



## **The effects of corruption on the implementation of curriculum at the tertiary institutions in Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

This paper focused on corruption in the tertiary institutions and its effect in the implementation of curriculum in Nigeria. As a way of doing justice to the paper, it extensively discussed the concepts of corruption, corruption in curriculum implementation, challenges of curriculum implementation in Nigeria and different dimensions of corruption practices both in the tertiary institutions and Nigerian society in particular. In this paper corruption is seen generally as a condemnable behaviour and particularly identifies corruption in the tertiary institutions as a practice that has multiple capabilities for undermining the implementation of curriculum and national development of Nigeria. Therefore, solutions were given as a way out to promote greater transparency, accountability, stronger and implementable social justice measures in education by developing curricular that will sensitize citizens to rise up to kill corruption in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

**Keywords:** curriculum implementation, challenges of curriculum implementation, curriculum and national development

### **Introduction**

The post-independent Nigeria has witnessed a serious hyper sickness called corruption which has engulfed all our political leaders and office holders. Corruption is an ethical and criminal problem which has been discussed throughout history (Kligarrd, 1998) [8].

However, the debate to stem corrupt behaviour has intensified amidst the more recent calls for transparency, accountability and adherence to democratic principles and practices, at a time when unethical behaviour and practices appear to have increased significantly. Several regional organizations such as the African Leadership Forum (ALF), the council for the development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRTA) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), have all raised the issue of corruption and have placed it squarely on the regional agenda in a forceful manner (Rasheeds, 1996) [17].

Corruption is shown to be linked to the climate of unethical leadership and bad governance which have especially on the implementation of curriculum at the tertiary level. After independence, Nigeria drifted shamelessly from a bureaucratic administration that emphasized good governance to one that emphasized the sovereignty of politics. This resulted in the emergence of politicized bureaucracy in Nigeria which began to engage in centralized economic decision-making and patrimonialism.

Nigeria was not only bureaucratic autocracy) but also political and economic monopoly now lacking in accountability, transparency and the rule of law (Dia, 1998). Thus, the post-independence governmental bureaucracy that emerged in this country contributed to institutional instability, the politicization of the state, and patrimonial economic management and incentives, whereby denialism replaced moral and political legitimacy, and political and personal loyalty and obedience were awarded more than merit (Dia,

1998). All these were part of the genesis of rampant corruption in Nigeria.

Corruption has being regarded as one hydra-headed scourge that has high profile and epidemic proportion, so pronounced and contagious that its seals and impressions can be noticed and felt by individuals and states globally without respect to levels of sophistication. Corruption exists at local, national and international levels and at any level of its existence not only in tertiary institutions, it has in-built devastating and disabling potentials to infest and reconfigure the psyche of the individuals, the state and those entrusted with the day to day affairs of the state at its social, political, economic, religious, moral, educational and general development levels with terrible viruses that in addition undermining the advancement and sustainable development of the country, corruption impairs and cripples the zeal for honesty, hard work and merit students admission in tertiary institutions. These are possible because corruption in any of its multi-dimensional forms has terrible potentials that can neutralize and bring to zero point the developmental aspirations of honest and hardworking individuals and institutions in country in the form of causing general disenchantment and instability, making nonsense to curriculum of the institutions, discouraging and eroding genuine value system upon which the sustainable development of country is laid. (Nwaokugha and Ezeugwu 2017) [11].

Nevertheless, the authors continue that, it is obvious, no serious rational thinker can doubt that corruption does not have serious implications for the implementation of curriculum and general well-being or survival of a people. Meaning that, corruption in education has detrimental effects on the efforts of a country to promote social equality, fair competition, competence and merit. Common sense shows that in societies like Nigeria where students pay for admission before they are admitted into tertiary educational institutions, admissions easily becomes the exclusive right of those who

can pay but who unfortunately have nothing to offer to the education industry or to the general society.

