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Checking the menace of malpractice in senior secondary certificate examination

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Abstract

This paper x-rays what examination malpractice has caused to the education sector in Nigeria. It also identifies the different ways students implores fraudulent act before and during examination. A well structured questionnaire aimed at collecting data from a sample population was constructed and administered to students. The instrument was face validated to ascertain the relevance of the instrument by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation, reliability of 0.81 using cronbach alpha coefficient determined after, a pilot test. Based on the findings in this article, the author recommended that parents should assist their wards to form positive reading habits to enable them succeed in their examination and no other miracle.

Keywords: Checking, Cheating, Education, Menace, Malpractice, Nigeria

Introduction

Various scholars have viewed examination malpractice in different ways. Sunday (2009) ^[8] viewed examination malpractice as “an improper and unjust act capable of disorganizing the true aim of examination, with a view to obtain an undeserved mark not worked for”. Despite efforts meted by the Federal Government of Nigeria against students indulging in examination malpractice. For instance, Degree 48 promulgated on July 24th 1984, makes leakages and cheating in examination an offence with a penalty of a minimum of twenty-one (21) years imprisonment, yet there is still widespread examination malpractice.

Another instance, is the recent sanction by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) over 13 Secondary Schools in Gombe State over cases of examination malpractice. The Director of Examinations in the Gombe State Ministry of Education, Ali Yaya, disclosed this during a meeting with principals of Secondary Schools in the State.

He said the development was a major setback in the Ministry’s effort to improve the Educational Sector in the State. According to him, examination malpractice is currently the major challenge facing Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) in the State, and the menace must be tackled before it escalates to other schools.

Percentage Result in WAEC SSCE 2022 As Against 2021

The percentage of 2021 results was 55.6% as against 79.5% for 2022 and this is in connection with the examination malpractice recorded in six of our schools.

Reasons Students Indulge in Examination Malpractice

The identified reasons are;

1. Fear of failure.
2. Laziness of students.
3. Lack of self-confidence.
4. Poor quality of teaching.
5. Bad school management.

6. Peer pressure.
7. Inadequate study materials.
8. Poor supervision.
9. High level of poverty.
10. Poor parent's upbringing.

Materials

According to Edebu (2018), Examination Malpractice has posed a lot of concern to the Educational Sector in Nigeria, because everybody has seen the type of graduates, schools are producing yearly. It is so devastating that graduates are no longer taken seriously by the employers of labour. Parents expectation for their wards to learn in school is being forfeited, thus communities have lost trust in certificates issued to students by the Educational bodies in Nigeria.

Any person who before, during or in anticipation of an examination or test have committed the underlisted examination offences (Okebukola, 2014) ^[5].

What Constitute Offences in Examination

1. Any student who communicates to other students in whatever form during an examination or test.
2. Students found with extraneous materials in the examination, either relevant or not.
3. Failure to obey lawful instruction from authorized persons.
4. Loitering around the examination hall.
5. Destruction of documents or resisting apprehension by investigators.
6. Mutilation of answer scripts.
7. Exchange of question papers.
8. Examination leakages.
9. Impersonation.
10. Use of calculator cover for jotting.

What is cheating?

Cheating refers to actual, intended or attempted deception and/or dishonestly in relation to academic or employment related assessments. It is only one part of the larger issue of test integrity; there are other issues such as teachers' help on k-12 summative tests or "faking good" on personality assessments. Underwood, J. and Sarbo, A. (2004) ^[9].

How to Stop Students from Getting External Help During Examination

Editorial (2008) list this few as supportive views:

1. Tighten authentication process by using technologies such as biometrics systems and two-factor authentication. This prevents students from receiving external help from experts.
2. Use Allflagging to make sure that the candidates don't display suspicious behaviour.
3. Teaching of Moral Education in Nigeria schools.
4. Create an anti-cheating pledge.
5. Change the structure of your test.
6. Change how you define success in your classroom.

Methodology

The main design of this study is instrumentation and this study is also a survey research since data are used to describe the features of the population. In the work of Okelekele (2022, p. 50). Surveys are studies which aim at collecting data on and describing in a systematic manner, the characteristic features or facts about a given population.

