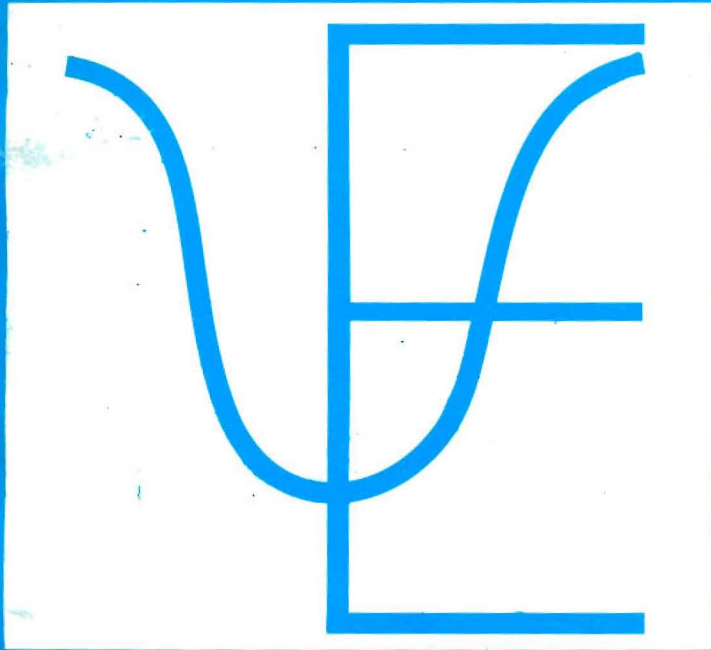


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SOME PRE-EXAMINATION UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCTS OF TEACHERS THAT PROMOTE EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE

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Abstract

The study was aimed at identifying some unprofessional conducts of teachers before examinations which promote examination malpractice. A sample of 400 subjects from three states of South-West Nigeria were used for the study. A questionnaire containing possible unprofessional conducts was administered on the subjects (teachers) and they were required to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed that each of them promoted examination malpractice. Thirteen out of the twenty items of the instrument were identified as conducts that promoted examination malpractice.

Introduction

The principal purpose of attending school is to learn. Hence, there is the need for teachers to determine whether the students have learned or not. The globally accepted means of confirming this is through the administration of test or examination. It is hoped that the conduct of examination would reveal the real academic prowess of a learner. Whatever result that is obtained from the examination is used to make a number of decisive decisions which include selection of subjects/vocation, promotion or demotion of students, determination of exceptional learners, and selection of students to be offered admission among others (Gesinde, 2002).

Due to the fact that vital decisions would be taken based on the outcome of the test it implies that there should be a level plain ground of the examinees. Differently stated, there should be rules and regulations governing the conduct of the examination which the entire examinees must abide with. These rules are made to ensure that

one of the examinees obtains undue favour over others or employs dishonest means to succeed in the examination. When rules and regulations governing the conduct of examinations are violated by anybody a case of examination misconduct or malpractice is established.

Examination malpractice which has been interchangeably referred to as examination misconduct, cheating in school and academic dishonesty has been defined in diverse ways. Bankole (2005) saw it as any surreptitious dishonest and deceitful move, arrangements and plans by a candidate, or school authority, parents/guardian or any examination body official(2) to contravene examination rules/reglartions to receive or give undue favour, so as to obtain undue reward for oneself or others in the educational system.

Unfortunately, violation of rules and regulations governing the conduct of examination is the bane of students from available survey researches from diverse nations. For instance, the Cable News Network (2003) reported a national survey by Rutgers Management Centre where 75% of the 4,500 high school students used for the survey engaged in serious cheating. This is in addition to the fact that many of them did not see anything wrong with cheating.

The prevalence of examination malpractice in Nigeria is highly alarming. Olugbile (2004) observed that this national malaise had assumed a more worrisome trend because states hitherto unknown for examination malpractice have suddenly taken the front seat in examination fraud. He supported this claim with the 2003 examinations malpractice rating of the 36 States and FCT in Nigeria released by the Exam Ethics Project.

The successful execution of cheating in examination would have been made impracticable if not for the collaborative efforts of other individuals or groups of individuals in the society. The massive preparation of examination malpractice has been found to involve teachers, principals, supervisors, parents, examination bodies, and law enforcement agents (Anameze, 1998; Okpala and Ifelumni 2001).

