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CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND PREVENTION OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES DURING SECONDARY SCHOOLS STUDENTS IN ONDO WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA IN ONDO STATE

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ABSTRACT

Examination practice is a kind of conduct that violates the acceptable laid down rules and regulations of Nigeria's education system. On the other hand, examination malpractice is any wrong doing before, during or after any examination. It has negative consequences for individuals and society. It has become a prolific business enterprise branded with the name of private examination centre as aided and abetted by corrupt examination officials, supported by parents.

This paper focuses on the concept of examination malpractice, causes consequences and prevention of examination malpractice. Considering its effects on individuals, families, teachers, families and society at large, collaborative effort among government, schools, individuals families, communities, non-governmental organizations, teachers and, school proprietors, school principals inevitable for combating this ruinous menace.

KEYWORDS

Causes and prevention, examination malpractices.



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Introduction

Nigeria's education system like any other country has its problems, lapses, controversies and issues. Many problems confront Nigeria educational system and institutions prominent among them are the issue of examination malpractice examination malpractice is a kind of conduct that violates the acceptable laid down rules and regulation of Nigeria's education system. On the other hand, examination malpractice is any wrong doing before, during or after any examination. Although one may not be able to rule out examination malpractices in the past, the current trend is alarming and calls for proper management in order to save the nation's most important sector (Nwana, 2000). Whereas, in the past, students tended to hide the acts, now they advertise them with reckless abandon.

Examination malpractice occurs in both internal and external examination. It is a problem which has been afflicting the educational system for many years. It seems to have defied solutions, as all antidotes applied so far have been faulted by fraudsters. In fact, it constitutes the most serious problem facing Nigerian education system in general and secondary education in particular.

Examination malpractice is one of the corrupt practices. It is no more a shame to be caught cheating in examination; because corruption has become a way of life for many and almost a daily routine of the vast majority. Occurrence of examination malpractices in several institution levels of learning in Nigeria have become a matter of concern to all (Ojo, 2003). This statement denote that the rate at which candidates indulge in examination malpractices examination leakage, impersonation copying and certificate forgoing is alarming and it put the examination and the country as a sole in an embarrassing position because it under estimate the quality of our educational system.

Examination malpractice can be traced back to 1914 when senior Cambridge local examination leaked. This was thirty-eight year before West African Examination Council was established in the secondary school cheating and alternation of marks is quite for common malpractice is even more evident in the West African Examination Council (WAEC). JAMB and other examination conducted by the federal ministry of education. Mark (2001) reported that the above fact was responsible for the 1987 decision by the Federal ministry of education states that the registrar indicated the examination malpractices constitution is one of the biggest problems facing the boards.

Examination malpractice according to Adelokun (2003) is the misconduct or any other act not in consonance with the rules and regulations guiding the examination with a view to obtaining good result by fraudulent means. Examination malpractice has been a cause of great concern to the society to the extent that there had to be an enactment of the examination malpractice act 33 of 1999 to deal with its societal menace. The West African Examination Council (WAEC) also has kept yearly record cases of examination malpractice to buttress prevalence in the polity. Examination malpractice has placed question mark on the quality of the Nigerian educational system and thus its certification.

Thus, Joint Admission and matriculation Board (JAMB, 2003) opined that the great emphasis on certificate as a means of employment or progress from one point to the other makes students more desperate to acquire certificates by all means thus culminating in examination malpractice ubelenin (2002) observed that either student cheats or parent help them to engage in examination malpractices because they want to passed at all cost. Souza (2004), was of the view that since teachers are poorly remunerated they are not interested in their work it results in improper teaching thereby making the not properly taught candidates engage in examination malpractices.

Concept of examination malpractices

Maduka (2003), defined examination as a way to ascertain how much of a subject matter in a particular field of study the candidate has mastered. Hombly (2005), defined an examination as formal test of somebody's knowledge or ability in a particular subject, especially by means of answering question or practical exercises. Balogun (2009), also defined examination as the process through which students are evaluated or tested to find out the quality of knowledge they have acquired within a specified period. It is also defined as a deliberate wrong doing contrary to official examination rules designed to place a candidate at unfair advantage or disadvantage.

