

**CORRUPTION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES ON SENIOR
SECONDARY EDUCATION IN DELTA STATE: SYNTHESIS OF
SOLUTION BY CURRICULUM PLANNERS**

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Abstract

This study was carried out to examine the level of corruption in Senior Secondary Education in Delta State and possible solution by curriculum planners. The population consisted of all teachers and students in Senior Secondary Schools in Delta State. Simple random sampling techniques was used to select two hundred and forty five (245) respondents consisting of 145 teachers and 100 students across the three senatorial districts in Delta State. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire consisting of sixteen (16) items of a 4 point likert scale type titled "corruption in the Senior Secondary Education system in Delta State" (CSSESIDS). The descriptive survey design was employed for the study. To guide the study, two research questions were formulated. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation with a benchmark of 2.50 for decision making. The findings revealed among others that there should be provision of adequate school infrastructure, discipline corrupt teachers and parents teachers association (PTA) to monitor school activities. The paper recommended that there should be proper sanctioning of corrupt teachers under the watchful eyes of government and Parent-Teacher-Association.

Keywords: corruption, senior secondary education, curriculum planners.

Introduction

Corruption in the education sector can be defined as "the systematic use of public office for private benefit whose impact is significant on the availability and equality of educational goals and services and has impact on access, quality and equity in Education. (Hallak and Poisson 2002). Tikumah (2009) asserted that, the term Corruption comes from the Latin word Corruptus which literally means "to destroy". Thus a practice or an action is labelled as corruption because of the destruction it causes to the moral, political or socio-economic being of the society. Corruption refers to illegal, immoral or dishonest behaviour. The word corruption means the destruction, ruining or the spoiling of a society or a nation

(Ugwoegbu 2012). Aderinoye (2011) explained corruption as inducement or persuasion to influence people to do things that are contrary to laid down rule or norms and values of a society.

Although there is no single generally accepted definition of corruption, the following are some common features of the various definitions of the term corruption:

- i. Abuse of public office for private gain;
- ii. Confusion of the private with public spheres or an illicit exchange between the two spheres;
- iii. Acting in a way inconsistent with official duty and the right of others and
- iv. Dishonest breach of trust by a public officer of his duty.

Corruption is also a behavior which deviates from the normal moral role that one is expected to display as a result of undue influence. According to Sen (1999), corruption or corrupt behavior involves the violation of established rules for personal gain and profit. Corruption is efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means or private gain at public expense or a misuse of public power for private benefit (Lipset & Lenz 2000). Corruption comes in form of embezzlement, bribery, deceit and extortion to mention a few. Corruption can be seen in every areas of our society.

Ekiyor (2009) in his broad view of corruption defined it as the unlawful use of official power or influence by an official of the government either to enrich himself or further his course and/or any other person at the expense of the public, in contravention of his oath of office and/or contrary to the conventions or Laws that are in force. It is very unfortunate that this menace knows not any time nor period; it happens anytime or period of any nation's history. This monster called corruption has now been nick named in most Nigerian Languages especially in the three major Languages.

Ndokwu (2004) says: the Igbos call it Igbuozu, the Yorubas call it Egunje while the Hausas call it Chuachua. People no Longer frown or feel ashamed to engage in corrupt practices! Chuachua/Egunje or Igbuozu is now acceptable and it is possible to hear someone openly complaining that there is no Chuachua, Egunje or Igbuozu at his or her place of work and as such a person might quickly resign if he or she finds another work where there is opportunity for Chuachua. It is as bad as that! In the home, public offices, market places, religious organizations, educational institutions, government institutions and parastatals the armed forces and so on are all involved in the act of corruption.

Conceptual Explanation of Terms

Some terms have been used in this paper and the manner which they have been described includes:

(a) **Corruption**

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, in terms of its coverage, the concept attracts different meanings from different scholars particularly the social scientist. Some of these definitions are self-limiting in what they cover as constituting corruption while others are encompassing.

