



Corruption in Formal Adult Education in Nigeria: Implications for Sustainable National Development

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ABSTRACT

This position paper took a cursory view of corruption, examined adult education, assessed corruption in formal adult education and highlighted the implications for sustainable national development in Nigeria. The paper concluded that concerted efforts must be put in place in order to curb the menace of corruption in adult education. Adult education is the poorest sector in education in terms of allocation of financial resources. Government allocates meagre financial resources annually to adult education organizations, yet corrupt financial practices are perpetrated by the operators of adult education institutions in Nigeria. There is equally the challenge of cheating in examination and examination malpractice. These have stifled the developmental needs of the country to be provided by adult education. It was suggested that the EFCC and ICPC should beam their searchlight on adult education sector of education with a view to recovering stolen funds arresting and prosecuting offenders of embezzlement and misappropriation of education funds; adult learners found guilty of corrupt practices should have their admission revoked; adult educators found guilty of the monetary extortion should be relieved of their jobs; and government should make it as a point of duty to allocate 3% of her education budget to adult education annually.

INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a means of upholding the existing social order by imparting contemporary ideas, new ways of doing things, current attitudes and values, and fostering creativity that aligns with the desired direction of progress. Education effectively conveys the 21st century development changes to the next generation, acting as a powerful means of transmitting change (Achounye & Njoku in Achounye, 2008; Enarebebe-Emberru, Igoni & Bariyaa, 2020). Education plays a critical role in the Nigerian economy, as every sector relies on it. Therefore, education is an essential measure for any significant progress (Abah, Nwapi, & Nwachukwu, 2013). Buseri (2017) argued that education is the sole authentic means by which individuals can free themselves from ignorance and all forms of evil. Consequently, a well-educated individual experiences freedom, equipped with essential skills for thriving in their environment. Wami's 2023 research posited that education functions as a tool for national progress and unlocking individual potential. It serves as the primary means to eliminate illiteracy and ignorance within any society, playing a pivotal role in both personal and collective growth. Adult education, within the academic and educational realm, addresses various socio-economic, cultural, political, and environmental challenges. According to Onyenemezu in Aminu (2022), adult education significantly impacts adults' social and psychological well-being, restoring hope and dispelling beliefs of incapability. However, corruption often obstructs the potential of adult education to contribute to sustained national development in Nigeria, despite its critical role in economic transformation. This study briefly examines corruption's concept, delves into adult education, assesses corruption within formal adult education, and discusses its implications for Nigeria's ongoing national development.

The notion of "corruption" has been elucidated from various viewpoints. Adeyinka (2017) characterizes corruption as the consistent deviation from accepted standards and norms by public officials and their associates. Paulley (2017), similarly, describes corruption as the habitual departure from established standards and norms by public officials and the individuals or groups they interact with. Specifically, Paulley (2017) defines corruption as any action undertaken by a public official that strays from the expected code of conduct for their position, motivated by personal gain. While the outcomes of such actions may carry social, economic, or political implications, they are deemed unethical as they contravene the ethics, norms, and values upheld by society. This is because the individual actor benefits at the expense of society as a whole. According to Abali and Nwapi (2017), corruption is defined as the deceitful and unlawful actions carried out by individuals who hold positions of authority or power within society. Ikeyei (2017) posited that corruption refers to the act of undermining a society or nation, resulting in the disruption or impairment of a well-structured system. A society provides an incentive to someone with the intention of influencing them to engage in actions that violate its established rules, conventions, and values. Buseri (2017) defined corruption as the propensity of individuals, particularly those in positions of authority, to exploit their influence for personal gain by engaging in dishonest or unlawful

activities in exchange for financial compensation or other types of preferential treatment. According to the World Bank (2013), corruption is the unlawful exploitation of authority for personal gain. Omenka (2013) stated that corruption is a widespread problem that exists in all areas of society and is both inherent and organized. According to Agih and Allen-Agih (2017), corruption refers to the act of offering a bribe to an official in order to suppress the truth. Any action that violates the laws of a particular society and the embezzlement of public funds for personal gain are examples of corruption. According to Transparency International in Gibson (2017), corruption is the act of misusing one's delegated authority for personal benefit. According to the Gibson (2017) report, corruption includes acts such as bribery, fraud, and other associated offenses, as defined by the Independent and Corrupt Practices and Related Crimes Commission (ICPC).

