

**EXAMINATION ETHICS AND EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE:
IMPLICATION FOR QUALITY EDUCATION**

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ABSTRACT

Examination is a popular concept in Nigerian School System. It is well articulated in the process of teaching and learning from nursery stage to University level in Nigerian Education System. The chance of moving forward from lower to upper level is measured by the performance of Students in examination. Thus, the thrust of the paper is Examination Ethics and Examination Malpractice. The paper provides adequate Statistical record of annual Examination Malpractice from 1996-2005 base on geopolitical Zones, States and Zonal levels. Moreover, the paper identifies and explains the forms and causes of examination malpractice. Finally, in order to curb Examination Malpractice and ensure strict Examination Ethics, the students, teachers, parents, Examiners, Counsellors and the Society are recommended in the paper to undertake certain drastic measures individually and collectively.

Introduction

Examination is as old as man which aims at assessing the cognitive objectives of learning activity. This confirms what Aliyu and Adejo cited in Suleiman (2006), that examination is the primary measure to test a candidate's knowledge, skills and abilities. Public examinations are presently the major instrument by which a society assesses the products of its educational system. For Secondary School Education which is the determining factor of one's ability to proceed for further education or enters into gainful employment or otherwise in Nigeria; such public examinations include: the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) set and conducted annually by the West African Examination Council, then recently by National Examination Council. Performance in these examinations is the most widely accepted criterion for determining the quality of

secondary education in the country. Hence, failure in these examinations at national, state and local levels becomes a source of great concern.

Meaning of Examination

Examination according to Denga (1983), is the testing of knowledge or ability of an individual in a field of knowledge. Examination, therefore, evaluates the learner in his new field of learning with the intent of rating his or her academic or skill capacities. Examination of any type and at any level is designed and administered with a view to bringing out the real capabilities of the learner without any external aid or fraudulent practice that could distort the exact knowledge in the field of knowledge by the learner being tested. The learner's performance is graded as means of giving relative quantification of his/her ability.

While the grading system vary from situation to situation and is based on the general concept of comparison with similar learners at the same level. This means that if teaching and learning should take place, examination cannot be avoided in the school setting. Therefore the need for students to pass the examination make some of them to device ways in order to pass by all means.

Examination Ethics

Examination Ethics is the respect for the rules, regulations, expectations, codes of conduct and moral principles governing the conduct of assessment and evaluation system not only in educational institution but in all sectors of endeavours. It helps students not only to identify their true talents but achieve their destinies. Examination ethics is the heart beat of education without which education stands naked without character and learning (Onyechere, 2005).

Onyechere (2005: 23), gave the historical background of examination ethics as:

Examination ethics project was founded and established in 1996 by non-profit, non-Governmental, non-partisan, social responsibility Organization dedicated to the cause of eradication of examination malpractice and enthronement of Examination ethics.

The annual report on exam malpractice and examination ethics ratings of states and geopolitical zones is one of the communication programme used to draw and sustain the attention of stakeholder.

Zonal and State Examination Report

The report serves as the tool for monitoring national, zonal and state trends in examination malpractice with a view to assessing impact of intervention programmes. It helps to identify zones and states that require special intervention effort. The report also helps in recognizing and encouraging stakeholders whose intervention programs are having positive impact. This annual report, most importantly helps to galvanize stakeholders with negative ratings so as to take action (Onyechere, 2005).

The ratings are based on statistical reports as published by public examination bodies especially National Examination Council (NECO) and the West African Examination Council (WAEC). The raw statistics used in the analysis as well as the formula for computing the indices are open for verification. How each state or zone comes out in the rating, is completely dependent on statistics released by public examination bodies.

The Exam Malpractice Index (EMI) as formulated by exam ethics project is the measure of number of candidates involved in malpractices out of every 100 that sit for such examination. The EMI can be determined for the whole country. For geo-political zones, for states, for institutions and for any category of examination. A trend analysis of EMI shows whether malpractice is increasing or decreasing. The Exam Ethics Index (EMI) is the increase of EMI (Onyechere, 2005).

Examination Malpractice is not a new event in Nigeria and indeed in all parts of the world. This is because its occurrence is as old as examination itself, and no part of the world is immuned to it. What is perhaps strange, is the phenomenal increase in cases of examination malpractice and the complex dimension it assumes in Nigeria. As long as examination continues to be measurement index of testing mental and physical abilities and also for prediction and selection purposes, many candidates will continue to use unhealthy and fraudulent means in gaining undue advantages over others (Isiayaku: 2001).

