

Corruption and Implementation of Education Programmes in Nigeria

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Abstract: Purpose: This paper discussed the impact of corruption on education programmes (Universal Basic Education UBE, Safe School Initiative SSI and National Homegrown Feeding Programme, NHFP) in Nigeria.

Method: The paper is a review study. The paper depends on secondary data that were collected from government documents, print resources and online publication. Content analysis was used to narrow the literature to the theme of the study.

Findings: The paper discovered that corruption inimical to the development of education and corruption has negatively affected the implementation of education programmes (Universal Basic Education Programme UBE, Safe School Initiative Programme SSI and National Homegrown Feeding Programme, NHFP) in Nigeria.

Recommendations: Government should deploy artificial intelligence to all the educational institutions to curtail corruption practices in the implementation of education programmes in Nigeria.

Key points: Education, Education Programme.

Introduction

Education is an organized process of teaching and learning made up of instruction designed to change the behavior of the learner for transformation of the society and nation. Education is a planned system involving teaching and learning process for the transformation of the individual and the nation (Ogunode, Kureh, & Kasimu, 2024). Education is one of the largest human organisation which services affect everyone in the society. It is also perceived as the panacea to the problems of ignorance, poverty and disease. Consequently, everybody in the society is concerned with the question of how this large human organization is managed, especially as there appears to be a strong and positive linkage between education and national development (Kadir, 2018). Education is the most powerful instrument for inculcating into citizens of any country good attributes and values for national building. Through education a child's attitude and character is sharpened with the relevant skills, knowledge and competences needed to contribute to social, economic and political development of the society. It is a fundamental human right as everybody has the right to be educated. Education is one of the main drivers of development, be it human, economic or political (Asiyai, 2020). Education is the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction especially at a school or university (Sulai, & Sulai.n.d). Education is a process of discovering and living the truth, expanding one's vision of life and the world and of acquiring practical knowledge (Ategwu & Obia 2019). Every educational policy has its aims and objectives to be carried out and resources to be utilized to achieve the expected goals. The purpose of education therefore is to

equip one with self-transforming knowledge which can be used to change the environment and execute whatever task that may be assigned, hence the saying that in every formal education process, there is a transition from the home to the school, and there is a transformation from the school to the home (Sulai, & Sulai,.n.d).

Education programmes are education support services planned to achieve education objectives. Education programme is an organized education resources and policies geared the attainment of education objectives. Education programmes are organized education services that is designed to achieve a particular education goal or objective. Educational programmes are planned action of education services to address certain education problems in a state or country. Educational programme are sets of projects.

Nigerian education system is faced with a lot of challenges and this made the past administration to initiated different education programme to address some critical education problems. Some of the education programme include universal primary education programme etc. Recently, under democratic government some education programmes were also introduced such as Universal Basic Education Programme, Safe School Initiative Programme, National Homegrown School-Feeding programme etc. These education programme started implementation across the Federation as programmes to aid realization of educational goals and objectives in Nigeria.

Corruption have been identified as one of the major problems facing Nigeria as a country. Corruption is responsible for most economic woes, insecurities and underdevelopment in most aspect of Nigerian society. Corruption has penetrated both public and private institutions in Nigeria. Corruption is responsible for poor implementation of government social, economic and education policies. It is import to examine corruption and implementation of education programme in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study paper is anchored on social role theory. The social role theory was propounded by Ralf Dahrendorf, Robert K Merton and Gorge Herbert Mead in 1956. A social role refers to the behaviours and responsibilities expected of individuals in society. In terms of gender, social roles prescribe certain behaviours to men and women. Role theory is the theory that an individual's behaviour is the performance of roles that are organized into categories defined by society. Individuals aim to meet these roles, which encompass certain expectations, responsibilities, and behaviours (S.M 2022).

The implication of this theory to this paper is that the government of Nigeria has a critical roles to play to ensure that education is develop and all programmes and policies formulated and designed to ensure quality education in Nigeria are implemented as planned.

Education Programmes

Educational programs are designed to improve the delivery of educational services. According to NOUN (2012), the Advanced Learner Dictionary defines a program as a plan of things to be done or included in the development of tasks. Programs typically arise from policies. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) is a policy program aimed at providing access to basic education for all. It includes sub-programs such as special programs for the nomadic population, education for the physically challenged, non-formal education, and formal education at primary and junior secondary school levels.

