

Impact of Exam Malpractice on the Quality of Graduates in Nigeria

Alhaji Kawugana

Federal Polytechnic P.M.B 0231 Bauchi,

Bauchi State

Alhajikawugana@gmail.com

Alpheause Kabasa Woyopwa

Keystone Bank Ltd Bank Road Bauchi Branch

Akabasa70@gmail.com

Abstract:

Examination malpractice is any wrong doing a student or candidate will exhibit before, during or after any examination. The impact of this act is so grave and has seriously affected the quality of graduates from our higher institutions of learning in the country. In the past, graduates of universities, polytechnics and college of education and other tertiary institutions speak, write and understand English, but unfortunately some of our graduates now do not understand and neither speaks English due to the notion and believes that one must pass at all cost even if by cheating during examination. Parents ,teachers, invigilators and proprietors of schools are those involved in this dirty game, for instance parents encourage wards by paying huge amount of money to the invigilators and proprietors of schools who open “miracle centres” where the examination malpractices take place so that they can pass with credit. Examination malpractice have been embraced by so many people as a norm and longer regarded as a bad act. The consequence of this for instance is that graduates of engineering whether mechanical or electrical cannot dismantle an couple an engine back not to talk of being creative and innovative. In conclusion Examination malpractice have seriously caused havoc to the education sector and our graduates can no longer compete with other students abroad where examination malpractice is seen and regarded as taboo

Key Words: Exam, Malpractice, Graduates, Quality, institutions

Introduction:

One of the objectives of education in Nigeria is to prepare the young ones to face future challenges and develop them to meet the nation’s manpower requirements. Schools need to conduct examinations as yardstick for assessment. It is the most practical way of assessment in education Maduka (1993) defined examination as a way to ascertain how much of a subject matter in a particular field of study the candidate has mastered. Homby (1995) defined an examination as a formal lest of somebody’s knowledge or ability in a particular subject, especially by means of answering questions or practical exercises (p. 58). Balogun (1999) also defined it as the process through which students are evaluated or tested to find out the quality of knowledge they have acquired within a specified period.

Examinations could be internal or external. It could be oral, written or both. Internal examinations entail continuous assessment tests, terminal, semester and annual or promotion examinations. Whereas external (public) examinations common in Nigerian schools include Common Entrance Examination for admission into secondary school. School certificates

examination are conducted by West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO), the Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) and National Teachers' Institute (NTI) conduct admission tests into tertiary institutions while the National Business and Technical Examination Board (NABTEB) conducts professional examinations for teachers and technicians respectively.

Examination malpractice is any wrong doing before, during or after any examination. Although one may not be able to rule out examination malpractice in the past, the current trend is alarming and calls for proper management in order to rid the school system of its consequences. Whereas in the past, students tended to hide the acts, now they advertise them with positive blatancy. The things that others thought right to draw a veil across, the modern biographer reveals with all the gusto of a showman. Ruwa (1997) traced back examination malpractice to 1914. He further reported that in the University of Maiduguri, about 25% of the students interviewed admitted to have engaged in one form of examination malpractice or another. Examination malpractice occurs in both internal and external examinations. In short, it has become an epidemic in the nation's educational system, which needs a prompt attention. The situation of examination malpractice has serious effect on the quality of grandaunts which invariably affect the socio-economic development of the country.

Fayombo (2004) categorized the reasons for examination malpractices into psychological and sociological causes. The over dependence on certification has led to 'mad rush' by the populace and the resultant effect is that people either acquire certificates legitimately or otherwise. This messy situation is having a negative effect on the nation's quality of education and the kind of certificates issued to students at different levels. So many people can no longer defend their certificates. Okwilagwe (2001) opined that the interest in non-intellectual factors would seem to have stemmed from the idea that "the human being is a complex whole" That is, man is made up of intellectual, emotional, affective and psychological traits. For them to develop and reach their full potential in life, these traits must be understood, harnessed, and be catered for by the school. Students' involvement examination malpractice has become perennial and institutionalized. It is a testimonial to the flawed process of admission into secondary schools and tertiary institutions. It has invariably, reflected in the multifaceted crises in the nation's educational system. Moral instruction is the detailed information, which concerns the principles of right and wrong behaviors'. The study of moral development has become a lively growth industry within the social sciences. Theories have maintained that human morality springs from emotional disposition that are hardwired into our species. Man is a complete entity, and there is no emphasis on the development of the whole individual that can play out morals. All children are born with a running start on the path to moral development. These children grow up to become adults in society. This is the more reason why children should be trained in self-discipline and filled with useful information. Education expects to provide a full Training for children, and the training involves examination and other forms of assessment from time to time to ascertain the level of knowledge / skill acquisition. This is the more reason why examinations must be well managed.