The involvement of teachers, which is the target of this paper, is not a figment of imagination but a reality. Substantiated cases abound

to show that teachers are truly involved. Omebe (2001) stated categorically that teachers take part in promotion of examination malpractice to make ends meet. Similarly, one of the psychological factors intensified by Denga and Denga (1998) as giving rise to examination malpractice is teachers' willingness to collaborate.

The recent sack of two lecturers, who were involved in sex for marks, by the authorities of Ibadan Polytechnic and Lagos State University (The Punch, 2005) is a reference point. It has also been reported that National Examination Council (NECO) in Rivers State has blacklisted about sixty supervisors for conniving with students and their parents to perpetrate examination malpractice (Guardian, 2004). In Cross Rivers State, principals, supervisors and invigilators of nine schools had been dismissed from the State service for their alleged roles in examination malpractice (Vanguard, 2004).

It is glaring from the above that teachers have been causing sustaining and promoting cheating in the school through their unprofessional conducts. Since examination malpractice could be perpetrated before, during and after examination, it therefore, implies that teachers' unprofessional conduct that sustain and promote examination malpractice in school would be before, during and after examination. Teachers' pre examination conducts, which is the principal focus this paper, that have been theoretically or empirically found to sustain and promote examination misconducts in school include unqualified teachers, poor teaching, (Egwangle, 1997; Obimba, 2002); quality of teaching, setting of examination questions, incessant strike, revelation of areas of concentration (Gesinde, 2002); poor quality of teaching, non-coverage of some essential syllabus content, poor teaching methods and incessant strike actions (Bankole, 2005).

The involvement of teachers in examination malpractice does not need any debate. Their involvement covers the three dimensions of examination malpractice namely before, during and after the examination. While concerted efforts have been made to isolate some of the teachers' pre-examination misconducts, as shown from the review of the literature, there are other unprofessional conducts of teachers before examination that sustain and promote examination

malpractices which have not been explored. This is in addition to the fact that some of the identified pre-examination misconducts are yet to be subjected to empirical study. For some of those that have been tested empirically teachers' views on the impact of their pre-examination behaviour on examination were not explored by the researchers.

Purpose of the study

Arising from the above this paper attempted to determine from teachers' viewpoint how certain teachers' conduct before examination sustain examination malpractice in school

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted descriptive survey design which allows a sample size to be selected and studied, based on which a conclusion is drawn about the population.

Population

The population of this study consisted of all post primary and post secondary school teachers in South Western States of Nigeria. From the six states in the South Western part of Nigeria, three states namely Oyo, Osun and Ogun were randomly selected through the use of the random number technique. A multistage random sampling technique was used to identify the post primary and post secondary schools in the three senatorial districts of the states with a view to ensuring equal participation.

Sampling Technique

A total of 400 teachers who were randomly drawn from the three senatorial districts of the three states participated in the study. Out of the 400 participants, 156 (39%) were from Oyo; 135 (33.75%) from Osun; and 109 (27.25%) from Ogun States. From the selected sample 221 (55.25%) were males while 179 (44.75%) were females. A further breakdown of the demographic information also showed that 328 (82%) were married, 72 (18%) were single; 255 (63.75%)

were from post primary schools and 145 (36.25%) were from post secondary schools; 218 (54.5%) had less than ten years working experience and 182 (45.5%) had ten years and above, of working experience. Their years of working experience ranged from 1-36 years ($\bar{X}=10.35$; S.D=7.32).

Research Instrument

The research instrument used for the study was a self developed questionnaire on sustenance and promotion of examination malpractice by teachers. The questionnaire had two major subdivisions. Section A was designed to collect respondents' demographic information which included gender, marital status, profession, years of working experience, place of work and state of origin.

Section B of the instrument was designed to elicit information on teachers' conducts that had been reported to contribute to the sustenance and promotion of examination malpractice. It contained 20 items with 4-point Likert response ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. In scoring the scale, the items were scored 1,2,3,4 for SD, D, A, and SA respectively.

The reliability index of the instrument was determined through the use of odd-even split-half reliability coefficient of relationship on 50 respondents from envisaged population (25 teachers from post-primary and 25 teachers from post secondary). When the two sets of scores were correlated the coefficient was found to be 0.94. With this outcome, the instrument was adjudged to be reliable for the study.

