

## Corruption; A Major Virus to Quality of Education in Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

*The study examines corruption as a virus that defaced quality and standard of education in Nigeria. The paper employs the philosophical methods of criticism, speculation and analysis. Corruption in the education sector in Nigeria is a major virus that is affecting the quality of education in the country. It takes various forms, namely; bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, and cronyism. These practices have a negative impact on the education sector, leading to a lack of resources, poor morale, low productivity, and a lack of trust in the system. In order to address this problem, there needs to be a commitment from all stakeholders to stamp out corruption and promote transparency and accountability in the education sector. Only then can the quality of education be improved for the benefit of all students in Nigeria.*

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**Keywords:** *Corruption; Quality of Education; Corrupt Practice; Effects of Corruption.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Corruption has been a global phenomenon with all kinds of society throughout history. It has been a universal crime which presents itself in different colorations and dimensions depending on where it rears its ugly head. In Nigeria educational sector, corruption remains one of the greatest obstacles to destabilize quality and standard of education. It affects the nation's aspirations and realization towards human capacity building for national development.

The problem of corruption in the education sector in Nigeria is a widespread and deeply entrenched issue that has been affecting the quality of education in the country for decades. The effects of

corruption are felt at all levels of the education system, from primary schools to universities. It impacts everything from the allocation of resources and funding, to the hiring and promotion of educators, to the quality of teaching and learning. This paper will explore the problem of corruption in the Nigerian education sector, and its effects on the quality of education in the country.

The paper, therefore, focuses on conceptual explanation of corruption effects of corruption, corrupt practices in the educational system and the challenges to the objectives of the sector. Finally, the paper takes a position in its conclusion with some recommendations.

### **CONCEPTUAL EXPLANATION OF CORRUPTION**

The concept of corruption could be viewed as a self-limiting as well as encompassing. As self-limited concept, corruption is viewed as any transaction which involves duty of public office holder with a partial motive of acquiring or amassing resources illegally for personal advancement and self-gratification. Nkom (1982) examining the concept from the perspective of deviancy of the norms of public morality stated that corruption is the behaviour of public officials which does not conform to the acceptable norms and which aims at serving the private interest of those who practice it. This involves the exchange of decision for money or material wealth. The above definition of corruption are self-limiting.

A simple, uncomplicated and encompassing definition of corruption is viewed as the acquisition of that which one (as a member of a society and not public official alone) is not entitled. (Akinyemi, 2004) Whereas some people (society) speak of corruption mainly in terms of illegal acquisition of materials things, others tend to stretch it further by bringing social and moral values under it (Metiboba, 2002).

According to Amaele S. (2011) corruption can broadly be defined as a change from good to bad, while a corrupt behaviour is the violation of the established rules and standard behaviour of the society. Obviously, 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 as no longer institutions of learning but instead as money exchange department to help students pass examinations.

Onwuka (2009) opined that corruption in the political life of a nation is a tragedy while corruption in the educational sector has a tremendous capacity to set in motion an uncontrollable reproductive process of corruption in the larger society and thereby disrupt the development structures.

### **TYPES/FORMS OF CORRUPTION**

According to Otite (1982) the following are the types of corruption identified: Economic, Bureaucratic, Moral, Judicial and political corruption. In economic corruption, business men and entrepreneurs use corrupt means to prevent the normal institutional regulations, hasten or shorten procedure to obtain business through an inappropriate process. In judicial corruption, administration of justice is prevented through bribery.

Bureaucratic corruption involves buying of favour from bureaucrats who formulate and administer government economic and political policies. Political corruption is a feature in those activities

connected with election, succession, manipulation of people and institution in order to retain political power and offices.

Moral corruption is manifested when morally corrupt people follow a set of moral that are based on unjust/evil actions and thereby playing mind tricks on themselves in believing those things as actually good.