Farrant (1964) states that educationists are often tempted to over-concentrate on certain aspects of the child's make-up to the detriment of the others. The focus of this paper therefore is on how moral instruction could be used for managing examination malpractice in schools. Dimensions of Examination Malpractices Year-in-year-out, students come up with new dimensions of examination malpractices. This is the more reason why drastic steps must be taken. The instances of examination malpractices vary. They range from impersonation, leakage of questions,

tampering with results, and computer fraud to fraudulent practices by invigilators, officials and security personnel charged with supervising examinations. Parents are not left out of the business.

Problem Statement/Justification

The situation of examination malpractice has serious effect on the quality of grandaunts which invariably affect the socio-economic development of the country.

Also the situation of examination malpractice is so embarrassing to the nation that the federal military government in 1984 promulgated Decree 20 to deal with it. Part of the Decree reads thus: Any person who fraudulently or with intent to cheat or secure any unfair advantage to himself or any other person or in abuse of his office, produces, sells or buys or otherwise deals with any question paper intended for the examination of persons at any examination or commits any of the offences specified in section 3(2 7) (c) of this Decree, shall be guilty of an offence and on conviction be sentenced to 21 years imprisonment... (Fagbemi, 1998, p.1 7) However, Examination Malpractice Act 33 of 1999 revised the above decree but now stipulates punishment ranging from a fine of N50, 000.00 to N100, 000.00 and imprisonment for a term of 3-4 years with or without option of fine. This new development is due to the inability of the appropriate authorities to enforce the old Decree 20 of 1985. Despite all these laws, examination malpractice has been on the increase and this may be due to non-implementation of the laws. Reasons for it being the low moral standard in schools, candidates' fear of failure, lack of confidence in themselves, inadequate preparation, laziness and '419' syndrome that have eaten deep into the life of the society. Pratt (1981) stated that students are likely to cheat when they are not prepared for examinations. Ruwa (1997) as well reported that university lecturers are of the opinion that inadequate teaching and learning facilities, poor conditions of service of teacher's fear of failure by students and admission of unqualified candidates into universities are responsible for examination malpractices.

Fayombo (2004) categorized the reasons for examination malpractices into psychological and sociological causes. The over dependence on certification has led to 'mad rush' by the populace and the resultant effect is that people either acquire certificates legitimately or otherwise This messy situation is having a negative effect on the nation's quality of education and the kind of certificates issued to students at different levels. So many people can no longer defend their certificates. Okwilagwe (2001) opined that the interest in non-intellectual factors would seem to have stemmed from the idea that "the human being is a complex whole" That is, man is made up of intellectual, emotional, affective and psychological traits.

Literature Review

Examination malpractices have consistently remained a bane of Nigerian educational system. Most foreigners say that the academic certificates being issued to graduates in Nigeria are no more valuable than the pieces of paper on which they are printed. So what is examination malpractice? Examination malpractice is an illegal behavior by a candidate before, during or after the examination so that he/she can attain success easily and cheaply. Hence, the worth of the examination is violated. Examination malpractice is a cankerworm that portends grave dangers for the nation. The major causes of examination malpractices are: i. Laziness of students: Seriousness is thrown to the wind by many students. Most of them have little time for their studies. They spend their time attending parties and forming gangs who engage in untoward behavior.

- ii. Second is large population of students in many schools. Reasonable or few numbers of students should be promoted or admitted into higher institutions. Students cheat therefore to excel over their mates.
- iii. Many students are desperate; thinking that passing the examination is a do or die affair; they want to excel by all means. Some want promises from parents fulfilled others want to be on TV or Newspaper as the best in one form of examination or the other (though cheats by cheating).
- iv. Syllabus in many subjects such as Physics, Chemistry etc. is wide and difficult for teachers to cover. The school period is shortened by holidays, shift system and late resumption by students.
- v. Another cause of examination malpractice is inadequate preparation for exams. In a number of schools the teachers are few and specialized ones are fewer so students are not adequately prepared for the examinations.
- vi. Corrupt invigilators and supervisors: the students know that if they offer bribe to the invigilators, they will be allowed to cheat in the examination hall.
- vii. Lastly, there is a general trend in our society towards cheating and this is encouraged by almost all members of the population. The evil effects of examination malpractices cannot be overemphasized. Creativity and resourcefulness are hampered. It wreaks great havoc on the social, religious, economic and political lives of Nigerians. Employees are engaged in jobs they are not suited for since the Certificate they claim to possess are not merited.

