

**COUNSELLING FOR CORRUPTION FREE EDUCATION
SYSTEM: A SINE QUA NON FOR ELIMINATING
CORRUPTION IN NIGERIAN SOCIAL SYSTEM**

Chijioke E. Ohuakanwa

Department of Educational Foundations and Counselling, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria

chijiokeohuakanwa@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: This paper tried to examine counselling for corruption free education system: a sine qua non for eliminating corruption in Nigerian social system. The author in this paper is of the argument that effective counselling when sustained in the education system could be a means of eliminating education based corruption and by extension eradicating corruption in the larger Nigeria social system. It is widely believed that no country the world over attains sustainable development in the face of corruption. It is worrisome, that corruption is subtly killing not only the education sector but also the nation generally. Education, as it were, has always been the instrument of change. In the case of corruption it could be a veritable weapon of curing corruption in Nigeria, but unfortunately, it is a terrible challenge that education sector itself is one of the worst victims of the virus of corruption. A whole lot of brands of corruption ravage the education sector (the school system and its allies). This is very sad, in the sense that if the engine room of the healing block is infected by the disease, then there is catastrophe at hand. Any kinds of corruption in the education sector will surely rub off on the entire sectors of the country's economy. It could be examination fraud or malpractice among Nigerian students; it could be academic fraud among tertiary institution workers (academic and non-academic) it could be education administrative fraud that ravage the bodies responsible for managing the education sector and so on. In this paper therefore, counselling for corruption free education system, in the view of the author is believed to be a sine qua non for eliminating corruption in Nigerian education sector and by extension the Nigerian social system. Thus, it is recommended in this paper that there should be a holistic reassessment of the introduction of counselling services in Nigerian schools with the intent to enhance the implementation of the programme at all levels of the educational system in Nigeria, bearing in mind its relevance.

Keywords: Corruption, Counselling, Corruption Free Education, Nigerian Social System

INTRODUCTION

Inordinate ambition hardly translates to dreaming big. Arguably, there is a direct relationship between dreaming big and high level of achievement in life endeavour. If an individual is associated with great ambition, the individual reserves the tendency to achieve greater height in a chosen career. Perhaps, this is what Rogers (1975) in his theory of personality and social development described as actualizing tendency in every individual being. Rogers in his personality development theory maintained that human beings possess driving forces which

inherently motivate them towards achievement. This innate drive in man according to Rogers, called self-actualizing tendency was described as the “Master Motive”.

On the other hand Adler (1965) in his own theory of personality development known as Individual Psychology of Personality Development, stressed on the principle of “feeling of inferiority and striving for superiority”. This does not translate to inordinate ambition but however, means that the individual being has the background motive or innate tendency to realize self and reach the top of his/her human endeavour. Adler likened this to be a masculine behaviour which results to success or achievement. However, there is a proviso, that in trying to attain the height of or status of superiority, an individual could come up with goals that are either constructive or not. When individuals create constructive goals, they are encouraged to work hard to achieve their goals. When an individual seeks to attain the enviable level of superiority bearing constructive goals, the individual smoothly, honestly and honourably develops social interest for the society which genuinely evolves from the mindset of selfless desire to contribute to the development of the society, where the individual is a partaker.

In another situation, an individual who has set unconstructive goals, to achieve superiority abhors hard work and has no association with integrity. The individual feels he can get there by hook and crook. The individual can be said to be inordinately ambitious. Inordinate ambition here can be likened to drawing goals to achieve superiority unconstructively which invariably can make the individual lose sight of integrity and adherence to hard work to achieve superiority by all means, including corrupt practices. Thus, at this point the author of this discourse would briefly examine and conceptualize the major variables under focus in this article.