Generally, the forms of corruption are bribery, fraud, embezzlement, extortion, favouritism, nepotism, lobbying, cronyism, parochialism, patronage, graft, influenced padding, etc,

### **SOME CORRUPT PRACTICE IN NIGERIA EDUCATIONAL SECTOR**

The Phenomenon of corruption in the Nigeria educational sector featured prominently in the process of admission, recruitment and promotion. 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 because one cannot give what he has not. The issue of fake certificates is now on the increase. Head of institutions are also involved in corrupt practice too. Head teachers, principals, Rectors, provost and vice-chancellors who are in charge of their institutions fund are fond of transferring these funds to their personal bank account for their personal use. Some of them place “ghost workers” on salaries and over invoicing of giving contrasts.

Teachers, lecturers and students are not exempted from these corrupt practices too. Students that are expected to be evaluated based on the curriculum and set objectives are frustrated more. Most students are exploited by teachers and lecturers to give bribe to pass their examinations. Worst still some are giving into sexual favour in order to gain good grades. Some student buy examination question papers before examinations and some pay other intelligent students to write for them. Lecturers and teachers are involved in corrupt practices of grade changing and forgery of academic credentials. The policy of “quota system”, “Catchment areas” or “less advantaged areas” in Nigeria Educational system promotes the administration of lower scores, bribery, favouritism and nepotism.

The issue of corruption is certainly a major challenge for the education system in Nigeria. Corruption can take many forms, from bribery and embezzlement to nepotism and cronyism. It can affect every aspect of the education system, from school funding and construction to the quality of teaching and learning materials. Corruption can lead to a lack of resources, poor infrastructure, and a culture of impunity, all of which can have a negative impact on the quality of education. In order to address this issue, there needs to be a strong commitment from the government and other stakeholders to root out corruption and promote transparency and accountability. Let us briefly examine these forms of corruption.

#### **i. Bribery**

Bribery is a specific type of corruption that is very common in the education sector in Nigeria. It can take many forms, from paying bribes to gain admission into a school, to paying bribes for grades, or for securing a job in the education sector. This type of corruption is not only harmful to the quality of education, but it also creates an unfair playing field, where those who can afford to pay bribes

have an advantage over those who cannot. In addition, bribery can create a culture of dishonesty and cheating, which can have long-term consequences for the country's educational system.

### **ii. Embezzlement**

Embezzlement is another type of corruption that can occur in the education sector in Nigeria. This occurs when public funds or property that are intended for use in the education sector are misappropriated or stolen by those in positions of power. This can be done through a variety of methods, such as falsifying records, overcharging for goods and services, or simply pocketing money that was meant to be used for educational purposes. Embezzlement can have devastating consequences for the education system, as it leads to a lack of resources and a lack of trust in the system.

### **iii. Nepotism**

Nepotism is another form of corruption that can have a negative impact on the quality of education in Nigeria. Nepotism occurs when jobs or opportunities in the education sector are given to friends or family members, rather than to the most qualified candidates. This can lead to a lack of diversity in the workforce, as well as a lack of innovation and new ideas. It can also foster an atmosphere of favoritism and cronyism, which can lead to poor morale and low productivity. Overall, nepotism can have a negative impact on the quality of education in Nigeria, as it prevents the best and brightest from being able to succeed.

### **iv. Cronyism**

In the context of education in Nigeria, cronyism refers to the practice of hiring or promoting individuals based on their connections to those in power, rather than on their qualifications or merit. This can lead to the appointment of unqualified individuals to positions of power, which can negatively impact the quality of education. Cronyism also creates a culture of favoritism and nepotism, where those with connections have an unfair advantage over others. Ultimately, this can lead to a lack of trust in the education system, as well as a lack of accountability.

## **EFFECTS OF CORRUPTION**

Corrupt practices have enormous negative consequences on the Nigeria educational system. Amaele (2001) remarked that corruption has destroyed the value of hard work which is the major means of cultural, social, economic, political and technological advancement of all developed nations like Britain, France, Russia, Germany, United State of America, Canada, China, Japan and Australia. Commenting strongly, Amaele voiced that corruption has destroyed the value of education. Student have turn themselves into Vandals, robber, assassins, cultists, prostitutes and political thugs.

