REORIENTATION AGAINST BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION: THE COUNSELLING IMPLICATIONS IN NIGERIA

GERTRUDE ONYEMA IKPEKAOGU (Ph.D)
Department of Psychology/Guidance & Counselling, College of Education,
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike
igertrudeonyema@gmail.com
08131862131

MOSES U. AJOKU (Ph.D)
Department of Psychology/Guidance & Counselling, College of Education,
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike

Abstract

Bribery and corruption are cancer worms eating up the fabrics of this nation. Bribery and corruption have affected every sector of the society and has caused a lot of havoc which if nothing is done will bring this nation to a great ruin and downfall. Bribery is a child of corruption which has invaded and spoilt the good values of this nation. This paper therefore focused on reorientation against bribery and corruption and counselling implications. The paper conceptualized bribery, corruption, reorientation and counselling implication. The paper discussed the prevalence of corruption in various sectors of the nation. The paper also highlighted the various forms of corruption which bribery is one of them. It also enumerated some consequences of bribery and corruption on the life of the people and the entire nation. The roles of the counsellor in reorientation of national values were discussed. Counsellors are in the position to control and checkmate this madness called bribery and corruption. Hence the counselling implications were listed to reorient the entire nation against bribery and corruption. The paper therefore recommended that counsellors should offer reorientation of values through their counselling activities.

Keywords: Bribery, Corruption, Counselling implications, National values, Nepotism, Reorientation.

Introduction

Corruption means any act or behaviour that is contrary to the accepted rules, norms and values in the society. Corruption according to Amini-Philips and Ogbuagwu is an absurd or deviant disposition of people which violates the ethical standards. International monetary fund (IMF) (2000) noted that corruption is the misuse of authority, power or trust for personal benefits and is a temptation indulged in not only by public officials, but also by others holding trusted position, by not-for-profit or private enterprises or organizations. This implies that when an individual in authority deviates from carrying out his duties which he swore by oaths of office and allegiance and engages in acts which solely benefit him, he is said to be corrupt. This topic reorientation against bribery and corruption and counselling implications were discussed under these subheadings; concept of bribery and corruption, forms of bribery and corruption in Nigeria, effects of bribery and corruption, concept of value reorientation, counselling implications and recommendations.

Concept of Corruption

Corruption is an act that deviates or violates the normal ethical standard against the society. Fasokun (2010) defines corruption as a behaviour which exploits human person, disdainfully uses men and women for selfish interests. The author also asserts that corruption acts include bribery, extortion, influence peddling, nepotism, fraud, influence officials to take specific actions and embezzlement. According to Chigbu, Oguzie and Obi (2021), corruption is a form of dishonesty or criminal activity undertaken by a person or organization entrusted with a position of authority, often to acquire illicit benefits. Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) Act (2000) defines corruption to include vices like bribery, fraud and other offences that are related. In this definition, bribery is outstanding and refers to the giving or receiving of money or any kind of favour in return or exchange for undue advantage over other people. It therefore means that any person, whether in private or public organizations who violates the laid down rules and regulation on how to deal with the customers and colleagues especially by taking unjust advantage of them, by asking for or demanding gratification in kind or cash is corrupt. Hallak and Poisson (2007) extend the definition

of corruption in the education sector to the systematic use of public office for private benefit, whose impact is significant on the availability and quality of educational goods and services, and, as a consequence, on access, quality or equity in education. Hallack and Poison (2007) also postulate that academic corruption is a systematic use of public office for private benefits, which impact is significant on the availability and quality of educational goods and services. Nigeria in particular has been crippled with the scourge of corruption; corruption however, flows from the top, those at the helm of affair to the little child on the street.

