

Evaluating the Effect of Examination Malpractice on Academic Performance among Some Selected Secondary School Students in Zaria LGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study Evaluate the Effect of Examination Malpractice on Academic Performance among Secondary School Students in some selected schools in Zaria LGA, Kaduna State, Nigeria. The study adopted cross-sectional descriptive design to carry out the research work and a simple random sample was used as a subset of statistical population in which each member of the subset has an equal probability of being chosen. The data collected was subjected to the Cronbach's Alpha which yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.75. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics using frequency tables and mean calculations. Findings indicate that examination malpractice has effect on academic performance among secondary school student (with aggregate mean of 3.08 and 3.00 in both Al-Hudahuda and GGSS Pada respectively. Lack of effective supervision during examination, lack of preparation for the examination and poor attendance of classes by students were identified as the major causes while various devices such as bringing prepared answers were also identified. Some suggestions were made for preventing examination malpractice. Based on the findings made, it is therefore concluded that examination malpractice is a problem affecting student academic performance among secondary school students, which encourages laziness in students where students no longer depend on themselves but on machineries and external materials. The recommendations such as ensuring that only formally registered candidates sit for the examination, making frequent unannounced visits by officials of examination centers.

Keywords: Examination Malpractice, Academic Performance, Secondary School Students, Zaria LGA

Introduction

Education is the development of an individual through training, transmission of what is worthwhile to the point that he is able to fit into his environment and contribute to the best of his ability for the wellbeing of the society. Our education system uses examination to grade students in both internal and external examinations in Nigeria. However, examinations are known to pay very significant and important roles in our educational system. They are used for academic stratification or for assigning grades to students in secondary schools and their institutions of learning. A student with a distinction all through in certificate examination will be regarded by those around his as academically precious. He is also likely to have place in institution of higher learning or in job situation within the society than a child with a mere pass or a failure. All these candidates have combined to influence a student's attitude to an examination malpractice.

Adenipekun, (2004) states that today, examination practice is perpetuated by individual who are desperate to pass and acquire certificates or degree, today, there is an unholy, unwholesome conspiracy to aid and abet examination malpractice by schools heads, teacher,

invigilators, parents, students, and “mercenaries” whose motive is to make quick money rather than genuine love for the candidates. Idaka (2006), Various efforts have been made to check examination malpractice in our institutions of learning. Unfortunately, the cankerworm called examination malpractice defies all educational attempts of curbing or completely eliminating it from our system. Consequently, Nigeria has been graded with reliability of half-bake graduate’s certificates racketeering and qualification inflation. Nwaba & Nwaba (2005). It is this reason that has informed the need for investigating the factors that are associated with the practice.

According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary malpractice is a wrong or illegal behavior exhibited by a person while discharging professional responsibilities. In the light of this definition, examination malpractice is simply illegal obtaining an answer to an examination question from any other source other than the brain of the examinee. Examination malpractice is defined as deliberate acts of wrong doing contrary to the rules of examinations designed to give a candidate an unfair disadvantage (Tambuwal, 2013). Examination malpractices are illegal acts committed by students single handedly, or in collaboration with others such as fellow students, parents, teachers, supervisors, invigilators and anybody or group of people before or after examination in order to obtain undeserved marks or grades. Perhaps we must make it clear at this stage that the issue of examination malpractice is most often considered at a very narrow perspective mainly focusing on the famous leakages of examination papers. However, the term examination malpractice is very broad in scope, for instance it includes every illegal act related to examination that may occur before, during and after examinations such as what happens during the preparation stage, custody, administration, making and releasing of examination result (Ivor, 2010).

Examination malpractice according to Usman (2005) is cheating in the examination or any intention to benefit or give undue advantage to oneself or another by deceit or fraud, before, during and after examination. Examination malpractice is already becoming a culture in Nigeria educational scene because it is been condoned by most parents, students, teachers, and lecturers (Ojerinde, 2010). Students often go into examination halls with pistols and gaggers to take care of anyone that would forestall them from cheating. At risk are invigilators and question papers, hence Nigerian educational system is gravely threatened. The frequency of occurrences of examination malpractice indicates a state of hopelessness and helplessness. The incidence of examination malpractice has become so endemic that the penalty hitherto meted out to its perpetrators is almost having no statistically significant effect on them.

