

CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA: FOCUS ON PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IKA NORTH EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF DELTA STATE.

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Abstract

This paper examined the corruption in the educational system with focus on private schools in Ika North East Local Government Area in Delta State. Education remains the light that drives away the darkness of ignorance and enables mankind to find its ways through the tortures and labyrinth of development and civilization. This paper argued that corruption is a general disease within the private school proprietors, policy makers, examination councils, teachers, supervisors and invigilators all leading to the abuse of teaching as a profession. This study was guided by two research questions. It utilized stratified random sampling technique to select five private secondary schools in Ika North East L.G.A. of Delta State. A total of fifty teachers were randomly selected from the five schools. The questionnaire tagged "Corruption on Educational System in Private Schools (COESIPS)" was administered to the fifty (50) subjects. Numerals, Frequency and percentage technique were used to analyse the data collected. The result indicated that teachers should live by good example, parents should show good examples to children, reward honesty and truthfulness and so on. The paper recommended some measures to check the corrupt practices in the educational system.

Keywords: *Corruption, Education, Private Secondary School*

Introduction

Corruption is an ethical and social problem which varies from one private school to another, ministry to ministry, place to place, time to time, culture to culture and with the level of economic development (Aluko, 2008). It is a global phenomenon that affects especially private secondary schools in Nigeria. Corruption is one of the major causes of examinational malpractices in private schools today using Ika North East L.G.A. as a case study, it occurs at all levels of private schools directly or indirectly. All over Nigeria, the perception of corruption especially in private schools is very high and uncontrollable. This is because, corruption undermines every aspect of the Educational System among which are, political development, economic development, social development and so on. It should be emphasized here that it is not just only in governance or educational system that corruption is found; it is equally noticeable in every human society today in Nigeria. It is on this note that Samson (2012), stated that the issue of corruption leads to an

extent whereby the common man will look at the trend and say, if the rich could do this, then my own child must survive too. So they will also emulate even if they don't have the money. The total effect is what we are experiencing today and the ministry of education and the policymakers are not helping matters concerning the issue of the ongoing level of corruption in private schools.

Today, some private schools are now been contracted by special centres or government official examiners to help deliver the school with sound results. On the other hand, as a result of unemployment in the educational system, unqualified teachers are been employed to teach in private school. For instance, a person who read Geography or Geology is employed to teach Business Studies or Christian Religious Knowledge as a result of unemployment without any little knowledge background of education system. These challenges have make teaching not to be recognized as a profession like every other discipline such Medicine, law, pharmacy or engineer (Anderson, 2005).

Nigeria, we toy around education thinking that we have gotten human resources and therefore we can do away with education with application of corruption as a shortcut for good results for our children (Samson, 2013). The question is; which type of human resource do we have in private schools today? Who are the management and operators of Private Schools today in Nigeria? With what qualifications to qualify as a teacher? The proprietors we have today in private secondary schools are half-baked because the system itself and the policymakers are half-baked. The education that doesn't allow external and internal educators the tendency to get into the system will not get anywhere because we have to exchange ideas. For instance, government now says those who will teach in post-primary schools must be NCE or First Degree holders in education so that things will not be the same, of which this cannot stop corruption among private schools in the state (Amunden, 2008). Presently, government agencies in charge of educational system have neglected the regular funding of public secondary schools which is the bedrock of private schools.

The utmost desire of most Nigerians is to combat corruption in the country as it has adversely affected the economic and socio-political systems of the country. The education sector of the economy must be involved in this crusade, not only in words but mainly by visible and positive actions. For this reason efforts must be made to tackle corruption in secondary schools, the hair root that initiates nourishment in academics (Mthiyare, 2013).

There is a wave of corrupt practices in the school system in Nigeria. Since corruption is an enemy to educational pursuit, strategies to expose and exterminate it must be devised. It is this search light that was beamed on secondary education segment in Delta State of Nigeria in this research. In summary, the problem of this investigation is to identify implementable options to achieve a corrupt-free secondary education and how to institute transparency and accountability in the system (Cambodia, 2004).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is stated below:

- i. To identify implementable options to achieve corruption free secondary education and
- ii. To institute transparency and accountability in the educational system.

Area of Study

The area of study covers Ika North East Local Government Area in Delta State

Research Question

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- i. To what extent can transparency and accountability be instituted in the private secondary schools in Ika North East L.G.A of Delta State?
- ii. To what extent can teachers in private secondary schools tackle corruption in Ika North East L.G.A of Delta State?

