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## **CORRUPTION WITHIN EDUCATION SECTOR: A TYPOLOGY OF CONSEQUENCES**

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to focus on the variety of corrupt practices that may develop within the education sector and to explore their associated consequences. Given the fact that most previous studies dealing with the costs of corruption put emphasis only on corruption from public officials, we propose a typology of consequences that allows a comprehensive understanding of the effects related to corrupt practices that could thrive in the education sector. The typology of consequences presented in this paper distinguishes three types of consequences: those related to the achievement of the main goals of access, quality and equity, those related to the demand for education and school performance and, those related to the achievement of broader objectives of the education sector and the development of the society as a whole.

#### JEL CLASSIFICATION

D73, I29

#### KEYWORDS

Corruption, Education, Education sector.

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

he increasing recognition of the central role of education for social and economic development of countries has been accompanied by the necessity to identify factors that would impede the effectivness and the performance of the education sector. Despite the overwhelming number of studies developed in this area, the existing literature has not paid much attention to analyzing the various forms of corruption that would thrive within the education sector. In this respect, Hallak and Poisson (2007) denoted that "corruption in education has been carefully ignored for several decades and remains so". This issue has been recently tackled by a smaller but growing literature aimed at diagnosing and evaluating corrupt practices in education and at identifying factors lying behind the development of corruption in the educational field. Studies developed in this direction were completed by a considerable number of reports and analysis concluding invariably that education, like other sectors, is not immune from corruption. This seems refuting the general perceptions that consider the education sector as relatively free from corruption. For instance, the Global Corruption Barometer elaborated by Transparency International in 2007 for sixty countries indicates that education is rarely considered to be among the most corrupt sectors (Transparency International 2007, p. 6). However, such perceptions do not seem to be supported by the knowledge gathered during past years. Indeed, there is some evidence that the education sector is particularly vulnerable to many forms of corruption which would hamper its effective functioning and, therefore, would constitute a major obstacle to the successful achievement of the various goals often assigned to this sector. Although many studies have investigated the incidence of corruption in education, a conclusive picture on the consequences that would result from corrupt practices thriving within education sector is still lacking. This is mainly explained by the fact that most past studies have tried to explore the consequence related to a single form of corruption. In this respect, this paper aims at providing a more comprehensive understanding of the incidence of corruption in the education sector. The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 recalls the principal forms that corruption could take within the education sector. Section 3 presents a typology of consequences related to corrupt practices in the educational field. On the basis of a detailed review of the existing literature dealing with the issue of corruption in education, we conclude that the consequences of corruption in education are diversified and can be divided into three main categories: those related to achieving the three main education goals of access, quality and equity; those related to the demand for education and school performance and; those in relation with the achievement of broad goals of education and the overall development of the society. Finally, section 4 concludes.

#### 2. CORRUPTION WITHIN EDUCATION SECTOR: DEFINITIONS AND FORMS

The last few years have shown a considerable progress in the analysis of corruption in education, leading to an unprecedented international commitment to the issue of corruption in the educational field. In this respect, we recall the research project on *"Ethics and Corruption in Education"* launched, in 2001, by the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP-UNESCO) to which are added the significant efforts made by some scientific associations (International Academy for Education), international organizations (World Bank) and nongovernmental organizations (Transparency International). Among the broad range of definitions of corruption in education, both scholars and practitioners often retain a characterization similar to that proposed by Hallak and Poisson (2002). These authors define corruption in education as: *"the systematic use of public office for private benefit whose impact is significant on access, quality or equity in education"*<sup>1</sup>. Such characterization has the advantage to integrating general aspects of corruption that can be applied to other public sectors (the use of public office for private gain), as well as those more specific to education sector (access, quality and equity). In order to offer a reliable picture on the forms of corruption in education, table 1 recalls the main forms of corruption as enumerated by Amundsen (1999) and provides some examples from the education sector.

