

Management of Re-occurring Cases of Examination Malpractice in Plateau State Collage of Health Technology Pankshin, Nigeria

Dusu, Paul Bot* Gotan, Anthony Deshi, Jummai M Gambo, Barashe
Department of General Studies, Plateau State College of Health Technology Pankshin. PMB 13, Plateau State-
Nigeria

Abstract

Nigeria's educational system is gradually degenerating, as the sanctity of education process has been affected by malpractice. The purpose of this paper was to assess re-occurring incidence of examination malpractice in Plateau State College of Health Technology Pankshin, Nigeria. It looked at cases of examination malpractice and students' perception of the causes of examination malpractices. Data were obtained from structured questionnaire issued to second and third year students, and secondary source from the College examination malpractice committee's report. The result indicated that the major types of cheating perpetuated by students are; Copying from each other 43% and Possession of foreign materials 32%. The result also showed that students perceived Poor sitting arrangement during exams 53%, High handedness by some lecturers 47% and Social distraction 49% as reasons that induce cheating. The study concluded that College authority and lecturers' attitude is the major factor that will either encourage or discourage examination malpractice. It recommended Ethical re-orientation, Examination monitoring team and Proper sitting arrangement as what to be put in place to minimize cheating during examination in the College.

Keywords: Re-occurring cases, Examination Malpractice, Students' Perception, Lecturers and College Authority

1. Introduction

The successful continuance of every society depends on the transmission of its right heritage to the young citizens, and education is one of the basic channels in all human society that can be used. This quest for knowledge has led to the desire by most citizens to get education and will do everything under the sun to achieve their aim. The unquenchable desire have some sort of backing, as most labour organizations have place high leverage on paper qualification before citizens are offered jobs in any reputable organization. The major aim of an educational institution is to produce intelligent, respectful and responsible individuals (Miranda and Freire, 2011), because of the synergy that exist between the educational system and the society.

The training of Polytechnic students is deemed efficient and effective, when the educational system makes periodic provision for evaluation of its students through test, assignment, practical and examination to ascertain their level of competence and capability (Dusu, 2014 and 2015). This should be done because adequate and proper acquisition of knowledge in subjects and disciplines of study is invariably a function of quality education (Okara, 2012).

Nigeria educational system has degenerated into a decadent institution where the sanctity of examination process has been trivialized by a lot of malpractice (Emaiku, 2012). Different methods of passing examinations at all cost are being devised by Students, thereby resulting to examination malpractice. Malpractice is as old as the western education itself and manifests in many forms. Kpangban, Ajaja and Umudhe (2008) contribution on the challenge posed by examination malpractice, stated that;

There is hardly any examination where no form of malpractice occurs. This is true for all examinations worldwide. What makes the difference is the prevalence, scale, magnitude and dimension. In Nigeria, the scale and dimension have taken a frightening look that the quality of our certificate is now questioned both locally and internationally.

The Examination Malpractice Act of Nigeria (1999) cited in Kofi and Kwabena (2014) explains examination malpractice as 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 him or herself, or any other person in such a manner that contravenes the rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity, reliability, authenticity of the examination and ultimately the integrity of the certificates issued.

So many factors both real and imagined have been isolated as the causes of examination malpractice. To restore the dignity of our educational institution and certificates, this ugly 'hydra headed' monster must be fought and defeated.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study with regards to examination malpractice is to;

1. Investigate re-occurring incidence of examination malpractice in Plateau State College of Health Technology Pankshin.

2. Understand Students' perception on the cause of examination malpractice within the College.
3. Suggest ways on how to minimize and if possible eradicate the incidence of examination malpractice in our educational institutions.

2. Research Questions

To guide this study based on the objectives, the following relevant questions were raised.