Buseri (2017) pointed out that for a person to be described corrupt, he would display, possess, or express any or all of the underlisted:

1. Amass wealth undeservedly (illegally);
2. Steal (take what does not belong to him/her);
3. Ruin the lives of the general public;
4. Deprive the general populace (society) of what they are entitled to;
5. Demean the lives of the unsuspecting citizens;
6. Send children (adults inclusive) to their early graves as a consequence of not providing for their needs;
7. Deny citizens (especially children) access to education (through denial of admission into schools) that is their fundamental right; and
8. Deny persons of healthcare needs (p.179).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Foundations of Corruption in Nigeria

Corruption in Nigeria has existed since the pre-colonial era, with traditional rulers, chiefs, and messengers notorious for establishing corruption as the norm in several kingdoms. This was especially prevalent in the resolution of land disputes. The colonial political administrators capitalized on the preexisting culture of bribery and corruption established by the traditional leaders (Odekunle in Adeyinka, 2017). According to the Storey report, cited in Adeyinka (2017), in the early 1950s, hospitals had a common practice where nurses demanded payment from in-patients before providing prescribed medication. Additionally, ward servants expected to receive a gratuity, known as a "dash," before undertaking tasks such as fetching a bedpan. This practice extended to the Police Motor Traffic Unit, which had ample opportunities for corruption due to the widespread occurrence of vehicle overloading. Pay clerks would deduct wages from daily-paid staff. Produce examiners would charge a fee to produce buyers for each graded and sealed bag. Domestic servants were required to give a portion of their wages to the most senior servant and also pay a lump sum to secure their employment. In sovereign Nigeria, the tradition of exchanging monetary gifts has expanded to include government service. Most

of the initial political leaders, both at the federal and regional/state levels, face accusations of engaging in various forms of corruption at the governance level. However, since the establishment of the most recent group of states in 1996, the extent, types, and scale of corruption in Nigeria have become increasingly concerning (Adeyinka, 2017). Odekunle, in Adeyinka's (2017) study, stated that in 1982, Angos Abdullahi characterized corruption as the primary impediment to the progress of a nation. The current situation is more dire than it was in 1982. The aspiration for rapid wealth acquisition has ensnared several Nigerians into engaging in diverse forms of corruption, like kidnapping and murder, in order to achieve their ambitions.

Forms or Sub-Divisions of Corruption

The forms of corruption as identified by Adeyinka (2017) includes the following:

Bribery This refers to the payment, whether in the form of money or goods, that is exchanged in a corrupt relationship. These encompass kickbacks, gratuities, pay-offs, sweeteners, and greasing palms, among others.

Fraud encompasses several forms of deception, including trickery, swindling, deceit, counterfeiting, racketeering, smuggling, and forgery.

Embezzlement refers to the misappropriation of public resources by individuals holding public office. Embezzlement refers to the act of a government official misappropriating funds from the public institution where they work. In Nigeria, misappropriation of public monies is a prevalent method of economic accumulation, likely resulting from the absence of a stringent regulatory structure.

Extortion refers to the act of obtaining money or other valuable resources by the use of compulsion, violence, or threats of force. It is commonly perceived as a process of extraction that occurs from a lower level or position.

Favouritism refers to the misuse of power, where state resources are distributed in a severely biased manner. Nevertheless, this tendency is seen as an inherent inclination of humans to prioritize their friends, relatives, and individuals who are near and trusted.

Nepotism refers to a particular type of favoritism where a person in a position of power shows preference towards their relatives and family members. Nepotism refers to the act of granting exemptions from specific laws and regulations or providing preferential treatment in the distribution of limited resources.