A simple, uncomplicated and encompassing definition of corruption that is found to be useful in this paper is the one that sees the phenomenon as the acquisition of that which one (as a member of society not public official alone) is **not** entitled. (Akinyemi, 2004). Corruption seen from this perspective therefore represents a departure from what the society considers as correct procedures in exchange of goods, services or money on the part of every body that makes up the society. This explains why corruption has been seen in various societies mostly in line with the culture or prescribed social life of the people. The implication of this is that while some societies speak of corruption mainly in terms of illegal acquisition of material things, others tend to stretch it further by bringing social and moral values under it. (Metiboba, 2002). The later explains why Usman Bala (2008) argues that corruption means much more than public officers taking bribes and gratification, committing fraud and stealing funds and assets entrusted in their care. The urge to be involved in corrupt practices runs through the veins of an average Nigerian.

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 examination and gain admission into higher institutions. Onwuka, (2009) 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 sector has tremendous capacity to set in motion an uncontrollable reproductive process of corruption in the larger society and thereby mare the development structures.

(b) Educational System

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 Twenty 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 its 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 characterized 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.

Review of Literature

According to Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda (ACCU) Parents-Teachers-Associations should be mandated to introduce Corruption Integrity packs to enable them verify teacher conduct, quality of educational materials, infrastructure and services under the Senior Secondary Education programme. And to Tanaka (2006), the first step in checking corruption is to identify physical space where corruption may occur and locating teachers and offices with monopolistic powers. The political will of senior staff would then be needed to stimulate teachers and staff morale. He advised that those who shun corruption even though they work in corrupted setting, should be identified and adequately compensated.

In the opinion of Mindphiles (2006), a monitoring team is needed to reduce government employment to realistic size for realistic salaries. In addition, anti-corruption measures should include, privatisation of the execution of public services and the use of general government computer network to speed up financial reporting. In an Anti-Corruption Day Youth Camp in Moldova (2004), the measures proposed to reduce corruption in schools included financial support from government, increasing the punishment on people involved in corruption and increasing transparency of admissions and examinations. And in Cambodia (2004), civic education and home economics were identified as primary school

subjects suitable for anti-corruption, teaching. Stories and illustrations that address values and friction between personal ambitions and needs of the community may also produce good results.

Mthiyane (2015) was strongly inspired by the declaration of David Chonco which emphasized the policy of zero corruption in the public sector in Zululand. In this regard, he wondered why food meant for students in boarding schools should be pilfered, class desks and chairs be carried away for household use and school grass cutting machine be used for commercial purposes. Mthiyane then opined that secondary schools are in poor state for lack of maintenance by appointed financial committees as there was no accountability of how money was spent.

Consequences of Corruption

The consequences of corruption are universal both in private and public senior secondary schools even if there could be variations in the level of government and non-government secondary schools responses to these consequences. Simply put: Massive corruption in secondary schools in Delta State, has reduced the amount of money needed for development just as it does in any other sectors of the nation's economy.

Notwithstanding, the most direct and in some ways the most inconsequential, cost of corruption as cited by David (2002) is the waste of the financial resources that get misdirected. The more serious costs are incurred when: (a) students unable to afford bribes are denied access to schooling or examinations, (b) talent is misallocated due to promotion being awarded on the basis of bribery rather than merit, and (c) a generation of students come to believe that personal effort and merit do not count and that success comes through manipulation, favoritism and bribery. When corruption is so pervasive that it comes to be viewed as a basic mechanism of social and economic interaction, it instills a value that is highly destructive to social and economic development of a country (David, 2002).

First, corruption promotes poverty. A simple example could be made with the corruption in the management of the senior secondary schools in Delta State. There are situations where teachers are not paid as at when due or receive their salaries as at when due. Education remains one of the main routes leading to a good life and national development, without education, what would be the future of teachers and the country? (Kayode, 2013).

Another consequence of corruption is that it creates the condition for political instability. This is because unrestricted corruption makes the state an

unlimited allocator of wealth to individuals and groups. This character of the state makes it possible for the politics of do-or-die to take root, with politicians struggling to out-compete one another sometimes in a most violent manner. It must be recalled that the various military regimes that took over power from democratically elected representatives of the people had always justified their intervention on the grounds of grand corruption and looting of state treasury by political state actors (Kayode, 2013).