The term corruption is one word that has defied consensus definition. The reason is that various people tend to see it from the point of view of their areas of inclination in life. Hence, in the context of this discourse, corruption could be said to be a way of doing legal activities in an unethically and unacceptable way to the extent that it becomes a style of life over a period of time, however, incorrect and unacceptable it may be. The concept corruption, from another point of view is simply seen as a symptom of something gone wrong in the character and moral wellbeing of the corrupt (Dike, 2007). In their opinion, Fox, Manning, Murphy, Urborm, Marwick and O’shea (2008) maintain that corruption represents, dishonest, illegal or immoral behaviour, especially from someone occupying a position of authority or power. In the same vein, Lawal and Victor (2012) posit that corruption is an illegal use of an individual’s position for selfish gains in such a way that his/her personal disposition runs contrary to the rule of law. In all the above definitions, there is a common denominator, which is that corruption no matter where it is perpetrated is anything abnormal, illegal, unethical and generally unacceptable practice. It is born out of a situation where an individual in charge or in the position of authority has lost sense of value due to moral paucity and judgment of what is right or wrong becomes eroded (Oluakanwa, 2011). It is saddening to note that corruption is as terrible as it could be traceable even to homes in the relationship styles among siblings in their ability to equitably distribute their inherited properties in fairness to all without bitterness. Often times siblings try to use their position as either elder brothers or sisters to unjustly cheat their younger ones in the sharing of inherited properties. This indeed is also seen as corruption in the home front.

Corruption manifests when people compromise their sense of values and morals and give unfair judgment against others in whichever sector. It is a truism that corruption is practically noticed in every human endeavour in life. It is sad to say that recent surveys have confirmed that Nigeria is one of the worst corrupt nations in the world. There is hardly any sector in the Nigerian economy that is not infested by the virus of corruption. Globally, no country can attain sustainable development in the face of corruption. Corruption is a canker worm which can drain the last drop of the fluid in the bone marrow of any nation. Indeed, Nigeria has been rendered quite anaemic due to the high rate of corruption. In view of the foregoing, arguably, education can help heal the nation of corruption tendency in the system by injecting in the school system value and moral reorientation at all levels of education.

Education has always been an instrument of change. It could serve as a veritable instrument of curing corruption in Nigeria, but unfortunately, education sector is not free from this scourge. A wide variety of corruption strands ravage the education sector, from the administrative/management/policy making arm down to the school level. This is very sad, in the sense that if the engine block of the healing mechanism is infected by the disease, then there is real problem at hand. As bedrock of change, education has always received high priority attention in most countries of the world. Thus, it is a popularly held view that any country that wants to jeopardize the development of its citizens and indeed the country generally, in its entire ramification should undermine the attention on education. Hence, education is an instrument or weapon given to individuals in order to liberate them from ignorance, poverty, disease and primitivism. Education therefore is the means of acquiring useful skills that will enable an individual live a more meaningful life in the world. In agreement with this opinion, Uwakwe, Oke and Aire (2000) maintained that education equips the individual with the necessary social and psychological skills to cope with the demands of life and living. However, it takes quality education to bequeath to individuals the necessary skills and knowledge. Education should foster the worth and development of the individual, for each individual's sake and for the sake of the society in general. Again, and most importantly, the Nigerian education policy suggests that "there is need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive, united Nigeria. Nigerian education policy stressed that school programs need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive; while interest and ability should determine the individual's direction in education"(FGN, 2004; P2). In order that the individual pursues the right direction to education, bearing in mind his/her interest and ability, the policy of education provided for very important elements. These serve as components of the new education system upon which the policy of education is framed. One of these components is Guidance and Counselling.

Guidance and counselling has been seen as one component of the new system of education in Nigeria that cannot be over stressed in terms of its need and importance. This is evidenced clearly in the major government policy statement in the document of the national policy on education. This policy statement informed the introduction of guidance and counselling in Nigerian schools and it states interalia, "in view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors shall be appointed in post-primary institutions since qualified personnel in this category are scarce, government shall continue to make provisions for the training of interested teachers in guidance and counselling ..." (FGN; 2004; p.47).

Critically examining the policy statement by the government mandating the introduction of guidance and counselling in Nigerian schools, one is presented with a sort of operational guidelines in summary, very in-exhaustive. The category of school personnel whose call to duty are so expressed in the statement understand the daunting tasks they are called to handle, in order to achieve among school aged youngsters who should realize themselves and take up their future realistically, that of their immediate environment and of course that of the nation as they are expected – “the leaders of tomorrow”. Through the process of counselling, the youngsters should be made to become fully aware of their potentials – interests, abilities, aptitudes, attitudes, strengths and weaknesses. In the same process, the complex nature of the human personality and the tendency towards behaviour maladjustment that is associated with nature can be taken care of for the purposes of a harmonious living in the society. It is only when this is achieved that the individual (citizen) can see his real essence in life, realize his values and then encourage appropriate values in the society. The question then arises, what is counselling? In this paper, counselling can be described as a helping relationship which involves two sets of individuals, one a professional or an expert who by training has acquired skills which enable him/her to effectively assist the other person who is vulnerable and desires help due to temporal crisis which he/she is going through at the moment. The expert in the description is called a counsellor while the vulnerable person is called the client.