Corruption

Corruption in the educational sector is basically the inappropriate behaviour of individuals' holding authoritative position in this sector that bring about personal gain and is detrimental to the standard of education and national advancement (Kanibin 2019). Corruption as the misuse or abuse of public office for private gains and wide array of illicit behaviour e.g. bribery, extortion, fraud, nepotism, grafts, theft, embezzlement, falsification of academic records, kickbacks, influence peddling (Ahmodu, & Sofoluwe, 2018). Corruption in this study refers to the inadequate provision of educational fund, facilities and infrastructure as well as political favouritism in appointing

educational managers. Corruption in education has also threatened Nigeria's citizens' equal access to education which has a negative effect on the poor and less privileged people in the country (Kadir, 2018). Corruption is a widespread malady to the peace and well-being of human being which has spared no country in the world (Ahmodu, et al 2018).

Corruption in education system in Nigeria itself has created a vicious circle of deficit culture so intensive, that virtually all good plans, moves and budgetary provisions for improved facilities in the education system ended up being misappropriated without corresponding provisions of the infrastructure being budgeted for (Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017). Corruption as absurd or deviant disposition of people in institutions of higher learning which violates the 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 according to Gorai (2016) is the abuse and misuse of power and authority. It could take various forms which include, bribe induced corruption, selfish reason corruption, such as a president siting a national airport in his village, and so on. Transparency International (2010) defined corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Education corruption includes the abuse of authority for personal and material gains (Heyheman 2004). It is an important notion because corruption is the illegal use of official power by the officer of the government to enrich himself or any other person at the detriment of the public in contrary to the government law that are in force (Heyheman, 2004). Corruption as any systematic vice perpetuated by individuals, society or State in forms of favouritism, nepotism, tribalism, undue wealth, power, position among other thing at the detriment of public (Ojiade (2000). From the above, corruption is any unlawful practices that is against normal social value and norms. Corruption is any action carried out that is against the acceptable society value and norms.

Chinyere and Chukwuma (2017) identified dimensions of corruption in Nigerian universities to included students, lecturers, non-academic staff and administrators. The shapes of corruption among students included bribing of lecturers for unmerited grades, cultism, examination malpractice, attacks on lecturers for stopping students from indulging in examination malpractice, fiscal extortion from innocent students by fellow students who form themselves into "lecturers' boys". Forms of corruption among lecturers included demanding huge amount of money, sex from female students for high grade, etc. Among non-teaching staff, the shades of corruption included monetary extortion from students before they see their results, demanding of money from unsuspecting parents in the guise that they are lecturers with a promise to secure admission for their children/wards, they also act as agents for lecturers, receiving money from students for higher grades after examination. At the administrator's level, shades of corruption included misappropriation and misapplication of fund meant for capital projects, offer of admission to undeserving students for a fee while deserving candidates are by-passed, amongst others. No effective university administration can take place under corrupt system.

Ogunode, Ohunene, and Olatunde-Aiyedun, (2022) and Priye (undated) concluded that factors responsible for high rate of financial corruption in the Nigerian public educational institutions (universities) includes; corrupt school administrators, weak monitoring and evaluation system, weak trade unions, poor participation of university stakeholders, weak preventive system and poor accountability system. Asiyai, (2015) identified the causes of corruption in universities to include moral decadence of the Nigerian society of getting rich quick syndrome, lack of fear of God, poor management and the desire to pass examination without working hard for it. She went further to observe that the Nigerian society worship for money and material wealth resulted in neglect of education for excellent character development. People who made it through dubious means are celebrated. Ahmodu, and Sofoluwe, (2018) outlines the causes of corruption to include: policies, programs and activities that are poorly conceived and managed, failing institutions, poverty, income disparities, inadequate civil servants' remuneration and lack of transparency and accountability are among the contributing factors.

Education Programmes

There are many educational programmes and policies that the federal government of Nigeria have initiated and implemented with aims to address different educational problems affecting development of education in Nigeria. Some of these education programme and education policies includes; UBE programme, safe school initiative, homegrown school-feeding programme, SBMS (NOUN, 2012). Education programme is any project meant to solve a problem in education and aid realization of education goals. Education programme is policy programme in education to address a particular issue and to ensure improvement in the quality of education. The objectives of education programme include; to improve quality of education, to provide solution to an identified education problem; to aid realization of education goals; and to aid delivery of education policies.

Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme (1999)

The universal Basic Education (UBE) programme is a nine year basic educational programme, which was launched and executed by the government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance, poverty as well as stimulate and accelerate national development, political consciousness and national integration. Former president Olusegun Obasanjo flagged off the UBE programme on the 30th of September 1999 in Sokoto, Sokoto State. The UBE programme is Nigeria is a strategy for the achievement of Education for all (EFA) and the education related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The implementation process of the programme has been since 1999 but progress was hampered by lack of an enabling law to execute certain aspects of the programme. What a big relief it was when the president signed the UBE Bill into law on the 26th of May 2004 following its passage by the National Assembly. The UBE Act 2004 makes provision for basic education comprising of Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) Primary and Junior Secondary Education. The financing of Basic Education is the responsibility of the states and the Local Government. However, the Federal Government has decided to intervene in the provision of basic education with 2% of its consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF).

The UBE programme has laudable and specific objectives. These according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 1999) are to: develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion; Provide free, compulsory Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school-going age; Reduce drastically, dropout rate from the formal school system through improved relevance and efficiency; Cater for dropouts and out-of-school children/adolescents the provision and promotion of basic education; Ensure the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative and life skills (as well as the ethical, moral and civic values) needed for laying the foundation for life-long learning; Ensure unfettered access to nine years of formal basic education; The provision of free, universal Basic Education (FUBE) for every Nigerian child of school going age; Reducing drastically the incidence of dropout from the formal school system through improved, relevant, quality and efficient educational system; and Ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

Safe School Initiative (SSI) Programme (2014)

The Safe School Initiative (SSI) is a national programme launched by the Nigerian Government, UN Special Envoy for Global Education, Gordon Brown, Nigerian Global Business Coalition for Education and private sector leaders, in May 2014, as an immediate response to the abduction of 276 students from the Government Girls Secondary Chibok, Borno State. The programme is aimed at addressing emerging safety and security needs in schools to ensure educational continuity. Meanwhile, the spate of attacks on schools is not limited to the North East (Manjo, 2024).

To be specific, the Safe Schools Initiative (SSI) was launched by the FGN in collaboration with the UN Special Envoy for Global Education, Mr. Gordon Brown and a coalition of Nigerian Business leaders on May 7th, 2014 during the World Economic Forum for Africa (WEFA) in Abuja. In October 2016, the SSI was subsumed by the Presidential Committee on Northeast Initiative (PCNI).

With this, the overall management of the implementation of the SSI program lies within the purview of the North East Development Commission. The main objective of the SSI Program is to urgently protect hundreds of schools across the country, (starting with those in North-Eastern Nigeria) from future attacks and kidnaps. The SSI started in 2014 with about 20 million USD to support the Northeast of Nigeria, after incidents of abductions of students in Chibok, Borno state. The implementation of the programme was anchored by the Federal Ministry of Finance. Safe School Initiative programme can be viewed as a programme designed for school (education) sustainability in Nigeria. It is a programme to provide a safe school environment to support the smooth implementation of teaching and learning in the schools. Safe School Initiative programme is an organized and planned educational programme to solve the problem of insecurity in educational institutions across Nigeria, especially in North-east Nigeria (Gever, 2016; Ihekoronye, & Opara, 2021; Ogunode, Ayeni, & Daniel, 2024; Manjo, 2024).

National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) (2016)

School feeding programme in the opinion of World Food Program (2016) is far more than just food giving; as it is an investment in the world's poorest children. Oyefade (2014) conceptualized school feeding programme as a social safety net that has been popular in developing countries as an instrument for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Oyefade maintained that school feeding programme is frequently targeted towards populations that are food insecure and reside in areas with high concentrations of families from low socioeconomic status, or towards schools that face poor attendance and enrollment of students. Adekunle and Ogbogu (2016) see school feeding programme as a social safety net which provides an important new opportunity to assist poor families and feed hungry children. It provides incentive for poor families to send their children to school and keep them there. School feeding programme constitutes a critical intervention which has been introduced in many developed and developing countries of the world to address the issue of poverty, stimulate school enrolment and enhance pupils' performance (Ogunode & Abubakar, 2022).

Generally, the overall objectives of Nigerian homegrown school programme according to FRN (2016) are to: improve the enrolment of primary school children in Nigeria and reduce the current dropout out rate, address the nutrition and health status of many children and thereby improve learning outcomes, stimulate local agricultural production and boost the income of farmers by creating a viable and ready market and to create jobs along the value chain and provide a multiplier effect for economic growth and development p. 11. The Nigerian home grown school feeding programme is aimed at delivering a government-led, cost-effective school feeding programme with a specific focus on the development of smallholder farmers and local procurement to spur growth in the local economy. While focusing on providing food to children, the food-based safety net programme will indirectly also help improve food security in the beneficiary households. The intended benefits of HGSF will accrue to a wide range of stakeholders. Children will benefit from a hot nutritionally balanced school meal; farmers will benefit from improved access to school feeding markets; and communities will benefit from new jobs across the supply chain such as catering, processing and food handling jobs. Besides the direct benefits, it is intended that HGSF can act as an important catalyst to drive (i) Agriculture-nutrition policies given the direct nutritional components of HGSF menus, and (ii) Smallholder market participation with spill-over effects on broader public agriculture commodity procurement. The policy document or the implementation guidelines on the national school feeding and health programme only covers basic class 1-3 (FGN, 2016).