The phenomenon of examination malpractice has drastically lowered the standard of our institutions of learning and its consequences is equally felt by the labour market.

Concept of Examination Malpractice

There are various definitions given to examination malpractice. For example Abubakar (2001), defines examination malpractice as a wrong doing in an examination which involves misconduct, irregularity and dishonesty. In a simple term Abubakar, explained examination malpractice as unacceptable conduct before, during or after examinations that warrant the application of appropriate sanctions against the alleged or guilty offenders.

Therefore, any avoidance of the rules and regulations guiding the conduct of examination could be regarded as examination malpractice. This means that any act that contravenes the rules and regulations of examination ethics is. According to Chukwemeka (1972) cited in Dikko (2001) examination malpractice is referred to as violation of examination regulations by candidates or schools. Examination regulations are always emphasizing that such examination should enable the examiners determine the level of competence of a candidate in absorbing, reproducing and where appropriate applying knowledge. Examination malpractice could also be defined as any act which violates the rules and regulations governing the conduct of any examination. This includes all activities that destroy the ways in determining the performance of the learner through the laid down regulations.

Records on Examination Malpractice from 1996-2005

Below are available statistical records on examination ethics and trends in National Examination Malpractice Index. This ranges from Geo-political zones, states to zonal levels.

Table 1: Ten Year Trend in National Examination Malpractice Index (1996-2005)

The table below shows the trend in which National Examination Malpractice Index occurred for the period of ten years. This is specifically from 1996-2005. It is apparent from the table that each year shows the number of candidates involved in examination malpractice and the percentage increase or decrease each year.

S/N	Year	No. of Candidate involved	No. of candidates sat	EMI	Percentage change
1	1996	99074	631042	15.2	-
2	1997	108410	643365	16.9	+9%
3	1998	83831	721986	11.6	-30%
4	1999	37164	817273	4.5	-61%
5	2000	39556	636064	6.2	+37%
6	2001	52112	1025185	5.0	-24%
7	2002	95519	909888	10.5	+110%
8	2003	111969	929294	12.1	+15%
9	2004	326863	1930530	16.4	+40%
10	2005	73050	1064587	6.9	-59%

Sources: Ethics Resources Centre Nigeria (2005).

Note:

1. In 2004, a composite of WAEC and NECO May/June Exam Malpractice statistics were applied.
2. In all other years, only WAEC May/June Exam Malpractice Statistics were applied.
3. Between 2004 and 2005, examination malpractice in declined by a factor of 59%.

Table: 2005 Exam Malpractices Rating of Geopolitical Zones

The table indicates the rate of Examination Malpractice based on geopolitical zones. Southern Eastern Zone recorded the highest percentage of exam malpractice with 9:31 percent. South-South was rated second with 8:86 percent. This is followed by south west with 6:34 percent involvement in examination malpractice.

North centrally zone took the fourth position with 5:90 percent. North East was rated fifth position in Examination Malpractice involvement with 5.49. the least involvement in Examination Malpractice was that of North West 3:46 percent.

S/N	Zone	No. of Candidate involved	No. of candidates sat	EMI	Ranking
1	North Central	10315	174881	5.90	4 th
2	North East	4166	75930	5.49	5 th
3	North West	3949	114203	3.46	6 th
4	South East	14094	151237	9.31	1 st
5	South-South	20414	230375	8.86	2 nd
6	South West	20112	317961	6.34	3 rd
		73050	1064587		

Sources: *Ethics Resource Centre Nigeria (2005).*

Table 3: 2005 Exam Ethics Rating of State

What follows in this table is Exam Ethics rating of states for 2005. All the states in the federation were arranged serially according to how far they distant themselves from committing Examination Malpractice. This shows the rate at which they controlled and guided themselves in accordance with Examination Ethics during that period.

