

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

An Assessment of the Effects of Examinational Practice amongst the Students of Umar Suleiman College of Education, Gashua, Yobe State, Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study is aimed to assess the examination Malpractice/misconduct among the students of Umar Suleiman College of Education Gashua. The study consists of two (2) research objectives and research questions were formulated and answered. The study employed descriptive survey research design and the population of the study consisted of NCE 1, NCE 11, and NCE 111 respectively. The research adopted both random and cluster sampling techniques in which NCE 1, NCE 11 and NCE 111 were selected from the three randomly selected NCE level. Therefore, the research revealed that there are poor supervision by the college management examination committee during the examination, teacher's negligence to duty, inadequate commitment on the side of the teachers on invigilation during examination, and parental attitudes contribute seriously towards students engage in to examinational practice/misconduct, nature of examination conduct and how the examination been organized by the committee. The study recommended that the Students should be encouraged by both their parents and teachers to be more committed to their studies and to avoid examination malpractice and students should also be properly checked to ensure they enter the examination hall/venue without any unauthorized materials, and school officials, administrators, teachers should show more commitment to their duties and to help the students to understand the basic and current information on their subject of study this will minimize examination malpractice. Therefore, the paper recommends strongly that the Examination Malpractice Act of 1999 should be amended and implemented to incorporate that section of Decree 20 of 1984 which stipulated twenty-one years imprisonment without option of a fine for a convicted culprit.

Keywords: Effects, examination malpractice, students

1. Introduction

Education, being a process of teaching and learning is evaluated through examination at the end of the learning period. Examination not only serves as a feedback for the trainer to ascertain the level of knowledge acquisition but also serves as a measure of knowledge retention by the trainee. Any misconduct or irregularity distorts this feedback mechanism and gives a false outcome of the learning process the importance of education to human being cannot be over emphasized. The relationship between education and development is well established such that education has been identified as a key index of development. However, education may not have a meaning without assessment. Assessment is required to help determine the standard and level of achievement in Nigerian secondary schools through the proper conduct of examination to assess students on a termly/semester basis. It is one of the major means of evaluating the achievement of curriculum objectives. It is done to enable teachers have adequate knowledge of the level of attainment curricular objectives. Nnam & Inah (2015) notes that examination is a yardstick against which students or candidates' competence and progress are formally measured and appraised in the education sector. According to Emaikwu (2012), examination as part of evaluation in education is aimed at determining a learner's level of skill acquisition intellectual competence and understanding after a given training. Evaluation usually enables the teacher to be effectively ready for further teaching as this forms a feedback. George & Ukpog (2013), opines that examination is the most common tool around which the entire system of education revolves, it is the instrument used to decide who is permitted to move to the next academic Journal of Education and Practice www.iiste.org ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online) Vol.6, No.26, 2015 level. Malik & Shah (1998) cited in Akaranga & Ongong (2013), observed that examination is not only a

process of assessing the progress of students but, it also motivates and helps them to know their academic strengths and weaknesses apart from providing teachers with opportunities to try new methods of teaching. But when examination is not properly conducted, the expected feedback may not result.

Hence, the result of such evaluation leads to wrong decision and judgment which affect the teacher, the learner, the entire education industry, as well as the society (Ojonemi et al., 2013). Whenever there is examination irregularity or malpractice, the validity and resulting outcome is questionable Bunza, (1996) strongly viewed examination misconduct as an act of omission or commission that contravenes those West Africa Examination Council rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity and reliability of the test and ultimately the integrity of the certificate issued by West African Examination Council. Similarly Ruwa (1997) defined examination misconduct as any wrong doing before, during or after any examination. Therefore, examination misconduct can be understood as the acts exhibited by a student in the examination hall which invalidates the good conduct of examination. Omogbo (2003) pointed out that “the fear of failure by students who do not prepare well for examination may push them to engage in malpractice in order to excel.

