

**ASSESSMENT OF TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS OF EXAMINATION
MALPRACTICES IN SCHOOLS: CURBING SOCIAL ILLS AMONG SECONDARY
SCHOOL STUDENTS**

By

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Abstract

This study investigated the prevalence of the various types of examination malpractices at the secondary education level in Nigeria; finds out the perceptions of teachers on the examination malpractices in schools and prescribe strategies for the prevention and management of examination malpractices in schools. The research design adopted for this study is descriptive survey. The sample consists of 203 (101 males and 102 females) secondary school teachers' randomly selected using simple random sampling technique from 12 senior secondary schools in Osogbo and Ede North local Government Area of Osun State. Instrument used for this study was designed by the researchers and titled as: Teachers Perception of Examination Malpractices Questionnaire (TPEMO), it consisted of 20 items with a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient = 0.82. Three research questions guided the study. Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and independent t-test. It was found that respondents had little awareness of the prevalence of these forms of examination malpractices in general. It was therefore recommended that teachers should be thoroughly trained before embarking on teaching and marking of student's script, so that they would not involve themselves in teaching malpractices and be able to easily detect and report cases of examination malpractices.

Keywords: Social Vices, Social Ills, Examination Malpractice, Prevalence, Perception.

Introduction

Social issues are issues or matters which affect a person, many members in a society or a group, either directly or indirectly, and which are considered to be matters of concern, problems or controversies. These matters raise concern because they are related to moral values. A social problem is a condition that

at least some people in a community view as being undesirable. For example, teenagers who play loud music in a public park obviously do not view it as a problem, but some other people may consider it an undesirable social condition. The aftermath of social problems result to social ills. These social ills are unjust, unkind, painful evil conditions and situations of harmful attitudes, deviation from moral attitudes in society. Social vices give rise to social ills. Social vices connote various forms of deviant behaviours and immoral actions that results to moral decadence.

Undoubtedly, examination malpractices are among such social vices confronting Nigerian schools today. There is hardly an academic session without reported cases of examination malpractices in many Nigerian institutions, and that now, includes primary and secondary schools. The purpose of examination is to determine the candidate's level of proficiency in the subject as well as the ability to utilize these knowledge and skills effectively. It is also believed that examination shows the strength and the short coming of a particular learning programme and efficiency of the teaching techniques employed.

Jegede (1996) defined examination malpractice as wrongdoing, misconduct or improper practice for personal gain or violation of rules and regulations guiding conduct of examination. Ijaiya (1998) also opined that examination malpractice is the act of going contrary to the rules and regulations guiding the conduct of examination. Oxford Dictionary of current English defines malpractices as improper, negligence, or criminal professional conduct. Examination malpractice is a problem that has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigeria education system. It is a social vice that is viewed as the bane of the Nigeria school system.

It is also of great concern that examination malpractice is assuming an alarming situation in primary schools where children are being socialized into rudiments of basic education. It is painful to realize that examination malpractice, have dangerously infected the psyche of some of our expected leaders of tomorrow. "Gender, age, religious beliefs and level of education are no longer inhibition to participation of individuals or engagement in examination malpractice". said President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria (Sovereign National Conference Report, 2014).

Examination malpractices have equally become the pastime of some teachers in the country. Teachers who are supposed to be role models are now the ambassadors of this social evil. Igbo (2013) opined that it manifest in different forms which includes examination leakages, impersonation, external assistance, smuggling of foreign materials into the examination halls, copying, use of handset in the examination halls, special centres now exist and lots more. According to Odo (2002), examination malpractices have been identified as one of the challenges facing the Nigerian education system. His study explores the meaning, causes, and forms of examination malpractices and the strategies with which to tackle the phenomenon. He described examination malpractice as a form of corrupt practice perpetrated within the education system. Mgbekem (2004) identified various forms of examination malpractices, electronically assisted malpractices, impersonation and some others.

According to Okotoni (2007), Examination malpractice is probably the most serious threat to academic credibility and prestige in Nigeria. His study examines the rising challenge of examination malpractice, which cuts across all levels of education in Nigeria and has harmed the reputation of the nation abroad. His study observes that there is an increase in the degree of examination malpractice at all level, and went on to analyze the various forms of examination malpractice in Nigeria. Such increase includes leakage, impersonation, alteration of marks by lecturers and examiners, aiding and abetting, supply of prewritten answer sheets to students, and many others.

Ayoola (1998) revealed the frequency of cheating especially among the adolescents in Nigeria. No specific figure can be given as to the occurrence because this depends on how cheating is defined and how it is measured. Even the so called developed world like America, British and Germany are not left out in examination cheating act. The effect of examination malpractices includes suspension, expulsion,

and cancellation of examination scores. It has also resulted into loss of lives, most of the times loss of jobs, violence that causes serious damages to properties and personalities.

