

# The Role of Ethics Education in the Fight Against Corruption

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## Abstract

Education has an integral role in inculcating morality in learners, producing responsible persons who can be trusted to promote the well-being of society. According to Julius Nyerere, an educated individual is one ready to serve the masses and recognize themselves as part of the society. Unless corruption is eliminated within and through the education system, society will continue to be captive of corruption, since it has overlooked the prime duty of imparting knowledge of morals to its citizens, thus resulting in the growth of citizens whose morals are in question. Corruption can be dealt with when people come into agreement and understanding of their place, the place of others, and the need to address the common good; that is, public resources. This position paper examined the place of ethics education in secondary school education in curbing corruption in Africa. Guided by the Deontological theory, the authors utilized secondary sources through document analysis where review of related literature on ethics education and corruption was done. The study argues that corruption is a major problem in society and concludes that there is need to fight corruption through ethics education at grassroot levels in schools. It recommended that educators enhance teaching of life skill education that fosters ethical education.

**Keywords:** *Education, Ethics, Morality, Corruption*

## Ethics and Ethics Education

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct, often addressing disputes of moral diversity. The term comes from the Greek word *ethos*, which means "character." The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy (1995) states that the word ethics is "commonly used interchangeably with 'morality' and sometimes it is used more narrowly to mean the moral principles of a particular tradition group or individual." Ethics is more important than morality in creating a functioning society.

According to Varkey (2021), ethics is a broad terminology that entails the morals and the effect of moral choices. Ethics influences the way we make decisions and the way we perceive things. Ethics entails normative ethics which tend to answer the question of moral ethical principles which are just for society. The norms and the ethical variations may occur due to the differences in culture, ethics, and society. The ethical norms are applicable in the areas of specialization and pro-

tection of the interest of one in their profession. Ethics entails various fundamental principles such as autonomy, justice, beneficence, and no maleficence. The principle of beneficence and no maleficence are traceable back to the ancient times of Hippocrates. The beneficence branch advocates that the physician has an obligation to act right in the conduct of supporting the patient's rules of morality and preventing harm to others while no maleficence is the obligation of the physician not to carry any harm to the patient.

Ethics education entails all educational dimensions and processes directly or indirectly interconnected to the ethical extent of an individual's life that can otherwise be planned, designed, guided, or monitored with the right educational methods and tools that remain unconscious, unexamined, or unintentional. Ethical education's main focus is on value and ethics promotion in terms of justice, equality, dignity, inclusiveness, and human rights among others as an entity of education to nurture individuals who are respectful in attitudes towards fellow human beings and the society. It is also a form of education that will inculcate its member's positive character, and reflective and informed moral

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judgment that puts individual's beliefs and values into practice. This is because education is not only an inherently value-laden process but it also enhances its consequences in terms of educational outcomes and relationships formed in the context of education (Strahovnik, 2016).

Ethical education also plays a fundamental role in nurturing individuals who are autonomous, caring, and resilient and who can contribute globally and locally. Ethical education strives for the following goals:

- to aid ethical thinking, accommodation, autonomy, and responsibility in children and the community at large established in a given educational setting;
- to help children examine and understand important ethical principles, ideals, values, and virtues, and to furnish them with intellectual and moral abilities relevant for responsible moral judgment and decision making;
- to direct children to examine diverse values, moral justifications that they can merge into guiding unity;
- to give direction to children on commitment in values that are recognized and regarded as key aspects of life;
- to enable children to overcome any prejudices that may come in their lives at various stages of life, to promote ethical behaviors, for character development among children that will facilitate the ancient ideal of *eudemonia* and finally for persons to situate themselves into a local and global society (Globokar 2018, Strahovnik, 2016).

The above inclinations of what ethics education was coined in the heart of John Dewey that serves as the goal of education in general that sums to form a cultivated and effectively functional valuable judgment or trial to respect with admirable aesthetics, accepted intellectually and approved morally (Dewey, 1980).