TABLE 1. FORMS OF CORRUPTION IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

FORM OF CORRUPTION	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES FROM THE EDUCATION SECTOR	
Embezzlement	Theft of public resources by public officials	Educational funds used for political Campaigns; School funds diverted for private interest	
Bribery	Payment (in money or in kind) given or taken in a corrupt relationship	Bribes paid to be recruited as a teacher; Bribes paid to be admitted to university	
Fraud	Economic crime that involves some kind of trickery, swindle or deceit	Ghost teachers; Paper mills and diploma mills	
Extortion	Money and other resources extracted by the use of coercion, violence or threats to use force	Illegal fees collected to be admitted to school; Sexual harassment for promotion	
Favouritism	Mechanism of power abuse implying 'privatization' and a highly biased distribution of state resources	Recruitment of administrators based on their membership of a political party; Good marks obtained due to favouritism	
Source: Adapted from Hallak and Poisson (2007, p. 58)			

<sup>1</sup> Hallak and Poisson (2002), p. 17.

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As shown in table 1, corruption in the education sector covers all the habitual forms of this phenomenon. In addition to these main forms that may occur in any other sector, there is a wide variety of corrupt practices more specific to the educational field. With the aim of providing a better understanding of the corrupt practices that would develop within the education sector, various typologies of forms of corruption in education have been proposed over the past years. One typology has been developed by Tanaka (2001) who focused on corrupt practices at school and classroom level and distinguished three possible areas where corruption may appear, namely:

- Corruption in procurement including procurement of buildings, equipment, textbooks, uniforms, meals, etc. In this area, corrupt practices can result in the
  procurement of bad quality goods and services, or increased procurement costs. It is important to note that students will ultimately be harmed by this kind
  of corrupt practices since they are the end users of such sub-standard goods and services.
- Corruption in school administration which may occur in career promotion, entrance/ graduate examinations, teacher recruitment, facilities utilization, etc.
   Corrupt behavior may involve not only the school, but also parents, local community, municipal offices and even education ministries.
- Teachers' corruption in the classroom which constitute is a matter for concern since students are directly involved. This type of corruption can occur when teachers tend to make abusive use of powers they have over students. The most obvious forms of corruption in this area include the demand for illegal and unauthorized fees, behaviors developed by teachers to increase the demand for private tutoring, as well as sexual harassment of students.

For Heyneman (2004) corruption in education covers all practices involving the abuse of authority for personal gain as well professional misconduct. Five main forms of corruption in education were listed by the author including corruption in selection; corruption in accreditation; corruption in procurement; corruption in educational property and taxes; and professional misconduct. In a similar vein, Rumyantseva (2005) distinguishes educational-specific corruption from that common to any public sector by identifying corruption that directly and indirectly involves students. Two principal categories of educational corruption are identified by Rumyantseva (2005) and can be summarized as follow:

- Education-specific corruption including all corrupt practices that involve students as agents and have a direct effect on their values, beliefs, and life chances. This includes, on the one hand, academic corruption dealing with potential exchanges that can be established between students and teachers or between students and administrators and, on the other hand, corruption in services which covers the exchanges between students and administrators, or between students and staff.
- Administrative corruption which refers to corrupt practices that do not involve students as agents and have limited direct affect on them. Examples of
  administrative corruption in the educational field include corruption in procurement, corruption in hiring and, the misuse of public funds for private
  purposes.

In a related issue, Hallak and Poisson (2007) denoted that opportunities for corruption are likely to occur in all areas related to the planning and management of the education sector, as illustrated in table 2.

TABLE 2: OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORRUPTION BY AREA OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING/MANAGEMENT
--

Areas of planning/management	Major opportunities for corrupt practices	
Finance	Transgressing rules and procedures / bypass of criteria; Inflation of costs and activities; Embezzlement	
Allocation of specific allowances (Fellowships,	Favouritism / nepotism ; Bribes ; Bypass of criteria; Discrimination (political, social, ethnic)	
subsidies, etc.)		
Construction, maintenance and school repairs	Fraud in public tendering (payoffs, gifts, favouritism); Collusion among suppliers; Embezzlement;	
	Manipulating data; Bypass of school mapping; Ghost deliveries	
Distribution of equipment, furniture and materials	Fraud in public tendering (payoffs, gifts, favouritism); Collusion among suppliers; Siphoning of school	
(including transport, boarding, textbooks, canteens	supplies; Purchase of unnecessary equipment; Manipulating data; Bypass of allocation criteria; Ghost	
and school meals)	deliveries	
Writing of textbooks	Fraud in the selection of authors (favouritism, bribes, gifts); Bypass of copyright law; Students forced to	
	purchase materials copyrighted by instructors	
Teacher appointment, management (transfer,	Fraud in the appointment and deployment of teachers (favouritism, bribes, gifts); Discrimination	
promotion), payment and training	(political, social, ethnic); Falsification of credentials/use of fake diplomas; Bypass of criteria; Pay delay,	
	sometimes with unauthorized deductions	
Teacher behaviour (Professional misconduct)	Ghost teachers; Absenteeism; Illegal fees (for school entrance, exams, assessment, private tutoring,	
	etc.);	
	Favouritism/nepotism/acceptance of gifts; Discrimination (political, social, ethnic); Private tutoring	
	(including use of schools for private purpose); Sexual harassment or exploitation; Bribes or favours	
	during inspector visits	
Information systems	Manipulating data; Selecting/suppressing information; Irregularity in producing and publishing	
	information; Payment for information that should be provided free	
Examinations and diplomas	Selling information ; Examination fraud (impersonation, cheating, favouritism, gifts); Bribes (for high	
Access to universities	marks, grades, selection to specialized programmes, diplomas, admission to universities); Diploma mills	
	and false credentials; Fraudulent research, plagiarism	
Institution accreditation	Fraud in the accreditation process (favouritism, bribes, gifts)	
	Source: Hallak and Poisson (2007, pp. 63-64).	

