



Model for Curbing Corruption in Nigeria in the 21st Century

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Abstract

This paper focused on Model for Curbing Corruption in Nigeria in the 21st Century. The paper looked at the meaning of corruption, nature of corruption in Nigeria, forms of corruption, effects of corruption and causes of corruption. The authors considered Utilitarian-Hedonistic Theory of corruption as relevant theory for the study. It was discovered that corruption is seen in all spheres of life in developing countries of the world. Corruption affects negatively the quality of product and services of any organization. The paper is of the opinion that management of corruption can be based on the following model: accountability, transparency, compliance to standard, punishment, use of guarantors, corruption trials, prevention mechanism, judicial proceedings bottleneck, banishment, citizen education and curriculum development. It was recommended that corporate business community must be involved in the fight against corruption in organization, workers in the organization should be trained or educated on the evils of corruption, corruption detection and deterrence; the traditional means of corruption management such as oath-taking in the shrine; banishment and use of guarantor should be re-emphasized and amplified; corrupt practices and trials should be straight-forward without any form of corrupt proceeding or sentiment; Curriculum developers should enshrine corruption in the school curriculum to specify dangers and management of corruption.

Key words: Corruption, Model, Management, Business, Organization, 21st Century

Citation of article: Okafor, L. C; Nwangele, S., Nweze, C. N. & Nome, U. (2024). Model for Curbing Corruption in Nigeria in the 21st Century, *African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies AJPAS*, 17(1): 705-722

Date Submitted: 24/04/2024 **Date Accepted:** 18/05/2024 **Date Published:** June, 2024

Introduction

Corruption has become household word in Nigeria and has increasingly decreased the realization of noble ideas despite Nigeria's enormous natural and human resources. Gbenga (2017) revealed that corruption exists everywhere in the world. Onu (2022) pointed out that act of corruption is not peculiar to Nigeria as it could be found in virtually every human society and its institutions. For the past years, transparency international has consistently ranked Nigerian among the top ten



most corrupt nations of the world (Ezeh and Etodike 2016). Its existentiality has created an indelible mark on the performance of public sector organization in Nigeria (George 2020). Therefore, corruption as observed by Mustapha (2010) is the misuse of public funds for personal use which indicates that something has gone wrong in the management of the state. Corruption is a cog in the wheel of progress of development process in Nigeria and has constantly frustrated the realization of the nation's development goals despite its enormous natural and human resources (Manjo 2024).

Corrupt behaviour involves the violation of established rules for personal or group gains and profit. Corruption is an effort to acquire wealth or power through illegal and illegitimate means. In other words, corruption is concerned with obtaining private gain at public expense or an issue of public power for private benefit (Leedy and Ormrod 2010). Also, corruption is a behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public officer, because of private gains such as personal, close family, private, clique, pecuniary or status gains. It is a behaviour which violates rules against the exercise of certain types of duties for private gains regarding influence (Odemba 2010).

Organizations that engage in corrupt practice vary in their degree of involvement. This degree of involvement in corrupt practice pertains to the intensity, scale and hierarchical scale of corruption. This has given rise to different types of organizational identities pertaining to the extent of corrupt practices in organizations. The intensity scale of corruption deals with the quality and gravity of corrupt practices in any organization. The hierarchical scale of corruption in organizations deals with the levels in organizations such as group or team level, function or departmental level, division level and corporate or head office level which are involved in corrupt practices. But the intensity scale and hierarchical level of corruption show the degree of corruption prevalence in organizations. Intensity scale of corruption shows the degree of the incidence of corruption while the hierarchical level of corruption shows the height or level of involvement of organizational units in corrupt practices.

In the main, organizations operating in developing economics, such as Nigeria, are affected by many environmental factors such as political instability, policy inconsistency, deficient



infrastructure, and acute competition, among others. These environmental factors created unfavourable effects on the operations of an organizations. Some decision-makers in such organization devise managerial practices that are seemingly unethical in order to cope and survive in their operations. Besides, some organizational employees engage in unethical practices in their organizations. It may therefore, be stated that both organizational managers and organizational employees engage in some form of corrupt practices to make end meet.

Problem created by corruption should be of serious concern to researchers, policy makers, employees, corporate executives, donor agencies, academics, students, etc. This is because corruption adversely affects growth and development in most economies, including Nigeria.