According to WAEC (2003) examination misconduct is irregular behavior exhibited by candidate or anybody charged with the responsibility of conducting examination in or outside the examination hall, before during or after examination. In the same vain, Duyilimi (2003), supports that it is unacceptable. Equally, an act or any act of misconduct such as leakage, impersonation, written on hidden part of wears, encoding/decoding of the fingers for objectives test, exchange of questions papers and answer booklets committed before, during or after the examination by either the students taking the examination or by officials assigned with the administration, evaluating or measuring the examination results.

1.1. Effects of Examination Malpractice on Higher Institutions

- In a society that examination malpractice is predominant, its impact are visibly seen in the type of human resources the education system has produced. Again, educational system strives to inculcate high level of discipline, diligence, moral love for others; to the recipients where the examination is fraught with malpractice, all the important feedback mechanism becomes defaulted and the educational system becomes distorted, (The CWO Voice, 2010).
- Examination malpractice leads to irreversible loss of credibility. A country that becomes notorious in examination malpractice loses international credibility. The implication is that documents or certificates emanating from such country will be treated with suspicion as is the case of Nigeria today. Such country's educational institutions are as good as dead as far as international cooperation in education is concerned (Jimoh, 2009).
- Examination malpractice has grave consequences on the individuals and institutions of learning, communities and the country at large. Dismissal, termination, loss of position, and lack of self-confidence are effects and have caused a lot of embarrassment and suffering to individuals, families and the nation. The guilty ones who were not caught and punished cannot defend the certificates procured not to talk of delivering at their duty posts.
- The prevalent rate of bank failures, collapse of buildings, economic sabotage, vandalism, kidnapping/hostage taking for ransom, drug trafficking, fake drug manufacturing and sales are practical effects of moral decadence, emanating from examination malpractice. Effects of examination fraud are displayed in the filling stations, churches, homes, hospitals, markets and everywhere.
- The fight against corruption cannot be realized if examination malpractice continues to be rampant in our educational system. As future leaders who have been equipped through a school system characterized by academic fraud and dishonesty, will certainly manifest this fraudulent behavior in any organization they may found themselves. Those that cheated to pass examination will cheat to get employed, have spouse, and even to win election through electoral violence or other sharp malpractices.
- Other effects of examination malpractice includes discouragement of students from hard work, low productivity and poor job performances, bribery, corruption, and certificate racketeering. Examination malpractice with its disadvantages is affecting all the facets of the society negatively. The potentials of this nation will be difficult to be realized socially, economically, and technologically until the individuals, governments, and other stakeholders in the education sector collaborate to eradicate this malpractice.

1.2. Efforts Made at Curbing Examination Malpractice

Immediately, after the leakage of the West African Examination Council (WAEC) question papers for the West African School Examination in 1977, the public outcry by WAEC led to the setting up of a tribunal by the federal government of Nigeria to investigate the mass leakage and suggest possible measure to forestall future occurrence. The recommendations of the tribunal led to the promulgation of Decree 20 by the federal military government in 1984 to deal with this menace. Part of the Decree 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 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.... (Fagbemi, 1998 cited in Oredein, 2006)”.

However, incidentally, Examination Malpractice Act 33 of 1999 revised the Decree 20 of 1984 and stipulates punishment ranging from a fine of ₦50,000.00 to ₦100,000.00 and imprisonment for a term of 3 – 4 years with or without option of fine. Despite all these laws, examination malpractice has been on the increase and this is as result of government inability to enforce the laws. The West African Examination Council being one of the oldest examination bodies in the country has

