



## **CURBING EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper highlights nature, causes and effects of examination malpractice in order to identify the challenges and strategies to curb this menace. The major challenges identified are non-adherence to the rules and regulations, low salaries given to teachers, inadequate training of teaching staff, unavailability of guidance and counselors among others. Also, the strategies for curbing the menace include public enlightenment, prosecuting offenders, setting special court for offenders, exposing evils of examination malpractice in primary and secondary schools to be mentioned but a few. The paper recommends that adequate legislations be made, special court be established to try offenders and the fight to eradicate examination malpractice should be a fight for all.

Keywords: Curbing; Examination, Malpractice, Public Secondary School.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Examination is a means of assessing and evaluating students' performance in a given task, Examination may be administered orally, on paper, on computer or in a confined area that requires an examinee to physically perform a set of skills. Adekunle (2003) stated that examination is an instrument used for the assessment of individual's skills and knowledge-content both in general and specific areas of study. According to him, teaching and learning become more effective when the students are subjected to an examination process to determine

the extent to which the students have assimilated the content of the instrument given to them and the teacher on the other hand, measures his effectiveness through the performance of the students. Olatunbosun (2009) agrees that till date, examination remains the best tool for an objective assessment and evaluation of what the learner has achieved after a period of schooling. Therefore, any action that undermines examination poses a great threat to the validity and reliability of examination results and certification. But many students these days no longer take their studies seriously by studying hard. They are often seen playing football and other games around. When confronted, the usual answer you will get is “don’t worry, I will make my papers”. And when the result comes out, they get better results than the students that spent time reading. Why is it so?

According to Nwadiani (2005), the process of examination in public secondary schools in Nigeria and Rivers State in particular has become a “contemporary shame”. The obvious cause of this is examination malpractice which has become an enemy of education system. The question therefore, is what is examination malpractice? West African Examination Council (1992) posits that examination malpractice is any irregular behaviour exhibited by candidates or officials charged with the responsibility of conducting examination in or outside the examination hall, before, during or after such examination. Onah (2010) see examination malpractice as anything done by an examination candidate that is likely to render the assessment useless. Asuka (1997) observes that the organization, co-ordination and administration of both internal and external examinations involve the federal and state governments, examination councils, teachers and parents with much commitment of money, energy and time, but these huge efforts are most often frustrated by the act called examination malpractice which has become a ritual in the public secondary school system. He therefore, defines examination malpractice as any deviant act that is perpetrated by a candidate before, during and after examination to be declared successful. Onyechere (1997) describes examination malpractice as a monster that is almost defying every solution and has intimidated Nigeria to submission to a state of hopelessness.

Adenipekun (2004) stated that this menace called examination malpractice is not a recent phenomenon in Nigeria but has been there for a long time and manifests now in a new dimension. Ekpo (1990) agreed to this with the assertion that cheating in examination is as old as academia. Adesina (2000) traced the history of examination malpractice to the leakage of Cambridge examination in 1914 which led to the Alexander commission in 1967. This commission was set up as a special commission of inquiry to investigate the incidences of Malpractice in Nigeria. Asuka (1997) stated that as a deviant act, Examination Malpractice also called “cheating or stealing” asserted its presence in Nigeria in 1977 during the May/June West African School Certificate Examination. Oluyeba (1993) stated that the percentage of candidates that cheated in West African Examination grew from 1% in 1985 to over 13% in 1994. This led to the special conference that was held in Ibadan in 1986 where decrees were promulgated, schools were sanctioned, results cancelled, invigilators and supervisors also suspended.

Many factors are responsible for examination malpractices. Denga (1981) categorized the factors responsible for examination malpractice into three, namely: psychological, environmental and intelligence. He explained that psychological factors have to do with all the stress that is often induced by parents, peer groups and students because of examination. The psychological trauma of failure or scoring low grades promotes candidates’ involvement in examination malpractice. Environmental factors on the other hand, refer to the crowded nature of classrooms and examination halls with few invigilators during examination. The outdated or inadequate or lack of instructional materials can lure students into examination malpractice, whereas

intelligence has to do with the difference in intelligent-quotient of students. Often the academically weak students try to measure themselves with the gifted students and when they cannot meet up with the challenges, they resort to seeking external help which manifests as examination malpractice.

Government and other stakeholders in education have decried the increase of examination malpractice in our educational system and had at different times adopted different means to curb the menace, but the more they try, the more widespread of the menace. Asuru (2004) wrote that in recent times, Rivers State was declared by WAEC as the state with the highest level of examination malpractice with the index of 36.55. The high rate of this social ill called examination malpractice in public secondary schools in Rivers State has become a major concern to the stakeholders in education including the writer of this paper, hence the focus of this paper is to examine the challenges and strategies of curbing examination malpractice in the public secondary schools in Rivers State.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

### **Examination Malpractice**

Adenipekun (2004) espouses that examination malpractice is not a recent phenomenon in Nigeria but has been there for a long time and manifests now in a new dimension. Ekpo (1999) agreed to this with the assertion that cheating in examination is as old as academia. Onyechere (1997) described examination malpractice as a monster that is almost defying every solution and has intimidated Nigeria to submission to a state of hopelessness. Asuka (1997) stated that as a deviant act, examination malpractice also called “cheating or stealing” asserted its presence in Nigeria in 1977 during the May/June West African School Certificate Examination. Oluyeba (1993) asserted that the percentage of candidates that cheated in West African Examination grew from 1% in 1985 to over 13% in 1994.

