



EFFECT OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE ON STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EBONYI STATE

Dr Simeon Nnanna Nwube
Ebonyi State College of Education,
Ikwo, Ebonyi State
&
Dr Edwin Ukpabi Nwangama
Ebonyi State College of Education, Ikwo,
Ebonyi State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study is aimed at finding Effects of Examination Malpractice on students' performance in Christian Religious Studies in Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination in Ebonyi State. A descriptive method was used. The procedure used for data collection was questionnaire and the data collected were analyzed with the use of test-retest tool in order to know if this research is valid and reliable. Findings from the study showed that one important cause of examination malpractices in secondary schools in the state was the non-implementation of the examination malpractices act of government. The implication of the findings for this study is based on the desire among students to pass the examination at all cost thereby graduating as an unqualified student graduates to the society. This implies that the attitude towards achieving paper qualification at all cost has assumed a great dimension in the local government area. In conclusion the study recommended among other things: Arrest and prosecution of students and teachers caught in examination malpractices to serve as a lesson to others; concerted efforts should be made in enhancing discipline among students through the counseling services schools in other to prevent them from acts of indiscipline during examinations; The use of electronic devices in checking students' pockets before entering examination halls; and increased emphasis on the use of continuous assessment by schools and examination boards in determining students' success or failure in public examinations.

Key words: Examination Malpractice, Students' Performance, Christian Religious Studies, Secondary School.

Introduction

Background of the Study

Education covers the whole of an individual from birth from cradle to grave, which shows that education is as old as man on earth. The formal school system is greatly influenced in its result on the lives of all who passed through it. In Nigeria before the 1840's, there was in existence a system of education which was broadly traditional, occupationally oriented and informal apprenticeship system. This type of education as at that time was relevant to the needs of the society. The advent and influence of the Christian Missionary activities affected a change from the informal system of education to the western oriented type of education. Preference was no longer for hard work but acquisition of certificate. However, education is the greatest investment a nation can make for a quick development of its economy, political, sociological and human resources. The development of any

nation depends on education.

The progress of students in education is usually tested by means of examination. According to Ezeocha (1985), examination is regarded as all forms of measurement and education test taken as institutional arrangement to determine the quality of knowledge or ability possessed by candidates as an affirmation or progress towards desired learning goals. If the purpose of examination can be argued to that of social goal, any action, and intention, aimed at frustrating the purpose is in effect anti- social and hence constitute a social problem.

Examinations play vital roles not only in our educational system but also in the society demands from its member's adversity of specialized functions. In the Nigerian school system, various forms of examinations are noticed. These are the entrance examinations, the terminal and promotion examinations, the senior school certificate examination and the degree or diploma



examinations. Students are required to pass any form of examination they partake in, but these days, students now find various means of passing examination without putting enough effort. One of such ways is by cheating in examination.

In 2007 senior school certificate examination, there were leakages of examination papers in some secondary schools in some parts of Nigeria, Ebonyi State inclusive, which led to the cancellation of Christian Religious Studies, mathematics, literature-in-English, physics and chemistry. According to Chibuikwe (1995), a lot of educationists and well known Nigerians raised alarm in the mass-media, and magazines that there is a great fall in the standard of education in Nigerian secondary schools.

Examination Malpractices are problems to society especially in our secondary schools which serves as one of the foundations of education. As stressed by Ani (1999), Examination Malpractice is stated as one of the greatest problems that undermine the foundation of educational practice in Nigeria today. The magnitude of the problem and the danger posed by this phenomenon has been identified by eminent institutions, examination bodies and educational administrators. They see this problem as a national disease that requires surgical operation. They also attribute this fallen standard of education to examination malpractice by the students and teachers. Ani (1996) point out that the standard of the education in Nigeria has fallen to a deplorable condition.