Prevalence of Bribery and Corruption in Nigeria

More cases of corruption revealed in Nigeria especially in the last several years are not only mind-boggling but pathetic. In 2013 there was the case of N4 billion Police Pension Funds embezzlement which was reported to have been handled in the shoddiest way as corrupt acts covered up the corruption (Nnochiri, 2016). In the same vein a former chief of defence staff of Nigerian Armed Forces stood trial on charges of embezzlement of millions of Dollars (Vanguard, 2016). As revealed by Nnodum (2008), corruption in Nigeria has got so dynamic that kidnapping and hostage taking are perpetrated in the people's to make money quick. Recently, 23,846 ghost workers were discovered and removed from the Federal Government payroll (Chiejina, 2016). The list of corruption in Nigeria is inexhaustible. Egenti (2016) states that Nigeria has been recorded as the most corrupt country in Sub-Saharan Africa. Hence, corruption in Nigeria has been in history and not a new phenomenon. For instance, it was because of corruption in governance that made the Nigerian military officers overthrew the Federal Government in 1967. Also the Murtala Mohammed military coup of 1976 which was welcomed by majority of Nigerians was staged to end corruption in governance and public life in Nigeria. Furthermore from1982 - 1984 corruption was generally decried as becoming all pervading; and it eventually was cited as the reason for the overthrow of the civilian Federal Government in 1984. And recently, it was anti-corruption campaign slogan that they rode on to win the nation's

2015 general election yet corruption is still menacing Nigeria (Oditah, 2016) and the just concluded 2019 election.

Nigeria is disastrously and terribly prone to bribery and corruption and it also appear in the education system. This is so and may continue to be so because globally, members of the larger society generally know and recognize that education is one sector that the Nigerian society believe that it normally attracts huge release of funds from international donor agencies, multinational corporations as part of their corporate social responsibility, federal, state, local governments, town unions and individuals. Regrettably, such huge and massive flow of funds are not properly accounted for across all agencies and institutions that are involved in releasing funds to the education sector so much so that the seals and impressions of corruption and corrupt practices are noticed starting from the point of the release of such funds for education to the various ministries, parasitatals and educational institutions where the funds are to be finally used. In this regard, Chigbu, Oguzie and Obi (2021) emphasized that the sting of bribery and corruption is damaging the educational system, especially at the secondary school level.

A litany of corrupt practices have been found to exist in academic institutions some of which are fraud, embezzlement, bribery, smuggling, sexual abuse, examination malpractices, distorting of grades, over use of power, and certificate forgery (Eze, 2006; Lawal, 2006; Chigbu, Oguzie & Obi, 2021). These are unacceptable practices and behaviour which members of staff are alleged to engage in as they execute their duties in their academic institutions. A review of literature reveals that sexual harassment, favouritism, examination malpractices, admission malpractices, compelling students to buy handouts or extortion, neglect of duty, certificate forgery, among others, are the common corrupt practices pervasive in the universities (Nnodum, 2008). Corruption has become so rampant that the young generation has seen it as part of life since everybody is doing it. For instance the syndrome of sorting or sign-sign during the West African Examinations and the like has become so

common that students see it as fun and when you are not doing that you do not belong or you do not know anything.

Causes of Corruption in Nigeria

Wrong value system, greed and selfishness, materialism, nepotism and parochialism, unemployment and weak institutions are major causes of corruption in Nigeria.

Wrong value system

This is understandable because as a result of our wrong value system, there is a blurred line of distinction between what an aberration is and what is morally right. Indecent dressing is a common sight along our streets. People of all walks of life indulge in one form of corruption or the other (Chigbu, Oguzie & Obi, 2021). We tacitly reward corruption by honouring those who indulge in it.

Greed, selfishness and materialism

An average corrupt Nigerian man is greedy, selfish and materialistic. Such people hold materials things to a high esteem at the expense of human dignity and sanctity of life. They want to be regarded as the richest men in their constituencies, Nigeria, Africa or the world. Obsessed by greed and narrow mindedness, they do not care how they obtain the material things or if they impoverish the masses or deplete the resources meant for development of the nation.

Uncontrolled nepotism

Uncontrolled nepotism and parochial tendencies bring about corruption. Nepotism and parochialism are extension of greed and selfishness. A situation whereby people who find themselves in positions of trust reserve best jobs and positions for their relatives and people from their constituencies does not augur well for even distribution of resources.

