



Examination Malpractice among Nigerian University Students: A Review

^{1^}AMADI, Eric Chikweru (Ph.D) & ²OPUIYO, Asimetamunopiri Ruth

¹Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Technical & Science Education, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt-Nigeria

²Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Technical & Science Education, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt-Nigeria

* amadi.eric@ust.edu.ng; joesac2000@gmail.com; joesac2000@yahoo.com,+2348035452254

ABSTRACT

This review elucidates examination malpractice among Nigerian university students. It highlights the probable causes of examination malpractice. 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, academic reputation, punishable offence

INTRODUCTION

Jega (2006) defined examination malpractice as any form of misbehaviour that leads to the alteration of or a tempering with the prescribed ways of conducting examination in any given system. He further said examination malpractice is a punishable offence which is committed during the process of normal and recognized examination. (Jegade in Jega, 2006) defined examination malpractice as any wrong doing, misconduct, dishonesty or improper practices for personal gains or violation of set rules of conduct during examination. Obo (2008) defined examination malpractice as any act of omission or commission which compromises the validity, reliability and integrity of any assessment or evaluation system. Joshua (2008) synthesized many definitions of examination malpractice by defining the concept as any unauthorized or unapproved action, inaction, activity, behaviour or practice that is associated with the preparation, conduct and processing of examination carried out by any person involved in preparing for, giving, taking and processing that examination at any level.

Examination malpractice is noted as fraud within the school system, which occurs right from primary, secondary to tertiary level of education in Nigeria. Examination malpractice is a corrupt practice within the educational system. This practice is thriving strongly in our system, thus making it a real monster, it is a real manner because the culture of hard work, academic excellence, honesty, decency are fast eroding the present generation of youth in different institutions of learning in Nigeria,

The causes of examination malpractice in Nigerian Universities

Many reasons have been adduced to be the cause of the prevalent cases of examination malpractice, Peter and Okon (2013) identify the causes to include:

a. Fear of failure: Students engagement in examination malpractice can be traced back to failure. Self-confidence in this context is when a student believes and has faith that he will make it in examination without cheating. Many students get involved in malpractice during examination because they doubt that they can not get an excellent result without having a “microchip” attached to their body. A good student has good faith that he or she will be able to make it in any examination, if they have studied for a long time in preparation for the examination.

At times, friends are the people that mislead the other to lose faith in what they are capable of doing. A student may be preparing for examination with the hope to write examination alone as a serious-minded student, a friend of his who derives joy from malpractice may come in and weaken the good student, resolve he an enter the room of the serious-minded student and begin to ask him saying: do you think you can make this examination without cheating in the exam? The serious student may answer you in the initial stage but change his mind later. The bad student can deceive the serious one by giving him reasons why he cannot make it without cheating during the exam.

b. Desire of parents to have their children in choice professions and University: Most parents impose courses on their children without considering if the child can handle the course. They forget the fact that not every child has a fast brain to learn. Sometimes, parents do this because their friend’s children are doing those courses so they force the child to go for the course. When a child is forced to read a course he cannot, then he or she comes in with the habit of cheating because he does not want to do the course and for this reason the student will not study because he will assume he will not understand anything.

c. George and Ukpong (2013) link the increasing rate of examination malpractice to the following:

Poor teaching: Lecturers do not finish most of the course outline they have for an academic semester before giving examinations to the student. In some cases, the lecturer even go to the extent of giving examinations to the students even in the areas that they did not teach the student.

What teaching method do some lecturers apply when teaching the student? Do the students really comprehend such teaching method? Anyone that understand teaching need to look at their students to find out if they understand, if the student do not comprehend with the method he uses, the lecturer must apply another method. It is his job to do so because the students pay the teachers, so he is not offering the service free of charge. Many lecturers in schools are not qualified and are not properly trained. This is the reason why some students engage in examination malpractice. What can an unqualified lecturer offer to an undergraduate student in university? Students cannot do well with such services, and this makes students to look for other ways to do well in their examination.

Ineffective preparation by student: Many students do not want to work hard through studying to their parents and sponsors proud. They think that making good result is a bed of roses. This is why they want to pass their exams through cut-corners, thereby getting involved in examination malpractice. Most students devote most of their time to having fun with their fellow lazy students and neglect the basic thing, which is their study. They forget the reason why their parent sent them to school. They watch many kinds of films in a day without even having time to look into their books and acquire skills through their study. They attend parties, examination malpractice due to ineffective preparation only lead to down fall and disaster to those students that indulge in it.

Weak parental functions: It is shameful that some parents do not perform their functions as true parents. Some parents do not encourage their children to work hard and make it on their own, some parents are careless of the importance of education to our nation. This makes student feel reluctant and as a result, they do not take their studies seriously.

Again, some parents do not take good care of their students in terms of sponsoring them financially. They do not give them balanced financial support in their schools, when students are not given money to buy textbooks for their study, they will not be balanced or prepared to enter into the examination hall and write their exams. The female students engage in several immoral activities in order to make money for their studies, thereby neglecting their books because they are always going about offering “back on the

ground services” so the young and old men around the campus even outside the campus, this result in malpractice because they do not have time for their books because they were in search of money.

