

A PANORAMIC DISCOURSE ON EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Examination malpractice is a serious problem in Nigerian educational institutions and especially in secondary schools. Examination malpractice is a notable reality in Nigeria but with many negative consequences. The presence of examination malpractice is a threat to the stability of educational institutions and the society at large. Many students, parents, teachers and guardians who partake in it have not realized the long-term consequences of examination malpractice. Carrying out a research work on the causes and effects of this menace, especially on the standard of education is necessary. This work employed analytical and descriptive methods with the use of questionnaires to carry out the research. The questionnaires were administered to four selected secondary schools in Oyun Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Keywords: Examination, Malpractice, Institutions, Student, Teachers and Government.

Introduction

Education is very important in every society. Education has the power to enlighten and transform students or pupils. The moral aspect of education particularly makes it indispensable in any community. Education at all levels is examination centered. In the majority of the examinations, the emphasis is on assessment of information/ knowledge. In other words, emphasis is on the memorization of facts. According to Manoharam, “the overall purpose of assessment is to provide valid information about the student for decision-making.”¹ Since teachers, students, parents, the public and governmental agencies make many types of decisions, assessment need to

¹ P. K. Manoharam, *Higher Education* (New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing corporation, 2009), 140.

be design for a variety of purposes”² Assessment procedures and examinations are institutionally created mechanism that serves as a medium to shape the learning process among students.

In the Nigerian school system, various forms of examinations are noticed. These are the entrance examinations, the terminal and promotion examinations, the senior school examinations and the degree or diploma examinations. Students are required to pass any kind of examinations they partake in. But these day’s students now find various means of achieving success in these examinations and of such ways is by cheating in examinations through leakages in examination papers, impersonation, external assistance, coping, smuggling of foreign materials, substitution of script and improper assignment. Examination malpractice remains a thorny issue in Nigerian educational debate. T.U. Umar affirms that, “students were initiated into the conduct of cheating right from primary schools”³. He explained further that it came up especially during the common entrance examinations where heads of schools conspire with the teachers to give answers to the pupils.⁴ The research asserts that traces of the vice can be seen in educational levels in across Nigeria. In view of this, this work is designed to make efforts in eradicating examination malpractice from our institutions. Since many of the efforts put in place to reduce examination malpractice have not been able to bring a lasting solution, this work approaches the problem of examination malpractice from an analytical and ethical perspective.

Statement of the Problem

Examination malpractice is a serious threat which defeats the purpose of education. Instead of students reading very hard to be enlightened, they depend on examination malpractice to succeed. Instead of exhibiting moral quality in the society, they embrace immoral acts being perpetrated during examination malpractice and beyond. Examination malpractice has reduced

² An evaluation process of testing or judging an examinee by a standard norm is known as examination. It may take a written form, oral form or the form of a practical work. Manoharam further states that “the system of formal written examination dates back to the second century BC. It was started in china to select candidates for the Chinese imperial service. it gradually spread to the other part of the word in the nineteenth century.

³ T.U. Umar, “The proliferation of Examination malpractice,” *vanguard online edition*, 13th May, 2004, 32.

⁴ Ibid.,

the quality of education and the students in Nigeria, and this has spread right from the primary schools up to the tertiary institutions but the problem is more prevalent in the secondary schools. The reduction in the quality of education and students being produced in most secondary schools in Nigeria is a serious academic and ethical dilemma that this research work addresses.

Examination malpractice is very common in many secondary schools and many secondary school students have been caught in the web of examination malpractice most of the time. This is seen practically when students sit for West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO), and Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). Examination malpractice does not stop with the various examination bodies mentioned above, it continued even into the higher institutions of learning. Many students who have been involved in such acts in their secondary school days use different means to push their ways through higher institutions. Such means include cultism, female sexual harassment, bribery, etc. Examination malpractice has invariably affected the quality of education and student in Nigeria.

The whole academic disposition in Nigeria is becoming a mockery of reality within and outside Nigeria and if the problem is not radically and objectively addressed, dangers loom for both the educational institutions and the students in them. The labour market is already suffering and the high level of immorality in the society and educational institutions particularly can be directly or indirectly traced to examination malpractice. This problem demands sincere response and this provides the justification for this study. Consequently, one can ask: what are the major causes for examination malpractice? Why is so much examination malpractice regardless of the campaign against it? What are the effects of examination malpractice on education and the society at large? How can it be solved? These issues are related to the problem raised above and they should be radically discussed in order to reduce examination malpractice to the barest minimum.

