

EDUCATIONAL CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA AND ACROSS NATIONAL BOUNDARIES

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ABSTRACT

The hue and alarming rate shown by the screaming headlines on both print and electronic media appears to be creating impression that corruption in Nigeria may be difficult to contain if it is not urgently addressed. This paper seeks to determine the educational corruption in Nigeria and beyond. This paper drawn standard international definitions of corruption and apply into the education sector. The paper concluded that corruption in Nigeria can be drastically reduced if not eliminated through the total overhaul of governance structure incorporating strong measures capable of checking all forms of graft, merger of the anti-graft agencies to avoid confusion and to promote better coordination of the fight against corruption using the system of sanctions including effective implementation of freedom of information bill.

KEYWORDS: Educational Corruption, Selection, Accreditation, Professional Misconduct, and Faculty Misconduct

INTRODUCTION

Corruption is one of the greatest challenges of the contemporary world. Corruption in Nigeria is a serious issue that cannot be over emphasized. However, Corruption in education is both materials and non materials. It undermines government, fundamentally distorts public policy, leads to the misallocation of resources, harms the private sector and particularly hurts the poor(Otalor&Eiya 2013, p.130). Corruption does not respect national boundaries and it deepens poverty around the world by distorting educational, political, economic and social life.

Concept of Educational Corruption

The definition of educational corruption is derived from the more general set of corruption issues. Like other areas, it includes the abuse of authority for material gain (Anechiarico and Jacobs, 1996; Kalnins, 2001; Frimpong and Jacques, 1999). But because education is an important public good, its professional standards include more than just material goods, hence the definition of education corruption includes the abuse of authority for personal as well as materials gain.

Concept of Corruption

There are a lot of various definitions of corruption, but the most precise and clear definition of this social phenomenon is provided in the communication from the commission to the European Parliament, the council and the European Economic and Social Committee:

Fighting corruption in the Eu of 2011: corruption shall mean an abuse of power for private gain. Nigeria is the 148 least corrupt nations out of 178 countries, according to the 2017 Corruption Perceptions Index reported by Transparency International. Corruption Rank in Nigeria average 120.45 from 1996 until 2017, reaching an all time high of 152 in 2005 and a record low of 52 in 1997. (Kaufmann, 2005:29).

Global Effects of Corruption

Corruption is a global challenges and issues facing almost every nation of the world with devastating effects. These include:

1. Economic Effects: Corruption has negative effects on economic growth as it, among other things, increases expenditure on public education, reduces level of investment and adds to investment risk (Mauro, 1997; and 1995; Shleifer and Vishny, 1993; Lipset & Lenz 2002). Corruption may also lead to the rise of the underground economy (Myint, 2000 p.46).
Others effects are:
2. Fiscal effect
3. Impact on investment
4. Effect on the Government Budget
5. Financial effect like income distribution

The Need for a Nation to be Free of Educational Corruption

Since the time of Plato, it has generally been understood that a key ingredient in the making of a nation/state is how it chooses its technical, commercial, and political leaders. In general, it is agreed that the modern nation can long survive if leaders are chosen on the basis of the inscriptive characteristics, i.e. the characteristics with which they are born, race, gender, social status. Schooling provides mechanism through which these opposing influences can be fairly managed. It is the common instrument used by nations to 'refresh' the sources of its leadership. Economists have tried to estimate the sacrifice in economic growth if there is a serious bias in the selection of leaders (Klitgaard, 1986). It has been estimated that developing countries could improve their GNP/capita by five percent points if they were to base their leadership upon merit as opposed to gender or social status (Pinera and Selowsk, 1981). In fact, by some estimates, the economic benefit to developing countries of choosing leaders on the basis of merit would be three times more than the benefit accruing from a reduction in OECD trade restriction on imports (Kirmani et al, 1986). Education is also for purposes of personal consumption, cultural development and social cohesion. Corruption of these purposes deeply threatens the nation as well.

The Common Features of an Educational System Free of Corruption

A school system, which is free of corruption, is characterized by the following:

- i) Equity of access to educational opportunity
- ii) Fairness in the distribution of educational curricular and materials.
- iii) Fairness and transparency in the criteria for selection to higher and more specialized training
- iv) Fairness in accreditation in which all institutions are judged by professional standards equally applied and open to public scrutiny.
- v) Fairness in the acquisition of educational goods and services.
- vi) Maintenance of professional standards of conduct by those who administer education institutions who teach in them, whether public or private.

Categories of Educational Corruption

1. **Selection:** There is no nation in which the proportion of the age cohort attending at the end of the post-compulsory system is as large as it is in compulsory education. Educational opportunity is shaped not like a rectangle, but like a pyramid.

Maintaining the same standard of reliability, cost difference in grading an essay views a multi-choice question can be as much as 10:1 (Heyneman, 1987). Moreover, as test taking populations expand as well. The cost difference between grading an oral and a multi-choice exam may be 10:1 if the number of test takers is 1000, but if the number of test takers is one million the cost difference may be 100:1.