Statement of the Problem

The Occurrence of Examination Malpractice at any level of educational stratum possesses the greatest threat to the validity and reliability of any examination and consequently to the authenticity and recognition of certificate issued. This exercise has precipitated regrettable appalling consequences, leading to loss of dignity, reputable and pride in the students, parents and society at large. The menace of the trend has adversely affected all facet of life ranging from the economic system to the socio-political system of this nation. Due to the ugly practice, the parents have no pride or no qualified and reliable graduates to work with; students themselves have no regard and value. Examination malpractice is such a deliberate act that has raised difficulty in assessment of the strength and weaknesses of the students in terms of academic performance. This makes nonsense of the certainty

of educational assessment and as such the products of our schools are not reliable. This problem of this study is therefore to investigate the effect of examination malpractice on students' performance in Christian Religious Studies in Secondary Schools in Ebonyi state.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of examination malpractice on students' performance in Christian Religious Studies in Secondary Schools in Ebonyi state. Specifically the study seeks to investigate the following:

1. The causes of examination malpractice among students of Christian Religious Studies in senior secondary school certificate examination (SSSCE) in Ebonyi state
2. The method used by the students for Examination Malpractice in secondary schools in Ebonyi State.
3. Who are the collaborators of examination malpractice in secondary schools in Ebonyi State.
4. What are the effects of examination malpractice in various secondary schools in Ebonyi State.
5. The necessary measures that will be applied in curbing this menace.

Research Questions

The research questions that will be used for this study are as follows:

1. What are the causes of Examination Malpractices in secondary schools in Ebonyi State?
2. What are the method used by students for Examination Malpractice in secondary schools in Ebonyi State?
3. Who are the collaborators of examination malpractices in secondary schools?
4. What are the effects of examination malpractices in secondary schools in Ebonyi state?
5. What are the necessary measures to be applied to curb examination malpractices in secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

1.7 Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study was tested for significance at 0.05 alpha level with chi-square (χ^2) statistics.



Ho₁ There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of private and public students on the effect of examination malpractices on students performance in Christian religious studies.

Research Methodology

The area of the study was based on the Senior secondary schools in Ebonyi State and was involved both the private and public schools. The population comprised all senior secondary (SS3) students attending both public and private secondary schools in the State. A sample of 120 students that comprised of 3 public secondary schools and 3 private secondary schools in the three senatorial zones of Ebonyi State, were randomly selected using simple random technique. For the six (6) schools that were selected, 20 was selected from each school making it a total of 120 respondents from the (6) secondary schools of study. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. In administering the questionnaire, research assistance was employed. Returns from 120 respondents was used for the study. The content validity of the instrument was

determined but experts in a test and measurement and Christian religious studies at the course of which all the items of the questionnaire were matched with the research questions to ascertain whether or not the instrument actually measured what it is supposed to measure. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the test-retest reliability technique. In doing this, the instrument was administered to 30 respondents drawn from 6 senior secondary schools outside the study area. After a period of two weeks, the instruments wasre-administered to the same respondents and the data collated were analysed using cronbach alpha which yielded a reliability index of 0.82 . Data analysis for this research work was purely based on the use of statistical simple percentage. It was used to determine whether a set of observed frequencies corresponded to the questionnaire under which the questionnaire will be agree or disagree, accepted or rejected. The data collected was analyzed using percentages and the chi-square (χ^2) method.



PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Research Question 1: What are the causes of examination malpractices in secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

Table 1: Causes of Examination Malpractices in Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State.

S/N	RESPONSES	PUBLIC SEC. SCH. = 60			PRIVATE SEC. SCH. = 60		
		Freq.	%	Rmk.	Freq.	%	Rmk.
1	General indiscipline among students in the school.	42	70.8	Agreed	45	75	Agreed
2	Non-implementation of examination malpractice decree which provides for imprisonment of culprits to 21 years jail term.	41	67.5	Agreed	42	69	Agreed
3	Lack of effective supervision of students during examination.	38	62.5	Agreed	40	66	Agreed
4	Insufficient preparation for examination among many students.	33	55.8	Agreed	38	63	Agreed
5	Desire among many students to pass examination at all cost.	32	54.2	Agreed	36	60	Agreed
	Average total	37	62.16	Agreed	37	62	Agreed

