
SMART PHONES AND EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE IN NIGERIA TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT: *Examination malpractice has become a social plague in Nigeria educational system. The mad rush for acquisition and over dependence on paper qualification without recourse to corresponding knowledge in skills and competence by an average Nigerians has aggravated students in different tiers of Nigeria educational system to device various means to compromise examination; which serves as a yardstick for teachers to ascertain the level of knowledge acquisition and retention by the students. This paper examined the advert of smart phones and examination malpractice in Nigeria, especially in tertiary institutions. Relevant journals and conference papers were consulted and are sources of secondary data used in the paper. It is discovered that the advert of smart phones and its availability to most tertiary institution students has led to the gaining of ground of electronic device cheating as a form of examination malpractice in Nigerian tertiary Institutions nowadays. The study also sees compromised security agents and poor invigilation on the part of lecturers who are mostly used as invigilators in semester examination in tertiary institutions as factor responsible for prevalence of electronic device cheating. This paper suggested that ban on the use of mobile smart phones in examination halls be enforced to curb the new wave of electronic cheating, full implementation of examination malpractice Act 33 of 1999 and a general change in societal crazy rush for acquisition and over dependence on academic paper certificate, as measures to curb examination malpractice in Tertiary institutions.*

KEY WORDS:- examination malpractice, smart phones, tertiary institutions, electronic device cheating.

INTRODUCTION

Examination malpractice has been a recurrent social problem in Nigeria educational system. The rise in examination malpractice cases in Nigeria particularly at the tertiary education level is drawing significant national attention. Examination malpractice in Nigeria educational system has been widely discussed and viewed as a major challenge not only to examination bodies but also to school administrators, stakeholders, government and the society at large (Oko & Adie, 2016). Examination malpractice is define as any deliberate act of wrong doing contrary to the rules of examination designed to give a candidate an undue advantage (Oko&Adie, 2016). According to West African Examination council (WAEC)(2003) the body defined examination malpractice as any irregular behavior or act exhibited by candidates or anybody charged with the responsibility of conducting examination in or outside the examination hall, before, during or after such

examination with the aim of taking undue advantage. According to Oyinbe, Uma and Ibina (2015) examination malpractice in Nigeria is as old as the country herself. Makaula (2018) cited in John, Gilbert and Suuk (2020) reported that the first case of examination malpractice in Africa was documented in Nigeria during the Cambridge school certificate examination in 1914 when examination question papers were reportedly seen by candidates before the scheduled date of the examinations. Since the incident, examination malpractice has gained notoriety in many African societies (John et.al, 2020).

According to Gannie (2014) cited in Chukwu, Blessing, Obuzor and Grace (2020) education equips every citizen with knowledge, skills, attitude and value capable of enabling citizens to derive maximum benefits of being a member of the society and attaining a satisfying and promising life that enables everyone to understand one's immediate environment and therefore, contribute to the development and welfare of everyone. Asante-Kyei and Nduro (2014) cited in John et. al (2020) asserted that education is one of the key conduits to the socio-economic development of every nation. Globally, examination has been used to assess and determine students' level of understanding after undertaking a course. Accordingly, examination remains one of the most acknowledged approaches in assessing how much one has learned and also in finding out the extent to which the objectives and goals of the course have been attained (John et.al, 2020). According to Oduwaiye (2014) cited in Oko and Adie (2016) asserted that examination is an organized assessment techniques which present individual with a series of questions or task geared toward ascertaining the individual acquired knowledge and skills. In Nigeria Tertiary Institutions, two major types of examinations are used to evaluate the achievement of students' learning. Each course is evaluated by continuous assessment test (CA Test) and Semester examination (Oko& Adle, 2016).

According to Makaula (2018) cited in John et al (2020) the author asserted that students performance in examination forms the basis of important decision about their educational and vocational future and this has placed a heavy burden on the education system. The competitive nature of the job market coupled with societal expectation, the pressure mounted on students to do all it takes to pass their examination makes some students to resort to dubious means which is examination malpractice (John et al, 2020). Malik & Shah (1998) cited in Akaranga and Ongong (2013) in Onyibe et.al (2015) observed that examination is not only a process to assess the progress of students, motivates and help them to know their academic strength and weakness, but also, it provides teachers the opportunity of trying new teaching method. This has led many Nigerians into buying educational certificate to prove their academic worth since certificate is seen as only yardstick to measure ones qualification (Onyibe et.al, 2015). Examination malpractice tends not only to confer undue advantage or underserved grade to the perpetrator of the act (Oyinbe et.al, 2015) but also demoralize other students who do not engage in such acts (John et al, 2020). According to Duvie and Eluwa (2016) Nigeria has witnessed an alarming rate of increase in incidents of examination misconduct. The crazy for instant educational certificates which goes against all norms of hard work has contributed greatly to the phenomenon of examination malpractice in Nigeria (Chukwu et.al, 2020) The serious quest for certification instead of

