



Strategies to restrain examination malpractices: A case study of the public secondary schools in Akure south local government area of Ondo state, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the strategies to restrain examination malpractices in Nigerian public secondary schools in Akure-South Local Government area of Ondo State. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population for the study include all the students in Ondo State Universities, secondary school teachers of Ondo State, staff of examination bodies and ministry of education officials in Ondo State. Two hundred (200) respondents were randomly selected to participate in the study and they were stratified according to their various groups. Data were collected through a self-developed questionnaire on the subject matter. Finding revealed that when parents play their parts in guiding their children in terms of choosing a career of their choice, inculcating good moral values in them, encouraging them to work harder and providing necessary textbooks needed for learning, when examination officials' salaries and other remunerations are paid regularly, all this would restrain examination mal-practices in Ondo State. The following recommendations were made from the findings; parents and guardians should be encouraged to guide their wards in choosing a career of their choice, provide necessary textbooks, and giving their wards moral upbringing, encouraging them to work harder and government on its own should review and pay teachers salary on time.

Keywords: Innovative, strategies, restrain, examination malpractices, dubbing, swapping, giraffing

Introduction

At every level of life advancement, there requires the need to be checked or questioned on the processes before the attainment of such advancement. The school is not left out as it even serves as the basis of all advancement. Examination is the major key to examine the ability of the students in which the outcome would be used to determine the strength of the students. Examination therefore is seen as one of the most objective techniques used in the measurement of learning outcomes at all levels of education in Nigeria and the entire part of the world.

Adesina (2008) ^[1], sees examination as an assessment tool intended to measure knowledge, skill, attitude, physical fitness or classification in topics taught. Examination may be administered orally, on paper, on computer or in a confined area that requires an examinee to physically perform a set of skills. However, despite the importance of examination in teaching and learning situations, there are number of factors that affects the credibility of examination scores. One of such practices that may affect the reliability of examination scores is examination malpractice (Olaseni and Olaseni 2020) ^[5].

Examination malpractice according to Wilayat (2009) ^[8], is any illegal act committed by a student single handedly or in collaboration with others; like fellow students, parents, teachers, supervisors, invigilators, printers and anybody or group of people before, during or after examination in order to obtain undeserved marks or grades. Some forms of examination malpractices are copying on sheet of papers, handkerchiefs, desk/chairs; swapping of answer booklets and collusion with other candidates or external agents. Others include leakage of examination questions before the actual examination day. In some schools, especially, those privately owned schools, the school authorities sometimes

bribe invigilators, supervisors and police personnel posted to the centers so that they could turn a blind eye when malpractices are being perpetrated (Olaseni & Olomosaye 2018) ^[5]. Electronic gadgets like calculators, organizers, radio Walkman and mobile phones are also used to carry out examination malpractices.

Statement of the Problem

There are several problems hindering the expected quality of secondary education in Nigeria among which is Examination malpractice which is fast becoming alarming on daily basis. Studies have shown that a lot of failures and irregularities happen in the careers of individuals because of the impact of the scourge of examination malpractice at this crucial level of education. It is observed that the more the education management bodies and other well-meaning individuals try to find solutions to the problem of examination mal-practices, the more the perpetrators also device ways to frustrate such efforts. The problem is becoming more advancing on daily basis, it arises from the era of student copying from fellow student to using modern electronic gadgets such as cell phones and concealed ear pieces. The problem of examination malpractice has reduced certificates issued in Nigeria into a worthless paper, such that a number of candidates with outstanding results cannot defend their certificates. This problem as it is, requires a prompt remedy. The study therefore is set to find out if innovative strategies for curbing examination malpractice in Nigeria's public secondary school examination can be determined.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- a) What is the degree of examination mal-practices in the secondary school in Akure South Local Government area of Ondo State?
- b) What are the strategies to restrain parents related examination malpractices in public examination in Nigeria?
- c) What are the strategies to restrain school personnel/teachers related examination malpractices?
- d) What are the strategies to restrain internet related examination malpractices in public examinations in Nigeria?
- e) What are the strategies to restrain examination body officials'/examination personnel related malpractices in public examinations in Nigeria?

Research Design

The study adopted descriptive research design of the survey type. The population of the study comprises all the secondary school students, teachers, staff of examination bodies and ministry of education officials in Ondo State. Simple random sample technique was used to draw the required sample. Consequently, a total number of 200 respondents were selected in the secondary schools within the Local Government for the study. The respondents were stratified according to their various groups; they were students, teachers and the senior official of the ministry of education and employees of the examination bodies under consideration. A number of 100 respondents were drawn from the students' stratum, 40 from the teachers' stratum, and 30 from the Ministry of Education and 30 from two examination bodies in Ondo State which include: WASSCE AND NECO. The use of the above simple size is in consonance with Ali (2006) [2] who stated that in the event of very large population, it is often feasible to take a portion of the population which the researcher can handle.

