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## TEACHER'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE SUSTENANCE AND PROMOTION OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS

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### ABSTRACT

*The existence of examination malpractice in Nigeria institutions of learning is not a figment of imagination but a reality. A number of write-ups, articles and studies have not only blamed the students but also crucified them on their involvement in examination malpractice. The position of this paper, however, hinges on the fact that every blame should not be on the students. Teachers in their part should share part of the blame because they overtly and or covertly get themselves involved in the sustenance and maintenance of examination malpractice. Some of the ways by which teachers are involved are highlighted and practicable recommendation, which will put a total half to their involvement made.*

### INTRODUCTION

Institutions of learning are characterized by a lot of psycho-socio-educational problems such as non-school attendance behaviour, cultism, robbery, riots, examination malpractices, etc. while some of these anti-social behaviours are absent in some institutions, others cut across all institutions of learning. One of such maladaptive behaviour that rear its head in virtually all institutions of learning is examination mal-practice. Hardly is there any institution of learning in this part of the world that is

totally immuned to its existence. It has become a cankerworm eating away the gains of educational programme. As rightly pointed out by Anameze (1999):

*"that examination malpractice is widespread in Nigeria is not a mere claim. Everyday experiences show that continuous assessment tests, termly or semester examinations and certificate examinations are replete with fraudulent practices (p. 198).*

Examination malpractice boundary cut across age, level of education, internal and external examination.

It is therefore highly imperative that concerted efforts should be made not only to identify those involved in the perpetration of this illicit act but efforts should also be made towards eliminating this menace gradually destroying the dignity of institution of learning in Nigeria. On this promise, this paper, as it advances, discusses meaning and forms of Examination malpractice. Emphasis is also on ways and manner by which teachers get themselves involved in examination malpractice. The paper concludes with practicable recommendations.

## MEANING OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE

The Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995) separately defines examination and malpractice. While examination is said to be "a test of student's knowledge or skill in a particular subject which results in a qualification if the student is successful, malpractice on the other hand is said to mean failure to act correctly or legally when doing your job. Examination malpractice could, therefore, be said to be failure to follow rules and regulations governing an attempt to test or examine knowledge or skill in a particular subject.

The above therefore implies that before an attempt is made to test student's knowledge appropriate rules and regulations governing their conduct before, during and after examination have been made known and stated in clear terms. When any of these rules and regulations is violated examination

malpractice has taken place. This may explain Anameze (1999) position that examination practice could be "correctly understood as the use of fraudulent means to achieve success in an examination".

## FORMS OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE

Despite the existence of rules and regulations governing the conduct of examination, students in Nigeria have devised diverse forms of fraudulent ways of achieving success in examination. Bolarin (1999) was of the opinion that one cannot exhaust all methods used to cheat in examination halls. This notwithstanding Agidi (1997) claimed that over 33 forms of examination malpractices have been identified.

These have been categorized into nine viz: externally aided collusion; inspection/accreditation; technical fraud; leakages; admissions; impersonation; computer fraud; and assault/intimidation.

In a survey study carried out by Animasahun (1998) which sought information on students methods of cheating from 106 respondents, the following are some of the popular methods of cheating: settiement; impersonating; syndicate of papers; writing on thighs; examination materials, finger-nails, shirt curves; buying of questions; hiring people to write in the hall.

In another study which examine the antics of examination malpractices in senior secondary schools in Ikere metropolis Ikudayisi (1998) identified the following as methods that students use in cheating: graphing; hiding of papers, textbooks, notes inside and outside the desk before examination; copying of notes on the body private parts or wearing apparel; writing of answers from outside and throwing to examinees to copy; WAEC agents smuggle questions papers to sell to student; students attract invigilators to themselves in a way to cheat, students bring in life questions; law enforcement agents aid students in the exam;

fraudulent class teachers who are invigilators aid students; and WAEC supervisors help to reveal life questions to students before the examination.

In its strict sense, the above forms of examination malpractice and many others not mentioned could be broadly classified into three viz:

- (a) Malpractice before examination
- (b) Malpractice during examination
- (c) Malpractice after examination.

