

## CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MAIDUGURI METROPOLIS, BORNO STATE

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### ABSTRACT

*The study examined the causes of examination malpractice and its effects on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State. Three objectives were stated and three research questions were answered. The study used survey research design. The population of the study was the entire government secondary school students in Maiduguri Metropolis. Simple random sampling technique was used to select three (3) out of the seventeen (17) secondary schools as sample for the study. Simple random sampling technique was also used to obtain the sample of 50 SS II and SS III students from each of the three selected secondary schools. That is 50 students from each school, making a total of 150 students. The instrument used was a structured questionnaire, which was designed by the researchers. The questionnaire was personally administered by the researchers during regular lesson period and was collected on the spot after completion by the respondents. The data obtained was analyzed using frequency count and percentage scores. The findings of the study revealed that inadequate teaching, poor supervision, moral decadence and teachers' involvements are some of the causes of examination malpractice. The study also showed that a decline in the standard of education is one of the most serious consequences of examination malpractice. The study recommended that teachers should engage in proper classroom teaching, Government should employ qualified teachers and provide enough teaching facilities, school and examination bodies should take all necessary measures to ensure that examination malpractice is minimized among others.*

### Introduction

Academic performance has continually been on the decline in Nigeria over the years. The situation in institutions of learning at all levels has been deteriorating at such an alarming rate that many critics describe the standard of education as having fallen (Abdullahi, 1982). Over the years, teachers in institutions of learning at all levels

have noticed the negative trend and have also expressed dismay over the increasing rate of students' poor performance in academics. This negative trend rapidly gained ground as a result of the numerous problems confronting the Nigerian educational system (Edem, 1997).

One of the perennial and most devastating problems militating against the performance of students

today is examination malpractice, that is, the use of fraudulent means of achieving success in an examination. This phenomenon has been described by Denga & Denga (1988) as "one of the cardinal forms of educational malpractices". The authors further termed it "an ugly virus that is rapidly acquiring the status of a social, moral and educational epidemic in Nigeria". According to them examination malpractice has become so internalized and legitimized among students that some of them regard it as a normal process of passing an examination.

#### **Statement of the Problems**

The problem has been that examination malpractice now seems to be a big reproach and disgrace to the development of education in Nigeria. The unfortunate aspect of it now is the rampant cases of examination malpractice, particularly at the end of term examination in secondary schools. Students' grades and performance is enhanced leading to selection, placement and promotion of students who cannot cope with the instruction. At the end of it all, the students cannot defend their result/performance. This problem of examination malpractice has serious effects on the students in that a senior secondary school student cannot list living and non

living things. In fact, some cannot even copy notes given to them by their teachers correctly, simply because they cheated their ways to the next class. It is also a known fact that many candidates have had their results withheld or cancelled, others probated or demoted and even expelled from school due to one form of examination malpractice or the other. It is in line with the obvious problems of examination malpractice that the researchers designed a study to investigate the causes of examination malpractice and its effects on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

The study has the following objectives:

To find out the causes of examination malpractice among senior secondary school students in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State.

To identify the various ways through which students engage in examination malpractice in secondary schools in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State.

To examine the effects of examination malpractice on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State.

### Research Questions

What are the causes of examination malpractice among senior secondary school students in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State?

What are the various ways through which students engage in or commit examination malpractice in secondary schools in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State?

What are the effects of examination malpractice on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State?

### Causes of Examination Malpractice

Examination malpractice according to Kwami (2002) is cheating or giving undue advantage to somebody or another by deceit or fraud before, during or after examination. The current emphasis in the country on paper qualification as a criterion for the selection of candidates for higher education and for employment into competitive jobs has been identified as one of the main causes of examination malpractice (Edem, 1997, Essien, 1997, Eyobio, 1997, Denga & Denga, 1998). Such situation can compel some candidates preparing for examination to device certain extra activities that would fetch them better grades. By

so doing they will abandon healthy activities that would help them naturally to become more knowledgeable (Newstead, Franklyn, Stokes & Armstea, 1996). Emphasis on paper qualification therefore serves as pressure on the learner to attain academic success by all means.