SOLUTIONS TO EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE

- i. Teachers should be trained properly in their fields. They will then have the tactics to follow on how to finish the syllabus for a particular term or at least cover a large part of it.
- ii. Holidays may be more in number but reduced in length as students are reluctant to resume from long holidays.
- iii. Guidance Counselors should be employed in all schools to guide the students on study habits, career prospects and requirement for various careers.
- iv. Continuous assessment should be practiced correctly. It will reduce examination malpractices as 40% of marks are accumulated from various assessment techniques such as projects and assignments before actual examinations.
- v. The number of invigilators and supervisors should be increased in the exam halls. Exam officers, Vice Principals and Principals should occasionally pay visits to exam halls to observe what is going on. In this way, they could notice any cheating behaviour.
- vi. The students should be thoroughly searched before entering the hall. Apart from photographs, finger prints on certificates should be used for identification as no two persons; even identical twins could have the same finger print. That is why it is used in crime detection. In conclusion, solutions are only possible where there are Examination Halls, large classrooms, adequate seats and adequate number of teachers in a school. A class where there are 150 students sitting on the floor and windows with some armed with knives and locally made pistols; an invigilator will not risk his life to prevent examination malpractice.

The government can play a very big role in curbing this menace by providing enough classrooms, desks and employing qualified teachers. And also, during an examination, the school should ensure that each student gets his/her own question paper and provide enough invigilators. The Federal government has established an Exam Ethics Committee, all State Government and Local Government Councils should do the same thing.

METHODOLOGY

The research design used for this study is both quantitative and qualitative. The study area is the Federal Polytechnic; Bauchi .Stratified sampling technique was used to select 400 sample sizes. This was based on the sample size guideline that when the population is about 5000 or more, 400 sample size is adequate for the study (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005), Olatunji, 2010 and Usman, 2015).

Questionnaire and interview will be used to source data for the purpose of this research .The strata comprise students, management and academic staff of federal polytechnic Bauchi, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University and Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic Bauchi .The data will be analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that there is high level of corruption in the educational sector due the large number of private schools instead of government to improve its own

The finding of the study also reveals that in Nigeria we value the certificates more than the knowledge acquire which make some of the student to embark on exam malpractice to pass so that they will have the certificate since no defence

The finding of the study further reveals that there is no implementation of Exam malpractice instead change it to Exam misconduct due to high level of corruption

The findings of the study reveal that there is high level of corruption on the side of examinations bodies which make them to be acceptable if students are passing their exams

Conclusion

In conclusion, solutions are only possible where there are Examination Halls, large classrooms, adequate seats and adequate number of teachers in a school. A class where there are 150 students sitting on the floor and windows with some armed with knives and locally made pistols; an invigilator will not risk his life to prevent examination malpractice. The government can play a very big role in curbing this menace by providing enough classrooms, desks and employing qualified teachers. And also, during an examination, the school should ensure that each student gets his/her own question paper and provide enough invigilators. The Federal government has established an Exam Ethics Committee, all State Government and Local Government Councils should do the same thing.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendation was made:

- 1) Teachers should be trained properly in their fields. They will then have the tactics to follow on how to finish the syllabus for a particular term or at least cover a large part of it.
- 2) Holidays may be more in number but reduced in length as students are reluctant to resume from long holidays.
- 3) Guidance Counsellors should be employed in all schools to guide the students on study habits, career prospects and requirement for various careers.
- 4) Continuous assessment should be practiced correctly. It will reduce examination malpractices as 40% of marks are accumulated from various assessment techniques such as projects and assignments before actual examinations.
- 5) The number of invigilators and supervisors should be increased in the exam halls. Exam officers, Vice Principals and Principals should occasionally pay visits to exam halls to

- observe what is going on. In this way, they could notice any cheating behavior.
- 6) The students should be thoroughly searched before entering the hall. Apart from photographs, finger prints on certificates should be used for identification as no two persons; even identical twins could have the same finger print. That is why it is used in crime detection
 - 7) Over emphasis on certificate and materialism to the detriment of knowledge and skill need are to be reversed.
 - 8) The shortcomings and inadequacies of previous and current government policies towards the conduct of examination will be highlighted and the stakeholders advised accordingly
 - 9) The research will advance the efficiency of the conduct of examinations and their roles in alleviating or reducing exams malpractice

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