

EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES AS BANE TO TEACHERS' PRODUCTIVITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Examination malpractices in Nigerian schools as a bane to teachers' productivity is the main focus of this paper. The paper examines the concept, trends, categories, causes and baneful effects of the examination malpractices on the teachers' productivity. Apart from proffering solutions to examination malpractices in Nigeria Schools, the paper submits that when examination malpractices are absent in the Nigerian educational system, teachers and certificates from Nigeria will be recognized and respected by the national and international bodies.

Introduction

Examination Malpractices had been described in different ways. It depends on how an individual looks at it. Examination itself is attempted purposely to satisfy individual needs for employment, admission, promotion, professional qualifications, etc. With these needs, many candidates look for one result or the other from examination bodies. The acquisition of the result sometimes becomes a do-or-die affair. The need for the certificate or result for any purpose encourages many citizens to acquire the type of certificate that they cannot defend themselves. Many people gained admission through fake results and after a year such students are rusticated. Many of these candidates are eventually employed into different organizations based on their fake results. The organizations thus begin to have problems of mismanagement and conflicts. There is inefficiency and disorderliness that ultimately lead to low \poor productivity.

Examination malpractices can be defined as an illegal act, an anti-social behaviour or activities that are perpetrated by the students to have unmerited advantages of excellence in an examination over their colleagues.

Olaniyan (1997) viewed examination malpractices as actions or activities engaged upon by the students or the society, home, etc. that influence the teachers or examiners to give unmerited grades or scores to candidates in order to favour them over their colleagues in an examination.

Egbegbadia (2000) described examination malpractices as an illegal or unacceptable or unlawful behaviour or activity that is perpetrated by a candidate or student to have personal advantage of excellence in an examination over his mates that are competing the same examination. Examination malpractices in Nigerian schools no doubt have baneful effects on the teachers' productivity and on the quality of education.

The Trends of Examination Malpractices in Nigerian Schools

The case of examination malpractices is not a recent development in Nigerian education; it is as old as education system in Nigeria. The first occurrence of examination malpractice took place in 1912 when there were mass leakages of all subjects in Cambridge examination. As from 1950, examination malpractices started to appear more rapidly in the educational system. During this period, there were simple forms of examination malpractices like 'giraffing', spying, leakages, whispering, etc. In 1970, there was a demonstration of real leakages when the then forthcoming examination papers were sold at the markets for candidates. Each of the candidates purchased the examination papers before the examination. The 1970s marked the beginning of having fore-knowledge of the papers to sit for before the examination.

1980 marked the beginning of devising of more sophisticated methods of examination malpractices. During this period, there was a massive violation of examination integrity. The

1980s actually marked the beginning of hiring 'mercenaries' for examination. By 1990s, examination malpractices had become established in the Nigerian society. 1990s marked the period when the public examination conduct became a matter of life and death. 1990s also had the highest number of cancelled results from WAEC, JAMB and some of the results were withheld while some centers were de-recognised by the examination bodies. 1990s also marked the period when result forgeries were detected.

The year 2000 witnessed the most complex form of examination malpractices. The nature of examination malpractices now varies from mass cheating during the examination, lobbying for marks, entering the hall with written notes or inscriptions hidden in the purse or in the private parts, sharing of answers with other candidates, issuing of unauthentic results to the forgery of results. For instance in the year 2002, JAMB results were cancelled as a result of mass cheating. In 2001 WASSCE result indicated that Lagos State had the highest level of examination malpractices. Kwara State took second in the year 2000, Salisu Buhari, a Speaker of the National Assembly was caught with University of Toronto results forged. In 2002, one Professor Uba of the University of Uyo was caught selling forged results of the University.

Another nature of sophisticated method of examination malpractices was also introduced in 2000s. The method involves contracting the examination by using unemployed graduates. The use of 'mercenaries' creating special centers in the rural areas tagged 'miracle centers', communicating the correct answers through the use of handsets, disturbing the invigilators or supervisors through distraction of attention while cheating is going on, starting of examination before the time of examination, substituting answer scripts or booklet during or after the examination, writing of examination after others have stopped, removing from the examination hall the answer booklet, tearing off some pages of answer booklets or question papers, substituting question paper with an old question paper while the new one had

been thrown out to the 'mercenaries', impersonation, having foreknowledge of examination, insulting and assaulting of the invigilators or supervisors, coming to the public examination hall with dangerous weapons like dane-guns, cutlasses, knives, pistols, charms, acid, axes, etc. to harm anybody that disturbs or disallows examination malpractice in such centers have become common.

Reasons for Examination Malpractices in Nigerian Schools

The Federal Government and well-meaning citizens of Nigeria are greatly disturbed by the high rate of educational fraud persisting in the various levels of Nigeria's educational system. The persistence of the examination malpractices in various schools today bothered the minds of education planners, guidance counsellors, Federal government, parents, voluntary associations and administrators continue to ask intriguing questions on the major reasons for examination malpractices. A combination of political, economic, social and psychological factors has been adduced to the prevalence of this cankerworm in our educational system.

Who Is Blame For The High Rate Examination Malpractices?

Akande (2000) held all of the home, schools, community, examination bodies and society at large responsible for examination malpractices. He identified the reasons why students engage in examination malpractices as: inadequate parental involvement in the upbringing of children; too much emphasis placed on certificate for admission and for securing good employment; laxity on the part of the school authority; poor teachers' condition of service; exorbitant examination registration fees; inadequate teaching-learning facilities; poor study habits by students; misplaced value and moral decadence in the society; high level of poverty among the teachers and the larger society general society; inadequate preparation; inconducive learning environment; divergence of interests; desire to have good grades and poor supervision of examination. Those that are to blame for this anomaly are the home, the school, the government, the

students themselves and the society.

