

# Strategies for Curbing Stakeholders Involvement in Examination Malpractice in Science and Technical Colleges in Benue State

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## ABSTRACT

The article on strategies for curbing stakeholders' involvement in examination malpractice in science and technical colleges in Benue State focused on the concept examination malpractice in science and technical colleges, stakeholder's involvement in examination malpractice in science and technical colleges and practical steps towards curbing examination malpractice in science and technical collages. The study revealed that government, teachers, parents, science and technical school administrators, invigilators and staff of the examination bodies do involved in examination malpractice. The study recommended that sections of the Nigerian constitution that deals with examination malpractice should be amended and stiff penalties be used against the offenders to serve as deterrent to others who may want to engage in examination malpractice in science and technical colleges. Besides creating awareness, the intelligent building system should be adopted in all science and technical colleges to monitor examiners and examinee during examination.

**Keywords:** Strategies, Curbing, Stakeholders, Examination Malpractice, Science and Technical College.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is the foundation upon which physical and technological developments rest. In Nigeria, technical education which science and technical colleges among others provides has been adopted as an instrument for national development. In view of the above statement

governments, communities, private organizations and individuals have established educational institutions with a view of training the citizens for the development of the nation's physical and human resources. One of the objectives of technical education in Nigeria is to prepare the Nigerian citizens to face future challenges and develop themselves to meet the nation's manpower requirements.

However, the increasing case of examination malpractice in Nigerian schools and particularly science and technical colleges are becoming worrisome. According to Odidi (2014) examination malpractice has eaten deep into the fabric of science and technical colleges in Nigeria that is why if any Nigerian student, most especially those in science and technical colleges wants to go to foreign university, he or she must pass through their education system before giving any formal admission because of the polluted nature of Nigeria educational system in recent times. Examination malpractice in Science and technical colleges takes place before, during and after examination with the assistance of teachers, students, school administrators and parents. Emaikwu (2012) added that a good number students, lecturers and parents indulge in examination malpractice in Nigerian schools.

The examination malpractice is perpetrated using different means among stakeholders in science and technical colleges in Benue State. According to Emaikwu, (2012) leakages, impersonation, continuous assessment malpractice, script swapping, bringing in 'foreign materials, altering of marks and grades, coping from one another and marking malpractice by teachers are some of the types of examination malpractice carried out among stakeholders in science and technical colleges in Benue State.

Causes of examination malpractice in science and technical colleges are range from undue emphasis on paper qualification, fear of failure, inadequate preparation, lack of resources for teaching, teacher related

factors and societal related factors. Examination malpractice in science and technical colleges has negative consequences on the economy of Nigeria as a nation. Emaikwu, (2012) and Kpokpo (2015) asserts that the implication of examination malpractice on Nigerian society is the production of half-baked graduates, lack of confidence on our educational system, high dropout rates from universities, discouragement of hard work, lowers the standard of education, decreases validity and reliability of measurement process and breeds a generation of fraudsters and other social vices.

### **Examination Malpractice in Science and Technical Colleges**

Examination is an important instrument every teacher uses to determine the rate or the extent to which science and technical students have achieved the desired objective of an instruction. Examination is used to measure the effectiveness of teaching strategy adopted by the teacher to deliver an instruction to the students. Examination in our contemporary Nigeria is integral part of school system. The basic role of examination in science and technical colleges include: generating psychometric properties for clarification, prediction, motivation and for research purposes (Nyem, 2012).

Furthermore, it is the desire of every science and technical students to pass every examination, be it internal or external. However, good performance in science and technical college examination is based on honesty and conformity with the rules governing proper conduct of examination. Unfortunately, most students in science and technical colleges in Benue State and Nigeria in general have departed from the normal behavior desirable in any known examination by engaging in various forms of examination malpractices. This has caused serious problems in science and technical colleges system.