knowledge and skill has prompted most students into malpractice so as to have the acquired certificate to be there (Oko and Adire, 2016). The incidences of examination malpractice has become endemic in the educational system of Nigeria to the extent that every examination season witness the emergence of new and ingenious ways of cheating (Olatunbosun, 2009; Chukwu et al, 2020; Nnam & Inah, 2015; Anzene, 2014). Based on this premise, this paper discussed the use of Smart phones (Electronic device cheating) as a new wave of examination malpractice in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and recommend measures aim at stopping or reducing the ugly trend.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

What is Education?

The term education is quite elusive and difficult to pin down to a single definition (chukwu et.al, 2020). This is because different scholars and authors in different disciplines give different interpretation to it as it appeal to them. Education is derived from two latin words, educare, which translate “to lead out” or “educere”, which translate to nourish that which had been led-out (chukwu et.al, 2020). According to the Longman dictionary of contemporary English (5th ed) cited in Onyibe et.al. (2015), it defines education as a process of teaching and learning. Akaranga & Ongong (2013) cited in Onyide et.al, (2015) asserts that education is a necessary process through which young adults are equipped to lead productive lives according to their talents and interest. Corroborating, Asante-Kyei and Nduro (2014) cited in John et.al (2020) see education as one of the key conduit to the socio-economic development of every nation. Through education, learners are taught, trained and adequately guide to acquire relevant skills and knowledge on how to adapt to life and contribute meaningfully to their society. Chukwusa (2011) opines that education is the systematic development and the cultivation of the mind and other natural power. Okere (1990) cited in chukwu et.al, (2020) asserts that education helps members of society to acquire suitable appreciation of their cultural heritage and to live a fully more satisfying life. Education could be divided to two types; formal or informal. Formal education occurs in a structured environment whose purpose is teaching of student in school environment with classroom of multiple students learning together with a certified trained teacher of the subject/course (Onyibe et.al, 2015) whilst informal education occurs in variety or places outside the school without any planned, systematic or structured according to subject/course.

What is Examination malpractice?

Examination malpractice can be referred to as an act that goes contrary to rules and regulations guiding the conduct of any examination and designed to give a candidate an undue advantage. Examination malpractice also know as cheating is the illegal action that students take during their examinations to try to make good grades by cutting corners (Oko& Adire, 2016). Examination malpractice is an act of accessing or testing candidates which goes contrary to the rules guiding the conduct of such examination. The West African Examination Council (WAEC) (2003) sees examination malpractice as any irregular behavior or act exhibited by candidates or anybody charged with the responsibility of conducting examination in or outside the examination hall, before, during or after such examination with the aim of taking undue advantage. Such

irregularities or misconducts such as collusion among students themselves and between them and examination official to leak examination materials to intended examinees, impersonation in the form of hiring mercenary to sits for examinations on behalf of the genuine candidate, giraffing, inscription of materials or information on any parts of the body, bribery of examination officials some money to buy examination papers, bribery to allow the use of illegal material smuggled into the examination halls, intimidation and assault on examination official by hired thugs so that students could have a free day while committing the heinous crime, exchange of answer booklets for note comparison, mass cheating and scientific malpractice of use of mobile phones during examination are all forms of examination malpractice (Onyibe et al, 2015)

What is Smart Mobile Phones?

Smart phone refers to a new class of mobile phones that provides integrated service from communication, computing and mobile sectors including voice communication, messaging, personal information management (PIM) application and wireless communication capability (Zheng & Ni, 2006). Smart phone is a mobile phone with advanced features and functionality beyond traditional functionalities like making phone calls and sending text messages. Smart phones are equipped with the capacity to display photos, play games, play video, navigation, built-in camera, audio/video, playback and recording, send/receive e-mail, built in apps for social web sites and surf the web, wireless internet and much more (Muhammed & Tariq, 2013). Due to the above listed special features, it has make the device socially accepted and is becoming popularly use in hospitals, public places, shopping Malls, educational institutions e.t.c (Muhammed & Tariq, 2013)

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Anomie Strain Theory

In this study, the use of smart phones as a form of examination malpractice used by students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria in a quest to acquire academic certificate is situated within the framework of anomie-strain theory. Robert K. Merton (1968) developed the theory but etymologically the word anomie has a french origin and connotes normlessness or the absence of law Emile Durkheim (1897) conceptualized the term anomie to mean absence, weakening, and violation of norms/laws and the core value regulating human action in society.