1. Have there been cases of examination malpractice in Plateau State College of Health Technology Pankshin, Nigeria?
2. What are the types of examination malpractice being perpetuated in the College?
3. Do Lecturers' attitude contribute to students' involvement in examination malpractice?
4. What do students perceive as the causes of examination malpractice in the College?
5. What measures should the College put in place to curb examination malpractices?

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

The design of this research was descriptive survey and the use of secondary source of data. Descriptive Survey was used as the study sought to discover students' perception and opinion on why some students involve in examination malpractice. Patton (2001) stated that survey research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific setting, where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest. On the other hand, secondary sources were also used to support the primary information and these were derived from Examination Malpractice Committee's report of the period under review, presented lecturers, Journals among others.

3.2 Population and Sample

In determining the sample plan and sample size, the survey was carried out among the students of Plateau State College of Health Technology Pankshin, Nigeria. Only second year and third year students were selected as the sample. First year students were not considered for the mere fact that they were new in the College and they were yet to write any examination. 300 students (75 every year) were randomly selected for this study.

3.3 Research Instrument

The questionnaire "Causes of Examination Malpractice in Plateau State College of Health Technology Pankshin" (CMPSCHTP) was developed for the study. The instrument consist of three sections; the first section sought personal data of the respondents, the Second section comprised questions on the study variables which are scored on four-point likert scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD) while the third section gives the despondence a chance to air any other view on malpractice.

3.4 Validity of Research Instrument

The content validity of the questionnaire was determined by giving the instrument to two specialists in measurement and evaluation for comments. The reliability of the questionnaire was done using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha approach (CCA). This is the appropriate approach for determining reliabilities of tests whose answers are not just one (Wiseman, 1999). The reliability coefficient of the instrument by use of CCA is 0.79 which is adjudged as being reliable.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed mathematically to generate percentage and presented on tables for easy comprehension. Out of the 300 administered questionnaires to students only 291 were returned for analysis, which represent a response rate of 97%.

4. Result and Discussion

The results that were generated from both Primary source and Secondary source are represented by the use of Tables 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Table – 1: Examination Malpractice Cases and Corresponding Student Population from 2011 to 2014: Student Population (SP) and Malpractice Cases (MC)

SCHOOLS	2014		2013		2012		2011	
	SP	MC	SP	MC	SP	MC	SP	MC
1. Environmental Health	933	2	1013	5	1134	7	1,439	11
2. Medical Laboratory Science	386	2	391	4	419	-	459	3
3. HIM/Biostatistics	199	-	212	1	219	2	237	2
4. Medical Image processing Technology	63	-	58	-	87	-	44	-
5. Pharmacy Technician	62	-	79	1	98	2	26	2

Source: College Academic Office and Examination Malpractice Committee Report from 2011-2014

The result in table-1 shows that, there have been cases of examination malpractice in Plateau State College of Health Technology Pankshin. The school of Environmental Health have had repeated cases of malpractice and the School also have the highest number of students caught cheating. The other schools have not had repeated cases of examination malpractice while Medical Image Processing Technology have never had any case of cheating which is commendable.

Table -2: Re-occurring cases of Examination Malpractice from 2011 to 2014

SN	SCHOOLS	CRIME COMMITTED					TOTAL
		Impersonation	Use of Foreign Material	Use of Hand Set	Copying from another Student	Exchange of Booklet	
1	Environmental Health	3	7	1	11	3	25
2	Medical Laboratory Science	3	2	-	4	1	10
3	HIM/Biostatistics	-	3	-	2	-	5
4	Medical Image processing Technology	-	-	-	-	-	0
5	Pharmacy Technician	1	1	-	3	-	5
TOTAL		7 (16%)	13 (29%)	1 (2%)	20 (44%)	4 (9%)	

Source: Examination Malpractice Committee Report from 2011-2014

On the re-occurring cases of examination malpractice, table-2 shows that majority of the students 20(44%) were caught copying from each other. Use of foreign materials had 13(29%), while other forms of malpractice are Impersonation 7(16%), Exchange of booklets 4(9%) and Use of hand set 1(2%).