In table 1, the opinion of the respondents in both public and private schools on the causes of examination malpractices in secondary schools in Ebonyi State. One major cause of examination malpractices given by respondents (70.8%) and (75%) were the general indiscipline among students in the school. Another important response given by the respondents (67.5%) and (96%) was the non- implementation of examination malpractice decree which provides for the imprisonment of the culprits to 21 years jail term. Other responses included lack of effective supervision during public examinations (62.5%) and (66%), insufficient preparation of examination among students (55.8%) and (63%), and the desire among students to pass the examination at all cost (54.2%) and (60%). On the average of the respondents (62.16%) and (62%) claimed that all the items listed in table 1 were causes of examination malpractices in secondary schools in Ebonyi State.



Research Question 2: What are the methods used by students to cheat in secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

Table 2: Methods used by students to cheat in Examinations Malpractices in Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State.

S/N	RESPONSES	PUBLIC SEC. SCH.			PRIVATE SEC. SCH.		
		Freq.	%	Rmk.	Freq.	%	Rmk.
6	Bringing prepared answers to Examination halls.	55	91.7	Agreed	42	69	Agreed
7	Copying other students' work during examination.	47	79.2	Agreed	45	75	Agreed
8	Invigilators conniving with students to cheat in examination halls.	42	70.8	Agreed	55	92	Agreed
9	Sending of prepared answers by teachers to students during examinations.	39	65	Agreed	38	63	Agreed
10	Copying answers directly from modules or textbooks during examinations.	35	58.3	Agreed	41	68	Agreed
	Average total	44	73	Agreed	42	71	Agreed

The data on table 2 show the divergent views of the respondents in both public and private secondary schools on the methods used by students to cheat in examination in secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The respondents (91.7%) and (69%) claimed that examination malpractices are perpetrated by students through the bringing of prepared answers to examination halls. Other methods given by the respondents included copying other students work during examinations which had (79.2%) and (75%), invigilators conniving with students to cheat in examination halls (70.8%) and (92%), sending of prepared answers by teachers to students during examinations (65%) and (63%), copying answers directly from the modules or text books during examinations (58.3%) and (68%). On the average, (73%) and (71%) claimed that all the methods were employed in perpetrating examination in the schools.



Research question 3: Who are the collaborators of Examination Malpractices in Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State?

Responding to this question, data on teachers' perception of who the collaborators of examination malpractices are in secondary schools in Ebonyi State were collected from the responses to the questionnaire. The data were analyzed using percentages. Table 4 shows the findings.

Table 3: Who are the collaborators of Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State?

S/N	RESPONSES	PUBLIC SEC. SCH. = 60			PRIVATE SEC. SCH. = 60		
		Freq.	%	Rmk.	Freq.	%	Rmk.
11	Schools authorities colluding with examination officials and invigilators to assist students.	42	70.8	Agreed	47	79	Agreed
12	Invigilators conniving with students to cheat in examination hall.	39	65	Agreed	35	58	Agreed
13	Hiring other people to write the examination through impersonation.	35	58.3	Agreed	41	68	Agreed
14	Sending of prepared answers by teachers to students during	32	54.2	Agreed	38	63	Agreed
	Average total	36	62.1	Agreed	40	66	Agreed

The data in table 3 show the response of both the public and private secondary schools students who the collaborators of examination malpractices are in secondary schools in Ebonyi state. The most important response given by the respondents (70.8%) and (79%) was the school authorities conniving with examination officials and invigilators to assist the students. Other collaborators included invigilators conniving with students to cheat in examination halls (65%) and (58%), hiring other people to write the examination through impersonation (58.3%) and (68%), and sending of prepared answers by teachers to students during examinations (54.2%) and (63%). On the average, (62.1%) and (66%) claimed that all these were the collaborators of examination malpractices in secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Research question 4: What are the effects of examination malpractices in secondary schools in Ebonyi state?

Answering this question, data on the effects of examination malpractices in Ebonyi State were collected from the responses to the questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using percentage. Table 5 shows the findings.