The instrument used for the collection of the relevant data to answer the research questions was 20 item structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on innovative strategies to restrain examination malpractice" (QISREM). The instrument which was developed by the researcher has a four - point likert type scale of Strongly Agreed (4 point), agreed (3 point), disagreed (2 point), strongly disagreed (1 point). Items of the instrument were both positively and negatively structured. The instrument was subjected to both face and content validity. Test-retest reliability was used to test the reliability of the instrument. Pearson product

moment correlation was used to analyze the data collected. Correlation coefficient of 70% and above was envisaged to show that the instrument would be reliable for the study.

The questionnaire was administered and retrieved by the researcher. The data collected was analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics of frequency count and simple percentage for the demographic information of the respondents and analysis of research questions.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the degree of examination mal-practices in Akure South Local Government Area of Ondo State?

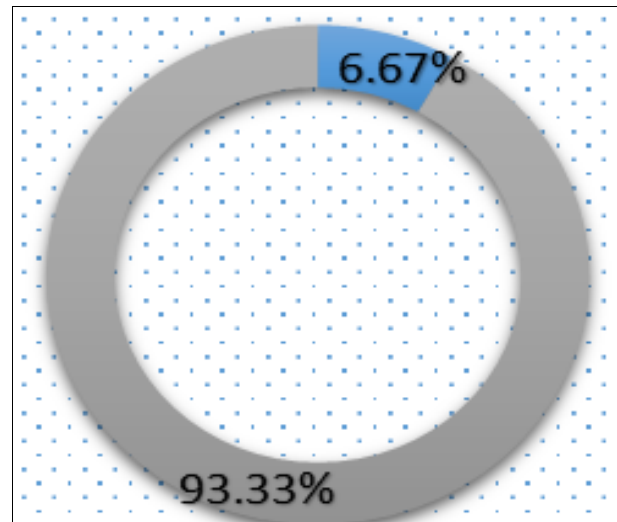


Fig 1: The degree of examination mal-practices in Akure South Local Government Area of Ondo State

Figure 1 reveals the degree of examination mal-practices in Ondo state public secondary schools. The chart reveals that 6.67% of the total public secondary schools in the local government area do not practice examination mal-practices, while 93.33% of the total public secondary schools practice examination mal-practices. This implied that less than one-tenth of the public secondary schools in Akure South local government area do not practice examination mal-practices. Research Question 2 What are the existing strategies to restrain examination mal-practices in Nigeria?

Table 1: Students' response to strategies for curbing parents related examination malpractices in public examination in Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA F %	A F %	DF %	SD F %
1.	Parent should not choose courses/career for their children.	141 70.5	50 25	3 1.5	6 3
2.	Parent should inculcate good moral values in their children.	111 55.5	86 43	1 5	2 1
3.	Parent should organize private lessons in subjects their children are weak.	113 56.5	80 40	6 3	1 5
4.	Parent should encourage their children to work hard in order to make excellent grades in examinations.	116 58	81 40.5	2 1	1 0.5
5.	Parent should buy all the text books and other study materials their children need in school.	133 66.5	62 31	3 1.5	2 1

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

The table above showed students' response to strategies for curbing parents related examination malpractices in public examination in Nigeria. Feedback from the fieldwork shows that, 141 (70.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that parent should not choose courses/career for their children, 50 (25%) agreed as well, 3 (1.5%) disagreed while 6 (3%) strongly disagreed. For item 2, 111 (55.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that parent should inculcate

good moral values in their children, 86 (43%) agreed as well, 1 (5%) disagreed while 2 (1%) strongly disagreed. For item 3, 113 (56.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that parent should organize private lessons in subjects their children are weak, 80 (40%) agreed as well, 6 (3%) disagreed while 1 (5%) strongly disagreed. For item 4, 116 (58%) of the respondents strongly agreed that parent should encourage their children to work hard in order to make

excellent grades in examinations, 81 (40.5%) agreed as well, 2 (1%) disagreed while 1 (0.5%) strongly disagreed. For item 5, 133 (66.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that parent should buy all the text books and other study materials their children need in school, 62 (31%) agreed as well, 3 (1.5%) disagreed while 2 (1%) strongly disagreed. In summary, majority of the respondents strongly agreed that

all the items raised above are strategies used for curbing parents related examination malpractices in public examination in Nigeria.