ISSUE OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE

Many problems confront Nigerian educational system and institutions prominent among them are the issue of examination malpractice.⁵ Some institutions of higher learning can no longer

⁵ Examination malpractice is a conduct that violates the acceptable laid down rules and regulations of Nigeria's education system.

boldly claim to be the citadel of excellence they have hitherto been noted for in Nigeria. The sanctity of examination process has been trivialized by a lot of malpractices. Some recent researches have shown that majority of students who gained admissions into tertiary institutions in Nigeria are products of examination malpractice⁶.

Examination malpractice is a reality in Nigerian educational settings today. To an extent where J.I. Ayeni observes that, “One of the greatest crises which the Nigerian educational system is passing through today is examination malpractice. Apart from cultism, no other problem has generated more serious concern and discussion among the Nigerian populace in recent times than examination malpractice.”⁷ Examination malpractice has been seen and defined differently by many scholars. S.O. Oyedokun defines examination malpractice as deliberate act of indiscipline adopted by students or their privileged accomplices to secure facile success and advantage before, during and after the administration of the test or examination.⁸ J.O. Adeniyi defines it as an improper or dishonest act associated with examination with a view to obtaining any unmerited advantage.⁹ E.O. Agubuabem sees examination malpractice “as any dishonest or deceitful act by candidate or any other person to contravene existing rules and regulations in order to obtain undue reward for oneself and others, or to disfavor anyone or others in any form of assessment or examination in educational system”¹⁰

⁶ Emaikwu, S.O. &Eba, E. (2007). Examination malpractices in tertiary institutions: Implications and the way forward. In Akubue, A.U. &Enyi, D. (Ed.)(389-400) *Crises and Challenges in Higher Education in Developing Countries*. A Publication of the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

⁷ J.I Ayeni, “Curbing Examination Malpractice: A Panacea for Quality in Nigerian Educational System,” *Confluence Journal of Education* CJE 6 (April, 2011): 251.

⁸S.O. Oyedokun, “Trends and Challenges of Examination in Higher Educational Institutions in Nigeria,” *Problems and Concern on Higher Education in Nigeria*, Ondo Schools of Education.Adeyemi College of Education, eds. A.O. Olagbaji and F.O. Afolabi, 1976, 28-35.

⁹ J.O. Adeniyi, “Forms and Incidence of Examination Malpractice among Students of Oyo State College: The College Review,” *Journal of Osun State College of Education*, Vol. II (December, 2004): 187.

¹⁰E.O. Agubuam, “Examination Malpractices and Cultism in Nigerian School.”*Orbit Educational Journal*, Vol. 1 (1999): 53.

In the thinking of Stan, “examination malpractice refers to all unethical practice carried out to influence or enhance the performance of a candidate in an examination, giving the candidate an undue advantage over the other examinees.”¹¹ According to N.O. Olanipekun, “examination malpractice is failure to carry out proper and honest conditions specified by the Examination body (school authority for example) for the evaluation of students in a programme of studies or any student who before, at, during, or in anticipation of any examination or test goes against the rules and regulations guiding the conduct of an examination is said to have committed examination malpractice or misconduct.”¹²

From the above definitions, one can see that examination malpractice is not an act that is ethically appealing. Examination malpractice is a cankerworm in Nigerian educational institutions. Examination malpractice poses grave dangers to the Nigerian nation. However, one can say vividly that examination malpractice is seen and defined from the educational perspective majorly, although STAN considers examination malpractice as an unethical behaviour, it does not dig very deep into the ethical implications and consequences of examination malpractice.

Examination malpractice has made many people in educational sector to be worried. One should justifiably be worried about the future of the nation when over 80% of people are merely passing through education to obtain just the certificate to append their names.¹³ In other words, people go to school nowadays to pass and obtain certificates and not to acquire knowledge that will enable them to discharge their professional responsibilities in the society.

Forms of Examination Malpractice

¹¹STAN, “Combating the Menace of Examination Malpractice in Nigeria,” *The Sixth Paper Position of the Science Teachers Association of Nigeria*, 2008, 23.

¹² N.O. Olanipekun, *Examination Malpractice in Nigeria Schools an in-depth Analysis* (Offa: Royal Prestige Venyures, 2003), 14.