Method

This study adopted cross sectional descriptive Survey research design. This design is considered to be appropriate as it will enable the researcher to collect necessary information from student within a selected location in a particular time through the use of questionnaire which addresses the research questions raised and was answered for the study. The population for this study consists of 660 senior secondary school students from two schools located at Zaria Metropolis of Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria. Simple random sample were used to select 66 students as a subset of statistical population in which each member of the subset has an equal chance of being chosen. This number is made up of 10% of the population for this study.

According to David (2012), a simple random sampling is a technique that allows each element of the population an equal and known chance of being selected as part of the sample.

The instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire titled: “Perception of Secondary School Students on Methods, Causes, Effects and Remedies to Examination Malpractice Questionnaire” (PSSSMCEREMQ). The PSSSMCEREMQ consists of 5 main Sections. Section A: Sought for Respondents Demographic Data such as Name of School, Gender and Age. Section B: Consist of Perceive Causes of Examination Malpractice in Secondary School. Section C: Consists of Device/Methods used by Students for Examination Malpractice. Section D: Consists of Students Perceived Effects of Examination Malpractice on Academic Performance among Secondary School Students. Section E: Consists of Measures to Prevent Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools. Four rating scales were used for the computations towards facilitating data analysis and better decision, the researcher classified - Strongly Agree (SA)⁴, Agree (A)³, Disagree (D)² and Strongly Disagree (SD)¹. The data collected was subjected to the Cranach’s Alpha, which yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.75. For the analysis of data, descriptive statistics was used, such frequency, mean and standard and deviations.

Results

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondent

Class	Al-hudahuda College		GGSS Pada, Zaria	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
SSI	17	45.95	12	41.38
SSII	20	54.05	17	58.62
Total	37	100.0	29	100.0
Age	-	-	-	-
10-12 yrs	5	13.51	3	10.34
13-15 yrs	9	24.32	7	24.14
16-18 yrs	13	35.14	10	34.48
19-21 yrs	10	27.03	9	31.04
22 yrs and above	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	37	100.0	29	100.0

Distribution of respondents on the basis of class. Al-hudahuda College has a total of 17 respondents representing 45.95% were in SSI and 20 respondents representing 54.05% were in SSII. While GGSS Pada, Zaria has a total of 12 respondents representing 41.38% were in SSI and 17 respondents representing 58.62% were in SSII.

Distribution of respondents on the basis of Age. Students of Al-hudahuda College within the age range of 10 – 12yrs has a of 5 respondents representing 13.51; followed by 13 – 15yrs has 9 respondents representing 24.32%; followed by 16 – 18yrs has 13 respondents representing 35.14% and 19 – 21yrs has 10 respondents representing 27.03%. Therefore, the majority of the respondent are within the age range of 16 – 18yrs with 13 highest respondents representing 35.14%. While among Students of GGSS Pada, Zaria within the age bracket of 10 – 12yrs has 3 respondents representing 10.34%; followed by 13 – 15yrs with 7 respondents representing 24.14%; followed by 16 – 18yrs with 10 respondents representing 34.48% and lastly 19 – 21yrs with 9 respondents representing 31.04%. Therefore, the majority of the respondent are within the

age bracket of 16 – 18yrs of age with 10 highest respondents representing 34.48% in GGSS Pada, Zaria.

Answering the Research Questions

The study research questions were answered and analyzed using frequency, mean and standard deviations of each items in each table. The cumulative mean in each table was compared with a decision mean of 2.50. The decision mean is computed based on the 4 liker scale options of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree carrying points of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. thus $(4+3+2+1)/4 = 2.500$. A cumulative mean greater than the decision mean, indicate a positive or general agreement with the question.

