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**PRINCIPALS INVOLVEMENT IN EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE IN IKA  
NORTH EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF DELTA STATE**

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**ABSTRACT**

This work focused on the involvement of principals in examination malpractice in Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State. The research design was descriptive survey. In conducting this research work, 430 teachers were sampled from the public secondary schools in Ika North East Area. The questionnaire entitled principal and examination malpractice (PAEM) was adopted to elicit information from the respondents. Chi-square was used to analyse the data. Some of the findings revealed that: principals are fully involved in examination malpractice, inadequate infrastructural facilities lead to examination malpractice and principals engage teachers in examination malpractice. The researcher therefore recommends among others that: Decree No.33 of 1999 concerning examination malpractice should be re-enforced, adequate infrastructural facilities should be provided, and parents should stop mounting pressure on their children as regards the choice of career.

**INTRODUCTION**

Education is the bedrock and an indispensable tool for the development of any nation. The advancement in technological know-how and other scientific breakthroughs which have elevated the standard of living in recent past owes its credit to education (Ikolo, 2004). Hence education is the pivot upon which the political, socio-economic, scientific and technological advancement of a nation rests. It is worthy of note that this great education industry has been bedeviled by examination malpractice, which if not checked, can lead to total collapse of the educational system which invariably affects the development of the nation. It is the biggest evil that has plagued and threatened the existence of education industry in Nigeria. Jegede (1996) sees examination malpractice "as wrongdoing, misconduct or dishonesty or improper practice for personal gain or violation of rules and



regulations for personal gain". Okpotu (1998) opined that examination malpractice is a form of intellectual crime, intellectual fraud or intellectual dishonesty. While Olagunju et al. (1994) said that examination malpractice is the absence of adherence to the rules and regulations guiding the conduct of an examination. Examination malpractice is perpetrated at all levels of education from nursery to tertiary institutions. It has negatively prevailed over both internal and external examinations. The causes of examination malpractice include: (i) the societal regard for success, (ii) lack of effective teaching and learning in our school system, (iii) the nations over-emphases on paper qualification for employment opportunities in various sectors of the economy, (iv) the decline in morality and relegation of hard work and honesty to the background,(v) inadequate and insufficient textbooks,(vi) for advertisement in the private schools, and(vii) improper enrolment of subjects. Denga cited in Aliyu and Adeloje (1991) discovered that students resorted to cheating for the following reasons: pressure from "significant others" like parents for good grades, a lack of continuous assessment and an absence of severe punishment for cheats. Ugwuegbu (1975) identified two major motivating factors; namely, to avoid failure and to consolidate one's excellent performances as predictors of examination malpractices. Olayinka (1993) and Oyekannu (1997) summarized the causes of examination malpractice as:(1) fear of failure,(2) inordinate ambition of some people to become rich,(3) unwholesome societal values premised on moral laxity which cause some parents: (i) put pressure on their children to pursue courses for which they have little or no aptitude, (ii) provide money to their children to purchase leaked questions papers or to pay helpers, and (iii) hire for their children impersonators to help them sit for their papcrs, and (4) overcrowding in examination halls and poor sitting arrangement. Many methods are adopted for carrying out this deadly practice. Anarado (2003) listed the various modes of examination malpractice as follows:(i) students cheating at the hall by giraffing, (ii) students go into the examination hall with relevant prepared materials hidden in their pockets, wrappers, face-caps, shoes etc, (iii) writing on different parts of the body, clothes, under-wears, handkerchiefs etc,(iv) impersonating, (v) jotting down some points on the question paper, (vi) teachers aiding the students, (vii) invigilators assisting the students, and (viii) invigilators serving as mercenaries.