Overall, the general picture that emerges from table 2 is that corrupt practices in the educational field could be identified in all planning and management areas of the education sector. Although people attitudes and the tolerance towards some corrupt behaviors can vary considerably from one society to another, it is not unrealistic to affirm that corruption in the education sector is a global phenomenon that involves all education stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, administrators, suppliers, as well as educational policy-makers and politicians. The extent of corruption within the educational field and the potential costs that might result from corrupt practices raise important questions about the performance of the education sector and its ability to achieve education goals. In the next section, we discuss the challenges that corruption is likely to pose for the education sector.

## 3. CONSEQUENCES RELATED TO CORRUPTION IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

A number of studies have tried to analyze the consequences associated with corrupt practices that may develop within the education sector. Drawing on the available literature, we can classify these consequences into three principal categories (see figure 1). The first category focuses on the supply-side consequences and considers the impact that corruption may have on the achievement of the main education goals, particularly the provision of an equal access to high-quality educational services. The second type of consequences emphasizes the effect of corruption on the demand for education and its impact on school performances. The third category of consequences questions the capacity of a corrupt educational system to achieve broader education goals, namely the transmission of universal and civic values to the young generations, as well as its ability to contribute to the development of the society as a whole. These categories of consequences are closely interconnected and can be identified at all levels of education, from primary to tertiary. Taken together, they invariably lead to recognize the inability of a corrupt educational system to meet the wide range of challenges that education sector is often facing. **3.1. SUPPLY-SIDE CONSEQUENCES** 

The first category of consequences highlights the effects that corruption may have on various aspects of educational provision. This includes the education system's ability to provide an equal access to free and high-quality education services and its contribution to create an educational environment conductive to learning. Several forms of corruption have a direct impact on the availability and quality of services delivered by education sector. In the same way as for corrupt

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practices that may develop in any other public sector, corruption in the educational field would certainly contribute to decreasing the resources available for education while increasing the diversion and the misappropriation of education funds and, therefore, would lower the quantity as well as the quality of educational supplies. In this sense, two main forms of corruption should be highlighted: embezzlement of education funds and fraudulent practices in the educational procurement process including construction, maintenance and school repairs, textbook procurement, meal provision, etc. In many countries, these malpractices resulted in the leakage of a significant part of education resources. In this context, Uganda's experience seems to be highly instructive as illustrated by the results from the public expenditure tracking survey (PETS) conducted in 250 Ugandan primary schools, in 1996, in order to diagnose and analyze the magnitude of leakages in education resources. The main conclusion from the PETS implemented in Uganda shows that during the 1991-1995 period, the majority of schools did not receive a large part of the funding to which they are entitled. More specially, the survey results confirm that schools received only 13 percent of the central government's allocation for the schools' nonwage expenditures. Similar findings have been suggested by public expenditure tracking surveys implemented in other countries. For instance, the PETS study covering 45 Tanzanian primary schools found that, in 1998 an average of 57 per cent of all nonwage spending were subject to capture whereas the leakages in education resources in Ghana were at around 49 per cent of nonwage funds, as reported by the PETS study implemented the same year in 126 primary schools from this country (Reinikka and Smith, 2004, pp. 36-37). In a related matter, financial losses related to teacher absenteeism, as calculated by Patrinos and Kagia (2007), seem to provide further evidence on the magnitude of educational wastage due to corrupt practices. These authors have estimated the direct financial cost of teacher absenteeism in primary education in some countries and reported that it ranges from \$16 million a year in Ecuador to \$2 billion a year in India (Patrinos and Kagia, 2007, p. 69). All these examples suggest that when educational resources are used for corrupt purposes, it will be more difficult for the educational system to provide high-quality education services for all children.