Asuka (1997) observed that the organization, co-ordination and administration of both internal and external examinations involve the federal and state governments, examination councils, teachers and parents with much commitment of money, energy and time but these huge efforts are most often frustrated by the act called examination malpractice which has become a ritual in the secondary school system. He therefore, defines examination malpractice as any deviant act that is perpetrated by a candidate before, during and after examination to be declared successful. According to Asuru (1997), the root word “Mal” in malpractice is a Latin word meaning bad practice applied in an examination in order to make the examinee earn an unmerited grade.

Isangedighi (2007) defined examination malpractice as a form of corrupt practice in which a candidate singly or in collaboration with others attempts to obtain grade better than he is capable of obtaining. Jega (2006) called it a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigerian’s education system, defines it as any form of misbehavior that leads to alteration or tampering with the prescribed ways to conducting examination in any given system. Habia (2001) see it as any act of misconduct such as leakages, impersonation, writing on the palms or hidden part of dresses, coding of five fingers (a,b,c,d,e respectively) for objective test, exchange of answer booklets after examination by either students taking the examination or the official assigned the duty of scoring or releasing the result of the examination.

Esuabana (2017) stated that the incidence of examination malpractices even in sophisticated form is on the increase in the educational system including the schools returned to the missions. He summarizes the cheating behaviours indulged by students in examination as glancing at other students' scripts, going into examination halls with piece of papers popularly referred to as "brain support" or "microchips", exchange of papers and answer sheets, discussion and the use of handsets, which is the recent method. However, often times, examination malpractice and examination misconduct are used interchangeably. Misconduct is an unacceptable or bad behaviour exhibited by someone in a position of authority or responsibility. Examination misconduct like examination malpractice has important rules controlling them regardless of the level of study. These are:

- The use of possession of unauthorized books, notes, software, electronic devices or other materials in an examination (unless specifically permitted).
- Obtaining an examination paper ahead of its authorized release.
- Attempting to impersonate or impersonation of another individual, due to be sitting a specific assessment. Considering the fact that the rules governing examination misconduct is also governing examination malpractice that is why both notions can be used interchangeably.

### **Nature of Examination Malpractice**

Asuka (1997) identified three phases of the manifestation of examination malpractices thus:

- Preparation phase;
- The examination phase; and
- After the examination phase

**Preparatory Phase:** This phase is characterized by the following activities which range from mundane to spiritual that are embarked upon by students, parents, examination officials, teachers etc. before the commencement of the examination:

**Getting examination question papers in advance:** This occurs in both internal and external examinations in secondary schools when students get question paper and solve the problems in preparation for the examination. In internal examinations, it is suspected that the examiners, the teachers, the typists and the cyclostyle who operate the photo-copying machine exposed the questions to students because of money or to favour their loved ones. Students who have seen the question paper help themselves by preparing the answers in small piece of papers and hide it in the most cryptic parts of their bodies to beat searches by invigilators who want to detect any "bullets" or "armours" they bear. They could also write the answers in very small letters on their thighs, sitting desks, mathematical set pads, white under wears etc.

In external examinations such as SSCE, question papers could be sold to students by the WAEC official and the supervisors before the commencement of the examination. They do this, by opening the sealed parcel of question paper and photocopy or write it out. Akanwa (1997) supported the above revelation in this report that while the West African Examination Council's head office in Nigeria was giving reasons for the delay in issuance of certificates to candidates, the lamented some of the problems facing WAEC in Nigeria which include: untimely cutting

open of question paper packets to leak to candidates, aiding and abetting, impersonation and substitution of worked scripts at the end of examinations. This phenomenon was very much in vogue in 1970s and was referred to as “Expo”.

**Entertainment Fee:** This is the modest name for what students refer to as “examination fee”. Students writing external examinations such as SSCE, NECO and JSCE contribute money into a common fund to be used for the entertainment of examination officials (Independent Monitor, 1997). These officials are the principal, teachers (invigilators), supervisor and WAEC official. In secondary schools, before the commencement of the above examinations, an examination committee is constituted to determine how much a student would pay for the organization of the examination. From the money, teachers (invigilators) who would either dictate or write the answers on the board or distribute photo-copied answer materials to candidates, the WAEC syndicate, the supervisor and in most cases the principal take part in sharing of the money. Any student who fails to pay the money for the reason of not having or for his or her Christian faith will be allocated to a separate room as a vindictive measure.

