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UPPER BASIC STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE IN ILORIN EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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Abstract

Examination is a potent instrument for assessing the knowledge acquired by humans especially in educational institutions. Examination malpractice is being misconstrued as a way to academic excellence. Examination malpractice in Nigeria has become one of the greatest social challenges that have eaten deep into all levels of the educational system. However, this study examined upper basic students' perception of the causes and consequences of examination malpractice in Ilorin East local government. The sample for this study comprised 100 upper basic three students selected from five basic schools. Two research questions and two research hypotheses were generated and raised in this study. Research questions one and two were answered with the use of mean and percentage while research hypotheses one and two were tested with the use of t-test at 0.05 level of significance. One of the findings of the study revealed that there is no significant difference in the perception of students of the causes of examination malpractice based on gender. It was also found that there is no significant difference in the perception of students on the consequences of examination malpractice based on gender. Based on the findings, it was recommended that; Teachers should encourage students to be more proactive and efficient in all aspect of their life, by setting aside a particular time to study everyday so that their body gets used to that.

Keywords: *Causes, Consequences, Examination Malpractice, Ilorin East*

Introduction

Examination is a potent instrument for judgment of knowledge or competence in every human endeavor especially in educational institutions. Use of examination in Nigerian formal schools dates back to the advent of formal education in the country in the 1800s and it was patterned after the British system. Formal education therefore is a very important tool in the life of a man. It helps in a man's search for better life, better values, expansion as well as a guide to intellectual development and a means of acquiring skills necessary for living and fulfillment of societal needs (Olubodun, 2005). Formal education is usually acquired through an organized study or instruction in a school or college environment. School is the most formal agency through which necessary skills, knowledge and values could be cultivated. For education to be seen to have taken place Abdullahi (2005) states that the recipients are expected to have attained a certain standard through the evaluation process. One way of doing this according to Nwadiani, (2005) is through the conduct of examination. The goals of national education system and indeed

national development therefore becomes elusive if examination ethic is not encouraged. Adeyemi (2010) considers examination as providing room for assessment of the curriculum content, the teacher, the method of teaching /learning environment and the capability of the learner. Notwithstanding the importance of examination in the educational system, the instances of student engagement in different forms of malpractices during examination have been on the increase.

Today in Nigeria, examination malpractice has become a household word and virtually everybody at every level of education seems to be involved in it knowingly or unknowingly. Examination malpractices is an action or inaction by students, teachers, school heads, examination invigilators and supervisors and officials of examination bodies that leads to a student having an unmerited result which nurtures cheats and mediocre and turn them into celebrities. Abdullahi (2005) also defines examination malpractices as covert actions employed by an individual in order to pass examination fraudulently.

Causes of Examination Malpractice

The perpetrators and collaborators of examination malpractice consider the whirl wind as wisdom in a society that glorifies certificate without skills, and employment without productivity. The sole reliance upon examination results in Nigeria makes students to see examination certificates as the only way out of their misery. They therefore resort to various corrupt practices to achieve success in examination. Examination malpractice therefore seems to have become a norm rather than abnormality. Onyechere (2004) and Awanbor (2005) also stated that other causes of examination malpractice are laziness, lack of preparation or inadequate preparation for examination. Also, other identified causes of examination practice are lack of self-confidence, poor school facilities (lack or inadequate examination hall), poor sitting arrangement, socio-economic factors, political-undertone, privatization and commercialization of education, poor invigilation and weak parental functions (Oko & Adie, 2016). Studies by Abdullahi (2005), Gbagolo (2011) and Olowu (2005) identified some reasons why secondary school students get involved in examination malpractice. These reasons were classified under social, moral, psychological and environmental factors. The psychological causes include desperate need to achieve, fear of failure, desire to meet societal expectations, fear and anxiety from parents to succeed even without the endowed ability. The social factors include the emphasis placed on certificates for the purpose of admission and employment, changing societal values, lack of proper teaching of students before examination, seemingly corrupt nature of the Nigerian society, poor attitude of students towards their studies, inability to cope with school work, poor admission and promotion policy by schools, non-completion of syllabus before examination and peer group influence. Environmental factors include population explosion in schools which results in over-crowding in the schools, lack of facilities such as classroom, workshops, equipment and instructional materials, laboratory suitable furniture and textbooks. The fact that students rely on malpractice to pass examination may result in non-attendance at classes.