S/N	State	No. of Candidate involved	No. of candidates sat in the state	Exam ethic index	Exam ethics rating
18	Abia	4115	8429	99.50	18 th
19	Adamawa	4870	9729	99.09	19 th
20	Delta	828	2068	98.05	20 th
21	Enugu	129	1988	98.52	21 st
22	Imo	7602	23860	98.46	22 nd
23	Plateau	3468	29220	98.41	23 rd
24	Benue	2066	38889	97.92	24 th
25	Osun	2287	20650	97.39	25 th
26	Edo	478	14870	97.25	26 th
27	Cross River	1801	24800	96.46	27 th
28	Bayelsa	2592	24480	96.89	28 th
29	Sokoto	2605	33108	96.89	29 th
30	Niger	3254	19669	96.140	30 th
31	Qun State	6167	20641	96.1259	31 st
32	Bayelsa	1636	1822	96.07	32 nd
33	Kaduna	2808	38048	89.64	33 rd

34	Edo	5664	53312	89.38	34 th
35	Enugu	4787	35533	86.53	35 th
36	Cross River	5882	32484	83.43	36 th
37	Benue	7213	38230	81.13	37 th
	Total	73050	1064587	93.14	

Sources: Ethics Resource Centre Nigeria (2005)

Table 4: 2005 Exam Malpractice Rating of State

This table is almost similar with the above table three. It shows the position of each state in the federation as regard to the degree of their involvement in exam malpractice. The table shows that Benue state has the highest malpractice with Seven Thousand Two Hundred and Thirteen (7213), while Federal Capital Territory, Abuja has least number of involvement in Exam Malpractice with only thirty one (31) candidates, and was therefore rated the 37th position.

S/N	State	No. of Candidate involved	No. of candidates sat in the state	Exam ethic index 2005	Exam ethics rating
16	Lagos	709	13383	5.45	17 th
17	Taraba	7913	18059	18.357	18 th
18	Benue	5882	32484	16.997	19 th
19	Cross River	415	8473	4.90	20 th
20	Enugu	4987	41502	18.747	21 st
21	Edo	5664	53312	10.62	4 th
22	Kaduna	1908	38048	10.636	22 nd
23	Bayelsa	1636	18523	8.94	23 rd
24	Rivers	6167	20641	8.94	24 th
25	Niger	3254	18669	8.86	25 th
26	Sokoto	2705	12188	8.86	26 th
27	Delta	2952	24780	8.71	27 th
28	Kogi	1303	35820	3.66	28 th
29	Abia	1881	24767	7.59	11 th
30	Gombe	378	5686	6.65	12 th
31	Osun	2277	34338	6.63	13 th
32	Imo	2266	35089	6.46	14 th

S/N	State	No. of Candidate involved	No. of candidates sat in the state	Exam ethic index 2005	Exam ethics rating
29	Katsina	412	14879	3.64	29 th
30	Adamawa	538	20650	2.77	30 th
31	Zamfara	204	9818	2.61	31 st
32	Plateau	465	29270	2.08	32 nd
33	Nasarawa	360	23855	1.59	33 rd
34	Kebbi	118	9183	1.57	34 th
35	Kwara	228	22058	1.03	35 th
36	Jigawa	35	5759	0.01	36 th
37	FCT	31	7129	0.43	37 th
	Total	73050	1064587	6.86	

Source: *Ethics Resource Centre Nigeria (2005).*

Table 5: 2005 Exam Malpractice Ranking of State in North West Zone.

This table gives specific reference to the North Western Zone and their ranking accounting to the level of their exam malpractice in the year 2005. North West Zone comprises of seven states as shown in the table. It is discernable from the table that Kaduna was ranked first position in Exam Malpractice, with one thousand eight hundred and seven students (1807), while Jigawa takes the last position (Seventh position) and stands as the least committed state in exams malpractice.

S/N	State	No. of Candidate involved	No. of candidates sat in state	EMI	Ranking
1	Jigawa	35	5759	0.61	7 th
2	Kaduna	1807	38545	4.69	1 st
3	Kano	913	23631	3.86	2 nd
4	Katsina	412	14879	2.77	4 th
5	Kebbi	118	9183	1.28	6 th
6	Sokoto	460	12388	3.71	3 rd
7	Zamfara	204	9848	2.08	5 th
	Zonal total	3949	114200	3.46	

Source: Ethics Resource Centre Nigeria (2005).

Table 6: 4 Year Trend of Exam Malpractice Rating of States (2002-2005)

This table gives 4 year trend of exam malpractice cutting across all states of the federation from 2002-2005. The states are arranged in alphabetical order. It shows the exam malpractice rating scale for each state and in each year starting from 2002-2005.

