

EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Education stands for in terms of its meaning, aims or objectives and its philosophy in the development of an individual for he/she usefulness to himself and the society where he finds himself and in relation to helping to achieve the nation's developmental goal cannot be achieve except the cancerous menace of examination malpractice is prevented or eradicated where its rear its head. Because of the far reaching effects of examination malpractice at undermining everything that education stands to achieve, the authors highlighted its meaning, prevalence, causes, effects and practical ways of curbing it in Nigerian educational system.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the process of developing the innate potentials of individuals. It is a process of developing an individual into a responsible, purposeful, innovative, creative and useful personal, who is able to contribute meaningfully to the society where he/she finds himself. It is in recognition of the importance of education that the Federal Government of Nigeria (FRN, 2004), clearly states that education fosters the worth and development of the individual for each individual's sake and for the general development of the society; and that education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plan because it is the most important instrument of change (FRN, 2004).

According to Ukwuije (2012), products of "quality education should be intellectually sound, socially adaptable, technologically skilled, vocationally competent and morally sound". This shows clearly that education is measured in terms of learning outcomes. The extent of assimilation of knowledge, skills, values, norms, attitudes, etc is determined/carried out through assessment of the learners. Every learner is expected to satisfy to a reasonable extent and conditions for decision making that he/she has been taught a prescribe content for his/her overall development. In other word, the learner is assessed on what has been taught in learning institutions. Assessment according to Buzzetto-More and Alade (2006), is an ongoing process that involves planning, discussion, consensus building, reflection, measuring, analyzing, and improving based on the data and artifacts gathered about a

learning objective”. Ukwuije (2007) stated that educational assessment is a process of documenting, usually in measurable terms, skills, attitudes, beliefs, practices or generally what behaviour a learner does or does not have, acquire or developed before, during and at the end of instruction, or course of study.

This is the stage at which the learner’s knowledge, skills, ability and competencies are assessed, and judgement made about such performance. The outcome of such judgement is used for diagnosing as well as placement of students as it is the best tool for an objective assessment and evaluation of what learners have achieved after a period of schooling. Fagbamiye (1998) described examination as a tool for measuring and judging the standard of education in any country. Examinations provide information about students progress, serve as innovation for students in their academic pursuit, provide feedback as regards the effectiveness of the teachers’ methods of instruction, diagnose and predict future performances, license candidates for occupations or profession. Ukwuije (2012) posited that examinations are instruments for determining the degree of change that has occurred among individuals following the end of treatment conditions on them.

The examination may be internal or external. These examinations could be oral, written or both. It is unfortunate that these two forms of assessment in Nigeria have been bedeviled by examination malpractice which started from the inception of formal education which was brought by the Missionaries. Specifically, examination malpractices was first recorded in 1914 in Nigeria when there was a leakage of Cambridge examination question papers. Other outstanding years of examination irregularities in Nigeria include 1963, 1967, 1970, 1973, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1985, 1987, 1991, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003(Ukwuije, 2012; Fasasi, 2006; Alutu & Aluede, 2006; and West African Examination Council, 2004).

The University of Port Harcourt’s academic policy refers to examination malpractice as: “all forms of cheating which directly or indirectly falsify the ability of the students” which include”.., cheating within an examination hail, cheating outside an examination hail, and any involvement in all illegal examination related offences” (University of Port Harcourt, 2004). Examination malpractice is also defined as any misconduct before, during and after examination leading to unfair advantage for a person or group of person that contravenes the rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity, reliability, authenticity of the examination and ultimately the integrity of the certificate issued (Olatunbosun,2009; Fasasi, 2006; Alutu & Aluede, 2006; FRN, 1999 and Oluyeba & Daramola). Moreover, Salami in