Negative Effects of Examination Malpractices on Teachers' Productivity.

Examination malpractices have negative effects on various sectors in the society. In recent times, nobody can trust or boast of fresh graduates for much competence due to the high rate of examination malpractices in the school system. The life of innocent Nigerian citizens are not safe in the hands of fake medical practitioners. So many engineers cannot handle mechanical equipment to repair their cars. Ineffective teachers ruin the lives of Nigerian youth. The tussle for political control is now in vogue. Products of examination malpractices graduate to election rigging and political thuggery underlining the fraudulent attitude of political office holders.

The laudable Nigerian educational objectives, policies, programmes failed at last as a result of high rate of examination malpractices. Such programmes like UPE, UBE, etc failed to achieve their stated objectives due to the persistence of examination malpractices in our educational system. Examination malpractices distort the evaluation system of the teachers because they do not allow actual performances of the students to be measured. They make most of the Nigerian examinations to be unreliable and they smack of the falling of the educational system of the country.

Examination malpractices destroy the future of the Nigerian youths, this is because the international community, national and local agencies, higher institutions appear to have become suspicious of the certificates. While higher institutions are hesitant of granting admission to students, employers are increasingly unsatisfied with the conflicts between certificates and their holders. Many companies and establishments now conduct their own examinations for their prospective employees to determine their competence.

The issue of examination malpractices encourages taking

of wrong decision which have had adverse effects on socio-economic, political and educational development of the country. It should be noted that during the period when there are socio-economic and political problems in any country like Nigeria, people often look into the educational sector to bail the country out of the predicament. The country however can never develop under high rate of examination malpractices; this is the reason why the Nigerian relegate the teaching profession to the background.

The issue of examination malpractices had deceived the parents, guardians and well meaningful Nigerians about the academic progress of the students. Many graduates that scored upper-credits can never defend their certificates, but the society or organization know this until when they have graduated. Some parents waste a lot of money to register half baked candidates which they fail woefully.

High wastage rates and social crimes in the society are caused by the complex nature of examination malpractices. The citizens that passed their examinations through examination malpractices find it difficult to defend their results elsewhere and as such no organization will employ nuisance into their organization and this lead to high rate of unemployment which lead to involvement in social crime, like hooliganism, sexual harassment, etc.

Finally, examination malpractices lead to financial wastage or mismanagement by the public examination bodies like JAMB, WASSCE, NECO, NTI, NABTEB. Billions of Naira had been committed by the Federal Government in finding a lasting solution to examination malpractices in Nigeria. As a way of waging concrete war against examination malpractices in the Nigerian educational system, most of the money that is at supposed to have been used to purchase the necessary educational facilities are now used to pay state Security Service (SSS), Policemen, Invigilators, Supervisors, Monitors and examiners

Ways Out of Examination Malpractices in Nigerian Schools

The Federal Government had committed billions of Naira to education in order to aid national productivity but up till the present time, there is no positive result. The complexity of conducting public examinations is now bothering the counsellors, parents, teachers, examination bodies, Government and every well meaning citizen in Nigeria. They continue to ask questions on what will be the future of Nigerians and whether Nigeria can ever be ranked high at all among the developed nations of the world. With these questions, teaching profession is in dilemma, because everybody is looking upon the educational sector for solution.

For the interest of education in Nigeria and for the sake of national development therefore, adequate measures should be taken to wage war against examination malpractices in various schools. The measures are : cancellation of result of any culprit caught.

- o Adequate educational facilities should be adequately provided as they will enhance conducive teaching learning environment for the teachers and students.
- o Students should be encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities in Nigerian schools. From there, the issue of social crime will be condemned through discussion.
- o Good condition of service should be enhanced for the teachers since poverty is the root cause of examination malpractice among teachers. If there are good conditions of service to the extent that teachers are motivated with a good salary, the teachers will not participate examination malpractices.
- o The Government should encourage the citizens to cultivate the habit of acceptable social norms, values and behaviors in the society. This could be done through provision of adequate guidance and counseling services for the youths.
- o Law enforcement agents, State Security Service personnel should be recruited to the examination halls on daily basis and they should be well paid.
- o Strict implementation of Decree 22 of 1984 and JAMB

Decree 21 of 1999 on examination malpractices that anybody caught for examination malpractice should be jailed for certain number of years.

- o Photographs of candidates should be engraved in the certificates issued to the students for easy identification of the ownership of the certificates.
- o The public examination bodies should recruit sufficient members of invigilators, supervisors for any given examinations and they should be well paid so as not to be enticed by money.
- o Expulsion or dismissal of culprits: principals, supervisors, invigilators, teachers caught aiding or abetting examination malpractices should be done.
- o Establishment and equipping of libraries and examination halls will reduce the menace of examination malpractices.
- o Exorbitant examination fees paid by the students should be cancelled and footed by the three tiers of government. If done, the government will be able to perform their duties as regard to combating examination malpractices in Nigerian schools.
- o Finally, counselors have a significant role to play as a way of reducing examination malpractices in Nigerian schools.

Conclusion

For the interest of Nigerian educational system and national development as a whole, there is the need to eradicate examination malpractices in the educational system. If this is done, there is no doubt that teachers' productivity will be enhanced in Nigeria.

In conclusion examination malpractices lead to serious challenges and intellectual fraud which portend grave danger for the survival of the system. To say that it is the root of all social vices will not be an exaggeration. There seems to be an indication that if a serious war is not waged against the menace of the examination malpractices, teachers' productivity in the society will be low and the gains of literate and educated society will be eroded.

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