Third, corruption contributes to the blanket criminalisation of teacher, examiners and government agencies on educational system in Delta State. With its capacity to generate poverty and instability, the youths have also been systematically hijacked for selfish ends by unscrupulous politicians and ideologies. Some of those that were not "hijacked" have found interest in advance fee fraud popularly known as online Yahoo business in local parlance. While corruption cannot, and should not, be the singular cause of this systematic criminalisation, it contributes to it (Kayode, 2013).

Four, corruption also has other social costs apart from poverty. As rightly noted by Myint (2000), "in any society, there are laws and regulations to serve social objectives and to protect the public interest, such as building codes, environmental controls, traffic laws and prudential banking regulations. Violating these laws for economic gain through corrupt means can cause serious social harm." The frequent use of substandard materials and violation of building regulations have led to numerous building collapses. Killing innocent students, teachers and occupiers have become a recurrent decimal in Nigeria even in the church where people worship (Kayode, 2013).

Lastly, and consequents upon the aforementioned is that corruption is anti-developmental to the extent that it reduces the amount of funds available to be used for developmental purposes. Funds that should have been used to better education, health, infrastructure and other items needed to encourage a good life of Nigerians at the grassroots are stolen by a microscopic few. But how has the EFCC responded? What has been done so far? (Kayode, 2013).

Synthesis of Solutions by Curriculum Planners.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) in National Policy on Education (NPE) asserted that: Education is an instrument for National Development; to this end, the formulation of ideas, their integration for National Development and the interaction of persons and ideas are all aspects of Education.

For Education to tackle corruption head-on, there is need for proper curriculum development which entails all the activities the school is to conduct

- (k) Equalities in terms of gender, rural areas, urban geographical zones etc;
- (l) Restriction of high level internet and other crimes;
- (m) Dangerous trans-boarder media influences should be critically examined;
- (n) There should be no transfer of states responsibilities to the Federal Government and
- (o) Amendment of JAMB bottlenecks or funnel syndrome by which millions of candidates are denied admission into higher institutions.

The above identified solutions by curriculum planners if tackled would go a long way in curbing corruption in the senior secondary education and society; but once the area of Education affected is not adequately addressed then all other sectors are at risk because the products coming out of the Education are the ones to occupy all public and private positions which means corruption would have to continue.

Research Questions

1. What strategies can be adopted to achieve a corruption-free Senior Secondary Education in Delta State of Nigeria?
2. How can fraud be tackled in Senior Secondary Education in Delta State?

Methods

The study adopted a survey research design. A survey research design focuses on people, the vital facts of people and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivation and behaviour. The population of the study consist of all teachers and students in senior secondary schools in Delta State. The sample of the study is made up of Two Hundred and Forty Five (245) respondents consisting of one hundred and forty-five (145) teachers and one hundred (100) students selected from (10) secondary schools across the three senatorial districts in Delta State. A simple random sampling technique was used to select four hundred and fifty (450) respondents from ten secondary schools across the three senatorial district of Delta State.

Data Analysis/Results

Research Question One

What strategies can be adopted to achieve a corruption-free Senior Secondary Education in Delta State of Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Responses and Standard Deviation of Strategies to Achieve corruption-free secondary education in Delta State.

S/N	Strategies	Means				XX	Remark
		Teachers		Students			
		X	SD	X	SD		
1	Provide Standard teaching materials and infrastructure	2.92	0.92	2.95	0.90	2.94	Agreed
2	Proper school supervision/conducive learning environment	2.98	0.88	2.93	0.93	2.96	Agreed
3	Pay teachers regularly at the end of each month	2.88	0.93	2.85	0.91	2.87	Agreed
4	Enforce rules and regulations/examination ethics moral disciplines	2.79	0.94	2.83	0.92	2.81	Agreed
5	Punish sack those found to be corrupt	3.00	0.93	2.91	0.92	2.96	Agreed
6	Provide incentives/good conditions of service to teachers	2.75	0.99	2.84	0.94	2.80	Agreed
7	Government to look at the welfare of teachers	2.87	0.94	2.81	0.87	2.84	Agreed
8	Committee of PTA to monitor school activities	2.93	0.92	2.90	0.85	2.92	Agreed

In Table 1, the teachers and students strongly opine that the best ways to arrest corruption in secondary education include the provision of instructional materials and infrastructure in schools, proper school supervision, regular payment of teachers' salaries and enforcement of rules and regulations on examination ethics.