Malpractice is an instance of negligence or on the part of a professional (Staff, 2009). Examination is an exercise designed to examine progress or test qualification or knowledge, a written spoken in practical test at school or college that one need to take and pass in order to get a certified qualification, while malpractice is an illegal un ethical negligent or immoral behaviors by somebody in a professional or official position, resulting in a failure to fulfill the duties or responsibilities associated with that position (Jimoh, 2009). When the two words are combined, it becomes Examination Malpractice which mostly occurs in school settings primary schools, secondary school and tertiary institution, organization among teachers, nurses and doctors.

Nwang (2000), examination malpractice is described as the massive and unprecedented abuse of rules and regulations pertaining to internal and external examinations beginning from the setting of such examination through the taking of the examinations, their marking and grading, to the release of the results and the issuance of certificates.

In the light of this definition, examination malpractice simply illegally obtaining an answer to an examination malpractice is simply illegally obtaining an answer to an examination question from any other source other than the brain of the examination. Salami (2004), defined examination malpractices as an improper and dishonest act associated with examination with a view to obtaining unmerited advantage.

Shonekan (2006) defined it as any act of omission or commission that coat ravens the rules and regulations of the examination body to the extent of wider mining the validity and reliability of the test and ultimately, the integrity of the certificate issued. Olayinka (1993), described practice in any examination with a view to obtaining good results through fraudulent action. Awanta (2004), stated that examination malpractice as an illegal act committed by a single student or in collaboration with other like fellow students, parent, teachers, supervisors, invigilator, computer operator or secretarial staff and anybody or group of people before during or after examination in order to obtained under served marks or grades.

Ajere (2013), regarded examination malpractice as intellectual crime, intellectual fraud, intellectual disrepute or intellectual dishonor that involves the parents, students, school administrator, teachers, security agents, clerks, typists, computer programmers and virtually almost all fact of entire society because of get rich syndrome. The examination malpractice act (1999) sees examination malpractice as any act of omission or commission by a person who in anticipation of before, during or after any examination fraudulently secure any unfair advantage for himself or any other person in such a manner that contravenes the rules and regulation to the extent of under mining the validity, reliability, authenticity of the examination and ultimately the integrity of the certificate issued. Jimoh (2009) reported that an examination malpractice is any irregular behavior exhibited by a candidate or anybody charges with the conduct of examination that contravenes the rules and regulation governing the conduct of such examination.

Forms of Examination Malpractice Nigerian School students have perfected various methods or form or techniques of cheating before, during and after the examination in a desperate attempt to pass examinations. It has been observed that various method of examination malpractice practice by pupils has been upgraded with the use of modern technology and mobile device by pupil in school. Many authors have attempted to discuss the different facet of examination malpractice or irregularities. In Nigeria: Olaniran (2002) in the paper present at an international seminar organized by Association for Education Assessment in Africa at Tanzania, examine examination malpractice or irregularities can be categorized mainly into three, which are of the period and time they occur, they are pre-examination, during examination and post examination. In the pre-examination category, it is the procurement of question papers prior to the date of examination.

Pre-examination

This occur where the examinee procure the question paper prior to the examination or has prior knowledge of its content. This is commonly referred to as “Expo” or leakage, it is worthy of note that this type of malpractice was very common in the 1920s and early 1980s (Obagan 1995). However, the cases under this category are the following:

Leakage

This is considered to be most deadly of all form of irregularities malpractice. Leakage can be internal through those connected with the printing of question papers, packaging of question paper item writer, custodians and supervisors. They could also be unintentional through carelessness on the part of those officials responsible for the packaging of question paper i.e. packaging of one subject/paper inside the envelope meant for another.

Deliberate falsification of entry document by candidate making additions to the list of subjects on the authenticated admission notice card in order to sit for paper not registered. This is usually carried out by candidate and in some cases with the connivance of principals, class teacher and invigilators.