Other corruption forms that thrive in the educational field are likely to undermine education quality. These mostly concern corrupt practices related to teacher management and behaviour. First, corruption in teacher appointment may favor the recruitment of teachers on the basis of subjective considerations, irrespective of their merit and competence, which could result in lower quality education. Second, excessive teacher absenteeism which constitutes a widespread phenomenon in many countries of the world, tends to reduce instructional time and raises important concerns regarding the professional and ethical commitments of teachers that adopt such behaviour. Given the fact that teachers are the most important element in enhancing quality education, high levels of teacher absenteeism should cast considerable doubt on the schooling system's ability to improve educational quality and learning outcomes. Third, malpractices adopted by some teachers in order to increase the demand for private tutoring could lead to a negligible attention to the quality of classroom instruction and, sometimes, may lead them to cover only part of the mainstream education program. In this respect, some researchers denoted that private tutoring constitutes a serious threat to teacher performance and could result in decreased teacher time and energy during regular classroom hours [Dang et Rogers (2008, p. 182) and, Hallak and Poisson (2007, p. 259)]. Furthermore, a recent empirical study provide evidence that teacher absenteeism increases significantly with the likelihood of providing extra tutoring sessions after school (Benveniste, Marshall and Araujo, 2008, p.70). In addition, private tutoring is likely to distort the curriculum in the mainstream system, disrupting the sequence of learning planned by mainstream teachers and exacerbating diversity in classrooms (Bray, 2007, p. 18). Finally, corrupt practices in the teacher-pupil relationship can also strengthen the segregation within the educational field and could lead, therefore, to an inequitable educational system. In this vein, malpractices in teacher behaviour, including the acceptance of gifts or favours, may impair their professional judgment (Hallak and Poisson, 2007, p. 161). When the relationship between teachers and students is based primarily on unethical and corrupt behaviour such as favoritism, nepotism, bribery or penalization of the pupils who do not attend private tutoring, it becomes even harder to attain an equal treatment for all students, regardless of social class, race, gender, language, religion, or ethnicity.