Ethical education helps people to formulate values that are relevant to, for, and in their own lives socially. It is also pegged on the deontological theory of ethics which according to Immanuel Kant states that nothing is good without qualification except a good will, and a good will is one that wills to act in accord with the moral law and out of respect for that law rather than out of natural inclinations. To act ethically therefore should be according to the moral law which is against any acts of corruption. Autonomy and justice are the widely used principles of ethics. Autonomy is traceable to the philosopher Immanuel Kant as an acceptable ethical principle (Taylor, 2005). The principle advocates that

each person has a unique value and purpose and should be given a chance to make rational decisions. Autonomy can be applicable in advocating for the moral issues in the society. However, the principle is limiting since it doesn't give a chance to persons of unsound mind in decision-making. This shows that persons have no right obligation to the decision on their behalf. Lack of a person's decisions on an issue due to the mental or physical disability has a consequence on the practices of the legal determination of the patient. The principle of autonomy can limit decision-making and deny people the right to making their own informed consent decisions. People have a right to be told the truth and their issues are guarded with confidentiality as evident with the health professionals.

On the other hand, the justice principle is interpreted as the equity, fairness, and treatment of people in an appropriate manner. In a societal setting, governance is the basis of economic growth. This applies to the family setting, community, institutions, or even the country. If human rights are violated, justice is not served. The main infringement of justice in today's society especially the developing countries is corruption that is taking away the rights of individuals. In the health sector, for example, justice is applicable in the fair distribution of healthcare resources and equitably in justifiable norms. The ethical principles have contradicting obligations. Appropriate application of the principles can help curb the problems faced in today's society especially corruption.

Education is a basic human right. Ethics education is considered as part of the human right. The purpose of ethics education is not only its study but also mobilizing the knowledge body to develop cognitive ability. The cognitive ability helps individuals apply ethical principles in fields such as economics, medicine, and policy in decision making. Ethics education also helps one to develop the critical thinking that helps them to guide their actions in the influence of others. Ethics education revolves around one's moral actions and the ability of one to respond to moral reason. In essence, ethics education plays significant role in the process of becoming human by inculcating cardinal values that strengthens responsible actions and interactions.

### **Corruption and its Manifestations in Society**

The word corruption originated from the Latin word *rumpere*, meaning to break or to rupture. The Latin word *corruptus* means consequence of of dishonest conduct or behavior, described as perveted, morally



corrupt, and broken. It thus means to break someone or force him or her to change the attitude of a certain principle or former opinion. From Latin, corruption is definable in two terms: issues of bribery or damage.

Corruption is attracting a lot of attention around the world. Several attempts have been made to define corruption by different scholars differently. Even though it may be difficult to define, it is generally not difficult to recognize when observed. Corruption is popularly defined, by the World Bank as the abuse of public office for private gain (Langseth & Stapenhurst, 1997). This, however, is not an indicator that corruption cannot exist in the private sector. Applied to large private enterprises, it manifests itself through procurement or even hiring. The abuse of public power is not necessarily for one's private benefit but it can benefit one's party, class, tribe friends, and family, among other beneficiaries (Kaufmann & Siegelbaum, 1996). Corruption can be defined neutrally as intentional non-compliance with an arm's length relationship aimed at deriving some advantage from the behavior for oneself or related for individuals (Tanzi, 1995). Rendtorff (2009) defines corruption as a controversial, illegal, and unethical because it is an act that goes against or challenges established and well-defined conceptions and laws of justice. It is the use of the government office for personal or private gains (Hallak & Poisson, 2007).

From the definitions, corruption is not a new phenomenon globally. What is new are the ever-mutating forms it is taking and the harm it is wrecking to the prosperity, security, reputation, and integral well-being and survival of our nations. Secondly, institutions have been set up and allocated resources to fight corruption, but corruption is getting worse and more widespread indeed, it is endemic. Corruption is an outcome of the society (Svensson, 2005). It reflects the nature and quality of a country's legal, economic, cultural, and political institutions. It also indicates the general moral quality of a people and their dominant values and priorities. Corruption has diverse effects on economic development and is very dangerous. It leads to a loss of resources. According to the World Economic Forum, the global cost of corruption is at least \$2.6 trillion, or 5% of the global gross domestic product (Guterres, 2018). It leads to political instability, poverty and unemployment, high crime rate and insecurity, increased cost of goods and services, increased poverty, injustice, and negative international image.