Examination malpractice is the act of cheating in an examination so as to enhance pupils or students performance. Examination malpractice

limits the ability of students and makes them intellectually lazy. It can be seen as a deliberate wrong doing contrary to official examination rules designed to place a candidate at unfair advantage or disadvantage. Asinya (2012) asserts that examination malpractice is any unfair behavior that is intended to enable pupils or students score more marks than what his natural ability and honest efforts would enable him. According to Ada, (2004) examination malpractice is referred to as cheating used by science and technical college students over others in internal and external examination.

In recent times, many strategies have been adopted by science and technical college students to carry out examination malpractice and as well escape laws and decrees set up by Nigerian government to stamp out the examination malpractice. According to Nyem, (2012) and Uzoagulu, (2008) these strategies include: leakages and pre-clinical favor, writing on the palm and copying answers on the blackboard, post clinical strategy which involves the replacement the original answer script written by the student after the examination, inflation of examination scores by the teacher or the examiner for the students in the internal/external examination. Other strategies are impersonation inflecting student's scores by the typists, computer operators and pool clerks, handing over pieces of papers by the invigilators and the connivances with the supervisors to look the other way during the examination, use of mobile texting systems to deliver answers to exam candidates as well as ghost examination halls, popularly known as exams runs. Adegoke (2010) affirms that students bring into the examination hall notes books, textbooks and other prepared materials. Adogoke stress further saying that some of the methods are nicknamed as hide and seek, microchips, tattoo and magic desk, sophisticated scientific calculators, giraffing, contraband, bullet, super print, escort and pregnant biros.

There are numerous causes of examination malpractice in science and technical colleges, this include the employment and utilization unqualified teachers to teach various subjects in private and public science and technical colleges, undue emphasis on paper qualification meaning that emphasis is placed so much on certificate than theoretical knowledge causing students to have more drive for certificates than acquiring knowledge.

The incessant technical teachers strike as a result of non-payment of salaries among others is also one of the causes of examination malpractice among students in science and technical colleges. The strikes action normally engaged in by technical teachers usually disrupt the academic calendar of science and technical college students. Students suffered it by staying at home for several months which had adversely effects on the students in terms of their academic performances and, also providing room for examination malpractices.

According to Odidi (2014), Poor state of facilities in science and technical colleges in Nigeria causes examination malpractice. Lack of decent hostels and classroom accommodation for the students will not provide comfort for the students to study for their internal and internal examination. Over population of students and lack of examination halls encourages examination malpractice among science and technical colleges. Government has failed to maintain and as well provide enough facilities in science and technical colleges. Esrom (2013) states that special centre for candidate is another problem causing high profile examination malpractices in Nigeria. Some of the classified tutorial classes are meant for examination malpractices which many candidates register with to have good grades in their examinations.

Therefore, the causes could be attributed to the behavior of examiners, parents and educational system. The consequences of examination

malpractice could be catastrophic to the aims and objectives of educational system.

### **Stakeholder's Involvement in Examination Malpractice in Science and Technical Colleges**

Examination malpractice poses a great threat to the survival and sustainability of good quality education in Benue State and Nigeria at large. It facilitates the enthronement of a mediocre, half-baked, incompetent and corrupt workforce ranging from quack doctors, pharmacists, engineers, lawyers and will lead to massive fraud in banks sector as well as other sectors of Nigerian economy. Danny (2012), states that examination stakeholders include parents, teachers, lecturers, students, invigilator, proprietors (government and private school owners), school management, security agents, printers and staff of examination bodies.

According to Danny (2012), examination malpractice has become so rampant in the society to the extent that before any examination body initiates a new idea to eradicate it, people already have their plans to get over it. Examination malpractice in science and technical college seems to be the only way to examination success. Kpokpo (2014) observed that examination bodies tried many a time to raise the standard of education but those sent to supervise, school owners and school managers are the major perpetrators of these this evil act called examination malpractice. Supervisors colluding with school principals and students by allowing teachers to come around to teach the students during examination period, teachers released question papers or give underserved marks or allowing students to illegally re-take examination papers. Security agents, printers and staff of examination bodies also sell question papers.

