



Journal Of Educational Foundations And Development

An Official Journal of the
Department of Educational Foundations,
Faculty of Education,
University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.

Vol. 05, May 2017

JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ATTITUDE OF UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN UNDERGRADUATES TOWARDS THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF HISTORY Saidu, Abubakar (Ph.D), Badiru, Surajudeen Adewale, Oyinloye, Sunday Kayode, Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.	1
EFFECTS OF TWO COUNSELLING TECHNIQUES ON PSYCHOSOCIAL PROBLEMS OF CHILDREN FROM SINGLE PARENT HOMES IN IBADAN METROPOLIS, NIGERIA Prof. Ngozi Osarenren, Prof. (Mrs.), M.O. Omoegun and Mrs. Oluseyi Odewale, Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria.	11
ENHANCING ACADEMIC RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES IN LINE WITH GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT Victoria C. Onyeike (Ph.D) & Emmanuel O. Eseyin, Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Port-Harcourt, Port-Harcourt, Nigeria.	28
ANALYSIS OF ADHERENCE OF RESEARCHERS TO RESEARCH ETHICS IN SOUTH-SOUTH UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA Dr. (Mrs.) V.C. Onyeike & Atuwokiki, Sam Jaja, Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Port-Harcourt, Port-Harcourt, Nigeria.	41
THE EFFECTS OF TEACHERS' WELFARE PACKAGE ON TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION Dr. Aina Kehinde, Faculty of Education, National Open University of Nigeria, Ahmadu Bello Way, Victoria Island, Lagos.	53
A REVIEW OF SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINANTS OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE MORBIDITY/MORTALITY IN CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS IN THE GAMBIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING EDUCATION Omar Manjang, M.Sc., Haddy Tunkara-Bah, M.Sc., & Jainaba Sey-Sawo, M.Sc., Department of Nursing, University of Benin, Benin-City, Nigeria.	61

**CAUSES OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE AS PERCEIVED BY
TEACHERS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LAGOS STATE NIGERIA:
IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELING PRACTICE**

Odebode, Aminat Adeola, Alwajud-Adewusi, M.B. & Akinyemi,
Obafolahan Bolakale, Department of Counselor Education,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. 76

**THE PLACE FOR LISTENING SKILLS IN THE METHODS OF FOREIGN
LANGUAGE TEACHING**

Dr. (Mrs.) Osa-Omoregie, Omawumi Doreen & Dr. (Mrs.) Awambor, Egbe
Josephine, Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology, Faculty of
Education, University of Benin, Benin-City, Nigeria. 90

**THE PREDICTIVE VALIDITY OF POST UNIFIED TERTIARY
MATRICULATION EXAMINATION ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
OF UNIVERSITY OF BENIN STUDENTS**

Egberha, Friday & Dr. (Mrs.) Osarumwense, Hannah Judith, Department of
Educational Evaluation and Counseling Psychology, Faculty of Education,
University of Benin, Benin-City, Nigeria. 101

**AUTHORITY, POWER AND ASSERTION: A MORAL MAZE IN
TEACHING**

Osawaru, Arasomwan Endurance, Department of Educational Foundations,
University of Benin, Benin-City & Prof. (Mrs.) B.O.J. Omatseye, Institute of
Education, University of Benin, Benin-City. 116

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SELF RELIANCE IN NIGERIA:
THE ROLE OF TECHNICAL & VOCATIONAL EDUCATION &
TRAINING**

Babatimehin Muiyiwa, Emeka Paul Okeke, Social Governance Policy Research
Department, Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Resarch (NISER), Ibadan,
Nigeria & Idowu Ezekiel Kayode, Department of Curriculum Studies and
Instructions, College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti. 127

**COUNSELING NEEDS OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS
IN OVIA NORTH-EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EDO STATE,
NIGERIA**

Eimuhi, Karl E. & Ovbiebo, Mercy Chinyere, Department of Human Kinetics
& Sports Science, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin-City, Nigeria.
.....142