Table 2: Mean response on the causes of examination malpractice

SN	Item statement	Al-hudahuda College	GGSS Pada, Zaria
		Mean	Mean
1	Lack of effective supervision during examination	3.80	3.50
2	Lack of preparation for the examination by students	3.00	3.40
3	Leakage of question papers by examination officers	2.30	3.20
4	Poor teaching by teachers	2.40	3.20
5	Too much emphasis on certificate in the society	1.65	3.30
6	Negative peer influence promotes malpractice	1.70	2.90
7	Inability to get reading materials teachers	2.65	3.00
8	Inadequate space for proper conduct of examinations	1.85	3.00
9	General indiscipline among students	2.90	2.90
10	Poor attendance of classes by students	3.45	2.50
	Aggregate	2.57	3.09

Decision mean = 2.50

Table 2: reveals the aggregate mean score of 2.57 for Al-hudahuda and 3.09 for GGSS Pada which is relatively higher than the decision mean of 2.5. This implies that, respondents were of the view that there are several cause of examination malpractices in the both Al-hudahuda and GGSS, pada. This is obvious as indicated by the expressed opinion of the respondents where they were of the agreement with a mean score greater than 2.5 for both Al-hudahuda and GGSS, pada that lack of effective supervision during examination, lack of preparation for the examination by students, inability to get reading materials teachers, general indiscipline among students and poor attendance of classes by students are causes of examination malpractice. However, only respondents in GGSS agreed that leakage of question papers by examination officers, poor teaching by teachers, too much emphasis on certificate in the society, negative peer influence promotes malpractice and inadequate space for proper conduct of examination cause examination malpractice.

Thus, the major causes of examination malpractice were lack of effective supervision during examination, lack of preparation for the examination by students, inability to get reading

materials teachers, general indiscipline among students and poor attendance of classes by students.

Table 3: Mean response on the Device/methods used by students for examination malpractice

SN	Item statement	Al-hudahuda College	GGSS Pada, Zaria
		Mean	Mean
1	Bringing prepared answers to examination halls	3.70	3.40
2	Copying other students answers during examination	3.05	3.40
3	Invigilators colluding to assists students	2.80	3.30
4	Sending of prepared answers by teachers to students during exams	2.95	2.90
5	Copying answers directly from notebooks of textbooks during exams	3.25	3.70
6	Hiring other people to write the examination through impersonation	2.90	2.90
7	Non-submission of answer script after an examination	2.70	2.90
8	Illegal removal of answer scripts from the examination hail	3.45	2.90
9	Using another person to sit for an examination on behalf of a candidates	2.85	3.60
10	Alteration of score in favour of candidates	2.95	2.50
	Aggregate mean	3.06	3.15

Decision mean = 2.50

Table 3: Shows the aggregate mean of 3.06 for al-hudahuda and 3.15 for GGSS Pada, this is relatively greater than the 2.5 midpoint of assessment. This implies that the method used in Al-hudahuda is quite different from the method used in GGSS Pada for examination malpractice. However, in Al-hudahuda college the common method used for examination malpractice is bringing prepared answers to examination halls followed by copying answers directly from notebooks of textbooks during exams and copying other student's answers during examination. Similarly, it is also observed that in GGSS Pada the common method used for examination malpractice is copying answers directly from notebooks of textbooks during exams, using another person to sit for an examination on behalf of candidates, copying other student's answers during examination and invigilators colluding to assists students. However, other methods are: Sending of prepared answers by teachers to students during exams, Hiring other people to write the examination through impersonation and non-submission of answer script after an examination.

Table 4: Mean Response on Students Perceived Effects of Examination Malpractice on Academic Performance among Secondary School Students

SN	Item statement	Al-hudahuda College Mean	GGSS Pada, Zaria Mean
1	Examination discourages students from studying hard	3.80	3.40
2	Poor attitude at future schools	2.05	2.70
3	Leads to ineffective study habits among students	2.80	3.00
4	Reduces the value of the certificate Obtained	3.55	3.50
5	Reduces healthy competition among students	3.10	2.70
6	Leads to denial of admission to deserving students	2.80	2.80
7	General lowers educational standard	2.75	3.00
8	Under achievement in productivity in the labour market	3.10	3.70
9	Causes low self-esteem among students engaged in malpractice	3.60	3.20
10	Encourages malpractice in other areas of student's personal lives	3.25	2.00
	Aggregate mean	3.08	3.00