Multiple Registrations

This occurs when the same candidate make two or more different entries for the same examination simultaneously i.e. multiple registration for an attendance at examination in which two candidates write an examination and at the end, only one of them the apparently superior candidate, submit the answer booklet whereas the genuine candidate would usually do the examination haphazardly or may turn in blank examination script. This is done mainly by candidate with the help of examination by candidate with the help of examination official and principals. This becomes a malpractice during examination.

During Examination

Malpractices during examination includes, coping from another candidate with or without permission, impersonation, collusion by interested parties with invigilators and supervisors, intimidation of timid invigilators and supervisors, substitution of scripts of registered examines with those done by mercenaries etc. others are bringing of unauthorized material with calculators, receives linked to external transmitters hearing aids and external assistance from invigilators, supervisors, non academic officers messengers and office clerks or hired persons. These forms of malpractice can feature while the examination is in progress and are categorized in the following ways.

Spying or giraffe

Candidate start chug beyond normal sitting space to copy from another candidate the practice referred to as giraffe' because of the rubber necking involved (Asuru, 2006). Bringing to the examination hall prohibited material such as computerized calculators, in which mathematical formula and short notes are stoned, for use during examination. Illegal inter-group communication e.g. exchange of question papers, answer booklet or relevant material in the examination hall, organized unauthorized communication e.g. use of signs, gesticulations bells at interval whistles, whispering dictation land speakers and so on.

Impersonation

This happen when the legitimate candidate schemes himself or herself out of the examination on previously agreed terms. It may also involve the candidate having to change the photograph at the onset of completing the entry document for the examination or outright failure to produce identification for the examination.

Post Examination Malpractices

Post examination malpractices on the other hand includes those traced to the full-time staff of the examination council like invigilators and supervisors unearned scores are substituted with earned ones, hence inflated scores are produced etc. the post examination malpractice or irregularities are considered by the perpetrator to be the safest, surest and most reliable form of malpractice that are capable of achieving desire objectives.

This category of Examination Malpractice include:

- a) Substituting a candidate's original script with a re-written one
- b) Alteration of score in favour of candidate. This can occur at various stage after examination thus
 - i. At marking centre when the examiner is transferring the score to the examiners mark sheet
 - ii. At the marking centre or in the office by the subject officer
 - iii. By the computer operator before scanning
- c) Falsification of statement of result forgery: this can take the form of outright illegal printing of statement of result certificate on which higher grade are now reflected or through alteration of the original statement of result
- d) Blocking: this is a relatively new vocabulary in the examination malpractice lexicon meaning the use of cash or kind or both by an examiner to influence on examine to award an underserved mark.

Causes of Examination Malpractices

According to Asure (1999) examination malpractice may not be limited to any one cause but series of facts emphasis on paper qualification, psychological factors, poor and inadequate teaching learning, environment facilities and admission policy as causes of malpractices in both internal and public examination societal value system.

Nigeria is a nation of paradoxes, a nation of climax and anticlimax society where morality honesty and social ethic which are the basis of human is in have been thrown to the dogs (Obagah 2001). It is the end that justifies the means. i.e. irrespective of what is done and how it's been done (good or bad). This is manifested in the series of electro fraud, bribery and corruption, perversion of

justice, thus etc from these, primary school pupils learn that anything could be won or gotten not by merit but through fraud.

Economic factors

Due to the shift on societal value from moral rectitude to wealth at whatever means, and coupled with the continued dwindling economic fortune of the teachers, most teacher in a bid to meet with societal standard expected of them and make ends meet, involve in examination practice for economic gender. The teachers see their job as the least resounding and regarded in their society, this make them susceptible to the allurements of gifts, money and promise of better job by students or their relation.

Over Emphasis on paper Qualification

In Nigeria, undue emphasis is placed on a paper qualification to the utter neglect of actual performance. Thus as long as one has a certificate to show, which is regarded as meal tickets, it does not necessarily matter whether he can perform what he claims to be. This is predicated the premise that less emphasis is placed on the assessment of the affection and psychomotor domains. These have a result and effects on making the students get the certificate at all cost.

Psychological factors

Students in a bid to portray to their parent, teachers, peers, relation and colleagues of their brilliance, indulge in examination malpractice, also in a frantic bid to avoid bearing the staging of failure, they indulge in malpractice.