Teachers and invigilators are not left out of examination malpractice. Some teacher and invigilator demand money for test and examination

scores from students to have good grades. Teachers sometimes exchange marks for sex from female students. Ojerinde (2002) observed that examination malpractice is no longer a desperate candidates' affair, rather school teachers and even principals are now involved in the perpetration of examination malpractice. Even with the promulgation of Decree No 33 of 1999 (Now Act of Parliament) designed to check examination malpractice; the crime appears to be on the increase.

Some private schools are also engaging in examination malpractices for their schools to remain the best among all. Both registered and unregistered schools also involved in examination malpractices. In fact, all stakeholders must be blamed for the issue of examination malpractices in Science and Technical in Benue State and Nigeria.

Parents are seriously involved in examination malpractice. Most parent registered examination for their children in miracle centres, pay examination malpractice fee thereby encouraging them to indulge in examination malpractice. Parental pressure for good grades from their wards becomes the order of the day. This also encourages examination malpractice among science and technical college students in Benue State. Some parents go to any length in buying question papers for their children while some others even buy certificates for their children (Duje, 2011). The examination malpractices in science and technical colleges have a negative impact on the country's academic programme and bad influence on the learning culture of students.

### **Practical Steps towards Curbing Examination Malpractice in Science and Technical Colleges**

Education comes from within you set it by struggle, effort and thought. We must not allow the drive of paper qualification to mess up technical educational system in Benue State. The world inventors today never attended any formal education but highly celebrated in all facets of life.

The best computer scientists in the world never had any paper qualification in their lives but excelled well in their various careers

Overhauling science and technical college system in Nigeria is of great importance. Most teachers and technologists are half-educated in terms of qualification. Some of these teachers never had good certificates, it becomes incumbent on government and other relevant agencies to organize regular workshop and seminar to train teachers in all subjects taught in science and technical colleges. According to Danny (2012), the responsibility of training technical teachers lies mainly with the government. Government needs to ensure that all those who have the responsibility of training students in schools are qualified and certified to do the job up to the required standard. The government also has the responsibility of ensuring that the welfare of these teachers is properly catered for.

Sound educational policy should be put in place to de-emphasize the supremacy of certificates over skills and professional competence as a way to stop or mitigate examination malpractice among stakeholders in science and technical colleges. Ekoja and Mgboro (2006) affirms that sound educational policy should be in place and that politics and ethnicity should not be played with educational issues. According to Kpokpo and Odidi (2014) examination bodies should make sure they recruit trustworthy, effective and honest hands to conduct the examination at different levels. The security agents at various examination halls should conduct a search on the candidates and invigilators before examinations start. Candidates easily gain power to exploit and cheat in examination when the conducting bodies do not play their roles well. Students are cunning and clever and we also need people who are as clever as they are to stop them from cheating in examination. The examination bodies such as Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), National Board for Technical Examinations, (NABTEB), West African Examination Council



(WAEC), National Examinations Council (NECO) and Benue State Examination Board (BSEB) should employ officials of unquestionable character. Finger prints and photographs should be used as a part of security for the exam papers. Invigilators and supervisors should be stern and strict and should be able to make strong decisions and enforce penalty when the need arises. According to Malami (2013) the appointment of supervisors of proven integrity and who are independent of the examinations centers. The remuneration of invigilators and supervisors should be attractable that would not allow one to think of taking bribe to add to his earnings. Administrators and examination bodies should ensure that only formally registered candidates sit for the examination.

Religious and community leaders should be used to prevail on parents in churches and town hall meeting to desist from insisting on their children getting the best result without genuine efforts for it. According to Danny (2012), Education actually starts from the home; our parents play a vital role in ameliorating examination malpractices. Our parents should encourage their wards to be studious and also make them understand that only hard work and God pays. Our parents should stop this attitude of resorting to connections, people and money when it comes to passing examinations or securing admission into the University. Danny (2012) added that parents should help and meet their children's emotional and physiological needs when they feel down casted and like they are failures. They should teach their wards that patience, prayer and hard work brings good success.