Procedure for Data Collection

Consequent upon the granting of permission for the administration of the instrument by the authorities of the selected schools, the instrument was administered with the help of five research assistants. Since the administration was carried out in the participants' respective schools it facilitated immediate retrieval.

Method of Data Analysis

This descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were employed to analyse the data. For the research questions, a mean

score from 2.5 indicated acceptance while a mean score below 2.5 indicated rejection of item.

Results and Discussion

The results obtained from the analysis of the research questions in this study are shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of the Influence of Teachers' Conduct Before Exam on the Sustenance of Examination Malpractice.

S/N	Items on Teachers Conduct	Mean Ratings	Standard Deviation	Remark	Ranking
1	Setting of difficult examination questions	2.01	0.96	Disagree	19th
2	Setting questions that have no bearing with what is taught in class	1.96	1.10	Disagree	20th
3	Perpetual repetition of previous examination questions without modification	2.22	0.95	Disagree	16th
4	Giving students likely examination questions that at times turn out to be questions set for examination.	2.69	0.99	Agree	5th
5	Commencement of teaching few days to examination	2.52	1.11	Agree	12th
6	Concentrating teaching efforts on questions set for examination only.	2.5	0.10	Agree	13th
7	Inappropriate teaching methods	2.54	1.02	Agree	11th

8. Teaching without teaching qualifications	2.22	1.08	Disagree	16th
9. Revelation of examination questions to favorites	2.72	1.16	Agree	3th
10. Exposing areas where questions will be set to favorites.	2.66	1.14	Agree	8th
11. Selling examination questions for financial benefit.	2.69	1.19	Agree	5th
12. Incessant industrial action by teachers	2.57	0.94	Agree	10th
13. Inability to cover the course outline/syllabus within the stated time frame	2.60	0.97	Agree	9th
14. Abrupt disruption of teaching due to teachers' crises	2.30	0.93	Disagree	14th
15. Non moderation of examination questions.	2.17	0.92	Disagree	18th
16. Carelessness with examination materials like carbon paper used for examination, examination question etc.	2.68	1.03	Agree	7th
17. Inadequate supervision/ monitoring of production of examination materials .	2.78	1.03	Agree	1st
18. Admitting students without required results	2.77	1.14	Agree	2nd

19. Lowering of admission requirements	2.72	1.01	Agree	3rd
20. Setting questions with ambiguous instructions	2.28	0.94	Disagree	15rd

The outcome of the analysis of the research question shows that out of the 20 statements made, the participants agreed with 13 (items, 4,5,6,7,8,9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18 and 19) and disagreed with 7 items 1,2,3,8,14,15, and 20. This clearly demonstrates that teachers are not ignorant but surreptitiously aware of the negative influence of certain acts on the sustenance of examination malpractice in schools. Similarly, since teachers' viewpoints were explored in this study it also confirmed their overt and covert involvement on the sustenance of examination malpractice. The findings of items 4,5,6,7,10 lent credence to Gesinde's (2002) theoretical postulation which argued that giving out likely questions to students; commencing teaching some days to examination; and concentrating teaching on examination questions contribute to academic dishonesty; while items 7,12 and 13 are in consonant with Bankole (2005) who stated that inappropriate teaching; strike actions and inability to cover required syllabus are the bane of examination misconduct. The outcome of item 7 also supports the earlier findings of Obimba (2002) who reported that students attributed poor and insufficient teaching as causing cheating in examination while item 11 agreed with Omebe's (2001) argument that selling of examinations questions could promote cheating behaviour.

Implications for counselling profession

School counsellors are saddled with the responsibility of eradicating maladaptive behaviour in the school, of which examination malpractice is one. The finding of this study has shown that counsellors' search light at putting an end to this illicit behaviour should be extended to teachers. Counsellors' preventive intervention strategies should, therefore, include counselling

teachers on the influence of their behaviour on the sustenance of examination malpractice in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings of this study had amply demonstrated the involvement of teachers in the sustenance of examination malpractice in Nigeria. It has exposed specific behaviour which promotes that illicit act in schools. Consequently, it would be appropriate to recommend that:

- teachers' conditions of service should be improved so as to reduce the temptation of engaging in unethical behaviours.
- Nigerian Union of Teachers should monitor teachers' adherence to professional ethics and met out punishment to violators.
- there is the need to establish examination monitoring board in each local government of the federation.

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