¹³J.I. Ayeni, “Curbing Examination Malpractice a Panacea for Quality in Nigerian Educational System,” *Confluence Journal of Education*, 251.

Different forms of examination malpractice have been reported in many parts of Nigeria to include common forms such as, bringing in of unauthorized materials, writing on current notes and identity cards, spying of other candidates' scripts, substitution of answer sheets, and changing of examination scores and grades are common. N.O. Olanipekun says that, "form of examination malpractice includes bringing in unauthorized materials, which are relevant to the particular examination, e.g. textbooks, prepared answer, lecture notes and similar materials."¹⁴ The world is changing and there are different ways of doing things among different kinds of people as well as students when it comes to the issue of examination malpractice. The followings are notable different ways of partaking in examination malpractice.

The Use of Information Communication Technology (ICT)

The availability of information technology has been employed by many students to cheat today. There are cases of students going into examination halls with iPad, sophisticated phones that can browse and laptops. Information is freely stored on these gadgets are freely or secretly used during the writing of examinations. Students even browse for examination answers from the internet and these answers are copied and written down. Some students even employ mercenaries to text answers to them. There are even cases where the mercenaries freely roam examination halls to write exams for some candidates.

Usage of Foreign Materials

Another form of examination malpractice includes jotting points on mathematical sets, razor blades, rulers, handkerchiefs and the likes of referencing during examination. "Giraffing"¹⁵ is another notable way of carrying out examination malpractice. This is an age-long type of stretching ones neck to copy other students' work. S. Jacob and T.D. Lar included impersonation, leakage of questions to students before examination (life wire), communing with supervisors and school authority to cheat and body writing or tattoo in which female students particularly write

¹⁴ N.O. Olanipekun, *Examination Malpractice in Nigeria Schools an in-depth Analysis*, 56.

¹⁵ This is a coined English word commonly used in Nigeria for students who involve in exam malpractice. The word is derived from an animal; Giraffe, which is characterized with a long neck. In view of this, people commonly referred to the act of malpractice as "Giraffing".

on the sensitive parts of their bodies.¹⁶ The “laptop” method is another form of examination malpractice according to Olanipekun. It is mostly practiced by female students. They write on their laps, undershirts, underwear etc. where it will be difficult for invigilators to check closely.

Impersonation

Impersonation is another unique way of perpetrating examination malpractice. This is done through a student impersonating another student with an intention to write an examination for him/her either on contract or on other terms.¹⁷ There is also a case where surveillance plays significant roles in examination malpractice. Surveillance in this context involves loitering around the examination halls to read the answers from the textbook to students seating near the windows in the examination halls.

Diabolical Means

S.O. Baba noted another way of carrying out examination malpractice in some rural areas and perhaps in some cities too. His emphasis, however, is on the students in schools in rural areas. There are cases of students in rural schools using spiritual powers to prevent the invigilators from seeing any foreign materials brought into the examination hall. In the same way, they make use of the same power to make the invigilator become a living robot till after the examination.¹⁸ This is a new dimension in methods of examination malpractice.

Assistance from Educational Stakeholders

Examination stakeholders include parents, teachers, lecturers, security agents, printers, and staff of examination bodies. Some parents go to any length in buying question papers for their children while some others even buy certificates for their children. Supervisors are often found colluding with teachers, school principals or students by allowing teachers to come around to

¹⁶ S. Jacob and T.D. Lar, “Forms and Reasons for Examination Malpractices and their Implications for National Development,” *Proceedings of the 16th Annual Congress of Nigeria Academy of Education* (Jos: The Nigerian Academy of Education, 2001), 336.

¹⁷ S.O Baba, “Examination Malpractice in Nigeria Educational : A Spiritual Solution” *Biblical Studies in African Christian Scholarship Archives*, (May 2008), 13

¹⁸ Ibid.

teach the students during examination period, lecturers or teachers releasing question papers or giving underserved marks or allowing students to illegally re-take examination papers. Security agents, printers and staff of examination bodies also sell question papers. The forms of examination malpractice as seen above could actually be more than these mentioned. It all depends on new methods and innovation devised by candidates.

