

FEMALE STUDENTS PERCEIVED CAUSES OF AND SOLUTION TO EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE IN ASA LOCAL GOVERNMENT: IMPLICATION FOR COUNSELLING

ABDULRAZAQ OLAYINKA ONIYE Ph.D. and AMINULLAHI SALMAN ALAWAYE

Department of Counsellors' Education,
University of Ilorin,
Ilorin.

ABSTRACT

Examination malpractice is rated as one of the greatest problems that undermine the foundation of educational practice in Nigeria today. The magnitude of the problem and the dangers posed by the phenomenon have been identified by stakeholders as national malady that require drastic solution. Thus, this study attempted to investigate the view of female students about the causes of and solutions to examination malpractices. A total of five hundred female students were sampled from ten selected schools in Asa Local Government Area of Kwara State for the study. Data were collected with the use of researcher developed questionnaire. Two (2) research questions were raised and answered using frequency counts, simple percentage and means scores. Three (3) hypotheses raised for the study were tested at 0.05 alpha level. However, results indicated that societal preference for paper qualification; inadequate preparation for examination, lack of self confidence, ill equipped schools, lack of good study habits and host of others were considered by female students as the causes of examination malpractice. The identified solutions range from restoring discipline in every facet of our national life, strict and thorough invigilation, employment of function counsellors in schools etc. Based on these findings, it was recommended that the government should sensitizes all citizens to basic ethical values of self worth, dignity of labour, integrity and personal responsibility. Guidance counsellors should be employed and posted to secondary schools to help students in self understanding and self management as well as the development of effective study habits in relation to how they can utilize their assets and manage their abilities for optimal development.

Introduction

Teachers at different stages use examination to assess and evaluate the academic achievement of students in the school system. In all teaching and learning situations therefore, it is essential to find out from time to time how much the students are

achieving from what they are being taught. In order to do this effectively, teachers, examining bodies like the West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO), National Teachers Institute (NTI) etc and classroom teachers assess the students by administering weekly, termly, end of year test and or final examinations.

The Nigeria government perceived education as means of giving its citizens tools for effective functioning as individuals and social beings. Thus, education becomes a vital and crucial tool needed for the formation of minds from childhood to adulthood in a designed environment called school where learning and the acquisition of skills can take place for the total development of each individual, the society and the nation as a whole (Ogunkoya 1998). The overall aim of education is to shape the behaviour of an individual, so that he or she can perform most effectively within his social milieu.

Bearing in mind the role that education is suppose to play in nation building, a nation stands the risk of being underdeveloped in terms of accumulation of illiteracy, disease and poverty when its youths reject the honour of getting sound education and seems to opt for fraudulent activities and deceptive ways in making- ends meet as epitomized by examination malpractices thereby negating the philosophy of sound education. The products of such a system can only grow up to be cynics, unbelievers, insensible, dishonesty, ignorant, narrow-minded, myopic, unintelligent, deceptive, close-minded, one sided beings who would be indifferent to the issues of life and powerless to act, create and succeed (Ogunsanya, 2004).

Liman (1997), opined that malpractices have a paralyzing effect on the developing nation. Its process makes void in our youth, future leaders and professionals a situation that leads to a future of social, political and economic insanity and bankruptcy. According to him, engaging in examination malpractice lead to cancellation of results which means great waste of resources to society and parents, and provides sources of great agony and injustice to innocent students.

Examination malpractices has been in existence for a very long time. Famiwole (1995) reported that the first case of examination leakage and irregularities in public examination occurred in 1945. According to him, a Nigerian candidate has his examination cancelled because of the possession of a history note during 1948 Matriculation Examination. An earlier incident was the leakage of the Cambridge School Certificate Examination in 1914, since then, there have been several cases. However, the most widely reported cases occurred in 1963, 1967, 1970, 1973, 1974, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1987, 1991 and 1994 (Money, 1997).

The importance of examination or test taking for diagnostic placement, classification and quality control in Nigeria institution have been greatly eroded and corrupted with increasing incidence of examination malpractice. Examination malpractice constitute

one of the most debilitating problems facing our education institutions today and they are constantly manifested and reported in our schools, colleges and other higher institutions.

