

Causes and Effects of Examination Malpractice on Social Studies Students in Secondary Schools of Apa Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract. This paper looks into the causes and effects of examination malpractices on academic performance of Social Studies students in some secondary schools in Jos Metropolis in Plateau State, Nigeria. The background looked into issues of malpractice and degrading standard of Nigeria education. The statement of problem also pinpoint the problems bothering effects examination malpractices can have on students as well. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study which include: causes of malpractice among social studies students among others. The population and samples used for the study consists of 200 students and 50 teachers' randomly selected from the study area. While the method of data analysis applied was descriptive inferential statistics particularly the mean method. The study revealed that lack of professional teachers, teaching materials and emphasis on certification as well as examination have been the only means of evaluation and thus are of the major reasons why students engage in examination malpractice in the study area. Again the researchers further revealed that parents, government, teachers and even the communities are partakers in examination malpractices. The study makes some recommendations to include, qualified social study teachers should be employed, teachers' welfare should be properly taken care of and their remuneration prioritized, government should punish partakers of malpractices when cut among others.

Keywords: Causes and effects, examination malpractice, social studies students and secondary schools

1. Introduction

The standard of education in Nigerian has been degrading and declining in the past decades, this has been adjudged to the decrease in quality of education obtainable in recent times which is seen as substandard and cannot measure up to the quality of education individuals use to have in the past 8 to 9 decades as a country. Hitherto, the standard and quality of Nigeria education is largely cherished within and outside the country where Nigeria students are offered scholarship to study abroad in best Universities across the globe. The decadence and degrading of Nigeria educational value has reflected on the performance of Nigeria students when measured on achievement, this has been a topic of debate to many concern stakeholders and citizens who mean well for the country and its educational system. Simply because, education is the instrument any country or nation uses to change her fortune and develop in all ramifications. Moreso, education is the only thing that can change anything, it then shows that the fall in standard of education in Nigeria can be said to be among the factors affecting the growth and development of the country.

The reasons for drastic fall in standard of education in the Nigeria could be caused by different factors such as teachers attitudes,

parent qualification, socio-economic background, home variables, environmental variables, peer influences, examination malpractices among many others. Nigeria is a developing country and crowded with a lot of problems economically, socially, educationally, and politically. There is indeed no dispute on the fact that, Nigeria requires informed and rational citizens not only with quality education, values, knowledge and skills, but citizens that can also appreciate the nations pathetic problems, citizens who can make concerted, deliberate, and conscious effort to salvage the country from this predicament of social, economic, political, and religious intolerance but also should be able to demonstrate pragmatically high degree of love for their fatherland as against citizens with idiosyncrasy attitudes and disposition. Nigeria therefore cannot afford to neglect the proper development of an all-important subject like social studies education in its developmental endeavours.

Another reason for the poor educational standard in Nigeria is not farfetched from the fact that, emphases are placed on certification and knowledge, appointment, promotion and what a person is granted base on certification and not really by functions and abilities. This has made the citizens and students to go any length in performing different atrocities in their examination since examination happens to be the judge of knowledge in the school system. For instance, many or some students engage in examination malpractices in different forms just to pass their examination at any cost.

The history of examination malpractice has been in existence long ago, the first time examination malpractice was reported in Nigeria was in 1914 when a leakage of Senior Cambridge local examination was revealed. After independence, there was hardly any year when examination malpractice is not recorded and after the civil war youths who were conscripted into the army during the war came back to school to continue their education. These youths who understood the language of the “gun” more than what the teacher was saying were not psycho-emotionally stable and prepared for examination thus, they resorted to alternative means of passing the examination such as direct cheating in

examination, bribing examiners to allow them indulge in cheating, impersonation among others, thus, marking the graduated decrease in morality and hard work by students during examination.

The Examination Malpractice Act (1999) explains examination malpractice as, “any act of omission or commission by a person who in anticipation of, before, during or after any examination fraudulently secure any unfair advantage for himself or any other person in such a manner that contravenes the rules and regulation to the extent of undermining the validity, reliability, authenticity of the examination and ultimately the integrity of the certificates issued”. This means that, examination malpractices involves any action or inaction by an examinee before, during, and after any examination fraudulently secure any unfair advantage for himself or any other person in such a manner that contrivance the rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity, reliability, authenticity of the examination and ultimately the integrity of the certificates issued. Students partake in malpractices in different means, like scientific malpractice where technological gadgets and phones are used, impersonation, communication, pipping or jiraffing into some ones work, copying, among other forms.