Ogunboyede (2010) defined examination malpractice as “an improper and dishonesty act associated with examination with a view to obtaining an unmerited advantage. It is therefore a misdemeanor and for some of its perpetrators, it is an abuse of their position of trust”. These misconducts include falsification of name, impersonation, inordinance, stealing of examination papers, disturbances at examination, obstruction of supervisor, forgery of result, smuggling of examination materials into examination hall, collusion between candidates, collusion between candidates and invigilators, change of scores, buying and selling of examination grades, question papers and prepared answers, and trading sex for question papers, marks and grades, girraffing, assault and intimidation of students and examination officials, teacher-student affair, bribery, spying, submission of multiple scripts, use of coded sign language, substitution of answer sheet, fake passport, Ghost voice/centres, improper completion of entry forms, electronically assisted malpractice through mobile phones high cost of sale of handout and test books by teachers/lecturers, admission racketeering, award of fake certificates, multiple entry of the same examination, inscription on thigh, palm, baby pampers, dresses, handkerchief, rulers, purses, chairs, tables, walls of examination halls, copying from one another, exchange of question/answer sheets, collaboration with an invigilator/lecturer where it involves a lecturer providing written/oral answer to a students in the examination hall, improper assignment of placing candidates under the supervision of corrupt official, etc (Ogunboyede, 2010; Magaji, 2006; Alutu & Aluede, 2006; University of Port Harcourt, 2004; Adesina, 1993; and Afolabi, 1998).

Prevalence of Examination Malpractice in Nigerian Educational Institutions

Examination malpractice is so widespread across the country to the extent that it has several popular names among students, teacher/lecturers and the populace. Several coded names given to examination malpractices include ECOMOG, ECOWAS, OAU, Hi-tech Micro computer, Networking, Microchips, Super print, Bullets or Missiles, Expo, Contractor, GSM, Settle, Cyber, Girraffing, Symbiosis, repeaters course, laya, Mercenary, Line fishing, Dubbing, etc (Ukwuije, 2012; Denga & Denga 1998; Imogie, 1993; Ivowi, 1993; & Ogunu).

Usman (2012) reported that the Director, National Orientation Agency (NOA) Mr. Mike Omeri, stated that the Examination Malpractice Index indicated that Nigeria ranked 1st in examination malpractice in the whole world with 12 percent.. What an unfortunate incidence! He further stated that cases of examination malpractice in the last examination by

National Examination Council (NECO) was 615,010 cases in 2012 while 439,529 were recorded in the 2011 examination.

The table below highlights breakdown of incidence of examination malpractice in two major examination bodies Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) and Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) between 2004 and 2011

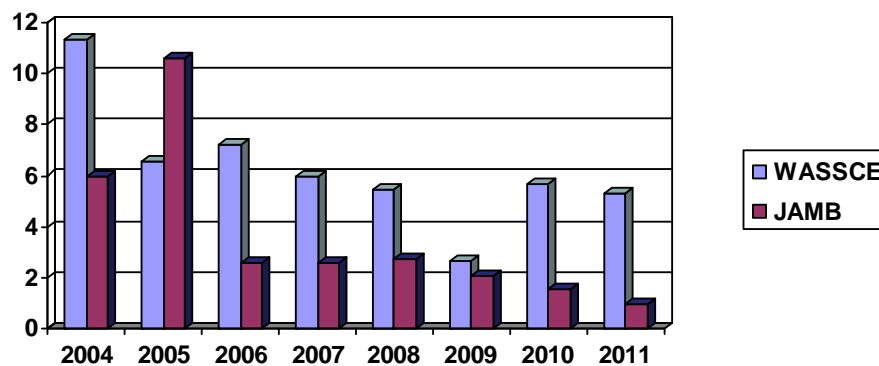
Table 1: Incidence of Examination Malpractice in SSCE and JAMB from 2004 - 2011

| YEAR | J A M B | | | S S C E MAY/JUNE | | |
|------|-----------|-------------|------------|------------------|-------------|------------|
| | Enrolment | Malpractice | Percentage | Enrolment | Malpractice | Percentage |
| 2011 | 1,540,250 | 81,573 | 5.3 | 1,493,604 | 15,160 | 1.014 |
| 2010 | 1,351,557 | 77,168 | 5.7 | 1,276,795 | 20,780 | 1.60 |
| 2009 | 1,184,907 | 32,423 | 2.7 | 1,145,961 | 23,819 | 2.07 |
| 2008 | 1,369,142 | 74,956 | 5.47 | 998,114 | 35,000 | 2.74 |
| 2007 | 1,252,570 | 74,754 | 5.97 | 854,439 | 22,286 | 2.62 |
| 2006 | 1,156,265 | 82,941 | 7.2 | 806,089 | 20,797 | 2.58 |
| 2005 | 1,064,587 | 73,050 | 6.56 | 908,548 | 95,985 | 10.56 |
| 2004 | 1,033,265 | 114,014 | 11.3 | 1,055,379 | 62,584 | 5.93 |

Source: Ukwuije, 2012.