Examination malpractice is any activity of a student or group of students whose purpose is to give any of them higher grades than they would likely receive on the basis of their own achievement. Fatai (2005) defines it as any irregular act exhibited by candidates or anybody charged with the conduct of examination, which is clearly a breach of the rules governing the conduct and integrity of the examination. It is viewed as any act carried out before, during and after an examination, which is against the rules set out for the proper and orderly conduct of the examination. It has been further described as an action done to gain undue advantage over other candidates which is against the rule and regulations governing the conduct of such examination. Omotosho (1988) viewed it as dishonest use of position of trust for personal gain. Ojerinde (2000) revealed that cheating in examinations is motivated by:

- i. The desperation to acquire certificate or get placed in a programme or be selected for a position.
- ii. Carelessness on the part of the teacher/examiners in safe guarding the examination paper before it is administered.
- iii. Emphasis on grades
- iv. Poor seating arrangement
- v. Poor invigilation
- vi. Use of objective tests

Udogi and Ivowi (1995) identified inadequate preparation for the examination, peer influence, poor facilities in schools, societal influence, lack of self confidence due to laziness, poor academic performance as causes or factors that prompt examination malpractices. Fatai (2005) outlined the fear of failure, craze for certificate, desire of parents to have their children in choice university and profession, pressure on students to pursue courses for which they have no aptitude, pressure on teachers who want to gain favour of student, in ordinate ambition of some people to get rich quick, and over crowded sitting arrangement as causes of examination malpractices.

In view of the magnitude examination malpractice has assumed in our society, curbing it permanently in our schools can not be an easy task. Nwosu (1995) identified the following ways through which examination malpractice could be tackled:

1. Career department should be established in our schools to educate students on morality and career prospects available for them.
2. Schools, colleges and universities should mount tighter security over all examination matters.

3. Schools should give proper orientation to students about reading skills and the use of library.
4. The federal government decree on examination malpractice is the right step in the right direction to deal with any examination fraud which may involve individual(s), groups of people and schools. Government could help to ensure that such culprits are severely punished to serve as deterrent to others.
5. Educating the parents on the needs to monitor the movements of their sons, daughters and wards and check their performance at schools.
6. Students also should learn to be useful not only to themselves and their parents but also the society at large.
7. Final years or public examinations be focused on;
 - aptitude test
 - achievement tests,
 - with emphasis being placed on knowledge, capability, performance and skills at jobs, but not on examinations and certificates alone.

Statement of the problem

Examination malpractice has become a common feature in the contemporary Nigerian school system. There are examination leakages, irregularities and cheating during class tests, at the end of the term or semester or during final examinations.

Various attempts have been made to reduce the incidence of malpractice yet the problem still persists even at a more alarming rate. There is the need to evolve a permanent solution to this cankerworm. Therefore, the objective of this study is to find out the perceived causes of and solution to examination malpractice hence this study is set out to:

1. Find out what female students consider as the causes or factors contributing to students involvement in examination malpractices in Asa Local Government Secondary Schools.
2. Find out students suggested solutions to the problems since their colleagues are perpetrators of the problem.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives the following research questions are postulated:

- i. What are the causes and factors contributing to examination malpractices from the view point of female secondary school students in Asa local government secondary school
- ii. What are the likely solutions to combat examination malpractices in secondary schools from the view point of female students.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the perceived causes of examination malpractices among female students in Asa Local Government on the basis of religious affiliation.
2. There is no significant difference in the perceived causes of examination malpractice among female students in Asa Local Government on the basis of class level.
3. There is no significant difference in the perceived causes of examination malpractices among female students in Asa Local Government on the basis of location of school.