Review of Related Literature

Corruption in the private education sectors takes many forms. For example corruption in the private secondary schools is defined as the systematic use of public office for private benefit whose impact is significant on access, quality or equity in education (Hallak and Poisson, 2002). The World Bank (2000) settles on a straightforward definition of corruption as the abuse of public office for private gain. This definition is not new rather was chosen because it is concise and broad enough to include most forms of corruption that the Bank encounters, as well as being widely used in the literature of other researchers (Ghukasyan, 2003; Bajracharya, 2003; Altinyelken, 2004; Anderson, 2005 and Aluko, 2008).

Public secondary schools are also involved in corruption when a principal or teacher accepts, solicits, or extorts a bribe from the students or parents. It is also abused when private secondary schools proprietors or teachers also actively offer bribes to circumvent education policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit.

Public schools can be abused for personal benefit even if bribery does not occur, through patronage and or nepotism. Of course, this should not be taken to mean that corruption cannot occur at other levels or its effects are only major in private secondary schools. Some parents also intend to send their children to private schools primarily to enable their children obtain excellent results and on the other hand support examination malpractices which have in turn degraded the quality and standard of education in Nigeria.

Education in the broadest sense of the term is meant to aid the human being in his/her pursuit of wholeness. Wholeness here implies the harmonious development of all the potentialities God has given to a human person. To Parankimailil (2012), education is a systematic process through which a child or an adult acquires knowledge, experience and relevant skills from one generation to another. Scott and Marshall (2005), known as pioneers of Dictionary of Sociology sees education as a philosophical as well as a sociological concept, denoting ideologies, curricula 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 to contribute his own quota, to the growth of the society of which he is a member.

Forms of Corruption in Private Secondary Schools

Corruption can take place in private secondary school in the following forms which may be applicable in some public secondary schools, such as follows:

- a) **Parents' Corrupt Practices:** This form of corruption is been manipulated by parent and thereby using all various unorthodox means such as given out 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 School Certificate Examinations (WAEC, NECO, GCE, A'Level Examinations).
- b) **Students' Corrupt Practices:** This is a situation by which students use 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.
- c) **Examination Councils' Corrupt Practices:** This form of corruption practice involves both the invigilators, supervisors, syndicates or examination officers 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 they refer as extra-time. Oyinlola (2009), postulated that the parents also upgrade JAMB score, which is very critical for admission into the university in Nigeria, syndicates now, route candidates to particular centers with the gain of cheating. It has also been observed relatedly that there 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
- d) **Teachers' Corrupt Practices:** This form of corrupt practice is dominant in the private schools even in the private university system. Lazy and incompetent students now result to sorting/finding 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/Lecturers and students print fake receipts, which they use in collecting school fees (Oyinlola, 2009). Another form of corruption is in a situation where an underpaid teacher, to make ends meet, charges students a 'paper fee' in order for them to take the end of year national examination for their grade. Student must pass this test in order to progress to the next grade (David, 2002).
- e) **Police/Security Officer/Gatekeeper 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 (Belloimman, 2005). Oyinloha (2009) further opined that the police are also alleged to be collecting an unauthorized fee before granting to arrested suspect and bail.

- b. Collecting of money for continuous assessment and inter-exams grades;
- c. Collecting money for change of grade 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' persistent absenteeism to accommodate other income outside their normal assigned duties.

David (2002), further cited other forms of corrupt practices in private educational sectors such as:

ghost teachers, diversion of school fees by the bursar or principals, inflation of school enrollment data, imposition of unauthorized fees on the students, diversion 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 found 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; Embezzlement, theft of public resources; Misappropriation illegal use of public resources; Favouritism, Fraud, Ghost worker, and Nepotism.