Table 4: What are the effects of examination malpractices in secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

S/N	RESPONSES	PUBLIC SEC. SCH. = 60			PRIVATE SEC. SCH. = 60		
		Freq.	%	Rmk.	Freq.	%	Rmk.
15	Hand-checking of students' pockets to prevent students from bringing prepared answers to the examination halls.	32	54.2	Agreed	35	58	Agreed
16	Cancellation of the students' results.	35	58.3	Agreed	42	71	Agreed
17	Blacklisting of the affected examination centers .	38	62.5	Agreed	45	75	Agreed
	Average total	31	53.1	Agreed	41	68	Agreed

For the data in table 4, the respondents' view varied on the effects of examination malpractices in secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The respondents (54.2%) and (58%) claimed that hand-checking of students' pockets is done to prevent students from bringing prepared answers to the examination halls. Also the respondents (58.3%) and (71%) reported that the cancellation of affected students result is an effect of examination malpractice in secondary schools in Ebonyi state. However, (62.5%) and (75%) reported that the blacklisting of the affected examination center is an effect of examination malpractice in secondary schools in Ebonyi State. On the average, (53.1%) and (68%) were of the opinion that the listed items in table 4 are effects of examination malpractices in Ebonyi state.

Research Question 5: how can examination malpractice be minimized or eliminated in secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

In response to this question, data on how examination malpractice can be minimized or eliminated in secondary schools in the State were collected from the responses to the questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using percentages. The findings are presented in table 5.



Table 5: How can examination malpractice be minimized or eliminated in secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

S/N	RESPONSES	PUBLIC SEC. SCH.			PRIVATE SEC. SCH.		
		Freq.	%	Rmk.	Freq.	%	Rmk.
18	Full implementation of the examination malpractices decree which provides for the imprisonment of culprits to 21 years jail term.	50	83.3	Agreed	47	78	Agreed
19	Concerted efforts in enhancing discipline among students through cancelling services in the schools in other to prevent them from acts of indiscipline during examinations.	35	58.3	Agreed	50	83	Agreed
20	Using electronic devices to check candidates' pockets before allowing them into examination halls.	45	75	Agreed	30	50	Agreed
21	Increased emphasis on the use of continuous assessment by schools and examination board in determining students' success or failure in pulic examinations.	38	62.5	Agreed	45	75	Agreed
22	Termination of appointment officials of examination boards and teachers involved in perpetrating examination malpractices in secondary schools.	42	70.8	Agreed	35	58	Agreed
	Average total	42	71	Agreed	41	68	Agreed

Data on table 5 show the opinion of both public and private school students on how examination malpractices can be minimize or eliminated in secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Among the measures, the need to make full implementation of examination malpractice decree which provides for the imprisonment of culprits to 21 years jail term had the large number of respondents (83.3%) and (78%). Also the respondents' suggestion that concerted efforts in enhancing discipline among students through counseling services in the schools in other to prevent them from acts of indiscipline during examinations had (58.3%) and (83%), the use of electronic devices to check students' pockets before allowing them into examination halls (75%) and (50%). Other measures include termination of appointment of officials of examination boards and teachers involved in perpetrating examination malpractices in schools (62.5%) and (75%) and the increase emphasis on the use of continuous assessment by schools and examination boards in determining students' success or failure in public examinations (70.8%) and (58%). On the average, 70 of the respondents (58.3%) claimed that the measures suggested on how to minimize or eliminate examination malpractices in secondary schools in Ebonyi State as shown in table 6 should be taken.



Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of public and private secondary school students.

Table 6: A-2x5 contingency table: X^2 independent mean.

Variables	Frequency responses on the influence of examination malpractice in secondary schools					
	Causes	Method Used	Collaborators	Effects	How to curb	Total
Public secondary school	14 (13.5)	11 (10.5)	13 (6.5)	12 (13)	10 (10.5)	60
Private secondary school	13 (6.5)	10 (10.5)	12 (13)	14 (13.5)	11 (10.5)	60
Total	27	21	25	26	21	120

Degree of freedom = 4, at 0.05 significant level.

$$\text{Formular: } X^2 = \frac{\sum (O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

Where X^2 = Chi-square,

O_i = Observed value,

E_i = Expected value.

