

The Impact of Exam Malpractices on the Quality of Graduates in Tertiary Institutions of Bauchi State

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Abstract

The study focused on the impact of examination malpractice on the Quality of Graduates in Tertiary Institutions of Bauchi state. Examination malpractice is a cankerworm that is posing a serious problem in the Nigerian educational system. The paper not only defined the concept of examination malpractice but also identified the causes, consequences and socio economic effects as well as the ways to eradicate it. This paper also explicates the implications of examination malpractice on quality graduates in Bauchi state which are majorly negative. The data for the research will be collected through questionnaire and interview, the research design used for this study is both quantitative and qualitative. The study area is Bauchi state. And the data collected will be analyzed using STATA statistical tools. The project may likely provide. Societal 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. Again, there is need to engage only honest persons in examination management. Based on the implications, recommendations, were made which inter alia include: proper counselling of students, intensified public enlightenment campaigns, strict interviews to be conducted for candidates and emphasis should be on practical performance in lieu of reliance on certificates (paper qualifications). Petters & Okon (2014) also suggests effective counseling services in schools to assist students acquire techniques of effective study habits.

Keywords: Examination, Malpractice, Graduates, Quality, Institution

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 test 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 ruch' 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.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

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 tertiary institution lecturers are of the opinion that inadequate teaching and learning facilities, poor conditions of service of lecturer's fear of failure by students and admission of unqualified candidates into universities are responsible for examination malpractices.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study is to:

- i. To examine the impact of exams malpractice in Tertiary Institutions of Bauchi State
- ii. To examine the efficiency of conduct of examination in Tertiary Institutions of Bauchi State
- iii. To examine the state of quality graduates in Tertiary Institutions of Bauchi state

Literature Review

Arifayan (2004), quoting Usman defined Examination malpractice as any act or wrong-doing that contravenes the rules of acceptable practice during and after an examination. It could also be seen as examination leakage or cheating which is the easiest way to destroy the image of any person or educational institution in any part of the world.

Idugboe, (2002), further stresses that, it is a dangerous monster that is destroying the moral foundation of our society, planting seeds of unethical and criminal values in the fertile minds of youths at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. In addition, Idugboe continues, that it robs the nation of a peaceful and harmonious society where professionalism, ethical values and certificates are a true reflection of sound knowledge and competence.

Onyechere (2003), the Exam Ethics Project Crusader notes that the spate of malpractices in health care delivery by medical processionals sworn to the Hippocratic oath, the auctioning and miscarriage of justice by the judiciary, the mindless looting of public treasury by Generals and Senators, the chronic political and electoral fraud, the regular collapse of buildings designed by "engineers" and "architects", the mindless theft of customers' money

by bank operators; all have root in an educational system bedeviled by malpractices.

Examination however is not necessarily the best and true test of knowledge, for many who have excelled in life have at one time or another had problems with examination. Sir Winston Churchill, one time British Prime Minister was a school failure, and described examination as an exercise that portrayed his ignorance where he portrayed knowledge (Danbaba 2004). In Nigeria's formal educational system, examination is the summit of an academic exercise in an institution. For this reason, its sanctity, transparency and conduct largely determines the credibility of both the certificate, and that of the institution. It is perplexing however, that examination as a means of evaluating students' performance has gradually changed from a fair competition and a true reflection of a student's ability to

Forms of Examination Malpractice.