Impact of Corruption on Education policies and Education Programme

Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme

The universal Basic Education (UBE) programme implementation in Nigeria appears to be engulfed with corruption. Ejere, (2011) reported allegation of corruption on the implementer of the universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria. Studies by Ogunode (2020) and Peter (2019) that assessed implementation of the universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria concluded

that corruption is one of the major problems hindering effective implementation of the programme. Ogunode (2020) and Musa (2017) affirmed that if not for corruption, the universal Basic Education (UBE) programme should be benefited more children than this. He went further to point at corruption as the greatest problem facing implementation of the universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria. Femi, (2021) reported that funds released for capacity building programme to support smooth implementation of the universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Benue was looted and mismanage.

Vanguard (2021) observed that the intervention funds accessed by some state government to provide infrastructure facilities in basic schools in their respective states have also been mismanaged and looted. Femi (2021) concluded that the corruption in the management of universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria has affected the development of the programme as planned. 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. Iho was found guilty of misappropriating N91,5 million (€220,000), and of taking a bribe of N14,9 million (over €36,000).

Safe School Initiative (SSI) Programme

The implementation of the safe school initiative (SSI) Programme in Nigeria appears to be faced with a lot of allegation of corruption, mismanagement and looting. Ogunode, Olowonefe. Jegede and Musa (2022) assessed implementation of the programme in Nigeria and pointed out that corruption is one of the biggest problems facing the implementation of the programme. Peter (2019) established that the implementation of the safe school initiative (SSI) programme in Nigeria is characterized with mismanagement, misappropriation and funds diversion and looting. Femi (2021) also affirmed that corruption has prevented effective implementation of the safe school initiative (SSI) programme in Nigeria. Vanguard newspaper, (2020) reported that the sum of N1.83 bn released to Kwara in July 2016 as the state's share of UBE grant for 2014 and 2015 was returned to the Commission because the Kwara State Government reportedly "diverted" its N1.45bn counterpart fund which it had initially deposited with some banks. The Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) reported that the sum of N1,016,133.08 billion (N1 billion) misappropriated by six State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) was yet to be returned (Allafrica, 2021).

There have been allegation of corruption in the management of the safe school initiative programme in Nigeria. For example, Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (2021) as reported by Punch urged the President, Major General Muhammadu Buhari (retd.), to "direct the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice Mr Abubakar Malami, SAN, and appropriate anti-corruption agencies to investigate allegations that \$30m safe school fund is missing, mismanaged or diverted, and to bring to justice anyone suspected to be involved, as well as recover any missing money." SERAP urged him to "direct Mr Malami and appropriate anti-corruption agencies to investigate why the Safe Schools Initiative, established to bolster security at schools in response to the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls has failed to stop frequent abductions of students, and to ensure the safety and security of Nigerian children in schools across the country. SERAP also urged him to "ask the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, Mr Gordon Brown to wait for the outcome of any investigation into the spending of the \$30m initially budgeted for the Safe School Initiative programme before leading the international community and donors to push for more funds for the programme (Punch, 2021).

Also, Premiumtimes (2018) reported that the House of Representatives on last administration resolved to probe alleged mismanagement of the Safe Schools Initiative (SSI) Funds in the North-east. This followed a motion by Shuaibu Abdulrahman (Adamawa-APC) at plenary. Moving the motion, Mr Abdulrahman recalled that SSI, a global intervention fund, was launched under the leadership of former British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, four years ago, after the abduction of

Chibok school girls. He said that an undisclosed amount of money was collected to enhance physical security around vulnerable schools to check abduction of students in schools in the North-east. The lawmaker noted that there was no evidence that schools in the area had now been secured or fortified with CCTV Cameras, high perimeter fence and generators as provided in the original concept of the initiative. He noted that the absence of security infrastructure in North-East schools led to the recent abduction of students of Government Secondary School, Dapchi, Yobe. According to him, this brought embarrassment and attendant trauma on Nigeria. The motion was unanimously adopted by members when it was put to a voice vote by the Speaker, Yakubu Dogara. The House, therefore, mandated its Committee on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Refugees and Initiatives on the North-east to investigate the extent of the funds collected. Corruption is may be another fundamental problem preventing effective implementation of the Safe School Initiative (SSI) programme in the Northeast Nigeria. The limited monies released for the programme might have been mismanaged or looted by some managers and administrator of the programme (Ogunode, Olowonefe, Jegede. & Musa,2022).