Causes of Corruption in Nigeria

The following are identified by Adeyinka (2017) as major reasons for corruption in Nigeria:

1. Disparity in wealth distribution;
2. Political positions as the primary avenue for acquiring wealth;
3. Clashes arising from shifting moral standards;
4. Inadequate social and governmental mechanisms for enforcement;
5. Lack of a robust national unity;
6. Fragile governmental institutions;

7. Insufficient incentives for fair compensation;
8. Lack of transparency and openness in public administration;
9. Deficiency in essential anti-corruption measures; Inefficiencies in political processes;
10. Cultural normalization and tolerance of corruption;
11. Poverty and the lack of effective political funding;
12. Competition for resources exacerbated by ethnic and religious divisions.

Concept of Adult Education

Adult education is a broad field that encompasses diverse facets of human learning. At its core, adult education is founded on the belief that learning should extend beyond a single opportunity within an individual's lifetime. Throughout the years, it has wielded significant influence and catalyzed transformations within various societies (Okafor & Arikawei, 2020). Adult education encompasses structured and deliberate educational endeavors tailored specifically for adults, aimed at fostering personal and societal advancement, both within and beyond conventional educational settings. It enables individuals to adapt to evolving global demands and tackle contemporary and emerging issues spanning health, environment, economics, social dynamics, and political landscapes. According to Obidiegwu (2013), inclusion within society lessens the likelihood of marginalization and alienation. Barikor, Wami, Nwafor, and Deekor (2019) assert that the development of human resources is greatly aided by adult education. It serves as a means of teaching the general public and is therefore essential to the development of every community, including rural areas..

UNESCO in Kobani (as cited in Wami et al., 2019 p.166) posited that adult education is:

Education encompasses the entirety of structured learning, regardless of its subject matter, level, or approach. This includes both continuing education for adults, whether it supplements or replaces formal schooling, and vocational training to enhance skills and qualifications. The aim of education is to foster personal growth and enable individuals to actively contribute to a well-rounded and self-sufficient society, both economically and culturally.

Anyanwu, Ononeze, and Chukwuji (2019) argued that the primary objective of adult education is to aid adults in enhancing their ability to adjust to their society by acquiring practical skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values that will empower them to address personal or community issues. According to UNESCO in Wami (2020), the primary goals and purposes of adult education should include fostering peace, promoting international understanding, and encouraging collaboration.

1. Attaining a nuanced understanding of pressing contemporary issues and societal shifts, along with the capability to actively contribute to social progress for the attainment of justice.

2. Raising awareness of the interconnection between individuals and their physical and cultural environments, and nurturing a commitment to improving the environment while upholding values of nature, heritage, and public resources.
3. Encouraging comprehension and appreciation of diverse traditions and civilizations at both local and global levels.
4. Cultivating the capacity to acquire new knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviors that contribute to holistic personal development, whether through independent means, group collaboration, or formal education.
5. Strengthening recognition and practice of diverse forms of communication and unity at familial, local, national, regional, and global levels.
6. Facilitating seamless integration into the workforce through advanced technical and vocational education, fostering the ability to innovate in creating both material goods and spiritual or aesthetic values, individually or collaboratively.
7. Nurturing an understanding of the complexities involved in parenting.
8. Developing the capability to creatively utilize leisure time and acquire desired knowledge.
9. Instilling critical discernment in effectively utilizing mass media such as radio, television, and cinema, and interpreting the myriad messages directed at modern individuals by society.
10. Fostering the skill of learning how to learn effectively.
11. Bergevin in Kobani (2018) gave the following as goals/objectives of adult education:
 12. Facilitate learners in attaining a sense of purpose and fulfillment in their lives;
 13. Assist learners in comprehending themselves, their abilities, limitations, and interpersonal connections;
 14. Foster awareness and appreciation of the importance of lifelong learning among adults;
 15. Create environments and chances for adults to develop spiritually, culturally, physically, and professionally;
 16. Offer necessary education for literacy, vocational skills, and health preservation as required.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Corruption in Formal Adult Education in Nigeria

Formal adult education refers to the education that adults get in established educational institutions, including universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, monotechnic, and similar establishments. These institutes offer educational opportunities for adults seeking to enhance and enhance their knowledge or skills. Adults obtain degrees, diplomas, and higher certificates in several fields of human endeavor through formal institutes of adult education.