Methodology

This study employed the descriptive survey method. The sample consisted of 500 senior secondary school and junior secondary school students drawn from ten secondary schools in Asa local government area of Kwara state. The instrument was based on the causes of and solutions to examination malpractices. The questionnaire was validated by experts in the Department of Educational Guidance and Counselling, University of Ilorin, and it was pilot tested among some SS3 students in Ilorin West Local Government Area Secondary Schools. The test-retest method was employed in establishing reliability for instrument. The reliability co-efficient of 0.75 was found and this was considered appropriate for the study. For the administration of the instrument, the researchers visited each school in the company of trained research assistants. We discussed the purpose of the study with the principal of the schools and gave them copies of the questionnaire, while soliciting their support for the administration of the questionnaire. The administration was done in each school according to specified dates. In each school, students were seated comfortably and copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the female student. After completion, they were collected back immediately.

The responses of the female students were collated and analysed for results. Frequency counts and simple percentages were used to answer the research questions while the t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were statistic measure used to test the three null hypotheses.

Results

The results of the study are presented in the table below:

Table 1: Causes of examination malpractices as perceived by female students

S/No	Causes of examination malpractices include:	Frequency	Percentage
1	Societal preference for paper qualification	424	84.8
2	Inadequate preparation for examination or test	380	76
3	Lack of self confidence	376	75.2
4	Ill-equipped schools	364	72.8
5	Lack of good study habits	360	72.
6	High cost of examination fees	359	71.8
7	Low morality level of members of the society	353	70.6
8	Lack of appropriate punishment measures for perpetrators of examination malpractice	343	68.6
9	Increase in students enrolment	332	66.4
10	Poor teaching method and incompetence of some teachers	330	66
11	Inability of teachers to complete their syllabus	322	64.4
12	Desire to get rich quick without due qualification	320	64
13	Illegal deals by staff of examination bodies (WASC, NECO, JAMB etc)	303	60.6
14	Wish to conform to peer influence	276	55.2
15	Poor state of the nation's economy	273	54.6

Table 1 shows the frequency counts as well as the percentage of the participants on the causes of examination malpractices. The table shows that societal preference for paper qualification, inadequate preparation for examination and lack of self confidence have the highest frequencies based on the responses of those who agreed that these are the leading causes of examination malpractices. Other factors identified by female students include illegal deals perpetrated by some staff of examination bodies (WAEC, NECO, JAMB etc), wish to conform to peer influence, and the poor state of the nation's economy which take the least as the causes of examination malpractices.

Table 2: Female students perceived ways of combating examination malpractices.

S/No	Ways of combating exam malpractice include	Frequency	Percentage
1	Restoring discipline in every facet of our national life	403	80.6
2	Strict and thorough invigilation	381	76.2
3	Employing functional counsellor for each school	321	74.2
4	Expulsion of culprits from schools	363	72.6
5	Enforcing of penalty for cheating	309	61.8

6	The use of continuous assessment	305	61
7	Improvement on the sitting arrangement for examination that is, three on a bench or each student to a table and a chair	280	56
8	Students should be encouraged to purchase needed textbooks.	260	52
9	Employing devoted and dedicated teachers	202	40.4
10	Checking bribery and corruption among teachers and principals in schools.	201	40.2

In table 2, the analysis of what female students perceived as the ways of combating the problems of examination malpractices is shown. This table shows that restoring discipline, strict and thorough invigilation, employment of functional counsellors in schools have the highest frequencies based on the responses of these who believed that those are the major ways of combating the menace of examination malpractices. Other ways identified include purchasing of textbooks by students, employing devoted and dedicated teachers and checking bribery and corruption in schools which had the least frequencies on the ways of combating examination malpractices.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1:

There is no significant difference in the perceived causes of examination malpractice among female secondary school students in Asa Local Government Area on the basis of religious affiliation.

Table 3: ANOVA results comparing respondents' opinion about the causes of examination malpractice on the basis of religious affiliation

Sources of variance	df	Sum of squares	Means squares	Cal-F-ratio	Critical F-value
Between groups	2	157.242	78.6211	1.65	3.00
Within groups	497	23703.380	47.6929		
Total	499	23860.6320			

Table 3 shows that the critical t-value of 3.00 is greater than the calculated t-value of 1.65 at 0.05 alpha level. The hypothesis is therefore accepted. No significant difference exist in the views of female students on the causes of examination malpractice on the basis of religious affiliation.

Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant difference in the perceived causes of examination malpractice among female secondary school students in Asa Local Government Area on the basis of class level.

Table 4: Means, standard deviations and t-value of JSS and SSS class respondents on causes of examination malpractice

Class level	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	Cal-t-value	Critical t-value
JSS	215	42.474	7.247	498	.33	1.96
SS	285	42.267	6.665			

Table 4 shows that calculated t-value of .33 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level. The hypothesis is therefore accepted. There is no significant different between JSS and SSS class in the perceived causes of examination malpractice.

Hypothesis 3:

There is no significant different in the perceived causes of examination malpractice among female secondary school students in Asa Local Government Area on the basis of location of school.

Table 5: Means, standard deviations and t-value of rural and urban school respondents on causes of examination malpractices

Location of School	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	Cal-t-value	Critical t-value
Rural	417	42.142	7.177	498	-1.56	1.96
Urban	83	43.434	5.137			

Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference among female students of rural and urban school in their view about causes of examination malpractice. Based on this, the null hypothesis is therefore upheld. This is because the calculated t-value of 1.56 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level.

Discussion

The study revealed the causes and the various ways to combat the menace of examination malpractices as perceived by female students themselves. On the causes of examination malpractice the study shows that, societal preference for paper qualification, inadequate preparation for exams, lack of self confidence, ill-equipped

schools, lack of good study habits etc are those reasons advanced by female students for the incidence of examination malpractice. The aforementioned causes and others conforms with the ones listed by Ogerinde (2000), Onugbu (2003), Fatai (2005) and Ibinaye (2006). On the various ways to combat the menace of examination malpractices, female students felt that examination malpractice could be curbed through restoring discipline in all facet of national life, thorough invigilation of examinations, employing functional counsellors in each school, expulsion of culprits from schools, enforcing of penalty for cheating, the use of continuous assessment etc. It is expected that these antidotes as suggested by female students themselves will go a long way in helping to check examination malpractices in our schools. Three null hypotheses were tested using the t-test and Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) statistical methods at 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that the three null hypotheses were accepted; the female students do not differ in their perception of the reasons for students involvements in examination malpractices. Also, the female students held similar view on the ways to curb the menace since examination malpractice has become an issue known to everybody and to which everybody is looking for way forward. Hence, the female students appear to be similar in their perception. They all agreed the menace should be dealt with within our educational system.

Recommendations and Counselling Implications

Since the whole segments of the nation's life such as home, school, society are unfortunately connected to the issues of examination malpractice, the government should organize enlightenment campaigns that will highlight the consequences of examination malpractice on the individual, schools and the society. This should be mounted and sustained at all tiers of governance through the use of modern and traditional mass communication media. Also, the government should sensitize all citizens to basic ethical values of self worth, dignity of labour, integrity and personal responsibility. Society itself should lay good examples by de-emphasizing ostentations, unbridled and flagrant display of materialism which could very easily be associated with success acquired through reaching the pinnacle via certificate awarding examination (Abdulkareem, 2003). Only teachers who are qualified, certificated, competent and of good moral standing need to be employed to teach the students. They should be dedicated teachers who would serve as role models in matters of punctuality, self discipline, accountability, integrity and sound leadership styles (Fatai, 2005).

Likewise, examination bodes should appoint people of proven integrity to work in their administrative and operational sectors and as well as supervisors for their various examinations. Also, there should be an enabling environment for examination ethics where good teaching takes place. Further more well equipped functional libraries should be in place to promote good reading habit. Facilities, like laboratories, and amenities for basic needs should be available and continuous assessment procedure

should be given to students to ignite the zeal to study and develop self-confidence with less emphasis on certification (Onyechere, 1946). Guidance counsellors should be employed and posted to secondary schools, and other tertiary institutions to help students in self understanding and self management, in relation to how they can utilize their assets and manage their abilities, capabilities for optimal development (Abdulkareem, 2003).

