



REASONS FOR EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE CHECKLIST

Science

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ABSTRACT

Educational institution, the bedrock of national development seems bedeviled by examination malpractice, ubiquitous in all societies, hampers development. The aim of the present study was to identify the factors that encourage examination malpractice. Specifically, a checklist was developed to assess the reasons for examination malpractice in tertiary institutions. 36 items generated through Focused Group Discussion and literature were administered to 287 participants 98(34.15%) lecturers and 189 (65.8%) students. Data generated were subjected to factor analysis which yielded three solid factors. 26 items out of 36 items loaded significantly on the three factors. It was concluded that examination malpractice has three theoretical foundation and university management, ministries of education and all stakeholders should address the factors in order to stem the tide of malpractice in tertiary institutions.

KEYWORDS

Examination, Malpractice, Checklist

Development of Instrument for Assessing the Reasons for Examination Malpractice in Tertiary Institutions

Every society in the world establishes different institutions for its overall development. One of such institutions is the educational institution. This institution is charged with the development of manpower or labour for socio economic development. Omeje (2010) posits that educational institutions are places designated for the purposes of teaching, acquisition of skills, knowledge and competencies that can empower individuals to cope with life and its challenges as well as earn a living. She further states that the sector is also charged with the responsibility of producing professionals that man different segments nation's activities such mechanical, finance, infrastructural development, leadership/administration, transportation, communication, manufacturing etc. Educational institutions span through three phases namely primary, secondary and tertiary. While the first two phases could be conceptualized as the foundation for tertiary education, the tertiary is the stage for professional development. According to Akaranga and Ongong (2013), education is a necessary process through which people are prepared for productive lives taking into consideration their talents and interests. Through education, individuals acquire knowledge, skills and training as well as coping strategies to survive in a challenging world. Thus education could be conceptualized as a process of empowerment. To accomplish the task, institutions put in place procedures and activities/objects which include curriculum development, mode of instruction, lecturers that will deliver the instructional materials, classrooms, instructional materials (teaching aids/laboratory equipments and reagents etc.) and time-table of events showing all the activities to embark on during any period of interest. The time-table stipulates lecture periods and examination.

Examination is the hallmark of all the activities that take place in any educational institution. It is an organized assessment technique which presents individuals with series of questions or task directed towards finding out the level of knowledge and skills the person has acquired (Oduwaiye, 2014). Oke & Adie (2016) note that a test may be administered orally, on a paper on a computer or in confirmed area that needs the test-taker to be physically present to respond to the demands of the test. George & Ukpong (2013) opine that examination is the most common tool around which the entire system revolves to determine who moves to the next level. Emaiku (2012) posits that examination as part of evaluation in education is aimed at determining a learner's level of skill acquisition or intellectual competence and understanding after a given training. Examination enables the individual to assess his/her strengths and weaknesses. Thus it could be asserted that examination is a process very cardinal to the assessment of the institution and its products (graduates). While on one hand, the students are evaluated to find out how much learning they have acquired as skills, knowledge and competence on the other hand, it enables the institution to assess how effective the curriculum, mode of

instruction and quality or competence of the teaching staff. But everyday observation seems to confirm that of all the activities that take place in educational institutions examination is fraught with corruption hence the phenomenon of examination malpractice.

Examination malpractice refers to any abhorable, dishonest or illegal behavior emitted by a student on his own or in connivance with others (fellow students, staff, parents etc) before, during or after examination in order to obtain undeserved grades. It is a canker worm that invalidates the certificates obtained and renders the perpetrators intellectually bankrupt/impoverished. According to Nigeria Examination Malpractice Act No 33 of 1999 constitution, it is any act of omission or commission by a person who in anticipation of before during or after any examination fraudulently secures any unfair advantage for himself or any other person in such a manner that contravenes the rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity reliability and authenticity of the examination and ultimately the certificate issued. The issue of examination malpractice is ubiquitous and cuts across all the levels of education. For instance, Adamako (2005) reported the incidence of examination malpractice in University of Ghana and Nkame Nkumura University of Science and Technology. John (2003) noted that Ukraine University students cheated massively in examination he conducted. In United States of America, McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield (1999) found that high level of examination malpractice take place among students.

