
EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES AND NATIONAL INSECURITY

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Abstract

“Examination malpractice and national insecurity in Nigeria” is the focus of this paper: variables statement discussed includes measurement and evaluation in test construction and test behavior, personality; anxiety; age; test structure; environment, type of test, examination malpractice, forms of examination malpractice, implication of examination malpractice on the nation and the students, policy guiding examination procedure, teachers status and examination conduct, students’ status and examination conduct. It was observed that, examination malpractice destroys students’ intelligent/intellectual potential, discourage hard work and competitiveness, and destroys Nigerians indigenous moral value system. It was recommended among others that emphasis should be laid on student’s ability to perform task; rather than Nigerian focus on certificate acquisition. Federal Ministry of Education should give in-service training to teachers to study curriculum education. And curriculum planners should make curriculum education a compulsory five credit work load course in universities.

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Nigeria, the giant of Africa where human and natural resources are abundant is dominated by zeal to achieve success always. The process for success achievement is sometime not considered. The same thing applies to examination success. Certificate for job success is targeted without giving credence to the usability of certificates. Certificates are testimonies for efficient performance but Nigerians strive to achieve certificate at all cost and so they involve in examination malpractice. This menace has put Nigeria in a very sordid and morbid position, so more so that United States of America and Britain are re-considering the validity of Nigerian Certificates. The concepts learnt in Nigerian schools are not made to solve Nigerians' contemporary problems. What is then the essence of curriculum? Olorundare (2009) posited that:

- i. Curriculum must take into cognizance, all the subject concept that solve societal needs, problems and proffer solutions to difficulties of the nation in a bid to reform and create new humans capable of being independent and reliant.
- ii. Questions, tests, interviews teachers conduct, are pathways to students' acquisition of knowledge with which to accomplish life endeavours; and be spurred to carry on investigations for better living in a given society.
- iii. Teachers are therefore the source of the most preferred knowledge; models, inspires investigators and motivators of the youths in a bid to acquire the desired knowledge for sustainable and reliable future challenges.

How can a teacher who opts to write examinations for a student inspire such student to strive to be independent? Independence in examinations had occurred during immediate post colonial era in Nigeria (1928 - 1985). Can a Nigerian student acquire the credibility for independent certification today? Parent's career choice had dominated career option of their children and/or wards in Nigeria. Schools also had put examination accomplishment at the back of examination halls. Examiners put examination behind examination halls because influential parents pay fees ranging from ₦50,000 to ₦100,000 for mercenaries to write examination for their children and/or wards. Therefore, a student who had opted to study Economics, are forced by their parents to study Medicine. As curriculum planners posited, Economic student require Mathematics, English Language, Geography, Accounting and Biology or Health Science. If such a student is made to study Medicine, such as a student should study Mathematics, English Language, Physics, Chemistry and Biology! If such a student must pass very well, he or she must indulge in examination malpractice! What type of examination results should one expect from such student?

Statement of the Problem

Nigerian parents push students to study subjects that they (students) do not have the capacity to accomplish. Examination malpractice is putting graduates of Nigeria origin into difficult unapproved, unrecognized positions. Examiners are not adequately trained in measurement and evaluation techniques. Examiners do not recognize test behaviour, personality and true examination procedures. The students are lazy and not ready to study to attain success but rather resort to various practices such as hiring mercenaries to write, bribe invigilators, harass uncompromising supervisors and even attack them for proving difficult. Government has laid too much emphasis on certification at the expense of skill acquisition. Therefore, students' strive to acquire certificate at all cost which has put the national security, integrity and stability in jeopardy.

Significance of the Study

This study is embarked upon to:

- i. Find out the forms of examination malpractices.
- ii. Expose the implications of examination malpractice on the nation and students
- iii. Draw up a policy guiding examination procedure
- iv. Elucidate teacher's position during the past and the present examination procedures.
- v. Sensitize all examination bodies and the Federal Ministry of Education on the proper manner at which examinations are to be conducted in Nigeria.
- vi. Re-awaken the knowledge of the curriculum planners to re-design subject contents to be learnt by Nigerian students.
- vii. Awaken the student knowledge on the penalties accruable to them for indulging in examination malpractices and to re-assure students of the need to be independent during examinations.
- viii. Engineer the student to re-direct their youthful exuberance at re-authenticating their credibility in the aspiration to acquire a certificate that can once again become useful outside the Nigeria shores.

