
AN INVESTIGATION ON PARENTAL ROLE IN CURBING EXAMINATION MAL-PRACTICE IN OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

S.F Popoola

Department of Educational Foundations,

University of Jos, Nigeria.

Email: funsoiye@yahoo.com

***Abstract:** Cases of examination misconduct have been on the increase in various institutions of learning across the nation, the consequence of which has put a serious dent on the image of our educational system nationally and internationally, rendering procured certificates invalid while the half-baked products are unsuitable in the expected task. Some measures have been put in place to curtail this menace but all to no avail. This study identifies parents as important stakeholder in the educational system with a major role to play in tackling this ugly trend head-long. The investigator largely employs literature review to examine parental influence on examination malpractice. Parents are challenged to wake up to their responsibility of inculcating the right value in their children at the early stage of life to enable them shun vices in their later lives. In conclusion, the study recommends parental personal development of right values, as role models, closeness to the children as well as development of interest in their educational pursuits among other things in playing their expected roles and curbing examination malpractice in our educational system.*

INTRODUCTION

An examination is an academic exercise aimed at determining the level of students' understanding of a particular concept in the learning process. Examination can be in different forms, such as tests or assignments which could be on a weekly, mid-termly or sessional basis. The Nigerian Educational System operates a Continuous Assessment System. In other words, a student's achievement is not just based on his performance at the terminal or sessional examination. This system puts a serious minded student at a greater advantage while the lazy ones wake up at the last minute is disadvantaged. Examination thus, serves as a crucial aspect of education that is compulsory for all candidates at all levels. At a point, it completes a stage of education process and ushers in the commencement of the next level

from the elementary school to the highest level of formal education (Kolawole and Adekeye, 2007). At a stage in some people's career, examination serves as the gateway to elevation and advancement. In life, nobody wants to be associated with failure; nevertheless, success is obtainable through encounter. However, it is not everyone who has encounter that succeeds. Success is meant for those who are ready to struggle with their last breath. Examination could be seen as an encounter that qualifies students for certificates. Before any genuine certificate is issued, the process of examination must have been concluded and certified.

This guarantees its acceptance in work settings, where many people need to fulfil destinies, dreams and aspirations. Without certificates, these may become illusion. In other words, certificate is the proof of education no matter how talented one is. Therefore, examination that leads to the award of a certificate seems to have become a do or die encounter for many people in the present day Nigeria. Desperate candidates, most especially, who cannot sit for examination and pass seem to have perceived it as the survival of the fittest syndrome. This among other reasons is prompting students to indulge in examination misconduct.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Cases of examination misconduct have been on the increase in various institutions of learning across the nation. Its escalation has reached an alarming dimension in recent times. Even outside the formal school system, it is an open secret that there is evidence of one form of sharp practice or the other in the country. Some measures have been put in place to curtail this menace but all to no avail. Parts of such measures are; Decree 21 of 1985, Examination Malpractice Act No. 33 of 1999, Examination Ethics Project of 2003 (EEP) led by Ike Onyechere, Public Relations Workshop Organized by the Lagos State Police Community Relations Committee- PCRC. As mentioned earlier, examination is one of the major measure and most practical way of determining the extent of students' achievement in a particular course of instruction or study. Any examination that will give a true measure of students' performance must be valid, reliable and void of examination misconducts. It is unfortunate that the examination system in most countries, Nigeria, inclusive is plagued with examination misconducts. Examination as an instrument for decision-making, always create fear and

anxiety in the heart of the candidates. As a result, many candidates would want to pass by all means. Also, parents would want to explore means of getting good grades for their children.

Therefore, they resort to different forms of malpractices before, during and after examinations. Today, the examination system has degenerated to an extent that its validity and reliability are being called to question because of the increasing incidence of malpractice Oyetunde (2004). This has been on the increase both in internally and externally conducted examination all over the nations including Nigeria. Consequently, examination is no longer regarded as a test for evaluating the performance or judging the scholastic attainment of students. The reason being that there is a complete breakdown of the whole system of examination, almost all over the country, and at all level of education. The parent, as important stakeholder in education system has major role to play in addressing this menace of examination malpractices, hence the need for this study.

