

# CURRENT EDUCATIONAL ISSUES: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS ISSUES IN EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE

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## **Abstract**

*This paper discusses the problems of Examination malpractice in Nigeria. It also looked at definitions of Examination malpractice; forms and methods of Examination malpractice; causes of Examination malpractice and ways to curb Examination malpractice. It concluded that in Nigeria it has lowered the standard of Education and Certificates obtained from Nigerian Institutions as they are seen as sub-standard in other Countries. Finally recommendations were made.*

In recent times Examination malpractice is one of the major issues of concerned in our Educational system. Examination malpractice transcends the conduct of public examinations such as: WAEC, NECO, NABTEB etc., it is seen in both public and private primary, secondary and tertiary educational system. According to Fabunmi (2006) Examination malpractice is a term relatively unknown to Nigerian Educational system, the ugly trend manifested a few decades ago. In the early 1970's the Nigerian society was morally up right and discipline, honour and integrity were cherished ideals in the society. The collapsed of value system in the late 70's resulted in various form of malpractice, which Examination malpractice is just one. Lawan (2006) pointed out that Examination fraud in Nigeria can be traced back to 1970 "expo'70" as it was popularly called, when WAEC experienced an unprecedented leakage in the school certificate examination. According to him all laws made to curb out the vice, the crime appears to be unrelenting. Those involved in it are now organised and sometimes armed to fight anybody who attempts to prevent cheating. Empirical evidence had shown that parents, teachers, communities, candidates, law enforcement agents and personnel of examination bodies are involved in it.

Ayua (2006) affirmed that Examination malpractice is on the increase all over the world, and also increasing in sophistication due to increasing use of electronic and communication gadgets as instruments of examination fraud. Examination malpractice is an unfortunate situation in our country today. Parents, Teacher's, Supervisors, Invigilators and Staff entrusted with sacred duty of conducting examinations perpetrate malpractice. It is a corruption of the worst type. Aiding, abetting or involvement in examination malpractice amounts to facilitating the enthronement of mediocre, half-

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baked, incompetent and corrupt workforce. It amounts to facilitating the production of quacks professionals including doctors, nurses, lawyers, building engineers nurtured on certificates rather than knowledge. We are today witness to the danger posed by such quacks to lives and properties of citizens (Obasanjo 2006).

### **Definition of Examination Malpractice**

Examination malpractice is defined as any deliberate act of wrong doing, contrary to the rules of the examination, designed to give a candidate unfair advantage (World Bank Group 2005c). Examination malpractice has been seen as “wrong-doings” in examinations (Ongom, 1994 as cited Ojerinde, 2006). Examination malpractice is also seen as an improper or dishonest act associated with examination with a view to obtaining an unmerited advantage (Salami, 1994 as cited Ojerinde, 2006). Examination malpractice is defined as any act of commission or omission which makes it impossible to use an examination in determining the level of competence of a student in absorbing, reproducing, and applying knowledge. It can be looked at as any act of wrong doing or neglect that contravenes the rules of acceptable practice before, during and after an Examination (Okafor 2006). Examination malpractice was defined as all forms of cheating which directly or indirectly falsify the ability of the students (Academic Policies, 2001 as cited in Abdulkareem and Alabi, 2010).

### Forms and Methods of Examination Malpractice

Onyechere’s (2000) study (as cited in Okafor, 2006) stressed that Examination malpractice comes in different ways, some are:

1. Bring illegal and unauthorized materials in to examination halls (Bullets).
2. Collusion between candidates in the examination hall.
3. Impersonation.
4. Collusion between candidates and officials or supervisors.
5. Assault and intimidation by hired touts to create confusion and commotion in examination halls in order to perpetrate examination malpractice.
6. Mass cheating with the connivance of the invigilator.
7. Substitution of answer sheets.
8. Giving materials “incentives” to supervisors and invigilators to look the other way while cheating goes on.
9. Continuous Assessment malpractices.
10. Examination funds or “comfort funds” to entertain supervisors.
11. Spying (Giraffe).
12. Passing papers in the examination hall.
13. Whispering answers.
14. Coded or sign language malpractices.
15. Sale of “live” question papers or “expo” before examination day.
16. Snatching question papers or answer sheets from invigilator.
17. Marking malpractices.
18. Mass promotion malpractices.

