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## Assessment of Causes and Effect of Examination Malpractice: A Panacea for Quality Education and Productivity in Secondary Schools in Gombe State

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### ABSTRACT

The study investigated the Causes and effect of Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools in Gombe Metropolis, Gombe State, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 1021 comprises 17 principals and 1004 secondary school teachers in Gombe metropolis. A sample of 279 respondents was selected using proportionate random sampling techniques. Instrument used for the study was a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale titled Causes and Consequences of Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (CCEMQ). It was validated by professionals in the Department of Educational Foundations and Curriculum, Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Pilot study was carried out and the data for the pilot study were analyzed using split half method of reliability. Cranach's Alpha was used to compute the reliability coefficient where 0.93 reliability coefficients were obtained. Descriptive statistics (mean score and standard deviation) was used to answer the research question and t-test analysis was used to test the null hypothesis at 5% ( $p < 0.05$ ) significant level. The findings revealed a significant difference in the opinion of principals and teachers on the causes and effect of examination malpractices in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis. It was concluded that having enough classrooms and furniture in schools, qualified teachers for subjects and effective supervision during examination did not cause examination malpractice. The study recommends among others that there should be regular pre-examination lectures, seminars, workshops for teachers and students on the evils inherent in examination malpractice. National and international examination board should share information on new threat to examination security and procedures for counter reacting malpractices.

**Key words:** Examination Malpractice, Quality Education, Productivity, Secondary Schools

### INTRODUCTION

Education is an important instrument of change in modern societies. With education an individual can rise to a valuable position and responsibility in the society. In Nigeria today, parents see education as a key to human development. Similarly, knowledge begins early in the primary school and increases with time. Even among the primary pupils, majority of them realize that doing well in school means acquiring more education for personal improvement. As a result, education has become a pre-requisite for employment in any bureaucratic organization. Without education, one is likely to remain in the same position because most jobs in the present world require education and experience for one to excel. The cases of examination malpractice in Nigerian institutions of learning started long ago. For instance the first recorded incident of examination malpractice was the leakage of the Cambridge School Certificate Examination in 1914 and this has continued in subsequent years in different form (Amaechi, 2001). Nigeria has, in recent times, recorded large-scale incidence of examination malpractice. This has posed serious problems to educational institutions, government officials, parent and the general public who have interest in quality education. There are many cases of examination malpractice in institutions of learning both in internal and external examinations. This has caused non-release of results for many candidates suspected for examination malpractice. Obidigbo (2011) lamented that, if education is a major means of providing intellectual yeast which can ferment the social, economic, political and technical development of Nigeria, serious efforts should be made to curb examination malpractice that lead to the pollution of the education system.

### Conceptual Framework

Examination malpractice is an ugly social virus that is rapidly acquiring the mean status of a social, moral and educational epidemic in Nigeria. Anameze (2000) stated that examination malpractice has been a social problem for most recorded history. According to Salami, (2002) examination malpractice involves various method employed by candidates to cheat during examination. This means that malpractice in examinations is an unlawful behavior engaged by students to have personal advantage in an examination over their colleagues or mates who are competing in the same examination. Olushola (2010) view

examination malpractice as act of omission or commission that contravenes those West African Examination Councils rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity and reliability of the test and ultimately the integrity of the certificates issued by West African Examination Councils (WAEC). According to Osinubi (2003) examination malpractice is an examination irregularities pre-arranged and carried out by candidates or their agents with the intension of gaining undue advantages in the examination. Umaru (2015) sees examination malpractice as the act of disobeying examination rules and regulations from borrowing in the examination hall to discussing the questions.

