

THE PROFESSIONAL TEACHER AND THE EXAMINATION MISCONDUCT: CONTROL AND THE WAY FORWARD

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ABSTRACT

The paper presented an overview of challenges of examination malpractice and other exam-related misconducts. It discussed the historical perspectives and outlined the role of professional teacher on how to mitigate the menace of examination malpractice among students in our various institutions of learning. The paper raised the issue of the deliberate negligence of examination malpractice by the concerned authorities and highlighted possible opportunities and benefits that our academic institutions could achieved if proper attention is given to the matter. Suggestions for future directions for the cultivation of sound, quality and standard education for now and beyond were made as Staff and students who are caught indulging in any kind of exams malpractice should be punished accordingly so as to server as a deterrence to others; Professional teachers should be well motivated so as to make extra effort to cover the syllabus which in turn can enable student to cover the aspects of exams questions, and; too much pressure should not be mounted on students to attain excellent result, but rather advise them by making sure they give enormous time to studying.

Keywords: Teacher, Professional Teacher, Exam Malpractice and Education.

Introduction

The improvement of human development is the primary concern of education. Through education, people develop knowledge, skills, and adopt new behaviours to sustain themselves and their society. In Nigeria, education is perceived to be the greatest force that can be used to achieve quick and desirable changes that bring about development of the nation's economic, political, social, and human resources (Okafor, 2011). The National policy on Education as well as various efforts that have gone in to its implementation is based on the above conviction. It is not a human fallacy about the fact that the provision of quality education through any mechanism put in place will enable the learner in the long run to be self-employed, self-reliant, be more useful and more productive citizen of the nation.

However, the role of a teacher in whatever level of academic education will not be overestimated. According to Webster's dictionary, a teacher is defined as one whose occupation is to instruct. This definition may not suit the preoccupation of the teacher today, because the teacher of today is a very complicated individual both personally and professionally which makes any simple description literally impossible. Some people today

have join the teaching profession because of the lack of employment in their desired profession. They regard teaching as a stepping stone to other lucrative jobs. Traditionally society has expected and set very high and at times, stringent ideals for teachers to follow. Teachers are always expected to be knowledgeable, prospectors, inspires, critics, dedicated, zealous, and self-controlled. (Jokthan, 2007).

Despite the enormous effort being made by a teacher towards achieving desired goals in education, many impending factors find their ways in negating the progress of our educational settings, one of those factors include examination malpractice. Examination malpractice has been described by Olushola (2006), as an unlawful behaviour or activity engaged in by students to have personal advantage in an examination over their colleagues or mates who are taking the same examination. Malpractice could be committed before, during, or after the examination by either the student taking the exam or by officials assigned with the administration of the examination. From the psychological point of view, examination malpractice is any form of cheating which directly or indirectly falsify the ability of students. Examination malpractice is against the ethics of exam, it is also an act of disrespect to all rules and regulations guiding the conduct of any examination or any evaluation process (West African Examination Council (WAEC, 2006).

Statement of the Problem

Today, Nigeria is engulfed with so many vices: corruption has eaten deep into all fabrics of human life, social vices and acts of indiscipline are manifested by educated elites and these can be the result of what started in form of examination malpractice that have degenerated into a wider scale. Nigeria is lacking behind in technological development, yet a critical survey will show a list of Nigerians who have graduated in science and technical courses with higher grades. The reason for this cannot be far from the fact that many have found their way to obtain the certificates. Many have turned out to be certificated illiterates. The high incidence of examination malpractice in Nigeria educational institution is on the increase, hence the menace need to be addressed if the educational sector of Nigeria as a nation is to be improved. This task could be accomplished by motivating people at all level e.g. students, teachers and stakeholders, to desist from exam malpractice. Therefore, it is on this premise that this paper focuses on the following headings,

- a. A Professional Teacher, who is he?
- b. Concept of Examination Malpractice.
- c. Some Common Forms of Examination Malpractice by students.
- d. Effect of Examination Malpractice to the Society.
- e. The Way Forward.
- f. Conclusion.

A Professional Teacher, Who is He?

Teaching is popularly known to as a noble profession. This statement best suits the teacher about eighty years ago. For instance, in many of our rural past, the teacher was highly respected and looked upon with awe. He was the interpreter for the district officer or high priest and combines the role of a teacher with that of a catechist, oracle of a white man's word, adviser, consultant, and many lofty appellations conceived of his apparently complex role (Jokthan, 2007). A Professional teacher is a specialized person who undergone a professional training in a field of study and is employed to bring up and teach the learners (students) for self-development of the society (Dike 1999), and he teach as one whose profession is to impart knowledge, practical skills and understanding. A teacher guides teachers/students through their studies which are principally directed at getting them to think for themselves. A teacher is a force to be reckoned with, in the school he is a critical resource upon which the economic future of the nation depends.

According to Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, (TRCN 2002). A teacher is a person who has undergone approved professional training in education at appropriate levels capable of imparting knowledge, attitudes, and skills to the learner. Jokthan (2007) maintained that a teacher should be "a student in training," all his life. Large parts of teacher's future success depend on his/her attitudes towards learning the job.