**Intoxicating Gins:** Part of the money collected is used to buy very intoxicating gins especially, for the supervisors suspected to be alcoholic or drunkards so that he could be intoxicated to fall into a deep slumber while the examination is on to give the students free hands.

**Comfort Girls:** These are very beautiful candidates in an examination centre that would be arranged by the examination committee to lure away a supervisor and WAEC official who prove difficult to compromise with the students.

**Settlement and Placation of Teachers:** This is the process whereby teachers who are not in support of examination malpractice and sometimes threaten to petition anyone involved are managed to develop a positive disposition by settling them with some of the money from the common fund so that they can give their blessings to the students. Also, at this time, students who had been very disobedient and rude to their teachers mend fences with them because the teachers are seen as invaluable assets at this period.

**Hiring of Mercenary:** A mercenary in an examination is someone arranged to write for an examinee because he is deemed to be more knowledgeable. In secondary schools, mercenaries are hired mostly in writing external examinations such as SSCE, NECO and JSCE and they are paid per subject but English language and mathematics are costlier because they are compulsory subjects and most students find it difficult to pass them.

**Financial and Material Gifts to Teachers:** The period very close to either internal or external examination are relatively blessed for teachers in schools. At this period, students, parents and husbands would send gifts ranging from food, drinks, clothes and money. Some parents come to the teachers with gifts and literarily “handover” their children and a ward to the teachers pleading that they should ensure everything is done to make them succeed.

**Spiritual or Mystical Attention:** Some students still believe that examination can be passed through some spiritual means or assistance; such students therefore, go to church prophets or native powers to receive prayers and other preparations to be used before and during the

examinations. They may be requested to submit their pens or other writing materials to be blessed for the examination.

**Preparing Answers to Suspected Questions:** This is when a student copies a particular topic and takes it into the examination hall because he suspects that it would be asked as a question.

**The Examination Phase:** This is the examination malpractice that occurs during the internal and external examinations. It takes place when the question paper has been actually administered to the students or candidates. The activities that characterize the examination phase especially, in external examinations include: impersonation of the actual student that registered for the examination. Sometimes, a junior student is used to impersonate an absent candidate, smuggling of question paper outside for a mercenary to solve, use of textbooks, notebooks and other prepared materials called “bullets”, “missiles” and “krekre”; invigilating teachers writing the solutions on the chalkboard for the students to copy, consultation of textbooks and notebooks outside on the excuse of visiting the public convenience, calling of answers to the objective questions for the students and settlement of examination monitors.

**After Examination Phase:** This phase is marked by the examination malpractices that people embark upon before result is released especially, in internal examinations. They include the following:

- Female Students who are unsure of passing or who may have fallen into trouble while indulging in examination malpractice usually meet the examiners to plead with them and by so doing could offer themselves, money or gifts in order to be considered.
- Students also plead with their teachers to be lenient when marking and scoring their papers after examinations.
- Husbands and parents go to examiners and offer money and other gifts while pleading with them for their wards, children and wives to be assisted to pass.
- Students, parents and husbands travel to WAEC Headquarters in Nigeria to pay money to the computer operators in Examination and Records department to feed-in high scores for themselves, children and wives.
- Teachers deliberately fail students so that they can come to bargain for payment in cash or kind in order to upgrade their scores.
- Teachers could talk to their colleagues to help a girlfriend, wife, sister, brother.
- Purchase of fake WASC result slips with good grades printed on them through “result agents or syndicates.”

Some students trace their scripts to the marking point in order to influence their grades especially, in internal examination where cash and kind can be exchanged for grades. Ojerinde (2004) supported this that some WASC candidates traced their scripts from Enugu to Kano and others from Kano to Ibadan.

### **Agents of Examination Malpractice**

Students who cheat do not do it alone, they usually collaborate with their agents such as, their parents, the teachers, principals, invigilators, supervisors, examination officials and their fellow

students. Ijaiya (2011) agreed to this, that examination malpractice involves students, parents, teachers, school heads, examination officials and supervisors.

### **Causes of Examination Malpractice**

Adenipekun (2004) and Idaka (2006) opined that examination malpractice is perpetuated by desperate individuals who want to acquire certificates and the unwholesome conspiracy to aid and abet examination malpractice by school principals, teachers, invigilators, parents, students and mercenaries whose motive is to make quick money rather than genuine love for the candidates. Again, Ololube (2013) agrees that parenting style and expectations are presumed to be at the forefront of examination malpractice in Nigeria. This is because most parents expect their children and wards in schools to complete their courses at the top of their classes. Hence, students who cannot cope with their parents' expectation may out of anxiety resort to examination malpractice.

Other factors responsible for examination Malpractice according to Azuka (1997: 161-166) include:

**Students' Insecurity:** This happens when the students are not sure of their ability to pass an examination. This factor could be attributed to mass promotion syndrome of students from previous classes without regard to their performance and also students' low reading culture as well as unreadiness to study hard.