According to Okorafor and Wogu (2017) <sup>[15]</sup>, Nigeria like most countries has adopted education as the instrument par excellence for achieving national objectives which the goal can only be realized through a well designed and implemented curriculum . Owing to the critical position of curriculum in driving sustainable development in tertiary institutions, commitment in curriculum determines the success or failure of such objectives. Because when the issue of education today is raised, the strands of thought that comes to peoples' mind are; decline in curriculum standard, deterioration of facilities, examination malpractices, mass production syndrome etc. before any other thing else . This calls for an in-depth study and analysis aimed at tutoring each and every stakeholders in the education system on how their corruptive actions have individually and collectively contributed to the collapsing state of educational curriculum in Nigeria. Thereby resulting to poor curriculum implementation and making many people not to have access to education which is their fundamental human right as a spring board for their empowerment rather the inability of the people to have access to education systematically rendered them useless given them the ability to engineer national development asseverations that left the citizens with frustration, disgruntled and disenchanting. In addition manifesting to terrible immorality in the forms of militancy and insurgency in the country.

### **Concept of corruption**

Corruption has crept into virtually all aspects of the country's economy where education is having its share of it. Money meant for educational programmes are often diverted into private coffers by some of those in power. In Nigeria, government money is regarded as 'national cake' which every individual wishes to cut his/her share of the cake.

According to Begovic (2005) <sup>[4]</sup> the most promising definition of corruption is the one made by Vito Tanzi which stated that corruption is the intentional non-compliance with the arm's-length principle aimed at deriving some advantage for oneself. In Nigeria tertiary institutions corruption is nothing but a consequence of the political process, hence there is no need for a wage increase, and it rather become a widespread notion that provides compensation for their lower wages. In this case corruption violates the rule of curriculum which is the prerequisite for the sustainable development of a country in terms of education. Meaning that corruption by its nature is universal and does not restrict itself to borders or geographical territories. In the same vein, corruption does not restrict itself to a particular institution or to a particular sector of the economy. In fact corruption and corrupt practices are common denominators that developed, developing and under-developed states share in common and in all these countries, individuals and institutions that perpetuate corruption and corrupt practices intentionally and willingly do so as they on their own create window of opportunities that promote and make corruption possible.

Therefore Akindele and Fasakin (2014) <sup>[1]</sup> supported that the underlying motivation for corruption globally is human nature, fanned, watered and triggered by greed as well as the cherished views or desires of some individuals usually, the

influential minority who do not allow the majority access to the good things of life. Unfortunately this unfolding development creates a vicious cycle that in addition to posing as life threatening threats to the wealthy minority also inherently promotes poverty, crisis and the intensification of corruption will not give room for the implementation of curriculum at the tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

In the African countries, most people see corruption in more practical terms: theft of public resources, embezzlement of public funds, illegal appropriation of public property, nepotism, favouring relatives and Mends in the distribution of public goods, employment in the public sector etc.; abuse of ones office in an effort to generate- benefits for the office holders, and his family capricious and selective enforcement of government laws and regulations in an effort to benefit the office holder; differential treatment of private enterprises in the expectations of a bribe from the entrepreneur whose business is enjoying preferential or favourable treatment, and illegal taxation of economic activity with benefits accruing to the bureaucrat (Harsch, 1993 P.33) 1967 <sup>[13]</sup>, Nye argued that:

Corruption involves behaviour which deviates from the normal duties of a public role because of private regarding (family, close private clique), pecuniary or status gains, or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private - regarding influence. This includes such behaviour as bribery (use of reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust) nepotism, (bestowed of patronage by reasons of ascriptive relationship rather than merit); and misappropriation, illegal appropriation of public resources for private regarding uses) Nye (1967, F419.) <sup>[13]</sup>.

### **Corruption in curriculum implementation**

Okorafor (2003) <sup>[16]</sup> has regarded curriculum as the life wire and the heart of every educational program. It is an embodiment of all the knowledge, skills and attitudes which a nation, through her schools, imparts to her citizens. He also viewed curriculum as the vehicle through which the school strives to achieve educational ends, be they, those of the nation, state, local government or even community, Which makes curriculum a planned and unplanned experiences which learners receive in the process of their formal or semi-formal education for the purpose of becoming rounded persons who can make meaningful contributions to the betterment of their society and the world. It is therefore the blue-print or instrument by which school seeks to translate the hope and values of the society in which it operates into concrete reality. However, Ogar and Awhen (2015) <sup>[14]</sup> explained the term curriculum implementation as the process of putting the curriculum into work for the achievement of the goals for which the curriculum is designed. It is also the translation of the objectives of the curriculum from paper to practice as well as as the translation of "theory into practice", or "proposal into action", the actual engagement of learners with planned learning opportunities. Meaning that the actual carrying-out of societal culture and/or government policies are spelt out in the curriculum.

