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**Management Strategies for Curbing Examination Malpractice in Public Secondary Schools
in Abuja, Nigeria**

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Abstract

The study assesses the management strategies for curbing examination malpractice in public senior secondary schools in Abuja, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population for the study was 183 Principals and Vice Principals including (Academic and Administration) and 7,104 students in 61 public senior secondary schools in Abuja. The sample for the study was 93 Principals including Vice Principals and 364 students in 30 public senior secondary schools in Abuja. Simple random sampling technique was used for selecting 30 schools with the 93 Principals and Vice Principals for the study while the sample of students and teachers were done using Morgan and Kreycie (1971). Three research questions were formulated for the study. Two instruments were used for collecting data. Instrument one titled 'Management Strategies for Curbing Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (MSCEMQ)' was developed for the Principals and Vice Principals both academic and administration, while instrument two titled Types and Causes of Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (TCEMQ) was developed for students. The two instruments were structured on a 4-point rating scale of strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instruments were validated and the reliability of the instruments was ascertained using Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient which yielded a reliability index of 0.78 and 0.71 respectively. Findings of the study showed that bringing in unauthorized materials into the examinations hall/centers is the most used type of examination malpractice in secondary schools and impersonation was the least used type of examination malpractice among secondary schools students. The study also revealed that lack of strict enforcement of punishment on offenders was the highest rated of the causes of examination malpractice among secondary school students and that orientation of staff and students on the danger of examination malpractice was the most used by principals.

Keywords: management strategies, curbing examination malpractices, brain support and corruption in education

Introduction

Examination in Nigerian education system has remained the criterion for promotion and certification. It is a yardstick for measuring students' achievement. Examination is a formal test of somebody's knowledge or ability in a particular subject. Over the years, standardized testing in a form of examination has been the most commonly used method of assessing performance of students. This method seems to be losing its credibility in the eyes of the society as a result of examination malpractices in schools. Tambuwal, (2013) defined examination malpractice as any act or omission that prevents the use of examination to determine the learner's level of competence in understanding the learning contents amounts to examination malpractice.

Examination malpractice is an act of wrong doing carried out by a candidate or group of candidates or any other person inside or outside the examination hall with the intention to cheat and gain unfair advantage in an examination. Chukwuemeka, (2012) stated that examination malpractice is a violation of examination rules and regulations by candidates. There are rule and regulations guiding the conducts of examinations and any contrary action amounts to examination malpractice. Bola (2016) stated that examination malpractice is any action that contravenes the rules and regulations of examination ethics. It is the application of unusual means to obtain a score or set of scores normally beyond the mental capability or the state of preparedness of a candidate for the examination. In the same view, Adamu (2008) described examination malpractice as irregularities premeditated and perpetrated by the candidates or their agents with the intension of gaining undue advantage in the examination. It is a massive and unprecedented abuse of rules and regulations pertaining to examination from the beginning, to the setting, through the taking, the marking and grading to the release of the results and even to the issuance of certificates. Examination malpractice occurs in different forms.

Forms of Examination Malpractice

There are many types of examination malpractices, these include: seeking and receiving help from invigilators, copying from another student, importation or bringing in foreign materials,

impersonation and leakages. All these and many others give students an undue advantage. Adamu (2008); Timothy & Abubakar, (2013) identified various forms of examination malpractice. They include bringing in unauthorized materials, writing on currency notes and identity cards, spying of candidates in examination halls, substitution of answer sheets, change of examination scores and grades. Jacob, (2011) included impersonation, leakage of questions to the students before examination, conniving with supervisors and school authorities to cheat, body writing or tattoo in which students especially females write on hidden parts of their bodies.

The CWO Voice (2010) found other forms of examination malpractice to include the use of radio transmitters hidden in clothes, personal stereos loaded with pre-recorded tapes and programmable calculators packed with data. With the emergence of the Global System of Mobile telephones (GSM) in the country examination malpractice have been revolutionized in the school system. Jekayinfa in Ukeje, Ocho & Fagbarniyc, (2006), highlighted the following as types of examination malpractice in secondary schools, dishonesty before, during and after the examination; ‘giraffing’ is an act of sticking out one’s neck to see another student’s answers; ‘abracadabra’ is an act of using magic powers; ‘lateral connection’ this is a sitting arrangement whereby the “bright” student is seated in the centre, flanked on both sides by other students; ‘livewire’ having access to question paper before examination period; ‘computo’ using calculator; ‘missile catch’ represents answers written on pieces of papers, squeezed and thrown to a colleague in the hall while the examination is going on. These various types of examination malpractices are caused by various reasons.