Reasons for Indulging in Examination Malpractice

Examination malpractice in many schools and among many students can be traced to many factors. Without mincing words, there are many factors that are responsible for examination malpractice. Identifying the causes of examination malpractice is very crucial if adequate solutions will be proffered. It is often said a problem identified is half solved. The factors that have been identified as promoting examination malpractice in Nigerian educational institutions and particularly in secondary schools are:

Economic Factors

Because of the shift in societal value from moral uprightness to wealth by whatever means, and added to this is the continued dwindling of the economic fortunes of teachers, most teachers in bid to meet with societal standards expected of them and make ends meet, involve themselves in examination malpractice for gain. This, in the debate on examination malpractice is known as “settlement” or “sorting”. Teachers see their job as least rewarding in the society. This makes them easily tempted by the giving of gifts, money and promise of better jobs/contract by students, candidates or their relations.

It is an open secret that invigilation of public examination is now a money-spinning business for teachers who use the opportunity to extort money from candidates as to allow them to cheat during examination. It is noteworthy to say teachers in most cases pay bribe to be listed as invigilators/supervisors, hence they have to recover the money so invested. As observed, some good candidates come from poor homes and to make ends meet, they accept money from richer but less intelligent students/candidates to assist them in examination. Also, the willingness of mercenaries to accept to write examination for their clients purely for monetary gains promotes examination malpractice.

Poor Academic Performance

This is another factor causing examination malpractice. The only option left for students who are not well-prepared for their examination is resorting to cheating. The poor performance of many students, especially in public schools, can be traced to many factors. Many teachers are lazy and will not cover the expected syllabus while teaching their students.

There are even cases of teachers not coming to class to teach at all. Many of them spend more time on their farms and businesses than the teaching work for which they are paid every month. It has been observed that teachers' commitment towards the profession of teaching is no longer what it used to be in the past – they lack dedication. This paves way for students to look elsewhere to pass their examination and the so-called “Miracle Centers” becoming their last resort.

Poor performance can also be traced to instability of education policies, industrial actions and lack of motivation among both teachers and students. Many schools are also poorly staffed. There are cases of students not having teachers to teach some compulsory subjects. Students who are exposed to these challenges are usually poorly equipped to face educational challenges and problems. As a result of this, such students take advantage of the situation to look for how examination malpractice will be carried out in order to pass their examination at all cost.

Over-Reliance on Certificate

The excessive over-reliance on certificate is yet another cause of examination malpractice. This is an emphasis on paper qualification. This is what R. Dore referred to as “The Diploma Disease.”¹⁹ The Diploma Disease as Dore identified has increased examination malpractice in Nigeria. In fact, if the researcher has her she would say the Diploma Disease has grown to now become the Degree Disease. The emphasis placed on certificate purposely to be admitted or employed as made many students to crave for success in their examinations without regards for moral or examination norms. Because of the too much emphasis on certificate in the society and

¹⁹ R. Dore, *The Diploma Disease* (George Atlens: Union Educational, 1978), 47.

the labour market, many students have seen examination malpractice as a tool to help them forge ahead academically.

This situation has given room for mad rush for certificate by all and sundry even when it is clear that certain students are not suitable or academically endowed. This phenomenon (the general madness for certificate) that Robert Okah called “Credentialism and Certificate Racketeering” is only encouraging cheating in examination. The school system in Nigeria seems to be structured towards passing of examination. Therefore, disproportionate emphasis on examination is embraced at the expense of moral issues, attitudes and depth based knowledge.²⁰

Laziness and Fear of Failure

It is pathetic today that many students have little or no time for their studies. They spend their time attending parties and forming gangs. Many students have prioritized entertainment and pleasure at the expense of their studies. It is very alarming to hear that nowadays students no longer prepare to write exams but rather prepare to see already solved questions posted on social networking sites such as Facebook, twitter etc. some hours before the examination commences. Students are becoming increasingly lazy. They spend more time on the social media where they learn things that cannot positively benefit their minds. Students spend more time watching home videos and movies. They can narrate a movie episode from beginning to end but have no serious time for their studies. With the advent and popularity of soccer, many students now spend their time watching European leagues.

The lazy attitude of many students has led to the fear of failure that encourages examination malpractice. There is fear all around and fear is natural for all living things. Fear is, however, increased when one is not well prepared to face the challenge ahead. Since many students are lazy and not serious with their studies, most are usually seized with fear when they are to write

²⁰ Robert Okah, “Contemporary Disciplinary Problems in Nigerian Secondary Schools, Cultism and Examination Malpractice as a Case Study,” *Nigerian Journal of Educational Studies and Research(NJSER)* (June 2005), 129.

examination. Since no one will desire to fail naturally, these students resort to examination malpractice to save their face and skin.