In a related description, Ekanem (2016) opines that counselling is a personalized and individualized process which is aimed at helping the individuals learn to adjust properly in their environment. Again, in the opinion of Ifelunni (2015), counselling is seen as an activity which allows a trained personnel, called a counsellor to engage on one on one relationship with another person or persons so that the other person called the client is helped to have a clear understanding of his/her life and potentials in order to make adjustment in his/her educational, vocational and social-personal areas of life. From the above definitions, it can be deduced that counselling is a helping relationship which its main focus is to assist the individual to learn and understand self accurately, so that the individual is motivated to actualize his/her potentials and maximum development. The individual further becomes fully aware of his/her personal values, attitudinal approach to issues and there makes his/her best personal decisions. Counselling helps the individual to attain a behavioural disposition that is valuable and beneficial not only to self but to other citizens around him/her and generally to the nation. Thus, counselling embraced as originally conceptualized and enshrined in the document of the national policy on education is intended to impact positively on the Nigerian social system.

In this discourse, the social system as it concerns the area under observation is seen as the totality of the network that is consistent in the way and manner the community of people are integrated and relate together in the society to sustain their existence and bring about their individual development and that of the society/community/nation in general. In other words, the existence and development of the people and the society is dependent on the harmonious integration and relationship of the various components of the society's structures that make up the super structure. Thus, in this discourse, Nigeria is seen as a super structure (social entity) that is only made possible by various networks of component bodies and institutions – social systems whose relationships together and independently would bring about a worthwhile society where every citizen will live and survive with relative comfort, getting what is naturally due to him/her as a

citizen. In order to actualize the above education which is the energizer must be free from any form of corruption. At this point, this discourse would attempt to examine certain disgusting corrupt practices in the education sector that have consequential effects on other sectors and invariably on the general Nigerian social system

Corrupt Practices in the Nigerian Education System

Corruption in the education system of whatever form should be decried and condemned in its entirety. Corruption has watered down the quality, standard and value of education in Nigeria today. It is so bad that young graduates these days with Universities first degrees are looked at with disdain. These degrees are not seen as honourable because, they are not in the opinion of major stakeholders true representations of the holders and since majority of the holders cannot defend their degrees. It is a truism that the quality and standard of education of any nation has a direct correlation with the development of that nation. It is sad to note that the quality of education in Nigeria, in the recent decades has been marred by assorted types of examination fraud or malpractice. It has been christened in several ways to suggest the way it is perpetrated, cheating in the examination hall, impersonation, mercenaries, sorting and many others (Oluakanwa, 2011)

Corruption seems to be largely responsible for examination malpractice. Examination malpractice is an academic fraud that is occasioned by inordinate desire or desperate ambition to pass examination by all means in order to possess certificate as a meal ticket. This desperate attitude towards achieving a certificate, for restraint of being immodest is probably because Nigerian education is greatly certificate driven. It does not matter if the individual cannot defend the certificate he/she is parading about. Simply put, examination malpractice is the act of cheating in examination. It involves all manners of illegal activities undertaken by an individual student to circumvent the normal process or standard of assessing the actual acquisition of knowledge or skills expected of the student within a specified period of school time. The illegal activities which many students adopt are often called fraud because they strive to unduly influence their performance arbitrarily. In this way, the true and realistic or authentic performance of the individuals involved in the practice is altered. Hence, there is a false representation of the individual's performance by the outcome of the said examination. For Oluakanwa (2011), examination malpractice is a form of corrupt practice in which in-school youths demonstrate dishonesty, immoral or illegal activities to achieve academic goals. He maintained that examination malpractice covers falsifying result, trying to manipulate their teachers to pass them in examination.