Robert K. Merton anomie strain perspective refers to the discrepancies between culturally defined goals and the institutionalized means available to achieve these goals. The theory maintains that it is the society that creates the environment for the birthing of crimes and criminal by stipulating goals and values without providing corresponding legal opportunities realizing them consequently, the disconnect between socially précised goals and the availability of legitimate means to attain such goals, in turn put pressure on the individual to commit crime. Merton (1968) developed a typology – a classification scheme designed to facilitate better understanding of the theory. According to Merton, there are five types of deviance/crime based criteria: **Innovations**; when individual accept the goals but reject the legitimate means of attaining such goals. **Conformity**;

when individual accepts goals and means of attaining the legitimate means of attaining such goals. **Ritualism**; when individual rejects the goals and routinized acceptance of the means of achieving the goals. **Retreatism**: when individual reject both the cultural goals and the means of achieving the goals and; **Rebellion** when the individual reject both cultural goals and the means of achieving the goals but replace both them with different goals and means. The theory suggested that when social regulations are weak, the controlling influence of society in the individual to conform to rules and regulations become loose. This looseness has crumbled the continent parts hence the breakdown of order leading to success goals being emphasized without an equivalent emphasis upon this set of culture goals is imperfectly integrated with the organization of society, which does not provide equal access to those goals for all members of society (Chukwu et al, 2020). The disjunction between culturally acclaimed goals and the institutionalized means of achieving goals coupled with the cultural context of great emphasis on success goals without equivalent emphasis upon institution means of attaining these goals have created an environment that predisposes some students to examination malpractice (Jimoh, 2009). The quest to acquire academic certificates though any means has led to the substitution of illegitimate means (examination malpractice) for legitimate means (hard work) by students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Smart Phones And Examination Malpractice in Nigeria Institution Tertiary Institutions.

The phenomenon of examination malpractice has become endemic in the educational system in Nigeria to the extent that every examination season witnesses the emergence of new and ingenious ways of cheating (Chukwu et al, 2020). The new emerging form of examination malpractice in tertiary institutions in Nigeria involved the use of electronic devices like Global system of Mobile Telephone (Duvie & Eluwa, 2016). Nnam and Inah (2015), found out that smuggling and the use of mobile phones and other electronic devices were common forms of examination malpractice used by student of tertiary institutions in recent years. Electronic cheating (e-cheating) which occurs through the use of mobile phone and other data or information storages devices for examination malpractices is a common thing in most tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This assume the form of electronic mails, SMS from syndicate, online browsing in examination hall as well as retrieval of stored data which could be typed data or snapped pages of text books or note books which are retrieved from the storage device like cell phones, BB, IPAD, IPHONE etc in the examination (Oko & Adie, 2016). Electronic device cheating is gaining more grounded as a form of examination malpractice in tertiary institutions in Nigeria in recent times. In Oko & Adie (2016) it was revealed that electronic cheating ranked third by 60% of the respondents in a field study conducted to examine the causes, effects and possible ways of curbing examination malpractices in Cross River University of Technology. The availability of smart phones and the accessibility of most students to this electronic gadget has made electronic cheating prevalent in Nigerian Tertiary institutions. The prevalence of electronic device cheating in Nigeria Tertiary institutions took a dangerous demission in July 2019, when the Management of the Polytechnic Ibadan, Oyo state burnt over 1000 mobile phone seized from students during the institution's semester examination. The Deputy Rector of the institution while addressing newsmen said the decision to burn the cell phones was aimed at discouraging students' from engaging in examination malpractice (Valentine, 2019). Also, in October, 2018 it was reported that a student of Afe Babalola University, Ado –

Ekiti, Ekiti State fought his lecturer for trying to size his phone during class (Nairaland forum, 2018). Examination malpractice through mobile phones has been attributed to students who want an easy way to scale the examination hurdles without stress. It has become so rampant as more tertiary institutions student no longer rely on their natural ability anymore in scaling through examination due to improved technology especially on GSM platform in solving their examination challenges. It is not in contention whether students should own a mobile phone due to its usefulness. The use of mobile phones, particularly by the student cannot be over emphasized due to its laudable advantages. But the use of smart mobile phones during examination for malpractice has been taken to another level in every stratum of education in Nigeria, most especially in tertiary institutions. Most tertiary institutions in Nigeria prohibit the use and bringing in of mobile phones and any other data or information storages device into examination hall. However, some female students usually hide their phones in their underwear and when confronted by invigilators; they will claim they were only adjusting their sanitary towels to make it firm. Through the device of every means by students to bring mobile phones into examination halls, electronic cheating had gain notoriety in many tertiary institutions in Nigeria, as students who would have ordinary passed an examination feel disappointed and loss confidence when less intelligent ones perform better than them through cheating, thus, leading to loss of confidence in themselves, the examination and the system at large (Oko & Adie, 2016).