#### 3.2. CONSEQUENCES RELATED TO THE DEMAND FOR EDUCATION AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

The second category of consequences deals with the incidence of corruption on two key aspects of the educational process: the demand for education and school performance. The effect of corruption on the demand for education is mainly transmitted through its impact on the ability of parents, especially those with low income, to invest in the education of their children. A vast array of corrupt practices is likely to work negatively to parents' income and, therefore, to the demand for education, including illegal fees for school entrance or for admission to universities, the demand to purchase textbooks supposed to be provided for free, and pressure exerted by teachers on parents to send their children for private tutoring or to purchase materials copyrighted by instructors. Many studies and surveys provide evidence that these corrupt practices are rampant within the education sectors of many countries around the world. For instance, according to the results of a recent study carried out in 2008 by Transparency International in seven African countries within the framework of Africa Education Watch<sup>2</sup>, an average of 44 percent of parents in the surveyed countries reported paying a registration fee to ensure the enrolment of their children in primary education (90 % in Morocco, 79% in Senegal and, 62% in Sierra Leone), with an average amount at around US\$ 4.16 per child for one school year while such fees have been abolished by law in all countries under study<sup>3</sup>. Similar results have been reported by another study conducted in 2003 by Transparency International's chapter in Mexico on the issue of corruption in the provision of public education. The main conclusion of the biennial National Survey on Corruption and Good Governance implemented in 2003 throughout Mexico's 32 federal states reveals that during the 12 months prior to the survey, the sums paid by Mexican households in bribes to secure access to public education (a compulsory and free public service) are over 102 million pesos (US\$10 million), which correspond to an average amount of 300 pesos (US\$30) paid by every household in exchange for a legally free education service (Transparency International, 2005, p. 48). Besides the abusive demands for fees that by law have been abolished, parents are often forced to devote a considerable part of their income in order to respond to various kinds of pressure imposed by teachers to enroll their children in private supplementary tutoring. These additional and undue fees constitute a heavy burden for parents, particularly the poorest, to afford their own children's schooling that, in turn, could translate into lower enrollment and completion rates. That said, the demand for education tends to decrease as costs that parents have to pay for the education of their children raise, due to corrupt practices. Regarding the impact of corruption on school performance, it constitutes to a large extent the combined effect of those mentioned above. In fact, when corruption tends to undermine the capacity of the education system to provide a high-quality education services, in particular a good quality classroom instruction and, when parents, because of some corrupt practices, are facing supplementary costs for schooling their children, it is students and their school performance who suffer the consequences. In this sense, academic success or failure, as well as the quality of the cognitive and social skills accumulated by students can be considered to a large extent as the product of the educational system itself. In addition, corruption may lead to lower school performance through two interrelated modalities: school participation and students' motivation. Indeed, various forms of corruption that thrive in the educational field could affect the key features of school participation: attendance and retention, and constitute a serious threat to students' motivation and their commitment to learning and, hence, would have a negative impact on the quality of knowledge and skills they are supposed to acquire. In this respect, high levels of teacher absenteeism and unethical behaviors developed by some teachers are likely to result in the development of negative attitudes among pupils towards school that in turn, would undermine their engagement to learning. Some empirical studies conducted over the past years have clearly emphasized that teacher absenteeism is negatively associated with student attendance [Benveniste, Marshall and Santibañez (2007, p. 95) and, Benveniste, Marshall and Araujo (2008, p. 85)]. Moreover, there is some evidence that teacher absenteeism tends to go along with lower school performance [Duflo and Hanna (2005), Clotfelter, Ladd and Vigdor (2007), Das, Dercon, Habyarimana and Krishnan (2007) and, Miller, Murnane and Willett (2007)].

Other corruption forms, especially malpractices in the teacher-pupil relationship, are major impediments that can have a negative impact on students' motivation and would contribute to lower attendance and retention rates. One should recall in this respect the detrimental effects of some corrupt and unethical behaviors such as favoritism and nepotism, sexual harassment and discrimination on grounds of race, gender, religion or ethnic origin. It is noteworthy that other corruption forms, including academic fraud and malpractices during examinations and the accreditation process, can lead to the decline of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Africa Education Watch (AEW) is a three year programme (2007-2010) implemented by Transparency International that focuses on governance in the management of public funds in the primary education system of seven African countries (Ghana, Madagascar, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda). In each country, four types of respondents were interviewed: households, head teachers, heads of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and local governments (district education officers).

Transparency International (2010), Africa Education Watch: Good Governance Lessons for Primary Education.

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meritocratic values and, in the long-term, can constitute a strong disincentive for students to learn (Hallak and Poisson, 2007, p. 233). From this perspective, a corrupt educational system would obviously result in students that are less motivated and less engaged in school and, more prone to attendance problems, particularly when they are beginning to recognize that success is based more on bribery, favoritism and manipulation than on merit, capacity and personal effort.

#### 3.3. CONSEQUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIETY AS A WHOLE

The first two categories of consequences show that corruption in the educational field impedes the achievement of the main education goals (access, quality and equity) and reduces the demand for education, as well as school participation and learning performance. The importance of education for the economic, social and political future of nations suggests that the widespread presence of corruption within the education sector is likely to compromise the development of the society as a whole. Without an education system free of corruption, it becomes harder to any country to create human resources that are necessary to its economic, social and political development. In fact, it is unrealistic to consider that "in a corrupt education system, students do not acquire the skills and knowledge that will enable them to contribute meaningfully to their country's economy and society. They learn from a young age to value corruption, accepting it is a norm for them and society"<sup>4</sup>. In this sens, corruption can put at risk the achievement of wider educational policy goals, including the learning and the transmission of civic, ethical and universal values to the future generation, the development of a well-informed electorate and the generation of qualified future leaders. Therefore, as denoted by Hallak and Poisson (2006), "lack of integrity and unethical behaviour within the education sector is inconsistent with one of main purposes of education; that is, to produce 'good citizens', respectful of the law, of human rights and fairness (it is also incompatible with any strategy that considers education as one of the principal means of fighting corruption/"<sup>5</sup>. In this respect, malpractices and unethical behaviors adopted by some teachers seriously undermine the schooling system's ability to impart the desired civic education and, thus, its capacity to promote the transmission of integrity and honesty values to the future generation. According to this vision, Tanaka (2001, p. 160) acknowledges that prolonged corruption in an educational environment will create a reproductive process that produces corrupt students. Similarly, as indicated by Chapman (2002, p.3), corruption in the educational field is harmful to the society as a whole and to its future particularly when entire generations of youth begin to believe that personal success comes not through merit and hard work, but through favoritism, bribery and fraud. In addition, academic fraud can endanger the credibility and usefulness of the assessment systems in place and the value of academic degrees, promoting distrust about the academic enterprise at large (Hallak and Poisson, 2007, p. 234). Furthermore, corruption in higher education has also a strong influence on the selection of the elite and, therefore, the nation's future leadership and, can be detrimental to public health and safely by allowing incompetent doctors, teachers and other professionals who have purchased their grades or licenses to practice (Rumyantseva, 2005, pp. 84-86).