1. Bringing foreign prepared materials into the examination hall and copying form them.
2. Collusion between candidates and officials via verbal communication of answers and sometimes involves teachers passing answers to students from outside.
3. Impersonation, a person other than the real student or registered candidate taking the place of the real person in exams.
4. Assault and intimidation of invigilators by for example, cult members who come into the exam halls with guns. If and when an invigilator spots them cheating, they will slightly show him/her their pistol without any other person knowing. The invigilator has no option but to keep his or her mouth shut due to fear of being hurt.
5. Mass cheating.
6. Leakage — some students intentionally come late to exam halls and this is to scout for some possible last hour exam leakage before they finally come to sit for exams.
7. Substitution of answer sheets by supervisors and invigilators.
8. "Giraffing" method — that is stretching and turning of neck in order to spy another person's answers.
9. Jotting down points for other students on question papers.
10. Writing answers/points on tables, chairs, palms and other parts of the body (e.g. laps).
11. Obtaining permission to visit the toilet where they have hidden written materials, while others if unaccompanied will go somewhere else to make reference to their books.
12. Submission of multiple scripts by students
13. Destroying evidence of exam malpractice by chewing and swallowing the evidence immediately they are caught.
14. Storing of information relevant to the exam in mobile phones or electronic organizer.
15. Some candidates/students adjust their sitting positions in such a way that they can allow some one beside or behind them to glance through their answer scripts. Malpractice also involves passport photographs, improper completion of entry forms and so on and so forth.
16. Post examination malpractice also occurs in abundance. Where the student goes to rewrite in the examiner's office or house. a non-competitive exercise. In fact, it is now a do-or-die affair.

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.

Some Causes of Examination Malpractice

Ade Adewumi, (2003), tries to make an analysis of factors that could bring about

examination malpractice.

(1) Society's Expectation/Orientation- It is the general notion of the entire populace in Nigeria that once you have gone to school you must graduate with a good result. Anything short of that, you are regarded as a failure or a drop out. Your honour and your prestige are at stake. In this respect, certificate is valued as a means to an end. Thus, all means whether straight or crooked are employed to achieve this objective. In short, there is too much emphasis on paper qualification without any thought of the ability of the individual to put into practice the knowledge so claimed to have been acquired.

(2) Parents' Status/Students' Inordinate Ambition- Research findings by Ezewu and Obanya, as quoted by Adewumi, (2003), indicate that academic aspiration of the school child is positively related to the socio-economic status of the parents. This is so because children always imitate their parents and many of them would wish to be like their parents and so aspire to be as highly educated or even better than their parents. Some parents want their children to take up their profession at all cost. Consequently we see a situation where some parents go to the extent of buying examination question papers for their wards and also lavishing invigilators and supervisors with gifts.

(3) Educational Institutions' Demand- In any institution of learning there are specific admission policies or requirements. For instance, from secondary school to University level, prospective applicants are expected to possess some minimum qualification(s) before being considered for admission. In an attempt to satisfy these requirements, students know that they must possess the relevant subjects for the course of study. In an attempt to satisfy these requirements, some of them feel that something must be done to avoid failure in their examinations so as to guarantee the achievement of their career goals. The final consequence of this is that many of them resort to cheating during the prescribed examination (s) so as to fulfill their academic ambition.

(4) Employers' Demand- Qualifications are the major parameters being used for employment or for filling vacancies in enterprises. Getting the certificate then becomes the most important thing to many of the prospective applicants for securing jobs. The effect of this is that the students who are academically weak but who desire good jobs on graduation easily resort to examination malpractice.

(5) General Economic Ailment/level of Income- In a nation like ours where there is a high inflationary trend due to the already battered economy, people seize every available means to make ends meet. People believe that without money, they cannot make it. The officials of examination bodies, mercenaries that are hired to write exams, some teachers and some corrupt supervisors/invigilators are no exception. Most of them use their positions to make money fraudulently. In addition, the monetary gains accruable from the business of examination malpractices have toughened the syndicates, pushing them to become more daring regardless of the cost/sanctions being imposed by examination bodies and government.

(6) Absence of Moral And Religious Instructions- Absence of moral and religious instructions in schools has led to low moral standards in the society which many believe is responsible for the wide spread cheating during examinations with its attendant consequences. Because of this low moral standard in the society, decay has set in, and hard work is not regarded nowadays as important anymore Those who work hard are looked upon as fools in the society.

(7) Lack of Exemplary Leadership- Some leaders in our country won their elections by rigging, some embezzle money and the students read all this stuff in the newspapers.

(8) Government's Laxity Fuels Examination Fraud- There are indications that examination malpractice has become a booming racket in different parts of the country because of government's attitude towards the malaise. For instance, despite the fact that

many candidates who sat for various public examinations over the years; have been indicted for examination malpractice. No single Nigerian has been made to face the full wrath of the law as provided for under decree No. 20 of 1984 (21 years jail term without option of fine); (now Act No 33 of 1999). Experts have said that since there is no known practical deterrent against the offence, candidates at public examinations now regard the various laws prohibiting exam malpractice as unenforceable. (Onyechere, 2004).