Ugwuanyi (2006) sees examination malpractices as “any act of wrong-doing or neglect that contravenes the rule of acceptable practices before, during, and after examination by anybody in any way. This implies that when supervisors neglect to perform their duties properly such that students feel free to cheat are equally guilty of malpractice. Oyetunde (2004) further added that examination malpractice as the violation of the established regulations of the conduct of the candidates taking parts in a particular examination. In order words any act exhibited by the students which goes against the stipulated rules at examination is considered a violation.

The purpose of introducing a subject like social studies into Nigeria curriculum was to mitigate all social, political, economic, and numerous

societal problems disturbing Nigeria as a country. It is seen as a panacea to ameliorating these forms of social misconduct that are ground to occur with human existence. In the words of Adeyoyin (1991) summarizes the scope of social studies to include values, attitude, skills and knowledge transmission which are taught to students or learners to bring about holistic as well as reasonable change in them that can make them better informed and rational citizens who can be able to make decisive decisions concerning social, economic, political, bothering on them and the society at large.

Social Studies as a subject emphasizes on patriotic, cross cultural, multi-dimensional citizens who are rational, value laden, efficient critical and patriotic in action. In order words, they can be referred to as social actors because they can take good decisions. In Kissocks in Yunus (2008) submission believes that social studies is a programme of study which the society uses to instill in the learners values, attitude, skills and knowledge they consider relevant for heir survival and association in the society. This presupposes that, social studies is geared towards solving problems facing the ever changing nature of man's society. Students who engage in malpractice are in all indiscipline's and such students are not even portraying what as the subject emphasizes example good character formation which is an aspect of the affective domain or psychological development traits and reflections. In fact there are many instances where social studies students have been caught for examination malpractices and the predicament is currently highly prevalent.

2. Conceptual Perspective of Examination Malpractice

The idea of examination malpractice involves real, intended or an attempted deception or dishonesty in relation to, any academic work in an organized institution of learning. In the Nigerian society it is still regarded as an illegal behavior by a candidate before, during or after the examination so that he or she can attain success easily.

According to Adegoke (2010) every few years, human knowledge doubles. This presupposes that, people are interested in adding knowledge or being referred to as intelligent or brilliant. Every achievement orientation has changed towards preferences acquisition of certificate instead of hardwork. Although the goal of an examination is to access how much an individual learner has learned and also to what extend educational objectives have been achieved and to also predict the future of a nation. Thus, Adegoke (2010) believes it that the spate of "cheating behavior by the school is now a big problem in our people. School authorities are now being called upon to desist from such acts and reduce the high premium attached to paper qualification as a prerequisite for gainful employment.

Maduka Oyetunde defines examination "as a way of ascertaining how much of a subject matter in a particular field of study. In order words it is the formal way of testing an individual knowledge of a particular subject. The gravity of the dilemma is so alarming that many other names are given to it like expo, bullet, omokirikiri e.t.c. Thus, it is clear that this evil known as examination malpractice is aided and abetted by nearly everybody (The tide, 2016). Any nation where examinations are observed in the breach of principles cannot progress educationally. In Nigeria for instance, where the problem is prevalent, students are already developing apathy to learning some hardly even attend classes while some who attend the classes are often times busy playing with their phones or chatting out rightly as Onyedukwu (2016) explains.

According to Lagos books club word press (2013), examination malpractice have consistently remained a bane of Nigeria. Moreso, that the Nigerian National policy on Education recognizes education as an instrument for affecting national development. It goes without saying that whatever compromises the efficiency and credibility of the educational system, must not compromise the quality and competency of its products, (Aliyu, 2018). He further believes that, Examination is the thrust of measurement and Evaluation stage of all formal

education process. It is infact, the only yardstick for the process of determining how much knowledge and skill a student has acquired. Over time however, the process has been corrupted such that all that matters is paper results gotten by hook or crook.