**Parents and Guardians:** These people have been observed to aid and abet the process of examination malpractice in Nigerian schools. They do this by sponsoring every payment for examination malpractice such as entertainment fee, script submission fee or payment for altering or upgrading examination scores for their children, wards or wives.

**Government's Attitude:** The government is also blamable for the large-scale examination malpractice experienced in the country. This is because they have not come up with an embracing punishment for the offenders. The miscellaneous offences decree No. 20 of 1984 which imposes a penalty of 21 years on offenders was too restrictive in scope because it did not cover the present practice of examination malpractice but only emphasized the acquisition or possession and sales of examination question papers.

Again, government will be blamed for their inability to provide the necessary infrastructures and enabling environment for effective teaching and learning which the cause of examination malpractice is also. Most schools do not have enough teachers to teach the subjects students registered for. Also, most schools offer science subjects without any laboratory and science equipment hence, because the students are ill-prepared for the examination, they resort to examination malpractice in order to pass.

Furthermore, certain government policies in education contribute to the upsurge of examination malpractice. For instance, in 1980, Rivers State ministry of education demanded that the most requirements for secondary school teachers' promotion is the number of students who passed their subjects in WASCE. The result of this policy was that teachers who do not have confidence in their students were compelled to aid and abet them in order to be promoted. The

present policy of mass promotion of students through continuous assessment system also leads them to involve in examination malpractice because they were ill-prepared in the previous classes. Finally, non-payment of teachers' salaries and other fringe benefits have led some teachers to resort to examination bribes in order to meet up their family responsibilities.

**Logistic Problems:** This problem is observed in external examinations such as JSCE, SSCE and JAMB where the terrain could constitute late arrival of the examination materials and late return of the materials to the custodian points. The situation creates opportunities for dubious supervisors to leak the question papers and sometimes gives room for students to have access to the question papers from neighbouring schools. Logistic problems also arise in internal examinations when teachers give their questions to the typist to type and produce but out of dubiousness or carelessness the question could leak. Examination malpractice could also occur when inadequate numbers of teachers are appointed to invigilate an examination and when examination is written in overcrowded halls.

**Craze for paper qualification:** In Nigeria, most employments are based on the presentation of certificate or "paper" and because of this; very many people are left with no other alternative than to have it and in most cases through examination malpractice.

**Corrupt WAEC examination supervisors:** Most WAEC and other external examination supervisors compromise standards by collecting money from schools and candidates and thus, close their eyes to the examination ills done under their nose.

**Good school image:** Some schools are known for making good results in the external examination like JSCE, WAEC, NECO and JAMB because they have secured the protection of the examining body. This popularity makes candidates to register such examinations with them with the hope of passing by all means. **Value system of the society:** The value for money in Nigeria has changed the orientation of teachers to explore and exploit the opportunity of making money through examination malpractice. This is because of the value system that a man's worth in Nigeria is measured by how much wealth he commands not how much grammar he speaks.

**Socialization:** Examination malpractice in Nigerian schools is spreading like a contagious disease. As a social phenomenon, it seems to have permeated all parts of the society where examinations are conducted. This process of permeation appears to be that of cultural diffusion, acculturation and enculturation. Many people think that examination malpractice is one of the means of solving the problem of educational imbalance in Nigeria. As a process of enculturation, junior students who have practically witnessed the various methods and types of examination malpractice become socialized into it.

**Frequent strike actions of teachers:** Teachers' frequent strike actions leave the students untaught for a long time. Sometimes, when the strike is called off, the students are rushed into examination without adequate preparations. The situation compels the students to resolve to help themselves by indulging in one form of cheating or the other.

**Blanket cancellation of results:** Ajetunmobi (1997) identified the blanket cancellation of results of all candidates in a centre when all the students did not indulge in examination malpractice in JSCE and S SCE as one of the causes of malpractice. His position was that punishing both the guilty and innocent has automatically made some of the good students to also indulge in examination malpractice.

Peters and Okon (2013) identified the causes of examination malpractice to include fear of failure, craze for certificate, desire of parents to have their children in choice professions and universities, pressure on students to pursue courses which they have no aptitude, pressure of teachers who want to gain favour from students and over-crowded sitting arrangements. George and Ukpong (2013) linked the increasing rate of examination malpractice to poor teaching, ineffective preparation of students, ill-equipped library facilities and dubious admission policy.’ Akaranga and Ongong (2013) on their own part attributed the causes of examination malpractice to parental upbringing. They opined that because of social status and economic ability, most parents are easily persuaded to bribe their way through for the sole success of their children and self-gratification.

Ejimogu (2001) believed that the general moral decadence and high premium placed on achievement of certificates by Nigerians have in recent times spread examination fraud. That is why the students nowadays are no longer hard working and dedicated to their academic endeavours. Omemu (2015) attributed the cause of examination malpractice to political insensibility on educational needs. This is because since independence, Nigerian political system has been characterized by inconsistency, instability and economic malpractice. Corruption has been the bane of Nigerian polity. The situation has catapulted people of no substance to positions of importance in the society because of their ill-gotten naira power. The government in its practice does not see the greatness of the nation in the classroom as Japan and America do, but rather sacrifice the educational needs on alter of politics, nepotism, ethnicity and selfishness.

