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EDITORIAL STATEMENT

Examination malpractice has assumed the dimension of a canker worm which is dealing death blow on all efforts to maintain standard and sustain the confidence in certificates awarded at all levels of the Nigerian educational system. It has worked at cross purpose to all the objectives of the nation's education and has the potential of reducing development moves in education to nothing. This is why the National Association of Educational Researchers and Evaluators dedicated its 2004 conference to addressing this serious matter.

At the conference, researchers and evaluators across the country's tertiary education gathered with stakeholders in public examining to analyze, isolate predisposing factors, examine the dimensions and implications and proffer solutions to examine malpractice. The contributions of family and other social groups, school and governmental agencies as well as religious, private and non-governmental agencies to the problem and their roles in solving it were also discussed. Social, economic, political and legal perspectives to this educational problem were critically examined. It was commonly recognized that except the various recommendations made by the contributions published in this edition of our journal are deliberately adopted, examination malpractice may remain with us for some time to come.

This is however not a publication of the proceedings at that conference. Rather, selected papers presented at the conference considered acceptable for publication by the criteria of this Journal were subjected to peer review. A few other articles related to the theme but not presented at the conference were published. We therefore commend this publication as a reference material to researchers interested in examination malpractice in Nigeria and similar environments world wide. It will also serve as good information source for educational evaluators who are interested in public examining.

INFORMATION TO CONTRIBUTORS

- i. Each article should not exceed 12 (double-space) typewritten quarto-size pages, accompanied by an abstract of not more than 200 words.
- ii. References or citations in the article should follow the recent APA format.
- iii. Two copies of manuscripts should be submitted.
- iv. Manuscripts which have been submitted for publication elsewhere or which have previously been published are not welcome.
- v. After authors have carried out the corrections suggested by the Editor, they should submit one final clean copy plus a diskette copy (3^{1/2} floppy MS Word Processed).
- vi. Subscribers are to pay assessment fee and a publication fee upon the acceptance of their manuscripts as determined by the Editorial Board.
- vii. Authors are assured of prompt editorial decisions on manuscripts.
- viii. The journal is published once a year, mostly from papers presented at the annual national conference of NAERE.
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TOWARDS A CRISIS FREE EXAMINATION MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIAN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

Examination malpractice is one of the numerous cankerworms threatening the very foundation of our education superstructure. As a result of over dependence on paper qualification, examinations in Nigeria are be-deviled with a number of problems. This paper examines the examination process in colleges of education. It highlights the procedure involved, identifies various examination malpractices and gives suggestions on effective management of examinations. Suggestions are also made on how to curb examination malpractices through certificates screening, use of disciplinary procedures, use of class tests and assignments to expose the students to more questions and helping them be able to withstand examination rigour.

Introduction

Some argue that examination is not a true test of one's ability. Until an alternative method is devised however, examinations will continue to be used. As a result of its widespread use as the means of testing students' academic ability, examination has been exposed to all sorts of abuses (Ayoola, 1997). Examinations and tests serve the means of delineating, obtaining and providing useful information for judging and making decisions among alternatives. Johnson (1978) noted that examinations to provide information about students progress, serve as innovation for students in their academic pursuit, provide feedback as regards the effectiveness of the teachers' methods of instruction, diagnose and predict future performances, license candidates for occupations or profession. Fagbongbe and Talabi (1985), see evaluation and examination as related to the school system. The act of examining a learning experience so as to determine the extent of progress or success that has been achieved by the learner is common in schools. Due to over dependence on paper qualification in Nigeria, the entire country is bedeviled with a lot of problems. Examinations in Nigeria today are used as a tool for generating income by fraudulent means. Many involved in examination malpractice include those given the responsibility of conducting external and internal examinations such as staff of examination bodies, staff of all ranks within the educational set up and even parents who want their wards to pass at all costs and earn a certificate (Oguniyi 1994). Bello (1981) observed that as long as high premium is placed on paper qualification, examinations in such a system will have man made problems.

People go as far as forming syndicates to perpetuate the illegal sale of life questions while some examination centers are notoriously designated to accommodate examination malpractice (WAEC, 1998). Like all other societal problems, examination malpractice is assuming a great magnitude and all efforts should be directed towards curbing the menace so as to have a crisis free examination management. The dimensions of cheating in most examination halls across the nooks and crannies of Nigeria are quite sophisticated. It has assumed a proportion that calls have been made for a re-orientation of all the stake holders in academic institutions.

