Review Article

Addressing Corruption in Tertiary Institutions: Implications for Curriculum Development

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Abstract

This paper focuses on corruption in tertiary institutions and how it can be tackled through introducing courses and approaches via curriculum development that will build integrity among students, as well as, institutional quality through citizenship and social cohesion. The paper also discussed the concept of corruption, forms of corruption, causes and corruption in tertiary institutions such as bribery, fraud, embezzlement, favouritism, nepotism, among others and its implication for curriculum development in the country. In order to check and eliminate corruption in tertiary institutions, the paper recommended that, social studies, citizenship and value education should be implemented in tertiary institutions to teach about the negative effects of corruption and to create resilience against corrupt practices. Also, stakeholders in education should organize conferences in tertiary institution to re-orientate them on the dangers of corruption with the action statement ''change begins with me'' in our educational system, effective classroom implementation of curriculum content and the introduction of courses that will imbibe moral consciousness in the business of education at the tertiary level.
Keywords: Corruption, Tertiary Education, Curriculum Development.

INTRODUCTION

The curriculum as a structured series of intended learning experiences and interacting forces within the learning environment has failed to translate the hopes and aspirations of the larger society into concrete reality and manifestation in the product of various levels of learning. It is evident that, greater percentage of the products of Nigerian educational institutions has not acquired desirable learning to positively modify the society to desirable direction. As stakeholders in the curriculum development and implementation process and having seen the level of decay/corruption in institutions, one can rewrite history by going back to the very foundation where these faulty cracks have been detected and take concrete steps to correct the anomalies. Curriculum development is a vital aspect of educational planning and development. Curriculum development provides the framework on which teaching learning and the various aspects of research works are based and to a great extent, determines the quality of education and its relevance in curbing corruption in tertiary institutions.

Corruption in tertiary education has taken different dimensions and forms that is digging deep into the fundamentals of tertiary education in Nigeria. Seniwoliba and Boahene (2015), assert that, corruption in education acts as a dangerous barrier, not only to high quality education, but to social and economic development of any nation. It also jeopardizes the academic work of the learners, students' morals, the future opportunities and quality future leadership. Corruption in higher education has given doubt to the worth of certificates obtained in Nigerian tertiary institutions before international communities. This, no doubt, agrees with the notion that, there is a decline in the standard of education in Nigeria.

Corruption is a hydra-headed scourge that has eaten deep into the fabrics of educational institutions globally. This exists at various levels of education at local, national and international levels. A worrisome trend in this whole thing is that, there is no country that can claim to be corruption free or that its citizens and institutions do not indulge in corruption and corrupt practices.

Nwaokugha and Ezeugwu (2017), observed that, though, countries may be involved in corrupt practices, there may be marked difference in their involvement or magnitude. It is very disheartening that Transparency International Index has rated Nigeria as among the highly corrupt Nation. Corruption Perception Index (CPI) (2019) scored Nigeria 27 out of 100 points and ranks 144 out of 180 countries perceived as highly corrupt. Thus, with Transparency International's rating Nigerian strongly believe that, eliminating corruption from public service, educational institutions would propel Nigeria's economic standing amongst the rest of the world.

What is Corruption?

To define corruption is a complex task because of different interpretations. Waite and Allen (2003), suggested that, the definition of corruption should be conceptualized in limited race and well-defined cases since corruption is absent in the literature in educational administration. Corruption according to Obanya (2014), is the destruction, ruining or spoiling of a society or a nation. He noted that, no uncorrupt society stops valuing integrity, virtue or moral principles. Ejitu (2009), defined corruption as anything that is debased, or braked-away from its original value/state.

Transparency International (2010), conceptualized corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain, which is classified as grand petty and political. Grand corruption are those acts committed at high level of government that distort policies or central function of the state, while petty corruption refers to everyday abuse of entrusted power by low and mid-level public officials in their interactions with citizens who often are trying to access basic goods or services in places. Lastly, political corruption concerns manipulation of policies, institution and rules of procedure in the allocation of resources and financing by political decision makers who use their position to sustain power. Begovic (2005), described corruption as something that is intentional on compliance with arm's length principles aimed at deriving some advantage for oneself or for related individuals. To World Bank (2000), corruption simply means the abuse of public office for private gains. This definition is in line with the general conception of the meaning of corruption but contrary to Waite and Allen (2003) view, that corruption is seen in limited race and well defined access.

Anecharice and Jacobs (1995), definition of education corruption includes the abuse of authority for material gain and in broad term is the abuse or misuse of public office and public trust for personal and private gains. In all these definitions, a link that unites all the definitions is the fact that, someone uses his/her position to amass wealth and other advantages for himself or herself at the detriment of the masses or the institutions where they work. Basically, many authors have tried to conceptualized corruption to mean allowing self to get influenced for personal interest at the detriment of the need of the society.

Again, Amini-Philips and Chukwuma (2017), opined that, corruption is the negative and wrong stand of people in the society including institutions of higher learning that is against the acceptable lay down behaviour. To Osipian (2008), corruption is loss of purity and purpose that is a social decomposition.

Corruption in Tertiary Institutions

Tertiary education in Nigeria has been grossly infected with this cancerous disease called corruption. It has eaten deep into the marrow of tertiary institutions, which has affected the quality of education and certificates obtained in those institutions. Agbo (2017), narrated some of the social vices that are being perpetuated in these institutions as exploitation of students by staff, recruitment and promotion of staff that are most of the time on political patronage, sorting and examination malpractice. These and others are big rot in Nigeria tertiary institutions.

