

EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE SYNDROME: A THREAT TO EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the role played by parents and teachers in examination malpractice. Four hundred secondary school students were randomly sampled for the study. An instrument (questionnaire) titled: "students' attitude towards examination malpractice was used on the students". The data collected were analyzed using chi-square and t-test. Findings reveal that there is no significant effect of parenting styles on students' attitudes towards examination malpractice. Students in senior and junior schools have almost the same attitude towards examination malpractice and their reasons for indulging in it were similar. There were no significant differences in their responses. Based on these findings, recommendations were made.

Introduction

Parents and teachers whose role and responsibility is the upkeep of moral and social standards have become useful tools for propagation of malpractice. One therefore, begins to wonder whether this role has changed in recent times.

Parents in the past send their children to school not because they are ambitious but because they want their wards educated. The interest and aptitude of the child are considered above parental interest. Wards are not pressurized into offering courses they are incapable of doing. Today the reverse is the case as parents not only pressurized their wards into offering ambitious courses but even go the extent of employing subject specialists to write examination for their wards or provide the money that these wards use to bribe examination officials. As role models to their lives, job and ; businesses, they teach their children immorality and unethical behaviours. Parents alike abet and finance examination malpractice for their children. Rather than being assets, children from such -families grow up to become liabilities and threats to the society (Onyechere, 1977).

Teachers who were in the past looked upon as the custodian of people's value and traditions . due to the economic crisis which affects them, most of them are also part of this problem. Anakwe (2008) reported that between 2006 and 2007 teachers were involved in aiding and abetting examination malpractice in different parts of the country. Also 600 schools were warned and 300. schools were recognized.

She stated that teachers perpetrated examination malpractice through the following ways: -

- * Teachers selected for invigilation act as accomplices to help candidates pass by rendering assistance to candidates.
- * Aiding and abetting impersonation,
- * Having dubious dealing with students so as to render assistance during examinations.
- * Dictating answers to candidates during examinations.
- * Organizing contribution from students to settle supervisors.
- « Allowing students to use mobile phones with answers stored in them during examination.
- * Allowing students to communicate with outsiders who Dictate answers to them

during the examination.

- * Allowing students to use earphones to listen to dictated answer during exams.
- * Divulging official confidential information on practical examination.

Denga (1991), opined that some teachers directly or indirectly promote examination malpractice through the direct means. They could show questions to their lovers or girl friends in advance. Indirectly they could sit glued to a place while invigilating examination and all sorts of information can be passed from one student to the other.

Some teachers who do not teach well during the semester, for one reason or the other, they make up for their deficiencies by propping up the marks of their students so that eyebrow will not be raised as to why so many students have failed their particular course.

Other teachers who lobby for marks from (heir fellow colleagues in respect of certain student can be accused of examination malpractice because directly one can infer from such a practice that it is what they do in their own courses.

Parents are considered (o be (he most influential agent of socialization. As the child grows up, he is assisted by parents to acquired and assimilate nil (lie values and norms cherished by the society. Ibrahim (2008) reported that the child's behaviour and learning are greatly influenced before (hey leave dome to secondary school. The influence of parents on the virtues of patriotism, morality, obedience, dignity of labour, transparent honesty and accountability is supreme.

Fajonyomi (2004) attributes all forms of deviant behaviours or poor parenting and moral decadence of the society. It is sad to note that today most Nigerian children and adolescents manifest all kinds of deviant behaviours such as violence and disobedience to constituted authority, poor attitude to work, cheating during examinations, sexual promiscuity, unwanted pregnancies, etc. Carew (2004) observed that parents, children, government officials, teachers, security agencies and even staff of these examination bodies are involved in this corrupt practice of aiding and abetting examination malpractice in all levels of our educational system. Carew further maintained that teachers leak question papers for favoured students, invigilators are settled to allow cheating in the hall or give advance copy of unauthorized groups and parents who give out huge sums of money of their children (o purchase question papers. However, these examination malpractioners serve as social reinforces in (he promotion of nnfi-social behaviours such as cheating during examination. This immoral practice has made it very difficult for universities and employers of labour to use the certificates presented by these products of examination malpractice for admission and employment.

The researcher attributes all the problems to poor parenting, peer influence and modeling. This therefore means that children that are properly brought up are most likely to manifest acceptable behaviours and are expected to shun all forms of corrupt tendencies such as examination malpractice, stealing, immorality, etc. On the other band, if children experience poor parenting and modeling where parents indulge in all forms of corrupt and immoral practices, their children are bound to copy their behaviours.