Frequent occurrence of examination malpractice in our school system also stems from the tolerance of dishonesty in today's society (Lindgren, 1976). The situation is aggravated by the attitudes of permissiveness on the part of the school authorities and those involved in supervision or invigilation of examination. Cheating has been found to be situationally specific. Leming (1980) reported that subjects cheated more under low risk conditions than under high risk conditions. It has been alleged that some school principals and proprietors foster examination malpractice in order to maintain the prestige of their schools. Eyobio(1997) asserted that, some classroom teachers have also been accused of engaging in examination malpractice as a means of showing their professional excellence, but using students examination results to assess school or teacher performance seems to be grossly inappropriate and crude.

### **Types of Examination Malpractice**

According to Agidi (1997), over thirty three (33) forms of examination malpractices have been identified. These are categorized into nine (9) groups. These are externally and internally aided collusion, inspection, accreditation in hi-tech fraud, leakages, admission, impersonation, computer/hand set fraud and assault. Some secondary school students have device means to beat the target of examination malpractice. Some of the complex ways of carrying out these acts are giraffing, that is extension of one's neck to glance other person's work, soliciting, copying, missiles, bullets and flying kites (with respect to throwing papers with relevant information into the examination hall from the outside), forgery, leakage, contractor system, ecomog, impersonation, super print (writing on dress), micro computer facilities, swallowing of evidence etc. Successful use of devices can enhance performance of students that they cannot defend while unsuccessful use of these means can cause poor performance there by resulting in fallen standard of education. In either ways, examination malpractice has a negative effect on the students' performance.

### **Effects of Examination Malpractice**

The effects of examination malpractice are stressed in the following claims of Denga & Denga (1997). Examination malpractice is "capable of not only ruining our school system but also impairing the efficacy of our labour force". People who are mentally and morally defective are smuggled into public offices that they cannot competently. Examination cheats seem to regard certificate acquisition as an end itself, instead of manifestation of what has been attained. This is surely a misplacement of values. Generally speaking, examination malpractice seems to have declined the standard of education because students want to make results to proceed to another class. admission have been offered to students with fake results from secondary schools, consequently, such students find it difficult to cope with the course given to them. This led to further examination malpractice.

### **Methodology**

The design adopted for this study was the survey research design. It is considered appropriate for this study because the study involves collecting information from secondary school students.

### **Population and Sample**

This study was carried out in Borno State. The population of the study consists of the entire Government secondary school students of Maiduguri Metropolis. Simple random sampling technique was used to select three (3) out of seventeen (17) secondary schools for the study. These schools are Government Girls Secondary School Yerwa, Brigadier Maimalara Day Secondary School, and Government College Maiduguri. The sample of 50 SS II and SS III students from each of the three selected secondary schools were used for the study, making a total of 150 respondents. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample from each of the schools, so that each member of the respondents has an equal chance of being selected to respond to the instrument.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire which was developed by the researcher. This means that

respondents are made to chose from the alternative answers or options provided. Face validity was used to validate the instrument. The questionnaire consists of 25 items which were later reduced to 18 items after validation. A total of 150 copies of the questionnaire were personally administered to the students by the researcher, with permission from the school authorities concerned. The questionnaire was duly completed by the respondents and was collected on the spot. There was 100% return of the questionnaire. This means that the researchers recorded no loss. Frequency count and percentage scores were used to analyze the data obtained.

### **Results**

The results were presented in three Tables according to the research questions used in the study.