Away from examination malpractices, education based corruption includes buying of admission into tertiary institutions. Situations abound when youths by several means attempt frantically to buy admissions into institutions of higher learning. Most often than not one notices desperate parents who encourage their children and wards to engage in all kinds of academic fraud or corrupt practices, little do they realize the impact in the social systems of the nation. A critical observation of corrupt practices in education appears to show that from the administrative side of the system where the policies are made to the classroom where the learners are seated listening to the teacher implementing the curriculum and the policy statements everybody involved is blown

or brushed by the wind of corruption. Most of the time one is sad to notice that the educational policies that are very significant and laudable do not see the light of the day in the process of implementation because of compromisation on issues. Thus, such policies cannot be carried out or implemented as it would benefit the nation generally since those through whose tool or channel the policy would have benefited others have not gained from it.

Education administrators and policy makers owe it as obligation to ensure that right things that have been thought of for the good of individual citizens and for the eventual good of the nation's development are implemented to the letter. The 6-3-3-4 system of education for instance as a very laudable system of education in Nigeria, would have been a brand of education system to bring the nation out prominently and repositioned her economy but the major component/elements of that system were merely compromised in the process of implementation due to corruption and the stakeholders attributed the failure to paucity of political will. From the highest point of administration or management of educational matters (federal, state or the local levels) to the classroom where the actual processes of teaching and learning take place, educational issues are compromised. It is not far from the truth that at those levels, the realization of the actual essence of education has been sacrificed at the altar of quota system, ethnicity, nepotism and unpatriotic attitude, when it comes to appointment of persons to positions of responsibilities. It is vital to observe that this impact negatively to the development of the nation's education sector down the line. There is a widely criticized policy of two various score benchmarks demarcating Nigerian candidates for admission into Nigerian Unity schools. In the same vein, there is no doubt that the idea of Unified benchmark score for candidates' admission into Nigerian tertiary institutions is made to favour a certain section of the Nigerian federation to the disadvantage of the other side. These are considered as compromised policies that can go a long way to breed corruption in the Nigeria education system and by extension to the lager Nigerian social system.

In the school system right from the least level of education, the students and pupils are taught and encouraged to be dishonest at very tender age in school. The child for instance who is not of school age but got the encouragement of the mother to claim the age he/she is not because for certain excuses, the child must be enrolled in school. When the child has been taught that dishonesty means no harm going to school, he/she develops the mindset that dishonesty is normal and can pass for any situation in school. A similar situation is the fact that parents make young school adolescents believe that education and certification can be attained by all means excluding hard work. These kinds of parents enlist their children in magic/examination made easy education centres; in these types of examination/education centres, children/students are made to understand that they are not meant to stress themselves working hard to pass examination and achieve certification. When this is done, parents encourage laziness among their children by buying admissions into institutions of higher learning. A situation that makes nonsense the whole efforts Joint Admission and Matriculation Board has put in to achieve a credible Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examinations. What a candidate scores in JAMB's UTME does not determine his admission but what the parents can pay for admission no matter the score obtained in UTME and for whatever the course he desires. There are various price tags for different courses as the case may be. An individual student like this whose opinion about education is via corrupt practices or dishonesty, believes that educational achievement is

shrouded in corruption, and also achievement in life endeavour is dependent on dishonesty or corruption. Unfortunately, it is these same Nigerian graduates who transit from school to become politicians. As politicians they occupy positions of authority and power and employ their dishonest attitudes to deal with the country the best way they have learnt. They transit from school to become medical doctors, economists, engineers, teachers and so on. This becomes a wild wind that blows no one good.

