
CHAPTER TWELVE

STRATEGIES AGAINST EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA: THE POSITION OF THE LIBRARY IN SERVICE DELIVERY

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Abstract

In recent years examination malpractice has become one of the most pernicious maladies afflicting our educational system from the primary school level to the tertiary level of education. Therefore, this paper takes a critical look into the meaning of examination malpractice, causes of examination malpractice, forms of examination malpractice, why students fail examinations and also x-rayed the library strategies against examination malpractice. More importantly, recommendations were proffered on how the library could be a remedy to this social malaise.

Introduction

Examination malpractice has become one of the pernicious maladies afflicting our educational system from the primary, secondary level to the highest echelons of tertiary education of Nigeria. A number of reasons have been adduced for the upsurge in Examination Malpractice. Maduka (1994:10), opined that the gross societal indiscipline which over-flows in schools, the morbid craze of many Nigerians to get rich overnight and the great emphasis on paper qualification rather than the ability of the applicant to perform on the job are major reasons why most people involve themselves in examination malpractice. Next is the inability on the part of learners to cope with courses leading to careers which parents and guardians have mapped out their children and wards, and lack of qualified teachers among others. Edokpa (1998), observed that examination malpractice have pervaded the Nigerian educational system at all levels and have reared their ugly heads in both the internally and externally conducted examinations, thereby rendering the purpose for which examinations are held ineffective and virtually useless. Consequently, so many measures have been employed by heads of institutions, educational stakeholders and the government in its bid to stop this ugly incidence promulgated decree 27 of 1973, which succeeded the 1952 WAEC (Nigerian Status) ordinance, which stipulates procedures and punishment for examination malpractices.

In a similar vein, the miscellaneous decree 20 of 1984, stipulates a jail term of 21 years for offenders and reports shows that culprits have been jailed but this has not deterred would be offenders. There is another examination malpractice ACT 33 of 1999, which list the following as punishable offences and these are: cheating at examination, stealing of (examination materials) impersonation, disorderliness and disturbance at examination, forgery of result slips, breach of duty (by examination officials) and conspiracy (to commit any of these offences). Cancellation and withholding of examination result, prohibiting specific schools from serving as examination centers. Also, examining bodies have in place rules, regulations and mechanism to ensure free, smooth and fair examinations. Notable on is the option A4 by Jamb in which centre A and E questions will be different from centre B and D. also in an effort to eliminate impersonation, WAEC acquired state of the art Microplex, Solid 90E Continuous Laser Printer embossing candidates' photographs on certificates (retrieved from <http://www.waecnigeria.org/exams-1.htm> 18th June 2008). Also concerned organization like the Nigerian Union of Teacher has adopted the "Study Circle" strategy to curb examination malpractice (Guardian 26th

December, 1988), while a Non-Governmental Organization, the Exam Ethics Project has devised means to monitor public examinations in abid to curb examination malpractice (Punch, 1st June 1999). In addition, Section 16 (D) of the miscellaneous offences decree of 1990, prescribes a jail term not exceeding ten years for those convicted of complicity in examination malpractice. Apparently, many students do not know the significance of the library and various services offered, which are tailored towards helping them pass their examinations with ease (Nwankwo, 2013). Significantly, this paper is intended to x-ray those motivational roles that the library can play to get students well prepared ahead of various examinations. This strategy is aimed to disabuse the minds of students from cheating during examinations and other malpractices that are associated with examinations.

Examination Malpractice Defined

Examination malpractice may be defined according to Igwe (1995:335), as "cheating in examination or any act intended to benefit or give undue advantage to oneself or another by deceit or fraud, before, during and after an examination. Fagbamiye (1998), defined examination malpractice as attempts by examinees, their agents or collaborators to influence the outcome of examination unfairly. Such agents could be other students, teachers, invigilators and adults or even parents and guardians. Ayoola (1998), defined examination malpractice as any overt or covert actions on the part of person or agroup of people in and around the school system that is designed to subvert the image of private or public examination, in the vein, examination malpractice is an unhealthy practice in any examination with the intention of obtaining good results through fraudulent action.

Causes of Examination Malpractice

The reasons students engage in examination malpractice in virtually all levels of educational institutions are not far-fetched. Alonge (2003), in his survey on why students cheat in examinations identified the following as being the major reasons:

- Pressure from parents and the society to get good grades.
- The value attached to certificates.
- Fluid examination procedures
- Low intellectual ability
- Low moral judgment and inappropriate operation of continuous assessment.

In all, Busayo (2008), however summarized the causes of examination malpractice as:

- Emphasis placed on certificates.
- Low morality level of our society.
- Undue emphasis on examination results portraying it as a matter of life and death.
- Scramble for material wealth in Nigeria.
- Poor teaching/learning habits.
- Physical and psychological conditions under which examinations are taken.
- Administrative lapses
- Logistics causes, distribution, supply and custodian of examination paper
- The desire of satisfy parents/guardians.
- Lack of confidence in students themselves
- Peer influences and wish to conform
- Support from a syndicate of friend, juniors, invigilators or teachers.
- Lack of appropriate punishment for culprits.