Bad Wagon Effect

Examination Malpractice to say the least has tended to be the rule rather than the exception in most cases, hence, what matters is whether a candidate has passed and not how. In order to be among the achievers candidate who ordinarily would not have been involved in malpractice, indulge in it in line with a popular say that if you cannot beat them, you join them.

Poor and inadequate teaching environment facilities conducive learning environment and availability of facilities are sine-qua-non to effective teaching-learning and good performance in examination. Most of our schools lack the basic teaching-learning facilities so negative learning environment or setting that adversely affects student learning, can affect students in many ways, such as how student achievement, poor behavior, student anxiety, or depression.

Unqualified admission policy

The introduction of mass promotion in primary schools is one of the most costly mistakes in school system. The result has been academic laxity. When faced with public or external or joint examinations, the candidates resort to cheating so as to pass.

Effects/Consequences of Examination Malpractice

The increasing rate of examination malpractice in educational institutions in Nigeria has become a serious national embarrassment which educationists, all stakeholders in the education sector and our leaders can only to ignore at great peril. It should be noted that one of the functions of examination is to determine students level of performance on differ went concept impacted to the by teachers (Onakwarpor, 2005).

However, frequent reports of examination malpractice have not helped the credibility of the certificates awarded by Nigerian institution and examination bodies. Examination malpractice destroys the moral integrity of the culprits. The fraudulent practices in examination not only destroy the moral integrity of the culprits, but also give them false sense of value and false impression of their capabilities. The dangers that examination malpractices pose include d perpetual condemnation of one's conscience whereby the carrier of the fake certificate is constantly under the persecution of carrying something that is false, and this also leads to professional inefficiency as the carrier knows that he is not entitled to what is carrying (Sofola, 2004).

Effects of examination malpractices can be seen as:

Unable to define his/her certificates discredits academic institutions and academia impedes intellectual progress of the nation affects national growth and productivity facilitates the enthronement of a mediocre, half-baked incompetent and corrupt workforce.

Leads to high educational wastage as those who cheat to pass examinations at a lower level achieve very poorly at higher levels.

Rubbished the standard and quality of educational standard in any country.

Reduces the value of certificate, however, Ojerinde (2008) enumerated some consequences of examination malpractices as

- i. Loss of interest in studying
- ii. Poor job performance
- iii. Increase in crime rate as a means for survival
- iv. Disregarded for Nigerian certificates
- v. Breeding of hatred among students who cheated to come top in their classes
- vi. Inability to defend one's certificate
- vii. Poor academic performance

Solution/Remedies to Examination Malpractice

Some measures have been put in place which will drastically reduce the rate of examination malpractice in Nigeria institutions. These are as follows

1. Sincere implementation of legislation by Government and other Agencies. In the past and even recently, decrees, laws, edited Decrees No 27, of 1973. Special Fribunal (miscellaneous offences) Act 410. Examination Malpractice Act No 33 of 1999 have been promulgated and enacted with sections and penalties spelt out for offenders and participant in examination malpractice. But these penalties have not been effectively enforced by the authorities and bodies initiating them.

To this end, an examination malpractice commission should be created to address this social malaise. According to Orblu (2006), such a body should be independent and empowered to have its teams of investigation and prosecutors. This body will ensure all sincerity implementing its legislation or duties

Less Emphasis on Certificate

Nigerians educating system is largely certificate oriented, so much value and emphasis are placed on certificate instead of knowledge skill and competence. It is not uncommon today that many school leavers and dropout have certificate without knowledge and skills. As a result, it is high time

that employers or higher institutions do not take certificates as passport to job or higher education, more emphases should be placed on the competence and skills acquisition such competence in academic works, proficiency in handling analysis and logical measuring in solving problems.

Campaign and seminars on the Dangers of Examination Malpractice. In order to cure examination malpractice Jimoh (2009) postulated that there should be continuous grassroots campaigns and seminars organized by all stakeholders in the education sector on the dangers associated with examination malpractices. This will help to sensitize the people.

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