National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP)

The National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) is an educational programme for improving the quality of education. The implementation of the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) in Nigeria is plagued with corruption. Peter (2019) and Ogunode, and Abubakar (2022) asserted that noted that corruption is a major problem facing the implementation of the national feeding programme in Nigeria. The funds released for the implementation of the programme is been looted and mismanaged by some officers handling the implementation across the federation. The former coordinator of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in Nigeria Mrs. Uwais observed that, She noted that government has suspended some officials of the programme in Benue and Niger States because some of them have taken money without the knowledge of government and even opened personal accounts where they had directed that some money for the programme should be lodged into, adding that those that were caught in the act were currently under investigations by the Economic And Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

Corruption on fund diversion has been reported in all the forms of education in Nigeria. Mismanagement was also cited as a challenge to the implementation of the School Feeding programme in the South Tongu District by (Eugene, Gabriel & Mark 2017 Ogunode & Abubakar, 2022).The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission, ICPC, announced that it found N2.67 billion in some private accounts which was meant for the provision of school feeding to federal colleges during the COVID-19 lockdown (Nairametric, 2020). Also, at the early child and basic education, the Education Secretary of Sabon Birni Local Government Area of Sokoto State, Ishaka Abdullahi, was on Monday, arraigned before Justice Malami Umar Dogondaji of the state high court for fraud. Abdullahi was arraigned by the Sokoto zonal office of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) after investigators traced school feeding funds to bank accounts linked to him (Thewhistler, 2020).

Generally, the Nigerian education system appears not to free from corruption. There have been many allegation of corruption in the education system, For instance, in 2020, Transparency International maintained in their annual report that 66 percent of the money Nigerian government's allocate to education is stolen by corrupt officials. According to the report, corruption is common place in education systems across the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS, (Premium Times 2020). Also, UNESCO (2014) report on *Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All* shows that Nigeria is among the 37 countries that are losing money spent on education because, children are not learning. UNESCO disclosed that the menace is already costing governments USD 129 billion a year. It stressed further that despite the money being spent, rejuvenation of primary education is not so soon because of poor-quality education that cannot ensure that children learn (NEEDS, 2014). Corruption direct resources from the designed projects to white elephant projects are heavily over invoiced, it increases the costs of running the schools,

distort public expenditures and defers private-public partnership investments. It also erodes the consistency for grants and funding (Egbefo, 2012; Suleiman 2005). In Nigeria institutions of learning, corruption has undermined the normal functioning of their social economic and academic systems. The cost 15 of corruption to the Nigerian educational system represent about 15½% of its GDP (Egbefo, 2012). Nwaokugha and Ezeugwu (2017), Observe that corruption in the educational sector drains the system of quality of education, impacts the moral advancement of the society while impeding the sustainable development of the country. About 21 billion US dollars has been lost between the years 2005 to 2006 to illicit as well as unlawful deployment of funds (Kanibin 2019; Mumuni & Sweeney, 2013; Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017).

The implication of corruption to the Nigerian educational system includes; poor quality of education, limited funds, inadequate facilities, shortage of teachers, poor supervision and planning, poor ranking in international ranking (Ogunode & Stephen, 2021; Ogunode, Josiah & Ajape 2021; Osunyikanmi, 2018; Ololube, 2016; Agabi, 2014),

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper critically examined the impact of corruption in the implementation of educational programme (Universal Basic Education UBE, Safe School Initiative SSI and National Homegrown Feeding Programme, NHFP) in Nigeria. The paper concluded that corruption has affected smooth implementation of educational programme (Universal Basic Education UBE, Safe School Initiative SSI and National Homegrown Feeding Programme, NHFP) in Nigeria and corruption has prevented the realization of education goals in Nigeria.

Based on this findings, the paper recommends that the federal and state government should adopt and deploy information communication technologies and artificial intelligence in the monitoring and evaluation of the funds releases for the implementation of education programmes in Nigeria. Government should adopt open and accountability

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