Forms of Examination Malpractice

Abdullahi (2005), Chukwu (2008) and Jekayinfa (2005) highlighted several means by which students engage in examination malpractice to include:

- Copying answers from another student's paper.
- Stretching out one's neck to see another student's answer (Giraffing Method).
- Entering into examination hall with cribs (micro-chips).
- Sitting arrangement in which the brilliant student is seating in the center flanked by other members of the group.
- Influencing marks or grades with the assistance of a friendly teacher.
- Having access to life questions before examination.
- Jotting points on mathematical set, rulers, laps, wrappers etc.
- Pretending to be sick during examination to secure examiner's sympathy while marking.
- Employing the services of another student or teacher to write examination.
- Writing on top desks or on chairs.
- Some rural schools designated as 'Miracle Centers' where atrocities on examinations are carried out on a full scale.

Hooligans normally force themselves into the halls during examinations, remove question papers and later return answered question to their candidates to copy. Teachers in Nigeria perpetrate examination malpractice through the following ways:

- Acting as accomplices to students who cheat while invigilating examination.
- Having amorous relationship with female students so as to render 'assistance' during examinations or while marking the papers.
- Dictating answers to students during examination.
- Supervisors sometimes look the other way thereby giving the students free hand to carry out their cheating plans.

Gesinde (2006) observed that examination malpractice is not the exclusive reserve of students because successful execution of the malpractice would have been made impracticable if not for collaborative efforts of other individuals or group of individuals in the society. Parents, teachers, school administrators, examination bodies and security agents are collaborators of examination malpractice.

Consequences of Examination Malpractice

Examination malpractice has a lot of consequences on the individual concerned, the parents and the society or nation at large. Alarape & Onokoya (2003) stated that examination malpractice has led to the fall in standard of education. The brilliant ones are no longer motivated to study hard as the less brilliant ones are seen to be having good grades through cheating. Examination malpractice according to Oko & Adie (2016) is being seen as or way of academic excellence. However, candidates produced in this manner will grow into adults and teachers or examination officials who will not see anything wrong with such sophisticated and high class examination fraud thus defeating the goals of education by turning out certificated illiterates. Studies by Onyechere (2004), Adewale (2014) and Uzochukwu (2015) identified

examination malpractice as the leading reason why good students lose confidence in themselves and in the examination and the system at large. Also, examination malpractice according to their studies may lure some students into other areas of misconduct such as prostitutions and or armed robbery, all in the bid to make money to pay for scores. Products of examination malpractice lack the required knowledge and experience to carry out their assignment and professional duties effectively. Uzochukwu (2015) asserted that examination malpractice also denies innocent and good students the opportunity of admission and employment because the corrupt ones have better scores and grades.

Examination malpractice in Nigeria has become one of the greatest social menaces that have eaten deep into all levels of the educational system. The rate at which this academic dishonesty is growing is very alarming. In spite of all the measures government, examination bodies and other concerned citizens have made to forestall the incidences of examination malpractices, the objectives for employing examination as a means of assessing, classifying, diagnosing and projecting human capabilities and potentials are being progressively eroded by this ugly act.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine upper basic students' perception on the causes and consequences of examination malpractice.

Research Questions

1. What is the perception of upper basic students on the causes of examination malpractice?
2. What is the perception of upper basic students on the consequences of examination malpractice?

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the perception of upper basic students on the causes of examination malpractice based on gender.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the perception of upper basic students on the consequences of examination malpractice based on gender.

Method

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The population for the study comprised all upper basic school students in Ilorin East Local Government Area, while the target population consisted of all upper basic three (JSS 3) students from the selected schools. The sample for the study was 100 JSS 3 students drawn from 5 schools. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 20 students each from the five selected schools in Ilorin East Local Government Area. The questionnaire titled "Students' Perception on the Causes and Consequences of Examination Malpractice" (SPCCCEM) was used to collect data. The instrument was developed by the researchers and has three sections: Section A elicited students' demographic information while sections B and C have 10 items with 4 point-likert type scale of Strongly Agree (SA-4points), Agree (A-3points), Disagree (D-2points) and Strongly Disagree (SD-1point) on students' perception on the causes and consequences of examination malpractice. A reliability test was performed on the instrument after it was validated by experts in the Department of Social Sciences Education. The reliability coefficient of 0.77 was obtained. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential

statistics. Research questions one and two were answered using mean and percentage while research hypotheses one and two were tested using t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: *What is the perception of students on the causes of examination malpractice?*

Table 1: Mean Response on the Perception of Students on the Causes of Examination Malpractice

S/N	Items	Mean	Rank
1.	Students' laziness leads to examination malpractice	3.13	1 st
2.	Fear of failure causes examination malpractice	2.67	4 th
3.	The desire to satisfy high standards causes examination malpractice	2.52	5 th
4.	Some students feel they should cheat since everyone is cheating	3.03	2 nd
5.	Rich parents pay teachers to assist their children during exam	2.95	3 rd

Table 1 shows the mean of the response on the perception of students on the causes of examination malpractice. It can be seen that the mean of all the items are higher than 2.5 which shows that the respondents agreed with the items as the causes of examination malpractice. However, respondents' perception of 'students' laziness' was the most rated and was ranked first with a mean of 3.13 and the perception of 'involving in examination malpractice as a result of the need to satisfy high standards' was the least rated and was ranked fifth with a mean of 2.52.