Examination Malpractice

Figure 1: Incidence of Examination Malpractice from 2004 -2011 for May/June WASSCE and JAMB



Ukwuije (2012) was of the opinion that the statistics of examination cheaters at higher institutions may not be different except that proper records are not kept. He reported that the annual Examination Ethics Project Report (2007) indicated an increase in examination malpractice and Examination Malpractice Index (EMI) showed that examination breaches have increased in Nigeria.

Moreover Fasasi reported that in 206, the Federal Ministry of Education blacklisted and derecognized 324 secondary schools across the country for 4 years (2007 to 2010) on the

ground of examination malpractices. The table below is the distributions of the schools found guilty of examination malpractice across the country.

Table 2: Examination Malpractice in Nigerian Secondary Schools.

| ZONE | NO. OF SCHOOLS INVOLVED | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------|-------------------------|------------|
| North – Central | 54 | 16.6 |
| North – East | 08 | 2.5 |
| North – West | 12 | 3.6 |
| South – East | 48 | 14.8 |
| South – South | 116 | 36.0 |
| South – West | 86 | 26.5 |
| Total | 324 | 100.0 |

Source: Week End times, 17th & 18th February, 2007, p.4

Information in Table 2 indicated that examination malpractice cut across all the geo-political zones of the country. It is a reflection of how widespread the menace is in the country. The North-East recorded the lowest cases of malpractice while the South-south zone had the highest rate of examination malpractices.

Examination Malpractice Act 33 of 1999

The Federal Government has made several efforts at curbing the menace of examination malpractices. One of such efforts is the enactment of Examination Malpractice 33 Act of 1999 in which punishment for different offences are recorded, thus:

1. Cheating at Examination: For offenders Under 18 years, a fine of N 100,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years or to both such fine and imprisonment. For Principal, Teacher, Invigilator, Examiner, agent or employee of the examination body: Imprisonment for term of 4 years without option of fine. For any other offender. Imprisonment for a term of 4 years without the option of a fine.
2. Stealing of question paper: A fine of N100,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding or another candidate's 3 years or to both such fine and imprisonment.
3. Impersonation: Candidate Under 18years, a fine of N100,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years or to both such fine and imprisonment. For Principal, Teacher, Invigilator, Examiner, agent or employee of the examination body: Imprisonment for a term of 4 years without the option of fine. For any other offender imprisonment for a term of 4 years without the option of fine.
4. Alteration or tempering: Candidate Under 18 years, a fine of N100,000 or imprisonment with a document issued meant for a term not exceeding 3 years or to both such fine to a candidate in relation and imprisonment. To examination Principal, Teacher, Invigilator, Examiner, agent or employee of the examination body:

imprisonment for a term of 4 years without the option of fine. For any offender:
imprisonment for a term of 4 years without the option of a fine.

5. Disturbance at examinations: Candidate Under 18 years, a fine of N100,000 or - use of offensive weapon, acting imprisonment for a term not exceeding years or to both or inciting other persons to act such fine and imprisonment. in a disorderly manner. Principal, Teacher, Invigilator, Examiner, agent or employee of the examination body: Imprisonment for a term of 4 years without the option of fine. Any other offender. Imprisonment for term of 4 years without the option of a fine.

It is rather unfortunate that despite Nigeria's ranking as 1st in Examination Malpractice in the world arising from increase in the rate of examination malpractice in Nigeria, it is difficult to count the number of examination offences that have been prosecuted within the country. Most teachers/lecturers and invigilators are not keen in writing reports on culprits or facing Examination Malpractice Panels. They are reluctant in going through the long rigor of ensuring that examination malpractice culprits are brought to book. Even cases of rustication and expulsion of students in higher institutions for cases of examination malpractices have drastically reduced. This is a matter for serious consideration.

Why Examination Malpractice

Reasons for examination malpractice abound around us and people have given different kinds of reasons why malpractice has continued to be on the rise in Nigeria. Some of the reasons adduced according to Ukwuije (2012); Obasa (2000); Olasehinde (1993); Adeghoye (1998); Adeyinka (1993); include

- ❖ Emphasis on cheating as malpractice is no longer as a moral issue. What the society wants now is that an individual is successful, not how he/she came about the success. Morality in fact is decaying in the society.
- ❖ Our society and the government places more emphasis to certificate than the talent that the individual possesses. People are ready to be involved in examination to get the certificate whether they will be able to perform when on the job or not.
- ❖ The society recognizes wealth above hard work, integrity and dedication to work.
- ❖ Record still shows that most of the teachers are not well trained while majority are not qualified teachers. This adversely affects level of assimilation of learners.
- ❖ Many examination centres are crowded due to poor sitting arrangement, lack of ventilation, shortage of invigilators, etc.