The calculated value is 6.63, which is less than the critical value of 9.49. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating that examination malpractice influence/affect students performance in Christian Religious studies in Ebonyi State.



DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY, RECOMMENDATIONS, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

Discussion of the Findings

The forgoing shows the analysis of data collected for this study. As indicated in the findings, one important cause of examination malpractices in secondary schools in the state was the non-implementation of the examination malpractices act of government. This shows that since there had been no penalty imposed on culprits in the past with the non- implementation of the examination malpractices act, many students continued to get involved in examination malpractices. It implies that since there is no punishment given to offenders to serve as a deterrent to others, examination malpractices among students in the schools remained unlimited. These findings negated the findings of previous researchers (Cromwell, 2000; Daniel, 2005).

Another cause as responded by students was the desire among the students to pass the examination at all cost. This implies that the attitude towards achieving paper qualification at all cost has assumed a great dimension in the State Educational system at the expense of commitment to serious academic work. These findings were in agreement with the findings of previous researchers (Onyekan, 1999, Odeminde 2003). The finding indicated that there was insufficient preparation for the examinations among many students implies that many students might not have been placed by the Nigerian Government on paper qualifications through the issuance of certificate which have perhaps made many students to be involved in examination malpractices. From the tested hypothesis, examination malpractices affect the students academic performance

Implication of the Finding

The implication of the findings for this study is based on the desire among students to pass the examination at all cost thereby graduating as an unqualified student graduates to the society. This implies that the attitude towards achieving paper qualification at all cost has assumed a great dimension in the local government area educational system at the expense of commitment to serious academic work. This finding was in agreement with the findings of previous research (Dike 13,26,35).

The finding indicated that there was insufficient preparation for the examination among many students which implies that many students might not have been well groomed for the examination and they would want to pass by all means. These findings agreed with the findings made in previous studies.

The act of cancellation of the affected students' results as found in the study was in consonance with the findings made by Dike (18) that there could be effects or problems of examination malpractices in schools without the students bringing in prepared answers to the examination halls. These findings agreed with the findings of other researchers. All these and more were because of the over emphasis made and placed by the Nigerian government on paper qualification through the issuance of certificates which have perhaps made many students to be involved in examination malpractices thereby causing nuisance, increment unqualified teachers, lack of knowledge, production of hooligans and production of incompetent professionals in schools, homes and society at large.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that there should be full implementation of the examination malpractices decree which provides for imprisonment of culprits to 21 years jail term. Hence, the arrest and prosecution of students caught in examination malpractices should always be done to serve as a lesson to others.

Concerted efforts should be made in enhancing discipline among students through the counseling services schools in other to prevent them from acts of indiscipline during examinations.

Electronic devices should be used to check students' pockets before entering examination halls.

There should be increased emphasis on the use of continuous assessment by schools and examination boards in determining students' success or failure in public examinations.

The termination of appointment of officials of examination boards and teachers involved in perpetrating examination malpractices should be enforced to serve as a deterrent to others.

Suggestions for Further Study

The researcher of this study suggests that further research can be done on examination malpractice and its problems in Nigerian schools especially in secondary schools in Ebonyi State.



Summary

The occurrence of examination malpractice and its problems at any level of educational stratum possesses the greatest threat to the validity and reliability of any examination and consequently to the authenticity and recognition of certificate issued. A salient observer of the secondary schools in the State must have noticed the prevailing problems of examination malpractices. This exercise has precipitated regrettable appalling consequences, leading to loss of dignity, reputation and pride in the students, parents and the society at large. Examination malpractice is such a deliberate act that has raised difficulty in assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of both practicing students and teachers. This makes nonsense of our certainty and as such the products of our schools are not reliable.

The procedures used for this study was the use of questionnaire, by asking questions to the students and teachers in the schools and getting answers from them either by acceptance or rejection. The data collected was through questionnaire, and was analyzed with the use of test-retest tool in order to know if this research is valid and reliable. The hypothesis in this research was significantly different with the use of t- calculated and t- table of 0.05 alpha level. The simple percentage was also used in this study.