**Research Question One: What are the Causes of Examination Malpractice among Senior Secondary School Students in Maiduguri 'Metropolis,' Borno State?**

**Table I: Students Responses on the Causes of Examination Malpractice in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State**

Items No.	Statements	Yes	% scores	No	% scores	Total %
1	Emphasis on paper qualification as a criterion for getting admission into schools and employment caused examination malpractice	120	80	30	20	100
2	Moral decadence is responsible for examination malpractice	115	76.7	35	23.3	100
3	Examination malpractice is caused by inadequate teaching	102	68	48	32	100
4	Laziness on the part of the students causes examination malpractice	100	66.7	50	33.3	100
5	Examination malpractice is as a result of poor supervision or invigilation	98	65.3	52	34.7	100
6	Lack of guidance and counselling services at the secondary schools level cause examination malpractice	98	65.3	52	34.7	100
7	Examination malpractice is caused by pressure from parents to excel in academics	92	61.3	58	38.7	100
8	Admission of unqualified students lead to examination malpractice	84	56	66	44	100
<b>Total</b>			<b>67.4</b>		<b>32.6</b>	<b>100</b>

The analysis of data presented in Table one indicated that 120(80 %) of the respondents agreed that emphasis on paper qualification as a criterion for getting admission into schools and employment caused examination malpractice while 30 (20 %) disagreed. 115 (76.7 %) of the respondents agreed with the statement that said "Moral decadence is responsible for examination malpractice", while 35 (23.3) of the respondents disagreed. It was discovered that 102 (68 %) of Examination malpractice was caused

by inadequate teaching, while the statement was disagreed by 48 (32%) of the respondents. It was revealed that 100 (66.7%) of the respondents agreed that Laziness on the part of the students causes examination malpractice, while 50 (33.3 %) disagreed. 98 (65.3%) of the respondents agreed that Examination malpractice is as a result of poor supervision or invigilation, while 52 (34.7%) of the respondents disagreed. 98 (65.3%) of the respondents agreed that Lack of guidance and counselling services at

the secondary school level caused examination malpractice, while 52 (34.7%) disagreed. 92(61.3%) of the respondents agreed that Examination malpractice is caused by pressure from parents to excel in academics while 58(38.7%) of the respondents disagreed. It was also discovered that 84 (56% ) of the respondents agreed that admission of unqualified

students lead to examination malpractice, while 66 (44 %)of the respondents disagreed.

**Research Question Two: What are the Various Ways Through which Students Engage in or Commit Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State?**

**Table II: Responses on the Various Ways through Which Students Engage in Malpractice in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State**

Items No.	Statements	Yes	% scores	No	% scores	Total %
9	Students engage in examination malpractice through giraffe method	120	80	30	20	100
10	Some students write on the dress or costume they want to wear on the examination day	110	73.3	40	26.7	100
11	Some students have access to examination question papers (leakage or new moon) before the actual day or time of examination	95	63.3	55	36.7	100
12	Students engage in examination malpractice through the use of hand sets and micro computers	91	60.7	59	39.3	100
13	Students engaged in examination malpractice through impersonation	87	58	63	42	100
14	Students engaged in examination malpractice through exchange of booklet.	83	55.3	67	44.7	100
<b>Total</b>			<b>62.4</b>		<b>36.6</b>	<b>100</b>

Table two showed the various ways through which the students engage in examination malpractice. The results revealed that 120 (80%) of the respondents agreed that

students engage in examination malpractice through giraffe method while 30 (20%) of the respondents disagreed. 110 (73.3%) of the respondents agreed that some students

write on the dress or costume they want to wear on the examination day, while 40 (26.7%) of the respondents disagreed. 95 (63.3%) of the respondents agreed that Some students have access to examination question papers (leakage or new moon) before the actual day or time of examination, while 55(36.7%) said no to the statement. It was also revealed that 91 (60.7 %) of the respondents agreed that students engage in examination malpractice through the use of hand sets and micro computers, while 59 (39.3%) disagreed with the statement. 87 (58%) of the respondents agreed while

63 (42%) disagreed that students engaged in examination malpractice through impersonation. It was also indicated that 83 (55.3%) of the respondents agreed that Students engaged in examination malpractice through exchange of booklet, while 67 (44.7)of the respondents disagreed.