Marshall (2018) reports that the number of staff being penalized for assisting students cheating GCSE and A level exams has more than doubled from previous years according to Ofqual the qualification regulator in United Kingdom. In Nigeria, exam malpractice dates back to 1914 when the question paper for Senior Cambridge Local Examination leaked before the exam date (Anzene 2014). According to Nnam & Irah (2015) the trend has continued, and every year new strategies evolve. Nigeria has been ranked number one in the world examination malpractice index (Omeri 2017). Yahaya, Odebo & Akinye (2017) note that the menace is alarming in Nigeria. Lawal (2017) asserts that malpractice is as old as Nigeria and has continued to be on the increase as buttressed by statistics which showed that in 2000, 6% of 636,064 students who sat WAEC cheated; in 2001 5% of 1,025,185; 2002; 10.5% of 909,888 cheated, in 2003 11% of 1,066,831 and 2004 11% of 1,035,280 etc.

Examination malpractice occurs in different forms ranging from sale of question paper, plagiarism, impersonation, use of electronic gadgets to transmit information, copying from one another, bringing materials into the hall, exchanging of scripts, conniving with lecturers, sorting (paying of lecturers for grades) which attracts differential amounts for different grades. The amount ranges from N3,000 for C grade through N5,000.00 for B to as much as N10,000 for A grade. The amount varies depending on how difficult the course is, economic condition and

disposition of the lecturer in question. Some lecturers also engage in “flogging” which is a situation where a female student is compelled to pay for a chalet as well as buy food and drink for the lecturer who after eating will have the energy to ‘flog’ (sex) the student on the bed in order to obtain good grades. In some cases also parents are the culprit by paying mercenaries to write exam for their wards/children. Some also extend good will to teachers to secure good grades for their children.

The devastating consequences of this canker worm cannot be over emphasized. Exam malpractice is a stimulus to question the validity and reliability of the certificates obtained through such process. This aberration could explain why a medical doctor would prescribe moduretic a drug for hypertension for a patient with low blood pressure or a surgeon after operation will stitch a surgical blade in the patient's stomach; a pharmacist producing fake drugs, accountant that does not know the use of balance sheet, a teacher that cannot spell his/her name, a lawyer that does not know the difference between complainant and accused and many other such abnormality. In fact, Lawal (2017) concludes that examination malpractice erodes creativity, resourcefulness, ingenuity, technical know-how and moral values. Uzochukwu (2015) posits that examination malpractices encourage prostitution and armed robbery among students in order to make money for the sorting. Examination malpractices engender mediocrity and irreversible loss of credibility within and outside Nigeria. Graduates of such process become intellectually impoverished, unemployable and may become victims of post education stress which may be difficult to treat. Distress symptoms from such abhorable situation may persist because lost years, time and resources while in “school” cannot be retrieved and pursuing a new course of study will gulp more resources in terms of money, time energy.

Judging from the foregoing, it could be deduced that the cause of examination malpractice is multifactorial from professional experience and literature, the factors include but not limited to greed/avarice, social expectation parental and peer pressure, laziness, uncondusive environment, low self esteem, irregular admission policies, lack of aptitude and interest in the course of study and lack of motivation, emphasis on certificate and not on skill and knowledge. These factors appear to suggest many theoretical explanations which need to be empirically validated. Thus the present study attempted to develop an instrument that will discover the etiological factors in examination malpractice. If reasons for the malpractice are established, it will go a long way in helping heads of institutions and educational administrators formulate policies and strategies to combat this menace.

METHOD

Participants

Two hundred and eighty-seven (287) adults were sampled from both private and public tertiary institutions within Enugu metropolis. They included 178 females (62.2%) and 109 males (37.98%). The participants were made up of both lecturers and students, 98(34.15%) were lecturers while 189 (65.85%) were students respectively. They were considered as direct stakeholders when it comes to examinations.

INSTRUMENT

Development of reasons for Examination Malpractice Checklist

A focus group discussion was first carried out with the population of interest to generate items for the checklist in addition to those from literature .The discussions took place at three different places, comprising lecturers and students of a college of education, poly technique and university. Initially, 36 items were put together, after which it was given to five experts. 2 psychologists, 2 educationists and 1 sociologist for face validity of the contents coverage and relevant to the checklist.

However, items that failed to get 70% approval of the five experts were dropped. Hence, 26 items were retained. The 26 – item examination malpractice checklist was designed to determine etiological factors in examination malpractice. An example of the item is “Clamour for high grades.” The checklist has likert response format, ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree and 4 = Strongly Agree. All the items are directly scored. An overall score of a participants will be gotten by summing the responses of the participants on each item on the checklist.

Administration

A total of 350 copies of the questionnaire were administered within 6

weeks. It was administered by the researchers with the help of research assistants. At the end, 302 copies of the questionnaires were returned out of which 15 copies were discarded due to error in completion, leaving 287 copies which were scored and used for the factor analysis. Meanwhile, adequate rapport was established between the researchers and the participants confidentiality guaranteed and informed consent obtained. The participants were first of all briefed about the purpose of the study and their consent to participate sought. So, all the participants in this study gave their consent to participate in this study.