Mullins, (2005) therefore posited that despite these factors as enumerated above, examination malpractices has manifested in different ways and forms. Majorly, examination malpractices has manifested in the following forms:

- Impersonation
- Smuggling in of foreign materials (micro chips, brain support, ekpo, cocain, codein, tramadol etc)
- External assistance and collusion

- Copying
- Paper leakage: This means that the content of examination or part of it is disclosed prior to taking the examination.
- Improper assignment: Deliberately placing candidates under the supervision of corrupt officials.
- Intimidation of exam officials by candidates.

Meyer, & Allen, (2001) and Meyer & Schoorman, (2001) further observed that since examination malpractice arrangement rarely fails; fraud or malpractice may eventually be seen as part of academic exercise. Arising from this situation, Timothy & Abubakar, (2013) concluded that graduates produced through examination malpractice will not see anything bad in sophisticated corrupt acts thus deflating societal morals

Causes of examination malpractice in secondary schools

There are various causes of examination malpractice in secondary schools, these include: student's desire to succeed by all means, many students want to pass examination at all cost, as a result of this desire, they involve themselves in examination malpractice not minding the consequences. Another cause of examination malpractice is high premium placed on certificate. Nigerian society as a whole places so much importance on certificate rather than competency. What people want to see is certificate, nobody care as to whether the certificate holder can defend it or not. No matter how experienced one is, as long as you do not have certificate to back it, nobody will recognize you (Nnam & Inah, 2015).

Jimoh, (2009) However, opined that the most challenging factors to the improvement of our educational standard is the fast growing cancer called "examination malpractice" which has eaten deep into the fabric of our educational system. This cancer worm has eaten deep into the school system from primary to tertiary institutions across the country. Timothy & Abubakar, (2013) had earlier posited that various factors can lead to examination malpractice, these factors according to Jimoh, (2009) and Dixit & Bhati, (2012) include but not limited to: poor moral

Management Strategies for Curbing Examination Malpractice in Public Secondary

upbringing, quest for paper qualification and not knowledge for technological development, lack of good societal and family upbringing, materialism, certificate over-consciousness, lack of self confidence, poor remuneration of teachers and examiners, poverty and corruption among others (Kyei, 2014). Other scholars like Lee, (2001); Lashley & Lee-Ross, (2003) and Mahsum, (2006) found that the causes of examination malpractice in our institutions of learning include:

- Inadequate school facilities and teachers.
- Threats and intimidations from parents.
- Laziness,
- Trying to protect the reputation of teachers and school status.
- Desire of some parents to place their children in lucrative jobs.

As a result of this, everybody's priority is acquisition of certificate. Fear of failure is another cause of examination malpractice. Fear of failure affects students psychologically. Students believe that examination is a difficult act and that not everybody who seat for it will pass, therefore they find themselves doing those things that are against the conducts of examinations (Babalola, et al., 2007; Anzene, 2014). Equally, Asuru cited in Babalola et al., (2007) observed that inadequate infrastructure in schools lead to overcrowding in classroom and examination halls thereby giving opportunities to students to involve themselves in examination malpractice.

Consequences of examination malpractice

The Federal Military Government in its bid to curb examination malpractice promulgated Decree 20 of 1984 part of which reads thus:

Any person who fraudulently or with intent to cheat or secure any unfair advantage to himself 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 section 3 (27) (c) of this decree, shall be guilty of an offence and

on conviction be sentenced to 21 years imprisonment (Nnam & Inah, 2015, pp 56).