The appropriate system in Sweden might be to have each teacher individually design and grade selection examinations. However, with about one percent of Sweden's education resources, about 100 times the number of university applicants, and an extensive geographical challenge, the appropriate system in China must be more standardized and machine gradable (Heyneman and Fagerlind, 1988).

A key difference among nations is not the kind of test used, but whether whatever technique is chosen can be corrupted. How selection is managed is deeply important for maintaining an equality of education opportunity. Many examinations are delivered orally. And many can only be taken at the university where they are designed. This system of selection is unfair, inefficient, and low quality.

Candidates may even know how much a 'pass' will cost and be expected to bring the cash ahead of time. This may have been the case in the 1990s for instance, in the Russian federation (World Bank, 1995; Heyneman, 1987, 1997, Plomp and Vogh, 1995; Xuequin, 2001; Heyneman and Fagerlind, 1988).

Effects of a Corrupted Selection System

The process of academic selection is the foundation of any education system, and over all national cohesion. It represents the essence of public good. If the system is corrupt or widely believed to be corrupt, little else in the education system can be successful. Inattention to corruption in selection will place all other aspects of a nation's economic and social ambitions at risk.

How to Avoid Corruption in Selection: The Case of Autonomous Examination Agency

Designing selection examination is technically complex. It requires a high degree of professionalism, modern equipment and staff with scarce technical skills able to garner high salaries in the private sector. Unless they are in very wealthy countries, few government ministries are able to perform functions well. The alternative is to create an autonomous agency, staffed with internationally recognized expertise, guided by public educational standards and policies, but financed by modes fees to sit for the examinations themselves (Heyneman, 1987, Heyneman and Fagerlind, 1988).

- 2. Corrupted System of Accreditation:** The granting of approval to an institution of higher learning by an official review board (N.U.C) the school has met certain requirements. When all institutions were states owned and administered, the system was managed within the central ministries. The higher education system of accreditation is often corrupt because the connection between higher education and the system of 'licensing' professionals or 'certifying professionals' has not been reformed. The license allows a person specialization. For instance, a license may allow someone to practice medicine; certification may allow medical doctors to practice surgery. Whenever higher education institutions are associated with licensure and/or certification, the states for accreditation are high. Therefore, the price-on the corrupted market – for accreditation is high.

Institutions that seek recognition of new programs, or private institution which seek institutional recognition often have to pay a bribe (Salak, 1994; Bogdanov, 2001) this places the nation at risk because an institution of low quality may be licensing individuals who may not be of sufficient professional standard. There are many

instances of corrupted accreditation leading to poor medical schools, law schools, and programs of business and accounting.

It is rarely recognized that in fact, education is a big business. In North Nigeria, America, education and training accounts for 12% of GPD. Education and training is the economy's largest sector after health care, and the fastest in growth. In considering only compulsory education for a moment, expenditures can be divided first into capital and recurrent categories. In terms of non-salary expenditures there is a wide variation from one country to another, with Sweden spending about \$2394/pupil and India spending less than \$1.00/pupil (Heyneman, 2001).

Nevertheless, as countries develop economically more resources are allocated to support educational quality (Fig 1). This process of development raises the size of the education markets around the world, particularly in countries with healthy rate of economic growth. Across the world, public education expenditure doubled between 1980 and 1994 (Heyneman, 2000b).

Lagger Growth of Education Expenditures Per Region

CONTINENTS, MAJOR AREAS AND GROUPS OF COUNTRY	PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION PER INDIVIDUAL AND PERCENTAGES							
	1 9 8 0	1 9 8 5	1 9 9 0	1 9 9 4	1 9 9 4	1 9 9 4	1 9 9 4	1 9 9 4
W o r l d t o t a l	1 2 6	1 2 4	2 0 2	2 3 2	1 0 0			
Africa (North and SSA)	4 8	4 0	4 1	4 1	1 5			
A m e r i c a	3 0 7	3 7 5	3 2 1	6 2 3	1 0 3			
A s i a	3 7	3 9	6 6	9 3	1 5 1			
E u r o p e	4 1 8	3 4 0	7 4 1	9 8 2	1 3 5			
O c e a n i a	4 6 7	4 3 9	7 1 5	8 7 8	8 8			
Industrializing countries	3 1	2 8	4 0	4 8	5 5			
S S A f r i c a	4 1	2 6	2 9	3 2	2 2			
A r a b S t a t e s	1 0 9	1 2 2	1 1 0	1 1 0	1			
L A C	9 3	7 0	1 0 2	1 5 3	6 5			
E A P	1 2	1 4	2 0	3 6	2 0 0			
S . A s i a	1 3	1 4	3 0	1 4	1			
P o o r e s t C o u n t r i e s	9	7	9	9	0			
Industrialized Countries	4 8 7	5 2 0	9 1 4	1 2 1 1	1 4 9			

In North America they grew by 103%; in Western Europe by 135%. But in East Asia and the Pacific, they grew by over 200% in the same time period (Table 1).

