

Explorative Study on the Causes and Effects of Examination Malpractice among Secondary School Students in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study investigated the causes and effects of examination malpractice among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria. Five objectives and five null hypotheses guided the study. The survey design was adopted for the study. The researcher selected 100 students and 50 teachers from each of the six area councils in FCT which constituted the sample for the study. Four rating scale structured questionnaire titled causes and effects of examination malpractice questionnaire (CEEMQ) was used for data collection. Validity of the instrument was determined by experts in Education. Test re-test method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument which gave coefficient value of 0.89. The researchers and six research assistants personally distributed the instrument. Data collected were coded into Statistical Package of Social Sciences which was used to run Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) into the test null hypotheses one, two and three while chi-square was used to determine null hypotheses four and five. All the null hypotheses were tested at significant level of 0.05. The result revealed, among others, that teachers, peers and students contributed to examination malpractices among students in secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. Consequently, this affected class attendance and study habit of the students. In view of these, it was recommended, among others, that counselling units of schools should help to improve the moral upbringing of students and teachers through enlightenment campaigns. In addition, parents should avoid relocating their children to schools known for examination malpractice.

Keywords: Examination, Malpractice, Secondary School, Students, Abuja, Nigeria.

Introduction

The world has acknowledged the importance of education in achieving national goals and objectives. Through education, youths are adequately guided

and requisite skills and knowledge needed for growth and development are acquired. The importance of education calls for strategies to monitor teaching and learning through effective evaluation. In the quest to achieve this, the role of examination as a major tool to assess the academic attainment of students cannot be underestimated. Examination is a yardstick for measuring success in the entire system of education. Till date, examination is the major tool that is used to formally assess students' academic achievement and progress. This therefore, means that examination is a vital instrument for measuring learners' level of skill acquisition or intellectual competence and understanding. It then follows that to undermine examinations' processes is a great threat to the validity and reliability of the quality of education.

In fact, the mode in which examinations are conducted with increased incidence of examination malpractices in the country has degenerated the validity and reliability of quality of graduates schools produce. The widespread examination malpractice has become an issue of growing concern to internal and external examiners in the country as they usually complain of one form of examination malpractice or the other. The deliberate and illegal perpetration of cheating during examinations by single individuals or groups outside or inside the classroom that provides examiners with an unfair advantage has constituted a serious threat to the quality of education at all its levels in Nigeria.

Examination malpractice can be defined as any deceitful or illegal act or action committed by a student or in collaboration with others such as students, guardians, parents, teachers, supervisors, invigilators, printers, security agencies, examination bodies/officials or any other body during or after an examination in order to obtain undeserved marks or grade. Alutu & Aluede (2006) remarked that examination malpractice is any irregular behaviour exhibited by a candidate or anybody charged with the conduct of examination before, during or after the examination that contravenes the rules and regulations governing the conduct of such an examination. The occurrence of examination malpractice in Nigeria is alarming and the phenomenon has become endemic in the educational system in Nigeria. Scholars such as Awanbor (2005), Alutu & Aluede (2006) and Ayua (2006) complained of the alarming rate of an increase in examination malpractice in Nigeria. Research works by Awanbor (2005), Nwandiani (2005), Badmus (2006), Okafor (2006), Ayua (2006), Azare (2006) and Aminu (2006) identified teachers' inability to discharge their duties, attitudes of peer groups and students' behaviours as some of the factors that leads students to engage in malpractice in schools.

The integrity or quality of education in Nigeria has become doubtful nationally and internationally as a result of an increase in the rate of examination malpractice in the country. Its outcome had reduced the credibility of Nigerian certificates as many graduates are either half-baked or unbaked. The image of our institutions has become irredeemably filthy in the eyes of the international community as the products of these educational institutions find it difficult to compete favourably with their counterparts where incidences of malpractice are under control.

Various forms of examination malpractices include: - collusion of students, impersonation, giraffing, bribery and inscription. It is incredible that the incidence of malpractices is not only limited to the time and the place. The advent of the Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM) in Nigeria has contributed to the rate of examination malpractice among students. They use electronic devices such as Short Message Service (SMS) or social networking to access and transfer academic information in examination halls. The rate at which this misdeed has spread and become a national phenomenon prompted the researchers to investigate causes and effects of examination malpractice among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Till date, education remains the backbone of development of any nation. In fact any country with sound education has acquired the basic knowledge to control the social and economical development of the world. The academic strength and weakness of students are determined through examinations. Hence, the role of examination in school settings cannot be overestimated.

Nigeria is one of the countries where the system of education has constantly been eroded by examination malpractice. Its widespread occurrence has become an issue of concern, as it has led to either withholding or cancellation of thousands of secondary school students' results in external examinations such as the West Africa School Certificate Examination (WASCE), Joint Matriculation Examination (JME), and National Examination Council (NECO) annually rendering innocent students frustrated. Various measures were introduced by the government, school authorities and examination bodies to curb the menace, but these have not solved the hydra-headed problem. This situation which has rendered innocent students unjustly punished and frustrated prompted the researchers to carry out the study.