The ways of curbing examination malpractice

a. **Social re-engineering and re-orientation to revamp moral values:** Good moral values should be properly inculcated into our youths, and parents counseled to stop aiding their children to cheat in examinations.

b. **Retaining and re-assessment of teachers:** Teachers should be equipped for the technological driven world. Teachers cannot provide experience and activities that guide student progress towards understanding of ideas if they themselves do not know what these ideas are; neither can they provide experiences that challenge student if they themselves share in the same misunderstanding, since some of the teachers in our various field of education are beneficiaries or product of malpractice, a compulsory nationwide retaining of teachers is very important to re-equip them to impact knowledge. And those found non-trainable should be reassigned with administrative duties.

c. **Appropriate recognition and remuneration of teachers and examination officials:** Enhanced salary should be paid to teachers and special welfare packages given to examination officials to dissuade them from financial and material inducement from students, parents and others who may want to subvert examination process.

d. **Enforcement of examination malpractice laws:** The Examination Malpractice Act 33 of 1999 should be amended to re-introduce the parts of Decree 20 of 1984, which advocated for twenty-one (21) years imprisonment for conducted culprits of examination malpractice without option of fund. If this is fully implemented, it will serve as deterrent to students, invigilators, security agents and other collaborators in the malpractice business.

e. **Employment of qualified teachers at all levels of education:** The need for qualified manpower cannot be overemphasized. Trained teachers should be deployed to handle courses only in their field of specialization.

f. **School libraries and laboratories should be adequately equipped:** Tools for effective teaching and learning include current and quality textbooks, up-to-date laboratory equipment, and workshop tools should be provided for effective learning activities. The whole school environment should be learning friendly and conducive for human habitation.

g. **Less emphasis on paper certificates:** Nigerian educational system is largely certificate oriented. Excessive value placed on paper qualification or certification is the major contributing factor for examination malpractice, this is why candidate would not spare any effort to ensure that they obtained whatever they needed to make a living whether by a just or unjust way. Conuka and Durowaju, (2013).

h. **The use of effective continuous assessment technique:** Akanni and Odofin (2015), defines assessment (C.A) as a continuous updating of teachers judgment about the learner’s performance. Continuous Assessment compels student to make adequate use of their time for studies by completing notes, doing homework. On the side of the teacher, it affords an early opportunity to review one’s teaching methodology and students’ assimilation of the course taught.

The effects of examination malpractice on national development

a. Examination malpractice kills the country’s academic reputation: It is a fact that at present, owing to the high rate of examination malpractice in Nigeria, most foreign countries no longer value academic certificate issued in Nigeria as they see them as being no more valuable than the pieces of paper on which they have printed. This poses a big set-back to Nigerian graduates when they go abroad.

b. Examination malpractice kills the spirit of hard work as most students now depend on malpractice to achieve the same or even higher level of success than their counterparts who wasted their time studying: This ultimately leads to low productivity as people get job in areas where they know little or nothing about, even with their excellent certificates.

c. It leads to suspension or expulsion on the student which may lead to termination of the student’s academic career, and for the lecturer, it can as well lead to suspension or outright dismissal from the school.

d. The rate of bank failure, collapse of building, economic sabotage, vandalism, kidnapping, drug trafficking, fake drug manufacturing and sales are practical effects of moral decadence, emanating from examination malpractice.

e. The fight against corruption cannot be realized if examination malpractice continues to be rampant in our educational system. A s future leaders who have been equipped through a school system characterized by academic fraud and dishonesty will certainly manifest this fraudulent behaviour in any organization they may find themselves. Those that cheated to pass examination will cheat to get employed, have spouse, and even to win election through electoral violence or other sharp malpractices.

School administration as a factor that contributes to examination malpractice

Administration simply means the range of activities concerned with organizing and supervising the way an institution functions, according to Okah (2005), Henry Fayol analysed the process of administration into five components: planning, organizing, commanding, co-ordinating and controlling (POCCC). A more popular classification of management process is referred to by acronym POSDCORB. This element forms the pillar of administrative step. On that note, the process of examination malpractice required many mechanisms in place for adequate check and control. Guidance personnel be made necessary in the school to assist student and individual to improve their study or the examination technique. This is because counseling in schools enables the country to identify her talented youths and nurture them to the optimal level of social, educational, and economic development. Guidance in school also helps the students to attain proper attitude in school work. There should be professionals on guidance and counseling in Rivers State University of Science and Technology just as we have in Technical and Science Education in order to achieve aim stated, Agi (2006). Most recently sorting has been identified as another means of examination malpractice.