Measurement and Evaluation in Examination Construction

Measurement and evaluation are two terms used in educational activities. The two are usually employed by examining bodies, such as the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO), other professional bodies and teachers in taking decision. These terms, measurement and evaluation are sometimes used erroneously and interchangeably. Therefore, it may be useful to clarify the relationship between the two.

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Erickson and Welting (1976) defined measurement as developing quantitative description. They warned that measurement should not be confused with evaluation. Erickson and Welting explained further that measurement is data and information gathering process while evaluation is concerned with assessing the adequacy or worth of particular performances or samples of students' knowledge, understanding, skill or feeling. From the above, it could be seen that evaluative judgment are based on information and data obtained through the use of sound measurement procedures and techniques. Some of the measurement techniques make use of interviews, assignments, questionnaires, and attitude inventories, multiple choice items, essays etc. It is in the process of applying these measurement techniques that examination malpractices occur. When these occur, any judgment i.e. evaluation based on such measurements becomes unreliable. Evaluation is an important and constantly occurring aspect of teachers' job. Anything that may render such activity useless deserves to be properly looked into and prevented.

It is for this reason that this paper is focusing attention on examination malpractice. In the cause of writing this paper, effort shall be made to explain test behaviour, the concept of examination malpractice, implication of examination malpractice and some steps toward reducing it. In this paper examination and test shall be used interchangeably to connote the same meaning. Measurements that are made on continuous basis or given by the teacher are more identified as tests. Measurements that are made at the end of a programme or semester, session or by national examination boards and professional bodies are often referred to as examinations. Malpractices do occur in the different types of measurements.

Test Behaviours

In the course of writing examinations, candidates tend to exhibit different types of attitudes. These attitudes are brought by some factors, and may have either negative or positive effects on students' performance in the examinations. These factors may include; personality, anxiety, age, test structure, environment, type of test and others. Some of these factors are discussed as follows;

Personality: According to Darley, Glucksberg, Kamin and Kincha (1994), personality is the organized and distinctive pattern of behaviour that characterizes an individual's adaptation overtime. Personality is not unconnected with the individual's biogenic structure and the total environmental experience. It is personality that is responsible for individual differences. It is one of the unique factors influencing test behaviour though in different ways for the individuals. A type 'A' person will react to a test in a way different from a type 'B' person.

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Anxiety: Anxiety cuts across race, sex and age barriers. Darley, Glucksberg, Kami and Kincha (1994) also described anxiety as an emotional fear, or an apprehension without a specific object of threat. Anxiety is capable of causing negative examination behaviours. Misreading examination questions, omitting numbers and words, changing the right answer for a wrong one, all can sometimes be traced to anxiety. Pyne (1984) established that there is relationship between answer changing and anxiety.

Age: intellectual capabilities increases from infancy to adulthood, at old age capabilities according to speculations, decrease. Though there is no fact to support the decrease of intellectual capabilities at old age, but a known fact is that the psychomotor activity decreases. Therefore a psychomotor test of the same standard administered to different age groups will elicit different behaviours positively or negatively.

Test Structure: These are problems relating to items construction. They may be unrelated to the concept and skill being tested. These problems may include illegible figures or letters, which may be a result of poor printing. Also test items loaded with unfamiliar word and terminologies, too long and ambiguous sentences, and test items with negative items are problems of test structure. Situations like those listed above can generate anxiety which may affect behaviour during test.

Environment: The environment in which a test is administered will influence test behaviour too. A poorly lit room, a very hot or cold room is not conducive for examination. A noisy environment with lot of distractions will negatively influence test behaviour. Sitting arrangement can influence test behaviour where students are seated too close to each other, negative test behaviour may ensue.

Type of test: Behaviour will also vary with the type of test, for instance, the degree of seriousness on an interest inventory test will differ from an aptitude test. A candidate taking a selection test of a particular programme is keen and may do anything to get into the programme. Also a teacher-made test which students are conversant with will not elicit the same fear as that by a National Examination Board. From experience, less fear is generated over a diagnostics achievement test than over general achievement test behavior. Some other factors that may influence test behavior are test procedure, and students' lack of preparation. It is essential for teachers to be aware of these factors so as to prevent their negative impact on examination.