CONCEPT OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE

The history of examination in Nigeria is not recent. It dates back to the colonial era. The first examination malpractice in Nigeria was reported in 1914; when there was a leakage of question paper in the Senior Cambridge Examination. Since then, the incidence examination malpractice has been on the increase and yearly reported. Students are known to be very desperate and can do anything to achieve objective of cheating. Today in Nigeria "examination malpractice" is a household word, and virtually everybody knowingly or unknowingly, seems to be involved in it. Examination malpractice could be said to be an action or inaction by students, parents, teachers, school heads, examination invigilators/supervisors and officials of examination bodies. Furthermore, examination malpractice is any dishonest or unauthorized action or deed committed by a student on his own or in collaboration with others like fellow students, guardians, parents, teachers, head teachers, examination officials, supervisors, invigilators, printers, security officers and anybody or group of people before, during or after examination in order to obtain undeserved marks or grades. Examination malpractice has become a cancerous problem in our educational system and it comes in diverse forms including: lateness of students to examination hall, cheating, and undue favouritism from invigilators to students, leakage of

question papers in the process of setting, printing, packaging, storing and distribution, impersonation and bribing/influencing examination staff, invigilators, examiners.

PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS IN EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE IN NIGERIA

More often than not, students engage the service of agents in order to succeed. The sensitivity of this social ill has attracted several studies from scholars across the nation. One of such studies is "Agents of Examination Malpractice in Nigeria Public Examination: The Strongest Links". It was carried out by Ijaiya (2004). In the study, she identified the strongest links of six agents of examination malpractices in public examination in Nigeria. Parents were indicted as one of the strongest agents. Mothers and fathers are regarded as one of the strongest agents (Ijaiya 2004). They act as agents for their wards by providing materials like cash, food stuff, clothes etc. needed to facilitate and perpetuate examination malpractice. Researchers have revealed means of parental influence in examination misconduct in encouragement of children to indulge in examination misconduct through the following:

- * provision of money for the execution of examination misconduct
- * purchasing of leaked question papers and solutions
- * gratifications of materials things for examination officials
- * taking wards to special centres where cheating is conducted with impunity
- * outright negotiation with officials at examination centre to deliberately allow examination misconduct
- * going directly to examination bodies to negotiate higher scores
- * sending unauthorized materials to the examination hall
- * hiring of mercenaries to write examinations (Ijaiya 2004, Akpan, 2006, Mgboro, 2006)

According to a study carried out by Akpan (2006), the socio-economic status of parents influences the level of examination malpractices among tertiary institutions' students. The study revealed that children from high socio-economic class being likely to be more involved, followed by those from low-socio-economic class, while the least is from the middle class family background. This means that affluence of parents seems to encourage

examination malpractice as students from such homes in spite of available education facilities at their disposal still turn around to source for good grades through various forms of examination malpractices before, during and after examinations to ensure the undeserved success of their children. This is still boiled down to improper training from parents. The children have been spoiled with money to the detriment of their academic pursuits. In another study Mgboro, (2006) parents are involved in examination malpractices. It is clear that parents make several efforts to cut corners for their children's academical progress. Consequently, this gives the children an affront to engage in examination malpractice as a way of supporting such ungodly efforts. Parents need to wake up to their responsibilities in the challenge of fight against examination malpractice in our society by shunning corrupt practices themselves, demonstrating honesty in their own life styles before their children. The development of a child who is able to make use of his potential to the maximum is achieved by positive guidance, encouragement and good parental examples. Without this, the child may lack self-assurance and suffer from fear and frustration. Parents should assure their children the possibility of academic success in handwork without malpractices. A child's development rests on a foundation of love and emotional support that gives him a sense of competence and significance. The importance of early child-training should not be less stressed. at this point, the child should be provided with sufficient care, love and emotional support through positive guidance, encouragement and stimulation as well as good parental examples. This enables the development of self-assurance in a person who is able to make the fullest use of his own potential and shun vices at the slightest temptation. Educational Psychologists view a child as "tabula rassa "(blank sheet).