Parental Influence

Many parents will not want their children to repeat any class no matter the level of their performance. Thus, they pressure school authority to give their children automatic promotion even when they fail their examination. Parents are also involved in hiring mercenaries to write examination for their children. They thus agree with principals to issue fake but favourable examination results for their children. Some of the ways parents serve as a strong force behind the acts of examination malpractice are listed by Olanipekun as follows:

- a. Procurement of real question papers for their children and wards.
- b. Parents and guardians recruit impersonators tagged mercenaries to write examination for their children and wards.
- c. Employment of Global System for Mobile communication (GSM) for their children and wards.
- d. Parents do not have enough time for their children; they are more interested in worldly things. Many leave home in the morning and return late in the night or never even returned till the next day (economic reasons may have contributed to this).
- e. Parents are known to shamelessly involve in examination malpractice by bribing the office of examination board and school management in their bid to falsify results and change scores for their children.
- f. Some parents force their wards to do subject of their (parents') own choice against the wish of such children. Consequently, such children (students) would not have interest to perform up to the expected standard.
- g. j. The failure of many parents to provide basic and essential moral training in the upbringing of children is also a factor.²¹

All the above mentioned factors reveal that the educational system in Nigeria is in deep trouble.

²¹ N.O. Olanipekun, *Examination Malpractices in Nigeria Schools an In-depth Analysis*, 57.

Effects of Examination Malpractice

According to Ija'iya, examination malpractice indicates a declining quality of education. This implies that the quality of education in Nigeria is low, since involvement in it spreads across the country. This will affect national development adversely. Moreover, those who engage in cheating at a lower level age are likely to continue at higher level of education. When they graduate into the society, their previous attitudes can easily lead them into corrupt practices.²² The following are notable effects of examination malpractice on students, schools, educational development, and national development.

Laziness and Lack of Commitment

When a student cheats from primary school to university and eventually sails through, it should be no surprise if he eventually defrauds his nation, or embezzle the entire resources of the nation or the organization he works with. Because he learnt the act all the way from kindergarten up to university level and having graduated, he only needs to put into practice what he has theorized over the years.²³ No wonder many political and chief executive organization leaders are managing the affairs of their office with the view of enriching their personal and selfish goals without sense of accountability and consideration to the people they are leading.

This is a serious problem in Nigeria today. There are many students and teachers who are performing below the standard simply because their heads are empty. They have accumulated certificate through dubious means and as a result, the labour market is bearing the brunt of their laziness. There have been cases of NCE students posted to schools to teach and the so-called teachers cannot read correctly and fluently. Under such condition, what will such teachers teach? This can result into a great problem for both the teachers and the students.

²²Y. Ijaiya, From quality control to quality assurance: A panacea for quality Education in Nigerian schools. (2001).

²³ L. Woiwode, "Television the Cyclops that eats Books from IMPRIMIS" *The Journal of Hillsdal College*, Vol. 21 (2002), 34.

It Discredits Certificates

Examination malpractice no doubt discredits certificates acquired by those involved in it. It makes students to be half-baked academically. It is a notable fact that employers of labour require certain skills from their employees based on the certificate they hold. These employers are disappointed when the employees perform grossly below expectation. Many certificates today are valueless in the nation. Examination malpractice gives room for incompetence students to earn certificates and grades they do not deserve.

It gives Undue Privileges to Unqualified Individuals

Examination malpractice also denies innocent and honest students from gaining admission.

According to S.O. Baba:

Many good students have been denied admission by the corrupt ones who through examination malpractice have better scores and grades. The best brains that could help in research and development are likely to be thrown out or frustrated while seeking admission, the corrupt ones admitted continue in their behaviours that won them admission and eventually wangle their way through the programme.²⁴

The pains and disappointment of hardworking students whose results are withheld in error or by coincidence of being in the same centres with offenders have terrible psychological effects on such students. Uncompromising parents and teachers share in this too. Examination malpractice has led to the cancellation of examination results of many schools by examination bodies in which innocent candidates suffer.