Again, Argungu (1997) in [However, Jega \(2006\) in \[### 3. Statement of Problem\]\(https://study moose \(2016\), views examination malpractice “as any form of misbehavior that leads to the alteration of or a tempering with the prescribed ways of conducting examination in any given system”. Thus, implying that an examination malpractice is a punishable offense which is committed during the process of normal and recognized examination. It is a gross violation of the laid down principles of conducting an examination. From all these definitions proffered, examination malpractice is noted as fraud within the school system and does occur at all levels of education irrespective of religious affiliations of stakeholders it is a real monster. According to Aje \(2003\) the issue of examination malpractice tends to weaken the validity of any examination making the results worthless and unreliable. Consequently, the authors proscribe that examination malpractice produces error scores in the examination with a student earning more marks than the one who had actually read and prepared for the said examination. Hence, producing people earning below their abilities and occupying wrong positions in the economy and employment sectors. While leaving the most qualified individuals unemployed or occupying lower job cadres in the society.</p>
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<div data-bbox=\)](https://study moose (2016) defines Examination Malpractice as “any irregularity which is premeditated and perpetrated by candidates or their agents with the intention of gaining undue advantage over others in an examination. This presupposes that the one cheating or committing any malpractice during an examination is trying to gain scores or grades where in the first instance he/she does not qualify to get. This in itself causes undue advantage over the one who has head and is prepared for the examination.”</p>
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The system and standard of education in Nigeria is changing day in day out, the worrisome part is that, the standard is falling and degrading drastically. We have graduate in Nigeria that can barely communicate fluently or write fluently, when you come across such graduate one would wonder if they truly went through secondary school and even more higher institutions, the narration is so discomfoting and repugnant to the fact that, there exist many unemployable graduates. The wanton rate of unemployment is another bothering issue this is not far from the fact that, most graduate are unable to secure jobs because they are not qualified and unemployable for such a job. Rather because there are totally no jobs as claimed by most of these unemployed graduates but rather their inability to communicate properly what they claim they know and have certificate at hand to show.

The system of education in Nigeria that lays emphasis on certification can lead many students into examination malpractice because students now do all they can to ensure they pass the examination just because of certification. Another issue is the fact that, those educated are the privileged ones who control the country and most times occupy political offices and such people get to political offices and become rich over night while those who are hardworking artisans for many years have not been able to make much for themselves. Such a situation has prompted and motivated a lot of people to want to acquire certificate by all means. Thus, it could be another possible cause of malpractice. The scourge and effects of these malpractices on students, schools, and the country at large cannot be over emphasize as this may lead to overall collapse and derail in the educational system which would in turn be a doom to Nigeria as a country. To this end, what are the effects of examination malpractices and how can these be curbed?

4. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to find out the effects of examination malpractice on social studies students in and specifically to objectives are:

- To find out possible cause of malpractices among social studies students.
- To identify aids and supporters of malpractices in social studies.
- To identify how best malpractice can be stopped.

5. Research Questions

The following research questions are put forward for this study:

- What are the effects examination malpractice have on social studies students.
- What are the possible causes of malpractices in social studies.
- Who are the supporters and aids of malpractice in social studies.
- What are the ways of stopping examination malpractice.

6. Methodology

For the purpose of this study the survey research design was adopted to collect data for the study. A survey design is usually used to collect data or information from a representative sample who represent the whole population but from which generalization can be deduced..

6.1 Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of 130 schools generated from both governments, private, and religious bodies, spread across APA Local Government Area of Benue State. That is a total of 49,386 students were selected as

population from the 130 schools in the study area. However, the sample size selected from this population is a total of 200 students and 50 teachers due to time, finance and other factors making a total of 250 respondents. Hence the study generated data from these 250 samples size from which generalization of the result were made consequently. The 250 sample are making up of 200 students and 50 teachers respectively for the study.

6.2 Instrumentation

The instrument used for generating data for this study was a questionnaire tagged questionnaire on examination malpractice amongst social studies students in APA (**QEMASSSA**) and a teacher’s interview schedule requiring their responses to what they equally have observed about the spate of this menace over the years.

7. Analysis of Findings

From the data collected, the analysis was based on two sections, which are section 1 for bio-data of teachers and students respectively, while section 2 contains the research questions and items analysis. The bio-data was analyzed using simple percentage while the research question was analysed using mean method or simple inferentics statistics where items from the questionnaire with mean score of 2.5 and above and positive were accepted. But any item with a lesser mean score than the above was rejected as negative mean score. Responses from the teachers returned and filled interview sheets were properly analyzed too.