Other common forms of corruption in the educational system especially in private secondary schools as illustrated by David (2002) include:

- a. Siphoning of school instructional material and other teaching aids to the black market especially the science teachers, principals and bursars;

In a similar study, Amundsen (2008) suggested five main forms of corruption, namely: embezzlement; bribery; fraud; extortion; and favouritism. He defines these various terms as follows:

- a) **Embezzlement:** This involves the theft of public resources by public officials. One

example in the education sector is the use of PTA funds aimed at school developmental projects or construction for private secondary school library;

b) **Bribery:** This involved payment (in money or in kind) given or taken in a corrupt relationship to be employed as a teacher or when such person does not have the This form of corrupt practices exist among the uniform appropriate credentials to be engaged into the system officers, who when assigned, attached or posted to but been employed as a teacher;

c) **Fraud:** This has to do with economic crime that involves some kind of trickery, swindling or deceit. One manifestation in the education sector is the producing of extra-result or statement of result issued by the proprietor or school principals; another is the existence of ghost teachers on payrolls especially when such school is being owned by a teacher who has little or no educational experience;

d) **Extortion:** money and other resources extracted by the use of coercion, violence or threats to use force. There may be fewer examples of violence or threats to use violence in the education sector compared to other sectors. However, sexual harassment of students by the teachers or the obligation for parents to pay illegal or unauthorized fees if they want their child to be admitted to school;

e) **Favouritism:** This has to do with mechanism of power abuse implying 'privatization' and a highly biased selling of school resources or equipments. This includes cases of nepotism where a public officer gives the priority to his or her family members or friends. There are many examples of favouritism in the educational field including the recruitment of administrators based on their committee of

friends, associations or family friend (Amundsen, 2000). Causes of corruption in educational sectors in Nigeria as highlighted by Oyinloha (2009) include the followings:

f) **Poverty.** This can take effect especially when teachers are poorly paid too assertive promotion or been motivated. This can also occurred as a result of exploitation from the principal to the students through sorting to upgrade their continuous assessment (CA) to get higher grade during or before the examination;

g) **Unemployment:** This may take effect in a situation whereby the applicant may find it difficult to secure a job in his profession and finally find himself in a teaching field which may not be his basic profession as a result of unemployment in the labour market and

h) **Low wage workers:** when teachers' salaries are low, staff may be compelled to use official position to collect bribes as a way of making ends meet.

Other causes of corruption as highlighted by Babatope (2008) includes: Weak government institutions Poor remuneration and pay incentives; Lack of openness and transparency in public and private service; Absence of key anti corruption tools; Culture and acceptance of corruption by the populace; Absence of effective political financing, Poverty; Ethnic and religious difference; and Resource scramble. He further argued that the reasons why the fight against corruption in Nigeria has not been achieved include the following factors:

- a. Insincerity of government;
- b. Pre bargaining and Negotiation, highly placed officials caught in corrupt practices are made to part with some of their looted funds and are thereafter set free;
- c. Low deterrent- the punitive measures for corrupt practices need to be strengthened

- d. Lack of virile political and social movements to tackle corruption. The mass of the people are yet to be mobilized in the fight against corruption;
- e. Lack of access to public information. A lot of secrecy still pervades government documents, and this underlies the need for the passage of the freedom of Information Bill presently before Nigeria's National Assembly;
- f. Insecurity of Informants. There is a need to enact laws to protect informants as well as reward them;
- g. Low public participation in governance; and
- h. Corrupt electoral system and nepotism (Babatope, 2008)

Methodology

This study was carried out to examine the level of corruption in private secondary schools in Ika North East L.G.A. in Delta State. The population consisted of all teachers in private secondary schools in Ika North East L.G.A. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select fifty (50) teachers in the private secondary schools. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire made up of Twelve (12) items. To guide the study, two (2) research questions were formulated. Data collected were analyzed using numerals, frequency and percentages.

Table 1: Sample of Schools for the Study

S/No	Names of Private Selected Secondary Schools in Ika North East L.G.A.	No. of Teachers
1.	Calvary Group of School, Boji Boji Owa	10
2.	Parents Pride Nursery Primary and Secondary School	10
3.	Rock of Ages Group of School	10
4.	Brain Trust Nursery, Primary & Secondary School	10
5.	Pere-Plague Nursery, Primary & Secondary School	10
Total		50

Data Analysis/Results

Research Question 1: To what extent can transparency and accountability be instituted in the private secondary schools in Ika North East L.G.A of Delta State?

Table 2: Frequency, numerals and percentages on extent of transparency and accountability in Private Secondary School in Ika North East L.G.A., Delta State.