Another dimension to examination malpractices is that some lecturers, administrative staff, parents and friends do collect matriculation numbers of students and their names with the intent of meeting with the examiners after the examination. The purpose of this is that the examiner would be wooed to pass the students in question. It is becoming common in tertiary institutions for some lecturers who go as far as collecting money from students to pay examiners (Issa, 2003). The situation is anti-thesis to what a true academic environment ought to be: a free place for generating ideas, a research and scientific environment should be freedom to generate ideas, embark on research and provide opportunities to view and review, harness, multiply, imbibe and inculcate new ways of doing things into the students. A nation where knowledge is treated with a kid's glove is near collapse.

Improving Examination Administration Procedures

Success or failure of the conduct of any examination rests solely on the invigilators and how efficient or otherwise they are. They should arrange the hall in such a way as to ensure the smooth conduct of examinations. In cases where students' numbers are pasted on the desks, they should be denied access to the hall outside examination periods to prevent them from writing answers or points on desks and tables before the commencement of any examination. Students in whatever sitting arrangement should be spaced in a way to limit cheating through spying.

Ibraheem and Kolo (1996) maintained that for proper conduct of examinations, there should be adequate arrangement and planning as regards:

- i. Environmental conditions such as sitting, lighting and ventilation
- ii. Appropriate invigilation to minimize cheating
- iii. Clear Instructions with reference to time allotted and number of questions required to be attempted.
- iv. Provision of examination materials.

It is the responsibility of invigilators to check students and materials to ensure that no incriminating material is brought into the exam hall. The good tone of the examination hall can be maintained by invigilators avoiding acts that may indirectly aid or lead students to cheating. According to Oggunniyi (1994), acts capable of jeopardising effective invigilation include:

- i. Non-challant attitude to invigilation by using unauthorised substitutes.
- ii. Colluding with students to cheat.
- iii. Leaving students and discussing with friends reading newspaper or marking scripts.

iv. Leaving the classroom completely to attend to some other businesses.

v. Lateness to or to absence from examination hall.

All officers should count themselves as suspects in any examination misconduct that occurs during any examination and as such only people with good character should be appointed to handle examinations (Ayoola, 1997). At question preparation stage, some examination papers directly or indirectly may be leaked due to carelessness while some may be intentional. At the examination papers production stage more often than not, Typists are implicated in either directly selling questions to students or showing a portion to relatives. Office hands like clerks who reproduce papers often sell the questions while some bold ones smuggle life questions without the supervisor knowing (Ogunniyi 1994).

According to Olanipekun (2003), any person who before, during or in anticipation of any examination or test commits any of the following is said to have committed examination offence/misconduct:

- a. Any student who communicates to other students in whatever form.
- b. Students found with extraneous materials in the examination hall, either relevant or not.
- c. Failure to obey lawful instruction from authorized persons.
- d. Loitering around the examination hall.
- e. Destruction of documents or resisting apprehension by invigilators.
- f. Multilation of answer scripts.
- g. Exchange of question papers.
- h. Examination leakages.
- i. Use of calculator cover for jottings.
- j. Impersonation.
- k. Presentation of fake identification documents.

The quality of any educational institution is a reflection of the quality of its leadership. Stakeholders, including students, teachers, lecturers, parents/society, school authorities, government and key operators who occupy exalted positions in the nation's education industry are partners in progress. On the part of the students, the following are expected from them:

- a. To cooperate with the school management on the issue of certificate screening
- b. To call the attention of the management to people who are not bonafide students.
- c. To abide by the laid down regulations guiding the conduct of examinations.

While the teachers/lecturers' roles will include:

- a. Giving adequate tests/assignments
- b. Taking their lectures seriously and attending classes regularly.
- c. Preparing their lesson/lecture notes very well and following the time schedules strictly (Olanipekun, 2003).

Conclusion

Examination is the life wire of any academic institution. Both the tone and image of educational institutions are determined by the standard of their examination system. It is not normal to lower the standard and quality of certificates through carelessness. It is even a yardstick for measuring the genuineness of the certificates of any educational institution that is worthy of its calling. Every hand should be on deck to improve the examination system.

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