision of become a leading economy by 2020 is rather reliant on how the country transforms its youths into a highly competence and equipped workforce that meets international standards. The strength or weakness of an educational system is measure in terms of how it placates its beneficiaries (Sumner, 2008).

History of Nigerian Educational System

The Nigerian educational system was traditionally targeted at improving individuals by means of character improvement, physical, academic and occupational training for national development (Njoku, 2016). Egbefo (2012) asserts that the pioneer educational system was initiated from 1843-1960 and was targeted at meeting the requirement of the colonial and missionary administration. According to him, priority was placed on “Reading, Arithmetic, and writing” and as such, individuals were basically taught to assist the colonial and missionary administration. This form of education, particularly the curriculum approach was abnormal in the Nigerian context as it lacked subjects that facilitated vocational and practical education that could have facilitated self-sufficiency, industrial advancement and national efficiency (Imam, 2012). Nevertheless, at the end of the colonial rule, conscious efforts were made to reform the educational system and its prospectus to guarantee and include societal, national and international applicability.

The essence of carrying out this re-organisation and restructuring was targeted at including three specific sectors that include literacy institutions targeted at individuals with disposed towards literacy, classics and humanities, the industrial institution was targeted at individuals inclined towards technical and vocational training while agricultural institutions were targeted at individuals with disposition towards farming and agricultural activities (Eneji et al., 2009). Upon independence further reformations were carried out on the educational policies and programmes from 1961-1970 and this involved the establishment of numerous groups and

commissions such as the Ashbu, Banjo, Dike and Oldhan commissions to review the educational structure and process of implementation (Oriafo, 2003; Egbefo, 2012). Scholars highlight that after the Nigerian Civil war there were significant reformation implemented in the second National Development plan of 1970 to 1974 and this plan highlighted clearly that the main national philosophy objectives that form foundation of the National policy on education are;

1. A society that is free and autonomous
2. A society that is upright and offers equal opportunities to gender
3. A nation that is together, strong and self-sufficient.
4. An economic that is dynamic
5. A nation filled with good opportunities for its citizens (Egbefo, 2012; Abubakar, 2013)

It must be highlighted that the national policy on education has subsequently been revised severally notably in 1981, 1994 and 2004. Egbefo (2012) asserts that it is commendable that the philosophy places emphases on national advancement through human capacity building.

Corruption in Nigerian Educational System

Societies all through time have always relied on the education for guidance (Ozturk, 2008). Chimombo (2015) postulates that education has always served to cultivate the innovative capabilities of individuals in a society and this has created opportunities for improvements in the economic, political, societal and moral outlook of individuals in a nation. Nations seeking to stimulate national development have invested in education (Ozturk, 2008). In recent times however, education in the Nigerian state has faced terrible challenges occasioned by corrupt practices. This is even worsened due to the fact that the international funding from multinational organisations that is attracted by this sector is misappropriated by those in charge (Ololube, 2016). Thereby further impacting on the advancement of the nation's educational sector. Researchers establish that about 21 billion US dollars has been lost between the years 2005 to 2006 to illicit as well as unlawful deployment of funds (Mumuni & Sweeney, 2013; Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017). In the Nigerian educational context, vouchers are inflated, sex for mark practiced, ghost workers employed, supplies of educational materials faked, ethnic based appointment and promotions practiced, withholding of retirement and salaries made common.

Scholars highlight that students and parents systematically and shamelessly impact the education sector incentives, unmerited gifts, donations to the school in other to influence decisions regarding their children and wards (Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017). In situations where they cannot achieve their objectives, they seek to make the job frustrating for the person involved. Furthermore, seminars, workshops intended to re-strategize and introduce new approaches to effective delivery of educational programmes as well as update teachers and practitioners in the educational sectors are used as mediums to siphon allocations. According to Okorosaye-Orubite (2008) in one of the workshops organised by the Universal Basic Education Board, about 800 million naira was outrageously spent on a one day training workshop. This highlights the corruption reality on ground. It can therefore be deduced that rather than the workshop serve as a means to improve the educational sector through innovative brainstorming it was used as means to line the pockets of those in charge of organising the seminar.

Corruption implication on the Nigerian Education System

Education has numerous functions one of its roles is to categorize individuals based on their capabilities. This traditional role of education as a result of corruption sees individuals who are not qualified for positions and professions placed in this role and this has implication on the society at large. Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu (2017) highlights that corruption in the educational sector impacts social equality, merit and competence as it becomes exclusive for those who can afford it. A school of thought links the rise in insurgency, kidnaping and militancy in the country to frustration due to lack of employment, funding and educational opportunities (Abraham, 2011). Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu (2017) Observe that corruption in the educational sector drains the system of quality of education, impacts the moral advancement of the society while impeding the sustainable development of the country.