Finally, Wilayat (2009) submits that a combination of anxiety for good results and greed make many school heads to wink at cheating in examinations conducted in their schools. They even do not punish students who cheat in internal examinations. Entrusted, as they are, with the responsibility of guarding educational values and standards in a constituency under violent assault, they are always found wanting in that regards. Often, their giving in to examination malpractice arises from the fear of community reprisals or even negative reports on their school. School heads go beyond mere keeping their peace, to co-ordinate the collection of illegal levies and hand the bribes to the supervisor. Others recruit intelligent ex-students to help provide answers for distribution to candidates. A combination of anxiety for good results and greed lead many school heads to intentionally work hand-in-hand with corrupt supervisors and invigilators. Finally, the school head, by failing to ensure good-quality education in areas of supervision or teaching, the provision of adequate staffing, equipment and space, encourages the ill prepared students to cheat. Flooding of the schools with hardened and hard-to-control external candidates and over-crowded examination centres, lack of enough space, poor seating arrangement and poor observational strategies could encourage examination malpractices. Other contributing factors to examination malpractice include; gross inadequacy of qualified teachers in schools, lack of devotion to their profession, unawareness towards teaching learning objectives, not properly trained, no capacity building, not providing moral training to students. The list of the causes of examination malpractice is inexhaustible.

### **Effects of Examination Malpractice**

Examination malpractice is a “time bomb” that is about to bring final destruction on the victim. No wonder, Ogunkola (2011) said that the quality of a nation’s manpower development is in direct proportion to the quality of its educational system, so a country with shaky and porous examination system will have poor manpower because the value of certificates obtained through

examination malpractice will be worthless. Amin (2006) in Njoku and Njoku (2016) noted that within a space of ten years alone, WAEC cancelled the results of 814,699 candidates in its May/June examinations. According her, billions of naira must have been wasted in the cost of buying the examination forms. She also, stated that a country that is noted for examination malpractice loses international credibility because other countries will always treat every certificate emanating from the affected country with suspicion. Asuka (1997) enumerates the effects of examination malpractice on the students, parents, government and the education system thus:

**The student:** Examination Malpractice creates in the student a negative attitude towards learning and acquisition of knowledge. He also develops a phobia for reading, to him, there is nothing rewarding in hard work. Ingenuity and creativity are killed in him because they are not even regarded in the wider society. All that matters is to get to the final or certificate year where he will cheat and pass all his papers for another round or phase of in disciplinary living in the society. He finally comes to see the social system as sustained by a chain of malpractices in which everyone is part and parcel of the existing pattern which he sees as a norm. Examination malpractice makes a student become an educational misfit either to be reeducated or compensated with society's fund again. This is the case of many Nigerians today who parade excellent school certificate and degree results that they cannot defend. For secondary school graduates, examination malpractice becomes a chain reaction as they enter into higher institution with these good results; they then socialize others in the system into the act of examination malpractice.

**The Parents and Government:** Examination malpractice is a great concern to well-meaning parents and the government because it is seen as a huge loss when money and time are invested on a school child and at the end, the child turns out to be a misfit without character and learning. The absence of socially acceptable characters of Nigerian school leavers is worrisome because they lack loyalty and respect for elders and constituted authority consequently, they cannot even make good employees. Nigeria today is teeming with these crops of graduates whose occupations of sensitive positions have rendered the places bankrupt.

**The Education System:** Every sector in Nigerian education system has become a suspect due to the increasing incidence of examination malpractice because it has been observed that the teachers, ministry of education officials and even the examining bodies are involved in it. This has affected the public perception of the education process and those who make it tick, On the whole, public schools seem to be noted more for examination malpractice. Thus, some parents now prefer private schools as a solution. But observations indicate that private schools are not immune from this menace because the society is a system. In general, because of examination malpractice, education is seen as ineffective and inefficient and no regard is given to the school graduates and their certificates. The public see the certificates as mere "meal tickets" and the graduates as having no iota of character and learning.

### **Challenges of Curbing Examination Malpractice**

Uzoigwe (2007) identified that WAEC and other examination bodies are faced with the following challenges:

**Poor funding:** The organizations rely heavily on revenue derived from examination fees which is barely sufficient to run their operations. He appreciated that government's financial assistance has improved in recent years but needs to be increased in order to provide the required assistance.

**Inadequate staffing:** These bodies do not have enough senior personnel to man all its examination centres nationwide. They therefore, rely on ad-hoc staff such as, teachers, principals, Ministry of education officials, Banks, sub-treasuries and security Agents for supervision, invigilation, custody of security materials and marking of scripts.

**Existing laws:** There is need to tighten the knot on the existing laws concerning examination malpractice.

**The problems posed by ICT:** The incidence of having fore-knowledge of examination question papers or leakage which was formerly localized but now spreads fast through the use of mobile phones and internet facilities by candidates.