Research Question 2: How can fraud be tackled in Senior Secondary Education in Delta State?

Table 2: Mean Responses and Standard Deviation on ways to tackle fraud in Senior Secondary School in Delta State.

S/N	Strategies	Means				XX	Remark
		Teachers		Students			
		X	SD	X	SD		
9	Prosecute corrupt teachers	2.73	0.95	2.71	0.96	2.72	Agreed
10	Pay teachers as at when due	2.85	0.92	2.86	0.92	2.86	Agreed
11	Frequent school inspection	2.61	0.96	2.56	0.90	2.57	Agreed
12	Provide adequate instructional materials	2.77	0.95	2.83	0.94	2.80	Agreed
13	Honesty should be rewarded	2.94	0.96	2.88	0.97	2.91	Agreed
14	Wage war against illegal collections	2.79	0.94	2.83	0.88	2.81	Agreed
15	Schools should be adequately funded	3.00	0.93	2.98	0.86	2.99	Agreed
16	PTA to be vigilant	2.91	0.92	2.88	0.96	2.90	Agreed

Table 2 reveals that fraud in secondary education, according to the respondents, can be tackled through prosecution of corrupt ones, paying teachers well and as at when due, regular supervision, effective activation of the works of the PTA and proper teaching of students.

Discussion of Findings

Data analysis in research question one shows that both the teachers and students agreed that there should be provision of standard teaching materials and infrastructure, conducive learning environment and committee of PTA to monitor school activities. This is in line with Anuforo 2013 who opined that the problems of education can be addressed through conducive learning environment and appropriate relevant curriculum.

In addition to the above, Mindphiles (2006), is of the opinion that a monitoring team should be heeded to reduce government employment to realistic size for realistic salaries. Moldova (2004), in line with research questions one also proposed that the measures to reduce corruption in schools included financial support from government, increasing the punishment of people involved in corruption, increasing transparency of admissions and examinations.

Analysis of Data in Table 2 shows that all the respondents agreed that teachers should be paid salary as at when due, honesty should be rewarded, incentives should be given to honest teachers/students which is in line with Tanka (2001) stating that the first step in checking corruption is to identify physical space where corruption may occur and locating teachers and offices with monopolistic powers. This is also the opinion of Bala Usman (2008).

Conclusion

In other to curb and eventually eradicate corruption in any level of education, the students and teachers need to be enriched with the power of distinguishing right from wrong. Secondary School should return to the teaching of moral education, examination malpractices and corruption as basic education in order to empower students with the spirit of stewardship while the teachers and students should live exemplary life, reflecting truth, kindness, dignity of labour and integrity in educational system in line with National Policy of Education. This study also discovered that all forms of corruption manifested in bribery, frauds, embezzlement, favouritism, nepotism, examination malpractice etc are noticeable in senior secondary schools even in higher institutions of the higher learning in Nigeria. The conclusion however, is that no matter the magnitude of natural resources present, advanced technology, the efficiency of labour and the availability of teaching aids in the educational system, development and moral

standard of education cannot be sustained in secondary schools except corruption is eradicated by adopting the above strategies.

Recommendation

Based on the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Government and other responsible bodies should endorse the teaching of ethics, examination malpractices and corruption at all levels of education for senior secondary school teachers and students;
- Economic and Financial Crimes Commission in Nigeria (EFCC) should collaborate local agencies to investigate all financial crimes including illegal fee frauds being charged by Heads of schools to reduce exploitations of parents especially in the rural areas;
- Government should involve in providing and maintaining instructional materials and ensuring adequate provision for teacher's welfare and
- There should be proper sanctioning of corrupt teachers under the watchful eyes of government and Parent-Teacher-Association, P.T.A.

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