Education is seen as the major key to human development in every society and the school makes up an enormous part of a child's life. Teachers play a major role in making up a child's experiences; academics and learning also leave their mark on development. That is, whatever you want the society to become put it in the school. According to Ukeje (2002), "if you want an honest society", teach honesty in the school. If it is value or virtues inculcate them into the children. Thus, education must be seen as an instrument of socialization; the school is the manufacturer of the society.

Remember that genetics and the environment are always interacting in a dynamic way. A child's genetic background will influence his ability to learn, but good educational experiences can enhance these abilities. While activities within the environment may make school a struggle, quality interventions allows kids to overcome difficulties and achieve their full potential. Associating innocent children with examination malpractice addicted children in particular can have an enormously detrimental effect on a child's experience and eventual behavior.

When a child starts schooling, there is the belief that he/she will inculcate positive values that will eventually influence his/her home now and in the future. The education of the child that is scheduled in the school is expected to bring about positive change in behavior, especially, when we think in terms of economy of time, facilities and economy of money expended on providing the child's education. Thus, children are sent to school for the purpose of furthering the society's interest. Such interests includes preparing individual for future life within the society, sense of belonging to the society together with commitment to its way of life maintaining the formative of end section patterns of the society by influencing its new entrants i.e. providing opportunities for children to become more acquainted with a wider and more diverse circle of friends than they would otherwise reach at home, widening the child's participating in culture from local to national levels, i.e. widening the child's horizon, selecting and molding elites for the society. The school system which provides formal education at three levels Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary (FRN, 2013), has a lot to offer in providing a lasting solution.

Scholars are concerned with capacity building at all levels of education, most importantly at the primary school level, which serves as the bedrock upon which other levels are built. Linnel (2003) perceives capacity buildings as:

- i. The process aimed at improving the skills of individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and communities for varying out key functions, solving problems, defining and achieving objectives, understanding and dealing with what is needed to manage these matters sustainably ;
- ii. A process that involves information, gaining insights, changing perceptions, values, common sense, practical skills, attitude and style; and
- iii. A process of developing and strengthening the skills, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt and thrive in the fast changing world.

Teaching quality becomes paramount and it includes: creating a positive learning climate, selecting appropriate instructional goals and assessments, using the curriculum effectively, and employing varied instructional behaviors' that help all students to learn at higher levels (Rokoff, 2004). It has been found that student's demographics are not the primary determinant of student achievement; rather, what teachers know and how the knowledge is transferred are the most important factor influencing what students learn and achieved.

From the going, it became pertinent to tackle head-on the prevalence of examination malpractice which has assumed an alarming rate. This paper, therefore attempts holistic measures for controlling the menace of examination malpractice in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

- i. To what extent to teachers have knowledge of the different forms of examination malpractices?
- ii. Is there a significant different between the teachers' perception of evil of examination malpractices based on gender?
- iii. Does the location of teachers affect their perception of evil of examination malpractices?

Methods and procedure

The research design adopted for this study is descriptive survey involving the use of close ended questionnaire.

Sample and sampling Technique

The sample made up of 203 (101 males and 102 females) secondary school teachers' randomly selected using random sampling technique from 12 Senior Secondary Schools in Osogbo and Ede north local government Area of Osun State. These Senior Secondary Schools were selected on the criteria of being approved by West African Examination Council (WAEC) and have been presenting candidates for public examinations.

Instrumentation

Instrument used for this study was Teachers Perception of Examination Malpractices (TPEMQ) consisted of 20 items which are close ended with a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient = 0.82. It has two sections: the first part (section A) comprised 5-items which solicited for bio-data of the respondents. Section B consisted of 15-items that solicited for information on teachers perception about exam malpractices..

Results and Data Analysis

Data collection was done by the researchers in all the 12 secondary schools and lasted two weeks. Research question 1 was analyzed using frequency counts and percentage. Research questions 2 and 3, were analyzed using independent t-test statistics.

Research Question One: To what extent do teachers have knowledge of the different forms of examination malpractices?

Table 1: Analysis of teachers level of Awareness on level of prevalence of forms examination malpractices

S/N	Form examination malpractice	High Awareness%	Low Awareness%	No Awareness%
1	Student's practices of impersonation	155(75.9)	23(11.27)	26(12.4)
2	Collusion with superior is common	101(49.5)	78(38.25)	25(12.25)
3	Student do copy one another	170(83.3)	20(9.9)	14(6.8)
4	Examination leakages are rampant among students	92(45.1)	70(34.3)	5(2.4)
5	External assistance during examination is common	123(60.3)	76(37.30)	5(2.4)
6	Smuggling of foreign materials into examination	68(29.4)	92(45.1)	72(35.3)
7	Usage of hand set in examination hall is common	32(15.7)	105(51.5)	72(35.5)
8	Student do substitution of script during examination	108(52.9)	86(42.2)	10(4.9)
9	Teachers assistance is allowed during examination	35(17.1)	101(49.5)	68(29.4)
10	Writing on the body is usually done in the examination	76(37.2)	111(54.4)	17(8.3)
11	Student usually hang on ear phone	49(24.0)	98(48.0)	57(27.9)
12	Use of signs and symbols is common	106(51.9)	87(42.6)	11(5.3)
13	There is existence of teaching malpractices	89(43.6)	90(48.)	16(7.8)

Table 1 indicates that among the various forms of examination malpractices student's practices of copying one another, impersonation and external assistance, assistance, substitution of script and use of signs and symbols has the highest response (170/83%, 155/75%, 123/60.3%, 108/52.9%, 106/51.9%) respectively.