Based on the above definitions, examination malpractice can be seen as an act or any form of misconduct such as leakage, impersonation, writing on hidden parts(s) of wares, encoding/decoding of the fingers for objective test, exchanges of question papers and answer booklets committed before, during or after the examination or by officials assigned with the administration evaluation or measuring the examination result. In other words, examination malpractice can be viewed as all forms of cheating which directly or indirectly falsely the ability of the student's performance. In Nigeria today, examination malpractice are numerous and varied. It can occur in the examination hall, at marking and collecting stage, it thrives among the students, the examination agencies, parents, invigilators, school authorities and so many others. Udoh (2011) has also listed and described the role of parents, principals and teachers, examiners and invigilators, supervisors and security agents, staffs, examination paper typist, transporters, gate men, graduates and undergraduates, boyfriends, educations inspectors, educational institution, communities, students and government etc. in nurturing examination malpractice where many individual groups and institutions are reported to be co-operators in a crime of this nature. It can therefore no longer be surprising why every attempt at curbing it in the past has failed to yield desired result.

#### **Manifestation of Examination Malpractice in Nigeria**

Examination malpractice in not a new phenomenon in Nigeria as well as in deed many part of the world. The first examination malpractice in Nigeria was reported in 1914, when there was a leakage of question papers in to the senior Cambridge local examination, others traced the origin of examination malpractice to the wave of cancellation of Nigerian's candidate's paper in 1948, because it posses on history during the 1940 matriculation examination to the then "Yaba" Nigeria Technical (Balogun 2001). The most pronounced examination malpractice in Nigeria was that of 1964 which was tagged "Expo" subsequently 1970, 1973, 1974, 1979, 1981, 1988 and 1991 followed. Since 1991 to date, examination has take advance and more sophisticated dimensions, records are been emerged yearly indicating high or low percentage in examination malpractice in the national core examinations (external) West African Examinations Councils (WAEC). Similarly, according to the WAEC statistics, in 2011, 4.65 percent to the total candidates that sat for WAEC engaged in malpractice. In 2012, it increased to 7.15 percent, jumped to 7.75 percent in 2013. Subsequently in 2014, 8.39 percent of the 1,692,037 candidates who sat for the examinations were found culpable of examination fraud, in 2015, the results of 118,101 candidates representing 7.41 percent are being withheld in connection with various cases of examination malpractice as the cases are being investigated and the reports of the investigations will be pr esented to the Nigerian Examinations Committee (Oluwatoyin, 2015). Referring to the examination fraud in the country, many people perceived examination as a means of getting a meal ticket and getting a job. This perception or orientation must be change so that students will appreciate the intrinsic value of education, which is the total development of the individual to be able to make meaningful contributions to the family, community and the country at large.

#### **Causes of Examination Malpractice**

Igbafe and Nwafor (2009) agreed in their various submissions that the desire to pass at all cost is a major factor responsible for examination malpractice. The facts remain that Nigerian orientation on education is certificate and high-grade intensiveness, students, parents, school management tend to push harder on wards to get the certificate and good grade by all "means" to secure employment, other prefer to manipulate to be admitted in a choicest higher institutions. The causes of examination malpractice are numerous as one encounter examination; different reasons are given to exonerate advocates from these acts. This exhortation tends to expose the causes of examination malpractice. Amobi (2007) sees undue emphasis placed on certificate as one of the courses of examination malpractice in Nigeria. He opined that the Nigerian society places too much emphasis on certificates obtained and examination passed on its own determinants. He further said that paper qualification and certificates serves as

means of getting well paid jobs and achievement of social status. Some people perceived certificates as a key to getting a well paid job. As a result, morality and honesty have been thrown to the dogs to pass examination and obtain certificates so long as emphasis is not on ones performance but on the paper first. Therefore many holders of certificates cannot practically defend them through their performance.