All over the globe, corruption is evident in all sectors of the economy and society even among profes-

sionals, for instance doctors, police, and even traders (Akdemir & Yeşilyurt, 2023). In the institutions of learning, corruption is also evident. Teachers take bribes from their students to facilitate the passing of examinations. In the institutions, the issuance of fake certificates and degrees as a result of corruption is also evident. Selling educational skills illegally destroys the market and the skilled labour force.

Many countries exhibit corrupt acts. Corruption can be administrative, political, and bureaucratic. Administrative corruption is manifested when the politicians are forced to sell their votes to the political parties. Administrative corruption occurs when those in administration accept bribes to facilitate tax evasion (Hallak & Poisson, 2007). For bureaucracy corruption, hiding files or slowing down the investigations is an act of corruption. Corruption entails a variety of issues such as funds embezzlement, bribe issuance, and nepotism, among other issues. The acts can be legal or illegal depending on the context.

In Asia, corruption is defined as unjust and unlawful acts. The acts may include soliciting funds from the public for unjust practices. A boundary can be drawn between the level of corruption ranging from minor issues to more complex issues. Major corruption can include ghost workers, wrong tender issuance for the school constructions, supply, and the manufacture of books (Hallak & Poisson, 2007). Parents bribing the school heads to secure their children's admissions and get promotions to the next grades is a minor form of corruption. Corruption is an injustice and classification as a minor or major issue should never be a matter of concern. Teacher's appointments through corruption can delay administration and promote misbehavior.

The determination of corruption varies from one state to another. In some countries, the issue of gifts to students in schools or public officers is unethical. They consider it as an act of bribery and punishable by the rule of the law. Some societies however accept the act of issuance of gifts for students and bets personal agents. They define corruption as Western belief that is in contradiction with reality. They see that a gift of low monetary value does not attract anything in return while that of high monetary value attracts something in return (Hallak & Poisson, 2007). Research indicates that persons share direct variations on what is ethical and what is unethical depending on the environment. The issuance of the gift can be narrowed to the education centers of learning, some argue that a teacher offering private tuition is unethical while some can



argue that it is ethical. The quantification of the claim is justifiable by the ultimate end of the quality of education. Therefore, for higher education institutions, private tutoring can be considered a legal act. If students who fail to meet the required grades are offered private tuition by the higher education institutions through their funding then the case is ethical.

Omar (2005) avers that the trend of the corruption rate is more prevalent in African countries than the Western countries, with Asia having the highest rate of corruption. As years progress the rate of poverty in Asia declines while that in Africa increases rapidly. The increase in corruption rate in Africa is to blame for the high rate of poverty. In a report by Transparency International (2015), growth for the rich is seen to be increasing while that of the poor declining. Corruption makes citizens lose the trust of the political parties and even leaders. Lack of trust ravages learning institutions. If children are permitted to cheat in their exams, the higher institutions of education will lack trust in the credibility of the grades the students attain. Research shows that Kenya is one of the countries where bribery is likely to be issued. Kenya is ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. In 2022, it was ranked at position 123 out of 180 countries of the world (Annan, 2022). The level of bribery is shown to have risen as the years progress. The level of bribery increase shows that those who cannot afford to bribe cannot attain services and the basic amenities in life. According to Odinga (2004), the level of bribery in parliament requires a commission for the disposal. If the MPs are corrupt and they are the key holders of the budgetary determination mandate, then the cost of living is likely to rise and children from poor families will not get the chance to have funding from the government for their studies.

Adverse examples of corruption cases in Kenya have been categorized into five by Mohamed Noor (2018). The Goldenberg scandal which he states to be a long-lasting saga between 1991 and 1993 where Goldenberg International Company owned by a Kenyan tycoon businessman Kamlesh Pattni, would export jewelry and then get compensation from the Central Bank of Kenya for foreign exchange earnings. From the look of things, this scandal cost Kenyan taxpayers money around US dollars 600 (BBC News, 2004, cited by Noor, 2018). The Anglo-leasing scandal came second involving a public procurement deal, a two-decade scandal with a series of corruption sagas in it. This scandal involved a series of dubious international financial