In addition, Lambert and Morgan (2009) <sup>[9]</sup> opined that over the past two decades the school curriculum has become

estranged from the challenge of corruption in educating children because of government intervention in the school curriculum, for teachers are no longer free to ‘impart a body of academic knowledge to their students. The school curriculum has become a battleground for zealous campaigners and entrepreneurs keen to promote their message, meanwhile, the content of the curriculum is not determined by its academic weight, but according to whether it promotes particular values about what it means to be a good citizen. This is as a result of the government coming out with any curriculum development according to their periodic tenure, no continuity, just for their pocket interest.

Meanwhile, Nwiyi and Okorie (2014) <sup>[12]</sup> noted that teachers are stagnated and denied promotion, hence some spend nearly eight years without promotion and those promoted are not implemented in terms of payment of the new salaries and allowances. This situation is highly demoralizing and has negative impacts on the implementation of the curriculum in the tertiary institutions as a result of corruption, people in charge sitting on other people’s progress and sufferings. Most of the equipment’s, tools and workshop facilities in the institutions are either broken down, damaged or dilapidated and they are not replaced or renovated. While the primary goal of developing curriculum is to teach the students both practical and theoretical aspect of subject matter, but unfortunately, it is not so in the Nigerian institutions because of lack of adequate instructional materials and ineffective teaching method as factors responsible for poor implementation of curriculum.

Therefore, the result implies that without the availability of functional infrastructure in the school, the skilled –based curriculum will not be effectively implemented in Nigeria and the youths would lack skills and economic empowerment.

### **Corruption and curriculum in tertiary institutions**

According to Durojaiye (2017) <sup>[7]</sup> corruption is everywhere in Nigeria and it is the major cause of poverty. It is associated with lower levels of economic development, slower economic growth and conflicts from educational institutions to other sectors. Corruption is a vice that is literally belittling Nigerian curriculum when compared to other country’s educational certificates. It has become a deep-rooted norm in every sector, occurring in different forms, giving the so called “egunje” a local parlance for bribes, being favoured at the expense of a more qualified and experienced colleague, nepotism or giving favours in exchange for gratifications in some tertiary institutions, a student cannot pass examinations without bribing the lecturer and lecturer not completing the curriculum in order to give room for bribing, how about parents buying examination papers for their children in advance? Perhaps, the most obvious institution where we see the manifestation of corruption in full glare in our everyday life is in tertiary institutions, denying the motion that teachers in particular are agentive in the curriculum-making process and need to be able to draw on ‘the subjects’ their intellectual work.

### **Considerable principles in drafting Sustainable and effective curriculum to eliminate corruption in Nigerian tertiary institutions**

For effective implementation of curriculum, it must look at “oneness” as an inevitable result of integrative and

disintegrative forces at work in the society, and will offer to its participants the gift of transformation. Its goal will not be, as it is now, a sheer variety of experience, but self-directed and purposeful change. Oneness in its true sense does not mean uniformity, but rather “unity in diversity.” In other words, cultural diversity is preserved and protected, while the global good, and not the local or national good, takes priority. Therefore, the principles for the curriculum development could include the following:

- consultation as a tool for decision making;
- ethical and moral principles as guides for actions;
- egoless evaluation of one’s own strengths and weaknesses;
- creative and disciplined initiatives for the common good;
- using systematic reflection to guide “learning by doing”;
- investing power and resources into educational activities;
- inspiring in others a visionary future based on shared values and principles;
- Fostering relationships based on interconnectedness, mutuality, and service.