The cancelation of the affected students' results as found in the study was in consonance with the

findings made Dike (18) that there could be effects or problems of examination malpractices in schools without the students bringing in prepared answers to the examination halls.

The problems of examination malpractice in Nigerian schools especially in secondary in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State are a function of academic dishonesty.

Conclusion

Considering the findings of this study, it was concluded that indiscipline among students are critical variable in students' involvement in examination malpractices in the schools. This was an evident in the findings which singled out indiscipline as a root of the problems of examination malpractices among students in the State. The findings have led the researcher to conclude that the cancellation of the affected students results as found in this study was as a of effects of examination malpractices in secondary schools in the State. The findings have also led the researcher to conclude that effective supervision of students during examination is lacking in many secondary schools while the measures that can be taken to minimize or eliminate examination malpractices and its problems among the students, are insufficient therefore, additional measures need to be taken.



REFERENCES

- Addison .J. (1990). Examination and the upper secondary curricula in the senior staff seminar, Ministry of Education ekiti, Nigeria, arch, 2-9.
- Agbo F.O. (2000). Causes of examination malpractice a challenge for tertiary institutions in the 21st century and it is a paper presented during the CNO Conference University of Jos.
- Akpan C.P., Okey S, Esirah .E. (2005). Comparative study of effectiveness in maintenance of discipline among administrators of private and public secondary schools in southern senatorial district of cross rivers state, Nigeria. Paper presented at the 29th annual conference of the national association for educational administration and planning held at the universities of calabar pp.6-12.
- Educational communications (1998). Cheating and succeeding record numbers of top high school students . some News in 29th annual survey of high achievers.
- EzeUgwu .C. (1987). Examination Malpractices issue and a problem unpublished NCE seminar papers submitted to the school of technical teachers Education Federal Polytechnic Oko.
- Hurwitz N, Hurwitz J(2004). Words on paper American school board journal, March. <http://www.asbj.com>, retrieved, july, 200
- Igwe .R. (2004). Examination Malpractice rocks Zamfara. Lagos: punch Education, the punch, 17 (19,166) September 10; 41.
- Gross .J. (2003). Eposing the cheat sheet, with the students' aid. The new York times, November 26, 2003 . <http://www.nytimes.com>, http://www.eci-whoswho.com/high_school/annual_surveys/29.shtml.
- Lathrop A, Fosske (2000). Students' cheating and plagiarism in the internet era: A wake-up call for educators and parents. Eaglewood, Co: libraries Unlimited European.
- Odo .C. (2000). Welcome address presented during the examinartion malpractices for secondary schools in Enugu state. 13th -20th April 2000. Seminar paper presented to school of technical teacher education, federal polytechnic Oko.
- Olubile .S. (2004). Examination Malpractice rocks Zamfara Lagos: punch Education, the punch 17 (19,166) Friday, September 10, 20014.
- OlypadeT.a.f.(1994). Cuases and effects of examination malpractices in Nigeria. A paper presented at orientation programe UDN, sokoto.
- Onipeda .H. (2003). National Development hinges on quality Education. The comet, Thursday, January 2, 2001.
- Onyekan . R.A. (1999). Views on examination Malpractice and secret cult in Nigeria Universities paper presented at the conference on cultism in Nigerian universities held at the Ondo State University, Ado- Ekiti from 30 to 31 August, 4-9.
- Owumanam. D.O. (2005). Ethics and Professionalism in Academics a paper presented at the Faculty of Education seminar, university of Ado Ekiti State, Nigeria on 16th may, 2007.
- Salami .A. (1992). Raising the standards of performance in public examination paper presented at the WAEC symposium held at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria 24th April, 1-3.
- Shaw .T. (2003). Making it work for learning technology and the test. Multimedia schools 10(3): 38-39.
- Uyo .A. (2004). Examination Malpractices rocks Zamfara. Punch Education, punch 17 (19,166) September 10, 20014.