

## Corruption and Curriculum Implementation in Nigerian Schools

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### Abstract

This paper examined the impact of corruption on curriculum implementation in Nigerian schools. The paper is a review study. The paper depends on secondary data that were collected from government documents, print resources and online publications. Content analysis was used to narrow the literature to the theme of the study. The paper discovered that corruption has affected effective curriculum implementation in schools. Corruption has led to a shortage of funds, inadequate teachers, shortage of infrastructure facilities, poor supervision, insecurity, brain-drain and poor capacity building of teachers. The government should institutionalise the culture of accountability and transparency in public institutions. Information and technology facilities should be deployed in all public institutions to curtail corruption practices in the system. Effective monitoring and evaluation units should be established in all educational institutions across the country.

**Keywords:** Corruption, curriculum, curriculum implementation, impact, schools.

### Introduction:

School is an organized institution meant for the implementation of instruction. School is an environment where learning and teaching take place. The school is designed to function with the curriculum. The implementation of curriculum aids the realization of school objectives. Curriculum implementation is a very strong school component.

Curriculum implementation is conceptualized by Ogunode et al. (2023) and Akin-Ibidiran et al. (2022) as the physical and virtual execution of an organized and planned learning program in educational institutions. Curriculum implementation is the process of carrying out organized prescribed courses of study, syllabuses, and subjects in the schools. Curriculum implementation is the implementation of four essential phases of the curriculum development process: planning, content and methods, implementation, and evaluation and reporting putting into consideration – the method and instructional resources. Curriculum implementation is the process of how the planned curriculum is passed and transferred to students to facilitate learning in educational institutions.

Curriculum implementation is the translation of the planned curriculum into the operational curriculum. Curriculum is the execution of the curriculum document. Curriculum implementation is putting into action the planned curriculum. This is the combined effort of the teachers and the learners in the tertiary institutions in the case of higher learning to have productive members of society. This shows that it is actual classroom teaching that the learners are expected to put into practice for society to benefit from them. The planned curriculum should have objectives, content and learning experiences that have been selected and organized, and the evaluation procedure determined, then its implementation comes in. Curriculum implementation in tertiary institutions

is made up of many activities and programmes. Curriculum implementation involves lecture planning, lecture presentation and teaching, lecture note preparation, assessment via examination, organization of instructional resources for lectures, marking of examination, preparation of report cards etc. (Usman et al., 2013; Isife & Nneka, 2016).

Curriculum implementation is an enterprise of translating curriculum conception into new patterns of action (Nuhu, 2016). Curriculum implementation makes teachers prepare lesson notes, use reinforcement and motivational strategies, classroom control and creation of friendly relationship, application of theories and principles of learning, effective use of evaluation techniques and adequately consideration of learner's cognitive styles. This facilitates the resolution of instructional challenges as well as the achievement of overall goals of education, which is the vision of the 21st century (Okoro, 2010). Curriculum implementation involves several activities culminating in translating curriculum documents into classroom practice. It involves the translation of theory into practice or proposal into action. This is achieved when the teacher is handed the curriculum and ends when the learners have been exposed to the learning experiences prescribed in the document. There are intermediate steps which include verbal and non-verbal exposition, practical work in the laboratories, interactions, workshops, fieldwork, teacher-student interactions, student-materials interactions and evaluation and feedback (Ivowi, 2004).

There are many factors affecting the smooth implementation of the curriculum in the school system. Some of these factors include; insecurities, poor supervision, poor funding, inadequate teachers and instructional resources, shortage of facilities and corruption. The international organization stated this in a new report titled: "Corruption in Education Systems in West Africa." According to the report, corruption is commonplace in education systems across the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The report highlighted "Resource misallocation, corrupt procurement, exchange of sex for grades, examination malpractices, fake qualifications, teacher absenteeism, and corrupt recruitment practices" as the various corruption risks and challenges facing education systems in all countries (Premium Times, 2020). Based on this, it is important to examine the impact of corruption on curriculum implementation in Nigerian schools.

### **Corruption:**

Corruption is a widespread malady to the peace and well-being of human beings which has spared no country in the world (Ahmodu & Sofoluwe, 2018). Corruption is the misuse or abuse of public office for private gains and a wide array of illicit behaviour e.g. bribery, extortion, fraud, nepotism, grafts, theft, embezzlement, falsification of academic records, kickbacks, influence peddling (ibid.). Corruption is an absurd or deviant disposition of people in institutions of higher learning which violates ethical standards. The prevalence of corruption in tertiary institutions is viewed to negate the core values of education at this level (Chinyere & Chukwuma, 2017).

Corruption involves the improper and unlawful behaviour of public service officials, both politicians and civil servants, whose positions create opportunities for the diversion of money and assets from the government to themselves and their accomplices (Khan et al., 2012). Corruption is any act that is deliberate and aimed at diverting public resources for personal use (Lawal & Tobi 2006). Corruption is the misappropriation of office, public power or authority for personal privilege through bribery, misuse, scam, and nepotism to mention but a few (Wood & Antonowicz (2011). In recent times, UNDP employed a broader definition of corruption in the bed to accommodate corruption practised in the private educational sector as such, the definition offered corruption as the misappropriation of delegated power to get private privileges (UNDP, 2008).