CAUSES OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE AS PERCEIVED BY TEACHERS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING PRACTICE

**ODEBODE, AMINAT ADEOLA
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Abstract

This study investigated the causes of examination malpractices as perceived by teachers of secondary school in Lagos State. Moderating variables of gender, length of years in service and school type were also examined. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. A total of 600 respondents from three senatorial districts were selected using a three-stage sampling procedure which comprised simple random and purposive sampling techniques. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Causes of Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (CEMQ)". The validity of the instrument was established by five experts in the Department of Counselor Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria while, the reliability was determined using test re-test method and a correlation coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test statistical tools were used to analyze the data and the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. Result showed that teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State perceived the causes of examination malpractice as societal preferences for certificates, poor self-concept, lack of adequate learning facilities (libraries, laboratories etc) and teachers not considering the slow learners while teaching, among others. The testing of the hypotheses showed that there was a significant difference in the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State based on gender, length of years in service, but there was no significant difference based on subject taught and school type. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that Government should place more emphasis on knowledge and skill acquisition and not on certificates, as certificates may not be a true measure of individual's abilities. Teachers should consider more, students who are slow learners when teaching.

Key Words: Causes, Examination malpractice, Teachers, Counseling Practice.

Introduction

Examination is a formal test of one's knowledge or ability in a particular subject especially by means of answering questions or practical exercises. It is through examination that students are evaluated or tested to find out the quality of knowledge they have acquired within a specific period. Thus, examination could be internal, external, oral or written. Continuous assessment scores, terminal, semester, annual or promotion examinations are examples of internal examinations (Bryne, 1980). The external (public) examinations include the National Common Entrance Examinations for admission into Secondary Schools, School Certificate Examinations which are conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), and the National Examinations Council (NECO). The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) conduct the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME). The National Teachers' Institute (NTI), National Business and Technical Examination Board (NABTEB) conduct examinations for teachers and technicians respectively.

Awanbor (2005) defined examination malpractice as an illegal act committed by a single student or in collaboration with others like fellow students, parents, teachers, supervisors, invigilators, computer operators or secretarial staff and anybody or group of people before, during, or after examination in order to obtain undeserved marks or grades. Although students' performance in examinations may not be the true reflection of their ability, till date however, examination still remains the best tool for an objective assessment and evaluation of what a learner has achieved after a period of schooling/training. In fact, it is one of the most reliable indicators used to determine the extent of students' performance in a given training.

The rampant occurrence of examination malpractice has become an issue of growing importance and concern in the global educational system. Most examinations are usually marked by complaints of various forms of malpractice. In most of the examinations, cheating is a recurrent practice. According to Isangedighi (2007), in Nigeria where certificates are the sole indices of educational growth and examinations the only means of obtaining these certificates, students seem to see examinations as a survival war and cheating as an effective means of winning the war. Although, examination malpractice attracts penalties such as rustication and paid terms, it nevertheless fails to decrease in strength and sophistication. The rising wave of examination malpractice amongst the youths today is posing a big challenge to contemporary society.

The value and functionality of any educational system lie in its ability to actualize the goals of education. In any educational system, the examination process makes the difference. One of the goals of national educational systems is to contribute to national development and this goal becomes like mirage if examination ethics is not encouraged and instituted (Nwadiani, 2005). Till date,

examinations still remain the best tool for an objective assessment and evaluation of what learners have achieved after a period of schooling. Hence, any action that undermines examinations poses a great threat to the validity and reliability of examination results and certification.