Nwanegbo (1999) quotes that; “Morality is a condition-sine-quo-non for development. Any society that experiences fraud, misappropriation, burglary, murder, enticement and various vices rise would face development impediments. A country where egocentrism, individualism as well as greed are central parts of the social arrangement will have development become an illusion”

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, the education corruption in the educational sector has more serious implication for the country in general because it short-changes members of the society in its provision of their fundamental human rights of social services. This rather unfortunate because the education is a trigger that rectifies the mistakes and errors of the past as well stimulates the developmental objectives and ambitions of generations. Primarily, corruption within the educational sector encourages mediocrity, impacts orderliness, abandons merit and equal competition which goes against the objectives of education in the global stage. Buttressing the study established that corruption in the educational sector has engineered the feeling of frustration, disgruntlement, immorality, militancy, infrastructural deficits, poverty and lack of foreign investment.

Recommendations

If Nigeria is tackle corruption in the Nigerian educational sector a number of strategies will be embarked on which include:

- Accountability and transparency should be sensitized and imposed on every aspect of the Nigerian society in such a way those public officer holders, contractors, tutors and stakeholders view transparency and accountability as key aspects of carrying out projects and serving the people.
- Supervision of programmes and projects embarked in the educational sector.
- Allocations for development of the educational sector publicised.
- Donations for infrastructural development in the educational sector should be publicised
- Sensitization on the dangerous impact of corruption on education should be carried out by non-governmental agencies and religious bodies.
- An effective and reliable financial management system should be established to control and monitor the use of educational resources.

- Financial incentives could be given to officials who have been proven to be immune to corruption.

REFERENCES

- Abubakar, A. (2013). Role of social studies education in national development in Nigeria. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2(6), 23.
- Abraham, N. M. (2011). Functional education, militancy and youth restiveness in Nigerias Niger Delta: The place of multi-national oil corporations (MNOCs). *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 5(10), 442-447.
- Abiogu, G. (2014). Philosophy of Education: A Tool for National Development?.
- Ajie, H.A and Wokekoro, O.E (2012). The Impact of Corruption on Sustainable Economic Growth and development in Nigeria. In *International Journal of Economic Development Research and Investment*. 3 (1) April
- Alli, A. 2004 “The Effect of Corruption on Development” The Courier No. 153, July –
- Arop, F. O., Akan, E. M., Nwannunu, B. I., & Owan, V. J. (2018). Personnel management and corrupt academic practices in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria
- Altinyelken, H.K. (2004). Corruption in the education sector in developing countries. The Hague: Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Education and Development Division.
- Bajracharya, H.R. (2003). Teachers’ codes of practice. Country report on Nepal. Paper prepared as part of the IIEP’s project on Ethics and Corruption in Education.
- Bhargava, V. (2005). The cancer of corruption. In *World bank global issues seminar series* (pp. 1-9).
- Brunelle – Quraishi, O (2011). Assessing the Relevance and Efficiency of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption: A Comparative Analysis. In *Notre Dame Journal of International & Comparative Law* pp 101-166
- Chukwuemeka, E. E., Okechuku, E., & Okafor, U. B. (2014). Foreign Aid to Nigeria and Domestic Obstacles: A Review of Anambra State Education Sector. *Africa’s Public Service Delivery & Performance Review*, 2(2), 52-81.
- Chimombo, J. P. (2005). Issues in basic education in developing countries: An exploration of policy options for improved delivery. *Journal of international cooperation in education*, 8(1), 129-152.
- Eneji, C. V. O., Eneji, J. E. O., Undeshi, V. A., Bisong, C. A., Emanghe, E., Bassey, J. E., & Etokobe, I. J. (2009). The Nigerian National Policy on Education and Structure: Matters Arising. *Annals of Modern Education*, 1(1), 100-112.
- Egbefo, D. O., & Ibbu, L. (2012) Corruption in the Nigerian Educational System: It’s Implication in Manpower and National Development in the Age of Globalization.
- Ganahl, J.P (2013). Corruption, Good Governance and the African States. A critical Analysis of the Political, Economic Foundations of Corruption in Sub-Saharan Africa. Potsdam Economi Series 2: Potsdam University Press
- Ghukasyan, G. (2003) Protection of Applicants’ Rights through Increasing Public Awareness on Costs of Corruption during Admission Exams in the Armenian Higher Educational Institutions, Yerevan
- Hallak & Muriel Poisson (2007). Corrupt schools, corrupt universities: What can be done? International Institute for Educational Planning, Retrieved, September, 2014, from: IIEP, <http://www.unesco.org/iiep>