It Destroys the Credibility of Examination Bodies

Another effect of examination malpractice is in the area of confidence. The confidence is lost on the validity and reliability of examinations by examination bodies in Nigeria. This leads to total erosion of confidence in the examining bodies in Nigeria. Since it is not the students per se that are measured and evaluated. Examination malpractice gives unreliable characteristics or

²⁴ S.O. Baba, "Examination Malpractice in Nigerian Educational Sector: A Spiritual Solution," *Biblical Studies in African Christian Scholarship Archives* (May 2008). 7.

properties that are measured and thereby send a wrong signal to the examining body in measuring educational standard. Wale Sokinbi said that “it is right to say that the entire examination leakage affair is sordid development. It is regrettable not only because it has once again questioned the integrity of WAEC as a credible examination body.”²⁵ But also undermines the quality certificate that students carry about.

Future Repercussions

Apart from the fact examination malpractice many reduce the value and quality of certificates issued in academic institutions locally and internationally, another plain truth is that the society will suffer the consequences of examination malpractice even the more tomorrow. The society might be the victim of the seed it is planting today and in fact the society is bearing the brunt already. Because the society helps to produce incompetent doctors, many of them are making costly mistakes every day and that is leading to loss precious lives every day. Many patients are dying prematurely because doctors are incompetent. The same thing is applicable to other fields of life. Many teachers and lecturers cannot impart sound knowledge to their student because they are empty themselves. They can easily spell doom for the society tomorrow if the issue of examination malpractice is not well addressed and confronted.

Efforts at Curbing Examination Malpractice

There are different approaches adopted by different examination bodies, federal, state and local government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and concerned individuals. A good example is the head count in Oyo State where the commissioner for education called a team to schools to ascertain the number of students in each school in Oyo state in a bid to forestall examination malpractices.²⁶ WAEC also has embarked on public campaign on the effects of examination malpractices and the punishments attached to each offence using handbills, posters, jingles, seminars and workshops. NECO also conducted workshops, seminars and public enlightenment campaign and NGO known as exam ethics project has worked tirelessly on

²⁵Wale Sokinbi. “Has WAEC Exams Leaked Again?” *Daily Sun*, Wednesday May 14, 2008, 9.

²⁶Okpe Gabriel and Philip Lar, “Causes and Effects of Examination Malpractice and Possible Solutions: A Case Study of Five Selected Secondary Schools in Bauchi Metropolis” *Department of General Studies, Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi*, 4.

curbing examination malpractices. Concerned individuals like Jegede have made effort to check these vices.²⁷ The federal government in the bid to curb examination malpractice enacted laws prohibiting examination malpractice. The most recent one is the computer based examination conducted by JAMB.

The best way to ensure a reduction or possible eradication of examination malpractice is to maintain quality control assurance. Quality assurance in education deals with proactive means of ensuring quality of inputs, teaching, learning, process academic achievement of pupils and school environment before things get out of hands.²⁸ Thus, an education of high quality should have high quality students, teachers, faculties, school curriculum and government policies as inputs. All these if adhered to helped in greatly reducing chances for examination malpractice. This work discussed the inputs that can forestall the educational malady ravaging the educational system in Nigeria - examination malpractice.

The Parts of the Students

Students constitute a vital input to the education system without them; all other inputs cannot achieve educational objectives. At the entry point of the educational system, the students are expected to be of high quality. That is, they should meet the expected standard of level of class in which they are to be enrolled. Incidentally, students of poor ability have been admitted or promoted into higher classes in our educational institutions. At the long run this serves as a seed for examination malpractice, because a student of poor ability who happens to be in a higher class will attempt to find means to make ends meet so he/she will not have to fail.

Competent Teachers

No educational system will rise above the quality of its teachers. Incidentally many teachers are lacking in good quality which can enhance meaningful teaching. As at 2004/2005 session,

²⁷O. T. Jegede, Checkmating the Unabated Crisis of Examination Malpractice in Nigerian Educational System, (2003), 15.

²⁸Okpe Gabriel and Philip Lar, "Causes and Effects of Examination Malpractice and Possible Solutions, 6.

25.65% of teachers in Nigerian secondary schools were not professionally qualified (Teacher's Registration Council of Nigeria Estimate as at June 2006). Quality of teaching to be given by this category of teachers is likely to be low, and this will have adverse effects on the learners. Conversely, teachers of high quality could impact right skills, knowledge and attitude.²⁹ Teachers as inputs, therefore, constitute a major factor of quality assurance.