S/N	State	2002		2003		2004		2005	
		Emi	Rating	Emi	Rating	Emi	Rating	Emi	Rating
1	Abia	14.71	8 th	42.88	2 nd	29.28	5 th	7.59	11 th
2	Abuja	1.72	32 nd	0.09	37 th	1.96	36 th	0.43	37 th
3	Adamawa	3.51	23 rd	0.82	36 th	10.14	24 th	2.61	30 th
4	Akwa Ibom	11.76	10 th	13.41	14 th	36.79	4 th	4.77	21 st
5	Anambra	3.39	25 th	1.72	35 th	6.93	32 nd	8.11	10 th
6	Bauchi	4.03	22 nd	8.19	20 th	9.06	26 th	4.90	20 th
7	Bayelsa	20.59	4 th	9.38	18 th	22.60	10 th	3.94	23 rd
8	Benue	14.49	9 th	19.65	7 th	18.34	13 th	18.87	1 st
9	Borno	0.64	35 th	21.24	5 th	13.34	9 th	18.93	6 th
10	Cross River	10.20	11 th	18.28	8 th	41.32	2 nd	16.57	2 nd
11	Delta	6.40	18 th	1.89	33 rd	18.18	15 th	3.66	27 th
12	Ebonyi	22.10	3 rd	16.26	10 th	18.37	13 th	10.36	5 th
13	Edo	3.50	24 th	13.84	13 th	26.13	6 th	10.62	4 th
14	Ekiti	5.70	19 th	7.95	21 st	11.14	21 st	5.35	17 th
15	Enugu	15.46	7 th	14.85	7 th	24.19	7 th	13.47	3 rd
16	Gombe	0.29	37 th	3.91	31 st	7.17	31 st	6.65	12 th
17	Imo	17.88	6 th	16.36	9 th	24.04	8 th	6.46	14 th
18	Jigawa	8.91	13 th	4.57	26 th	18.31	14 th	0.61	36 th
19	Kaduna	5.03	20 th	15.02	11 th	11.08	22 nd	4.69	22 nd
20	Kano	1.15	34 th	7.24	22 nd	10.02	25 th	3.86	24 th
21	Katsina	1.94	30 th	4.52	28 th	4.99	33 rd	2.77	29 th
22	Kebbi	4.05	21 st	10.99	17 th	51.29	1 st	1.28	34 th
23	Kogi	44.89	1 st	27.91	4 th	29.36	3 rd	3.64	28 th
24	Kwara	35.47	2 nd	20.95	6 th	17.01	16 th	1.03	35 th
25	Lagos	8.82	14 th	4.13	29 th	8.78	27 th	5.64	16 th
26	Nasarawa	1.74	31 st	8.79	19 th	11.78	20 th	1.57	33 rd
27	Niger	2.25	28 th	4.81	25 th	16.52	17 th	3.86	25 th
28	Ogun	8.15	16 th	11.76	16 th	10.02	23 rd	8.203	8 th
29	Ondo	8.50	15 th	5.17	24 th	23.42	9 th	8.20	9 th
30	Osun	9.87	12 th	4.56	27 th	8.61	28 th	6.63	13 th
31	Oyo	2.06	29 th	1.78	34 th	4.55	35 th	5.56	15 th
32	Plateau	2.37	27 th	2.25	32 nd	7.56	30 th	1.59	32 nd
33	Rivers	18.64	4 th	40.14	3 rd	21.59	11 th	8.75	7 th

34	Sokoto	6.46	17 th	4.06	30 th	14.23	18 th	3.71	26 th
35	Taraba	3.08	26 th	5.23	23 rd	8.02	29 th	5.45	17 th
36	Yobe	1.37	33 rd	11.76	16 th	1.69	37 th	4.99	19 th
37	Zamfara	0.46	36 th	4.78	1 st	4.87	34 th	2.08	31 st

Source: Ethics Resource Centre Nigeria (2005).

Forms of Examination Malpractice

For some decades, institutions of learning in Nigeria engage in various forms of examination malpractice. Eze (1991), in Abubakar (2001), identified and listed the following trends as various forms of examination malpractice.

