

Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools Forms, Causes, Effect and Possible Solutions

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Abstract: Examination in any way is to assess or evaluate an individual or groups in order to determine their capabilities to be assigned to a particular status. The mode of conduct of examinations particularly in Nigeria, faces a lot of challenges, either before, during or after the exam, a lot misconduct occurs (Examination mal-practice), especially in our educational system. The most common agents of examination mal-practices are parents/guardians, teachers, school administrators, examiners, printers typists, supervisors, government officials etc and the results or consequences of this great menace are that there is the danger of unacceptable compromise of standard and quality which can emanate to fatal professional errors and this may lead to destruction of institutional value system or even to some extent loss of lives. Therefore, to eradicate or curb this menace in our educational system all hands must be on deck and government on its part must ensure that the rule of law must be followed any diversion to that must followed with an immediate and urgent execution of punishment.

Keywords: Educational system, Examination, Challenges and the way out.

Introduction

Examination is an evaluate mechanism conducted in various forms, for various purposes to access and /or grade candidates' intellectual status and / or capabilities. Examinations, broadly speaking are not conducted only on or limited to school settings. They are of various grades and types; for example entrance, promotional, final graduating examinations. Examinations are also conducted for employment purposes, promotion of employees in the civil service or private corporate outfits. Adelake, in Oke and Jekayinfa, (2003) saw examination as instrument being used for assessment off individual skills and knowledge both in general and specific areas of studies; and overall academic achievement.

The history of examination malpractice may be as old as examination itself. It is one of the serious calamities facing our educational system. Examination malpractice has now reached a gigantic dimension with different methods used by students in schools. It has consistently remained a bane of the Nigerian educational system. As a form of corruption and corrupt practices, examination malpractice has crept into the fabrics of all levels of the educational system (Nuraini, 2005).

What is Examination Malpractice?

Waziri, (2009) defined examination malpractice as a deliberate act of wrong doing, contrary to official examination rules, and is designed to place a candidate as an unfair advantage or disadvantage. According to Oyekanmi, (2005) examination malpractice is a deliberate act of indiscipline adopted by students or their privileged accomplices to secure facile success and advantage before during or after the administration of the tests and examinations. Jekayinfa, (2003) also defined examination malpractice as a fraudulent illegal or crooked way of obtaining success or high grades in examinations, assessments or evaluation of students.

In view of all the above definitions, one may conclude that examination malpractice renders the assessment process useless. Ojerinde, (2006) said its even more disheartening to note that these vices are perpetrated by teachers, parents, students, invigilators, typists, markers, school authorities, law enforcement agents, bank officials, custodian-point officials, printers and the community interested in this awful practice.

Statement of the Problem

Over the decades this country have gone through series of developments; human, human, resources, economic etc.

With all these, its citizens are still not contented. Everybody want to progress through any simple, easiest or even crooked way. It is as a result of this that dishonesty exist in our communities. Bribery and corruption has become part of the due process, fake drugs and quack doctors all over the society, government treasures being looted by fraudulent staff. Uncompleted infrastructure in government establishments, educational institutions experiencing great set back because of fake certificates/results. The partakers of the above were once students, that may have been involved in examination malpractice to earn their certificates; thus the reason for reviewing this paper-examination malpractice in secondary schools.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the causes of examination malpractice.
2. Find out the types of examination.
3. To determine what reasons students have for examination malpractice.
4. To ascertain the agents of examination malpractice.
5. To determine the possible ways of reducing or eradicating examination malpractices in secondary schools.

The researchers undertook a fact finding survey through the sharing of questionnaires in some selected secondary schools. Nassarawa and Tarauni Local Government Areas of Kano State, Funtua Local Government Area of Katsina State and Sabon Gari Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The results of the respondents which comprised of SS3, 2, and JS 3 students are as follows:-

Table 1: Causes of Examination Malpractice

	Students based causes	Examination officials	Teachers based causes	Society based causes	Proprietors	Government	Parent	total
No	102	7	33	19	3	3	8	175
%	48	4	18.8	10.8	1.7	1.7	5	100

The respondents in table 1 gave the causes of examination malpractice as:

- Poor students' reading habit
- Lack of textbooks for students
- Teachers' absent for lesson
- Parents desire to meet up with tertiary institutions' requirement of cut off points
- Examination officials give out questions for money or don't coordinate well during the examination.
- The government does not provide adequate laboratories, teachers, classrooms and conducive venues for final examination.
- Proprietors pay off exam official to earn name for their school.

Table 2: Types of Examination Malpractice

	Impersonation	Foreign materials	Expo	Giraffing	Bribe	Total
No	9	78	36	13	8	172
%	5	45	21	21	8	100

The respondents stated the types of examination malpractices as:

1. Foreign materials brought to examination hall eg.
 - Hand sets
 - Parts of textbook/note
 - "Choks" reducing notes to tiny of paper that is smuggled in exam hall.
 - Writing on clothes parts of the body.
 - Key point small questions and answers booklet
2. Expo
 - Teachers/exam official giving students questions before exam date
 - Teachers writing answers on the black board.
 - Verbal answers given by teachers to candidates
 - Giving finger sings for objective questions (like small finger for E, thumb for A, middle for C etc).
3. Giraffing (stretching to see another person's answer)

- Exchanging answer sheets
 - Writing and passing of sheets of papers
4. Parents give bribe to teachers and examination officials (infact some even negotiate prices per subject in order of importance)
 5. Impersonation someone not a student writing for a candidate Igwe, (2000) and Oyebamaji, (2003) also added other prominent forms of examination malpractice as
 - Intimidation of examination officials including supervisors and markers either by candidate or some external persons. They physically threatened to give way, or be dealt with.
 - Substitution of script: Replacing of answer sheets handed out during the course of the exam with the ones written outside the center; before, during or after examination. This is done under the supervision of corrupt officials.
 - Ghost centers: Factitious centers are created by exam officials just for the purpose of awarding great mark for lazy candidates.
 - Marker malpractice: A deliberate alteration of Marks designed to inflate or deflate candidates' original marks.