Null Hypotheses

The study has the following hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between teachers factor and examination malpractice among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between peer group factor and examination malpractice among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.
3. There is no significant relationship between students' factor and examination malpractice among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.
4. Examination malpractice has no significant effect on class attendance of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.
5. Examination malpractice has no significant effect on the study habit of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The study has the following objectives

1. Determine the relationship between teachers' factor and examination malpractice among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.
2. Investigate the relationship between peer group factor and examination malpractice among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.
3. Establish the relationship between students' factor and examination malpractice among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.
4. Find out the effect of examination malpractice on class attendance of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.
5. Examine the effect of examination malpractice on the study habit of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

Methodology

The descriptive survey was used because the study needed questionnaires in the collection of data. The researchers randomly selected 100 SS II students and 50 teachers from each of the six area councils in FCT. The sample for the study therefore, stood at 900, comprising 300 teachers and 600 students. Four rating scale structured questionnaire of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used for data collection. The questionnaire

which was titled “Causes and Effects of Examination Malpractice Questionnaire” (CEEMQ) was made up of 25 items. Consultations were made with experts in Education to determine the content validity of the instrument. Test re-test was used to establish the reliability of the instrument using secondary school students in Kaduna State. The choice of the State was because it is outside the population of the study but has common characteristics with the study area. The reliability of the instrument was 0.89.

The researchers and their assistants with help from the academic vice principals of each of the schools visited collected the data. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to test hypothesis one, two and three while chi-square was used to determine null hypotheses four and five. All the hypotheses were tested at a significance level of 0.05.

Results of the Study

HO₁ There is no significant relationship between teacher’s factor and examination malpractice among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

Table 1: Correlation of the relationship between teacher’s factors and examination malpractice among secondary schools students in FCT

		Examination malpractice	Teacher’s Factor
Examination malpractice	Pearson Coeff Sig (two-tailed N	1 532	0.20 0.00 532
Teacher’s Factor	Pearson Coeff Sig (two-tailed N	0.20 0.00 6 532	1 532

The data in Table 1 showed that there was a positive significant relationship between teacher’s factors and examination malpractice. It showed further that teachers’ factors had 20% influence on the examination malpractices of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

HO₂ There is no significant relationship between peer group factor and examination malpractice among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

Table 2: Correlation of the relationship between peer group factors and examination malpractice among secondary school students in FCT.

		Examination malpractice	Peer group Factor
Examination malpractice	Pearson Coeff	1	0.29
	Sig (two-tailed		0.00
	N	532	532
Peer group Factor	Pearson Coeff	0.292	1
	Sig (two-tailed	0.00	
	N	532	532

The analysis of data in Table 2 revealed that there was a positive significant correlation between peer group factor and examination malpractice among secondary schools in FCT. The study further showed that peer group factor had 29% influence on examination malpractice among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

HO₃ There is no significant relationship between students' factor and examination malpractice among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

Table 3: Correlation of the relationship between students' factor and examination malpractice among secondary school students in the FCT.

		Examination malpractice	Factor
Examination malpractice	Pearson Coeff	1	0.198
	Sig (two-tailed		0.02
	N	532	532
Students' Factor	Pearson Coeff	0.198	1
	Sig (two-tailed	0.00	
	N	532	532

Result of the data presented in Table 3 indicated that there was a positive significant correlation between students' factors and examination malpractice. The analysis showed that students' factor had 19.8% influence on examination malpractice among secondary school students in FCT, Nigeria.

HO₄ Examination malpractice has no significant effect on class attendance of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

Table 4: Test of the effect of examination malpractice on class attendance of secondary school students

Tick Options	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Cal	Chi-Crit	Df	Asymp. Sig.
Strongly agree	93	133	-40	15.11 ^a	7.815	3	0.001
Agree	68	133	-65				
Disagree	161	133	28				
Strongly disagree	210	133	77				
Total	532	532					

Table 4 shows the result of the effect of examination malpractice on class attendance of secondary school students in FCT. The analysis showed a chi-square of 15.11 obtained with 3 degree of freedom with a P-value of 0.001. It therefore, implied that examination malpractice had a significant effect on students' class attendance in FCT.

