

Effect of Examination Malpractice on Nigeria Graduate Productivity in the Labour Market Crew

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Abstract

Education as the bedrock of development and one of the fundamental factors determining sustainable economic development has been faced with a lot of challenges; most especially examination malpractice the paper examined the effect of examination malpractice conceptually by reviewing the related literature. Based on the literature reviewed, the paper concluded that there is a gap between the certificates obtained by graduates and their productivity at the labour market due to the various examination malpractice perpetuated by them when they were in school. The paper recommended that Examination malpractice should be discouraged in its entirety. The government, the citizens, the teachers/trainers, the students/trainees, the family and the school, employers and employees, must take this as a critical assignment that must be done.

Keywords: Education, Examination Malpractice, Labour Market, Challenges, Development.

Introduction

The overall socio-economic development of any nation depends largely on effective human resource planning, development and utilization. Education is the bedrock of development and one of the fundamental factors determining sustainable economic development. It increases the human capital and production of labour as it leads to high output in the economy. Education equips people with necessary skills and competences and enhances them with innovative capacity of labour. It facilitates the adoption and implementation of foreign technology and helps to reduce knowledge gap between the technological advanced nations and developing nations. It helps the nations to compete in global markets. The knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes to achieve these benefits of education are got from education institutions. This made the educational institutions to be an industry where future leaders, workers, doctors, lawyers, politicians, teachers, thinkers, etc are produced.

The World Bank (1999) explains that a single most important key to development and poverty alleviation is education. It is therefore essential for any nation that is interested in development to improve on the academic performance of its citizens, most especially in tertiary institution. Quality education is essential to the development of any country. Education strengthens citizenship values, fosters sustainable development, it is a powerful tool in eradicating poverty, reduces unemployment, and improves the quality of life of the people (Oseni, Abumere and Ehimi 2010).

These all important roles of educational institutions make it imperative that the institutions should be sacrosanct. Corruption in education is thwarting these noble roles of educational institutions. The effect of corruption on education is too alarming, that instead of education being an agent of purifying the minds of children to become useful members of the society, it is rather diverting the mind of

children away from what education is intended for. Because of corruption in education in Nigeria, the graduates of our schools do not measure up to the standards of both internal and external evaluators.

The general emphasis in our society today is on materialism, bribery, corruption, cultism, sexual promiscuity, fraud, violence, certificate racketeering and a host of other social vices. The society does not want to know how an individual achieves success. The important thing is the success.

Nigerian education system has been marked with the weakness of producing unemployable graduates-graduates who need to attend further training before they could be fit for a job. The most disheartening of all these is that education corruption is being perpetrated by all cadre of people involved in education sector, viz: the government, lecturers, parents, teachers, students etc. in fact it is frustrating that all the stakeholders in education are involved in promoting education corruption.

In the light of the above, the objective of this article is to examine the effect of examination misconduct on Nigeria graduate productivity in the labour market crew with a view to determining the relevance of current educational certificate to graduates productivity in Nigeria.

Tertiary Education

Tertiary education, according to the National Policy on Education (2004), has the following goals to:

- a) Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training.
- b) Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of individual and society.
- c) Develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments.
- d) Acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society.
- e) Promote and encourage scholarship and community service.
- f) Forge and cement national unity; and g. promote national and international understanding and interaction.

Quality Education: Quality education can be looked at as the extent to which education accomplishes the various roles ascribed to it in the National Policy of Education, such as usefulness of education for employment, relevance to the developmental needs of the recipients as individuals and the society in which the individuals live and operate as citizens, and achievement of students. Quality education should elicit favourable feed back from stake holders. The outputs of quality education should be intellectually sound, socially adaptable, technologically skilled, vocationally competent and morally sound. To achieve quality education, we need quality teachers to deliver quality teaching and learning that will enhance quality assessment.

Assessment: According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2002), the word "Assessment" comes from the root word assess which means to judge, or decide or determine the importance, size, or value of something. It is a process used in collecting information on events, objects but particularly on human behavior which is used to evaluate the quality of work done. Educational assessment as the procedure of assigning value to the learning achieved during and at the end of a course, it is an attempt by the teacher to gain knowledge of his/her students' competencies.