Corruption is one of the greatest challenges facing private and public organizations in contemporary times and it is a major hinderance to sustainable development.

Nature of Corruption in Nigeria

Atelhe and Agada (2014) traced origin of corruption to the beginning of public administration in Nigeria. Whereas Agbiboa (2012) maintains that the commencement of corruption in Nigeria started with the colonial rulers through their policy of indirect rule. Corruption may be conceptualized as change from good to bad, right to wrong, acceptable or unacceptable. Corruption is involved with the abuse of office, power and/or procedures for personal or group needs. It is concerned with the violation of established standard rules, practices and procedures for personal and/or group interests. Action exhibited towards acquiring wealth, power, authority, influence, or relevance through illegal means is corruption. Corruption usually exists in profit and non-profit organizations, government establishment and civil society, educational institutions and religious organizations. It seems that corruption is a universal phenomenon which changes from one country or the other.

Corruption is not peculiar to any continent, region, ethnic group, faith, political system, age group, gender, though it varies from one country to another, or organization to organization. Corrupt practices include the following: bribery (gratitude's, 'PR' kick-backs, sorting, brown envelop, appreciation and so on), fraud, extortion and favouritism. Ojaide (2000) in Gbenga



(2017) listed the following as forms of corruption: bribery, smuggling, fraud, illegal payments, money laundering, drug trafficking, falsification of documents/records, window dressing, false declaration, evasion, underpayment, deceit, forgery, concealment, aiding and abetting of any kind to the detriment of another person, community or nation.

Forms of corruption

Forms of corruption according to Gbenga (2017) include the following:

- (1) Ghost Workers Phenomenon – Ghost workers form of corruption is a practice where the management of a public organization deliberately inflates payroll by adding fictitious names to get more salaries from released subvention. The excess is siphoned by the members of management in connivance with some members of governing councils or boards (Azelama 2005). Every office has its responsibility and role to play towards the achievement of the organization's vision and mission. Corruption negates inputs and affects growth and development (Oluwatosin and Kalu-Mba 2020).
- (2) Procurement scam – Procurement scam refers to over-invoicing of government contracts or corruption related to purchases. In this case, the purchase price of an item is inflated to the extent that the difference between the inflated price and actual price is shared between the person who does the purchasing and the sellers (Azelama 2005). Gbenga (2017) citing the case of Nigeria Port Authority stated that this procurement scam has become a cog on the wheel of operational excellence.
- (3) Budgeting Padding – Budget padding is where Management bribes some members of the legislature to approve inflated estimate for the institution during budgeting. Once the budget is approved or passed, the management is expected to give tips or gratifications to the government functionaries whose duty is to release money to the institutions (Azelama 2005).
- (4) Favouritism - This is a form of corruption where a public servant gives undue preference or favour to his or her friends, family or anybody close to him/her. Recruitment of unqualified candidates into any organization, either private or public



sector has favouritism as one the causes of employing unqualified workers (Gbenga 2017).

Effects of Corruption

Effects of corruption are numerous. It leaves an economy with an untold hardship and its effects are felt in the economic, political and social spheres directly or indirectly and it deepens poverty and makes it difficult for ordinary people to get ahead of the result of their own efforts (Gbenga 2017). Dike (2005) observed that corruption occurs in many forms and it has contributed immensely to the poverty and misery of a large segment of the Nigeria's population. Mauro and Johnson (2016) observed that high rate of corruption makes it difficult to predict investment returns and this scares away foreign and local investors. Manjo (2024) sees corruption as personal gain at public expense and efforts to get power, wealth or material things through illicit means. On the effect of corruption, he stated that the high rate of corruption in Nigeria is disturbing as corrupt practices have stalled and slowed down numerous public infrastructural projects in the country through over-invoicing, bribery, connivance and conspiracy to reduce quality of public infrastructure in return for cash, kick-back, misappropriation of project fund, embezzlement, diversion of fund, shoddy work, etc.

