



Forms and Causes of Examination Malpractice among University Students: A Case of Rivers State University, Port Harcourt

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ABSTRACT

This work is on effects of examination malpractice in Nigerian universities, a case study of Rivers State University. It is a survey study. Two (2) research questions were used. The type of design adopted was survey method. It was discovered that the students lack the appetite for studying but rather want to pass their exams by all means. Some lecturers, who cherish sorting, sometimes examine students with what they were not taught. It was also discovered that appropriate authorities were not doing enough to keep the trend in check. To resolve this problem of cheating in examination, the following recommendations were made: Ban the sale of handouts to minimize incessant cases of examination malpractice, counseling services should be provided for students and adequate facilities should be provided to make teaching and learning effective.

Keywords: examination malpractice, Nigerian universities, counseling services

INTRODUCTION

In the traditional African education system, teaching and learning were basically practical. The students learned orally and through close observation of their master, no issuance of certificate to prove completion of course of study since the society was interested in skill acquisition and practical demonstration of the arts learned, there was no need for certification, since education was viewed as a means to an end and not an end itself (Akaranga and Ongong, 2013).

To Emaikwu (2012), examination as part of evaluation in education is aimed at determining a learner's level of intellectual competence and understanding after a given training. George and Ukpong (2013) opines that examination is the most common tool around which the entire system of education revolves, it is the instrument used to decide who is permitted to move to the next academic level. Ojonemi (2013) asserts that whenever there is examination malpractice, the validity and resulting outcome is questionable. The common belief on certificate as the only yardstick to measure ones qualification has led many Nigerian into buying educational certificates to prove their academic worth. (Wilagat cited in Akaranga and Onyong, 2013). Atutu and Aluede cited in Jimoh (2009) remarked that examination malpractice is any irregular behaviour exhibited by a candidate or anybody charged with the conduct of examination before, during or after the examination that contravenes the rules and regulation governing such examination.

METHODOLOGY

Design: The research design adopted for this study is the survey method. Respondents were expected to tick their view on the questions which were on a four point scale of strongly agree (SA)-4,, Agree (A)-3, Disagree(D)-2 and Strongly disagree (SD)-1.

ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Research question 1: *Which are the most frequently used forms of examination malpractice in RSU?*

Table 1: Forms of Examination Malpractice

S/N	Relevant question	Responses				N	ΣFX	\bar{X}	Remark
		SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1				
1	Phone is used as a tool for examination malpractice	147	126	16	11	300	1009	3.36	Accepted
2	Textbooks are used in examination halls for malpractice.	88	181	21	10	300	947	3.15	Accepted
3	Leaking of examination question paper is a form of examination malpractice.	88	123	70	19	300	880	2.93	Accepted
4	Copying from a colleague during examination is a way of indulging in examination malpractice.	78	136	73	32	300	866	2.88	Accepted
5	Smuggling of microchips into the examination hall to be used as a guide is a way of cheating in examination.	88	96	41	75	300	797	2.65	Rejected
6	Sorting of courses by students is a way of indulging in examination malpractice.	109	106	59	26	300	898	2.99	Accepted
	Total mean							17.96	
	Grand mean							2.99	

Interpretation: Analysis of the data in Table 1, question 1 indicates that the respondents accepted the view that phone is used as a tool for examination malpractice.

From the same table, question 2 indicates that the respondents accepted that textbooks are used in examination hall for examination malpractice. From the same table, question 3 indicates that the respondents accepted the view that leaking of examination paper is a form of examination malpractice from the same table, question 4 indicates that the respondents rejected the view that copying from a colleague during examination is not a way of indulging in examination malpractice.

From the same table, question 5 indicates that the respondents rejected the view that smuggling of microchips into the examination hall to be used as a guide is a way of cheating in examination.

From the same table, question 6 indicates that the respondents accepted that sorting of courses by the student is a way of indulging in examination malpractice.

Research question 2: *What are the perceived causes and implications of examination malpractice in RSU?*

Table 2: Causes and Implications of Examination Malpractice

S/N	Relevant question	Responses				N	ΣFX	\bar{X}	Remark
		SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1				
1	The quest for money making by lecturers encourages examination malpractice.	98	128	40	34	300	890	2.96	Accepted
2	Ill preparation of students for examination causes examination malpractice	121	85	59	35	300	892	2.97	Accepted
3	Undue emphasis on paper qualification encourages examination malpractice.	80	118	65	37	300	841	2.80	Rejected
4	Student decline reading habit also lead to examination malpractice.	72	83	116	29	300	798	2.66	Rejected
5	Fear of failure in students encourages examination malpractice.	91	42	134	33	300	791	2.63	Rejected
	Total mean							14.02	
	Grand mean							2.80	

Interpretation: Analysis of the data in table 2, question 1 indicates that large number of respondents accepted the view that the quest for money making by lecturers encourages examination malpractice. From the same table, question 2 indicates that large number of respondents accepted that ill preparation of students for examination causes examination malpractice. From the same table, question 3 indicates that large number of respondents rejected the view that undue emphasis on paper qualification causes examination malpractice. From the same table, question 4 indicates that the respondents rejected the view that students decline reading habit leads to examination malpractice. From the same table, question 5 indicates that large number of respondents rejected the view that fear of failure in students encourages examination malpractice.

DISCUSSION

During the cause of the research, it was discovered that the problem of examination malpractice has become a compounded issue. While the students agreed that examination malpractices were being carried

out, those who agreed to be involved were more. Some of the reasons given by the culprit for their involvement in the sin can be grouped.

Examination malpractice cannot be totally eliminated but could be controlled. Some of the perpetrators were the ones raising false alarm, thereby creating bottle-neck for true fight against the menace.

CONCLUSION

This work had so far grouped the effects of examination malpractice into five major headlines, which are: unvaluable academic certificate, low productivity, suspension or expulsion, time management might be seen as a problem of administration

RECOMMENDATIONS

Examination is no doubt a vital instrument in the educational industry to ascertain the level of knowledge of the students for proper planning and progress. In other word, examination is administered for the purpose of determining those who have learnt among the students and to remedy the deficiency in those who have not learnt. The following recommendations could assist in steaming the tide:

- (a) The need for intensified continuous assessment at various stages of our educational system.
- (b) Ban the sale of handouts to minimize incessant cases of examination malpractice as many students had been apprehended with handouts in examination halls.
- (c) There may be the need for new measurement and evaluation criteria that will reduce the burden on examination as the only yardstick for academic progress, ranking and ability.
- (d) While the students must be blamed for poor preparation of examination, the cases of examination malpractice may be reduce through intensive counseling.
- (e) Examination bodies, government, stakeholders must confront this challenge by reducing or eliminating the administrative, institutional, attitudinal and logistic problem encouraging examination malpractices.
- (f) There must be a major and comprehensive overhaul of the educational system in the country since education is the best legacy that any parent or nation could bequeath to its younger generation. This is more so that no individual or country in this contemporary world would develop with a flawed educational system.

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