Table 3 Reasons for Examination Malpractice

	Laziness	Parents' based	Inadequate teaching materials	Lack/unqualified teachers	Exam tension	Paper qualification	Lack of concentration	Total
No	43	3	6	11	8	8	7	86
%	50	3.4	7	13	9.3	9.3	8	100

The respondent's reason for examination malpractice are as follows:

1. Laziness towards studies
 - Peer group influence
2. Lack of qualified teachers (some teachers are not fully qualified in the subject they teach; for example a diploma food tech. graduate taking senior class in home management or food and nutrition).
 - Poor teaching method
 - Non coverage of syllabus
3. Examination tension and anxiety
4. Emphasis on paper qualification by the work force (employers)
5. Lack of concentration during lessons
6. Lack of adequate instructional materials
7. Parents' carefree attitude towards children's daily performance in school.

Table 4: Agents of Examination Malpractice

	Teachers	Invigilators/supervisors	Exam bodies	Peer group	School authority	Parents	Printers	Security personnel	Students	Govt	Total
No	37	24	18	6	10	22	2	3	17	3	142
%	26	17	13	4.2	7	15.4	1.4	2	12	2	100

The students gave various agents of examination malpractice as:

Causes from teachers side like (collecting money from parents and or students to either write for them or give questions.

Invigilators and supervisors who allow or and partake in giving candidates answer or materials.

Parents (pay for marks or certificate for their children).

Examination bodies (create ghost examination centers, smuggle scripts out etc).

Students (intimidate exam officials, bribe teachers and even security personnel during, before or after the examination.

School authorities (pay large sum of money to earn the school name for "an outstanding performance").

Peer group (either team up and intimidate official's or pass foreign materials during examination).

Security personal (they either deliberately leave the center for a while or pretend as if nothing wrong is going on, because they have been bribed).

Printers and typist during the course of their work, scripts are smuggled out to parents, teachers or even students themselves.

Table 5: Reducing or Strategies for Eradicating Examination Malpractice

	Hear d work	Avoid briber y	Adequa te qualifie d teachers	Sufficie nt specious exam hall	Adequa te learning material s	Strict invigilati on	Defaulte d should be strongly penalize	Public enlightenme nt	Good salary for teach er	Less emphasi s on certifica te	Elimina te private schools	Tota l
N o	22	7	19	8	4	13	14	19	6	5	2	119
%	18	6	16	7	3	11	12	16	5	4	2	100

As to how examination malpractice is to be reduced or even eradicated, students gave the following suggestions.

1. Heard work on students' part
2. Adequate and qualified teachers
3. Public enlightenment
4. Strongly penalize defaulters
5. Strict invigilation during examination
6. Sufficient well equipment exam halls
7. Avoid bribery
8. Adequate salary and prompt payment for teachers
9. Less emphasis on certificate
10. Adequate learning materials
11. Elimination of private schools

Summary

Examinations generally speaking are conducted to access and rank candidates; so as to determine their capabilities or abilities to perform certain tasks. But there is a cranker worn attached to examination which has been a concern over the years in this country. This issue is examination malpractice. It has consistently remained a bane of the Nigeria educational system. Examination malpractice is a fraudulent illegal or crooked way of obtaining success or high grades in examinations, assessments or evaluation of students.

Some of the forms of examination malpractice include leakage of questions in advance of the actual date of the examination, impersonation (where an individual who is not registered takes place of a registered candidate), external assistance, intimidating examination officials including supervisors and markers of papers etc.

Among the reasons for examination malpractice are quota system, school administrators and teachers desire to have their school rated high in academic performance; inadequate facilities like textbooks, teacher's and teacher training strikes and frequent school closure are common features of education problems the country is facing.

The common agents of examination malpractice are parents and guardians (who buy exam for their wards), teachers and school administrators; lazy students, examiners who set and mark the papers, printers typists, supervisors, government officials that deliberately allocate poor facilities such as inadequate hall which cause overcrowding of candidates.

The consequences of this great menace are that there is the danger of an unacceptable compromise of standard and quality promotion of corruption and moral decadence e.g. sexual bribery, planting of seeds of fraud and corruption, fatal professional errors that result in loss of lives, filed careers, mediocrity, destruction of institutions and value systems to mention a few.

To curb or eradicate examination malpractice within the educational subsector the home, school and the government have some important roles to play. The possible solutions are that parents should perceive themselves not only as character moulders but also role models for their children or wards. Teachers on their part should be more committed to their profession and teach with mastery. Students should be taught that success is not acquired but earned through hard work and determination. Adequate facilities necessary for learning and testing should adequately be provided in schools for better academic performance and moral attainment of educational goals.

Conclusion

It is certain that examination malpractice is not limited to examination alone, perhaps it may be right to say that if all is not well in the larger Nigerian community, it will inevitably reflect everywhere. We are all involved in one way or the other as educational administrators in the formulation of examination policies, monitoring and evaluation etc. we must not therefore allow deliberate loop holes in the conduct of examinations. The entire country is in dear need of best doctors, politicians, teachers, lawyers, pilots, engineers, administrators, accountants, architects etc. but all this will remain a wonder dream if examination malpractice lingers.

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