Causes of corruption

Corruption can be caused by greed, poor youth empowerment, poverty, unemployment, primitive accumulation, decline in societal values and morals, sublimation of ethical standards, rugged individualism. Greed leads a public officer to divert public fund/wealth for personal use or safe for family future consumption. On poor youth empowerment, it has been observed that empowerment programmes are being hijacked and distributed to non-targeted beneficiaries. People are interested in primitive wealth accumulation in an uncivilized society whereas people in a civilized society are busy touching lives and helping the needy. In terms of unemployment, high unemployment rate leads to corrupt practices. There is scarcity of jobs. Youth are not employed and this leads to a lot of atrocities in the society such as yahoo-boys, hook-ups, corruption, crime, kidnapping, ritual killings, thuggery and so on. Civilization comes with its own negative impacts on the societal values and moral. Values and moral of our society are gradually phasing out as a result of civilization. What was regarded as taboo in the olden days



are no longer such nowadays due to decline in societal values and morals. In term of sublimation of ethical standard, it is on record that in the olden days, no child brings anything home that the parents do not know how it come about. At community level, such cases of suspected corruption are treated at community playground by the villagers or the age grade. Today, Yahoo Boys or corrupt persons are being glorified, adored or worshipped in our society. There is also weak institutional framework and structure in our legal system. A lot of loopholes in our legal institutions exist. The laws are weak and not always fully implemented. Cases of corruption are consistently adjourned or sometimes denied. On rugged individualism, corrupt individuals do not think of consequences of corruption. They believe in accumulation of public wealth at the expense of others thereby applying the Principle of Machiavellian to the fullest. These days, parent no longer ask their children, source of their wealth unlike in the olden days when every acquired wealth was accounted for. To get employment, money has to change hand and it is now in Dollars no longer in Naira.

Utilitarian-Hedonistic Theory of Corruption

This study is anchored on Utilitarian-Hedonistic Theory of Corruption. Jereny Bentham who was born and lived in England came up with the principles of Utility in 1769. He is best known for his Utilitarian or Hedonistic Calculus Theory.

The assumption of the theory holds that pleasure and pain are linked to people's action. This posit that the best moral action is one that maximizes utility. Utilitarian-Hedonistic Theory of Corruption evaluates social situation in terms of good or bad and recognizes pleasures and avoidance of pain as value to man. By application, the theory advocates on morality that foster happiness and opposes action that causes harm or unhappiness. Utilitarian-hedonistic theory explains internal and external cause of corruption in Nigeria and is adopted for this study.



Model for Managing Corruption

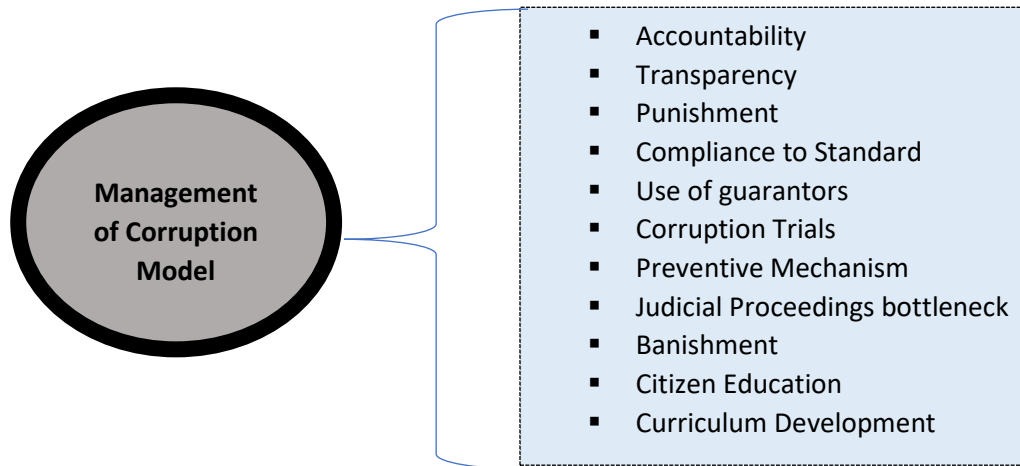


Fig. 1 – Okafor, Nwangele, Nweze and Nome model for Management of Corruption 2024

Conceptual framework of managing corruption is expressly captured from the above framework. An organization should among other considerations observe with strict compliance the abovementioned factors in managing corruption. These factors are accountability, transparency, compliance to standard, punishment, use of guarantors, corruption trials, prevention mechanism, judicial proceedings bottleneck, banishment, citizen education and curriculum development which are indispensable in handling and managing corruption in this 21st century in Nigeria. Transparency is quality that expresses openness and honest in all your transactions in organization. Accountability is the quality or state of being accountable to entrusted responsibilities. Punishment refers to disciplinary action use to compel one comply to established rules and procedures. Corruption trials are not adequately followed up as sentiment and God-fatherism affect normal corruption trials.