Nevertheless, corruption is a pervasive phenomenon that occurs on a daily basis inside society, infiltrating official adult education institutions and impeding academic advancement. One of the many challenges confronting adult education in Nigeria is corruption. Adeyinka and Paulley (2016) posited that corruption in formal adult education has manifested itself in the form of; Collection of bribes;

1. Collection of illegal fees, particularly for procuring admission to educational institutes;
2. Academic fraud (such as certificate forgery or impersonation of owners of credible certificates in specific disciplines);
3. Withholding of teachers (facilitators') salaries;
4. Preferential recruitment;
5. Promotion and retention of staff;
6. Charging students (adult learners) illegal fees for "tutoring" to cover a specific subject syllabus to enable students perform better in mandatory examinations. Such additional "tutoring" would not have been necessary if the teacher has planned well to cover the required content in class; and
7. Examination malpractice and cheating.

Academic corruption is an appropriate term to characterize corruption in formal adult education. In their study, Ezekiel-Hart, Dorgu, and Olu-Obafemi (2017) identified three primary forms of academic corruption: pre-examination cheating, cheating during the examination, and post-examination cheating. According to Asuka (2014), cheating in exams is evident in the behavior of examinees both before, during, and after the examination.

Cheating Before the Examination

This occurs when adult learners or students are provided with pre-determined examination questions before the actual examination. This allows them to bring the prearranged responses into the examination room. This phenomenon frequently arises through the cooperation of facilitators, typists, or anyone who has had the opportunity to view the questions before to the actual examination date (Ezekiel-Hart in Dorgu & Olu-Obafemi, 2017). According to Asuka (2014), prior to the examination, examinees' cheating behavior is evident in the following ways:

1. Looking for money to settle financial demands that would come up during examinations;
2. Encouraging other candidates and students to cheat during the examination phase;
3. Finding a mercenary (a paid examination candidate) to write all or some of the papers;
4. Contracting a teacher to write all or some of the papers;
5. Preparing written and photocopied materials for use in the examination;
6. Sleeping, which refers to exchange of examination grades for sex by examiners; and
7. Expo, which is an assistance to candidates, by teachers, invigilators or examination officers by giving him/her leaked live papers.

Cheating During the Examination

This is the most prevalent form of academic dishonesty. Instances of cheating among adult learners take place throughout the examination period and at the designated location. This involves the act of copying from one another, as well as from textbooks, microchips (brief notes written on little pieces of paper), and notebooks that are taken into the examination hall. Certain test takers hire individuals to write on their behalf. These individuals are professional soldiers who are hired to fight in exchange for payment. According to Dorgu and Olu-Obafemi (2017), some individuals plagiarize by directly copying from their own bodies. As stated by Asuka (2014), on the day of the examination, an individual who cheats on the exam engages in the following actions:

1. Gives money to invigilators on each examination day to allow him/her to cheat;
2. Sneaks out of the examination hall with the question paper and answer booklet to write outside and submit paper later;
3. Sneaks out of the examination hall while mercenary stays to write for him/her;
4. Stays in examination hall with mercenary and writes separate paper but only one of the scripts is submitted;
5. Copies already prepared answers from body parts, mostly thighs and white under-wears;
6. Copies answers prepared on black/whiteboards by invigilators;
7. Gives bulk money to invigilators and supervisors to allow for a free for all cheating during the examinations;
8. Assaults invigilators in the examination hall by showing dangerous weapons including guns;
9. Refuses to submit scripts at the expiration of the examination time;
10. Giraffing, a process of sticking out of one's neck to see another candidate's answer sheet in an examination hall.
11. Lateral connection - a sitting arrangement where brilliant students are seated in the centre with low intelligent students around them so as to enable the weaker candidates to copy from the brilliant ones;
12. Hi-tech microcomputer-using facilities for multiple entries and digital dairies. Students use code to log points and recall such points in examination hall.