RESULTS

The factorability of the 26 examination malpractice checklist items were examined using SPSS IBM Version 20. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) inspecting the correlation matrix coefficients of 0.30 is termed factorability of R and It was observed that all the 26 items correlated at least .30. Morevoer, the *Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin* (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy of .70 which portrays a good sampling adequacy was observed indicating any coefficient above .50 is good, and the items should be factorized (Hair, Anderson, Tatham& Black, 1995; Tabachnick&Fidell, 2007). Also, Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant at $\chi^2(325) = 1203.600, p < .001$ level of significance which showed that there were patterned relationships among the items (Barlett, 1950).

Furthermore, according to Costello and Osborne (2005) giving the confusing nature of factor analysis, no single criteria should be assumed to determine factor extraction. So, using an Eigenvalues cut-off of >1.0 (Kaiser, 1960), there were 9 factors that explained a cumulative variance of 58.17%. Meanwhile, for something to be labelled as a factor it should at least have 3 variables/items (Tabachnick&Fidell, 2007), as such, the Screen plot disconfirmed the ratings of the 9 factors and indicated that the data have three factors that are meaningful for this checklist. These were due to the fact that interpreting Screen plots is subjective, requiring researcher judgement (Thompson, 2004). Hence, the factor loadings after rotation using significant factor criterion of .3 gave rise to student factors, teacher factors and significant others factor. In addition, a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .76 was obtained and a mean of 69.76 which is the norm for this scale. This means that scores higher than the norm indicate higher agreement with the scale items while scores lower than the mean indicate lack of agreement.

Figure 1. Reasons for malpractice checklist: Teachers factors

S/N	Item	Teacher factors
1	Item3. Setting examinations outside the course curriculum	.611
2	Item9. Teachers Laziness and uncompromising attitude	.601
3	Item4. Not attending classes	.591
4	Item6. Not reading before examinations	.563
5	Item2. Inability of teachers to transfer knowledge to the students	.524
6	Item7. Poor teaching aids	.509
7	Item13. Poor academicbackground	.498
8	Item10. Imposing fears on students by teachers	.465

From the above, items in this factor were named teacher factors due to their inclinations towards the activities of the teachers that bring about examination malpractice.

Figure 2. Student factors

S/N	Item	Students Factors
9	Item22. Admission of intellectually impoverished students	.628
10	Item18. Being over ambitious to obtain high grades	.552
11	Item12. Clamour for high grades	.541
12	Item1. Bad peer influence	.478
13	Item20. Fear of failure	.469
14	Item21. Desire to maintain standard/satisfy parents/siblings	.466

15	Item19. Being anxious about performance during/after examinations	.434
16	Item8. Lacking confidence in oneself	.398
17	Item11. Having access to technology	.358

From the above, items in this factor were named student factors due to their inclinations towards the activities of the students that bring about examination malpractice.

Figure 3. Other significant factors

S/N	Item	Social Factors
18	Item14. Parental influence on student's course of study	.299
19	Item25. Lack of conducive examination halls	.628
20	Item26. Ambiguous questions/instructions	.558
21	Item16. Giving of gifts to teachers by students	.520
22	Item24. Cheating as a norm to adhere to peer pressure	.476
23	Item17. Using of students as errand boys/girls by teachers	.444
24	Item15. Poor spacing of examinations	.440
25	Item23. Admission into unsolicited course of study	.327
26	Item5. Over familiarity between teachers and students	.229

From the above, items in this factor were named other significant factors due to their inclinations towards the activities of the society in terms of expectations and associations that bring about examination malpractice.

The above three tables were made possible because according to Henson and Roberts (2006) two or three variables must load on a factor so it can be given a meaningful interpretation. Since, labelling of factors is a subjective, theoretical, and inductive processes (Pett, Lackey & Sullivan,).

DISCUSSION

A factor analysis was carried out which produced a three-factor structure for Reasons for Examination Malpractice Checklist with 26-item. The checklist revealed that examination malpractice has many factors in its etiology. In other words, to tackle the problem of malpractice, these factors must be addressed and strategies to forestall it put in place. This is to ensure the quality of education and its products (graduates) guaranteed.

Recommendations

The researchers hereby recommend the scale to university, ministry of education and other stakeholders in the educational sector to utilize this scale in determining the causes of examination malpractice and subsequently apply its outcome in policy formulation and management of examinations in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

To this end, it was concluded that the scale 'Examination Malpractice Checklist' was developed and designed to determine factors that influence incessant examination malpractice and the scale is highly reliable.

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