In otherwise, whatever form of examination malpractice identified, the illicit act is either perpetrated before, during, or after examination.

## TEACHER'S INVOLVEMENT IN EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES

The successful execution of examination malpractice act has been attributed to involvement of a number of individuals, group of individuals and examination bodies. Okpala and Ifelumni (2001) maintained that the issue of who is involved in examination malpractice does not need any debate. The consensus, they argued, identify the society, those in authority such as school, examining bodies, the law enforcement agents and the examinees.

On his part Anameze (1999) asserted that perpetrators of examination malpractice comprises students, impersonating graduates or under-graduates, school administrations, teachers, examination officers, examiners security agents, staff of examination bodies, custodians of examination papers, printers, gateman, transports, education inspectors, schools, communities and parents.

From the foregoing, it will be misleading to limit examination malpractices act to student alone exonerating teachers. Teachers are overtly and covertly involved. Apart from teaching, they set questions for examination, invigilate examination and mark

examination papers. The disturbing nature of teachers involvement in examination malpractice is summed up in this way by Okpala and Ifelunni (2001) thus

*..... Of more disturbing and sustaining of examination malpractice in our teachers including principals and head teachers, invigilators and supervisors who are supposed to be the role models to the students (P. 23).*

In a study conducted by Ikudayisi (1998) which sought to know the extent of the involvement of the society, teachers, parents and students in examination malpractice, 46% of the 540 respondents agreed that students get parents and teachers encouragement to cheat. Apart from supporting the idea of some teachers promoting examination malpractice Omebe (2001) concurred that most teachers get themselves involved in this unethical behaviour in order to make ends meet.

It is, however, worth mentioning that involvement of teachers in examination malpractice may be before, during or after examination.

Below are some of the unethical behaviour of teachers before, during and after examination which have been found to sustain and promote examination malpractice in Nigeria schools.

#### QUALITY OF TEACHING

Teachings are employed to teach students. The quality of teaching should aid retention ability of learners. Students can only recall or reproduce what is retained through teaching. While some teachers deliver their lesson in a manner that would aid retention poor quality of teaching have been reported among others. It has been observed that poor quality of teaching aggravates the urge to cheat in the examination hall by students with low academic ability (Egwangle, 1997). The following ways of teaching can

aggravate and serve as catalyst to student's engagement in examination malpractice;

- Commencement of teaching few days to examination
- Concentrating teaching efforts on questions set for examination only.
- Inappropriate teaching methods.
- Teaching without teaching qualification.

### (b) SETTING OF EXAMINATION QUESTION

Examination questions are to be prepared by teachers before or after teaching the entire course outline. It is, however, worthy of note that some teachers are in the usual habit of setting examination questions that are very difficult in the practical sense of it or set questions which have little or no bearing with what students are taught in class. When this is the usual practice of a teacher the tendency is therefore certain category of students, most especially those with low academic ability, to be involved in examination malpractice before, during or after examination.

Besides this, some teachers are in the usual habit of repeating part of or all questions set for previous examination instead of setting new questions.

Act like this increase the probability that certain category of students will prepare the answer before examination and make use of such during examination. On the contrary, some teachers have been accused of giving students likely examination questions which turned out to be questions set for examination

### (c) METHODS OF INVIGILATION

In an attempt to make examination malpractice free, invigilators are appointed to watch the examinees. These invigilators are teachers. It therefore means that they are saddled with the professional responsibility of preventing whatever

examination malpractice that are likely to take place during the conduct of examination.

Teachers are therefore expected not only to be vigilant but also prevent and report any examination malpractice during the conduct of examination. The need for total vigilance becomes imperative because of certain reasons: One, it has been discovered from the finding of Ewangle (1997) study that the more vigilant an invigilator is, the less the ability of students to cheat. Two, examination malpractice act that cannot be perpetrated before the conduct of examination would be deferred to this period or examination perpetrated before examination would be perfected during the conduct of examination.

For instance, students may want to pass jotted points to one another or copy from one another. A student with prepared examination booklet will want to submit it or a student who did not submit answer booklet but still sign examination submission sheet or students stealing answer booklet for the purpose of using it for another paper. Students can even pass examination questions out, to be answered by some one else and returned for submission.