Research question 3

What are the strategies to restrain school personnel/teachers related examination malpractices?

Table 2: Strategies for restraining school personnel/teachers related examination malpractices.

S/N	Items	SAF %	AF %	DF %	SDF %
	Exam supervisors and invigilators should be nominated by school principals.	122 61	69 34.5	6 3	3 1.5
	Only teachers of proven integrity should be nominated and appointed as supervisors and invigilators.	106 53	89 44.5	4 2	1 0.5
	Supervisors/invigilators should be adequately remunerated	109 54.5	86 43	4 2	1 0.5
	Teachers should not be allowed to supervise/invigilate exams in schools they are teaching	65 32.5	89 44.5	40 20	6 3
	School principals should be sanctioned when their nominees get involved in exam malpractice.	86 43	58 29	41 20.5	15 7.5

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

The table above shows students’ response to strategies for curbing school personnel/teachers related examination malpractices. 122 (61%) of the respondents strongly agreed that exam supervisors and invigilators should be nominated by school principals, 69 (34.5%) agreed as well, 6 (3%) disagreed while 3 (1.5%) strongly disagreed. For item 2, 106 (53%) of the respondents strongly agreed that only teachers of proven integrity should be nominated and appointed as supervisors and invigilators, 89 (44.5%) agreed as well, 4 (2%) disagreed while 1 (0.5%) strongly disagreed. For item 3, 109 (54.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that supervisors/invigilators should be adequately remunerated, 86 (43%) agreed as well, 4 (2%) disagreed while 1 (0.5%) strongly disagreed. For item 4, 65 (32.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that teachers should not

be allowed to supervise/invigilate exams in schools they are teaching, 89 (44.5%) agreed as well, 40 (20%) disagreed while 6 (3%) strongly disagreed. For item 5, 86 (43%) of the respondents strongly agreed that school principals should be sanctioned when their nominees get involved in exam malpractice, 58 (29%) agreed as well, 41 (20.5%) disagreed while 15 (7.5%) strongly disagreed. In summary, majority of the respondents strongly agreed that all the items raised above are strategies for curbing school personnel/teachers related examination malpractices.

Research Question 4

What are the strategies for restraining internet related examination malpractices in public examinations in Nigeria?

Table 3: Strategies for restraining internet related examination malpractices in public examinations in Nigeria.

S/N	Items	SA %	AF %	DF %	SDF %
	Biometric data capturing should be used in all public examinations in Nigeria.	128 64	65 32.5	5 2.5	2 1
	Writing examinations online should be encouraged to replace the manual methods being used now.	58 29	65 32.5	60 30	17 8.5
	Bringing mobile phone and other ICT gadget into examination hall should be prohibited.	116 58	75 37.5	8 4	1 0.5
	The use of earpiece in examination hall should be discouraged.	96 48	95 47.5	6 3	3 1.5
	Closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras should be installed in all examination halls to check malpractices.	118 59	73 36.5	8 4	1 0.5

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

The table above shows students’ response to the strategies for curbing internet related examination malpractices in public examinations in Nigeria. 128 (64%) of the respondents strongly agreed that biometric data capturing should be used in all public examinations in Nigeria, 65 (32.5%) agreed as well, 5 (2.5%) disagreed while 2 (1%) strongly disagreed. For item 2, 58 (29%) of the respondents strongly agreed that writing examinations online should be encouraged to replace the manual methods being used now, 65 (32.5%) agreed as well, 60 (30%) disagreed while 17(8.5%) strongly disagreed. For item 3, 116 (58%) of the respondents strongly agreed that bringing mobile phone and other ICT gadget into examination hall should be prohibited, 75 (37.5%) agreed as well, 8 (4%) disagreed while 1 (0.5%) strongly disagreed. For item 4, 96 (48%) of the respondents

strongly agreed that the use of earpiece in examination hall should be discouraged, 95 (47.5%) agreed as well, 6 (3%) disagreed while 3 (1.5%) strongly disagreed. For item 5, 118 (59%) of the respondents strongly agreed that closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras should be installed in all examination halls to check malpractices, 73 (36.5%) agreed as well, 8 (4%) disagreed while 1 (0.5%) strongly disagreed. In summary, majority of the respondents agreed that all the items raised above showed the strategies for curbing internet related examination malpractices in public examinations in Nigeria.

Research question 5: What are the strategies to restrain examination body officials’/examination personnel related malpractices in public examinations in Nigeria?

Table 4: Strategies for restraining examination body officials’/examination personnel related malpractices in public examinations in Nigeria.