Facilities

Facilities are material resources in the schools; they are physical and spatial enablers of teaching and learning which will increase the production of results.³⁰ They include building structures, equipment, water, electricity textbooks, furniture and recreational facilities, among others. They constitute vital inputs which are capable of achieving good results when combined with other resources in adequate quality and quantity. However, poor supply and poor maintenance of facilities are regular features in many primary and secondary schools. This type of environment inhibits learning and assimilation for students. Eventually this factor will encourage indulging in examination malpractice. To curb examination malpractice issues such as this should be adequately taken care of.

Full Implementation of the Criminal Law on Examination Malpractice

In the past, the government evolved many education policies which were meant for execution in order to achieve national objectives. However, some of the policies were characterized by an "on the implementation planning." That is, implementation had stated before proper planning. For example, the Universal Primary Education (UPE) of 1976 was pronounced by the federal government in 1974 in Sokoto; and the implementation started without a prior discussion of its logistics. Similarly the UPE of 1979 embarked upon by state government in the south western Nigeria, had no long term planning.

Meanwhile, implementation had already started in 1999. An education policy embarked upon without adequate planning will not have good quality and sufficient teacher and other resources.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 7.

This can in no way truly help students who will have no choice than to resort to examination malpractice. The situation of examination malpractice is so embarrassing to the Nigerian 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 advantages to himself/herself 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 the section 3, 27(c) of this decree, shall be guilty of an offence and on conviction be sentenced to 21 years imprisonment.³¹

However, Examination Malpractice Act 33 of 1999 revised the above decree but now stipulates punishment ranging from a fine of #50,000 to #100,000 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 1984. Despite all these laws, examination malpractice has been on the increase and this may be due to the non-implementation of the law. Therefore, government and its agencies should hence forth stop handling cases of examination malpractices with kid gloves. The law should be implemented without fear or favour. Anyone caught cheating should be made to face the full wrath of the law to serve as deterrent.

To make the fight against examination malpractice very effective, all the agents of civilization and socialization must participate actively in orienting Nigeria children to work and study harder, making it known that hard work pays and cheating ruins. If we fail to do all these, the ugly trend would continue to a greater proportion, and in no time, our education section will totally collapse, rendering the workforce completely incompetent and unproductive. Certificates issued by the nation's institutions will also become useless, losing recognition both locally and internationally.

Conclusion and Recommendations

³¹ A. Fagbemi, "Assessment and Educational Malpractice," *Proceedings of the 16th Annual Conference of Nigerian Academy of Education* (Jos: University of Jose, 1998), 17.

It is no gainsaying that examination malpractice is a serious problem in Nigerian educational institution at all levels. Ayeni laments concerning examination malpractice that “the most disturbing aspect of it is that the people who are supposed to be actively involved in the crusade against this evil are instead adding and abetting it in one way or the other.”³² Obviously, one of the areas where educational reforms should be directed is examination malpractice. Examination malpractice is an evil and immoral behaviour and has become a cankerworm in the society. It has many negative consequences. For this reason, efforts should be intensified to eradicate it. This is because the collapse of education is the collapse of the nation.

This research makes the following recommendations that will help to curb the vice in secondary schools in Nigeria.

1. Students should be very serious and concentrate on their studies. They should believe in themselves and make the necessary sacrifices that will enable them to be successful in their academic pursuits.
2. The government should subsidize the price of textbooks and other educational materials. This will help students to have access to useful materials that will make their education easy. This will make the students prepared for their examination and thus have no reason to cheat in examinations.
3. The various examination bodies need to set up and put in place the measure that will reduce the incidence of examination malpractice to the barest minimum. Corrupt officials within the examination bodies should be made to face the music. A situation where examination questions leaked before the examination date does not speak well about the examination body.
4. Teachers should be available to their students and teach them to pass examination and be good citizens. Apart from intellectual prowess, teachers should possess virtues such as love, patience, endurance, diligence and honesty that should be imparted to students through modeling and mentorship that will help them develop a right disposition to life.
5. The society should be ready to live by ethical codes. There should be justice in the society. As a result, those students, mercenaries, teachers and examination invigilators

³² Ibid, 252.

who perpetrate examination malpractice should be punished severely by the government and law enforcement officers in order to eradicate examination malpractice from the society.

6. Subsequent researchers should investigate into the relationship of poverty of teachers to examination malpractice as well as peer group pressure.

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