Forms of Examination Malpractice

Busayo (2008), in his survey identified the various tricks adopted by some students of the state college of education Ikere-Ekiti in perpetuating examination malpractice to include:

1. Examination leakage through the lecturers, typists, HOD's office, Dean's office and the office of examinations and records directorate.
2. Giraffe method
3. Bringing prepared answer sheets to the examination hall
4. Paring (Group) system
5. Prepared jotting (micro writing)

Ajayi and Ayodele (2002), identified the various methods/forms of examination malpractice to include:

- a. Bringing in of foreign or authorized materials into the examination hall (i.e. known by students as Omu kilikili star).
- b. Irregular activities inside or outside the examination hall
- c. Collusion
- d. Examination leakage
- e. Mass cheating
- f. Smuggling of answer scripts
- g. Certificate racketeering of forgery
- h. Assault on examination supervisors.
- i. Access to questions from typists, Head of department offices and so on.
- j. The giraffe method
- k. The pairing method which involves students coping each other in the examination hall
- l. Copying from handouts, textbooks and notes.
- m. Non-submission of answer scripts
- n. Exchange of examination papers
- o. Lap methods this involves writing information or notes on laps
- p. External assistance or mercenary method
- q. Micro computer storage/retrieval method
- r. Re-writing examination privately after the official examination.
- s. Use of cell phone to communicate responses to examination questions.

Why Students Fail Examination

Reasons have been adduced why students fail examination. Alonge (2003), reported that at the National Conference on mass failure in public examinations held at the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, in 1985, several factors were observed to be responsible as follows: some blamed the home, society and parents for failure to inculcate discipline and learning habits in their children. Others blamed the Government and Ministry of Education for failure to provide human and material resources to facilitate good teaching and learning. Some also blamed the teachers for failure to inculcate the necessary knowledge, skills and behavior to students. However, if students are serious and are well prepared for their respective examination success will surely be theirs. "For whoever fails to prepare, is prepared to fail" says an adage.

Library Strategies against Examination Malpractice

The importance of libraries as educational resources centre cannot be over-emphasized. If the numerous resources provided by the libraries are duly harnessed by students while preparing for their examinations, the temptation to engage in examination malpractice will not be there. Fadero (2001), opined that there was apparently no further need to debate the importance of libraries in any

national system of education because the issue seems to have been over-flogged by experts in both librarianship and educational planning. Fadero, further observed that effective teaching requires support of librarians and well equipped libraries and that meaningful teaching and learning demand adequate provision of library facilities. Ultimately, these are possible ways by which the library services can help to reduce the menace of examination malpractice.

User's Education

Library users must be enlightened and counseled, during orientation on the use of library concerning the aftermath of examination malpractice. This enlightenment should be stressed before any test or examination by the lecturers concerned.

1. **Reading Environment**

Silence is the golden rule of libraries. Conducive reading environment, good lighting, good ventilation stand by generator etc, will spur students to read and curb examination malpractice.

2. **Reference Services**

Reference services help users to be better informed and enlightened. Reference services can be directional, ready reference or research based. All those go a long way to preparing students for their examinations and make examination malpractice unattractive.

3. **Inter-Library Loan Services**

Inter-Library loan services between libraries of equal standing for materials on behalf of students, is an opportunity that students explore, which is very beneficial to serious minded students in passing their examination with ease.

4. **Book Fairs**

Libraries can also liaise with their respective vendors for a book fair, where relevant books and journals can be sold to students at reduced prices. This also will curb examination malpractice.

5. **Library Staff/Services**

The library does not discriminate. All registered students are eligible to use library resources. However, to make use of these resources maximally, the staff/users' relationship must be very cordial but uncompromising.

6. **Exhibitions and Displays**

Exhibitions and displays when mounted periodically on the consequences of examination malpractice and the disciplinary measures for offenders will curb students' excesses. This is a legitimate role of the librarian.

7. **Bibliographic Services**

The use of books and other library materials can be encouraged by the preparation of various bibliographic aids. This could be a weekly or monthly list of new books which the library has acquired and wishes to bring to the attention of its readers. Such lists are usually referred to as "New Accessions", New Books', New Addition to the library as opined by Fayose (2000).

8. **Photocopying Services**

Not all library materials are loan able. Photocopying services at subsidized rate will enable students make copies of relevant materials that they have read and be well prepared for examination. This will also curb thefts pilfering and mutilation (Library Guide, 2005).

9. **Past Question Papers**

The library makes available to users past question papers. This serves as a guide to most students in preparing for their examination malpractice (Library Guide, 2005).

Nwankwo, F. A. (2013). How has Examination Malpractice Affected quality of Education in Nigeria (Unpublished Work). P.8.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, the following recommendations are made to curb the menace.

1. Reading habits must be inculcated into our students' life from the primary schools to the tertiary institutions, through encouragement of use of the library;
2. There must be well stocked libraries in all our levels of educational institutions (i.e. the 6-3-3-4 stages);
3. Students are to be kept currently aware of materials relevant to their needs, both curriculum-based and personal;
4. Students are to receive instruction on how to use the library and its services;
5. Students should be given an opportunity to develop into an independent learner;
6. Students should be assisted to receive guidance in locating and selecting materials, investigating, organizing and presenting ideas, and producing materials;
7. Students should be encouraged to view and listen to audio-visual materials.

Conclusion

Examination malpractice is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigerian educational system at all level at all levels (6-3-3-4) and this invariably has made the certificates by the various institutions to be questionable and doubtful both within and outside Nigeria. Significantly, there is no doubt, that our libraries have roles to play in curbing the menace of examination malpractice in Nigeria. Therefore, the libraries can render the required services if sufficiently funded to cater for its statutory services.

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