19. Sale of handouts by teachers which are suggestive questions to be set in examinations and answers expected.
20. Improper completion of entry forms to confuse examiners from detecting examination malpractice.

### **ICT form of Examination Malpractice**

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought about new ways of Examination cheating. Candidates now use text messages to cheat in exam halls, use programmable calculators, opaque jottings (which ordinary eyes cannot capture but which special eye glasses can magnify), use Bluetooth facilities to send or receive messages within examination environment among candidates. Oloyede (2006) affirmed that candidates uses reflective glasses with zooming facilities and also use micro computer techniques, digitization and coding of texts.

### **Causes of Examination Malpractice**

Several factors are responsible for the causes of Examination malpractice in our Schools and public examinations some are considered here: Ojerinde (2006) outlined these factors in to

- A. Person related factors
- B. Parents related factors
- C. Public related factors
- A. Person related factors are as follows:
  - i. Inordinate ambition which is fuelled by pride.
  - ii. Lust for power which makes individuals to seek for extra means to be able to manipulate and control others.
  - iii. Influence of peers especially if the individual lacks proper moral background to stand alone for what he/she believes in.
  - iv. Inadequate preparation for examination and life generally.
  - v. Lack of achievement motivation pleasure driven opposed to commitment and industry.
  - vi. Inability to discover ones strength; this makes the individual to go for subjects/courses he/she lacks aptitude in and in the process become frustrated.
- B. Parent related factors are as follows:
  - i. Improper motivation revenging from our responsibilities to provide the basic necessity for our children and wards.
  - ii. Inheritable traits it is said that as dog begets dog so pupils/students naturally take after their parents traits either positive or negative.
  - iii. Inadequate for example, it is not just enough for parents to preach to their children and wards, they should practice what they preach. Parents who are cheats would naturally influence their children to become one.
  - iv. Misconception of the concept of genuine love for children.

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- C. Public related factors are as follows:
  - i. Institutionalization of corruption in our polity.
  - ii. Enthronement and recognition of wealthy persons without recourse to how they made their money.
  - iii. Undue emphasis on paper qualification.
  - iv. Faulty admission system.
  - v. Infrastructural deficiencies in our Schools.
  - vi. Indiscretion of Examination Officials.
  - vii. Preponderance and non-censorship of foreign and local films that tend to Violence, hedonism, cultism etc.

There are many causes of Examination malpractice as reviewed above, it could be inferred these causes may be classified in to: (i) Self-factor (ii) Inheritable-factor (iii) Societal-factor (iv) Environmental-factor. Self-factor: This has to do with individual's abilities "intelligent" or "dull". A brilliant Student may not involve himself into Examination malpractice; he could work hard to pass his Examination. A dull Student may opt for cheating, because he cannot prepare himself to pass an Examination. Inheritable-factor: This has to do with some individual's traits acquire from his parents'. These traits may be positive or negative, such dullness, laziness; brilliance etc., negative acquired trait is not guided by his parents' or a counsellor which may result to such a student to engage into examination fraud. Societal-factor: This has to do with what a society holds as ethical, a society that does not see Examination malpractice as unethical issue, in such a society many students' may be found to be involved in it. Societal vices such as corruption, cheating, neglect of parents' responsibilities, lack of culture of self-esteem and hard work etc., all encourage Examination malpractice. Environmental-factor: It is related to environment where learning is taking place, it has to do with availabilities of learning infrastructures, learning facilities, and trained manpower that would ensure good learning. Lack of Classrooms and Laboratories may not provide good learning environment. Lack of qualified teachers also may force Students' to cheat in an Examination

### **Consequences of Examination Malpractice**

Ojerinde (2006) pointed that Examination malpractice has a deleterious effect on not only the individuals directly caught up with such vices but, indeed the entire society. Some of the consequences Examination malpractices are:

- i. Loss of personal identity.
- ii. Moral decadence.
- iii. Poor academic performance.
- iv. Dismissal from school.