Cheating After Examination

This form of academic dishonesty entails altering examination scores in exchange for tangible benefits. Referred to as "sorting," adult learners engage in offering money or presents to facilitators or other individuals associated with exam results in exchange for improved grades (Ezekiel-Hart in Dorgu and Olu-Obafemi, 2017). Asuka (2014) noted that following the examination, candidate cheating becomes apparent through the following means:

1. Withdrawal of an answer script to write new answers on another after submission;

2. Withdrawal of answer sheet to make correction with the payment of money;
3. Asking invigilators as well as examiners for higher scores for “anything”;
4. Sexually harassing teachers/invigilators for higher grades;
5. Payment of money to teachers to alter examination results. This is actually called sorting. Through this means, candidates are able to negotiate higher grades for themselves. For instance, a D grade is tagged Denmark, C grade is tagged California, B grade is tagged Brazil while an A grade is tagged America. Usually, the higher the amount paid, the higher the grade.
6. Buying gifts for teachers for higher grades;
7. Changing scores with computer operators after financial offers;
8. Changing scores with office clerks after financial inducement; and
9. Contact, the act of examination cheats influencing grade with the assistance of friendly teachers. This could be before and after the conduct of examination.

Perpetrators of Corruption in Formal Adult Education in Nigeria

The major perpetrators of corrupt practices in adult education are the politicians/government in power, administrators of adult education organizations/institutions, adult educators and adult learners.

Politicians/Government in Power

Unfortunately, many politicians holding positions of authority in Nigeria lack an understanding of the importance of adult education in driving national progress and development. As a result, the allocation of funds to adult education often becomes embroiled in political wrangling and negotiations (Maduagwu & Nworgu in Abali & Nwapi, 2017). Obasi (2014) observes that the majority of African governments allocate limited financial resources to adult education institutions annually. Compared to other areas of education, adult education receives the least amount of financial support (Afrik in Oghenekohwo, Tonukari & Samuel, 2022). Consequently, there is a shortage of funding for the operation of adult education establishments. Both the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) and the Mid-term Conference recommended earmarking a minimum of 3% of the education budget specifically for adult education. However, a survey done in 2005 by Action Aid and Global Campaign for Education (GCE) found that this argument was not supported. The survey revealed that only Namibia had made an effort to allocate approximately 3% of its education budget to adult education (Archer, 2020).

According to Abali and Nwapi (2017), funds allocated for education are misappropriated to other sectors due to dishonest financial practices by government officials. Owing to pervasive corruption, the majority of contracts for school building renovations and equipment acquisition are granted to influential political figures or loyal party members who may lack the motivation to carry out the tasks in accordance with the specified requirements.

Contractors can inflate the prices of things in their contracts, resulting in increased costs for schooling (Nwafor, 2006; Aghenta, 2001 in Abali & Nwapi, 2017).

Administration of Adult Education Institutions

Certain managers of formal adult education institutions fail to fulfill their responsibilities with honesty and a sense of moral responsibility, as they redirect funding to other avenues for their own selfish gain. They embezzle revenue from the organization and unlawfully charge fees to adult learners. Oluwuo and Onyema (2013) confirmed that school officials in Imo State have been implicated in corrupt financial activities, including misappropriation, embezzlement, inflation of statistics, and diversion of cash.

Adult Educators and Adult Learners

Within adult education institutions, both adult educators and adult learners actively engage in facilitating examination malpractice and committing dishonest financial activities. According to Maduagwu (2006), examination malpractice is commonly practiced through sorting, which has become a celebrated event among students and lecturers. This practice allows students to avoid the challenges of learning by either copying or obtaining access to examination question papers, or even having someone else write the exam on their behalf. Sorting refers to the act of exchanging gifts, such as money, wrist-watches, clothes, shoes, etc., with the intention of receiving favorable marks or grades in one's scholastic endeavors (Abali & Nwapi, 2017). Miss Royalty's World (2013) argued that the practice of sorting is undermining our academic principles and standards. Therefore, it is imperative to take decisive action to address the problem of sorting in adult education. Considering the ramifications of corruption for long-term national progress is crucial at this point.