- Ibietan, J., Chidozie, F., & Ujara, E. (2014). Poverty alleviation and the efficacy of development assistance models in Nigeria: An Appraisal. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)*, 1(4), 1-8.
- Imam, H. (2012). Educational policy in Nigeria from the colonial era to the post-independence period. *Italian Journal of sociology of education*, 4(1).
- Iyanda, D.O. (2012) Corruption: Definitions, Theories and Concepts. In *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (OMAN Chapter)* 2 (4) Nov. 37-45,
- Khan, M.N (1996). A typology of Corrupt Transactions in Developing Countries. *IDS Bulletin*
- Lawal, G and Tobi, A (2006). Bureaucratic Corruption, Good Governance and Development: The Challenges and Prospects of Institution building in Nigeria. In *Journal of Applied Sciences Research* 2 (10) pp 642-649
- Mumuni, A and Sweeney, G. (2013). Public Interest litigation for the right to education: the SERAP V. Nigeria case. In G. Sweeney, K. Despota and Lindner (eds) *Global Corruption Report: Education*. New York Routledge.
- Ndokwu, J.N. (2004). Corruption, corrupt practices and honest leadership in Nigeria. Online: <http://www.corruption,newscorrupt.org/printer>
- Njoku, L. (2016) *Nigerian educational development & need for quality sustainance* (Doctoral dissertation).
- NERDC (2004) *National Policy on Education*, 4th edition, Lagos: Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (First Published 1977).
- Nwanegbo-Ben, J. (1999). *The mind of philosophy* Port Harcourt; Wan Project and Games Company
- Nwaokugha, D.O, Aminigo, I.M and Nwaorgu, V.A (2010). Examination Malpractice: Implications for education and national development in Nigeria. In *Journal of Kinetics and Health Education Perspectives* Volume 4, December pp 92-98
- Nwaokugha, D.O, Nyewusira, B.N and Nyewusira, C (2013). Education and Corruption in Nigeria: A historical and Philosophical analysis. In *Journal of Educational Review* 6 (2) April – June pp 195-200
- Nwaokugha, D. O., & Ezeugwu, M. C. (2017). Corruption in the education industry in Nigeria, Implications for national development. *European Journal of Training and Development Studies*, 4(1), 1-17.
- Odo, L. U. (2015). The impact and consequences of corruption on the Nigerian society and economy. *AFRREV IJAH: An International Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 4(1), 177-190.
- Ojiade, F. (2000) The professional accountant and anti-corruption crusade. In *ICAN News* July/September.
- Okeyim, M.O, Ejue, J.B and Ekenem, S.A (2013) Governance and Corruption in Nigeria: A philopsychological Analysis. In *Net Journal of Social sciences* 1 (2) pp 24-32, October
- Okorosaye-Orubite, A.K (2008). From Universal Primary Education (UPE) to Universal Basic Education (UBE). What hope for Nigeria? School of Graduate Studies Seminar Studies; SGS Monograph No 1 March
- Ola, A., Mohammed, A. D. A. M. U., & Audi, M. S. (2014). Effects Of Corruption On Economic Development In Nigeria. *Global Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Science* 3: 209, 215.
- Oladele, S. (2019). *Corruption in the educational sector in Nigeria. The continuous strike of the Academic Staff Union of Universities*. GRIN Verlag.

- Ololube, N. P. (2016). Education fund misappropriation and mismanagement and the provision of quality higher education in Nigeria. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, 9(4), 333-349.
- Onwuka, E. Mary (2009) "Strategies for countering corruption in the Educational System: An Administrative overview" in *International Journal of Forum for African Women Educationalists Nigeria Ijofuwun* Vol.1 No.4. 56-63.
- Oriafo, S.O. (2003) Refocusing Science Technology and Mathematics Education in Nigeria in S.O. Oriafo, P.O.E Nwaokolo, G.C Igborgbor (eds) *Refocusing Education in Nigeria* Pp51-61.
- Osipian, A. L. (2007). Corruption in higher education: Conceptual approaches and measurement techniques. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 2(4), 313-332.
- Ozturk, I. (2008). The role of education in economic development: a theoretical perspective. *Available at SSRN 1137541*.
- Parankimalil, J. (2012). Meaning, nature and aims of education. *Retrieved April, 16, 2013*.
- Rabiu, U. M., & Arome, A. T. Impact of Corruption in Educational System. A Focus on Private Secondary Schools in Kaduna State.
- Sanyal, R. N., & Samanta, S. K. (2002). Corruption across countries: The cultural and economic factors. *Business and Professional Ethics Journal*, 21(1), 21-46.
- Sumner, D. A. (2008). *A Measurement of Student Satisfaction Levels as a Means of Program Evaluation: An Examination of Baker University's Educational Leadership Doctoral Program* (Doctoral dissertation, Baker University).
- Transparency International (2013). Introduction to the Global Corruption Report: Education. In G. Sweeney, K. Despota and S. Lindner (eds) *Global Corruption Report: Education*, New York, Routledge
- UNDP (2008). *Primer on Corruption and Development: Anti-corruption Interventions for poverty Reduction, Realization of the MDGs and Promoting Sustainable Development Democratic Governance Group, Bureau for Development Policy: New York*. 39.
- UNDP (2010) *UNDP Framework on Corruption and Development: Anti-corruption Guidance Note*. Retrieved, from: <http://www.undp.ro/publications/anti-corruption/>
- World Bank (1998). *Partnerships for Development: Proposed actions for the World Bank; A discussion paper*. 20 May, Washington DC: World Bank.
- Wood, J., & Antonowicz, L. (2011). *Fighting Corruption in the Education Sector: Methods Tools, and Good Practices. United Nations Development Programme*.