Statement of the Problem

Significant observers have maintained that no country globally can ever attain sustainable development in the face of corruption. Corruption is a canker worm which can drain the last drop of the fluid in the bone marrow of any nation that refuse to fight it. Indeed, Nigeria has been rendered quite anaemic due to the high rate of corruption. Education has always been an instrument of change. It could serve as a veritable tool of curing corruption in Nigeria, but unfortunately, it is a terrible challenge that the education sector is also one of the worst victims of the corruption virus. A wide range of corruption brands ravage the education sector. However, speculative this assertion may be, it is imperative to succumb to the argument that education is the bedrock upon which the other structures of the social system and the general development of the national economy depends. This is evidenced by the fact that the manpower need or the human capital needs of the other sectors depend on education for supply. As a concerned observer, the author considers as dangerous the infestation of the education sector with corrupt practices, widely alleged is the case in the recent decades. This is sad, in the sense that if the engine block of the healing mechanism is infected by the disease, then there is a big challenge to worry about. Counselling for corruption free education system is considered a sine qua non in order to protect and shield the Nigerian social system from corruption virus. This discourse is faced with the challenge of examining the extent to which the Nigerian social system can be more worthwhile in terms of eliminating corruption by trying to ensure a corruption free education system through effective counselling in schools. This calls for value reorientation in the system which can be achieved by encouraging counselling at all levels of the nation's educational system.

Counselling for Corruption Free Education System

Counselling is one of the very vital elements that is intended to make the education of the Nigerian child a lot worthwhile. Counselling as enunciated in the National Policy on Education Document,(FGN, 2004)has its mission and vision at two folds targets. It is targeted first at assisting the young school children to acquire the awareness of wide array of careers in order that they are given wider opportunity to make appropriate and valid choices based on their interests and aptitudes among other traits. Again, the mission targets the personality dispositions of the youngsters in terms of sustaining desirable behaviours and/or modifying maladjusted behaviours associated with students as well as enabling them to clear misconceptions and doubts regarding their values (FGN, 2004). In either of the perspectives, the essence is to assist the youngsters acquire dependable education on one hand as well as credible social personal dispositions that will make them passionate in their desire for the acquisition of moral values and love for self, neighbours and father land (nation).It is the author's position that counselling focus in the post-

primary school if carried out as the mandate provides, should be able to put a lot of misdemeanours/issues at bay in school, at that foundational level of education, leading to a better moulded youngster, both in learning and character before entering the higher level of education. Thus, effective counselling programme in the secondary school should provide opportunity for youngsters to unlearn certain maladjusted behaviours like cultism, fighting, hatred, bullying, lying, examination malpractice, dishonesty of all kinds and so on. Effective counselling in school should also go a long way to impact positively the teachers and other school personnel to carry out their duties in the school passionately and selflessly and not to engage in certain unethical and clandestine practices that can mislead the students they are supposed to model aright bearing their various positions.

The Place of the Counsellor in Ensuring a Corrupt Free Education System

The counselling practitioners (counsellors) in the first place are the individuals who have received training in the art and act of helping. By their training, they acquired the skills and techniques that qualify them to become professional helpers. They employ their skills, knowledge and expertise in helping the young school students in overcoming numerous challenges they encounter in the areas of education, vocational/career and social personal areas while going through school. The National Policy on Education Document as has been observed was very clear about this fact.

The counsellors in Nigerian schools have enormous works to do in ensuring that whole lots of issues are got right in the school system. Going by the mandate or the mission or essence of counselling introduction in school, the cardinal roles of the counsellors include among others to assist students generally acquire a healthy attitude towards balanced pattern of life and perception of life consistent only with their ability to achieve greatness by share hard work.

The counsellors in school have a duty to ensure that the young school children should be able to develop this healthy perception towards their pursuit of academic excellence through school and graduating with that mindset out of school into their careers in life.

The counsellors' plays the role of impressing in the minds of young school children the benefits of healthy and honest approach to examinations devoid of any kind of fraud.

In line with the above is another vital role of the Counsellors in school, which is to make school children embrace hard work towards achieving academic heights than dependence on fraud/cheating when they are indolent. Making the pupils and students realize, that this is the only time academic excellence can be said to have been acquired in "learning and character".

The counsellors equally adopt the behaviour modification strategies to heal a whole lot of behaviour maladjustment issues youngsters are associated with in school.

Counsellors through the effective counselling programme in school at various levels make remarkable impact in the sound development of young school children in very advanced nations of the world America, Sweden, Canada and so on. These are places where Nigeria copy from in

terms of counselling activities, therefore, there is no doubt that counselling and counsellors can also have positive impact in the Nigerian nation if it is taken seriously.