Statement of the Problem

The Nigerian Post-Primary School children manifest all kinds of deviant behaviour,: particularly cheating during internal and external examinations. Virtually everyone in the society takes part in encouraging examination malpractice. Most of the time, (he family, the school and the society serve as social reinforcers. The consequences arising from its moral decadence range from expulsion (o suspension of students from school, poor performance, loss of confidence in the value of examination and results and falling standard of education. In spile of all the efforts made by government and spirited individuals to stamp out examination malpractice in schools,

the immoral act is still increasing daily and more sophisticated methods are used by students, invigilators and parents to perpetuate cheating during examinations. Ibrahim (2007) argues that parental influences and poor modeling are the major factors responsible for this moral decadence. This therefore means that children that have enjoyed good parenting are those who withstand external pressure and shun all forms of corrupt tendencies whereas those who experienced poor parenting and modeling exhibit all forms of anti-social behaviours such as examination misconduct (Mohammed, 2008).

Although much work has been done on the causes and effects of examination malpractice in schools, little attention has been paid to the effects of parental influence on children's attitude towards examination malpractice. More importantly, much attention has not been given to the need for value re-orientation and attitudinal change.

Purpose of the Study

This study examines the effects of parental attitude toward examination malpractice in post-primary schools in Katsina Local Government. The aim is to find out whether or not poor parenting leads to the development of positive attitude towards examination malpractice and at what level of our education system it manifesting itself. To this end, the study aims at finding out: -

1. The effect of parental influences on children's attitude towards examination malpractice.
2. Consequences of examination malpractice in schools.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study emanates from the fact that children's behaviours in schools are affected by the kind of child rearing practices they have received at home and the neighborhood. The results obtained will provide parents with information that is useful for necessary adjustment in the home in order to assist other stakeholders in stamping out examination malpractice in our schools. It will also help psychologists and administrators by providing insight into the cause of students' deviant behaviours and how they can be assisted to address the problem.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant effect of parenting styles on children's attitude towards examination malpractice.
2. There is significant difference between children's attitude towards examination malpractice at the junior secondary level and senior secondary schools.
3. Examination malpractice does not have any significant effect on secondary school students.
4. There is no significant difference between children in junior and senior secondary school on their reasons for indulging in examination malpractice.

Methodology

The target population of this study comprised all secondary school children in Katsina local government. Four hundred secondary school children formed the sample for this study. The stratified sampling technique was used to classify the schools into junior secondary school and senior secondary schools. A simple random sampling was then applied to select eight schools: four junior secondary and four senior secondary schools.

The research instrument used to gather data for the study was a self-designed questionnaire titled "students' attitude toward examination malpractice". The instrument was divided into two sections. The first part was designed to obtain students' biographical data; the second section was directed at identifying the cause, effects and children's attitude toward examination malpractice. The questionnaire contained fifteen items, which the subjects were expected to tick. The hypotheses postulated guided the items formulated to elicit information from the respondents.

Procedure The questionnaires were administered in the selected schools by the researcher with the assistance of the teachers in the schools. They were collected and thereafter analyzed.

Data Analysis

Hypothesis I: There is no significant effect of parenting style on students' aptitude towards examination malpractice.

Table 1: Parenting Style and children Attitudes towards Examination Malpractice

Parenting	Junior	Senior Junior	Senior	Total	D.F.	X Cal.	X ² Cal.	Remarks
Sec, Sch.	Sec.	Sec.	Sec. Schs.	Schs.	Schs.			
Democratic	30	27	40	30	127	6	-0.15	12.50
Laissez Faire	40	28	29	38	135			
Autocratic	30	45	31	12	118			
	100	100	100	80	380			

The table reveals that there is no significant effect of parenting style on children's attitude towards examination malpractice. The calculated X² value of 0.15 is greater than the tabulated values of 12.50 this led to the acceptance of the hypotheses. Therefore, there is no significant effect of parenting style on children's attitude toward examination misconduct, which is contrary to general expectations.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between children's attitude towards examination malpractice Junior Senior Secondary Schools,

Table 2 Students' Attitude towards Exam Malpractice

Attitude	JSS	SS	Total	P.F.-I
Critical				
Positive	178	352		-4
Negative	3.84	OK		
Total	180	360		

Table 2 shows an insignificant difference between Junior Secondary and (heir counterparts in Senior Secondary Schools. This is because (he calculated X^2 values of 4 is less than the critical X^2 values of 3.84, which led to (he acceptance of the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: Examination malpractice does not have any significant effect on secondary school students.

Table 3 Consequences of Exam Malpractices

S/no	Statement	Sec. Schs.	Senior Sec. Schs.	Total	D.F.	X^2 Cal.	"
1.	Lead to expulsion	40	18	58		3.11	"
2.	Inability to defend ones Certificate	04	9	13			"
3.	Leads to cancellation Results	41	76	17			"
4.	Lead to suspension	33	29	62			"
5.	Lead (o poor Performance	3	10	13			"
6.	Beating		47	86			"
7.	Total	50		349			"

Table 3 shows (he analysis of students' responses on the consequences of indulging in examination malpractice with the X^2 critical of 11.07, (he hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference between students Junior Secondary School and Senior Secondary School on their reason for indulging in examination misconduct.