- i. **Exposition of Examination Question:** For many times, some examination question papers are made available to candidates before examination. Teachers, friends, typist or printers becomes agents of examination malpractice. Examination question papers have become an articles of trade and it can even travel miles away to reach many candidates within a short time.
- ii. **Supervision/Invigilation Malpractice:** Some invigilators contrary to their assigned task, in order to get money, collide with candidates and go along helping the candidate to cheat. Similarly, some supervisors collide with candidates in changing their answer scripts after examinations. The candidates on the other hand submit the answers that are carefully written outside the examination halls by other person.
- iii. **Change of Grades/Scores:** A number of candidate's scores are often changed. Candidates could even procure a "printout" of result notification slip if he so wishes and can afford it. Also teachers and examination officers who are charged with computing results do change scores/grades depending on how much money a candidate can offer.
- iv. Copying answers on different parts of the body and clothes.
- v. Use of sheets and pieces of papers to jot down the main points.
- vi. Prepared predicted answers to expected questions for transferring into the scripts.
- vii. Code lecture points into micro-computer with a view to decoding/recalling them for use in the examination.
- viii. Helping students by smuggling papers with jotted points into the halls, or smuggling out question papers to mercenaries who in turn answer and pass the answers back to the candidates in the hall.
- ix. Having other brighter or more advanced students to write the examination for them.

- x. Use of hooligans, gaining entry into examination halls by force as examinations are in progress to remove papers, then escape from the hall and later on shout back answers to the candidates generally for them to copy.
- xi. Super Print: These are coded writings which form a distance, look like flowery designs. They are discovered on handkerchiefs, shirts, jacket, hiring shirts and inside shoes and stockings.

Causes of Examination Malpractice

Several studies have identified the following factors as causes of examination malpractice.

1. Inadequate number of untrained and dedicated teachers/lecturers.
2. Inadequate infrastructure in schools leading to overcrowded classrooms/lecture halls and examination hall.
3. Lack of instructional facilities such as text books, teaching aids, libraries, science laboratories and technology workshops.
4. Lack of confidence in the part of the teachers, lecturers and students.
5. Poor teaching in schools and non-completion of syllabus before examination.
6. Inadequate supervision of teachers by inspectors.
7. The pampering of weak students.
8. The desire to be successful at all cost.
9. Social or parent demands on students and schools.
10. High enrolment fees where it is applicable.
11. Immorality in the wider society.
12. Absence of guidance and counseling services in schools.

Remedy for Examination Malpractice

In order to curb examination malpractice and ensure strict examination ethics, the following should be observed:

1. **Student:** There is need to carryout orientation for new students at the beginning of each new session about the danger and implication of examination malpractices. The implications are as follows:
 - a. If caught, the culprit would be sentenced to 21 years imprisonment.

- b. The entire result can be cancelled. This implies rewriting it all over, and it is to the disadvantage of the innocent ones.
 - c. The student caught in examination malpractice will not be confident in himself, knowing that he earns such result through cheating.
 - d. Students should be taught how to use the libraries effectively and cultivate healthy and good study habit.
2. **Teachers:** Teachers should make sure that they cover the school syllabus before the examination. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action against such a teacher.
 3. **The Parents:** Parents should be made to realize the danger of forcing children to read subjects which is not of their interest, this may be too difficult for the child, as a result of it, it leads the student to engage in examination malpractice. The services of the school counselor is required to discourage parents from giving money to students for the procurement of live question papers, rather than taking positive steps to aid learning and encourage students to prepare for the examination squarely.
 4. **The Examiners:** School counsellors or principals where available should discourage the examiners from using live question papers to teach their students.
 5. **The Examination Boards:** School counselors or Head teachers should advice the examination boards to screen well the staff that handles examinations. The examination boards staff that swaps scripts long after the examinations have been concluded should be made to realize that they are not helping the candidates.
 6. **Counseling Unit:** Schools should establish counseling unit where students or pupils are guided on matters affecting their personal problems, social problems, educational problems and vocational problems. This unit will help to attend to students' general problems and proffer solutions to their problems.
 7. **The Society:** School counselors should make sure that they advice members of the society to fight against any trend that give bad image to the society, e.g. examination malpractice and any other related vices.

Conclusion

Examination Malpractice is still very much with us despite the various sanctions from both the West African Examination Council and Government. Therefore, for Nigerian educational system to regain its utmost confidence and play its role for national development, efforts have to be intensified to curb examination malpractices in our institutions of learning. Thus, this is a shared responsibility of the teachers/lecturers, parents, students, school administrators, examination bodies, judiciary, government and school counselors. This means that the whole of Nigerian Community should work hand

in hand in ensuring examination ethics. If this could be done, there would be improved performance and productivity of student's learning. On the other hand, qualitative education will be realized and national educational objective will be highly achieved. This will also give us more confidence in the certificates we issue to graduates.

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