transfers that related to government security contracts among other corruption cases. The third was the National Youth Service Scandal that surfaced between 2015-2017. Here, officials discharged various contracts of procurement to companies but never delivered even though full payments were disbursed to each company. The fourth was the Rio Games Scandal in 2016 when the spirit of Kenyan athletes for the Rio Olympic games was shattered when money that was meant for their catering and comfort was stolen. There was also overpricing of return air tickets for the players. Lastly, Kenya experienced a National Cereal and Produce Board Scandal that was affiliated with no genuine transaction records or receipts. With this and to blind Kenyans, the government of Kenya tried to react to these cases in court battles but the perpetrators were left free. The cases are still ongoing with no desirable fruits. This has resulted in mistrust of the government by the public. These are some of the cases of high-level corruption cases reported in Kenya. From the above assertions, corruption has adverse effects not only on the government and institutions but also on the society at large. It has led to unfavourable economic conditions, political instability, poverty and unemployment. Among the citizens, according to Mohamed Noor (2018), corruption has led to crime and insecurity, increased cost of goods and services, increased poverty, injustice and negative international image.

### **Role of Ethics Education in the Fight Against Corruption**

The purpose of ethics education in general, is to build values and develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to shape students' civic stance against corruption (Cam, 2016). The key to successfully fighting corruption is to change the

culture among the young generation. Globally, corruption is an area of interest that has persisted to exist despite several attempts to stop it. The United Nations Office On Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is trying to lead the Anti-Corruption Academic Initiative (ACAD), which is a collaborative project that seeks to encourage teaching and research of anti-corruption issues by institutions of higher learning. The initiative acts as a central hub for anti-corruption education worldwide. Its role is to bring together professors globally and regionally offering free online resources on possible mitigation online. The UNODC has also fought for "Education for Justice" that seeks to control crime and promote a culture of legitimacy through education activities at all



levels of education. It is therefore believed that this will help the next generation better understand vices of illegality and how best to overcome them. This however has not put forth or clearly shown the need and role of ethics education in curbing corruption.

The World Economic Forum estimates the global cost of corruption is *at least \$2.6 trillion*, or 5 percent of the global gross domestic product (Guterres, 2018). The UN convention, for example, emphasizes the need for being transparent and accountable for the actions that we undertake. The call for the eradication of the bribe issuance and receiving gives individuals equal opportunities to acquire education. Education being the social equalizer helps society to understand appropriate acts and thus enables them to have a clear understanding that corruption is an act of injustice to human rights. If children are denied the rights to acquire education since they cannot bribe, the whole cause of humanity is triggered.

In Rwanda, the government has a mandate to promote accountability and transparency. The advocacy for transparency is an act of human rights (Sikhosana & Nzewi, 2019). It helps bridge the gap of corruption and the possible loopholes that can be incurable in society. Analysis of the cash flow and the fiscal budget helps eliminate the issuance of bribes since no money is left to be looted without being traced. Enforcement of transparency and accountability will release the much needed resources to the targeted development projects and help limit the poverty levels in the society. A corrupt free society gives all children equal opportunities in the educational centers of learning and eradicating poverty.

The effect of corruption ranges from the individual, society, and country up to the global perspective. In Nigeria for example, the effect of corruption is deeply rooted in the society affecting its individual (Okunlola & Obadare, 2016). The effect of corruption manifests from the economic perspective to the educational systems. Corruption being a global problem affects the citizens of various nations leading to the reduction in the moral fabric with the inclusion of academia. However, corruption is common in the underdeveloped or the developing nations. According to Okunlola and Obadare (2016), the World Bank report showed that the economies of the developing countries are more prevalent with corruption cases. Nigeria as an example shows high levels of poverty among the citizens with only a few individuals meeting their basic needs. The employers not being able to meet the employees needs such as salary pay-

ments and students' ability to access education due to the poor facilities is a manifestation of the corruption depth.

Generally, corruption has adverse effects in any society. Some scholars have discussed various aspects and effects of corruption in various fields such as the economy and education. They however assert that even a small incidence of corruption can become dangerous to the normal functioning of the society and any institution of learning (Dreher & Herzfeld, 2005). Indeed a corrupt education system is the beginning of all problems to the society. For example, if students cheat in exams, the outcome is production of poor skilled personnel who cannot deliver in the economy as well as making the job market flooded with mediocrity and underperformance. The lack of qualified personnel makes it difficult to enhance economic productivity.