(9) Congestion in Examination Halls- This also aids cheating during examinations.

(10) Opened Examination Hall- Leaving examination halls open at all times during exam periods encourages students to go in and write on specific seats and on the walls so that they can copy from them during exams.

(11) Frequent Disruption in the School System- The frequent disruption in the school system vis-à-vis strikes is equally a contributory factor. Once the academic system is disrupted, students to a large extent are not prepared for examinations, explaining the recourse to cheating.

(12) The Enabling Environment- The enabling environment for serious academics in the country is lacking. With dilapidated infrastructures, dearth of instructional materials and lack of parental support staring in the face, it becomes inevitable that these factors have all leagued to contribute to the decay in the educational system.

(13) Governments- Governments at any level in Nigeria, give operational approval to private and public educational institutions with little or no facilities to prepare students for internal and external examinations. There are schools without science instruments and science reagents, yet their students routinely “participate in science practical’s.” This is against examination ethics and it brings about examination malpractice.

(14) Teachers’ inadequate coverage of syllabus– This, many believe is also responsible for exam malpractices in our schools. Running to class, three weeks to exam to teach students is a fire brigade approach which could lead students to cheating in order to make good grades.

Socio-Economic Consequences of Examination Malpractice

The Examination Ethics Project (EEP) campaigner, Onyechere, (2004), observes that those who engage in examination malpractice to pass school certificate and UME examination pose great danger to the nation today. He maintains that such persons are likely to continue cheating all their lives and therefore end up as incompetent people in their chosen fields, adding that examination malpractice is the root of corruption in Nigeria today. Imagine what awaits us when people like this become our medical doctors, engineers, pharmacists and professionals in other fields.

A princely sum of Ni billion is lost annually, courtesy of examination malpractice. In 2003 alone, JAMB justifiably cancelled 116, 990 results, while WAEC on its part cancelled 88, 260 partially and another 95, 283 totally. This means that WAEC effectively cancelled 183, 543 results, because those with partial results would still have to re-sit for the exams. This economic loss is to parents and also to students, leading to retardation of their progress, in addition to psychological and social trauma. In ten years, the country has lost N66 billion to examination malpractice alone. This 66 billion in 10 years is from cost of registration, tutorials, sundry charges and expenses which accounted for this financial loss. This money could have been channeled positively to other spheres of life (Onyechere 2004). What a waste! It is impossible to build an ethics friendly society on a foundation of labour force conceived, delivered and weaned on an educational diet of fraud, malpractices and irregularities; the Exams Ethics Project helmsman further said.

Many employers of labour have complained loud of supposed upper class graduates who find it tasking to apply for a job on paper. (Madojemu, 2000). More worrisome she

continued is when these “Toronto” graduates attempt to communicate verbally. Still on consequences of exam malpractice, Arifayan, (2004), maintains that exam malpractice renders our certificates worthless in terms of institutional, national and international standards, while hard-work is sacrificed on the altar of mediocrity. Talents are left untapped while discipline, honesty, dedication, and even self-actualization are pathetically compromised

Research Methodology

The research design used for this study is both quantitative and qualitative. The study area is Bauchi state. 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 of institutions in Bauchi State .The data will be analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Conclusion:

- The Conduct of Examinations in Bauchi state will be determined to guide policy makers in the future
- The research will advance the efficiency of the conduct of examinations and their roles in alleviating or reducing exams malpractice
- The shortcomings and inadequacies of previous and current government policies towards the conduct of examination will be highlighted and the stakeholders advised accordingly
- It will guide government and policy makers to have an insight into the causes of exams malpractice in Bauchi state with a view to re-strategize in the future

Recommendation

1. Over emphasis on certificate and materialism to the detriment of knowledge and skill need are to be reversed.
2. Examination officials should be motivated in cash so that they cannot be vulnerable to temptation.
3. Disciplinary action on perpetrators of examination malpractice should be taken immediately without fear or favour.
4. Proper counselling of pupils and students can go a longer to changing their mind set about examination malpractice.

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