Misangyi, Weaver and Elms (2008) condemned corruption in its totality. Some of the traditional ways like oath-taking and forcing a culprit to swear before idol or shrine is a good way of managing corruption. Any action contrary to sworn oath leads to death. Citizen education whereby awareness on the dangers of corruption to individual and the society should be inculcated in the citizens of a country as a way of managing corruption. The system of judicial



proceedings bottleneck gives room for continued corrupt practices in an organization. Introduction of banishment of any public officer who is found guilty of corruption charges is a welcomed model for managing corruption in any organization. Therefore, with the application of any of the foregoing factors, the increasing cases of corruption that have crippled most public organization would be effectively controlled and abated.

Corruption Perceptions Index

Corruption Perception Index or CPI Ranking is an annual publication of Transparency International which ranks countries by their levels of public sector corruption. Corruption Perception Index (CPI) refers to the ranking of corruption in a country based on their perceived level of public sector corruption. The statistics of Corruption Perception Index shows that corruption is thriving across the world, Africa and in Nigeria. Transparency International is an international non-governmental organization founded in 1993 and in charge of tackling issue of corruption globally. It works in partnership with government, business and civil society to effectively measure corruption. It exists in more than 100 countries with its international secretariat at Berlin, Germany.

Corruption Perception Index - Nigeria

Ede (2017), disclosed that Nigeria was ranked 32nd as one the most corrupt countries in the world according to Corruption Perception Index of 2015. In 2021, Nigeria was ranked 26th position of corrupt country in the world. From International Transparency, Nigeria scored 25 over 100 in 2023, thereby ranking 145 out of 180 countries in the world on a scale of 100 (very clean) to 0 (highly corrupt). Nkwede, Moliki and Dauda (2017) noted that successive governments in Nigeria since independence in 1960 had in one way or the other devised means of curbing corruption but with little success.

Transparency International listed two strengths and seven weaknesses of Nigeria. Nigeria's strength is seen in the passage of key bill such as the Electoral Act and the efforts of anti-graft agencies despite political interference. The Nigeria's seven weaknesses in the assessed Corruption Perception Index are: pardon of convicted high-profile individuals, prevalence of high-profile corruption, increase in oil theft, judicial challenges, lack of accountability and



transparency of security sector, lack of transparency in consistency projects and opacity of the subsidy regime.

In Nigeria, there are three accredited or major anti-corruption institutions: ICPC (Independent) established on 29th September, 2000, EFCC () Establishment Act was enacted and amended on 4th June, 2004, and CCB (Code of conduct Bureau) and BBP (Bureau of Public Procurement).

Table 1: Corruption Perception Index of Nigeria 2014 - 2023

S/N	YEAR	Rank	SCORE (Corruption Perception Index)
1	2014	136 out of 176	27/100
2	2015	136 out of 176	26/100
3	2016	136 out of 180	28/100
4	2017	148 out of 180	27/100
5	2018	144 out of 180	27/100
6	2019	146 out of 180	26/100
7	2020	149 out of 180	26/100
8	2021	154 out of 180	24/100
9	2022	150 out of 180	24/100
10	2023	145 out of 180	25/100

Source: Transparency International, compiled by the authors 2024

Corruption Perception Index – 10 most Corrupt African Countries

Corruption Perception Index captures 10 countries as the most top corrupt countries in Africa. Most of Africans are denied their basic needs by corrupt African leaders who live in affluence as a result of corruption and corrupt practices.