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 everybody 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 the illegal acquisition of material things, others tend to stretch it further by bringing social and moral values under it (Metiboba, 2002). Corruption means much more than public officers taking bribes and gratification, committing fraud and stealing funds and assets entrusted in their care (Usman, 2008).

Causes of corruption in educational institutions according to Asiyai (2015) include moral decadence of the Nigerian society of getting rich quick syndrome, lack of fear of God, poor management and the desire to pass the examination without working hard for it. She went further to observe that the Nigerian society's worship of money and material wealth resulted in neglect of education for excellent character development. People who made it through dubious means are celebrated. This increases the rate of corruption which spreads like wildfire into the universities. For Ogunode et al. (2022), Kanibin (2019), Oladele (2019), the causes of corruption in higher institutions include: Bureaucratic Factors, Undue Emphasis on Certificates, Non-Payment of Staff Salaries Promptly, Environmental Factors, Moral Decadence, Failure of Leadership, Materialism and Deviation from Ethical Principles and Values.

### **Impact of Corruption:**

Corruption has affected the implementation of the curriculum in Nigerian educational institutions in the following ways:

**,Shortage of funds:** Funds are very important in the implementation of school curriculum. Availability of adequate funds ensures adequate provision of human and material resources needed for effective implementation of the school curriculum. The high rate of corruption in the administration and management of schools in Nigeria appears to have affected the volume of funds available for the operation of the schools. Institutions of learning are meant to be properly funded to enhance research, current studies and human development (Meier & Griffin, 2005; Mgboji et al., 2020). Ololube (2016) maintained that the growing rate of corruption in educational institutions poses a huge challenge as misappropriation and mismanagement of grants, support from private bodies and subventions from the government leads to a lack of funds for executing necessary projects when the need arises. The problem of mismanagement and inadequate provision of funds hampered effective management of education. Nwankwo & Nweke (2016) that the educational system has become a corrupt sector that such corrupt practices as misappropriation of the budget allocated for education, favouritism, and ghost workers among others have led the education system to difficulty in managing the achievement of educational goals. Ogunode & Akimki (2023) write that funds that should have been used for better education, health, infrastructure and other items needed to encourage a good life for Nigerians at the grassroots are misappropriated by a microscopic few. Ogbonnaya (2009) and Ogunode (2020) write that ministry officials collected bribes from contractors handling building projects in schools. Babalola (2003) and Acho & Abuh (2016) found that teachers demanded gratification from students and that this situation has led to a decline in the standard of education. When funds budgeted and allocated to schools for proper management are diverted by the Ministry of Education officials, this can lead to the non-maintenance of schools and the non-purchase of instructional materials for effective student learning. The classrooms

will be overcrowded and activities will crumble. All these corrupt practices affect the smooth implementation of the curriculum in the schools. At the tertiary institutions, corruption has led to a shortage of funds (Ogunode et al., 2021a). At both secondary school and basic schools, Asiyai (2020) concluded that corruption has led to a diversion of funds in the administration.

- i. **Inadequate teachers:** Teachers who are the major workforce in any institution are expected to be professional and adequately prepared for the task of imparting knowledge and also improving the quality of students that are churned out into society. They are expected to be exceptional and those who love the art of teaching but with the corruption encountered during recruitment, the quality of teachers is questionable and this tells on the quality of graduates released. The teachers can only give what they have and cannot do otherwise. (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). Corruption in the management of education in Nigeria has led to inadequate professional teachers. For instance, at the universities, Ogunode (2020) and Kanibin (2019) noted that corruption in the university administration is a shortage of academic staff. Because of the corrupt practices in the recruitment processes in the Nigerian public universities, this results in the employment of unqualified staff resulting in a shortage of professional teachers in the system. The problems of ghost workers in many public universities have also led to a shortage of staff in the system. At secondary school, Ogunode & Paul (2021) and Asiyai (2020) write that corruption in secondary schools impacts negatively the quality of teaching and learning, results in dropouts, and leads to understaffing of some schools and over staffing of others. In basic education, Peter (2020) concluded that corruption in the administration of basic schools has led to a shortage of professional teachers. Ifedili and Ochuba (2009), maintained that the appointment of unqualified teachers based on ethnicity and parochialism, inadequate instructional facilities, mismanagement of funds, and poor remuneration of teachers among others as the factors militating against the maintenance of standard education in Nigeria. Dike (2007) that Nigeria's system of education can tackle corruption by managing and strictly supervising school morality and integrity and moulding them to be honest and trustworthy in their service delivery in the country.
- ii. **Shortage of infrastructure facilities:** Kadir (2018) noted that the provision of adequate facilities and infrastructures enhances the effective management of education. The provision of well-ventilated classrooms, adequate furniture, appropriate textbooks, and provision of libraries as well as provision of laboratories with equipment improve and enhance the effective management of education. Corruption has affected the provision of adequate infrastructure facilities in Nigerian educational institutions. In basic education, Kadir (2018) and Ogunode & Agwor (2021) linked the shortage of infrastructure facilities to corruption practices in the system. In secondary school education, Nwafor et al. (2015) and Asiyai (2020) associated the shortage of infrastructure facilities with the high rate of corruption in the management and administration. In higher education, Ebehikhalu & Dawam (2016), Ogunode & Adamu (2021) and Ishaya & Ogunode (2021) noted that inadequate infrastructural facilities in many public universities in Nigeria have been linked to the high rate of corruption in the system. The money provided for