Implications for Sustainable National Development in Nigeria

Hornby (2010) defines sustainable as the capacity to endure or endure over an extended period of time. According to Oyebamiji and Adekola (2022), sustainability has become a prominent topic of discussion in contemporary development literature as well as among professionals in the field. Development is the process of transitioning society from a state of underdevelopment to one that is considered desirable and beneficial. Social progress is a deliberate transformation in society that enhances its people's social and economic well-being without causing discord (Sergent-Awuse, 2014). According to Reem in Kobani and Mba (2022), development refers to the circumstances that allow the human self to be actualized. Development is the process of improving the quality, quantity, or both aspects of utilizing existing resources. A sustainable development process in the 21st century should meet the criteria of being environmentally friendly, economically feasible, and socially and culturally acceptable. It should also aim to enhance the capabilities of communities at the grassroots level, with a focus on technological ideologies and practices. From one generation to the next, this should be a continuous

effort (Oji & Okemini, 2022). National development refers to the positive progress in the moral, cultural, social, economic, and political aspects of the lives of citizens (Abali & Nwapi, 2017). Economic development is defined as the expansion, transformations, and enhancements that occur in a specific economy with the goal of improving the standard of living among the population (Ikwuegbu & Nwaneri, 2014). National development refers to progress that goes beyond specific economic sectors and enhances the country's overall self-esteem (Abali & Nwapi, 2017). Sustainable national development can be defined as the ability of a country's population to accomplish significant progress and enhancement in all aspects of its life, including economic, social, political, cultural, and religious domains. It refers to a country's capacity to strategically and effectively enhance and advance the socio-economic, political, cultural, and environmental well-being of both current and future generations. Given the aforementioned realities, achieving sustainable national development in Nigeria necessitates the provision of sufficient funds to both the adult education sector and education as a whole. How can Nigeria attain sustainability in national development amidst the diversion of education funds by politicians, misappropriation of school funds by administrators of adult educational institutions, the demand for monetary gratification by adult educators and lecturers before passing or graduating students, and the practice of adult learners and students bribing their way through school? According to Paulley (2017), cheating in exams and test malpractice have significant repercussions on Nigerian society and its citizens. Examination cheating and malpractice have had a detrimental impact on Nigerian culture since many adults possess impressive certifications without demonstrating the required knowledge and skills in their behavior and performance at work. To put it simply, the grades achieved by candidates using these unethical methods may not accurately reflect the candidates' academic talents. Many individuals certified through this process become perpetrators of social vices in Nigerian society, including armed robbers, kidnappers, pipeline vandals, and Boko Haram members (Paulley, 2017). Another consequence of cheating in examinations and engaging in examination malpractice in Nigerian society is the potential impact on patients seeking medical treatment from individuals who have graduated as medical doctors through unethical manipulations. This raises concerns about the well-being and safety of these patients. These medical doctors would inadvertently cause the premature deaths of their patients due to their lack of expertise and understanding to carry out such a critical professional responsibility. If the person in question is a teacher, the situation becomes even more dire, as the harm produced by an inept instructor would be beyond comprehension (Paulley, 2017). When entrusted with leadership roles, what should society expect from those who prioritize financial rewards over academic success? Corrupt behaviors within a nation's educational system hinder sustained national development and progress. The act of demanding money through threats and the misuse of funds in formal adult education hinder a nation's long-term progress. The nation's economy is under the control

of those who lack awareness of their value, leaving those with genuine expertise to question or doubt their abilities (Abali & Nwapi, 2017).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Concerted efforts must be put in place in order to curb the menace of corruption in adult education. Adult education is the poor resources. Government allocates meagre financial resources annually to adult education organizations, yet corrupt financial practices are perpetrated by operators of adult education institutions in Nigeria. There is equally the challenge in examination and examination malpractice. These have stifled the development needs of the country to be provided by adult education.

With a view to eradicating corrupt practices in adult education so as to achieve sustainable national development in Nigeria, the following were suggested as way-forward-

1. The EFCC and ICPC should beam their searchlight on adult education sector of education with a view to recovering stolen funds by arresting and prosecuting offenders of embezzlement and misappropriation of education funds.
2. Adult learners found guilty of corrupt practices should have their admission revoked.
3. Adult educators found guilty of monetary extortion should be relieved of their jobs.
4. Government should make it as a point of duty to allocate 3% of her education budget to adult education annually

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