Concept of Examination Malpractice

Examination malpractice is any illegal act committed by a student single handedly or in collaboration with others i.e. fellow students, parents, teachers, supervisors, invigilators, parents, or anybody or group of people either before, during, or after the examination in order to obtain underserve marks or grades (Wilitat, 2009). The West African Examination Council (1992), referred to examination malpractice as any irregular behavior exhibited by candidates or officials charged with the responsibility of conducting the examination, in or outside the examination hall, before, during, or after such examination. It involves various methods employed by candidates to cheats during examination. Shonekan (1996) Stated that examination malpractice is an act of omission or commission that contravenes the rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity and reliability of the certificate or result issued by that body or institution.

Examination malpractices in Nigeria are successfully perpetrated with the active connivance of students, parents, school authorities, government functionaries and invigilators. Examination malpractice is perpetrated for different reasons and it affects the credibility of result in the sense that grades are assigned to candidates wrongly, thereby misleading the teacher and other users of the school product in decision making.

Some Common Forms of Examination Malpractice

Researchers and educationalist like Adesina (2004), Olariyan (1997), Olashelinde (1993) and Awanbor (2006) have written a number of behaviors that are exhibited by student, in order to

cheat. Some of these activities were listed by Jekayinta (2006) with the special names they are referred to by their perpetrators as follows:

1. **Giraffing:** This is an act of sticking out one's neck to see another student's answer sheet.
2. **Lateral Connection:** This is a sitting arrangement whereby the "bright" student is seated in the center, flanked on both sides by other students.
3. **Nothin-Nothin:** This involves the use of empty pen to trace information on the blank piece of white paper. Seeing this on the table, one would think there is nothing on the paper, but on closer observation, one would realize that the paper is loaded with facts related to the examination.
4. **Livewire:** This is when students have access to live question paper before the examination.
5. **Contract:** This is when students' grades are influenced with the assistance of the faintly teacher.
6. **Tattoo:** This is when the students write information on the tender part of their thigh where they can easily adjust to reveal the materials and can be cleared within seconds where there is problem.
7. **Swapping:** This is exchanging answer booklet so that bright student can write answer out for his/her colleague.
8. **Mercenary Service:** This is employing the service of another student to write the examination.
9. **Table Top:** Writing anticipation answers on top of a desk before the commencement of examination.

Causes of Examination Malpractice in our Institutions of Learning

After outlining some common forms of examination malpractice, it is imperative to disclose some common causes associated to examination malpractice. Several factors have been responsible for examination malpractice in which few among them include the following:

Poor Reading Habits on the part of Student.

Many students show some laxity when it comes to reading. Very few students visit the library to get acquitted and further strengthening what was taught to them earlier in the class. Students of higher Institution with poor reading habit receive poor grades and fail to develop their full potentials. Rubin (2002) opined that students with poor reading habits have a higher chance of anti-social behaviour and even engaging in examination malpractice.

Unpreparedness of students for Examination.

Sometimes many students fail to prepare for their examinations and generally develop examination fever or tension. Because of this, they are unable to retain concept learnt, and experience difficulties in retrieving what has been taught in the class during examination, hence they resort to exam malpractice. Students prefer to engage in some activities other than academics. With these causes, many students engage in examination mal-practice and other

vices such as distraction of examination officials, coercing examiners into filtering scores for them etc. Be that as it is, there are also various ways of curbing this menace of examination malpractice by professional teachers, and they are considered under the following, according to Chanson and Okafor (2013).

- i. Conducting thorough search prior to the examination.
- ii. Any form of unauthorized electronic device should be discouraged
- iii. Teachers should ensure that examination hall is spacious enough to avoid clustering of students who may want to copy from others.
- iv. Internal securities should be given the entire necessary mandate to enforce the rules and regulations of the examination.

The Way Forward (Recommendations)

Any institution of learning that cannot provide quality education to the population cannot be adequately reformed, without simultaneously and correspondingly reforming the culture of our academic dedications. It is based on the above caption that the following recommendations were made in arresting the cancer of exams mal-practice in our higher institutions;

1. Staff and students who are caught indulging in any kind of exams malpractice should be punished accordingly so as to server as a deterrence to others.
2. Professional teachers should be well motivated so as to make extra effort to cover the syllabus which in turn can enable student to cover the aspects of exams questions.
3. Too much pressure should not be mounted on students to attain excellent result, but rather advise them by making sure they give enormous time to studying.

Conclusion

Based on the issues discussed, without reasonable doubt, students of higher institutions of learning appear to be the strongest agents of examination mal-practice and are also at higher risk of facing the wrath of the misconduct when caught. But to blame them fully may not be justifiable enough because some of them are actually the victims of poor educational environment in which they find themselves. Students who are educated in good schools with proper parental upbringing will be more honest and develop more confidence needed to face the examination unaided, so as to have pride in their achievement. It is not worthy that if we fail to fight against the evil of exams mal-practice in our higher institutions, the ugly trend will continue with greater proportion and in no time our educational sector will be flooded with workforce that is completely incompetence and unproductive. Thereby rendering any certificate issued by our institutions useless and losing recognition both nationally and internationally.

Therefore, the only way to chart the path to decency for our students from their academic sleaze is to massively and qualitatively educate everyone available. Generation of freshly oriented Nigerian students with emotionally patriotic attachment to the ideals and aspirations of the nation must be produced. Hence we must stop digging and start building.

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