Examination Malpractice

Examination malpractice can be defined as any fraudulent, dishonest or disruptive behavior of a candidate, group of candidates or others involved in the administration of examination. This is done with an intention of altering the correlation between examinees' grade or scores and their cognitive, psychomotor and perceptual abilities. Examination malpractice is usually a fraudulent intention, and may occur before, during and after the writing of an examination. Examination malpractice is a cankerworm eating up our education evaluation system and rendering it invalid and unreliable. Examination malpractice rears its ugly head in many shapes and forms. It occurs in formative, summative and public examinations. The situation is so bad, leakage of questions of some National Examination Boards occur on regular basis.

Forms of Examination Malpractice

Some of the common ways in which examination malpractice occurs especially in schools' and colleges' organized examination include:

- a. Copying each other in the examination hall
- b. Copying from papers smuggled into examination hall.
- c. Illegal possession of examination questions
- d. Swapping of scripts.
- e. Spying or giraffing
- f. Unlawful possession of examination booklets.
- g. Noise-making or talking during examination.
- h. Replacing original examination booklet written in an examination hall with that neatly and correctly written somewhere else.
- i. Insubordination in the examination hall.

Omosho (1991) also identified some other types of examination malpractice, some of which are in line with those listed above, they include:-

- i Examination leakage
- ii Impersonation
- iii cheating, collusion, swapping of scripts etc
- iv Smuggling of answer scripts.
- v Certificate forgery
- vi Assault on examination administrators

Most of these malpractices are obtained in both public and private school examinations. The most common and widely reported of examination malpractice is leakage of questions. Sometimes examiners get hold of examination questions before the

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examination takes place. Omotosho (1991) identified some possible sources of examination leakage. They include:-

1. Examination bodies or persons involved in examination processes.
2. The printing press used in printing examination papers.
3. Transportation of live papers from the press to place of custody of examination papers.
4. Custodians of examination papers
5. Supervisors of various examination
6. Wrong or mixed packing of question papers; there is the likelihood of wrong packing of certain question papers not meant for a particular day or session.

In the school system, examination leakage is possible, through the secretariat staff responsible for typing and collating the questions. Lecturers, who absent themselves from lectures due to other personal interest and engagement, sometimes cover up their inadequacy and inefficiency by teaching students the exact questions set for their examinations. Some also give out questions for monetary rewards or for sexual pleasure.

Implications of Examination Malpractice on the Nation's Students

If care is not taken, many of the certificates issued in this country either by national examination boards or the tertiary institutions may lose recognition. This may happen because not all those in possession of Nigerian certificates can perform at the level of the certificates they possess. These days only few students rely solely on their ability for success in examination. Many go out looking for easy ways out. Such may include getting the examination questions before the tests are taken, arranging for impersonation at the examination for agreed fees. The fear that they cannot succeed without cheating is always there since they have not laboured for such a success. Grade is no longer a reflection of student's abilities. The urge to work hard is no more in students because honest and hardworking students find themselves trailing behind weaker students. The situation had resulted in parents and guardians spending extra money providing extra lessons to see their sons/wards through during examinations. These sons/wards get overstretched because of the artificial, unnecessary competition they face, which keep them busy receiving lectures morning, afternoon and night. Academically, weak students who get admitted into higher institutions with certificate obtained through examination malpractice may get frustrated at the demands of their courses of specialization. Such students can be easily provoked and can engage in violence and vandalism.

According to Gade and Berliner (1998), delinquent behaviour is the student's desperate way of escaping from failure and threat. Frustration brought about by students

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inadequate scholastic aptitude and achievement can make students submit easily to peer and gang influences. As a result, it is quite possible for frustrated students to seek refuge under secret societies and other immoral acts are perpetrated.

Though the causes of examination malpractice reside in the same societal factors that produce crime outside the schools, yet teachers cannot be completely exonerated from examination malpractice. It is an indictment of teachers for poor performance. When students misbehave or create disorder in any form, teachers are being said to have failed in their duties. Bajah (1994) opined that it is not only becoming increasingly difficult to attract “good” people into the teaching profession across board/levels due to poor remuneration. It is in fact even difficult retaining those who initially opt for teaching. The occurrence of examination malpractice in schools today could be said to be a reflection of the quality of teachers in the system. The effects of examination malpractice are considered so disastrous to the society that ways to be devised to reduce these effects and save our educational system are demanded. Corruption in all forms seems to be turning into a normal way of life in this country. Therefore parents, teachers and students who are actors in examination malpractice must be focused on when making efforts to reduce examination malpractice.