Decision mean = 2.50

Table 4: shows that examination malpractice has effect on academic performance among secondary school student. This is observed from the aggregate mean of 3.08 and 3.00 in both Al-hudahuda and GGSS Pada. However, among the perceived effect, respondents in Al-hudahuda were of opinion that Poor attitude at future is not a perceived effect of examination malpractice on academic performance among secondary school students. On the other hand, respondents in GGSS, Pada were of the opinion that encouraging malpractice in other areas of student's personal lives is not a perceived effect of examination malpractice on academic performance among secondary school student. More so, other perceived effects were: examination malpractice discourages students from studying hard, leads to ineffective study habits among students, reduces the value of the certificate Obtained, reduces healthy competition among students, leads to denial of admission to deserving students, general lowers educational standard, under achievement in productivity in the labour market as well as causes low self-esteem among students engaged in malpractice.

Table 6: Mean response on Measures to Prevent Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools

SN	Item statement	Al-hudahuda College Mean	GGSS Pada, Zaria Mean
1	Hand-checking of students' pocket to check for prepared answers	3.35	3.40
2	Cancellation of student's results and government should be serious with Act. 33 of 1999 and enforce it.	3.35	3.40
3	Effective supervisor/invigilation	2.40	3.50
4	Adequate space in examination hall	2.20	3.50
5	Strict compliance with examination rules! regulation by the school authority	2.10	3.40
6	Ensure that only formally registered candidates sit for the examination	3.05	3.50
7	There should be frequent unannounced visits by officials of examination centers and erring centers should be punished	3.50	3.20
8	Religious and community leaders should be used to intervene on parents who insist on their children getting the best result without genuine efforts for it.	3.05	3.50
9	The remuneration of invigilators and supervisors should be attractable that would not allow one to think of taking bribe to add to his earnings.	3.70	3.00
10	Sitting arrangement of students should be changed on daily or weekly basis. Students could be arranged according to their registration/examination number or name.	2.55	3.00

Decision mean = 2.50

Table 6 revealed that, the main measure to prevent examination malpractice in secondary school is hand-checking of students pocket to check for prepared answers and cancellation of student's result and government should be serious with Act 33 of 1999 and enforce it. Other measure were: Ensure that only formally registered candidates sit for the examination, there should be frequent unannounced visits by officials of examination centers and erring centers should be punished, religious and community leaders should be used to intervene on parents who insist on their children getting the best result without genuine efforts for it, the remuneration of invigilators and supervisors should be attractable that would not allow one to think of taking bribe to add to his earnings as well as sitting arrangement of students should be changed on daily or weekly basis. Students could be arranged according to their registration/examination number or name.

Summary of the Major Findings

Examination malpractice has effect on academic performance among secondary school student. The effect of examination malpractice cannot be overemphasized. Among the perceived effect of examination malpractice considered detrimental to the performance are majorly examination malpractice discourages students from studying hard, leads to ineffective study habits among students, reduces the value of the certificate obtained, reduces healthy competition among students, leads to denial of admission to deserving students, general lowers educational standard, under achievement in productivity in the labour market as well as causes low self-esteem among students engaged in malpractice. Furthermore, major causes of examination malpractice were lack of effective supervision during examination, lack of preparation for the examination by students, inability to get reading materials teachers, general indiscipline among students and poor attendance of classes by students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings made, it was concluded that examination malpractice is a problem affecting student academic performance among secondary school students. Examination malpractice is loaded with strategic skills which facilitate the laziness in students where student no longer depend on themselves but on machineries on external materials. This aspect has equally brought to limelight the fact that various malpractice methods were applied by students in virtually every school.

Recommendations

The findings of the research work clearly have shown a positive relationship between examination malpractice influence and academic achievement on secondary school students. The following recommendations were therefore presented:

- i) Ensure that only formally registered candidates sit for the examination
- ii) There should be frequent unannounced visits by officials of examination centers and erring centers should be punished.
- iii) Religious and community leaders should be used to intervene on parents who insist on their children getting the best result without genuine efforts for it.
- iv) It is essential to review the remuneration packages of invigilators, supervisors and teachers to ensure they are fairly compensated and deter them from seeking additional income through bribery.

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