S/No	Suggested Ways	Remark	No. & % of Yes	No. & % of No
1	Teachers to live by good examples	Agreed	46 (92%)	4 (8%)
2	Eradicate all forms of malpractice	Agreed	48 (96%)	2 (4%)
3	Appointments should be based on merit	Agreed	50 (100%)	-
4	Government officials should show good examples	Agreed	45 (90%)	5 (10%)
5	Appointment truthful and honest people to head schools	Agreed	40 (80%)	10 (20%)
6	Parents to shod good examples to children	Agreed	42 (84%)	8 (16%)

Table 2 indicates that 90% of teachers responded positively that teachers should live by good examples, appointment should be based on merit and government officials should show good examples in course of their visitation to schools.

Research Question 2: To what extent can teachers in private secondary schools tackle corruption in Ika North East L.G.A of Delta State?

Table 3: Frequency Numerals and Percentages on how private school teachers can tackle corruption in Ika North East L.G.A., Delta State.

S/No	Suggested Ways	Remark	No. & % of Yes	No. & % Of No
7	Teachers to be morally sound and employed on merit	Agreed	48 (96%)	2 (4%)
8	Students should be well taught to be self reliance.	Agreed	49 (98%)	1 (2%)
9	Seminars on awareness of corruption	Agreed	47 (94%)	3 (6%)
10	Basic knowledge of subject content	Agreed	46 (92%)	4 (8%)
11	Proprietors should be sanctioned for exam malpractice	Agreed	50 (100%)	-
12	Honesty and truthfulness should be rewarded	Agreed	50 (100%)	-

Table 3 shows that 96% of the respondents agreed that teachers should be morally sound, while 98% are of the opinion that salaries of private school teachers should be attractive. Furthermore 100% of the respondent agreed that proprietors should be sanctioned if his/her school is involved in exam malpractice.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of research question one as shown in table 1 reveals that teachers should leave by good examples in order to eradicate all forms of malpractices. This is in agreement with Onyinlota (2009), who reported that teachers/lecturers and students print fake receipts, which they use in collecting school fees. Also, findings from table 1 shows that teachers should be paid well which is in line with David (2002) who opined that another form of corruption is in a situation where an underpaid teacher, to make ends meet, charges students a "paper fee" in order for them to take the end of year examination for their grade. Katharina (2004) further cited other forms of corrupt practices in private educational sector as: embezzlement of public resources by government officials, involvement of payment (n money or in kind) before a teacher could be employed, fake statement o results and so on. This is in agreement with questions 2 and 6.

Research question 2 shows that the findings of table 3 reveals that over 70% of teachers agree that teachers should be educationally sound to teach with knowledge of subject content which is in

agreement with Samson (2012) who postulated that unqualified teachers are been employed in private schools to teach subject not related to their areas of study thereby making teaching not to be recognize as a profession. Also teachers agree that proprietors should be sanctioned for exam malpractice which is of the same opinion with Amunden (2008), who opined that proprietors in private school today are half-baked because the system itself and the policy makers are half-baked.

Implication for Educational Planning and Development

In course of planning curriculum education for schools, the following should be put into consideration:

- i. Curriculum planners should involve the government and proprietors of secondary schools to provide adequate school infrastructures and modern teaching materials in schools
- ii. Curriculum educators should put in place effective disciplinary/corrective measures without fear or favour on corrupt teachers/proprietors and
- iii. Local Education Authority should be evolved and sustained in result-oriented and regular school supervision of private schools.
- iv. Effective disciplinary/Corrective measures should be applied without fear or favour on corrupt teachers/proprietors.

Conclusion

This paper has established that there is a link between corruption and the educational system. Corruption must be stopped not just by punishing the culprit but also by disinfecting the system to make it extremely difficult for corruption to breed in the system. This can be done through effective education by enlightening proprietors and students of private school on the dangerous effects of educational corruption.

In addition to the above, I wish to conclude on a very positive note by stressing that, it is not that corruption is in the blood of the Nigerians or that proprietors of private schools are fundamentally different from other people in the world, but the fact remains that, corruption persists in Nigeria, especially in the educational sector because of the fertile ground for corrupt practices occasioned by decades of inept political leadership.

Recommendations

Based on the study the following recommendations are made:

- i. The traditional values of transparency, high moral standard, high level of discipline and so on, should be reinstated into private school curriculum;
- ii. All offending proprietors/proprietress involved in exam malpractice should be sanctioned to serve as deterrent to others;
- iii. The political leaders at all levels should serve as role models to others in curbing corruption especially in the educational sector;
- iv. Parents and teachers should live by good examples and can do well by promoting positive moral values, hence it is often said that "charity begins at home". (Imasren, 2007).

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