The target population for the study comprised of all the students in Isaac Jasper Boro College of Education Demonstration Secondary School, Yenagoa. The sample of 240 students were drawn out of the population using simple random sampling technique to complete the questionnaires on checking the menace of malpractice in the school.

The instrument was face validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation, reliability of 0.81 using Crombach coefficient determined through a pilot test. Data collected was analyzed using "MEAN" as analysis tool to answering "accepting or rejecting" research questions.

Results

Descriptive Analysis

Research Question 1: Which form of examination malpractice are commonly used?

In order to answer the research question, the researcher has to present a table as shown below using MEAN as Analysis tool to answer "accepting or rejecting" a statement.

Table 1: Forms of examination malpractice

S/N	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Mean Cut-Off Point	Result
1.	Phone is used as a tool for examination malpractice	3.4	1.30	1.7	3.0	Accepted
2.	Student decline in reading habits also lead to examination malpractice	3.0	0.84	0.7		Rejected
3.	Fear of failure in student encourages examination malpractice	3.3	1.34	1.8		Rejected
4.	Textbooks are used in examination malpractice	3.0	0.84	0.7		Accepted
5.	Sorting of-course by student is a way of indulging in examination malpractice	3.4	1.34	1.7		Accepted
6.	The quest for money-making by teachers encourages examination malpractice	3.2	0.89	0.8	Rejected	
7.	Smuggling of microchips to be used as guide into the examination hall is a way of cheating in an examination	2.9	0.89	0.8	Accepted	
8.	Copying from a colleague during examination is a way of indulging in examination malpractice	2.3	0.84	0.7	Accepted	
9.	Leaking of examination question paper is a form of examination malpractice	3.7	2.38	5.67	Accepted	
10.	Undue emphasis on paper qualification by employers of labour encourages examination malpractice	2.1	0.55	0.3	Rejected	
	Grand Mean	3.03				

$x \leq 3.50$ indicate "Accepted" otherwise "Rejected".

The researcher states his analysis as follows

The result is that item 2, 3, 6 and 10 are the factors relating to

the form of examination malpractice and item 1, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 state otherwise.

The use of “MEAN” to answer research questions by accepting or rejecting a statement has been widely employed by many researchers including Nworgu (2020).

Discussion

The findings of this study indicates that the quest for paper qualification in Nigeria and not academic attainment has because more harm to the society.

All forms of dubious practices are now implored to acquire certificates thereby increasing the risk of attaining a genuine acquisition of certificate through hard work. The quest has promoted examination malpractice to its zenith, therefore it is my view that government should have a review about paper acquisition for a true and standard education.

Implications of the Findings

The findings of this study has far reaching implications for teachers, guidance counselors, State Government and Supervisors of Examinations.

For teachers, they should be ever ready to give students everything needed to promote real academic and award deserving students who shows outstanding performance in class. For the guidance counselors, students with outstanding performance be advised and encouraged at the formative level to put more interest in their studies and at the summative stage to seek admission into tertiary institutions for advancement. At the State, students’ results be used in the award of scholarships to outstanding students. This will boost students’ moral and interest in acquiring genuine certificate through hard work.

The general poor performance by students which lead to examination malpractice is as a result of ineffective supervisory strategies of teachers and administrators respectively. This situation needs immediate remedy as to improve students’ interest in schools.

Limitations of the Study

Blames are directed to the State Government, for the inability to reward teachers who are the engine room in education for they perform a great task to improve students’ interest in education. The ultimate wish of every teacher is to witness in practical terms, an improved working conditions. This subsequently enhance increase in teachers’ productivity and thereby reduce the negative attitude of teachers towards students in classrooms, but these are completely absent in the educational system in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was drawn that students should be assisted by teachers, parents and the government to provide a fair atmosphere that would be conducive to enable students realize their aims and objectives in school.

In fact, by using the suggested points in this article, it is my conviction that the risks of cheating in examination will be reduced and high academic integrity restored.

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- 116
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