Unfortunately, the process of examination in Nigeria secondary schools has become a "contemporary shame" (Nwadiani, 2005). This is because of the phenomenon of examination malpractice that has become endemic in the educational system. The Examination Malpractice Act (1999) described examination malpractice as any act of omission or commission by a person who, in anticipation of, before, during or after any examination fraudulently secures any unfair advantage for himself or any other person in such a manner that contravenes the rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity, reliability, authenticity of the examination and ultimately the integrity of the certificates issued. Alutu and Aluede (2006) remarked that examination malpractice is any irregular behaviour exhibited by a candidate or anybody charged with the conduct of examination before, during or after the examination that contravenes the rules and regulations governing the conduct of such examination.

In Nigeria, the last two decades have witnessed an alarming rate of increase in the occurrence of examination misconduct. Evidence abound of increasing involvement in examination malpractice by students, teachers and parents. The incidence of examination malpractice has become so widespread that there is virtually no examination anywhere at all levels and outside the formal school system that there is not one form of sharp practice or the other. The incidence of examination malpractice are common everywhere and every examination season witnesses the emergence of new and ingenious ways of cheating.

Newstead, Franklyn and Armstead (1996) investigated the incidence and causes of cheating in examination. A sample size of 942 students of different disciplines from a large English University was used in the study. A questionnaire form containing 21 items on malpractice behaviour was structured on reasons for cheating or not giving in for cheating. Responses were given and expressed in percentages. The result revealed immorality and dishonesty as major factors causing examination malpractice. Over 80% of respondents who indicated that they did not indulge in examination malpractice gave immorality as their reasons.

The result of the study conducted by Ali (1986) and Ekpo (1992) agreed with that of Newstead, Franklyn and Armstead (1996). Ali wanted to find out the influence of moral values on examination malpractice. A sample of 7,799 students from primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in Nigeria was used for the study through structured questionnaire. 40% of the graduate students, 49% secondary students and 35% of those in the primary school accepted that they indulged in examination malpractice. Sixty percent of the respondents indicated that there was nothing immoral about indulging in examination malpractice and 65% agreed that

examination malpractice is an acceptable for upward mobility. The findings revealed that a majority of the students who were caught in examination malpractice expressed ignorance of immediate and ultimate consequences of their behaviour.

Adekale (1993) identified poor preparation for examinations, low morality and poor school facilities as causes of examination malpractice. Other causes may include the fear of failure, craze for certificate, desire of parents to have their children in choice professions and university, pressure on students to pursue courses for which they have no aptitude, pressure on teachers who want to gain favour of student and overcrowded sitting arrangement (Adekale, 1993).

Udogie and Ivowi (1995) identified inadequate preparation for the examination, peer influence, poor facilities in schools, societal influence and expectations, lack of self-confidence due to laziness, poor academic performance as causes or factors that prompt examination malpractice and fraud. Lack of resources for educational purposes could be another possible cause for examination malpractice. Maheshwari, (2011) observed that some Lecturers/teachers also encouraged examination malpractice by assisting students during the examinations, upgrade students' marks while marking the scripts, collecting money and other tangible/intangible things from interested students.

Oniye and Alawaye (2008) who carried out a study on female students perceived causes of and solution to examination malpractice in Asa Local Government and its implication for counselling. They found the causes and the various ways to combat the menace of examination malpractices as perceived by female students themselves. The study showed that, societal preference for paper qualification, inadequate preparation for examinations, lack of self-confidence, ill-equipped schools, lack of good study habits etc., are the major causes of examination malpractice among female students.

In the same vein, Wilayat (2009) carried out a study titled causes and consequences of examination malpractice. It was found that the malpractices in examination have mainly contributed to the overall deterioration of the standard of education in our country. Despite different researches that have been conducted on examination malpractices using different respondents, instruments and locale, the menace seems to be increasing among students.

Although, several researchers have worked on examination malpractices, it is most unfortunate that the menace is rapidly increasing. Therefore, this study aimed at investigating causes of examination malpractice as perceived by students and teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study also sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What did Lagos State see school teachers say are the causes of examination malpractice?
2. Is there any gender difference in the perception of the causes of examination malpractice by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State?
3. Is there any difference on the basis of subject taught in the causes of examination malpractice by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State?
4. Is there any difference on the basis of school type in the causes of examination malpractice by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were generated to guide the conduct of the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State based on gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State based on subject taught.
3. There is no significant difference in the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State based on school type.