Table -3: Students' perception on Problems Posed by College Authority. Strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD).

SN	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	Unstable school calendar due to frequent strike can encourage examination malpractice	123 (42%)	78 (27%)	54 (19%)	36 (12%)
2	Lack of proper monitoring of part-time lecturers activities by management can encourage exam malpractice	111 (38%)	63 (22%)	96 (33%)	21 (7%)
3	Lack of proper exam timetable structure can encourage exams malpractice	104 (36%)	86 (30%)	69 (24%)	32 (11%)
4	Inadequate facilities for exams can encourage students to cheat in exams	148 (51%)	92 (32%)	37 (13%)	14 (5%)
5	Student-teacher unholy alliance can encourage exam malpractice	122 (42%)	99 (34%)	42 (14%)	28 (10%)
6	Unholy alliance between students and non-academic staff in sensitive offices can encourage exam malpractice	101 (35%)	137 (47%)	16 (6%)	37 (13%)
7	Poor sitting arrangement during examination can encourage examination malpractice.	153 (53%)	107 (37%)	23 (8%)	8 (3%)

Source: Field Survey 2011-2014

Looking at students' perception on re-occurring incidents of examination malpractices in terms of Contribution of College Authorities to the phenomenon, it shows that poor sitting arrangement during examination induce students to cheat in the evaluation process attracts 153(53%) strongly agreeing to the assertion. Inadequate facilities for exams, unstable school calendar due to frequent strike and student-lecturer unholy alliance who polled 148(51%), 123(42%) and 122(42%) respectively strongly agree to the fact that, these

factors contribute to cheating during examination. Also agreeing to the assertion is the fact that unholy alliance between students and non-academic staff in sensitive offices encourages malpractice in the process attracting 137(47%).

Table -4: Students' perception on Problems Posed by Lecturers: Strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD).

	Items	SA	A	D	SD
8	Poor attendance of lecturers in class encourages students to cheat in exams	98 (34%)	112 (39%)	61 (21%)	20 (7%)
9	High handedness of students by lecturers influences involvement in exam malpractices	101 (35%)	137 (47%)	37 (13%)	16 (6%)
10	Marking of examination scripts by students or non-academic staff encourages exam malpractice	111 (38%)	96 (33%)	63 (22%)	21 (7%)
11	Collecting of gratification from students by lecturers promotes exam malpractice	141 (49%)	76 (26%)	63 (22%)	11 (4%)
12	Altering of students' Scores by lecturers or departments is examination malpractice	104 (36%)	86 (30%)	32 (11%)	69 (24%)
13	Invigilators covering for Students caught cheating is examination malpractice	111 (38%)	63 (22%)	21 (7%)	96 (33%)

Source: Field Survey 2011-2014

The students' perception on lecturers behavior that induce malpractice had the following reservations; majority of the students 141(49%) strongly agree that collection of gratification from students by lecturers ignites cheating and 111(38%) students strongly agree that invigilators covering for students caught cheating and marking of exams scripts by students or non-academic staff stimulates examination malpractice. Surprisingly 96(33%) students strongly disagree that invigilators covering for students caught cheating do not encourage malpractice but are seen as been lenient to students. Interestingly 137(47%) and 112(39%) agree that high handedness of students by lecturers and poor attendance of lecturers in class respectively induce cheating.

Table -5: Students' perception on Problems Posed by Students: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD).