S/N	Items	SAF %	AF %	DF %	SDF %
	Examination officials should always be paid their salaries and allowances regularly.	152 76	46 23	1 0.5	1 0.5
	Examinations officials should maintain high integrity at all times in order to serve as an example to other stakeholders.	102 51	92 46	4 2	2 1

Any examination body/staff indulges in any form of examination malpractices should be sanctioned.	116 58	77 38.5	6 3	1 5
Any examining body/staff that collects bribe from teachers to appoint them as supervisors/investigators should be sanctioned.	100 50	91 45.5	6 3	3 1.5
Government should provide adequate equipment and facility that will help examination officials in curbing malpractice.	136 68	60 30	4 2	0 0

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

The table presented above shows students’ response to strategies for curbing examination body officials /examination personnel related malpractices in public examinations in Nigeria. 152 (76%) of the respondents strongly agreed that examination officials should always be paid their salaries and allowances regularly, 46 (23%) agreed as well, 1 (0.5%) disagreed while 1 (0.5%) strongly disagreed. For item 2, 102 (51%) of the respondents strongly agreed that examinations officials should maintain high integrity at all times in order to serve as an example to other stakeholders, 92 (46%) agreed as well, 4 (2%) disagreed while 2 (1%) strongly disagreed. For item 3, 116 (58%) of the respondents strongly agreed that any examination body / staff indulges in any form of examination malpractices should be sanctioned, 77 (38.5%) agreed as well, 6 (3%) disagreed while 1 (5%) strongly disagreed. For item 4, 100 (50%) of the respondents strongly agreed that any examining body/staff that collects bribe from teachers to appoint them as supervisors/investigators should be sanctioned, 91 (45.5%) agreed as well, 6 (3%) disagreed while 3 (1.5%) strongly disagreed. For item 5, 136 (68%) of the respondents strongly agreed that government should provide adequate equipment and facility that will help examination officials in curbing malpractice, 60 (30%) agreed as well, while 4 (2%) disagreed. In summary, majority of the respondents agreed that all the items raised above showed the strategies for curbing examination body officials/examination personnel related malpractices in public examinations in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Finding from research question one revealed that when parent played their part in equipping their children in terms of choosing their careers, inculcating good moral values, encouraging them to work harder and providing necessary textbooks needed for learning, this will curb the children from examination malpractices. This is line with Wilayat (2009) [8] who opined that parents stand indicted for abdicating their cardinal responsibility of ensuring the morality of their young ones. They corrupt their children by providing them with bribe money and gifts for supervisors, school authorities or custodians of examination materials, who in return allow cheating.

Finding from research question two revealed that when teachers/supervisors played their role faithfully and effectively, examination malpractices will be minimal. This is in line with Oluwarotimi, (2008) [7] who opined that when teachers are faithful in teaching students, the students will succeed in examinations.

Finding from research question three revealed that biometric data capturing should be used in all examinations centers in Nigeria. It also revealed that Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras should be installed in all examination halls to check and detect any form of malpractice. This is in line with Dike (2015) [3] who opined that with the introduction of photo embossed certificates by WAEC, effective from 1999,

cases of impersonation at examination halls have drastically reduced.

Finding from research question four revealed that when examination officials’ salaries and other remunerations are paid regularly, they won’t be moved / faked with bribery. This implies that there will be a state of satisfaction when the examiners salaries are paid regularly. This is in line with Olusola (2016) [6] who opined that sometimes, “some supervisors, recruited and paid by examination bodies even appear to be working against such bodies by contributing to examination malpractices.” To him, “examination malpractices are probably, the greatest challenge Nigeria has to contend with. Similarly, Wilayat (2009) [8] also opined that negligence on the part of the invigilators/supervisors exhibited either advertently or inadvertently could result in examination malpractices.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that examination malpractices are caused by several agents such as students, staff, parents, examination bodies, internet and other agents by means of different techniques that grow by the day. Several innovative strategies that can be used to restrain examination malpractices of any source have been outlined. It then behooves on all of us to apply these strategies in order to minimize the dangers of examination malpractice.

Recommendations

In view of the above, the following recommendations if adopted would help to curb examination malpractices in Nigeria

- The following recommendations were made from the findings; parents and guardians should be encouraged to guide their wards in choosing a career of their choice,
- Parents/wards, should provide necessary textbooks and required facilities to aid their wards learning process.
- Government should as well provide the necessary facilities in terms of human and materials to boost the quality of teaching.
- Parents are enjoyed to give their wards moral upbringing to influence their attitude outside the homes
- Parents and staff should encourage the students to work harder in terms of studying and finally.
- The government on its own should review and pay teachers salary on time as this would motivate them in doing their job well.

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