- ❖ Poor planning for examination and maladministration of school heads and examiners;
- ❖ In most cases examination materials may not be enough and most pertinent logistics for examinations are not provided given the examinee opportunity for malpractice;
- ❖ Some students indulge in malpractice because of pressure from their parents for success at whatever cost.
- ❖ Most students that indulge in examination malpractice are not ready or prepared for examination.
- ❖ Students' lack of self confidence is also a reason for cheating during examination.
- ❖ Some learners face intense pressure from their peer to engage in examination malpractice.
- ❖ Most vendors of examination papers engage in the act because of monetary gains.
- ❖ The act of examination malpractice has continued unabated because of injustice in punishment of culprit/insincerity in tackling the problem.
- ❖ Incessant staff strikes which leads to crash programme in school programme leaves student to no option than to indulge in examination malpractice to pass their examination.
- ❖ Student as a result of fear they have due to their teachers threat to fail them engage in examination malpractice.
- ❖ The desire to succeed in highly competitive or selective examinations is also a contributing factor.
- ❖ Poor reading culture of our presence day youth..
- ❖ There is always availability of willing accomplices of examination malpractice due to pressure from parents and monetary gains.
- ❖ Status of academic excellence makes most school to deliberately engage in malpractice to maintain the status and get more intakes for admission.
- ❖ Some people are prone to cheating no matter the circumstance.
- ❖ Inadequate school facilities and shortage of teachers, working equipment, etc.
- ❖ Some examination centres are located in very remote areas which may not be well supervised with no proper security.
- ❖ High expectation is enough pressure on the learner to be involve in malpractice.
- ❖ Low salary level of teachers and invigilator.
- ❖ A high school fee which forces students to ensure that the fees paid is justified.
- ❖ The government has not been able to demonstrate the will to punish erring officials who aid and abet examination malpractice.
- ❖ Lack of cooperation on the part of law enforcement agencies in ensuring that culprits are actually prosecuted.

Dangers and Effects of Examination Malpractices

Some of the dangers of examination malpractices according to Ogunboyede (2010); Fasasi (2009); Sooeze (2004); Onyechere (2004); Unachukwu and Onunkwo (1999); Oluyeba (1998); Salami (1994); Ongon (1994) and Akinpelu (1992) include:

- ❖ People possess qualification that they do not deserve.
- ❖ It negates the vital objectives of conducting examination.
- ❖ It affects the psychometric properties of any test and render internal and external validation of courses and curricular very difficult.
- ❖ It affects the predicting function of examination on the learner to be able to perform in subsequent task or performance.
- ❖ It destroys the integrity of the culprits and creates a false sense of value and false impression on their abilities and capabilities.
- ❖ Most of the candidates now believe in short cut and most are unwilling to read for examination since they know that culprits are not always prosecuted.
- ❖ Most certificates from our schools are now discredited most especially in foreign countries.
- ❖ Examination malpractices have affected our standard of education.
- ❖ Most honest and innocent students are denied admission in place of dishonest and fraudulent students.
- ❖ The country, Nigeria lost about N190 billion to examination malpractice in five years due to cancellation of examination papers, rescheduling of examination days, etc.
- ❖ Examination malpractices now dominate examination planning and conduct procedures.
- ❖ Suspicion of examination malpractice delays the processing of examination scores and grades.
- ❖ Candidates are no longer satisfied with the results of examinations.
- ❖ In most cases students who engages in examination malpractice find it difficult to defend their certificate.
- ❖ Employers have to retrain graduates in order to be effective and efficient on the job.
- ❖ Many students are expelled from higher institutions on account of examination malpractices shattering their dreams and hope of a better tomorrow.
- ❖ Most employees lost their jobs because they could not perform well because they cheated throughout their time in school to obtain good grade.
- ❖ The spill over effect of expulsion and lost of jobs affects parents and relatives of culprits.
- ❖ Sometimes culprits get initiated into system dishonesty and corrupt practices (sometimes cult group) by which they become hardened.

- ❖ It makes nonsense of the educational system and it militates against the country's goal of technological advancement.
- ❖ Examination malpractice discredits certificates issued by national examination bodies and institutions of higher learning and the nation as a whole.