Chinedu (2008), Students should not be allowed into examination venue with electronic devices such as cellular phones and personal IPADS. Science and technical college teachers should be motivated and remunerated adequately. Learning environment should be made friendly for Science and technical college teachers and students to satisfactorily cover the syllabus before examinations. The examination bodies and the

Government also have their role to play in combating examination malpractice among stakeholders in science and technical colleges.

Examination bodies should make sure they have penalty to impose on candidates who are caught in the act. They should not just have penalty but enforce them strictly without mercy, by doing so, others would learn and also tell those who are planning to indulge in such act to eschew from such intentions. The officials of the examination bodies should frequently visit examination centers and erring centers should be punished. In Nigeria, currently a 21 year jail term attached to any person involved in examination malpractice in science and technical colleges. However cases of malpractice are hardly chased in court. The point here is not to prescribe such a long jail term for examination malpractice but to ensure that those caught in the act are prosecuted according to the rule of law.

Evidence of wrong doing and application of legal sanctions for examination malpractice must be publicized using media. Encourage political and civic leaders to speak out in favor of creating a public examination system that is administrated by adequately qualified people, according to accepted rules that are devoid of external interference. Examination boards national and international should have information on new threats to examination security and on procedure for counteracting malpractices.

Ikponmwosa (2015) asserts that students, teachers, parents and even the society at large should be continuously reminded and kept aware of the negative effects of malpractice on our development as a country through workshops and seminars. Importance of hard work and diligence is the right way to achieving educational success. If all parties are convinced that it is better to fail honorably than to pass dishonorably then examination malpractice will be reduced to the barest minimum in science and technical colleges.

Asinya (2012) reports that recent experiences has shown that it is difficult to cheat in a computer based examination because methods such as copying, answer booklet swapping, question leakage and bribery of examiners are greatly reduced if not completely eliminated. However, the electricity power failure is the challenge in computer based examination. The availability and adequacy of computer system and the introduction of computer base examination in all science and technical colleges will be a good strategy in stamping out examination malpractice among stakeholders.

The use of intelligent building systems will completely eliminate examination malpractice among stakeholders in science and technical colleges in Nigeria and particularly Benue State. According to Imborivungu and Adzande (2015) the intelligent buildings system is an integrated building system operating a single building or facility. The intelligent buildings system can communicate and exchange information. The communication among these systems allows the right responses and decisions to operate buildings in a productive, economical and convenient way. The communication and information sharing in science and technical college buildings and examination hall be it internal or external examination will facilitate the interaction between the security agents, supervisors, invigilators, administrators as well as examination bodies when candidate want to cheat in examination. This scourge has so degraded the value of a Nigerian education such that a good number of reputable establishments within and outside Nigeria are of the opinion that Nigerian science and technical college graduates are not employable.

## CONCLUSION

Examination malpractices have negative impact on the country's academic programme and bad influence on the learning culture of students. This situation had led to students' involvement in secret-cults, engaging in truancy. Another problem posed by this menace is the

refusal of students to copy notes and do their assignment. Students' believe that whether they read or not, they are bound to excel through cheatings on the final examination. The situation had led to the function of peer gangs who now relax under trees during lesson periods. It has also influenced the shabby dressing system. All stakeholders in education sector most strive harder to stamp out examination malpractice in science and technical colleges to redeem bad image it has on Benue State and Nigerian citizenry.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To overcome the challenge of examination malpractice among stakeholders in science and technical colleges in Benue State, the following steps must be adopted; the Nigerian constitution, particularly the aspects that concern examination malpractice should be amended. Stiff penalties such as death sentence and prosecution of those involve in examination malpractice must be strictly adhere to. This will serve as deterrent to others. Those involve in the conduct of examination be it internal or external should be well paid to discourage them from accepting bribe from candidate or examinees during examination. Finally, the intelligent building system should be adopted in all schools to monitor examiners and examinee during examination. Creation of awareness should be taken more serious. The media sectors, workshops, seminar and town hall meeting should be organize at least on quarterly basis to education the masses on the negative implications of examination malpractice to a nation like Nigeria.

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