Examination/Test: Ohuche and Akeju (1977), see tests and examinations as those stamps of external authority whose results are used to take far-reaching decisions and which very often place a mark of distinction or stigma on pupils. They are instruments for determining the degree of change that has occurred among individuals or things following the end of treatment conditions. There are two major forms of examination taken in Nigeria and they are classified according to who conducts the examination and these are Internal and External Examinations. In internal examinations the items/questions are constructed by the classroom teachers and administered by the teachers in their individual institutions, while external examination is an examination conducted by and/or on behalf of state and open to all those who meet the defined entry requirements.

Qualities of Good Test/Examination

No matter the type of test/examination (instrument) used to collect data on individuals, it must be ensured that it meets some minimum benchmarks. The most commonly minimum benchmarks are validity and reliability. Other less common but important ones according to Nwana (2000) are credibility and civility. Validity and reliability pertains to the instrument itself, while the others relate more to the circumstance within the environment in which the test is undertaken.

Validity: Validity refers to the extent to which a test measures what its authors say it measures. There are four types of test validity; face, content, criterion and construct. Anything that will hinder a test from doing what it suppose to do will affect the validity like test bias (differential item functioning), test administration, scoring and interpretation etc.

Reliability: Reliability is the consistency, accuracy, stability, or trust worthiness of a measuring instrument or scores obtained. It shows how far the same test or a similar one would give the same result if it could be done again by the same subjects or respondents on different occasions or with different sets of equivalent items under the same conditions.

Civility: According to Nwana (2000) Civility in examination deals with the circumstances under which the examinations/tests are taken. For an examination to be civil the environment must be friendly, and the examination halls should not be crowded. An examination supervised by examination marshals, policemen and soldiers and under constant threats by supervisors is never civil.

Credibility: According to Nwana (2000) credibility refers to the extent to which consumers of the results of the test regard the grades or certificates obtained from them as reflecting competence/excellence in the said discipline. If those who carry the certificates are regarded as competent and enviable within the society, and if the examinations are set and marked by competent persons then they are credible.

Examination Misconduct: One of the most serious problems facing examination in Nigeria today is the unethical behavior before, during and after examinations known as Examination Malpractice (EM). Examination malpractice is anything done by the examination candidate that is likely to render the assessment useless. It is therefore, anything made by the stakeholders such as examination administrators, teachers, parents or students that is likely to render the assessment or examination ineffective or useless (Bruno and Obidigbo, 2012).

The cries about examination misconduct which takes place at all level of the Nigerian educational system is nothing but a reflection of the society. As education institutions in Nigeria are not in vacuum but in the same corrupt society, the sector is as corrupt as the public and private sector. The glaring fact of the existence of corruption makes Yushua (2012) regrets that when people talk about corruption usually they refer to public fund siphoned or misappropriate by civil servants, contractors, politicians, etc. hardly do they think of the type of corruption that destroys the minds of our children and siphons the moral values of our society – the monumental corruption that is taking place in our educational system. These types of corruption are more dangerous and more serious threat to the future of Nigeria. Education institution has deteriorated to the extent that in place of being an agent of purifying the minds of our children to become useful members of our society, it is now diverting the mind of the children away from what education is all about.

Some lecturers/ professors, especially at the higher educational level, make their business intention clearly known to the students by telling them what they need to do in order to pass their course. Those students who are not willing to play by the prescribed rules of the game are advised to drop the course before it is too late.

Factors Influencing examination Malpractice

- Societal Factors: A nation cannot rise above its quality of family, moral and societal values. A society where mediocres are celebrated at the detriment of honest and sound morals is on the path of dangerous zone.
- Personal Factors: Some people are prone to cheating no matter the circumstance; they have cheating in the blood (genetic) and are product of cheaters.
- Emphasis on certificates: Success on examination has profound immediate and long term impact on candidates. Possession of good certificate is a passport for brighter tomorrow; hence candidates do whatever it takes to obtain it.
- Poor teaching methods and lack of completion of the required syllabus. Inadequate School Facilities and Teachers: Shortage of textbooks, working equipment, crowded examination classrooms, unqualified teachers, teachers' absence from duty, Strike and frequent closure (not applicable to private school) of schools.
- Lack of confidence on the part of the students resulting from poor attitude to school, poor study habit, unpreparedness for the examination, lack of interest and peer group influence.
- High expectation: When expectations are too high, candidates have no option than to employ unfair means to attain them, that is to win societal honor that goes along with success.
- Low Salary Level: Salary levels of teachers, examination officials are very low. In such instance, bribes from parents and students may be too tempting to ignore.
- High Enrollment Fees: Students try to ensure that their high enrollments fees are not wasted.
- Poor supervision during examination and aided by invigilators.
- Unconducive Environment: Candidates cheat because examinations are written in crowded halls with no proper seating arrangements.