### 4. CONCLUSION

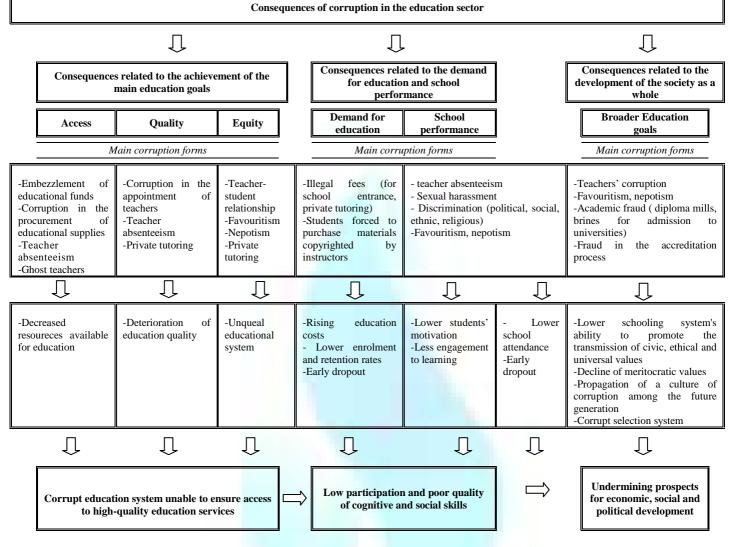
The aim of this paper was to put emphasis on the various forms of corruption that may flourish within the education sector and in particular, to explore their associated consequences. Despite the fact that little attention has been paid to the issue of corruption in education, the available literature seems to provide sufficient insights on the magnitude of the problem in the education sector of many countries around the world and acknowledges that corrupt practices can be related to the more specific aspects of the educational field. In this respect, early studies indicate that corruption in education is a worldwide phenomenon that may occur at all areas related to the planning and the management of the education sector and show that corrupt practices are likely to involve all education stakeholders of any country, regardless of its level of development. This is illustrated by the findings of many studies conducted in various regions of the world, underlining the magnitude and the diversity of corrupt practices in the educational field. The main conclusion of past studies dealing with the issue of corruption in education suggests that the vulnerability of the education system to corruption can only lead to disastrous consequences. Drawing on the past literature, we have tried to provide a classification of the consequences that would result from the various forms of corruption thriving within the education sector. The typology of consequences presented in this paper makes a distinction between three types of effects: those related to the supply of education and the achievement of the main education goals of access, quality and equity; those related to the demand for education and school performance and; those related to the achievement of broader education goals and the development of the society as a whole. These three categories of consequences are obviously interrelated and enable us to constitute a better understanding of the costs and implications of corruption in the educational sector. Taken together, they suggest that the development of corruption within the education sector tends to curtail incentives to invest in education, both individually and collectively. The extent of malpractice in the educational field suggests also that the desired education objectives cannot be achieved in the presence of a corrupt educational system. In this sens, a great deal of attention on the issue of corruption in the educational field and a radical education reform are often needed to make the system free of corruption, more competitive and hence, more likely to play a better role in empowering individuals and transforming societies.



FIGURE 1: EDUCATIONAL CORRUPTION: A TYPOLOGY OF CONSEQUENCES

<sup>4</sup> Transparency International (2009), p. 2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Hallak, J. and Poisson, M. (2006), Governance in Education: Transparency and Accountability, p. 6.



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