Most of the evils in our society at the elite level have its root in examination malpractices which permeate into all other aspects of our national development. It is a cankerworm that places mediocrity above hard work and excellence and robs the best hands and minds of genuine placement and accountability. It is a bane to the nation's social-economical and technological development.

Curbing Examination Malpractice

The panacea for curbing examination malpractice is right within us as individuals, families, society and government. Several ways by which the evil of examination malpractices can be nibbed in the bud according to Ukwuije (2012); Ogunboyede (2010); Olatunbosun, (2009); Fasasi, (2009); Alutu & Aluede (2006) include

- ❖ Effective implementation of educational policy by implementing continuous assessment policy in schools in Nigeria.
- ❖ There should be adequate funding of education in Nigeria. Enough space for learners during learning and examination.
- ❖ Discipline should be enforced in our schools at all levels of education.
- ❖ Value education, in form of moral education should be included in the curriculum to teach learners value for hard work and need to avoid examination malpractice.
- ❖ E-examination should be introduced to schools at all levels.
- ❖ High pay for officials and other education personnel to prevent them from being lured into collecting bribes for examination malpractice.
- ❖ Penalty for examination printers whenever it leaks – charge for examination leakage and non-payment of contractual agreement.
- ❖ National and international examination boards and organizations should share information on new threats to examination security and procedures for counteracting malpractice.
- ❖ Enlist the support of Banks and Security agencies outfit for keeping examination materials to ensure safety and secrecy.

- ❖ Invigilators of examination may be recruited from other schools rather than using the personnel in the same school.
- ❖ Presentation of different versions of multiple-choice papers to candidates sitting close to each other as it is done by JAMB.
- ❖ Review of Examination Act 33 of 1999 to give magisterial powers (including right to arrest) to examination board officials.
- ❖ Ensure proper spacing and good supervision during examination.
- ❖ Introduction of e-examination.
- ❖ Conduct frequent and unannounced visits to centres.
- ❖ Conduct a public awareness campaign to highlight the importance of integrity of the examination system.
- ❖ Supervisors and invigilators should be rotated on daily basis for examination that last more than one day.
- ❖ Publication and blacklisting of names of schools and individuals involved in examination malpractice.
- ❖ Religious bodies should join in the campaign against examination malpractice to their worshippers
- ❖ Reduce human access (and the possibility of interference with marking and /or data entry) by using technology in the form of optical scanners and computers.
- ❖ Increase transparency in the administration of the public examination system.
- ❖ Encourage political and civil leaders to speak out in favour of creating a public examination system that is administered by adequately qualified people and according to accepted rules, that is devoid of external interference and that has the confidence of the public.
- ❖ Examination papers should not be within the reach of the security agents.
- ❖ Sitting arrangement of students should be changed on daily or weekly basis.
- ❖ Students could be arranged according to their registration\examination numbers or names.
- ❖ Efforts should be made to inspect all examination centres at least once daily.
- ❖ Parents and communities should train-up their children to imbibe the traditional values of honesty, hard-work, fairness, uprightness at home and be complemented by schools.
- ❖ Government should provide conducive-learning environment in schools by providing learning facilities and enhanced remuneration for teachers.
- ❖ Enough resources must be made available for the conduct of examinations

- ❖ Examination bodies and Chief Executives of educational institutions should plant secret cameras in halls to monitor examinees.
- ❖ Proper orientation on avoiding examination malpractices and its consequences of all new students in all institutions at their resumption.
- ❖ Embossment of candidates photographs as practiced by WAEC could be on all external examinations, tertiary institution and National Youth Services Corps certificates as a way of curbing impersonation.
- ❖ Candidates caught cheating should have their results cancelled or barred from future examinations (for external examinations). For internal examinations, students caught cheating should be rusticated or expelled, their names should be published in newspapers and the school authority should inform their parents.
- ❖ The conduct of these public examinations in future must be suspended when there is a national crisis.

Conclusion

Examination malpractice can be a thing of the past in Nigeria if all hands are on deck to check and stop the menace. It calls for sincerity on the part of parents, teachers, school administrators, government official, security agents, examination bodies religious bodies and the civil society in educating the students on the dangers of examination malpractice, encouraging hard work, honesty and integrity, rewarding excellence and punishing offenders where and when necessary. It also calls for strategies and devising better ways of preventing examination malpractice through technology. Introduction of e-examination at internal and external examination will also help in reducing the scourge of examination to the barest minimum.

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