Implications of Examination Malpractice

Aguh (2007) observed that there are generally decay in our institutions of higher learning which are characterized by indiscipline, immorality, truancy, violence, drug abuse, cult activities, various forms of examination malpractice etc. Nigerian graduates' employers complain that graduates are poorly prepared for work. They believe that academic standard has fallen considerably over the past two decades, that the graduate certificate is no longer a guarantee of communication skills or technical competence. As a result, graduates are commonly half-baked and not suitable for employment (Okoli and Oranusi, 2011).

The consequences of examination malpractice in Nigeria cannot be overstated. Abbas (2006) noted that it has been reported in dailies that some foreign countries like USA and United Kingdom had refused to accept Nigeria degrees due to the prevalence of examination malpractice. It is also posing a great threat to the survival and sustainability of good quality education, integrity and credibility of the certificates awarded. Most of the social ills, including medical malpractice by incompetent doctors, manufacture and sale of fake drugs by pharmacists, collapse of building designed by fraudulent engineers, massive fraud in banks, miscarriage of justice, rigging of election by unelected politicians, poor quality pastors who take advantage of their members, mass failure in examination etc, are consequences of examination malpractice and all these will impede productivity in the country. When employed by companies, much money is expended retraining them because they are product of examination malpractice thereby lowering productivity.

The incidences of examination malpractice have become so widespread that there is virtually no examination anywhere at all levels and outside the formal school system without any form of shoddy practice or the other. Examination malpractices are common everywhere and every examination season witnesses the emergence of new and ingenious ways of cheating.

Examination malpractice is an ill wind that blows no one good; it is a virus that has affected the whole society. We must all unite to ensure that the virus is completely wiped out or reduced to the barest minimum. It is a task that must be done. The crisis of examination malpractice in our educational system is the most serious ethical problem facing Nigeria today. It is more serious than contract fraud,

advance fee fraud, bank fraud, election rigging etc, because it is the mother of all other types of frauds and corruption.

Remedies to minimize examination malpractice

Some remedies have been initiated by external and internal examiners such as:

- Publication and blacklisting of names of schools and individuals involved in examination malpractice.
- Ensuring proper spacing and good supervision during examination.
- Proprietors and teachers should deemphasize money and operate within the ambits of the law establishing and approving of schools.
- Ensure adequate facilities,-textbooks, well equipped laboratories and conducive environment for teaching and learning as well as coverage of the syllabus.
- Ensure the service of qualified personnel and make teaching profession to be very attractive.
- Training and retraining of teachers to update their knowledge.
- Parents should show exemplary models to their children.
- Proper embossment of photographs on all credentials to check impersonation.

Conclusion

This article examined the relationship between the certificate obtained by graduates and their productivity at the labour market and concludes that there is a gap between the certificate obtained and the productivity of graduates at the labour market due to the various examination misconduct perpetuated by them when they were in school. Various factors that tend to cause examination malpractice which will hinder the effectiveness of educational system have been highlighted in this article and modalities to ameliorate their influence were suggested.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made to reduce the effect of examination malpractice thereby increasing graduates productivity:

- a) Aggressive campaign should therefore be mounted, educating all the stakeholders about the dangers in engaging in the act and let them be informed of the dignity in having a clean examination system.
- b) Nigerian Union of Teachers and other concerned Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) should, in this regard, partner with the public and the government to rid the system of the cankerworm.
- c) Government should try and make the salary of teachers/lecturers reasonable i.e there should be appropriate recognition and remuneration of teachers.
- d) Qualitative and affordable education should be made available for all.
- e) Value and cultural reorientation which is the missing link in the observance of laid down rules and regulations in Nigeria should be emphasized most importantly through the informal education system.
- f) Parents should not celebrate success without a commensurate input.
- g) Examination malpractice should be discouraged in its entirety. The government, the citizens, the teachers/trainers, the students/trainees, the family and the school, employers and employees, must take this as a critical assignment that must be done.

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