Therefore, emphasis in the curriculum should be placed on the student’s moral responsibility to search for and recognize truth. Such recognition must inevitably lead the student to apply that truth in all aspects of his or her life. The curriculum must encourage students to find principles that can serve as the basis for their lives. These principles will serve as a driving force for their decisions and actions. Also, in addition to their steadfastness to their adopted principles, the curriculum must teach students to remain open to the investigation of new principles so as to allow for continuing growth in Nigeria tertiary institutions (and the society as a whole. (www.aabri.com)

### **Challenges of curriculum implementation on Nigeria**

According to Mkandawire (2010) <sup>[10]</sup> It is very difficult to implement a curriculum successfully if the education system has limited funding capacities. Under funding raise a lot of other implications on the part of curriculum. The economy of a nation will determine the success of curriculum implementation. In developing countries, the numbers of students and teachers have kept on rising but government money available for education is less. Since manpower in the education sector has increased, the bulk of money allocated to education is absorbed by salaries of both teachers and ghost workers, leaving very little for teaching materials, books, in-service training, monitoring and other things needed for the smooth implementation of curriculum. In the absence of teaching and learning materials, the teaching and learning processes will be hampered and if standard officers do not go out to evaluate, it will be difficult to know whether the curriculum is being effectively implemented or not. Although the government introduced tuition fees in tertiary institutions of learning to cushion the dwindling resources, the move has had little impact as most learning institutions are still experiencing liquidity problems as a result of corruption in the system. This has had a negative effect on curriculum implementation.

Arthur (2016) <sup>[2]</sup> supported that the quality of educational curriculum in any country is one of the major keys to sustainable national development. He sees curriculum as a set

of courses, course work and topics, offered in schools. It is the aggregate of subjects/courses and topics that are being or should be offered in schools. In Nigeria, poor curriculum implementation is a major problem. There is a great disparity between policies formulated by government and the actual implementation of these policies. Policy makers often vary from policy implementers, hence, this gap becomes a problem in course of implementation.

It isn't just restricted to the implementation phase, but also curriculum development in general. Having proper curriculum makes for a sound educational and academic sector because the students will be taught with respect to recent happenings and developments. However, Nigeria is laden by a number of problems when curriculum implementation is concerned. Here are some of the problems declining in the quality and standard of education in Nigeria, and it has its challenges in the implementation of curriculum in Nigeria as follows:

1. **Lack of teacher participation in decision making and curriculum planning:** The teacher has a crucial role to play in the success of any educational programme in the nation and as such should be in the center and take an active part in the planning and development of the curriculum. When teachers are not actively involved in the planning of the curriculum, a problem builds up since it is these teachers that interact with the students, know what they need and in what proportion, and actually make use of the curriculum.
2. **Lack of sufficient finance:** Curriculum implementation is greatly drawn back by the lack of finance because workshops and seminars that are necessary to sensitize teachers and educationists across the country cost a lot of money. Hence the teachers are not properly tutored on every corner of the curriculum.
3. **Frequent turnover of teachers:** The frequent turnover of teachers is caused by so many factors. One factor that plays a primary role is the excessive number of temporary and or part time teachers. For example, Youth Corpers are posted to secondary schools across the country. They teach for less than a year and a new set of core members replace them. There is no time to settle into the system and work with the curriculum properly. Also, a host of these temporary teachers are usually not dedicated, while others don't have the zeal and skill to teach.
4. **Policy changes:** Another factor that affects curriculum development is the frequent changes in educational policies. An example is the universal primary education (UPE) which was launched in 1976 to ensure that every child who had attained such age that he or she is ripe for school, should be enrolled in school. Then the 6-3-3-4 system came. The 6-5-4 system also came, and so many others.
5. **Rapid increase in knowledge:** The world is growing at a tremendous rate when knowledge is concerned. Due to the development of science and technology, it become more tasking for the curriculum development process as knowledge becomes obsolete quickly hence the need for constant review for the curriculum, the method and materials of instruction. It therefore becomes difficult to stay in line with these continuous changes. For example, we were used to 9 planets in the solar system. But right

now, Pluto has been removed from the list of planets because it is simply too small to be called a planet. However, in schools today, teachers still tell their students that there are 9 planets and still include Pluto.