Recommendations

If Nigerian economy must be made to be vibrant and development assured and sustained, government attention and attitude must change for better towards education. Education as it is globally acclaimed must be given its pride of place as it is the case in civilized nations of the world.

Again, key players in the education industry as policy makers, administrators and implementation agents and even down to the classroom teachers should be accorded their due priority attention and value. It should be realized that if the teachers and others in the industry are cared for adequately to perceive themselves as the heads and shoulders upon which the foundation of the nation's economy and development rest then they would not but give their very best to make education qualitative and productive. In very many developed nations of the world teachers for instance are highly remunerated, in order that they feel their value contributing to the development of the nation in a very remarkable way. A laudable instance is Germany, where the teachers have the highest salary scheme in the country and the government is never intimidated to tell anyone that it is unfair to compare teachers' salaries with any other group of professionals who are products of teachers.

The effective implementation of counselling programme in Nigerian schools should be the starting point of National reorientation of the Nigerian child towards value appreciation.

The school through counselling should be utilized to fill the gap that have been created by the absence of the parents in the family in ensuring the inculcation of values, honesty and right attitudes are imbibed by the young school children. These when carefully impressed in the mindset of the children would lead them throughout life in and out of school making room for some worth healthy society devoid of quest for wrong life styles.

Counselling is one vital element in the education sector that cannot be lost sight of, in achieving focal education objectives. The mission and vision of education in any nation can be frontally pursued if counselling is entrenched firmly in the school system. Government should therefore not handle the issue of the implementation of counselling programme in school at all levels with kids' gloves.

Very few Universities in the country federal, states and privates have Counselling Centres. The government should encourage the establishment of counselling centres in all the Universities in Nigeria. This will go to assist in ensuring that every student in any Nigerian University will be exposed to counselling that benefits the student academically, vocationally and social personal wise. Thus, an individual leaving school would have achieved proper and quality education academically, vocational and would have acquired proper values to contribute to fullest self-development and of course to the development of the nation.

Conclusion

The country must ensure a social system devoid of corruption. It is possible to attain this enviable height if education is properly boosted to achieve its right of objectives. The author of this article strongly holds the opinion, that if Nigeria must overcome corruption, Nigeria must have a complete round the circle turn and take education seriously. This paper has articulated carefully, that if counselling as enshrined in the Policy Document of Nigerian Education System, is pursued for its intent and purpose, Nigeria could achieve corruption free social system through the instrumentality of education. Counselling as a vital educational service must be given quality attention it deserves. Education is the bed rock of all kinds of development. No country will attain any meaningful development in the face of low level of education and coupled with endemic corruption. However, education can provide a veritable tool to eradicate corruption but not when the education system itself is corrupted. Therefore, a corruption free qualitative education system will go a long way to pave the way for a corrupt free social system, in which case counselling is a sine qua non.

Reference

- Adler, A. (1965). *Understanding human nature*. New York: Fawcett Premier Books.
- Dike, V. E (2007) Tackling corruption through character and moral education. Retrieved 7 October, 2010 from <http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com>
- Ekanem, A. U (2016). *Theories of counselling and psychotherapy*. Calabar: University of Calabar Press
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). *National Policy on Education*. Lagos: Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council
- Fox, C., Manning, E., Murphy, M., Urborn, R., Marwick, K. C. & O'shea (2008). *Concept of corruption*. (ed) Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. Edinburgh Gate: Pearson Education Limited.
- Ifelunni, C. S.I (2015). The role of guidance and counselling in re-engineering the Nigerian society. *Journal of Counselling and Communication (JCC)*. Vol.1 no. 5. 1- 13
- Lawal, T. & Victor, O. K. (2012). Combating corruption in Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Research in Economics and Management Sciences*, 1 (4), 1 – 7.
- Ohuakanwa, C. E(2011). Parental and peer influence on corrupt practices among in – school youths: Implications for counselling and good governance. *The Lagos Counsellor*, 4 (1), 1- 12
- Rogers, C. (1975). The emerging person: a new revolution. In R.I. Evans (Ed). *Carl Rogers: the man and his ideas*. New York: Ep. Dutton.
- Uwakwe, C. B. U., Oke, J. O. & Aire, J. (2000). *Academic achievement analysis*. Ibadan. Centre for External Studies University of Ibadan