HO₅ Examination malpractices has no significant effect on the study habit of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

Table 5: Test of the effect of examination malpractice on the study habit of secondary school students

Tick Options	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Cal	Chi-Crit	Df	Asymp. Sig.
Strongly agree	103	133	-30	9.42 ^a	7.815	3	0.000
Agree	71	133	-62				
Disagree	142	133	09				
Strongly disagree	216	133	83				
Total	532	532					

Table 5 shows the result of the effect of examination malpractice on students' study habit. The analysis showed a chi-square of 9.42 obtained with 3 with a P-value of 0.000 which implied that examination malpractice had a

significant effect on the study habit of secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

Discussion of the Findings

The test of null hypothesis one revealed that teachers' factor had an influence on examination malpractice among students. This outcome confirmed the findings of Anyiin (1998) who listed non-coverage of prescribed syllabuses due to their extensiveness and the general nonchalant attitude of teachers towards teaching among the fundamental causes of examination irregularities in Nigeria's educational system. Orhungur (2003) decried the general opinion which tends to indict the students and exonerate the teachers and other examination agents. Umar (2003) indicted headmasters and principals as the biggest perpetrators of examination malpractice in Nigeria. He maintained that in most schools, headmasters, in connivance with their teachers, initiate primary school pupils into examination malpractice during common entrance examinations by giving answers to the students so that they would record a high number of passes in their schools. Similarly, Ike (2004) reported that many school principals collaborate with examination bodies to engage in examination malpractice. Michael (2015) posited that examination malpractices are accelerated by the inability of teachers to cover the syllabus of their subjects, inadequate preparation for exams and numbers of teachers in schools.

The result of hypothesis two showed that peer groups had a significant influence on examination malpractice among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. This is similar to the view of Ivowi (1997) who maintained that peer groups influenced examination malpractice among their friends. Udogi and Ivowi (1995) identified inadequate preparation for the examination and peer influence as some causes or factors that prompt examination malpractices. Olujuwon (2004) identified the role of peers/groups on examination malpractice in Nigeria. Fatai (2005) outlined the peer influence to be one of the causes of examination malpractices. Abdulrazaq & Aminullahi (2008) also reported that peer influence and the poor state of the nation's economy (which takes the least position) as the causes of examination malpractices.

The result of test of hypothesis three showed that there was a significant relationship between students' factor and examination malpractice in secondary schools in FCT. These factors include laziness, bad study habits and indiscipline. Ukpior (2005) earlier reported that students with negative self concept got involved in examination malpractice. Similarly, Otu (2009) reported that students' attitude and study habit have a significant relationship with their malpractice

behaviour in examination. He stressed that lack of good study habits leads to tension which reduces the level of students' effectiveness and performance in examinations. Ukpong (2013) linked the increasing rate of examination malpractice to poor teaching, ineffective preparation by students, ill-equipped library facilities and dubious admission policies. The findings further buttressed those of Petters & Maureen (2014) who reported that lack of positive self concept, lack of effective study habits, inadequate preparation and laziness among students are some of the causes of examination malpractice. Similarly, Thomas (2004) also maintained that prioritized entertainment and pleasure at the expense of their books by students lured them into examination malpractice. Ukporkor (2005) reported that a negative self concept and self doubt by students make them to get involved in examination malpractice. Otu (2009) reported that the attitude of students and their study habit have a significant relationship with their malpractice behaviour in examination. Recently, Michael (2015) reported that students' factors such as laziness, lack of devoting time for studies and time spent in parties and forming gangs who engage in untoward behaviour are some of the causes of examination malpractice.

The result of test of null hypothesis five revealed that there was a strong relationship between examination malpractice and study habits of students. It affirmed Pitan's (2013) opinion that children with poor reading habits have a higher chance of engaging in anti-social behaviours like delinquency, truancy, school violence, bullying, hacking computers and examination malpractices. The findings of Sunday & Maureen (2014) showed that most students are no longer serious with their studies because they believe solely in indulging in examination malpractice which to them is a short cut to success. Nowadays, students refer to examination malpractice as "brain support" which implies that it is an act to aid one's memory in examinations. They no longer believe in hard work.

Conclusion

Examination malpractice is a cancer that portends a serious danger to the nation. It is a fabric that has become permanent and institutionalized and which reflects a gradual decline of the quality of education that has resulted to poor rating of our educational system in the world. It is pathetic and most regrettable that examination malpractice which is a serious threat to educational goals and objectives of the country has not been properly managed.

Recommendations

Based on the outcome of the study, it was recommended that:-

1. to enable students have faith in their own ability, teachers should be dedicated to their work. They should motivate and help with the moral upbringing of students through enlightenment campaigns.
2. parents, teachers and guardians should try to monitor the people that students associate with and also counsel them on the danger of associating with bad people.
3. schools should help to improve teaching and learning. In addition, the number of invigilators and supervisors should be increased during examinations.
4. parents should ensure that their children are regular in schools. School authorities should help to provide parents with information regarding their children in school.
5. schools should organize orientation campaigns to enlighten students on the effects of laziness and poor study habits on their self confidence during examinations. In addition, parents and teachers should advise students on how to develop appropriate study habits.

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