Counselling Implications

Gibson and Mitchell (1999) defined guidance and counselling as a series of developmental processes embark upon to assist an individual to understand, accept and utilize his or her abilities and capabilities maximally, make informed decisions and solve his or her own problems himself or herself.

Based on this definitions, the following implications were drawn with emphasis on the maximum development of the individual emotionally, mentally, morally and spiritually.

Guidance services such as orientation, individual appraisal, information, placement, referral, following up and research, services should be made available to all secondary school students.

- Guidance services should also be rendered on a continuous basis this is because, as a person grows up, his needs, interest, goals, aspirations and plans may also change. It is also stated by the authors that guidance services are not based on intellectual development alone, rather it is based on the total development of mental, vocational, emotional and personal social aspects of an individual (Odediran, 2005).

Also, consultation services should be extended to principals, teachers, parents and the community to coordinate the activities of the students for remediation of educational deficiencies.

Olayinka (1996) stated that the school counsellors should embark on the following strategies which could be of benefit to the students, teachers, administrators, parents and the society at large. Such strategies include; orientation programme, keeping of records remedial programmes, series of talks on how to study effectively, how to use library etc.

Counsellors should be allowed to teach basic courses in psychology such as; principles of behaviours, principles of human relationship, principles of assertiveness, importance of learning, pursuit of purpose, peer group influence and the importance of the mind and brain in "choices and consequences".

The counsellor should organize pre-examination lectures/seminars for teachers and principals on the evils inherent in examination malpractices (Bunza, 1996).

Omoegun (2002) noted that counsellors can confront client on his weak-point and encourage him or her to change his/her attitudes or develop desirable

behaviour with the application of some behaviour modification techniques like assertive training, peer cluster involvement, accurate education and contingent contracting. Davidoff (1987) lamented that behaviour modification which is applicable in curbing the menace of examination malpractice involves the application of learning theories and other experimentally derived psychological techniques for systematic altering and improving mal-adaptive behaviour.

References

- Abdulkareem, A. Y. (2003): Examination Malpractice: The way out. A paper presented at the 36th founders day Anniversary of Ilorin Grammar School, Ilorin, Thursday February 6th, 2003.
- Aminullahi, S. A. (2006): Causes and pattern of Examination Malpractices among female secondary school students in Asa Local Government Area, Kwara State. An Unpubslihed M.Ed. project, Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.
- Bunza, M. M. (1996): The role of teachers in promoting examination ethics in I. Onyechere (ed), promoting examination ethics: Lagos: Potomac consulting group.
- Didu-Ojerinde, S. O. O. (2000): Different dimensions of cheating in University Examination. *Ife Journal of Educational studies*, 7(1): 17 - 29.
- Famiwole, R. O. (1995): Perspective of students involvement in examination. In O. A. Joseph (ed), issues on Examination Malpractice in Nigeria (pp 160-163); Ekiti, Petoa education publishers.
- Fatai, K. (2005): Causes, implications and solutions to Examination Malpractices in Ilorin East Local Government Secondary Schools. An Unpublished B.Ed. projects, Department of Arts and Social Science, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.
- Liman, M. T. (1996): Promoting Examination ethics. Nigeria: An Examination ethics publication.
- Olayinka, M. S. (1998): Guidance and counselling approaches to Examination Malpractice. In E. O. Obe (ed), school indiscipline and remedies. Lagos: Premier press and publishers.
- Omoegun, O. M. (2002): Curbing Examination Malpractices in Nigerian Schools through Counselling. Paper presented at the 26th annual National Conference of CASSON, held at University of Benin, 19th to 23rd August, 2002.

- Onyechere, T. (1997). Promoting Examination ethics. The challenges of a collective responsibility. Proceedings national conference organized by Federal Ministry of Education. Lagos: Potomac Consulting group.
- Udogie & Ivowi (1996): Examination Malpractice: Profile, causes, warning signs, case studies, prevention and detection strategies. In I. Onyechere (ed) Promoting Examination Ethics. Lagos: Potomac Publications.