Table 4: Students' Responses for Engaging in Examination Malpractices.

s/no	Statement	Junior	Senior	Total	O F2	X^2 Cal	X" Crit	
1.	Everybody is doing it		12	19	31	0.83	5.99	Significant
2.	I want to pass at all cost	103	143	2465				
3.	Teaching do not teach us well	67	32	35				
4.	Fear of examination	32	35	67				

Table 4 shows the analysis of the responses of children for engaging in examination misconduct. It revealed that the calculated X^2 value of 0.83 is less than the critical X^2 value of 5.99.

The hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference between children in Junior, Senior Secondary School on their reasons for indulging in examination misconduct, is accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which parental influence affect children's attitude towards examination misconduct in Katsina Local Government. The results of hypothesis one reveal no significant effect of parenting styles on students¹ attitude towards examination malpractice contrary to the general speculations and findings of (Onyechere, 1997). The present findings is however in line with the study of Fajonyomi (2004) whose studies revealed that lack of adult models, crave for material wealth, moral decadence and peer influence are the major factors that encourage the development of positive attitude towards examination malpractice. It seems as if parents and all stakeholders in the child rearing industry are fast losing the battle. Anakwe (2008) attributed this to the influence of electronic and print media. The result of hypothesis 2 reveals no significant difference between children's altitude toward examination malpractices in Junior and Senior Secondary Schools. This is true because according to Fajonyomi and Onyechere virtually everyone in the society lakes part in encouraging examination malpractice by being reinlbrccrs.

The findings of hypothesis 3 reveal an insignificant effect of examination malpractice on children academic future, which is contrary to general opinion and research findings. Ibrahim (2007) and Fajoyumi (2004) reported that examination malpractice leads to expulsion, suspension cancellation of results, and loss of confidence on results obtained and employment of incompetent and fraudulent people into private sector organization with disastrous consequences to the society. The findings of this study is supported by Mohammed (200X) who observed that, children who find it difficult to meet the conditions for achieving certain goals would employ unacceptable means. Tins means that children who feel that they cannot pass their examination due to laziness, poor teaching and truancy are prepared to use any means, no mailer the cost, to cheal during examination in order to gel the desired grades. Examination malpractice is a bone in the neck and it is gelting more sophisticated every day.

Hypothesis 4 which states that no significant difference between students in Junior Secondary School and Senior Secondary School on their reasons for indulging in examination misconduct does not show any significant different in the reasons for indulging in examination misconduct in both the junior and senior secondary schools. This shows that examination malpractice has eaten deep into the fabric of our students.

It seems as if parents and all stakeholders in the child rearing industry are fast losing the battle. Anakwe (2008) attributed this to the influence of electronic and print media.

The result of hypothesis 2 reveals no significant difference between children's attitude toward examination malpractice in junior and senior secondary schools.

Recommendations

Consequent upon the above discussion the researcher likes to advance the following suggestions:

1. Teachers should serve as model for students' to allow; this implies that they should try to live above board by not compromising anything for their status and position. Also they should be dedicated to their duty by giving the students the best training they need which will lead to desired goals of success.
2. The examination ethics projects should motivate teachers, parents and individuals on 'the society by commending them when they demonstrate ethics-friendly attitude. On the other hand, punish those who abet examination malpractice.
3. Parents should counsel and caution their wards on the importance of hard work as a path to success in life. On the other hand, they should see themselves as model for the reinforcement of good behaviours and should not engage in aiding and abetting examination malpractice themselves.
4. The government and educational planners should give serious attention to the funding of education. Facilities should be provided in all institutions of learning and the classroom should be structured in order to show students the correct behaviours to adopt.

5. Decree 22 of 1984 of special Tribunal (miscellaneous offences), which has been silenced, should be revisited *by* government to make it a more realistic, tool for fighting examination malpractice.
6. Religious bodies should preach against the evil of cheating.
7. Guidance and counselling services should be provided to all categories of learners in secondary schools in order to interpret events in their lives (hereby giving sense to the senseless and removing the discomfort and anxiety, which inevitably accompany confusion.
8. The government should ensure consistency in the implementation of its policies.
9. Security agents whose role it is to implement laws should be educated not to be part of the law breakers.
10. The high premium placed on paper qualification over and against skill should be de-emphasized.
11. Providing conducive atmosphere for them to thrive should encourage artisans.
12. The government should build and furnish libraries with books.
13. The government should motivate and train teachers whose spirits are near breaking point through appropriate reward measures for greater productivity.
14. Students should be subjected to proper searching before entering an examination hall.
15. Students should learn to use most of their time learning and preparing before hand for whatever task is ahead of them and accept failure or success in good fate and as a means of improving performance.
16. All forms for phones and electrical and scientific calculators and gadgets should be discouraged during any form of examination.

Conclusion

Parents who set a solid foundation at home, which the teachers build upon, should actively be involved in correcting all forms of cheating; the job will become light for other stakeholders in the development of the child and society to carry malpractice.

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