Research Question Two: *What is the perception of students on the consequences of examination malpractice?*

Table 2: Mean Response on the Perception of Students on the Consequences of Examination Malpractice

S/N	Items	Mean	Rank
1.	Examination malpractice leads to underachievement in the labour market	2.83	3 rd
2.	Examination malpractice reduces the credibility of certificates	3.24	2 nd
3.	Examination malpractice leads to molestation and harassment of students by teachers	3.52	1 st
4.	Examination malpractice deprives good candidates of opportunities	2.63	4 th
5.	Examination malpractice leads to wastage of resources	2.55	5 th

Table 2 shows the mean of the response on the perception of students on the consequences of examination malpractice. It can be seen that the mean of all the items are higher than 2.5 which shows that the respondents agreed with the items as the consequences of examination malpractice. However, respondents' perception of 'examination malpractice leads to molestation and harassment of students by teachers' was the most rated and was ranked first with a mean of 3.52 and the perception of 'examination malpractice leads to wastage of resources' was the least rated and was ranked fifth with a mean of 2.55.

Hypotheses Testing

Research Hypothesis One: *There is no significant difference in the perception of students on the causes of examination malpractice based on gender*

Table 3: t-test Analysis on the Difference in the Perception of Students on the Causes of Examination Malpractice Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	Df	Sig (2 tailed)	Decision
Male	53	15.2	1.37	.558	98	.580	Do not Reject
Female	47	14.8	1.12				

$P > 0.05$

Result from Table 3 shows the t value yielded .558 which is not significant with P value .580 > 0.05. This shows a non-significant result. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in the perception of students on the causes of examination malpractice based on gender.

Research Hypothesis Two: *There is no significant difference in the perception of students on the consequences of examination malpractice based on gender*

Table 4: t-test Analysis on the Difference in the Perception of Students on the Consequences of Examination Malpractice Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	Df	Sig (2 tailed)	Decision
Male	53	15.2	1.37	.483	98	.631	Do not Reject
Female	47	14.8	1.12				

$P > 0.05$

Result from Table 4 shows the t value yielded .483 which is not significant with P value .631 > 0.05. This shows a non-significant result. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in the perception of students on the consequences of examination malpractice based on gender.

Discussion

The first finding of this study revealed that, the major cause of examination malpractice is due to students' laziness. This finding supports the finding of Akewusola, (2015) which state that students' perceived causes of examination malpractice include laziness and inadequate preparation. The similarities in the two findings confirm the saying, "he who fails to prepare, prepares to fail". Since many who failed in preparation are bent on passing at all cost, cheating becomes their only option.

One of the findings revealed that, the perception of students on the consequences of examination malpractice is molestation and harassment of students by teachers. This finding corroborates the finding of Omemu (2015) who found that students can be molested when caught cheating during examination. However, the two findings are not in line with the finding of Tambawal (2013) that students produced in this manner will grow into adults and teachers or examinations officials who will not see anything wrong with high class of examination fraud

thus defeating the goals of education by turning out certificated illiterates. The third finding revealed that, there was no significant difference in the perception of students on the causes of examination malpractice based on gender. The fourth finding revealed that, there was no significant difference in the perception of students on the consequences of examination malpractice based on gender.

Conclusion

This study examined causes and consequences of examination malpractice among upper basic students. Based on the above discussion, it was concluded that the sampled students perception on causes of examination malpractices among students is majorly laziness from their part while the consequences of examination leads to molestation by the teachers or invigilators.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Teachers should encourage students to be more proactive and efficient in all aspect of their life, by setting aside a particular time to study everyday. That way they may get used to studying.
2. There should be frequent unannounced visits by examination officials to centers as this may prompt students to prepare ahead of examination and so avoid been molested by their teachers.
3. Since there was no difference in male and female perception on examination malpractice, there should be increased efforts by schools and examination boards in enhancing the supervision of students during examinations.

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