Unemployment

Unemployment is also a serious causal factor of corruption. An idle man is a devil’s workshop. Unemployed youths have become veritable tools for political assassination, thugery, drug trafficking, baby factory, cyber crime, armed robbery, kidnapping, electoral malpractices, etc. Unless the

youths are offered gainful employment, all attempts at curbing corruption will remain a mirage.

Weak institution

This is situation where judges bribed to acquit the accused and the innocents are put in jail. Sometimes, when the accused are convicted, the punishment given to them can be best described as a pat on the back. This scenario gives criminally minded Nigerians sufficient courage to embark on massive looting where they use part of their loot to settle cases and pay judges for their freedom

Various Forms of Corrupt behaviour in the Education Sector

A non-exhaustive list of corrupt behaviour in education sector comprises:

- School admissions: illegal charges for admission; "auctioning off" of school places; favouritism; misconduct during school admission tests
- Tests and exams: Bribery for good grades; release of exam results only upon payment; readmission of failing students under false names; exam questions or papers being sold in advance; private tutoring as a requirement for passing a test/exam
- School infrastructure and resources: financing or subsidies based on favouritism or other unjust factors; embezzlement of school funds, e.g. unauthorized deductions from teachers' salaries by education officials; bribery for the purpose of sale (often for inflated prices) of low quality education materials such as textbooks, meals, uniforms; use of school property for private commercial purposes; abuse by staff of students' unpaid labour; teacher recruitment through bribery or sexual favours; "ghost teachers"; inflation of student numbers to obtain better funding; allocation funding to schools based on personal or political reasons; forcing students to purchase education materials copyrighted by professors; unfair allocation of construction, maintenance and school repair contracts
- School offering: paid private tutoring outside of school, sometimes by teachers who withhold lessons on purpose

- Licensing, accreditation, auditing: licenses and accreditation obtained through corruption; bribery of auditors for the purpose of hiding the misuse of funds

These forms of corruption could be crosschecked if Nigerian should sit up and improve their educational system starting from the younger generation through reorientation. Nigerian government should expose the children on values and ethics and provide education that will expose the danger of behaviours that violate education integrity – such behaviours as cheating, undue recognition of achievement, misappropriation of funds, favouritism in staffing decisions, etc.

Many countries have adopted ways to curb this corruption such as Tajikistan's Anti-corruption Strategy for 2013-2020. It has a section on education and health, where the high level of corruption in the education sector, especially during tests and exams and misappropriation of public funds, are emphasized as particularly worrying. The absence of regulations for education-sector employees and insufficient control are deemed to be the main reasons for bribery and embezzlement. Hence, Nigeria can improve on the ways of curbing corruption through the effective value reorientation

Need for Value Reorientation

The term reorientation means an act of changing the focus and direction of something. Value reorientation is a sure possible way of curbing corruption in Nigeria. The reorientation of value system is a conscious development of human resources through ideological appeals, planning, training, productivity and efficiency in achievements through corporate culture. Value reorientation is needed in Nigeria at every stage and every sector of the Nigerian nation. This is because the golden value system has been destroyed and eroded, hence the increase in bribery and corruption.

Value re-orientation is necessary so that Nigerians will begin to rank honesty, integrity, reputation and decency higher than dirty wealth and immorality. Social values and norms must be preached. People who are embodiments of social norms and values should be rewarded. The re-orientation on materialistic needs and never-ending lust to earn more and

more by putting in less and less effort can be exchanged for value based life through inculcation of an attitude that earning money is for living a respectable life and for helping others who are disadvantaged. The re-orientation of values is the duty of everybody to make the nation better. The unit to undertake value reorientation is family unit, education and government, religion, economy and mass media and the counsellor. Therefore, the counseling implication is emphasized in this paper.