infrastructural facilities is diverted and looted, leaving the universities to suffer a shortage of facilities. Also, Priye (n. d.) observed that corruption began to affect education seriously in the middle and late 1980s as the psychosocial beast beclouded the minds of those who ruled Nigeria. The scramble to loot as much as possible by those in a position of power resulted in the neglect of the educational sector. Suddenly, education which was considered the cornerstone for the development and modernization of Nigeria was ignored, neglected, and starved of the funds and policy initiatives needed to move it forward. Increasingly, national and state governments started cutting educational funds, creating the impression that education was no longer an important strategic tool in directing the country's growth. With this development, the looting of educational

- iii. **Poor supervision:** The realization of the school curriculum depends on many factors such as supervision. Asemah (2010) defined supervision as a way of advising, stimulating, guiding, improving, refreshing, encouraging and overseeing their operations for the supervisors to be successful in their task of supervision. Ogunode (2021) and Ogunode & Richard (2021) viewed supervision as playing an essential role in deciding the nature and content of the curriculum and selecting materials to facilitate teaching. Supervision is vital to effective curriculum implementation in the schools. The poor supervision of school curriculum in Nigeria is linked to factors such as corruption. In basic education, Ogunode & Stephen (2021) identified corruption as a major problem hindering effective curriculum implementation. Ogunode & Ajape (2021) ascertained that both at secondary schools and higher institutions, corruption has affected the smooth implementation of the curriculum.
- iv. **Insecurity:** No meaningful curriculum can be implemented in an insecure school environment. A peaceful and conducive environment aids the effective implementation of the curriculum. Nigeria is facing a lot of insecurities and challenges and this affected the smooth implementation of the curriculum. The Nigerian insecurity problems are caused by many factors such as unemployment and corruption. Corruption is one of the factors responsible for insecurity in Nigeria. The insecurity has affected educational institutions by slowing down the implementation of the school curriculum.
- v. **Brain-drain:** Adequate numbers of professional teachers are required for the effective implementation of school curricula in Nigeria. Qualified and experienced teachers aid effective implementation of the curriculum in educational institutions. Many qualified and experienced teachers are moving out of the Nigerian education institutions because of poor motivation which is sometimes linked with corruption and mismanagement of resources. Suleman (2005), Olatunde & Obaje (2016), Osunyanmi (2018) and Ogunode (2021) noted that corruption jeopardized the realization of the objectives of education at the basic level. Appointment of teachers by taking bribes and appointment of underqualified teachers or appointing teachers who do not have a teaching certificate will spell doom for the delivery of quality teaching and learning. These non-professional teachers do not even know the philosophy of education and teaching methodologies. When funds budgeted for teachers' welfare, staff training and allowance payments are mismanaged and

looted, it affects the morale and motivation of the teachers. This causes the migration of teachers from educational institutions in Nigeria.

- vi. **Capacity Building:** Capacity building is designed to aid the effective implementation of the curriculum in schools. Capacity building assists the teachers to upgrade their knowledge and skills in the delivery of curriculum content. Corruption in the administration of education has affected funds allocated for the implementation of capacity-building programmes in schools across the country. Ogunode & Jegede (2020) identified corruption as affecting effective training programmes in Nigerian tertiary institutions. At the secondary schools, Ogunode & Johnson (2021) noted that corruption has reduced the funds budgeted for the execution of training programmes for teachers. At the basic schools, Ogunode et al. (2021b) maintained that corruption has militated against effective capacity programmes in basic schools. Also, Gift (2018) submitted that in September 2018, Anum Iho, former chairman of the State Basic Education Board (SUBEB) – an offshoot of the Universal Basic Education Commission in the states, established to address the inequality in educational opportunity at the basic level and improving the quality of its provision – was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment for embezzling funds meant for the training of teachers in Benue State.

### **Conclusion:**

This paper discussed the impact of corruption on curriculum implementation in Nigerian schools. The paper concluded that corruption has affected effective curriculum implementation in schools. Corruption has led to a shortage of funds, inadequate teachers, shortage of infrastructure facilities, poor supervision, insecurity, brain-drain and poor capacity building of teachers.

### **Recommendations:**

Based on these findings, the paper recommends the following:

- i. The government should institutionalise the culture of accountability and transparency in public institutions.
- ii. Information and technology facilities should be deployed in all public institutions to curtail corruption practices in the system.
- iii. Effective monitoring and evaluation units should be established in all educational institutions across the country.

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