As a result, the parents have the great privilege of instilling great values like hard work, honesty, consideration for others and so on. These values will eventually influence the child's subsequent experiences in life. The combination of love and discipline in the father and mother creates a suitable environment that enables the child to develop acceptable norms. Hence, both parents should speak with one voice and align their strength together to create a lasting impact. More than ever before, this our time calls for the much needed parental closeness with the children to hear their views, pains and confusions. The rate at which the social media and peers influence

children is quite alarming. They present to them perverse ways of life, hence, they see many things and hear numerous views. The parents should be readily at hand to counter such negative views. In the contrary, where the parents are not available to answer their questions and clear their doubts and confusion, they will definitely turn to available alternatives at their disposals which may not be helpful. These days, well respected and enlightened people do display depravity in their actions and reactions, strange enough, such people have followers among youths to such an extent that they are made role models to them. This can easily take place when parents have failed in inculcating the right values in their children. More so, parents should let the children realise the grave consequence of involvement in examination malpractice which include..... Our present society is bedevilled with the challenge of a break in family tie. Children are cut off from the much needed parental care as a result of tight schedules from work and career. Most of the time, the parents leave home early to come back at late in the evenings, too tired and worn-out to give necessary attention to the children. This phenomenon makes the children prey to negative influences and social vices imbibed from peers and even older people. (Batur-Laha, 2007). Generally, parenting style affects child development. Democratic parents usually establish roles, set attainable goals, explain reasons for certain behaviour to their children. They are role models for their children who are likely to conform to laid rules and regulations in the school. This conformity will ensure their ability to shun examination malpractices. On the other hand, unduly strict, authoritarian parents are likely to breed children with resentments which may take the form of unruly behaviour, manifested in form of examination malpractice.

Finally, children from persuasive homes can be termed as 'spoilt' and are generally low in ability to cope with school discipline; as such, they are most likely to be trapped in examination malpractice since they lack the will power to shun vices. Some corrupt parents engage in cutting corners for the children's educational success as well as their own success. A case was reported where aged parents registered for the first School-leaving Certificate examinations and brought in their children to write for them (Akinseye, 2005). Of course such corrupt parents will lack the courage to restrain their children if they engage in any form of examination malpractice in the future.

The role of parents in ensuring high level of students' academic performances cannot be overemphasized. Parents play significant role in determining the extent to which their children can achieve success in studies. There are some parents who are less concerned about their children's welfare and studies. Some parents do not visit their children for a term, session and even sessions in school to tally with teachers and monitor their progress. It is also important that parents should establish a positive parent-child relationship with their children. They are to show warmth, openness, mutual truth, open communication, empathy to their children and also develop self-confidence in them. This in turn will make children to be open and ask questions in order to receive guided counselling from parents. Worse still, some parents do not provide necessary textbooks, writing materials and uniform for their wards. Their belief and expectation are that the government must provide all these essential elements (textbooks, writing materials and uniform) for their wards. In a situation whereby a student does not have textbooks for school subjects such as English Language, Mathematics, Literature in English, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Accounting etc. how will he engage in personal study of topics taught by the teachers. It is expedient that parents should provide all the necessary materials including textbooks that will help improve students' performances. Parents should make it a point of duty to pay unscheduled visit to their children at school so as to ascertain whether they are making progress or not. Furthermore, parents should develop a positive parent-teacher relationship with the teachers. There have been cases whereby parents quarrel or fight with teachers or school management because their children were disciplined for a wrong act; this type of behaviour is disheartening. Therefore, parents should desist from such and regard their children's teachers as partners in progress.

In addition, parents should provide improved parental guidance, monitoring and evaluation of students' performances. The responsibility lies on parents to constantly provide guidance to their children. They should try to identify their needs, aspiration and fear not only in their studies but all aspects of their lives. Wise parents should also monitor and evaluate their children's academic progress so as to provide intervention program where necessary. For instance, parents can enrol their children in private coaching or lesson to supplement the effort of their teachers. Parents can also help their children develop good study habits by encouraging them to spend more time

studying and less time watching home videos, playing games, browsing on net or making night calls. Therefore, parents should be committed to their children's education.