In a more corrupt society or institutions of learning, there exists a moral dilemma. Individuals in such environments tend to collaborate in matters of corruption and as such, nobody can stand still in promoting ethics education (Hallak & Poisson, 2007). Ethics education plays a vital role in non-materialistic costs of corruption which is dangerous in the erosion of democratic values, human rights, and freedom which in turn may lead to the loss of human lives. Ethics education should hence be enhanced in all centers of learning ranging from the basic educational institutions to tertiary institutions to generate a morally upright society. Though this might be a tall order, it is the way to go in the process of training the mind of all children from their formative stages in life.

Like many other countries, Kenya is one of the countries immensely affected by corruption. In the fight against this vice the country has developed institutions that are responsible for its eradication. There exists an approach of a legal and institutional framework through the enactment of laws and the establishment of institutions to fight this menace. For example, the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) has yielded some positive breakthrough towards the fight against corruption. There has been also an attempt by Transparency International Kenya (TI-K) to initiate integrity clubs for students in ethical and integrity learning in schools (2015). This has been made possible by supporting and strengthening the activities of 80 integrity clubs across the country. However, only three counties were taken care of; 30 in Trans-Nzoia County, 29 in Kisumu County, and 21 in Kwale County to improve discipline and responsibility among students. All



this however hasn't brought much positive change and the emphasis on ethics education as a criterion to curb corruption is imperative. The initiatives being made through the educational reforms as the country embraces Competency Based Education and introduction of life skills and fanning of moral education of values will impact the lives of the future generations. However, as it is now the little or no effort in the reduction of corruption cases can be attributed to the fact that some people who should serve as examples in society are the perpetrators of the vice. Kadida (2016) in his study ascertained that the Chief Justice and the President of the Supreme Court of Kenya was reported to have confessed that corruption networks in Kenya have penetrated even oversight institutions that are tasked with the role of fighting corruption. This in itself is an indication that there exists little moral leadership in Kenya at the top most the hierarchy which is expected by the public to be independent of such vices. This has pushed the need for a paradigm shift in the implimentation of life skills, values and moral education espoused in the Competency Based Education from the norm which is the ethics education perspective to addressing ethics through the multiple learning dimesions: formal, informal, and non-formal processes to bring about ethical reasoning and virtue formation. The educational reforms instituted through the Competency Based Education in Kenya have made progress in a number of ways. There is the mainstreaming of Pertinent Contemporary Issues (PCIs) to train the young ones on the evils of corruption in learning areas around Global Citizenship, Life Skills and Values where life skills, values and moral education are articulated (KICD, 2017). This form of education is an all-round system that requires contribution from all dimensions. The school being a formal institution that acts as a foundation where teaching and learning of all kinds can easily be executed remains the most ideal place for ethical values to be incurlcated now and in the future. The several constructive activities that take place during teaching and learning in a formal setup creates a fertile ground for the transmission of ethical education in all aspects of life during and after childhood. This includes learning through association, imitation, and interaction. If utilized well at this stage of life to its learners, there is a likelihood to produce citizens who are sound and responsible for their various actions in life, the workplace, and in society at large.

It is hoped the initiatives through implimentation of Competency Based Education will impact the student

soft skills to navigate daily issues of life with ease. Ethically grounded persons from school will shun and condemn acts of corruption regardless of the influence they may encounter in the line of duty. The continuous education or creation of awareness on corruption helps to mitigate the possible ways for its elimination. Understanding that corruption is a form of injustice is the first ethical way for its eradication. Ethics education in itself is an enemy of corruption since corruption requires individuals to perhaps take bribes for them to be served in any organization or institution. This form of education requires the same individuals to practice what is right and shun away from wrongdoing by all means regardless of the good things that come with it. The application of educational ethics will demand more transparency from the organizations be it vertical or horizontal. Ethics underscores doing what is right and instils the the will to speak against the vices in society, corruption included. The determination of its effects also drives the push for the anti-corruption commissions to help fight the vice.

Ethics education enhances the awareness creation of the benefits of good morals such as good governance accompanied by transparency. It is in the same vein some civil society organizations, advocate for the fight against the corrupt practice. International civil society calls for transparency that enhances the good governance of its member states around the globe. The perception of the corruption index rate produced annually makes the member states debate on the issues regarding corruption. Despite, the lack of trust in the annual reports need for transparency by countries is no issue to bargain as the issue of corruption is hitting up. The address of corruption by countries helps investors build trust in a certain country and facilitate its eradication. Reinforcing what governments and civil society do to fight against corruption through ethics education will to a great extent contribute to sustaining the war against corruption.