**Degradation of moral values:** Emphasis on materialism seems to supplant societal ethos.

**Increasing risk to life:** Examination officials now face increasing risks to their lives and property as they dare to stand up against malpractice.

In line with this, Jakayinta (2006) observed that all the penal codes made by the government have not been implemented because no offender on record is known to have been tried under any of the stipulated decrees and this is a major challenge. Also, the author's personal observation in relation to challenges associated with examination malpractice suffices as follows:

- Non adherence to the rules and regulations: The education stakeholders who were part of the law enactors do not obey the rules they had made and they are unpunished not because they are not known but because nobody wants to stand out to testify against them. Even when one agrees to testify, the matter will not be prosecuted effectively and the culprit will come after you in a hard way.
- Low salaries given to teachers make them prone to inducement by students or parents.
- Inability of teachers to cover the entire syllabus also poses a lot of challenges as the students who were not taught enough to face the examination fall back to cheating.
- Inadequate training of teachers: If teachers are trained properly, they will be able to deliver lessons in more understandable manner. The students will enjoy the lessons and in turn write the examination with confident, pass it without cheating.
- Unavailability of guidance and counselors: Although there are few schools that have guidance and counseling units but these are made up of teachers teaching other subjects. This makes it impossible to carry out the services of counseling the students. But majority of the schools do not know there is need to have such unit in the school talk-less of the students getting help and solution to their problems.
- Connival with WAEC accredited centres: Inability of the examination bodies to control how the owners of study centres who connive with WAEC accredited examination centres link up with the examination supervisor and other agencies to sell academic success to the streets, they even sell out this academic success to the mechanics, market women and as many as are ready to pay.

- Poor funding: The examination bodies do not pay the supervisors well. The money paid can barely take care of their transportation let alone their feeding and other miscellaneous. If paid properly, they will be able to resist the temptation of bribery from students and school authorities. After all, they say that “someone who is filled does not eat poison”.
- The students are not properly searched before entering examination halls in our secondary schools especially during internal exams. When this mindset that examinations are often that free is inculcated in the minds of the students, they carry the nonchalant attitude towards examinations to the world and exhibit it.
- Inability to use fingerprints for identification during examinations apart from photograph as no two person even identical twins could have the same finger print. That is why it is used in crime detection.
- Overemphasis on paper qualification: Over reliance on certificates rather than skills is one of the major challenges against this fight as the dull students do not want to present a certificate that will suit their status rather, they want to present the best in their certificates.

The fight against examination malpractice should not be seen as the fight of WAEC, other examination bodies, government and schools; rather, it should be seen as a fight against bondage. On the whole, the challenges associated with curbing examination malpractice include non-adherence to examination rules and regulations, poor salaries and remunerations to the staff of the examining bodies, none coverage of syllabus by the teachers and inadequate number of teachers especially, guidance and counselors.

### **Strategies to Curb Examination Malpractice**

A lot of strategies have been put in place by government, school authorities, examination bodies and non-governmental organizations to eradicate examination malpractices in secondary schools in Nigeria but the menace has been on increase as every efforts been frustrated by the perpetrators of the acts. Jekayinfa (2006) identified the following measures adopted by government to curb Examination Malpractice:

- Enactment of decree 27 of 1973 on West African Senior Certificate Examination (WASSCE) which prescribed two years jail term for offenders;
- Enactment of decree 20 of the 1984 which was amended by decree 22 of 1986; and
- Enactment of decree 33of 1999 which prescribed 21 years jail term for offenders.

According to Uzoigwe (2007) Government also put in the following strategies in curbing examination malpractice:

- Deployment of senior officials of the Ministry of Education (Federal and State levels) on inspection of examination centres.
- Monitoring of the enrollment of candidates for school examinations to prevent non-school candidates from registering for the examination.
- Sanctioning of erring schools, principals, supervisors and other examination officials.

Again, West African Examination Council (WAEC) had also made efforts to bring examination malpractice under control. Olatoye (2011) reported the efforts made by WAEC to include the following:

- **Public Enlightenment:** The current awareness in the country today on the evils and consequences of examination malpractice are attributable to the campaign launched by WAEC in 1984. The campaign has indirectly given birth to today's examination ethics crusade in the country.
- **Information to candidates:** The council publishes in book form and on her website, the rules and regulations guiding the conduct of her examinations and gives details of the various offences and the sanctions applicable to them.
- **Sensitization of government and Stakeholders:** The Council as a matter of policy avails the government and stakeholders of her decisions on reported cases of malpractice by an appropriate committee.
- **Sanctions:** The Council promptly sanctions candidates caught cheating in her examinations and reports teachers and other culprits to their employers for appropriate sanctions. Any staff of the council found to be involved in examination malpractice is regarded as a security threat and is summarily dismissed.
- **Embossment of certificates:** The council introduced photo-embossed certificates to reduce the incidence of impersonation in her examinations.
- **Use of security bags for the collection of security materials:** Question papers are collected by supervisors in locked-up security bags which they do not have the keys because one set of the key is kept by the WAEC staff at the custodian point where question papers are collected while, the other set is kept by the schools' examination officers at the point of delivery to the school centre.
- **Mounting of anti-malpractice billboards:** Anti-malpractice billboards are mounted in vantage positions throughout the country to increase public awareness of the ills and consequences of examination malpractice.
- **The council also created post-examination department as an in-house security measure to handle cases of examination malpractice,** newly recruited officers of the council are also administered with an oath of secrecy on assumption of duty and the council develops security regulations which are reviewed periodically and made available to officers for proper guidance.
- **Delivery of examination materials:** The delivery of question papers and other examination materials to the custodian points is done on daily basis and by senior officers.
- **Examination Centre Supervisors:** The examination centre supervisors are swapped on daily basis to guard against undue familiarity and influence from the schools.

Furthermore, Esuabana (2017) stated that curbing examination malpractice has been a long time battle for both the government and stakeholders in education. According to him, some of the penalties to curb this menace include: 21 years imprisonment, cancellation or withholding of result, demotion of teachers and supervisors, blacklisting of supervisors and invigilators, de-recognition of schools, rustication and dismissal of erring students as well as sack for teachers. Asuka (1997) confirms this that between 1987 and 1994 not less than 500 secondary schools in Rivers State were derecognized by West African Examination Council (WAEC) for indulging in

examination malpractice. Odewuni (1997) corroborates with this in his report that in February 1997 WAEC disallowed 107 secondary schools in Nigeria from presenting candidates for the SSCE due to reasons bordering on aiding and abetting of examination malpractice. Also, punch (1997) in conveying WAEC's reply to three candidates who sat for the November/December, 1995 SSCE said that their results were cancelled because they were involved in examination malpractice.

Again, Zakky (2016) proffered additional strategies for curbing the following related examination malpractices:

- Curbing parents related examination malpractices in public examination in Nigeria include: not choosing courses/careers for children; inculcate good moral values in children; organize private lessons in subjects children are weak; encourage children to work hard in order to make excellent grades in examinations; buy all the text books and other study materials children need in school; be penalized by PTA whenever they are involved in examination malpractice; not relocate children during examinations from urban to rural schools; and not provide funds for engaging the services of mercenaries to aid children during examinations.
- Curbing school personnel/teachers related examination malpractice include: examination supervisors and invigilators should be nominated by school principals; only teachers of proven integrity should be nominated and appointed as supervisors/invigilators; supervisors/invigilators should be adequately remunerated; teachers should not be allowed to supervise/invigilate exams in schools they are teaching; school principals should be sanctioned when their nominees get involved in examination malpractice; school authorities should organize extra moral classes before examination to assist weak students; only qualified and dedicated teachers should be employed; any staff found aiding and abetting examination malpractice should be dismissed; principals of schools involved in examination malpractices should be dismissed; schools that perpetrate examination malpractices should be closed; principals should be directed to allow only genuine inspectors/monitoring officers to have access to their schools during examination; establishing schools should not be seen as a profit making ventures but a social service; all schools that inflate/increase their final examination fees should be sanctioned.
- Curbing internet related examination malpractices in public examinations in public schools are: biometric data capturing should be used in all public examinations; writing examination online should be encouraged to replace the manual methods being used now; Mobile phone in examination hall should be prohibited; Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras should be installed in all examination halls to check malpractices; Short Message Service (SMS) tracking devices should be installed at all examination centres that can access network; the use of ear piece in examination hall should be discouraged.
- Curbing examination body officials/examination personnel related malpractices in public examinations include; examination officials should always be paid their salaries and allowances regularly; examination officials should maintain high integrity at all times in order to serve as example to other stakeholders; any examination body staff that indulges in any form of examination malpractice should be sanctioned; any examining body staff that collects bribe from teachers to appoint them as supervisor/invigilators should be

sanctioned; application and problem solving questions should be used in examinations; open book method of examination, where candidates carry books into the examination hall should be introduced in public examinations.

- Ways in which candidates/peers related examination malpractices be curbed include; maximize the guidance and counseling units of their various schools to aid them in the choice of their career; not cheat in examination even when their parents encourage them to do so; avoid bad companies who are not serious with their studies at school; be encouraged to make morality their watchword at all times; request for more explanation in areas they are deficient or did not understand.
- Way in which security agents related examination malpractices in public examination in Nigeria be curbed are; security personnel should be deployed to all examination centres during the conduct of any public examination; any security agent that is caught aiding and abetting examination malpractice should be dismissed; any security personnel that tries any examination malpractice should be convicted and dismissed.
- Curbing school location/environmental related examination malpractice include: schools in both rural and urban areas must meet all needed requirements before they are recognized as examination centres; schools in both remote and urban areas should be given close supervision during examination; adequate materials/teachers should be provided to schools in both rural and urban centres; candidates from urban centres that choose to write their examination in rural areas should be disallowed.
- Curbing Ministries of Education related examination malpractice include: Ministry of Education officials should be paid well and promptly too; Ministry of Education should recognize only the schools that have required facilities; for establishing such schools before they are allowed to serve as examination centres all private secondary schools must meet the minimum standards; examination monitoring unit of the Ministry of Education should send only credible staff to monitor public examinations; Ministry of Education should sanction schools and individuals involved in examination malpractice.