Policy Guiding Examination Procedure

With the economic instability where everyone is looking for ways to survive, moral uprightness tends to be at its lowest ebb. It may therefore be unrealistic to talk about ways of stamping out examination malpractice completely as this may be unrealistic and unachievable in the present circumstances. Rather, it may be more realistic to proffer some ways of reducing the rate of examination malpractice. In the past, examination malpractice had been traced to poor administration of examination. In this regard, reducing examination malpractice may require the following policies:

Table 1: Examination Policy in Nigeria

Policy	Proposed Examination Procedure and Policies
P	S/N Mark Ordering and Authentification
PA	1 Security at examination drafting Village:
	i. Adequate security during preparation of the examination questions must be ensured.
	ii Examiners are to be incaserated within the period
	iii Examiners are to live in examination village.
	iv Examiners are to swear oath of secrecy and allegiance, by crossing the guns (10) and axe (10)
	v Examiners should be given lectures that are examinable. Those who pass the exams only shall be the examination drafting committee.

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- vi Examiners are to be inducted to accept their assignment as service to National Development.
 - vii Examiners to wear clothes (Jackets and trousers) without pockets.
 - viii Examiners are to be per state (36) members.
 - ix Examiners to be adequately remunerated for the period of the assignment
 - x Visitors to the examiners are not to be allowed: examiners to tell their visitors to stay away.
 - xi On no condition should examiners be allowed to wear wrist watch, nor carry calculator or have access to telephone.
- PB 2 Hall for the examination:
- i. Separate (2) examination hall, one for practical and one for non-practical subjects adequately illuminated and ventilated must be built with the same pattern in each of the 8810 wards in Nigeria and built with exam paper room inside the hall.
 - ii The hall to be painted white, glossy and 24 feet high.
 - iii Hall to accommodate two hundred (200) candidates (8810 x 200).
 - iv Student to write the examination in his/her ward of birth, non-Nigerian in ward of residence.
 - v Long tables of 15 feet long occupying 5 candidates must be with 2 feet baring cross-bar, 2 feet high and 3 feet width, painted in glossy and white colour.
 - vi Long benches occupying 5 candidates must be with 2 feet resting back cross-bar, sitting space of 3 feet, painted in glossy and white colour.
 - * The glossy/greasy nature of the tables and benches to prevent writing of any form on the surface.
 - vii Benches and tables to be arranged for the students to back themselves; 2 feet intervals and space created for adequate movement of the invigilators
- PC 3 Materials and equipment for the examination
- i. All answer scripts must be numbered, marked and connectable to electronic device for fake detection.
 - ii Question paper should be so numbered and marked with electronic device for fake detection.
 - iii Biro, pencils, rulers, erasers must be provided by the Federal Ministry of Education to be distributed to each hall in the 8810 wards in Nigeria.
 - iv Pens (biros) and rulers to be block, no hole in the biro and ruler made of iron.
 - v Calculators, four figure tables and all other necessary materials must be made available.
 - vi Chemicals for chemistry and all facilities must be in each hall (practical).
 - vii Home economics facilities and equipment must be made available within the hall (practical).
 - viii Integrated science, Biology facilities and equipment must also be built within the hall (practical).

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- ix Technical equipment facilities and equipments must be provided within the hall (practical).
- x The strong room for the examination papers must be that of the bank to secure the exam papers.
- xi 5 Mobile Policemen must be recruited and annexed to each examination hall in the 8810 x 2 halls x 5 mobile policemen.
- PD 4 Examination Bodies in Nigeria
- i. The halls must not be allowed to lie fallow throughout the year round. Regular, private and public examinations must be scheduled and held in the halls to make the services of the law enforcement agents relevant. The examination bodies available in Nigeria for secondary schools are:
- ii West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE OL)⁽¹⁾, WASCE OL NOV/DEC⁽²⁾, National Examination Council NECO OL (Regular)⁽³⁾, NECO OL (NOV/DEC)⁽⁴⁾, Teachers II Regular⁽⁵⁾, Grade II Teachers Certificate (NOV/DEC)⁽⁶⁾, National Teachers Institute (for GR II)⁽⁷⁾, National Technical Certificate (NTC)⁽⁸⁾, National Business Certificate (NBC)⁽⁹⁾, IJMB Exams⁽¹⁰⁾, UME⁽¹¹⁾.
- PE 5 5 invigilators are to be assigned to each hall per examination (8810 x 2 x 5). Invigilators must be provided and to be sure these that invigilators are present physically and are vigilant throughout the examinations. On no account should the invigilators be less than 5 (five); 40 candidates per I invigilator.
- PF 6 Cases of examination malpractice should be reported by invigilators and should be well documented.
- PG 7 The cases should be promptly treated when examinations are over (within one week after the examination (for recall of the students if necessary for repeat).
- PH 8 Adequate and unambiguous instructions are to be provided on the questions papers.
- PI 9 Candidates sitting for examinations must be properly identified and checked into the examination halls.
- PJ 10 Candidates wishing to ease themselves must do that in the toilets provided in the halls. On no account should a candidate be allowed to move out of the hall of examination.
- AC 11 No loitering at 24 feet round the exam halls.
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Teachers' Status and Examination Conduct