Examination Malpractice connotes some things enlist, bad and illegal which often attracts one form of punishment or the other, but one still find students everyday involving themselves in examination malpractice. Cheating in examination has eaten deep in to vein that even when caught and their paper cancelled or result seized, they still go on in their next examination malpractice. It is well known that more teachers now spend less time in teaching, thus do not cover their scheme of work or syllabus before rushing students for examination. The end result is however, to use cheating in order to make them excel. The pre-requisite for effective preparation are lacking in our public schools coupled with the presence of ill-trained and lowly motivated teachers in our midst. Also poor teaching is covered in examination fraud by some teachers. On the part of the students these days, they hardly take their studies seriously but prefer having good time to the detriment of their studies. So the only thing to do is to cheat in examination in order to be promoted or get certificate to what society attaches undue importance. Ameachi (2001) identifies another causes of examination malpractice as lack of proper guidance and counseling programmes and added that some schools do not have guidance and counseling programmes for students as such, students take courses without proper guidance, parents sometimes in their pride impose courses on their children not minding the capacity of their affective, cognitive or psychomotor of the wards before the imposition. These kids are push too hard and too far thereby making them corrupt through engagement in malpractice and misconducts to please their parents and to justify their pride. Truancy and absenteeism made some students to be ill-prepared for examination, not because they absent themselves from school and lectures but they do not know what others have been taught, some of these students are just lazy therefore, they had to resort to examination malpractice as alternative therapy in their careers.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Examination is an important aspect of the education process it is a tool where the learner's knowledge, skills, ability and competencies are assessed and evaluated for quality education and productivity in our educational system. However, Examination malpractice in Nigeria in general and in Gombe State in particular is a matter of great concern. Some of these concerns include parent's displeasure for their children's poor performance in external examinations. Government has put the blame on the ineffectiveness of teachers. On the other hand, the teachers have accused the government of not providing the conducive environment for the achievement of educational objectives. Some of the effects of examination malpractice include: embarrassment of parents and relatives, dropouts and suspension of wards from school, bad image to the affected schools among others. The rate at which examination malpractices occur in the Nigerian educational system is highly disturbing and, therefore, needs prompt attention by all stakeholders. Hence it is based on this background that the researchers intend to assess the causes and consequences of examination malpractice in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis, Gombe state Nigeria

### **Objectives of the Study**

The research objectives below was formulated to serve as a guide to the researchers

1. To assess factors responsible for student's involvement in examination malpractice in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis
2. To assess the effect of examination malpractice in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis

### **Research Questions**

The research questions below was formulated to serve as a guide to the researcher

1. What are the factors responsible for student's involvement in examination malpractice in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis?
2. What are the effects of examination malpractice in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis?

### **Null Hypothesis**

In line with the research questions, the following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 5% level of significance using t-test statistics.

1. There is no significant difference in the opinions of principals and teachers on the factors responsible for student's involvement in examination malpractice in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis.
2. There is no significant difference in the opinions of principals and teachers on the effects of examination malpractice in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis.

### METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study and the population of the study is one thousand and twenty one (1021) which comprises 17 seventeen principals and all one thousand and four (1004) secondary school teachers in Gombe metropolis. A sample of two hundred and seventy nine (279) respondents was used for the study. That is, 17 principals and 262 teachers. The selection of this sample size is based on the recommendation of Research Advisors, (2006) who recommended that in a population of >1000 and <1125, the sample size of 279 is enough for good representation. The entire 17 principals were used for the study. Two hundred and sixty two (262) teachers were selected using proportionate random sampling. Hat drawn technique was used to select the respondents. "YES" and "NO" were written on ballots and the respondents were asked to pick. Those that picked YES were used as sample for the study. A structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale titled "Assessment of Causes and Effect of Examination Malpractice Questionnaire" (ACEEMQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by professionals in the Department of Educational Foundations and Curriculum, Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Pilot study was carried out in Gombe South Senatorial District with thirty (30) secondary school teachers and six (6) Secondary schools principals. The data for the pilot study were analyzed using split halve method of reliability and Cronbach's Alpha was used to compute the reliability coefficient where 0.93 reliability coefficient was obtained. The instrument was personally administered to the respondents by the researcher which facilitated prompt response from the respondents. Frequency and simple percentage was used to analyzed the personal data of respondents, descriptive statistics (mean score and standard deviation) was used to answer the research question while t-test analysis was used to test the null hypothesis at 5% ( $p < 0.05$ ) significant level.

### RESULTS

#### Research Question 1

What are the factors responsible for student's involvement in examination malpractice in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis?