Methods

The descriptive survey research design was adopted since the study sought to investigate the types of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State. The population is all secondary school students in Lagos State, while the target population is all teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State. The population is estimated at 33, 056 (Statistics Division, Lagos State Ministry of Education, 2010). Based on the population of the study and using the Research Advisor (2006), at a confidence level of 5% margin of error, the minimum sample size that is suitable for the study is 381. Therefore the researchers used a sample size of 600 respondents. The sample and sampling technique for the study was carried out in three stages. At stage one, dip-hat sampling technique was used to select two local government areas from each of the three Senatorial Districts. This method entails the researcher writing the names of the local governments on different small pieces of papers and putting them into a container. This container is then properly shaken; after which the researcher dipped her hand into the container and picked 2 local government areas from each of the three senatorial districts in Lagos State to give a total of six Local Government areas that were selected for the study.

At stage two, the researcher purposively selected Ten (10) secondary schools (4 Private Schools; 6 Public Schools) from each of the three selected Local Government areas. A total of thirty (30) secondary schools were sampled for the study. At stage three, simple random sampling technique was used to select Twenty (20) respondents from each of the 30 schools. This comprised 10 from private schools and 10 from public schools; thus, a total of six hundred (600) teachers. This sample (600) which was above the pre-determined sample size of 500 gave room for the researcher to discard questionnaires that were wrongly ticked, not returned and misplaced.

A researcher-designed questionnaire tagged "Causes of Examination Malpractices Questionnaire (CEMQ)" was used to gather data from the respondents. It has three sections: A and B. Section A focuses on demographic data which include gender, length of years in service and school type of the respondents. Section B on the other hand, comprised 20 items which seek information from the respondents on the causes of examination malpractice among secondary school students. Four Point modified Likert-Type Rating Scale was used to score each item of the instrument after being answered by the respondents. The rating is in the following order: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points; Agree (A) = 3 points; Disagree (D) = 2 points; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. The average mean score is 2.5, therefore, any mean score ranging from 2.5 and above in section B will indicate the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by secondary school teachers in Lagos state, Nigeria. The researchers personally administered the instruments to the respondents. The data obtained were analyzed using percentages, mean and Standard Deviation as well as rank order for the descriptive data while t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics were used to test the null hypotheses generated at 0.05 level of significance.

Demographic Data

The demographic data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency and percentage. This is presented as follows:

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	312	52.1
Female	288	47.9
Total	600	100.0

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by gender. The table indicates that 312 (52.1%) of the respondents are male, while 288 (47.9%) of the respondents are female.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Length of Years in Service

Length of Years	Frequency	Percentage
0-15 years	262	43.2
16 years & Above	338	56.8
Total	600	100.0

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by years in service. The table indicates that 262 (43.2%) of the respondents have spent between 0 – 15 years in service while, 338 (56.8%) of the respondents have spent between 16 years and above in service.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Type of School Type

School Type	Frequency	Percentage
Public School	322	53.9
Private School	278	46.1
Total	600	100.0

Table 3 indicates the distribution of respondents by type of school. The table indicates that 322 (53.9%) of the respondents are in public schools while, 278 (46.1%) of the respondents are in private schools.

Research Question 1: What are the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State?