### **Theoretical foundation of ethics education to eradicate corruption**

The underpinning theory encompassing the discussion in this paper is the deontological theory of moral obligation. The word deontology derives from the Greek words for duty (*deon*) and science (or study) of (*logos*). In contemporary moral philosophy, deontology is one of those kinds of normative theories regarding which choices are morally required, forbidden, or permitted. In other words, deontology falls within the domain of



moral theories that guide and assess our choices of what we ought to do (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2024). For deontologists, what makes a choice right is its conformity with a moral norm. Such norms are to be simply obeyed by each moral agent.

The assumptions in the deontological theory is that society has developed clear rules, laws and norms that define the moral duty of individuals to act right and shun wrongdoing. Society employs education to transmit and inculcate morality in children. As such, the contents of moral education and the educational process should ensure that learners have a clear sense of what is right and wrong, good and bad, and be willing to choose right actions. In essence, if education is properly undertaken, then learners will be clear in their minds that corruption is wrong, evil and should be shunned by all.

### **Rationale and content of ethics education in combating corruption**

Since education is considered the basic pillar of any society, different stakeholders are actively reinforcing ethics education around the world, for instance, UNESCO initiated a program in 2004 where it supported its member states in initiating and supporting teaching programs and professional ethics education. This is approached by Ten Have (2008), in his work addressing the influence of UNESCO in ethics education programs in schools.

Also, the European Union has encouraged its member states to incorporate ethics education in their school curricula. They stress that students who are equipped with ethical norms at early stages will easily understand that there are diverse conceptions, principles, and perceptions and have an improved ability to substantiate their moral judgments (Cam, 2016).

In the US, ethics education became part of most US institutions of higher education between 1980 and 2015. Over time, ethics education has been attributed to playing a role in enriching students moral capacities and reinforcing community standards (Keohane, 2006). Ethics education in the US has produced consistent results and has provided structured opportunities for students to develop values associated with morality.

Traditionally, the African society took upon itself to produce ethically upright generations. After the introduction of formal education, the responsibility of inculcating ethics in children was left largely to schools (Mwanzia, 2019). This to a great extent has led to the erosion of the training in morals and values as educ-

ational institutions concentrated on academic excellence fanned by the push for good academic grades at the expense of morals and values training sometimes effectively achieved through informal and non-formal learning.

### **Ethics education content concerning corruption**

Ethics define the principles that morally control someone's behavior in any activity. Ethics is a philosophical branch that revolves around the analysis and concepts of moral interactions that helps identify the right or wrong. The ethical analysis helps us define ethics education which aids in the determination of pedagogical requirements through the analysis and conceptualization of behavior morally. Ethics education aims to assemble a knowledge body for its purposes rather than only studying ethics. Teaching ethics in schools helps children approach the life challenges they encounter. Educational ethics is considered a human right because it aids in making people free. According to Dewey, the introduction of democracy in teaching helps in the application of new methods in teaching and teaching (Dewey, 1980).

In education, four major ethical considerations takes the center of the pedagogical training. The ethical considerations include truth, dignity, act of fairness, and freedom. The ethical issues help one to grow with self-responsibility of determining what is right and what is wrong.

### **Dignity and truth**

Dignity in ethics education is defined as the respect for human dignity (Parandeh, Khaghanizade, Mohammadi, & Mokhtari-Nouri, 2016). Students need to respect everyone including the younger ones. This is not only applicable to the students alone but also the teachers to respect others regardless of their ethnic background, age, religion, and opinions, and treatment of people justly. Dignity and ethics education are strongly related and they can help regulate corrupt practices. On the other hand, truth aims at regulating the teachers' activities by helping them steer the students to move through life activities and environment for others. Truth helps in transparency, the transparency can range from the government activities to the administrative agencies. Transparent administrative ways in the educational centers of learning can help curb the corrupt practices in society. They reduce the ways and channels of corrupt activities.