The University Authority is yet to come up with adequate measure on this phenomenon rise in examination malpractice. In most of our institutions, there are no good infrastructures e.g. good and conducive classrooms for learning, hostel accommodation, good books, electricity supply

In Rivers State University of Science and Technology, most of the classrooms do not have power supply which made the students not to be comfortable in classroom during the dry season. As a result of no power supply, student may not attend lectures and decide to practice examination malpractice during exam; some student that know the reason why they have come to school will still attend lectures regardless of the conditions of the school but will be interrupted or disturbed by the so-called cultists in the school premises. These cultist do all sort of things, like extorting money from them, stealing their phones, raping, killing etc. all these activities also makes a serious student to be scared of attending lectures and would practice examination malpractice. The school authority should come up with measures to protect the interest of the serious students in order for them not to be scared to attending classes.

The way out of examination malpractice in Nigeria.

- a. Prohibit the use of electronic devices including cellular phone and IPAD.
- b. There should be frequent unannounced visit by officials of examination or external supervisors and erring students should be punished.
- c. School lecturers should be motivated and remunerated adequately and learning environment made friendly so that they can do their work satisfactorily and cover the syllabus before examination.
- d. Ensure that only the students that registered a particular course sit for the examination.
- e. Government should provide conducive learning environment in schools by providing learning facilities and enhanced remuneration for teachers.
- f. Examination bodies and chief executives of educational institutions should plant secret cameras in halls to monitor examinees.
- g. Proper orientation on avoiding examination malpractice and its consequences of all new students in all institution at their resumptions.
- h. National campaign on the values of honesty and integrity may help in combating leakage and other irregularities.

Summary

From the discussion on the related literature on the effect of examination malpractice, the researcher found that the effect could be grouped into the following factors:

Students, parents, factor, teacher's factors law enforcement agency, school administration, the mobility and complexity of an effective factors of the concerned authorities to put in proper machinery in place to deal with the situation.

This research has also vindicated that emphasis on certificate and paper qualification, fear of failure, inadequate preparation for examination, teachers related factors like extorting money from students in order to upgrade scores, poor teaching, teachers unfriendliness as factors which causes the problem of examination malpractice.

The effect of examination malpractice identified in this work is: examination malpractice kills the spirit of hard work, it also kills the academic reputation of the country.

REFERENCES

- Akanni, O. O. & Odofin, B. (2015). Reducing examination malpractice in Nigerian schools through effective Continuous Assessment (CA) techniques as an alternative to one-shot examination in Nigeria. *American Journal of Education Research*, 2(1); 9-101
- Akaranga, S. L. & Onyong, J. J. (2013). *The phenomenon of examination malpractice: An example of Nairobi and Kenyatta Universities*. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 4(18): 87-96.
- Anzene, S. J. (2014). *Trends in examination malpractice on Nigerian educational system and its effects on the socio-economic development of Nigeria: Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(3) 1-8
- Emaikwu, S. O. (2012). *Assessing the impact of examination malpractice on the measurement of ability in Nigeria*. *Internal Journal of Social Sciences and Education*, 2(4): 748-757
- George, I. N. & Ukpogon, D. E. (2013). Contemporary social problems in Nigeria and its impact on national development: Implication for guidance and counseling services. *Journal of Educational and social Research*, 3(2): 167-173
- Jimoh, B. O. (2009). *Examination malpractice in secondary schools in Nigeria: What sustains it?* *European Journal of Educational Studies*, 1(3): 101-108
- Nnam, M. U. & Inah, A. F. (2015). Empirical investigation into the causes, form and consequences of examination malpractice in Nigerian institutions of higher learning. *International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social Sciences*, 2(1): 52-62
- Ojonemi, P. S., Enejoh, W., Enejoh, A. & Olatunmibi, O. (2013). *Examination malpractice: Challenges to human resource development in Nigeria*. *International Journal of Capacity Building in Education and Management*, 2(1): 91-101
- Onuka, A. & Amoo, S. A. (n.d). Examination malpractice and Act 33 of 1999. Retrieved from www.naere.org.ng/journal/examination-malpracticeact331999pdf
- Onuka, A. O. U. & Durowoju, E. O. (2013). *Stakeholders' role in curbing examination malpractice in Nigeria: International Journal of Economy, Management and Special Sciences*, 2(6): 342-348
- Oredein, A.O. (2006). Checking examination malpractice in Nigeria schools. Retrieved from www.naere.org.ng/journal/checking-examinationmalpracticenigerianschools-pdf 02/07/2016.
- Peters, J. S. & Okon, M. O. (2013). *Students perception of causes and effects of examination malpractice in the Nigerian educational system: The way forward for quality education*. Retrieved from www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S187704281305310X
- The C.W.O voice (06/04/2010). Examination malpractice: Implications for national development. Retrieved from <http://news2.onlinenigeria.com/news/general/5692-exam-malpractice-implication-for-national-development.html>
- Udoh, N. A. (2011). Remote causes and counseling implications of examination malpractice in Nigeria. *Student pulse*, 3(10). Retrieved from <http://www.studentpulse.com/a?id=585>
- Uzoigwe, G. O. (n.d). Corruption in education and assessment systems: The WAEC experience. Retrieved from www.iaea.info/documents/paper-//62d/6538.pdf