From the foregoing, therefore, invigilators (teachers) vigilance could prevent examination malpractice from taking place. It is however, disheartening to note that the attitude of some teachers to proper invigilation calls for concern. Rather than prevent and report examination malpractice during the conduct of examination, some teachers either intentionally or inadvertently allow examination malpractice take place during examination.

To such category of teacher's vigilance, which is the hallmark of invigilation, is not part of their responsibility. If these teachers are not reading newspaper during the period of invigilation, they are discussing with their colleagues or playing with the examinees. Ikudayisi (1998) asserted that some invigilators even remain quiet when students are cheating. Finding from his study also confirmed that fraudulent teachers who are invigilators aid students during examination. Cases of invigilators pardoning students who cheated during examination after begging invigilators have been revealed by Ewangle (1997)



ironically, most students prefer invigilators who are not vigilant when it is time for invigilation.

#### (d) INCESSANT STRIKE

An academic programme in institution of learning is expected to follow a laid down academic calendar on yearly basis. This is sometimes prevented by incessant action by teachers.

Sixty seven percent of respondents used for a study on antics of examination malpractice by Ikudayisi (1998) agreed that incessant strike is a prominent factor responsible for examination malpractice. When teachers are on strike teaching learning process is automatically paralyzed. Students are to remain at home until the industrial action is suspended or called off.

The adjustment that is always made to the academic calendar after strike, in most cases, is not always to the academic benefits of students. What is expected to be taught for eight weeks may be compressed to four weeks. Academic calendar adjustment due to industrial action of teachers, therefore, tends to make certain category of students academically maladjusted up to the level of engaging in examination malpractice. Studies have shown the need for students to make adequate preparation before participating in examination. For instance, Ewangle (1997) study revealed that eighty-eight percent of students used for the study on major reasons for examination malpractice called for more preparation on the part of students. They also urged school authorities to give adequate time for students to read.

#### e) REVELATION OF CONCENTRATION AREA

It is customary of students to demand for area of concentration after the completion of course outline for a particular subject or course. This is based on the premise that area of concentration (AOC) will give them clear cut focus of what to and what not to read in their attempt to prepare for and pass examination. Moreso, Area of Concentration (AOC) becomes

necessary because of the fact that it is unlikely that questions will come out from all the topics taught in the class.

In their attempt to meet the demand of students for area of concentration (AOC), teachers directly or indirectly prepare the ground for examination malpractice. Take a case of a teacher who gives students specific topics from where questions will come out in the examination or a teacher who gives students likely examination questions which ironically are the questions that will come out during examination. Cases like this tend to give certain students not only the pre-knowledge of questions that will come out in the examination but also what they will write on a sheet of paper to be taken in during examinations.

(f) **FAVOURITISM**

the act of favoritism by teachers is one other behaviour that promotes examination malpractice in Nigeria schools. Students are unduly favored before, during and after examination. Reasons for giving unmerited favour to a particular student by teachers varied. The following are some of the ways by which teachers can favour students and some of the ways by which teachers can favour students and it will amount to examination malpractice before, during and after examinations:

- revealing examination questions to favorites before examination.
- Highlighting areas where questions will be set for examination to favorites.
- Selling of examination questions for a specific amount of money.
- Providing answer or giving clue to answer to favorites during examination.
- Failure to report or ignoring examination malpractice acts perpetrated by favorites.
- Allowing favorites to re-write examination after the conduct of examination

- Passing favorites students who did not sit for examination.
- Marking without marking scheme.
- Failure to adhere to marking scheme.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is glaringly evident from the above that the sustenance and promotion of examination malpractice have the negative input of teachers. Inability to uphold professional ethics could be said to be the major underlying cause of there. If teachers abide by professional ethics governing their profession their negative input to sustenance and promotion of examination malpractice will be part of history.

It is therefore the recommendation of this paper that professional ethical standards governing teaching profession should not only be made available to all teachers but adherence to it should also be monitored. Erring teachers should be made to face disciplinary actions.

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