Table 4: Mean and Rank Order of Causes of Examination Malpractice as Perceived by the Respondents

S/N	Examination malpractices among students are caused by:	Mean	Rank
4	societal preference for certificates	3.58	1 st
5	poor self-concept	3.51	2 nd
8	lack of adequate learning facilities (libraries, laboratories etc.)	3.51	2 nd
11	law enforcement agencies not doing enough to check examination malpractice	3.51	2 nd
1	peer pressure	3.49	5 th
10	lack of confidence as a result of inadequate preparation	3.48	6 th
12	employment of unqualified teachers	3.41	7 th
14	teachers not considering the slow learners while teaching	3.39	8 th
13	lack of parental involvement in their ward's education	3.33	9 th

16	poor study habits	3.30	10 th
7	making use of congested classrooms for examinations	2.98	11 th
2	inability to study to cover the syllabus before examination	2.87	12 th
20	poor invigilation by teachers	3.19	13 th
17	incessant strike actions in schools	3.17	14 th
19	teachers being subjective in marking	3.17	14 th
9	pressure from parents on students to pass by all means	3.16	16 th
15	admission of unqualified students in schools	3.16	17 th
18	low morality among teachers	3.15	18 th
3	delay in punishing examination offenders	3.06	19 th
6	Irregular attendance in classes	2.87	20 th

Table 4 shows the mean and rank order of the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State. The table shows that item 4 which stated that "societal preferences for certificates" with a mean score of 3.58 ranked 1st. Item 5, 8 and 11 which stated that "poor self-concept", "lack of adequate learning facilities (libraries, laboratories etc.)" and "law enforcement agencies not doing enough to check examination malpractice" respectively with mean score of 3.51 ranked 2nd. Item 3 which stated that "delay in punishing examination offenders" with a mean score of 3.06 ranked 19th. Item 6 which indicated that "Irregular attendance in classes" ranked 20th with mean score of 2.87. Since the cut-off point for taking decision on the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by the respondents is 2.5 and all items used have mean scores above the cut-off, this depicts that the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State are societal preferences for certificates, poor self-concept, lack of adequate learning facilities (libraries, laboratories etc.), delay in punishing examination offenders, law enforcement agencies not doing enough to check examination malpractice, making use of congested classrooms for examinations and teachers not considering the slow learners while teaching among others.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant difference in the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State based on gender.*

Table 5: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value on Causes of Examination Malpractice as Perceived by Teachers of Secondary Schools in Lagos State Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal.t-value	Crit. t-value	Decision
Male	312	67.77	5.02	558	11.60*	1.96	Significant
Female	288	62.32	6.07				

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 5 shows that the calculated t-value is 11.60 while, the critical t-value is 1.96. Since the calculated t-value of 11.60 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis is rejected. This means that there was a significant difference in the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State based on gender.

Hypothesis Two: *There is no significant difference in the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State based on length of years in service.*

Table 6: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value on Causes of Examination Malpractice as Perceived by Teachers of Secondary Schools in Lagos State Based on Length of Years in Service

Lenght of Years	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal.t-value	Crit. t-value	Decision
0-15 years	262	69.35	13.25	599	4.70*	1.96	Significant
16years & Above	338	62.59	18.65				

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 6 indicates that the calculated t-value is 4.70 while, the critical t-value is 1.96. Since the calculated t-value of 4.70 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis is rejected. This means that there was a significant difference in the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State based on length of years in service.

Hypothesis Three: *There is no significant difference in the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State based on school type.*

Table 7: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value on Causes of Examination Malpractice as Perceived by Teachers of Secondary Schools in Lagos State Based on School Type

School Type	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal.t-value	Crit. t-value	Decision
Public	322	65.92	15.37	599	0.20	1.96	Significant
Private	278	64.41	18.25				

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 7 indicates that the calculated t-value is 0.20 while, the critical t-value is 1.96. Since the calculated t-value of 0.20 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis is accepted. This means that there was no significant difference in the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State based on school type.

Discussion

The findings of this study identified the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State as societal preference for certificates, poor self-concept, lack of adequate learning facilities (libraries, laboratories etc), delay in punishing examination offenders, law enforcement agencies not doing enough to check examination malpractice, making use of congested classrooms for examinations and teachers not considering the slow learners while teaching among others. This finding supports the submission of Emeh (2008) that the only reason examination malpractice has persisted for long is due to lack of will on the government to prosecute those involved. This could also be that on many occasions, teachers have experienced some of the causes of examination malpractice for instance, students having the feelings that they can never pass a particular examination unless they cheat; parents lobbying for high scores in school, society depending solely on certificate before getting people employed etcetera.