SN	Items	SA	A	D	SD
14	Emphasis on paper qualification by employers of labour ignites exam malpractice	139(48%)	104(35%)	32(11%)	16(6%)
15	Poor attitude by students towards lectures encourages exams malpractice	73 (25%)	118 (41%)	81 (28%)	19 (7%)
16	Inadequate preparation for exams due to laziness makes students cheat in exams	119 (41%)	106 (36%)	44 (15%)	22 (8%)
17	Inability to cope with school work due to social distraction promotes exam Malpractices	63 (22%)	141 (49%)	76 (26%)	11 (4%)
18	Trying to meet up with the College Grading System induces malpractice	63 (22%)	111 (38%)	96 (33%)	21 (7%)
19	Negative influence brings about exam malpractice	78 (27%)	123 (42%)	36 (12%)	54 (19%)

Source: Field Survey 2011-2014

Looking at students' perception with regards to themselves; 119(41%) students from the evaluation process strongly agree to the assertion that inadequate preparation due to laziness induces cheating. A great majority of the respondents agree to almost all the issues with high frequencies of 141(49%), 123(42%), 118(41%) and 111(38%) that inability to cope with school work due to social distraction, negative influence, poor attitude by students towards lectures and trying to meet up with College grading system ignites sharp practice during exams. Quite a number of students 76(26%) disagree that social distraction could affect their ability to cope with school work which will lead them involving in cheating.

5 Discussion

The findings of this paper show that, there have been incidence of cheating in the College during examination and this research work was able to bring to light the re-occurring types of examination malpractice and major causes of the menace using students' perception. The study moved further by collating some data from the College Examination Malpractice Committee report. Solutions to examination malpractice devoid of students' perception will to a certain level not succeed because they know why students engage in cheating and hence stand in a better position to help provide such solutions to curb malpractice during examination. This agrees with the findings of Kpangban et al (2008).

The students' response stated that the most significant causes of cheating is Emphasis on paper qualification by employers of labour and that poor sitting arrangement during exams which encourages copying from each other, exchange of booklets and giraffing. The result of the study agrees with the study conducted by Uzoagulu (2008) who noted that giraffing, coping from one another, taking handwritten materials and textbooks into the examination hall rank first among other types of examination malpractice at all levels of education in Nigeria. The students also indicated that some lecturers have poor attendance to lectures while some that attend lectures have high handedness towards students. However, students were divided on their response on the issue of lecturers (invigilators) covering for students caught cheating.

A major finding based on the students' response revealed that, in finding solutions to the prevalence of examination malpractice the challenge is on the College and lecturers. This is so, because the result of this work tend to show that if the College authority and lectures say no to cheating, the incidence will vanish in our institutions, but if they nurture malpractice through their actions and deeds, examination malpractice will continue.

6. Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn from the study;

The school of Environmental Health is running a number of courses which are; Nutrition and Deities, Environmental Health Assistance, Environmental Health Technician, National Diploma Environmental Health and Higher National Diploma Environmental Health, this is why the school had the highest number of students caught cheating. Some schools have never had any case of cheating which is commendable but hoping that invigilators have not been covering for students caught in examination malpractice.

The incidence of examination malpractice is gradually decreasing, which shows that some of the measures already put in place by the College authority to curb this menace are working. The common types of malpractice are student's copying from each other and use of foreign materials which are closely related to poor sitting arrangement.

The College authority and lecturers' attitude towards malpractice will either encourage or discourage cheating. Finally, paper qualification should not be seen as the only tool for employment but knowledge of the graduates.

7. Recommendation

To further minimize the common causes of examination malpractice, the following recommendations are made;

1. Proper sitting arrangement should be put in place to reduce incidence of students copying from each other or exchanging booklets.
2. Invigilators should be serious with their work by checking students thoroughly before entering the hall to ensure that foreign materials and phones are not allowed.
3. Examination monitoring team to monitor examinations should be put in place to always check invigilators, supervisors and students' activities during examination to minimize unholy alliance between students and staff. This will also eliminate covering for Students caught cheating during examination.
4. Guidance and Counseling programmes should be organized for students by the College students' Affairs Unit on regular basis.
5. Ethical re-orientation, through workshops, seminars and enlightenment programs on inculcating of moral values should be organized at least twice every semester for staff and students by College authority.
6. Religious organizations, Tribal organizations and other clubs on campus should always discourage their members on examination malpractice.

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