Research Question One

Table I: Courses of Malpractices among Social Studies Students? Student Responses

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN
1.	Lack of qualified teachers	20	27	28	105	1.79
2.	Poor teaching methods by teachers	81	70	18	11	3.23
3.	Emphasis on certification	64	56	34	26	2.88
4.	Examination as test of knowledge	89	59	24	8	3.27

The analysis from the students responses above reveal that, lack of qualified teachers does not really makes students involved in malpractice since it had the mean of 1.79, emphasis on certificate was also agreed as another reason why students engage in examination malpractices, and poor teaching method of teachers contributes to a large extend to malpractices among students. Also emphasis on examination as the only test of knowledge is agreed by the students as reason are major why students involve in

mathematics since some have ability in different field and areas like art, craft, acting and so many other fields but all tested with examination and no one wants to fail at the long run.

Table II: Causes of malpractices among Social Studies Students? Teacher’s Responses

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN
1.	Corrupt teachers/invigilators	94	49	27	10	3.26
2.	Lack of motivation	77	58	25	20	3.07
3.	Poor evaluation and loose system	94	49	27	10	3.26

From the response of the teachers on research question one it shows that, the causes of examination malpractices as agreed by them are that corrupt teachers who are selected serve as invigilators most times prove to be unethical by allowing students to cheat during examination either for some personal gains, and nepotism or some other sentiments. Again, lack of motivation is equally agreed by them as a cause of examination malpractice because when teachers are not motivated on their job they get attracted to side motivations and most times become partakers in malpractices. And lastly poor evaluation of the system where the examination is being conducted or sometimes the examination may be conducted out of context hence, students may not know what to do but cheat when the examiner has no knowledge of the evaluation process or poor knowledge of examination questions drawn. Again, poor teaching styles and techniques are also among major causes of this great moral menace as the mean scores all reveal from table I and II.

8. Conclusion

From the data collected and analyzed for the study, it has been established that students involvement in malpractices among social studies is dependent on the teaching activities in the learning process ranging from strategies of teaching, instructional materials, social studies teachers competency and evaluation procedure. It was also revealed that, the emphasis on certification in Nigeria system of education is a major cause of examination malpractices amongst students as every students wants to pass his or her examination at all cost. This way, students get involved in various kinds of examination malpractices activities before, during or even after an examination. Through

the analysis of data collected it also unravelled the fact that, examination being the only system of evaluating students in Nigeria is not favourable because it neglects the domain of character, virtues and skills which may not be able to be measured this, giving room and encouraging students in malpractices. Moreso once students pass the examination they would be certified and the one who is so certified by virtue of certification is automatically qualified to seek for job anywhere. The study also revealed that, examination malpractices exists and parents, teachers, invigilators, school heads, and government among many are sources of this menace.

9. Recommendations

After the investigation into the effects of examination malpractice on social studies students performance a detail causes collection of data and analysis of data were adopted to xray the menace appropriately. The necessary suggestion and some recommendations were proffered on how examination malpractices can be curtailed and possibly eradicated. In addition, the following recommendations are made:

- Professionally trained, and more upright teachers should be employed and brought to schools to teach social studies so that the learners will be given quality knowledge that would properly guide them towards learning that is impactful and meaningful.
- Teachers remuneration should be prioritize because when social studies teachers are well paid they cannot be tempted to take bribe or be partakes in examination malpractices. The salaries would be able to take care of their welfare and cover any additional expenses.

They will be able to work and teach the learners well.

- Parents and the society in general should revive the lost values of traditional upbringing where children were taught values of truth, respect, diligent, punctuality, hardwork, fairness among others and were diligently led to imbibe in the learners from home and left for the teachers alone to do in the schools.
- There should be a strong legislation on the issue and culprits and all partakers in such malpractices when caught by the invigilators or supervisor should be allowed to be punished by the unit of education.
- The emphasizes on certification and the myth behind it should be broken and be laid on practical skills acquisition and entrepreneurship and attitude on certification be curtailed or totally eradicated.
- Government should review curriculum and bring it to stand the test of time so that values, attitude and skills would be the benchmark for certification in schools as oppose to the present system of almighty examination placement.
- Schools should also be provided adequate instructional materials and equipment required to teach social studies effectively for both teachers and students'.

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