However, examination malpractice Act 33 of 1999 reversed the above decree but stipulate punishment ranging from a fine of N50, 000 to N100, 000 and imprisonment for a term of 3-4 years with or without option of fine. This development was due to the inability of appropriate authorities to enforce the old decree 20. Despite the provision of this law, examination malpractice has been on the increase and this is partly due to the non implementation of the law. Disturbed by increasing trend of this criminal act, the Federal Government at her Executive Council meeting held on 4th of September, 2013 approved a proposal to amend the West African Examination Council (WAEC) Act for culprits to spend five (5) years in jail or pay a fine of N250, 000 (Onuka & Durowoju, 2013; Nnam & Inah, 2015).

Besides Decree 20 of 1984 and later Act 33 of 1999 aimed at minimizing examination malpractice; WAEC has also embarked on public campaigns on effects of examination malpractice, the punishments attached to such offences using handbills, posters, jingles; seminars and workshops. NECO also conducted similar campaigns at various times. A Non-Government Organization (NGO) known as Exam Ethics project has been working tirelessly in fighting examination malpractice.

Management Strategies for Curbing Examination Malpractice

Onyibe, Uma & Ibina, (2015) highlighted the followings as strategies for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools.

Moral Education/ citizenship education: Examination malpractice especially at the secondary school level is a hydra headed problem facing the educational system in Nigeria. Since previous efforts geared towards curbing this problem seem to have yielded no dividends, there is the urgent need to adopt the strategy of moral Education. This is so because; examination malpractice is a reflection of the moral decadence in the society. Moral education is essential for bringing up

Management Strategies for Curbing Examination Malpractice in Public Secondary

morally sound children. Good character is required for a crime-free society to be instilled in the people at an early stage. Moral education ensures that the people know what is good, desire what is good; and do what is good. This attitude should be instilled in the youth right from the primary schools to secondary schools.

Values such as peace, honesty, forth rightness and dedication; diligence are cherished and aspired by the world all over. Such values are the sustaining forces of human society and progress. What children and youths learn is inter woven into the fabric of the society. So, positive values should be passed on to the school children.

Stiff punishment: Stiff punishment such as paying fine, imprisonment as stipulated in the examination malpractice decree and also expelling the student(s) among others should be strictly adhered to. This will make students to shun examination malpractice because of the fear of the punishment.

Continuous Assessment: This is another strategy for curbing examination malpractice. It is a continuous updating of teachers' judgment about the learner's performance in relation to specific criteria which will allow at any time a cumulative judgment to be made about his/her performance. It is known to reduce the rates of school indiscipline. Through the continuous assessment, students can have prerequisite knowledge of areas of concentrations which are likely to come out in exams. In this way, students can decide to focus more on the likely continuous assessment questions to avoid cheating during exams. Though this means, students can avoid involving themselves in examination malpractice through:

- i. proper counseling of students from time to time on the consequences of examination malpractices
- ii. provision of conducive environment for writing examinations
- iii. genuine involvement of all staff in the supervision of examination
- iii. proper securing of examination question papers

- iv. provision of conducive classrooms and venues for the examinations

Statement of the Problem

The issue of examination malpractice has become a serious problem that affects all the systems of education in Nigeria, from nursery to higher institution. What are pathetic are that students, parents, teachers and even those who in one way or the other have something to do with examination seems to be involved in examination malpractice. Examination malpractice has become ramped in secondary schools as a result of intense competition for access to higher institutions. Students cheat in examination for the purpose of obtaining higher scores to improve their chances of gaining admission to the next level of education.

The more the government, principals, examination bodies and other well-meaning individuals try to find solutions to the problem, the more the perpetrators also device ways to frustrate such efforts. The problem is becoming more scientific by the day; it is metamorphosing from the era of candidates copying from fellow candidates to using sophisticated electronic gadgets such as cell phones and concealed ear pieces. This has drawn the attention of stakeholders in education to find solution to this problem. It is on this note that the study tends to investigate the management strategies that can be adopted for curbing examination malpractice in public secondary schools in Abuja, Nigeria.

The specific purposes of the study are to:

1. Identify the various types of examination malpractice peculiar to public senior secondary schools in Abuja.
2. Establish the causes of examination malpractice in public senior secondary schools in Abuja.
3. Determine the management strategies used in curbing the examination malpractice in public secondary schools in Abuja.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the various types of examination malpractice peculiar to public senior secondary schools in Abuja?
2. What are the causes of examination malpractice in public senior secondary schools in Abuja?
3. What are the management strategies adopted by principals for curbing the examination malpractice in public secondary schools in Abuja?