Aminu (2006) pointed out that the social evil of Examination malpractice has multi-facet dangers. It has very serious economic implications, considering the cost of buying the Examination form alone, this amount to waste of about 2.5billion Naira. The

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economic waste associated with cancellations in WAEC, NECO, NABTEB, JAMB, NTI and other examinations; as well as all the associated costs of preparing for exams, the financial implication is very high for just a year. Furthermore, he said Examination malpractice leads to irreversible loss of credibility; the person indicted for this, is very likely to ever again rise to a position of trust and leadership.

According to Oloyede (2006) consequences of Examination malpractice can be listed as follows:

- Duplication of Tests (Retest).
- Enthronement of mediocrity.
- Erosion of Integrity/Credibility.
- Waste of resources.
- Loss of life, material and integrity.

### **Ways to Curb Examination Malpractice**

Having looked at the causes and consequences of Examination malpractice in our society, here, this paper will attempt to put forward some ways to stamp out the menace or ways to reduce it to a barest minimum level.

**Religious Teaching:** Religious teaching in our educational institutions will help in giving our younger one's religious sense of belonging. The two major religions in Nigeria Christianity and Islam teach the culture and climate of honesty, integrity, service and sacrifice as opposed to the current negative socio-moral order that exists in our society. Students will have the fear of God in all their activities.

**Quality Teaching:** There is the need to ensure that quality teaching and learning takes place in our schools. Quality teaching will highly depend on the type of people that will teach in our schools; in this regard priority must be given to teacher education and continuing professional development. In all levels of our Educational system professional teachers must be employed not the case today in some our primary schools where un-qualified teachers are employed to teach. In this regard the professionalization of teaching profession must be allowed to take its proper course as stated in the decree establishing the Teachers Registration Council.

**Provision of Educational Infrastructural and facilities:** There is the need for various authorities of Educational institutions to ensure that adequate Classrooms, Theatres, and Laboratories/Workshops are provided in their institutions that will cater for their Students population. They must also provide tables, chairs and laboratories facilities that will ensure effective teaching and learning. Crowded seating arrangement must be avoided because must of the time crowded class do help in cheating to take place.

**Proper Prosecution of Examination malpractice culprit:** Though there is Examination malpractice act, but the law is not working properly. Despite the facts that thousands of candidate's results are cancelled every year for Examination malpractice, there are difficulties with prosecution of such candidates. People saddled with the responsibilities of invigilation and supervision does not give the required cooperation to apprehend the culprits, this makes it difficult to establish the case before the law.

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Examination bodies must employ and train Examination Supervisors on how to handle cases of Examination malpractice.

Improve Students Invigilator ratio: The way invigilators are assign to invigilate Examination nowadays do not augur well for our Educational system. Fewer invigilators are allocated large number of students to take care of during Examination. Such invigilators cannot do otherwise rather than to succumb to the wish of students to cheat. The ratio of 1:30 may be reasonable to contain with.

Transfer of Invigilators/Supervisors: Deployment of invigilators/supervisors to communities not which they are not resident may help in reducing cases of examination malpractice, because invigilator may not aid cheating with a view that he is helping his people.

### **Conclusion**

Examination Malpractice is a great problem to our educational system; it has lowered the standard of education in Nigeria. More over, certificates obtained from Nigerian Institution are looked down at in other countries. Therefore, there is the need for concerted efforts to fight it by governments, religious institutions, schools, parents and every body in the society.

### **Recommendations**

- Authorities of institutions should avoid over admitting of students so that facilities are not over stretch.
- Examination bodies such as WAEC, NECO etc, should employ and train supervisors in the handling of Examination malpractice.
- Schools Examination Officers should not be allowed to over stay in the position to avoid situations where they become syndicate group in Examination malpractice.
- The Teachers Registration Council disciplinary committee should enforce to punish erring teachers.
- NGOs should take up campaign against Examination malpractice, so that the ugly trend could be reduced in our society.

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