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Respondent's Opinions on Factors Responsible for Students Involvement in Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools in Gombe Metropolis, Gombe State, Nigeria

S/N	Item statement	Category of Respondents	O p i n i o n o f R e s p o n d e n t s						Mean	SD	Decision			
			F	%	F	%	F	%						
1	Lack of enough classrooms may result to examination malpractice in secondary schools	Principals	1	4	82.4	0	0	0	0	3	17.6	3.47	1.179	Agree
		Teachers	2	23	86.1	1	9	7.3	1	9	7.3	3.68	.866	Agree
2	Inadequate funding may cause students involvement in examination malpractice	Principals	1	3	76.6	0	0	0	0	4	23.6	3.29	1.312	Agree
		Teachers	2	23	86.1	1	7	6.6	2	2	8.4	3.68	.860	Agree
3	Inadequate qualified teachers may result to examination malpractice	Principals	1	4	82.4	0	1	6.9	0	2	11.8	3.43	1.089	Agree
		Teachers	2	04	77.9	3	3	12.6	2	6	9.6	3.69	.904	Agree
4	Lack of emphasis placed on Nigerian certificate may result to examination malpractice	Principals	1	4	82.4	0	1	6.9	0	2	11.8	3.30	1.301	Agree
		Teachers	1	7	66.3	3	2	12.2	6	2	21.8	3.19	1.249	Agree
5	Inadequate supervision during exams may cause students involvement in examination malpractice	Principals	1	4	82.4	0	0	0	0	3	17.6	3.47	1.181	Agree
		Teachers	1	8	66.3	3	2	12.2	4	3	16.4	3.37	1.126	Agree

Table 1 shows the analysis of items statements 1-5 used to answer the research question one on factors responsible for students involvement in examination malpractice in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis. As presented on the table, all the items were

agreed by both the principals and secondary school teachers, and item number one attracted the highest mean score of 3.47 for the principals and 3.86 for secondary school teachers, with details showing 14 (82.4%) of secondary school principals agreed with the item. For the secondary school teachers, 223 (85.1%) agreed with the item. The standard deviation recorded for the item statement was 1.179 for the principals and .865 for the secondary school teachers. All the 5 items have the mean score of 3.00 and above indicating that they were all agreed by the respondents.

**Research Question 2**

What are the effects of examination malpractice in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis?

**Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Respondents' Opinions on Effect of Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools in Gombe Metropolis, Gombe State, Nigeria**

Table 2 shows the analysis of items statements 1-5 used to answer the research question two on the effect of examination malpractice in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis. The table revealed that, both the teachers and principals agreed to the

S/N	Item statement	Category of Respondents	Opinion of Respondents								Mean	SD	Decision
			A	G	U	D	D	A	Frg	%			
6.	Many student lose their result because of examination malpractice	Principals	16	94.1	00	00	01	5.9	3.76	.970	Agree		
		Teachers	244	93.1	11	4.2	07	2.7	3.88	.618	Agree		
7.	Examination malpractice spoils name of a school	Principals	16	94.1	00	00	01	5.9	3.82	.728	Agree		
		Teachers	223	85.1	20	7.6	19	7.3	3.71	.803	Agree		
8.	Examination malpractice lowers the standard of education certificate in a country	Principals	14	82.4	01	6.9	02	11.8	3.69	1.004	Agree		
		Teachers	200	76.4	32	12.2	30	11.6	3.63	.969	Agree		
9.	Students that are involved in examination malpractice are dismissed	Principals	14	82.4	00	00	03	17.6	3.29	1.321	Agree		
		Teachers	180	68.7	39	11.1	51	19.6	3.27	1.210	Agree		
10.	Examination malpractice paralyse the country's education system	Principals	14	82.4	01	6.9	02	11.8	3.30	1.301	Agree		
		Teachers	171	65.3	32	12.2	52	21.8	3.19	1.249	Agree		

statement. As presented on the table, item number 6 attracted the highest mean score of 3.76 for the principals and 3.88 for secondary school teachers, with details showing 16 (94.1%) of secondary school principals agreed with the item while only 1 (5.9%) disagree with the item. For the secondary school teachers, 244 (93.1%) agreed with the item, while only 18 (6.9%) disagreed with the item. The standard deviation recorded for the item statement was .970 for the principals and .618 for the secondary school teachers. All the 5 items have the mean score of 3.00 and above indicating that they were all agreed by the respondents.