**Research Question Three: What are the Effects of Examination Malpractice on the Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State?**

**Table III: Students Responses on the Effects of Examination Malpractice on the Academic performance of Secondary School Students in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State**

Items No.	Statements	Yes	% scores	No	% scores	Total %
15	Examination malpractice has decreased the standard of education	143	95.3	07	4.7	100
16	Examination malpractice enhances grades/performances that students cannot defend	126	84	24	16	100
17	Examination malpractice affects future performance of students	106	70.7	44	29.3	100
18	Examination malpractice reduces one's personality	81	54	69	46	100
<b>Total</b>		<b>76</b>		<b>24</b>		<b>100</b>

Table three indicated the effects of examination malpractice on the academic performance of senior secondary school students. 143 (95.3%) of the respondents agreed that examination malpractice has

decreased the standard of education, while 07 (4.7%) of the respondents disagreed. it was revealed that 126 (84%) of the respondents agreed, while 24 (16%) disagreed with the statement which said "examination

malpractice enhances grades/performance that students cannot defend “. 106 (70.7%) of the respondents agreed that examination malpractice affects future performance of students while 44 (29.3%) disagreed. It was also discovered that 81 (54%) of the respondents agreed while 69 (46 %) disagreed that examination malpractice reduces one’s personality.

### **Discussion**

This study was aimed at finding out the causes of examination malpractice and its effects on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State. The result in Table one revealed the causes of examination malpractice. According to the findings, emphasis on paper qualification as a criterion for getting admission into schools and employment, moral decadence, inadequate teaching, laziness, lack of guidance and counselling, poor supervision, pressure from parents to excel in academics and admission of unqualified students are the causes of poor performance in secondary school. These findings are in agreement with Edem’s (1997) & Denga & Denga’s (1998) findings which revealed that the current emphasis in the country on paper qualification as a criterion for

selection of candidates for higher education and employment into competitive jobs causes examination malpractice.

The data analyzed in Table two showed that majority of the respondents agreed that students use various ways of examination malpractice ranging from “giraffe method”, writing on the dress, leakage(new moon), use of handset and computers, impersonation and exchange of booklet. These findings confirmed Agidi’s(1997) study which found that collusion, hi-tech fraud, leakage, impersonation and computer/ hand set fraud are some of the ways through which students engaged in examination malpractice.

The data analyzed in table three also indicated that, majority of the respondents agreed that examination malpractice have some negative effects on the academic performance of senior secondary school students, which include decreased in the standard of education, obtaining grades that they cannot be able to defend, and effects on future performance. These findings are also in support of Denga & Denga’s findings which revealed that examination malpractice have declined the standard of education and impaired the efficacy of our labour force.

### **Conclusion**

Examination malpractice can be described as a virus that has been eating up the fabrics of the Nigerian educational system. Examination malpractice exerts a strong negative influence on the performance of students in our educational institutions in the country and is of no lasting profit to the students or the Nation. Many factors have been found as being responsible for the rampant occurrence of examination malpractice in the Nigerian education systems. The society, government, examining bodies, principals, teachers, parents and students have all been known to share in the blame for the existence of the ugly phenomenon.

Remedial measures have been recommended which if followed may drastically reduce the incidence of examination malpractice. This paper will be concluded with observation that, lack of serious strategies for punishing students who involve in examination malpractice have open wide doors for cheating and teachers' participation in examination malpractice gave students more encouragement to involve in examination malpractice.

### **Recommendations**

1. Employers of labour should emphasize job excellence and not paper qualification.
2. Government should endeavour to employ qualified teachers who will initiate students to prepare for examination.
3. Government should provide enough teaching aids and reading materials for students.
4. Educational administrators should not use the rate of passes or failure to assess performance of schools/teachers.
5. Parents should desist from pressurizing their children to excel in academics by all means.
6. Teachers should engage in proper classroom teaching. They should also desist from promising students assistance on examination.
7. Principals and examination bodies should ensure that persons with sound moral character handle examination papers and the conduct of examination. The teachers and examination officials should engage in proper invigilation/supervision during examination.

8. There should be a change in the general attitude of the society towards examination malpractice. Emphasis should be on performance and not merely on passing examination.

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