First it might be noted that corruption in school supplies can be found in countries at all levels of economic development, from Kenya and Uganda (Kigotho, 2002; Heyneman, 1975, 1983) to Dallas, New York and other more well endowed environment (Linden and Beck, 1981; Segal, 1977, Bellamy, 2002).

In terms of book sales in North America, for instance, two thirds of the publishing; hence the receipt of contracts for textbook design can bring an automatic benefit to the authors (Heyneman, 1990).

Governments may believe that the costs are worth it, and that protection is justified on the basis of four common arguments. These are:

National Interest: To appear strong, some believe it necessary to protect one from foreign products. This argument is very common in education. All nations believe they have the right to educate their citizens in the way they choose. What may not be well understood is that to do this well, curriculum, supplies and materials need to be public sector monopoly.

1) **Safeguard of Local Jobs**

This is rarely made in education by comparison; jay to textile, but it can be used when other arguments appear weak.

2) **Period for Infant Industries**

This is commonly heard with respect to local textbook publishers and provides of tests and standardized examinations

3) **Saving Foreign Exchange**

This is an argument typical of very low –income countries with artificial restrictions on foreign exchange. The problem with this argument is that the cost in local exchange may be considerably higher than an imported product.

How to Avoid Corruption in Educational Supplies

Corruption risk can be reduced by following these three steps:

First is to treat the educational procurement process in the way as the procurement of all other goods and services.

Second is to establish bidding procedures in which there are no hidden wires.

Third is to open up the bidding process in parallel with the new guidelines on education services circulated by the World Trade Organization. The more limited the role of the government in the manufacturing process, the lower the change for corruption in the process of educational supply.

3. **Professional Misconduct:** Since education is a public good, education corrupt must include an element broader than illicit material gain for personal use. It must include an element if professional misconduct. Misconduct can be found in other professions like legal, engineering, law Accounting, medicine, etc. But when misconduct affects children and youth, citizens who are not adults or who are young adults, the implications are more serious and the safeguards must be more stringent.

Elements of Professional Misconduct on Education Include:

- i) Accepting of material gifts or rewards in exchange for positive grade, assessments or selection to specialized programmed
- ii) Assigning of grades or assessments biased by students' tribe, ethnicity, race, culture, and social class and other descriptive attributes.
- iii) Lusting on a student's adoption of the instructor's personal values and philosophy;
- iv) Disclosing confidential information regarding a student;
- v) Sexually or other exploiting, harassing or discriminating against particular students;
- vi) Adopting an inadequate textbook or educational materials because of a manufacturer's gifts or incentive
- vii) Ignoring the inadequate teaching of colleagues' misconduct of fellow professionals;
- viii) Utilizing school property for private commercial purposes, etc.

4. **Faculty Misconduct:** Definition of faculty misconduct may differ from one country to another. But no nation can long ignore the existence of significant misconduct. In some countries it is common for teachers to accept payment for allowing students to

proceed to the next grade. In some countries it is common for teachers to offer after school tutoring for a price, and to suggest that students might fail if they did not pay for after school tutoring.

5. **Corrupted Educational Property and Taxes:** Educational faculties often occupy prime locations in urban areas. These can be rented or leased for both educational and other purposes. Almost all higher education institutions, and also many institutions under compulsory education, must supplement public with public resources.

How to Avoid Corruption of Land and Taxes

- i) Profit-making educational institutions which are equity owned should pay the same taxes as all commercial business.
- ii) As long as they are not commercial (i.e. equity-owned), neither public nor private educational institutions should pay tax on income.
- iii) Gifts from individual and from corporations should be public information and tax deductible.

Conclusion

There is an alarming issue on corruption in education. Before now, the issue of corruption was highly pronounced in politics, business, banking, the judicial and legal system, and security agencies. Because the structures are outdated, corruption is common in the accreditation process, the liking process and in the certification process. It is common for teachers to misuse their professional positions to accept favours for normal services, and to accept bribes and looking for favour from certain students. In order to fight corruption in education and other sectors successfully, there should be overhaul of the country's entire governance structure incorporating strong control measures that will help check graft in segments of the economy.

Recommendations

The measures of curbing the problems of educational corruption are similar to the measures of curbing the problems of corruption in other sectors. Misappropriation of public property, bribery in conjunction with public procurement, whether in education, health or politics are governed by similar rules and regulations. If the rules and regulations fail to deter the corruption in these sectors they will have serious impact on education.

On the other hand, there are certain preventive measures specific to education corruption. These include:

- i) Structural reforms necessary to reduce the opportunity for corruption.
- ii) Improvements in adjudication and management to help anticipate questions of definition and interpretation,
- iii) Effective implementation of freedom of information laws
- iv) Measures should be kept in place to check abuse; reducing the rate of corruption by increasing public sector wages.
- v) Sanction required to demote or punished when infractions occur.
- vi) Withdrawal of license from any defaulter.
- vii) Dismissal of defaulters from service.
- viii) Criminal penalties for professional and faculty misconduct
- ix) The anti-graft agencies like EFCC and ICPC should be merged.

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