Journal of Education and Practice www.iiste.org ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online) Vol.6, No.26, 2015, 16 adopted and applied several measures to curtail malpractice. The efforts by WAEC includes: public enlightenment on the dangers of examination malpractice, information to candidates on rules and regulations guiding its examinations, sensitization of government and other stakeholders, sanctioning candidates and officials caught in examination irregularities. Other measures by WAEC include use of security bags for collection of security materials, photo-embossment of certificates, mounting of anti-malpractice bill boards among others. Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic Unwana, Ebonyi State and other tertiary institutions in the country have their own sets of examination rules and regulations published in examination guidelines /students hand books.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Examination Malpractice are one of the diseases that affect educational system of Nigerian institutions. Examination malpractice is a social vice which is being display in all levels schools system, but also creates doubt regarding the validity and reliability of relevant certificates. Examination malpractice as any unlawful behavior violates the established and conventional rules governing the conduct of any given examination of an institution. Similarly, it can be regarded as wrong act before, during or after any set of examination. The wrong doing may be on the part of candidates, secretaries/ typist, school management, supervisors, invigilators, school securities or any other person who is fully directly or indirectly involve in both internal and external examination. Therefore, at this juncture the above mentioned issues of examination misconduct became a serious problems in our schools especially the tertiary institutions and if the situation is left as it is, it will definitely lead to production of graduates with result they cannot defend, as such affect the general quality of the certificate and educational system at large. These are the few among others problems that exactly pushed the students to get involved in examination misconduct in our various schools? Therefore, on these problems the researchers engage to assess empirically the examination malpractice/misconduct among the students of Umar Suleiman College of Education Gashua, Yobe State, Nigeria.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following research objectives

- To examine the effect of examination malpractice among the students of Umar Suleiman College of Education Gashua.
- To determine the reasons why students involve themselves in examination malpractice in Umar Suleiman College of Education Gashua.

1.5. Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions

- What is the effect of examination malpractice among the students of Umar Suleiman College of Education Gashua?
- Why do students involve themselves in examination malpractice in Umar Suleiman College of Education Gashua?

2. Methodology

The study employed descriptive survey research design. A descriptive survey research design is the type of research design in which a group of people or item is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or item considered to be representatives of the entire group (Azing, 1993). This design is considered relevant because the study will involve collection of data presentation, a representation of the population. The total population of the study was 4011. NCE1 (226), NCE11 (2182) and NCE111 (1588) and (15) teachers were selected from various schools at Umar Suleiman College of Education Gashua.

The College has six (6) schools these are; School of Education, School of Science, School of vocational, School of Art and Social Science, School of languages and School of preliminary Study. Therefore, two schools were randomly selected out of the college this are schools of art and social science and school of science in the institutions, random sampling techniques were used to select 20 students from each of the three levels (NCE1, NCE11 and NCE111). This gave a total of 60 students per school and made a total of 120 for the two schools selected. However, 15 teachers were randomly selected from the two schools. This gave a total of 135 respondents both teachers and Students for the two selected schools at Umar Suleiman College of Education Gashua, Yobe State.

Data was also collected using a 14 items questionnaire titled, students opinion on the assessment of the effect of examination malpractice among the students of Umar Suleiman College of Education Gashua questionnaire that was designed by the researcher. 135 questionnaires were administered to both students and teachers; 120 and 15 respectively. The structure adopts a four – point Likert scale with the under listed response category using four points Likert scale. The scales are as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD). To ascertain the content validation of the instrument was done by two (2) experts from each, school of art and social science and school of science. The data was analyzed using the simple percentages and frequencies so as to help in the interpretation of data obtained from the questionnaire distributed. The decision rule for each item in the questionnaire was determined as follows:

2.1. Testing of Research Questions

Item	Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Do the natures of examination encourage students Into malpractice?	Yes	85	37.03
	No	50	62.96
Does the conduct of examination allow the Students in to examination malpractice?	No	68	50.37
	Yes	67	49.62
Does the supervisors carefully invigilating the students During the exam?	Yes	35	25.92
	No	100	74.07
Are the students allow to enter the examination venue with their materials?	No	129	95.55
	Yes	6	4.44

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage on the Nature of Examination Malpractice among the Students of USCOEGA

Table 1: reveals information on the nature of examination malpractice among the students. It shows that the large number of respondents disagreed with the above mentioned statement (62.96), (37.03), agreed that the nature affect the examination malpractice. It also revealed that (74.07), of the respondent claimed that supervisors are not carefully invigilating the students accordingly. However, most of the respondents (95.55) disagreed with the statement that students are allow to enter the examination venue with material.