The teachers had high awareness of the prevalence of these forms of examination malpractices. With regard to writing on the body, teachers' assistance and teaching malpractices respondents indicated 111(54.4%), 105(51.5%), 101(49.5%) as having highest score under low awareness. This means that the respondents had little awareness of the existence of writing on the body, teachers' assistance and teaching malpractices as forms of examination malpractices. The inference that can be drawn here is that respondents had little awareness of the prevalence of these forms of examination malpractices in general.

Research Question Two: Is there a significant difference between the teachers Perception of evil consequences of examination malpractices based on gender?

Table 2: t-test analysis of teachers' perception of evil consequences of examination malpractices based on gender

Variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	t-test for equality of means		
						t	df	Sig 2(tailed) Remark
Teachers' Pedagogical strategies	Male	101	10.94	2.81	.782			.465 Not Sig.
	Female	102	10.66	2.51	.249	.732	201	

Table 2 shows t-test analysis of teachers' perception of evil consequences of examination malpractices basis on gender?

The male teachers had the mean score of 10.94 and female teachers 10.66 which was not statistically significant. The result shows that there is no significant difference in mean of score of male and female. Therefore the perception of male and female does not differ on the evils of examination malpractices.

Research Question Three: Does the location of teacher affect their perception of evil consequences of examination malpractices?

Table 3: t-test analysis of teachers' perception evils consequences of examination malpractices

Variable	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	t-test for equality of means		
						t	df	Sig 2(tailed) Remark
Teachers' Perception	Urban	125	11.05	2.7	.242			.440 Not Sig.
	Rural	79	10.75	2.59	.292	.775	201	

The urban teachers had the mean score of 11.05 and rural teachers 10.75 which was not statistically significant, The result shows that there is no significant difference in mean score of teachers in the urban centres and rural setting. Therefore the perception of teachers in urban and teachers in rural does not differ on the evils of examination malpractices.

Discussion of Results

The assessment of the level of awareness of teachers on the prevalence of different forms of examination malpractices revealed that the prominent ones among the forms are copying one another, impersonation and external assistance, substitution of script and use of signs and symbols. These are the ones teachers

have high awareness for and implication they are the ones that are prevalent in their area. The result reveal that this type has high rate of prevalence and by implication they are the ones solution should be provided. This however confirmed Mgbekem (2004) indication's of forms of examination malpractices. The author describes Odo (2002) also agreed that examination malpractice as a form of corrupt practice perpetrated within the education system with his exploration of different forms identified. Jimoh and Omoregie (2012) confirmed that Examination malpractices have become endemic in the Nigerian educational system, particularly in secondary schools, with teachers, school heads, parents, and other key stakeholders in examination administration involved in the corruption. With examination of the variables that predispose secondary school teachers to examination malpractice, their findings indicate that teacher is a major significant variable to causes of examination malpractice. The implication of this is that when there is proper identification of different forms will assist the determination of whether they are prevalent or not. Okotoni, C. A. (2007) also affirmed on the increase of various forms of examination malpractice in Nigeria. Such increase includes leakage, impersonation, alteration of marks by lecturers and examiners, aiding and abetting, supply of prewritten answer sheets to students, and many others.

This study also reveals that the perception of male and female does not differ on the evils caused by examination malpractices. The study found no significant difference in the way urban teachers and rural teaches perceives examination malpractices

Conclusion

The role of the teacher as a major determining factor in the equality of education and can hardly be ignored. And if the world would remain fruitful, then the lives of the children should be considered by every government and every individual. The kind of life the child lives today would determine the kind of youth and adult he or she would be tomorrow.

Recommendation

Young people should be educated about this vice and advised to resist any temptation of examination malpractices. As a curriculum implementer and guide to the learner, it is necessary for the teacher to know what to teach, how to teach it and how to ensure that learning takes place. The teacher needs to be current in emerging local, national and global issues and be able to accommodate these in the curriculum.

Teachers should be well trained and efficient in discharging their sole responsibility of imparting knowledge to the students rather than abetting examination malpractices.

Government on their own part should pay the salaries and allowances of teachers as at when due and improve the condition of service of teachers to prevent the occurrence of strike actions in schools.

Government should provide necessary facilities for the schools to help both teachers and students during process of teaching and learning.

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