6. **Review when needed:** The curriculum in Nigeria is only reviewed when there is an obvious problem observed. This is wrong, and the curriculum should be constantly reviewed to keep the country in line with the rest of the world.
7. **Poor ICT:** The world is developing at a rapid rate and therefore, even when the curriculum is updated, a new problem of meeting the requirements of the new elements added to the curriculum develops. Since the world is advancing technologically, the new trend of curriculums require students to be familiar with computers and make use of them.
8. **Lack of trained and well informed teachers:** you cannot give what you do not have. Hence, when the teachers and facilitators of the curriculum do not have the required skill level to teach correctly in accordance with the growing technology. Then the students cannot learn. This makes the curriculum useless.
9. **Inflexibility:** the inflexibility of curriculum in Nigeria makes it difficult for teachers and students to properly optimize them. Different regions have different conditions and when the curriculum cannot work in any of them, a problem starts up.
10. **Unwelcoming attitude to change:** some teachers are so used to how they previously taught their subject. This makes it difficult to implement a new curriculum. For example, with the introduction of international financial reporting standard and a change in some methods of accounting. Some accounting teachers who have been teachers all their life would still cling to their old method of teaching.
11. **Many examination bodies:** different examination bodies have their different standards and techniques, not to talk of approaches to questions. There is a problem on how to adequately meet the needs of these bodies.

#### **Suggested solutions for effective implementation of curriculum at the tertiary institutions in Nigeria**

There is a need for a paradigm shift of some education policies such as lecturers' emphasis on seminar and conferences, methodology, the 'customized' poor budget allocation to education among others, to result oriented policies that would ameliorate the deplorable state of curriculum implementation in the tertiary institutions.

#### **Therefore, Ogar and Awhen (2015) <sup>[14]</sup> highlighted the possible leading ways out as fellows**

1. The heads of departments and deans of faculties should be made to incorporate the task of monitoring of their colleagues to the administrative task. With this heavy monitoring, teachers should be sufficiently motivated for noblerole.
2. There should be a review of the curriculum to meet contemporary need of the society, with the provision of more qualified and competent teachers to meet the challenges of the envisaged curriculum. In the new

curriculum, examinations should be de-emphasized while competency should be tested by employers of labour. Awojide, Wale, Bella and Ayodele (2015)<sup>[3]</sup> continue that:

3. The state of origin advantage factored in the admission of students into tertiary institutions should be fully eradicated, the admission into tertiary institutions must be based on merit or qualification not connections.
4. There is need for our tertiary institutions to start undergoing research, not when most of the lecturers still deal with obsolete handouts, “outdated curriculum, textbooks and practical methods.
5. Tertiary institutions Curriculum should be reviewed and redirected towards research and improving innovation.
6. Both Infrastructure and Curriculum should be revamped... We cannot have a good educational system without infrastructure.
7. Learning curriculum, methodology and environment should be revamped, update and restructure with qualified and Trained of Lecturers.
8. Tertiary institutions lecturers should be employed based on qualification not on connection, because a lot of unqualified lecturers roam our Universities because of Corruption, Nepotism and Politics influence. A poor teacher can't produce good graduates. Therefore, nationwide screening be conducted to wipe out quack lecturers in all tertiary institutions.
9. To get education right we must attract the best brains and pay them adequately. Meaning that Government should make teaching attractive so that people with a passion to teach will come on board.”
10. There should be opportunities for lecturer training and retraining to upgrade the knowledge of Nigerian lecturers

### Conclusion

Corruption both in the tertiary institutions and Nigerian society is a morally condemnable behaviour as it does not leave any positive impressions on the economic, social and moral outlooks of the country. Meaning that corruption in the implementation of curriculum in Nigeria tertiary institutions is more dreaded and dangerous as it short changes members of the society in the provision of an essential social services, thereby placing Nigeria's educational system into areas where they cannot make sustainable contributions to the development of the Nigerian as a whole. Forgetting the fact that the school curriculum is the vehicle for arranging the introduction of coherent educational encounters and experiences for young people to understand that ‘the curriculum’ and its components should be uncorrupted, more complicated than partly because it passes through the hands (and heads) of teachers and young people. Therefore, less emphasis should be universally agreed upon definitions of corruption rather what should be stressed can be observable phenomena associated with corruption that will absolutely translate tertiary institutions' curriculum in Nigeria not to be a mirage and it will be well with us.

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