Tertiary education according to Obanya (2014), has tripartite mission in society that are knowledge generation through research, knowledge transmission through teaching (curriculum implementation) and knowledge sharing that is social engagement. The question then is how the nation, Nigeria, can meet up with this mission with the rate of rot in her educational institutions. It is only when credibility is restored in tertiary education sector through what – where – how educational policies are implemented via set benchmark or standard that would represent a complete upward turn around in the quality of education in Nigerian institutions.

Maduewesi (2005), suggested the need to promote proper value orientation in the product of tertiary institutions since they are perceived as centre of excellence starting from the admission procedure through the rigorous academic work to graduation. The tradition of honesty, transparency and discipline must be maintained.

Corruption in education is an important issue to be addressed because to Hallak and Bisson (2002), corruption affects not only the volume of educational services but also their quality efficiency and equity in education and public confidence in educational system. Heinemann (2004), in his view of education corruption, argued that, because education is an important public good, its professional standards includes the abuse of authority for personal as well as material gain.

Forms of Corruption in Tertiary Education

Tertiary institutions being part of the economy and Nigerian society are not exempted in terms of corruption. Osipian (2008), highlighted some forms of

corruption that are specific to certain places and some that are global. Among these are:

- **Bribery:** This involves giving and taking money either as cash direct or account transfer. Bribe can be given as valuable gifts, services or preferential treatment. It also has to do with the payment (in money or kind), that is taken or given in a corrupt relationship (i.e kickbacks, greasing of palms).
- **Fraud:** This is a form of corruption occurs in research knowledge where there is adjustment or misuse of research procedures to suit the interest of the parties involved. There is false report of results to meet some expectations. To Ejitu (2009), it involves some kind of trickery, swindle and deceit, counterfeiting, racketing, smuggling and forgery.
- **Embezzlement:** This is another form of corruption in higher education. This is carried out by employees and management of tertiary education in form of misappropriation of research grants given by the government. Others include cheating, plagiarism and fake academic credentials.
- **Extortion:** This involves money and other resources extracted by the use of coercion, violence, threats or the use of force. It is often seen as extraction from below (the police and custom officers are the main culprits in Nigeria, Ejitu (2009).

In addition, Boehim (2015), highlighted different forms of corruption in education sector into:

(1) Corruption between policy makers and providers (school teachers and contractors) for example favouritism, nepotism, selling of postings.
(2) The second one is between providers, schools, teacher and beneficiaries (parents, students, communities) such as teacher absenteeism, ghost teachers, private tutoring and embezzlement of school resources, social favours and selling of examination scores.

Causes of Corruption in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Causes of corruption in tertiary institutions in Nigeria among others includes: Absence of effective political financing, absence of key anticorruption tools; ethnic and religious difference; weak government institutions, poor pay incentive, ineffective political processes; lack of openness and transparency in public service (Onyido, 2010).

Curriculum Development: Implications for Curbing Corruption in Tertiary Education

Curriculum development involves planning learning opportunities intended to bring about certain changes in learners. These learning opportunities include all the planned series of interaction among the learners, materials, equipment and the teacher who is expected to bring about learning. The learner needs, abilities, interest and environment, which are considered before thinking of what to teach, how to teach and how to assess the effectiveness of his teaching. Curriculum development is a continuous process in which insight gained from evaluation forms feedback to provide information for further studies.

Since the curriculum is an instrument for addressing and solving problems and meeting the needs of the society, introducing ant-corruption studies into the curriculum of Nigerian universities will build moral standard and reduce corruption. Corrupt practices in tertiary institutions have become endemic and systematic which cannot be uprooted by campaigns, but through conscientious planning. Learning opportunities which include serious monitoring team to oversee the activities of the teachers, administrators and students in the following areas should be adhered to:

i. Teachers' certification and promotion should be monitored.
ii. Are teachers paid their full salary as at when due?
iii. Do parents have opportunities to act against corrupt practices?
iv. Better information technology for administration must be put in place.

Technology and Anti-Corruption in Tertiary Education

Technology transforms the ways education can be delivered and experienced as it offers greater opportunities for learning. Thus, the inclusion of courses especially civic, social studies, developing creative accountability approaches will help to build integrity among the students. The approaches through the technology will be tailored to address the specific needs in the issues of integrity and anti-corruption. Curriculum developers are, therefore, expected to select content relevant and realistic within e-learning.

Institutional quality through citizenship and social cohesion which social studies provide should be enshrined in the school curriculum. This will go a long way to improve and fight corruption in Nigeria educational institutions. The right culture in the school system will help the coming generation to identify and stop corrupt practices.

Ganaka (2015), in his study, noted the major challenge for anti-corruption education which lies in its integration with existing curriculum. This anti-corruption requires collective effort of educational stakeholders especially classroom teachers.

CONCLUSION

What has happened over the years is that, educational institutions have lost their ability to educate, mainly because the educative features that

enable school to pass through the student, as opposed to the students merely passing through the school have largely disappeared. Corrupt practices in tertiary institutions have far-reaching consequences. It jeopardizes the provision of qualitative education for the citizenry, thereby leading to drop in tertiary education standard.

Thinking about an anti-corruption curriculum offers new ways for restarting and re-managing the moral rebirth of a nation through curriculum development and innovation. This will involve the production of educational material on a large scale, the training of teachers as well as training the trainers on issues involving anti-corruption in education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Value, civic education and social studies should be used to teach about a corrupt free institutions and society at large.
2. All stakeholders in education should participate actively in value orientation, with the action ''change begins with me'' in Nigerian educational system.
3. Effective and efficient curriculum development and its effective implementation in the classroom will go a long way in reducing corruption in institutions of higher learning. So there is urgent need to introduce those courses such as that will imbibe moral consciousness in the school and all that in the business of education in Nigeria.
4. Insert anti-bribery clauses into all major procurement contracts that have to do with tertiary education.
5. Introduce transparency and education functions, particularly in all their financial transactions.

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