**Table 2: Corruption Perception Index of top 10 African countries with high corruption**

S/N	COUNTRIES	CPI	GLOBAL RANKING	CAUSES
1	Somalia	11	180 th	Weak Central Government Political Instability
2	South Sudan	13	177 th	Power Struggle Resources Mismanagement
3	Equatorial Guinea	17	172 nd	High level of nepotism Embezzlement
4	Libya	18	170 th	Political Instability Post Revolution
5	Sudan	20	162 nd	Political Turmoil Economic Instability
6	Democratic Republic of Congo	20	162 nd	Corruption is seen in public and private sectors
7	Comoros	20	162 nd	Unable to combat corruption and promote transparency
8	Chad	20	162 nd	Lack of effective corruption measures
9	Burundi	20	162 nd	Battles with systematic corruption issues
10	Eritrea	21	161 st	Inability to tackle corruption

Source: Transparency International 2023

Corruption Perception Index – 180 Countries in the World

The 2023 Corruption Perception Index showed that corruption is thriving across the world and the Transparency International survey across the world shows Corruption Perception Index as follows.

**Table 3: Corruption Perception Index of 180 countries in the world**

S/N	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK
1	Denmark	90	1
2	Finland	87	2
3	New Zealand	85	3
4	Norway	84	4
5	Singapore	83	5
6	Sweden	82	6
7	Switzerland	82	6
8	Netherlands	79	8
9	Germany	78	9
10	Luxembong	78	9
11	Ireland	77	11
12	Estonia	76	12
13	Canada	76	12
14	Australia	75	14
15	Hong Kong	75	14
16	Belgium	73	16
17	Japan	73	16
18	Uruguay	73	16
19	Iceland	72	19
20	United Kingdom	71	20
21	Austria	71	20
22	France	71	20
23	United States of America	69	24
24	Barbados	69	24
25	Bhutan	68	26
26	United Arab Emirates	68	28
27	Taiwan	67	28
28	Chile	66	29
29	Bahamas	64	30
30	Cabo Verde	64	30
31	South Korea	63	32
32	Israel	62	33
33	Lithuania	61	34
34	Portugal	61	34
35	Latvia	60	36
36	Spain	60	36
37	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	60	36
38	Botswana	59	39
39	Qatar	58	40
40	Czechia	57	41
41	Slovenia	56	42



42	Slovenia	56	42
43	Dominica	56	40
44	Italy	56	42
45	St Lucia	55	45
46	Costa Rica	55	45
47	Poland	54	47
48	Slovakia	54	47
49	Rwanda	53	49
50	Cyprus	53	49
51	Georgia	53	49
52	Grenada	53	49
53	Fiji	52	53
54	Saudi Arabia	52	53
55	Malta	51	55
56	Mauritius	51	55
57	Croatia	50	57
58	Malaysia	50	57
59	Greece	49	59
60	Namibia	49	59
61	Vanuatu	48	61
62	Armenia	47	62
63	Romania	46	63
64	Jordan	46	63
65	Montenegro	46	63
66	Kuwait	46	63
67	Bulgaria	45	67
68	Sao Tome and Principia	45	67
69	Jamaica	44	69
70	Timor-Leste	43	70
71	Senegal	43	70
72	Oman	43	70
73	Benin	43	70
74	Ghana	43	70
75	Solomon Island	43	70
76	Hungary	42	76
77	China	42	76
78	North Macedonia	42	76
79	Bahram	42	76
80	Cuba	42	76
81	Trinidad and Tobago	42	76
82	Moldova	42	76
83	South Africa	41	83
84	Vietnam	41	83
85	Burkina Faso	41	83



86	Kosovo	41	83
87	Cote d'voire	40	87
88	Guyana	40	87
89	Tunisia	40	87
90	Colombia	40	87
91	Tanzania	40	87
92	Suriname	40	87
93	Lesotho	39	93
94	India	39	93
95	Maldives	39	93
96	Kazakhstan	39	93
97	Morocco	38	97
98	Albania	37	98
99	Argentina	37	98
100	Zambia	37	98
101	Ethiopia	37	98
102	Gambia	37	98
103	Belarus	37	98
104	Ukraine	36	104
105	Serbia	36	104
106	Algeria	36	104
107	Brazil	36	104
108	Dominican Republic	35	108
109	Sierra Leone	35	108
110	Thailand	35	108
111	Egypt	35	108
112	Bosnia and Herzegovina	35	108
113	Nepal	35	108
114	Panama	35	108
115	Philippines	34	115
116	Turkey	34	115
117	Malawi	34	115
118	Ecuador	34	115
119	Indonesia	34	115
120	Sri Lanka	34	115
121	Uzbekistan	33	121
122	Mongolis	33	121
123	Angola	33	121
124	Peru	33	121
125	Niger	3	125
126	Togo	31	126
127	Mexico	31	126
128	Kenya	31	126
129	El Salvador	31	126