Hypothesis one which stated that there is no significant difference in the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State based on gender was rejected. This implies that there was a significant difference in the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State based on gender. This also implies

that gender of teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State influences their perception of causes of examination malpractices. This finding is in conflict with the findings of Siguake (2004) and Fatai, who found no significant difference on the basis of gender. This finding could be as a result of gender that is associated with different-perception of issues; this implies that male teachers may be able to perceive the causes of examination malpractices than their female counterparts due to the fact that they are more sensitive to issues.

Hypothesis two which stated that there is no significant difference in the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State based on length of years in service was rejected. This means that there was a significant difference in the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State based on length of years in service. This also implies that the length of years that teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State have spent in service influences their perception of causes of examination malpractices. This finding corroborates the finding of Abdullahi (2009) and that of Adeyemi (2010) as they found significant differences on the basis of length of years in service as regards the causes of examination malpractices. This finding could be that experience counts; this means that the respondents who have spent more years in service have more experience regarding the causes of examination malpractice than their counterparts who have spent a few years in service. For instance, teachers who have spent more years in service may have experienced on several occasions, students being caught for examination malpractices and no punishment is given to such students and this has been recorded as a strong factor causing examination malpractice.

Hypothesis three which stated that there is no significant difference in the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State based on school type was accepted. This implies that there was no significant difference in the causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State based on school type. This also implies that the type of school that teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State teach does not influence their perception of causes of examination malpractices. In the study by Olatunbosun (2009) and Peters and Okon (2004), school type did not influence the expression of the respondents, hence similar to the finding of this study. The reason for this finding could be that the respondents, whether they are in public or private school, they are working with students who are examinees at one time or the other therefore, they could all be familiar with what makes students engage in examination malpractice.

Implications of the Findings for Counseling Practice

The causes of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State are societal preferences for certificates, poor self-concept, lack of adequate learning facilities (libraries, laboratories etc) and teachers not considering the slow learners while teaching among others. These imply that counselors should dissuade parents from putting undue pressure on their children to pass examination rather; parents should be advised to help their children by getting them textbooks, enrolling them in extra murals and giving them time to study at home. Counselors should advocate the establishment of 'Morality' club; which would be geared towards preventing students from engaging in examination malpractices; all staff of educational institutions should be encouraged to partake in the club activities. Counselors could create public awareness about the types and causes of examination malpractices with the hope of making people know the consequence of the act. Counselors should leave no stone unturned on the issue of examination malpractices by liaising with examination bodies, parents, Law Enforcement Agencies and other stakeholders on preventing the causes of examination malpractices.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government should place more emphasis on knowledge and skill acquisition not on certificates, as certificates may not be a true measure of individual's abilities. There are many people that have certificates in Nigeria today that cannot defend them. It has been recorded that some people earned their class of degrees through examination malpractices.
2. Government should provide more adequate teaching and learning materials in schools; standard libraries should be built and stocked with up to date text books in all schools to arouse the students' interest in learning and studying.
3. Teachers should put in more efforts in teaching students; they should consider individual differences and use varied teaching methods and aids. This would make learning interesting to students and enable each student learn at his/her pace.
4. Government and school administrators should prevent the admission of unqualified candidates. Candidates who do not meet the minimum requirements of a particular school should be denied admission. This is because, it has been recorded that admission of unqualified candidates is one of the causes of examination malpractices.
5. Parents should desist from putting undue pressure on their children to have good grades; they should desist from tipping teachers to give their children high scores which they do not merit. Parents can help their children by

helping them to study at home, helping them through their assignments, providing their children with textbooks and hiring lesson teachers for them.

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