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population for the study was 183 Principals and Vice Principals including (Academic and Administration) and 7,104 students in 61 public senior secondary schools in Abuja. The sample for the study was 93 Principals including Vice Principals and 364 students in 30 public senior secondary schools in Abuja. Simple random sampling technique was used for selecting 30 schools with the 93 Principals and Vice Principals for the study, while the sample of students and teachers were done using Morgan and Kreycie (1971). Three research questions were formulated for the study. Two instruments were used for collecting data. Instrument one titled 'Management Strategies for Curbing Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (MSCEMQ) was developed for the Principals and Vice Principals (both academic and administration), while instrument two titled Types and Causes of Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (TCEMQ) was developed for students.

The two instruments were structured on a 4-point Likert types rating scale of strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instruments were validated by two experts in the Department of Educational Management, University of Abuja and the reliability of the instruments was ascertained using Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient, which yielded a reliability index of 0.78 and 0.71 respectively. The results of the analysis were presented in tables with the interpretations followed. Mean scores and standard deviations were

used to answer the research questions and the decision rule is that a mean score of 2.50 and above was considered as positive response (Agree) and less than 2.50 considered as negative response (Disagree).

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1

What are the various types of examination malpractice peculiar to public senior secondary schools in Abuja?

Table 1: Analysis of students' responses to types of examination malpractices in public senior secondary schools, Abuja (N=364)

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	Decision
1.	Bringing in unauthorized materials into the examinations hall/centers	101	158	57	47	2.98	Agree
2.	Sorting (alternation of examination grade with the use of money or sex)	63	157	85	59	2.59	Agree
3.	Writing on currency notes, tissue papers, handkerchief and identity cards	76	68	127	93	2.34	Disagree
4.	Copying from other candidates (giraffing) during examination	113	108	47	46	2.51	Agree
5.	Writing on hidden parts of the body before commencement of examination	82	143	84	55	2.68	Agree
6.	Use of mobile phone	85	141	122	16	2.81	Agree
7	Impersonation	79	223	42	17	1.05	Agree
Overall mean						2.68	Agree

Table 1 shows mean responses of students on the types of examination malpractice in public senior secondary schools in Abuja. The results of data analysis on table 1 revealed that students agreed with most of the items presented to them as types of examination malpractice with mean range between 2.51 to 2.98 with the exception items 3 and 7, which have mean scores of 2.34 and 1.05. On individual items, the finding shows that Bringing in unauthorized materials into the examinations hall/centers is the most used type of examination malpractice in secondary schools.

On the other hand students rated impersonation as the low type of examination malpractice used in secondary schools.

Research Question 2

What are the causes of examination malpractice in public senior secondary schools in Abuja?

Table 2: Analysis of students' responses to causes of examination malpractices in public senior secondary schools, Abuja (No =364)

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	Decision
1.	Inadequate staffing	126	163	47	28	2.57	Strongly Agree
2	Lack of strict enforcement of punishment on offenders	67	150	71	76	3.06	Agree
3.	Parents wanting their children to pass at all cost	68	155	74	67	2.61	Agree
4.	Emphasis on certificates rather than on demonstration of skills and competencies	130	94	57	83	2.74	Agree
5.	Student's fear of failure in examination	133	95	72	64	2.81	Agree
6.	Lack of reading habits among students as a result of inadequate library resources	100	172	67	25	2.95	Agree
7.	Lecturers not adequately motivated	167	56	64	77	2.85	Agree
8.	Lack of guidance and counseling services for students	82	140	125	17	2.78	Agree
9.	Inadequate infrastructure in schools	99	180	64	18	2.97	Agree
10.	Lack of traditional values among students	95	100	72	97	2.53	Agree
Overall mean						2.78	Agree

Table 2 shows students' responses to causes of examination malpractices in public senior secondary schools and most of the items have mean above the criterion mean of 2.5, all the students' mean responses are in agreement to the items stated. The items were rated high with mean scores ranging between 2.53 to 3.06. However, on individual items, lack of strict enforcement of punishment on offenders was rated highest with mean score of 3.06.