**Test of Null Hypothesis 1**

The hypothesis one states that there is no significant difference in the opinions of principals and teachers on the factors responsible for student's involvement in examination malpractice in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis

**Table 3: T-test Summary on Factors Responsible for Students Involvement in Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools in Gombe Metropolis, Gombe State, Nigeria**

Variables	N	Mean	Std.	Df	t-cal	t-crit.	Sig.	Decision
Principals	17	3.4	.76029	277	1.016	1.96	.872	Retained
Teachers	262	3.3	.64142					

Table 3 shows the t-test analysis of difference in the opinions of principals and teachers on the factors responsible for student's involvement in examination malpractice in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis. Results on the table indicated that, t-calculated value (1.016) at 277 degree of freedom and at 0.05 is less than the t-critical (1.96). The observed P=.872 is greater than 0.05 level of significance indicating that there is difference in the opinions of principals and teachers on factors responsible for student's involvement in examination malpractice in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

### Test of Null Hypothesis 2

The hypothesis two states that there is no significant difference in the opinions of principals and teachers on the effect of examination malpractice in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis

Table 4: T-test Summary on the Effect of Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools in Gombe Metropolis, Gombe State Nigeria

Variables	N	Mean	Std.	Df	t-cal	t-crit.	Sig.	Decision
Principals	17	3.6	.80623	277	1.516	1.96	.078	Retained
Teachers	262	3.4	.64311					

Table 4 shows the t-test analysis of difference in the opinions of principals and Teacher son the effect of examination malpractices in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis, Gombe State, Nigeria. Results on the table revealed that calculated t-value (1.516) at 277 degree of freedom and at 5% level of significance is less than t-critical value (1.96). The observed P=.078 is greater than 0.05 level of significance indicating that there is difference in the opinions of principals and teachers on the effect of examination malpractices in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis. Therefore, the null hypothesis one was retained.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first finding of this study revealed that lack of enough classrooms, inadequate qualified teachers; inadequate supervision and undue emphasis placed on Nigerian certificate are the factors that make students involvement in examination malpractice. This finding was presented on table 1 by answers to research question 1 where both principals and teachers agreed on the factors mentioned. T-test analysis used to test the null hypothesis as presented on table 3 revealed that, there is no significant difference in the opinions of principals and teachers on the factors responsible for student's involvement in examination malpractice in secondary schools in Gombe metropolis. The finding is in line with the view of Amobi (2007) who stated that undue emphasis placed on certificate is one of the courses of examination malpractice in Nigeria. He opined that the Nigerian society places too much emphasis on certificates obtained and examination passed on its own determinants. He further said that paper qualification and certificates serves as means of getting well paid jobs and achievement of social status. The second finding of the study revealed embarrassment of parents and relatives, dropouts and suspension of wards from school are the effects of examination malpractice. This result is in line with the views of Ameachi (2001) and Oluwatoyin (2015) who stated that Examination malpractices breed unqualified and unskillful product of the school system and lowers the standard of education certificate in a country. It also paints the country or state in bad light to external communities.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that having enough classrooms and furniture in schools, qualified teachers for subjects and effective supervision during examination did not cause examination malpractice. However, inadequate qualified teachers and undue emphasis placed on Nigerian certificates are the causes of examination malpractice which if it is not properly

addressed, will lead to embarrassment of parents and relatives, dropouts and suspension of wards from school and certificates issued at all levels will become useless, not recognized locally and internationally thereby making the nation to produce half-baked graduates.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- There should be regular pre-examination lectures, seminars, workshops for teachers and principals on the evils inherent in examination malpractice.
- National and international examination board should share information on new threat to examination security and procedures for counter reacting malpractice.
- There is need for school inspectors to visit schools regularly to ensure that minimum standard of teaching and learning takes place in secondary schools

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