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ECONOMICS

SOCIAL AMD MANAGEMENT SCIENCE

EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE

Nigeria has witnessed an alarming rate of increase in incidents of examination malpractice especially at secondary school level. Examination malpractice has become so widespread that there is virtually no examination anywhere at all levels and even outside the formal school system that there is one form of sharp practice or the other. Every examination season witnesses the emergence of new and ingenious ways of cheating.

Examination malpractice can simply be defined as academic dishonesty or academic fraud. In fact, both of these notions can be used inter-changeably. So, what is the definition of examination malpractice? This is any type of cheating during the malpractice process. It does not only refer to students, but to staff too.

There are different types of examination malpractice:

1. Plagiarism: reproduction of someone’s work without any sort of attribution or references to the original author
2. Fabrication: falsification of data, information or reference sources
3. Lying: giving wrong info to the educational staff
4. Cheating: an attempt to take in helpful material for the exam but in a way that the examiner does not know about it
5. Bribery: getting the right answers or marks for money
6. Sabotage: An attempt to prevent others from passing the exams. This includes among other things tearing pages from their books etc.

CAUSES OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE

1. Incentives for deception: some people cheat because they can’t help themselves why some cheat because they want to
2. Demographic: Some demographic aspects like age, gender, and average score may determine the likelihood of a person to cheat. Secondary school students, women, and intelligent students cheat less often, while students that participate in a lot of extracurricular activities are more likely to cheat. Students participating in non-educational actions may be less involved in their studies or need more free time, which they don't have. It leads to a greater necessity to cheat.
3. Social and academic environment: There is a connection between malpractice and the educational environment. For example, research shows that bullied students or those who are uncomfortable in the learning environment are very likely to cheat. Teachers can unintentionally stimulate examination malpractice. One study showed that when a teacher is very strict and unfair in their teaching, students can see cheating as a form of revenge.

EFFECTS OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE

Examination malpractice has many effects on students, teachers, educational institutions and the educational system as a whole. For example, students who engage in examination malpractice are more likely to be dishonest in other aspect of their life. Majority of them end up stealing or even cheating at work. Students are adversely affected even after graduation.

The school certificate is an important document on the labor market. Nigerian employers use it as a proof of student's knowledge and abilities. However, due to examination malpractice, not everyone who has a diploma is smart or possesses the required skills. Due to the high rate of exam malpractice, employers cannot rely on the certificate to tell them who deserves the job and who doesn't. That's why a lot of them are afraid to pay new graduates the salary they deserve because they don't believe in their skills. Consequently, academic dishonesty adversely affects everyone, even decent students. Examination malpractice creates problems for teachers. It affects the way the faculty and even the school is viewed. One study says that 77% of teachers say dealing with cheating students is the most stressful part of their job. Examination malpractice in Nigeria can also have a negative impact on the reputation of the institution. Institutions affected by scandals associated with deception may become less attractive to potential sponsors, prospective students and potential employers. Conversely, universities with a low level of examination malpractice can use their reputation to attract new students and employers.

SOLUTIONS FOR EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE IN NIGERIA

Numerous publications consider various measures of counteracting cheating in exams.

-Disqualifying them from taken the exam

-Low marks.

-Monetary fines (for example, in Oxford, a fine of £100 is imposed on fraudulent students).

Most researchers agree that in order to combat student fraud during examinations, a set of measures, both administrative and educational, is needed to increase interest in learning.

In conclusion, examination malpractice destroys the academic world. This destroys the main point of education — the gaining of knowledge and practical skills. This means students can obtain a certificate without gaining knowledge. This phenomenon makes the learning process unfair. As a result, even honest students and teachers feel its negative effect.