Research Question 3

What are the management strategies adopted by principals for curbing the examination malpractice in public secondary schools in Abuja?

Table 3: Analysis of principals' and vice principals responses to management strategies use in curbing the examination malpractice in public secondary schools in Abuja (N93).

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	Decision
1.	Giving moral education to students	23	49	12	9	2.72	Agree
2	Proper and prompt payment of remuneration to staff	5	6	66	16	2.00	Disagree
3.	Enforcement of stiff punishment to any involved in examination malpractice	51	24	11	7	2.27	Strongly Agree
4.	Orientation of staff and students on the danger of examination malpractice	11	60	7	15	2.92	Agree
5.	Provision of adequate infrastructure in schools	22	57	13	1	3.07	Strongly Agree
6.	Encouraging teacher-student's relationship	5	11	47	30	1.90	Disagree
7.	Use of Computerized Cameras & Transmitters Television. (CCTV)	3	15	43	32	1.88	Disagree
8.	Use of qualified teachers	10	26	46	11	2.37	Disagree
Overall mean						2.51	

Table 2 indicates that items 1, 4 and 5 have mean responses of above 2.50 which signifies acceptance to the items while respondents show disagreement with items 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8 as strategies adopted by principals for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools. On individual items, the study revealed that orientation of staff and students on the danger of examination malpractice was the most used by principals.

Discussion of Findings

Students are involved in various types of examination malpractices. Some of the methods used include bringing in unauthorized materials into the examinations hall/centers, sorting (alternation of examination grade with the use of money or sex), copying from other candidates (giraffing) during examination, use of mobile phone, Impersonation. The finding of this study is in line with the finding of Phiri & Nakamba, (2015) who found that one of the greatest problems confronting

the Nigerian education system today is examination malpractice. This result also confirms that of Agbo, (2005) who found a similar result. Maduka, (2013) studies also found similar results.

It was on the basis of results like this that Rod & Nicholas, (2010) advocated that one of the greatest problems confronting the Nigerian education system today is examination malpractice. It was on the strength of this advocacy that to Agbo (2005) said students negotiate their grades according to their pockets. Maduka (2013) stated that some students buy question papers with money while some others buy paper with their bodies if they are females. Various reasons for students' examination malpractices were identified. These are inadequate staffing, lack of strict enforcement of punishment on offenders, emphasis on certificates rather than on demonstration of skills and competencies, lack of reading habits among students as a result of inadequate library resources among others. Many students indulge in examination malpractice so as to pass their examinations, they do not bother themselves with reading and attending lectures as expected.

Examination malpractices constitute a major setback to quality education in the society; there is therefore urgent need for eradicating this, hence, principals have adopted management strategies to curb examination malpractices, these strategies include giving moral education to students, enforcement of stiff punishment to anyone involved in examination malpractice, orientation of staff and students on the danger of examination malpractice and adequate infrastructures in schools. This a major confirmation of Rum, Troena, Hadiwidjoyo & Surachman, (2013) whose quest for effective teaching and learning, must be backed by the provision of a conducive, crime and corruption free learning environment which must be conducive.

Conclusion

From this study, it has been established that examination malpractice has eaten deep into our educational system; this hydra headed monster must be tackled headlong, if our educational system must be restored to produce graduates worth the salt. The desire and quest for entering higher institution has caused many students to indulge in examination malpractice. This study has

highlighted types and causes of examination malpractices. The study also highlights the principals' management strategies for curbing examination malpractices. The study concludes that examination malpractice must be seriously tackled in order to ensure quality education in secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should provide adequate infrastructure and staff in schools
2. Government should enforce stiffer penalties and fines for students, teachers and invigilators engaging in any form to promote examination malpractice during or after exam.
3. Teachers, vice principals and principals also need to acquire and display in their work in school sound moral values of equality, honesty, honors, respect, self- control responsibility, social justice, and respect for authority etc.
4. Moral education must be emphasized from home to the school, this should be preached according to the tenets to the content of the education program, not just mere mouth speculations.

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