Item	Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Provided the examination is difficult, are you Interested in cheating?	Yes	85	62.96
	NO	50	37.04
Do your parent support the idea of engaging in examination malpractice	Yes	4	2.96
	No	131	97.04
Cheating is very common in Nigerian institutions of higher learning	Yes	90	66.67
	No	45	33.33
Do you consider only those who cheat have high grade?	Yes	115	85.19
	No	135	100

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage on Why Do Students Involve Themselves on Examination Malpractice among the Students of USCOEGA

Table 2: reveals information on why do students involve themselves on examination malpractice among the students of USCOEGA. It shows that the large number of respondents agreed with the above mentioned statement (62.96), (37.03), that provided the examination is difficult is you interested in cheating while few disagreed in number. It also revealed the majority of the respondents disagreed (97.04) and only (2.96) agreed with the statement on do your parents support the idea of engaging in exams malpractice. However, (66.67) respondents agreed while (33.33) disagreed with the opinion that cheating is very common. In Nigeria institutions of higher learning. Finally, most of the respondents agreed with (85.19) and (14.81) disagreed with the statement do you consider only those who cheat have high grades in examinations?

2.2. Findings of the Study

- The nature of examination misconduct, the conduct of exam encourage students to involve in malpractice, laxity on the part of administrators/management and invigilators in term of preparation of questions paper and the conduct of examination in the hall. Therefore, this gives chance for the students to cheat during the examination.
- Lack of dedication and commitment to the duty by the teachers, coming late to exam invigilation, gist with their colleagues on the exams hall, giving much time playing with their hand set, allow the students to talk among them.
- The teachers have to be very careful on the setting of exam questions so as to make sure question is clear and cover the content. Because provided the examination is difficult the students are trying to find the easy way of passing the exam, since nowadays the examination malpractice became an order of the day in our higher institutions of learning.

3. Discussion of Findings

Table one, shows responses of the respondents on nature of examination malpractice among the students of USCOEGA. This involves the general conduct of the exam, laxity of the administrators/ management on the proper examination supervision, invigilators readiness in terms of preparation of question paper. This will create exchange of answer booklet among students, grafting, unauthorized assistance and use of handset by the students as one of the finding of the study. This supported the findings of Abba (1998) who identified some method like grafting, super- print use of foreign material, unauthorized assistance and use of GSM handset as some of the natures constituted to the examination malpractice.

Subsequently, the Table two shows responses of the respondent on why do students involve themselves in examination malpractice these involve some negative attitude of students towards studies, poor reading habit, lack of confidence during exam and leakage of question papers before the exam its now reveals in this findings. In line with this

findings it supported by WAEC (2003), identified some method such as leakage of question papers, negative attitude toward reading, lack of confidence on the part of students. All these constituted the factors why students involve themselves in examination malpractice.

4. Conclusion

Education, being a process of teaching and learning is evaluated through examination at the end of the learning period. Examination not only serves as a feedback for the trainer to ascertain the level of knowledge acquisition but also serves as a measure of knowledge retention by the trainee. Any misconduct or irregularity distorts this feedback mechanism and gives a false outcome of the learning process. However, the research findings identified some major factors responsible for examination malpractice to include; laxity in the part of administrators and examination committee who usually organized the exams, also lack of commitment by the teachers during invigilation in the exam is an attribute that encourage the students into examination malpractice. Therefore, inability of the school administrators/ management, teachers and stakeholders on education to take serious action will definitely lead to producing of illiterate candidates without the ability to defend the certificate obtained.

5. Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study the researchers recommended the followings:

- Students should be encouraged by both their parents and teachers to be more committed to their studies and to avoid examination malpractice.
- Students should also be properly checked to ensure they enter the examination hall/venue without any unauthorized materials.
- School officials, administrators, teachers should be supervised, to be more committed to their duties, and help the students to understand the basic and current information on their subject of study will minimize examination malpractice.
- Societal re-engineering and re-orientation to revamp moral values: Good moral values should be properly inculcated into our youths, and parents counselled to stop aiding their children to cheat in examinations. Again, there is need to engage only honest persons in examination management.
- Retraining and reassessment of teachers: Teachers should be equipped for the technological-driven world.
- Government should establish examination ethics committee and revised examination Act and to make sure the law put into implementation for anyone caught or commit.

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