Corruption has virtually destroyed every aspect of the society's life, be it political, social, economic, educational, moral and scientific. Alli (2004) citing educator (1996), 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. Suleman (2005) noted that corruption directs resources from the designed projects to white elephant projects are heavily over involved; it increases the costs of running the schools, distort public expenditure and defers private-public partnership investment. It also erodes the consistency for grants and funding.

In Nigeria institution of learning, corruption has undermined the normal functioning of their social economic and academic system. It leads to a decaying of infrastructure, inadequate staffing, poor and fallen education standards, the disappearance of grants, trust funds, loans and the entire project without a trace.

Corruption has breeds stagnation in the educational sector. The evidence is noticed in our institutions without walls and roofs, classes without desks, chairs and books, poor quality of graduated students, empty labouratories and libraries, obsolete instructional materials, underpaid/unpaid teachers, decline in standards, overstaffing, examination malpractices, cultism, politicization of academic positions/merit wards and economic to mediocre and imposters. Corruption has also brought about poor and un-purposeful leadership in the educational sector. This has also contribute to underdevelopment in the sector.

### **VARIOUS MEANS OF STAMPING OUT CORRUPTION**

- ❖ Establishing clear rules and regulations to govern the education sector and setting up independent bodies to monitor compliance.
- ❖ Promoting transparency by making information about educational budgets and spending publicly available.
- ❖ Strengthening the role of civil society organizations in monitoring and reporting on corruption in the education sector.
- ❖ Encouraging public participation in the oversight of the education sector through mechanisms such as school governing bodies.
- ❖ Strengthening the capacity of educational institutions to detect and investigate corruption, and taking swift action against those found to be involved.
- ❖ Increasing accountability by introducing performance-based contracts for educators and school administrators.

### **CONCLUSION**

From the foregone, we have seen the dialectical consequences of corrupt practices on the Nigeria educational system. It is an abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Corruption is a serious problem in the Nigerian education sector that requires a multifaceted approach to address. It is important to not only focus on stamping out corruption, but also on building the capacity of the education sector to deliver quality education to all. While the challenges are significant, there is hope that with a concerted effort and the support of all stakeholders, corruption can be reduced and the quality of education improved for the benefit of all Nigerians.

### **POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Increase funding for the education sector, and ensure that the funds are used transparently and effectively.

- a. Increasing salaries of educators to reduce incentives for corruption.
- b. Strengthening the monitoring and accountability mechanisms of the education sector.
- c. Promoting public awareness and education on the negative impacts of corruption on education.
- d. Establishing an independent agency to investigate and prosecute corruption in the education sector.
- e. Strengthening the capacity of the judiciary to effectively handle corruption cases in the education sector.
- f. Strengthening the legal framework to punish perpetrators of corruption in the education sector.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❖ Effective and reliable financial management system can be established to control the use of educational resources.
- ❖ Sincere effort should be made to remove all the legal, political and social constraints that hamper the effective operation of the anti-corruption bodies in Nigeria.
- ❖ The traditional values of transparency, high moral standard, high level of discipline etc, should be re-instituted into our schools curriculum and make part of the national ethics that should guide all citizens.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ The country must continue to seek international co-operation on issues related to corruption so that funds wrongly acquired by corrupt Nigerians cannot be easily transferred abroad.
- ❖ The anti-corruption bodies more than ever before should step up its campaigns against corruption with the objective of implanting transparency, honest living and fiscal discipline in the heart of the citizens.
- ❖ A branch of the anti-corruption boards should be established in all public institutions and made functional so that cases of corruption can be deleted evenly enough and reported for prosecution.
- ❖ The practice of honouring honesty should receive boost from the government, religious, organizations and other corporate bodies at all levels.

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