Effects of examination malpractice in Nigerian tertiary Institutions

The consequence of examination malpractice in Nigeria tertiary institutions has been catastrophic to both education and the society. At the educational level, student/candidate who would ordinary be working hard to pass examination now depend on malpractice as a way of academic exercise thereby defeating the goals of education by turning out certificated illiterates (Oko & Adie, 2016). Students who are brilliant and would have ordinarily passed an examination feel disappointed, less motivated and loss confidence in the examination and the system at large when less intelligent students perform better than them through malpractice. According to John et.al (2020) students/candidates who are product of examination malpractice lack the requites knowledge and experience to enable them to perform their professional duties efficiently and effectively in their chosen endeavours. Examination malpractice may tempt some tertiary institutions students into other criminal acts such as prostitution and armed robbery in a bid to make money to pay for scores (Onyechere, 2004; Adewale, 2014 & Uzochukwu, 2015).

At the society level, Phiri and Nkamba (2015) cited in John et. al (2020) assert that examination malpractice is evil and has associated long term effect including the production of individual who are corrupt and lack the moral to criticize those who indulge in shady deals/things since they are also a product of fraud. The prevalent rate of bank failures, collapse of buildings, economic sabotage, vandalism, kidnapping, hostage, drug trafficking, fake drug manufacturing and sales are practical effect of moral decadence emanating from examination malpractice (Onyibe at el, 2015). Examination malpractice is a negative orientation for future leaders who may end up being serially fraudulent and morally corrupt in their various public and private offices. The fight against corruption can not be achieved if examination malpractice continues to be widespread in our tertiary

institutions as a future leaders who have been a product of a fraud and dishonesty academic process will certainly manifest such fraudulent behaviour in any organization they may found themselves (Onyibe at et, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Examination malpractice takes place in all forms of examination and it is becoming a norms to cheat in these examination. The advent of smart phones and its accessibility by students have taken electronic device cheating to a frightened level in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The causes could be attributed to societal value system that places high value on paper certification instead of skills and practical knowledge. Most tertiary institutions in Nigeria prohibit the use of smart mobile phones and any other data or information storage devices in examination halls. However, unlike most National examination bodies at the primary and post-primary levels that had put many preventive measures against examination malpractice such as public enlightenment on the danger of examination malpractice, information to candidates on the rules and regulation guiding the examination, using security bags for collection of security materials, photo embossment of certificate and mounting of anti examination malpractice billboard etc, most tertiary institutions have no stringent measures to prevent and punish the use of smart phones in examination halls. Based on the above, the following measures have been recommended as strategies to checkmate electronics cheating in Nigeria tertiary institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion, the following suggestions are proffered toward eradicating electronic device cheating in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

1. Management of Tertiary Institutions, important stakeholders in tertiary education and government should be sincere in the implementation of legislation on examination malpractice Act No. 33 of 1999. The Act should be amended to re-introduce the parts of Decree 20 of 1981 which stipulated twenty one (21) years imprisonment for convicted culprit of examination malpractice without option of fines. Such law should also include the use of smart phones in an examination hall. If this is fully implemented, it will serve as deterrent to students, investigators, security agents and other collaborators involved in examination malpractice.
2. Effort should be made to reduce the emphasis place on certificate and paper qualification. The high value placed on paper certification and qualification has been identified as major contributing factors for examination malpractice in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Students would do everything in their power to pass and obtain the certificate whether legal or illegal since they believe that it is what they needed to make a living (Oyinbe et al 2015; Onuka & Durowoju, 2013).
3. Total ban on the use of mobile cell phone, BBs and IPAD in examination halls. Mobile cell phones during seize examination should be confiscated or destroyed by school Management.
4. Security should be tightened at the venue of examination by using metal detectors to search students before entering examination halls to ensure they don't enter the halls with mobile cell phones.

5. The integrity of the tertiary institutions lecturers is key in curbing examination malpractice. Lecturers and supervisors should be person of proven integrity who would not be enticed by some irresistible 'Greek gift' from students to circumvent the sanctity of examination by allowing them to bring in mobile cell phones into examination halls.
6. Student handbook should be reviewed to incorporate the ban of the use of mobile cell phones in and around examination halls. The punishment against such act should be clearly spelt out and made available to students during orientation ceremony.

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