### **Virtues training**

Virtues training entails the lifelong skills that help an individual live rightfully in society through association with others. Virtues are related to ethics education as they advocate for rightful practices such as honesty, fairness, and freedom (Melé, 2005). Fair treatment of individuals stipulates that all people must be treated without discrimination. Fair treatment of individuals in society is arrived at fair practices in the school, as the school is a social organization that guides the activities of the society, if students are trained in the right way through virtues training, the students will acquire the rightful skills to employ in their daily dealings with others, through the implication of virtues at a tender age in education, hence, human justice is attained which is also advocated for by human rights.

### **Approaches in ethics education to eradicate corruption**

The approaches in ethics education to reduce corruption include instructional approach. According to Mulhearn *et al.*, (2017), instructional approaches in ethics facilitates content delivery, the delivery method, processes, and activities. The instructional method is effective in the acquisition of the skills and knowledge of the learners. The acquired knowledge helps the students acquire appropriate skills that promote healthy living through corruption eradication. Corruption is the key element that affects the current society. Improvisation of the appropriate ways of its elimination helps equity in society.

Instructional training helps the learners identify how corruption is carried out. The possible ways of evading them are identified in the instructional training (Mulhearn *et al.*, 2017). The use of instructional methods such as video presentations of corruption being undertaken helps students identify the need to be just and practice fairness to others. If a teacher gives illegal marks to a student, for example, the other learners will be offended. The appropriate ways of elimination is through the application of relevant approaches.

The second approach to the study of ethics in education is the utilitarian approach. The utilitarian approach seeks that all people in society be treated fairly. It seeks that any action taken should strive to bring happiness to all the people in the society. If the action offends others, then the act should be eliminated. The use of the utilitarian approach in learners' education helps them learn how to live socially and justly in society. Since corruption denies members of the society

who cannot practice in the act of injustice fair treatment, they are denied the rights and freedoms of association with other members of the society. Instilling of fair practices among learners at an early age through ethics education helps eliminate them. According to Armstrong, Ketz & Owsen, (2003), accounting students can invoke methods of cost to discuss it in varied topics. The utilitarian idea argues that "the end justifies the means," this argues that people should engage in activities that are beneficial to all. Advocating for fair practices helps reduce corrupt practices in society.

Virtue approach can also be used in ethics education to address corruption. Virtues approach aids in virtues development. The method is rooted in the philosophical account for the conduct morally and the aim in education. According to Carr & Steutel (2005), the virtues approach aims at virtue promotion and instillation to the students. A teacher can practice morality by acting as an example to the students. Practicing a good role model is also a way of helping students acquire moral knowledge. If the teacher refuses to receive or issue a bribe, the students will learn that the act is a vice and they should not engage in it. The virtues approach aims at instilling values that are admirable to the learners (Carr & Steutel, 2005). If students grow up with moral values they will not engage or they will speak out against the vice. The virtues approach can well be addressed by the teachers by introducing it into the school curriculum. The government can chip in by providing the available resources to aid the virtues approach instilled in the learners.

### **Conclusion**

Corruption has been found to be a serious challenge globally, internationally, and regionally. The cases of corruption range not only at individual level but also at groups, institutions of learning, and the government at large. Several efforts to curb this vice have produced little or no fruits. With the involvement of the government bodies in corruption, it becomes difficult to overcome this vice, however, there is a need to instill ethical education at grassroots levels in schools to produce future generations who are corruption-free and that will be committed to reduce the cases of corruption at all levels. It is due to this that this study sought to analyse the role of ethics education in the fight against corruption. The study was guided by the deontological theory of ethics whose main concern is on how individuals are expected to behave with respect to the moral duties they are entitled to. It is enshrined in the statement, "duty for



*duty's sake*". Meaning that individuals who have encountered ethics education will be obligated to obey rules and laws on the right actions and shun vices like corrupt acts. The sources were extracted from literature with emphasis on secondary sources. The study used document analysis as qualitative paradigm was employed to arrange, locate and assess the information gathered.

### Recommendations

The authors recommend the following:

There is a need for education stakeholders to foster ethics education in school curriculum. Thus ethics education is to be made a compulsory subject in all stages of education. The ethics education process should emphasize the deontological theory of moral obligation such that learners adhere to rules and principles laid down at all times. Additionally, ethics education should promote rational reasoning in the way that individuals will critically reflect on how their actions might affect others, undermining their dignity and the common good, and strive to respect fellow humans by shunning corruption.

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