130	Mautama	30	130
132	Eswatini	30	130
133	Djibouti	30	130
134	Bolivia	29	133
135	Pakistan	29	133
136	Papua New Guinea	29	133
137	Paraguay	28	136
138	Loas	28	136
139	Gabon	28	136
140	Cameroon	28	136
141	Guinea	26	141
142	Uganda	26	141
143	Russia	26	141
144	Kyrgyzstan	26	141
145	Nigeria	25	145
146	Mozambique	25	145
147	Madagascar	25	145
148	Liberia	25	145
149	Central African Republic	24	149
150	Zimbabwe	24	149
151	Lebanon	24	149
152	Bangladesh	24	149
153	Iran	24	149
154	Azerbaijan	23	154
155	Iraq	23	154
156	Honduras	23	154
157	Guatemala	23	154
158	Cambodia	22	158
159	Congo	22	158
160	Guinea-Bissau	22	158
161	Eritrea	21	161
162	Burundi	20	162
163	Afghanistan	20	162
164	Tajikistan	20	162
165	Chad	20	162
166	Democratic Republic of Congo	20	162
167	Myanmar	20	162
168	Comoros	20	162
169	Sudan	20	162
170	Turkmenistan	18	170
171	Libya	18	170
172	Haiti	17	172
173	Equatorial Guinea	17	172
174	Nicaragua	17	172



175	North Korea	17	172
176	Yemen	16	176
177	South Sudan	13	177
178	Venezuela	13	177
179	Syria	13	177
180	Somalia	11	180

Source: Transparency International 2023

Implication of Corrupt Perception Index (CPI) on Nigeria

From the Corruption Perception Index carried out by Transparency International, it has been discovered that while some countries have low level of corruption in their public sector some have high level of corruption. Government effort towards fighting corruption is failing. It is also observed that corruption is still high in African countries. A total of 180 countries were ranked by International Transparency. However, Nigeria recorded an improved ranking in corruption perception index by moving five places up to rank 145 out of 180 countries assessed in 2023.

Nkwede, Moliki and Dauda (2016) identified that corruption is partly responsible for budget-padding, perversion of justice, ineffectiveness of the anti-graft agencies, contradictory judgements by judiciary on electoral matters, delayed justice, electoral fraud, pervasive poverty and poor service delivery by public officials. Ijewereme (2013) enumerated various measures put in place in Nigeria since 1967 till date to fight corruption to include: Public Officer Investigation of Asset Decree No. 5 of 1976; Forfeiture of Assets Decree No. 53 of 1999, the use of tribunal like the failed Bank Tribunal set up by Abacha military administration, the Code of Conduct Bureau Tribunal of 1979; the Fifth Schedule Part 1 of 1999 Nigerian Constitution, Ethical Revolution of 1979 to 1983, War Against Indiscipline of 1983 – 1985, War Against Indiscipline Crusade of 1993 to 1998, Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission in 2000 and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission 2003.

Despite the above-mentioned measures, corruption still persists in Nigeria regardless of Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).



Conclusion

Corruption is bad. It portrays countries involved in bad image and adversely affect growth and development. This paper develops a model for managing corruption in our society. Transparency International ranks countries annually through corruption Perception Index to ascertain level of involvement in corruption.

Recommendations

1. Anti-corruption Agents and Corporate Business Community must be involved in the fight against corruption in an organization. Anti-corruption measures in any society cannot be successful unless individual organizations and the general public are involved in the fight against corruption.
2. Education and Training – Workers in the organization should be trained or educated on the evils of corruption, corruption detection and deterrence. This should be done through integration of corporate culture, organizational structure and compliance system.
3. Curriculum development – the school curriculum should be designed in such a way to discourage corrupt practice especially in developing country like Nigeria.
4. The traditional means of corruption management such as oath-taking in the shrine, banishment and use of guarantor should be re-emphasized, amplified and implemented.
5. Corrupt practices and trials should be straight-forward without any form of corrupt proceeding or sentiment.
6. Curriculum developers should enshrine corruption in the school curriculum to specify clearly dangers and management of corruption.



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