Counselling Implications

Counselling can play an important role in curbing corruption. Counselling is an important educational tool in shaping the orientation of a child from negative ideas that is planted in the child by his/her peers. Akinade (2012) defines counselling as a process of helping an individual become fully aware of his/her self and the ways in which he is responding to the influences of his/her environment. Counselling can assist one to establish some personal meaning for his/her behaviour and to develop and classify a set of goals and values for future behaviour (Oguzie, Oguzie, Nnadi, Mokwelu & Obi, 2019). According to Oviogbodu (2015), counselling can be defined as a number of procedures in assisting an individual to solve his problems. Counselling is more involved emotionally in the affective realm personalized learning, that is, emotions and feelings, values, and attitudes. Counselling is a learning process in which a counsellor helps an individual or individuals learn, understand themselves and their environment and be in a position to choose the right type of behaviours that will help them develop, grow, progress, ascend, mature and step up, educationally, vocationally and socio personally (Egbo, 2013). In other words, counselling is a transformative process of helping people to learn all that are to be learnt both in and outside the School. Hence counselling services are needed in all sectors of the society.

The counsellors have lot of roles to play in order to assist maladjusted individuals. Professionals in counselling should help to change people's attitude, belief and perception in all other variables of corruption. There is need for the establishments and corporate affairs to have counsellors who

take care of its human capitals while management of the establishments and cooperation cater for the main product. The counsellors should work in both public and private sectors as representative of organizations of employers and workers. The counsellors in various organisations and establishments can display posters around the work premises inviting workers who have problems to come for dialogue. Counsellors should organise workshops and seminars for the managers and supervisors in such establishments to help them acquire necessary skills motivating the workers. Schools should establish a functional unit that will take care of students' aspirations. The students should be helped to perceive themselves clearly and realistically.

Counsellors should organize individual or group counselling session with parents, friends, teachers, peer groups and relatives since they have influence on the students' decision. Parents and guardians should be informed about the various forms of corruption. Counsellors should occasionally organize town hall meeting with parents and guardians in attendance. If counsellors succeed in inculcating self-discipline and moral values in parents, there is no doubt that parents will transmit such moral values to their children more than other persons, knowing fully well that children are leaders of tomorrow.

Public office holders especially those entrusted with common resources must be mandated to receive anti-corruption counselling services from the professional counsellors at least once in a week. The counsellors should serve as models of integrity and honesty. Moral counsellors should exude virtues of diligence, patriotism and altruism so that people will be compelled to emulate their sterling qualities.

Conclusion

Counselors should play leading roles in curbing bribery and corruption in Nigeria. They should organize themselves and pay regular visits to schools including primary and secondary schools, establishments and organizations. Behaviour modification counselors must deploy appropriate and effective counseling techniques to realize the counseling goals.

Students showing symptoms of antisocial behaviour should be assisted by the counselors to jettison such behaviours for pro-social behaviours. It is hoped that appropriate moral and ethical values acquired at youthful age and any stage of life will help to bring bribery and corruption to the barest minimum.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion drawn from the paper, it is recommended that:

1. Counsellors should be employed in the school to take charge of reorienting students on the national values because these students are the futures of tomorrow so that they can uphold good values and qualities.
2. School counsellors should endeavour to use their initiative and assist students to see education certificates as a means not an end itself. This should be accomplished through schedules of group counselling aimed at attitudinal reorientation.
3. School counsellors should reach out to teachers and appropriate authorities and remind them of the importance of covering the syllabus and scheme of work prescribed for the students.
4. School counsellors are in a better position to assist students develop effective study habit therefore offer them study patterns or techniques that are appropriate.
5. School children should constantly visit the counsellor for therapy if they haveany issue that is of burden to them.
6. The guidance counsellor should see the school child as his / her child, friend, and someone that needs help as in a medical doctor patient relationship.
7. Stakeholders should take their responsibilities seriously and embrace counselling services because all hands should be on deck in value reorientation and in curbing bribery and corruption.
8. In schools, to avoid these academic problems and their concomitant effects, teachers should to pay more attention to cover their syllabus and make learners learn.

9. There should be measures in form of scholarship grants and tangible prizes for students to work harder.
10. Government should furnish schools with modern facilities which include ICT devices. Hence, they should step up efforts to provide needed facilities.

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