In the past teachers were known to be morally upright and disciplined. The situation is no more the same. This is not to say that all present day teachers are bad but that we have more bad teachers than in the past. Teachers nowadays aid and abet examination malpractice. This situation could have been brought about by harsh economic situations. What teachers earn as salary is not enough to cater for all their needs. Hence, they look for other ways to make the two ends meet. For examination malpractice traceable to teachers to be reduced, the following measures should be taken:

1. Teachers' condition of service should be greatly improved e.g. better salary, adequate housing, effective transportation etc.
2. Disciplinary committee should be set up to deal with offending teachers at local, state and national levels as may be appropriate.
3. Teachers should be adequately supervised to make sure they teach their students effectively. Some teachers may leave their work undone and may be tempted to cover their inefficiency by leaking examination questions.
4. Teachers who help in exposing examination malpractice should be commended and rewarded appropriately.

Students' Status and Examination Conduct

The principal actors in examination malpractice are the students. The act is usually carried out by them or on their behalf. Therefore whatever can reduce act of examination malpractice in them should have been of a greater impact. Some of the ways to reduce students' involvement in examination malpractice are to:

1. Educate the Students about the evil effects of examination malpractice
2. Educate them on time management that they may provide sufficient time to their studies.
3. Provide adequate instructional facilities in schools;
4. Advise them on the syllabus of their courses and ensure the coverage by their teachers;
5. Advise them to make adequate use of the library

Parents' Status and Examination Conduct

In recent times, it has been discovered that parents go to any extent to ensure the success of their children. There is nothing bad in ensuring the success of ones children if done in the right way. A parent paying an impersonator to write an examination for his/her child is not helping that child. Any dubious activity of the parent in securing for their wards is not good. Parents can help in reducing examination malpractice by:

- i. Ensuring that their children attend classes regularly

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- ii. Providing their wards books and other materials needed for their education including provision of conducive room for studying.
- iii. Attending Parent Teacher Association Meeting.
- iv. Visiting their wards' school to check their performance and progress
- v. Setting achievable goals for their wards.
- vi. Setting good examples for their wards to follow.

Conclusion

In this paper, efforts have been made to explain the concept of examination malpractice as a fraudulent means of obtaining examination grades. The various forms of examination malpractice such as smuggling of prepared papers into examination hall, swapping of papers, spying and others were discussed. It was mentioned that this may affect the recognition of our certificates within and outside Nigeria. It has been postulated by various governmental and non-governmental campaign teams that examination malpractice:

- a. Destroys students intellectual potentials
- b. Destroys Nigerian Educational system
- c. Is a threat to national image
- d. Undermines our collective aspirations
- e. Discourages hard work and competitiveness
- f. Destroys our indigenous moral value system
- g. Ruins the future and can lead victims to prison.

Some suggestions for reducing examination malpractice through examination Administrators, teachers, students and parent were discussed. It is believed that whatever is put into reducing examination malpractice shall not be a waste, Nigeria educational system must be saved from degenerating and deteriorating.

Recommendations

Based on the submissions, it could be recommended that:

1. The Federal Ministry of Education should create conducive atmosphere for the conduct of examination in Nigeria (Policy on conduct of examination in Nigeria referred).
2. The curriculum planners should make school study concept, ideas, issues learnt relevant to Nigerian societies.
3. Less emphasis should be laid on certificate acquisition in Nigeria.
4. Most of the examinations conducted in Nigeria should be made practicable (if need be some of their theoretical questions be transformed to practical questions)

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5. At teachers' Colleges, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities, process of examination construction must be taught.
6. Parents should be sensitized in churches, mosques and shrines to allow students to choose and study subjects they have ability for.

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