Finally, Asuka (1997:168-170) suggests that other ways to curb examination malpractice include:

- Enforcement of teachers' professional code of conducts in schools. This could be done by disciplining teachers, principals, ministry of education officials and WAEC officials who use examination malpractice as a means of making money for themselves. Such people should be suspended or sacked to reprimand others that school is a place for academic excellence and character moulding.
- A play down on the high regard for "papers" and "certificates" as tickets for employment and appointment. More emphasis should rather be given to actual and practical tests to determine competency. The actual application of knowledge should determine the acquisition of knowledge at any moment. In employment of people, psychological test should be administered to reveal their mindsets which would go a long way to know their characters.
- Adequate compensation for teachers in Nigerian schools: It is the teachers that build the man that would build the society therefore; they should be paid well to boost their morale and induce them to be more committed. WAEC should also remunerate their workers adequately to turn their eyes away from students' examination money.

- Appropriate penalty for officials and students involved in acts of examination malpractice should be spelt out and enforced without delay. Appropriate surveillance and security plans should be put in place to police the supervisor in the execution of his assignment.
- Private or external candidates should be disallowed from registering in school to write public examinations because most of them are not prepared, so they resort to using mercenaries.
- The National Orientation Agency and other enlightenment bodies should mount public campaigns and seminars to educate parents and members of the public on the dangers of examination malpractice.
- The Government: Government should provide schools with relevant teaching materials such as books, laboratory and technical workshop equipment. Also, the qualified manpower needed to teach the students in the use of these materials should be deployed to the schools to justify Governments' huge investment in the educational sector.

From the review done so far, it is clear that many studies have been carried out on how to curb examination malpractices in different states of Nigeria but few has been done in Rivers State. The review exposed various method of perpetrating examination malpractices, strategies for curbing them to limelight. This paper agrees with all the strategies reviewed but wants to make its own contributions. It is true that, to a large extent if morality is inculcated in the minds of the people of Rivers State and Nigeria at large and if all stake holders are willing to address the issue of examination malpractices with all sincerity and dedication, the problem would be minimized if not eradicated.

All stakeholders, people who have this state at heart and indeed those interested in enhancing qualitative education for the citizens of the state and beyond should show concern about this problem and fight against it. Everyone should take it as a challenge to address the issues of the Act. Evils of examination malpractice should be included in the school's curriculum from Primary to Secondary schools to inculcate in their young minds that hard work pays. When they grow with the understanding that people who do well in life are those that do not get involved in criminal matters in which examination malpractice is one of them, it will help them. Public Secondary schools and primary schools in Rivers State should adopt the inclusion of prospectus on admission; and the penalty for involvement in examination malpractice specifically spelt out.

Another strategy to be adopted in curbing this menace is to sanction schools, perpetrators, display them on the television screens, announce their names in radio stations and prosecute them. Any child involved in malpractice should not be admitted into any other school within and outside the state when expelled from the school. Finally, concerned parents and well-meaning citizens and lovers of this state should carry placards to create awareness on the evils being perpetrated by examination malpractice. Media houses should create the awareness just as they do in the case of HIV/AIDS.

## **CONCLUSION**

Destroying any nation does not require the use of atomic bomb, or the use of long rang muscles, it simply requires lowering the quality of education through the practice of examination malpractice by the students. This paper established that examination malpractice has eaten deep into our educational system and requires a multidimensional approach, commitment with

sincerity of purpose of all the stakeholders in education if we must achieve the much need success.

## Recommendations

Based on the discussion, the following suggestions were made:

- Implementation of the decrees on examination malpractice and making of adequate new legislations: The House of Assembly and other legislative Assemblies should as a matter of urgency, enact new laws against examination malpractice and such laws should have stiff penalties attached.
- Establishment of special Court: Special court should be established to avoid the rigors of conventional courts. The establishment of this special court is very necessary so that the constant adjournment of the matter in the conventional courts will be avoided. Also, the special courts should be located close to the area where this special examination centres are situated. This will act as a deterrent to the students who will witness the proceedings of such cases, thereby instilling fear in them.
- Teachers and parents should help students to develop reading culture, obey school rules and regulations, encourage hard work and discourage shortcuts to success.
- Teachers in public secondary schools should display integrity to resist pressure from students who come to bribe them.
- Government should provide and equip school libraries, laboratories, and technical workshops for effective teaching and learning.
- Examining officers should be paid well to discourage them from being interested in examination bribe.

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