DISCUSSION

Findings from this study reveals that for parents to play their roles effectively in curbing examination malpractice in our educational system;

Parents are to make time to be with their children to inculcate the right values and attitudes in them. This can be done as they expose them to teachings from the word of God and give them success stories from their own experiences as well as being good role models for them. More so, they should not be involved in offering cash to obtain undeserved grades for the children in examinations. The parent's affluence should not be used in perpetrating corrupt practices such as examination malpractice in any form or shade for example:

Parents should demonstrate interest in their children's studies by checking their notebooks from time to time to discover discrepancies for timely remedy. No hiring of mercenaries to aid them in examination malpractice.

- None use of privileged position to aid children in the examination hall through malpractices.
- None involvement in evil collaboration with examination supervisors
- Dissuade children from registering in 'miracle' centres

Above all, they should provide all necessary learning materials for the children at the appropriate time and engage children that are academically weak in extra lessons personally as well as provide professional assistance where necessary. They should equally assure the possibility of good and lasting academic success through hard work and honesty, making them to know the grave consequences of involvement and addiction to examination malpractice.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommends that parents should develop the right values themselves by being right in their relationship with God because one can only give out what he possesses. Without God, we can do nothing. Personal relationship in closeness to God through His word will bring overcoming power of persuasive tendencies of human nature. Both parents and children should realise that dishonest acts can form a hindrance to God's in human

affairs. At all points of the examination, we need God; we need God to follow up every processes of the examination, from writing to marking to compilation to the final release of the result. Children can be short-sighted, parents need to see afar off and do all within their reach to shield their children from the great consequences of examination malpractice and by extension rid our educational system from the embarrassment of this menace.

REFERENCES

- Akinseye, F.A. (2005) An Assessment of Examination Malpractices, Sexual Harassment, Perversion and Exploitation in Higher Institutions of Learning in Ondo State NASHER 43(1) pp 29-38
- Akpan, I.D (2006) Some Family Factors in Examination Malpractice. The Nigerian Educational Psychologist. *Journal of Nigeria Society for Educational Psychologist (NISEP)* 4(6) pp 250-261
- Batur-Laha, G. (2007). Family Factors in Examination Malpractices in Nigeria. Conference Proceedings, Value System and the Nigeria Child. Official Publication of the Nigeria Society for Educational Psychologists.
- Ijaiya, N.Y (2004), "Agents of Malpractice in Nigerian Public Examinations: The Strongest Links", A Publication Of The National Association Of Educational Researchers And Evaluators,5(1),55-62.
- Kpangban, E. et al (2008). Sound moral values and Development of Right Attitudes as a Panacea to Examination Malpractice. *Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 17, Number 3.
- Mgboro C.U (2006) Students' Perception of Selection as a Factor in Examination Malpractice in Ebonyi State. *Journal of the Nigerian Society for Educational Psychology (NISEP)* 4(2) P 300-313
- Oyetunde, T.O (2004) Examination and Educational Standards. In T.O Oyetunde, Y.A. Mallum, C. A Andzayi (eds) *The Practice of Teaching: Perspectives and Strategies* pp 360-370 Jos; Lecaps Publishers
- Ojo, O.D and Olumuyiwa, F.A (2011). Parental Influence on Wards in Escalation of Examination Misconduct in Nigeria. *European Journal of Social Sciences* Vol. 19, Number 2.

Onuka, A.O and Durowoju, E.O. (2013). Stakeholders' Role in Curbing Examination Malpractice in Nigeria. *International Journal of Economy, Management and Social Sciences*, Vol. 1, Number 6

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: S.F Popoola (2017) An Investigation on Parental Role in Curbing Examination Mal-Practice in our Educational System. *J. of Education and Policy Review*, Vol. 9, No. 2, Pp. 67-76