Examination malpractice has consequences on the citizenry and the economy of the nation. Money and Money (2003) listed some of the consequences as follows: (1) distortion of psychometric properties of the institutions tests, (2) reduction of the students self confidence as the impression, that they cannot do well unless assisted, (3) discouragement of good study habits thus stunting students intellectual capacity as skills



acquisitions, (4) honest students feel cheated and this can affect adversely their morale and productivity (5) validity and reliability of examinations and the integrity of certificates issued by the institutions are questionable, (6) there will be poor quality and standard of education in higher institutions, (7) there will also be proliferation of uncouth, dishonest, ill-equipped graduates leading to the inevitable collapse of cherished values and services of the society, (8) attempt by institutions in curbing examination malpractice has put the administration on collusion course with students. This often times leads to students riots (9) it leads to incidence of institution giving "best students awards" to the wrong students, and (10) the aim of establishing the institutions is threatened since it has a lot of negative impact on both the students and the administration of the school. The cause of this pandemic and dangerous practice has been blamed on government, principals, teachers, parents and students. This paper intends to look into the involvement of principal in examination malpractice. Ikolo (2004) states that like in the primary school scenario, principals and teachers are the "principal actors" in examination malpractice. Students are advised in their own interest to pay huge sums of money ranging from five hundred to seven hundred naira per subject. As such special classes are reserved for those who are able to meet the financial requirement. There and then, teachers provide answers to the examination questions. On the other hand, students who are unable to pay their way through end up with police number F9. According to Agbo (2005), for SSCE, no principal wants his students to fail. Because of this, an illegal fee is collected from the candidates in the guise that it will be used for logistics. In reality, it is used to bribe the invigilators to look the other way while the teachers aid their students to write the exams, fully armed with their textbooks. Uwagwa(2005) reported that the commissioner for Education in Delta State, during her tour round the State on the war against malpractice, Dr. Veronica Ogbuagwu ordered the arrest of proprietors, principals, teachers, students and even the daughter of a school principal was an impersonator. Oroka (2006) also opined that within the secondary school system, the principals is the principal examination malpractioner. The principals make their school "miracle centres."

## STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Since Expo '77' which was the mass leakage of examination papers that occurred in 1977, examination malpractice has become a major threat to the educational system of our nation, and if not checked, may eventually lead to total collapse of the system. There is increase in the number of the students who cheat during examination evcry year. Even their methods of operation have also increased. The effects of this bad practice among which are: (1) students now tend to be lazy and gradually the culturc of



learning in our educational institutions is being croded, (2)high rate of failures in examination, and it lower the standard of education by default. The cause of this canker worm in the educational system has been attributed to parents, principals and students. The consequences of this deadly practice is devastating hence there is urgent need to look out how to put an end to it. Thus this paper seeks to look into the involvement of the principals in the examination malpractice and the way forward.



## HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between inadequate infrastructural facilities and examination malpractice.
2. There is no significant relationship between parent pressure on the principal and examination malpractice.
3. There is no significant relationship in the utilization of teachers and examination malpractice.
4. There is no significant relationship between the population of the students and examination malpractice.

## METHODOLOGY

**Research Design:** The research design is descriptive survey. According to Whawo (2000) in a survey research, the investigator selects a sample from the population for an exploratory study to enable him discover relative incidence, distribution, interrelations of sociological and psychological variables. Thus the researcher lends to secondary schools in Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State.

**Population of the Study:** The study made use of teachers in public secondary schools in Ika North East. There are 878 teachers in the public secondary schools in Ika Local Government Area. (Source: Inspectorate Division, Ministry of Education, Asaba Delta State 2002/2003).

**Sample and Sampling Technique:** Simple random sampling technique was employed to select the respondents. Sample of 439 teachers were used across the public secondary schools in Ika North East L.G.A. This is 50% of the total population. 439 teachers were sampled because they adequately represented the population of the study.

**Research Instrument:** The questionnaire titled principal and examination malpractice (PAEM) was constructed by the researcher to elicit information on the principal involvement in examination malpractice. The study made use of questionnaire containing 20 items for teachers.

**Validation of the Instrument:** The instrument was validated by three chosen experts from the Department of Educational Administration and Policy Studies, Delta State University Abraka. A reliability co-efficient of 70 for the instrument was got using Cronbach coefficient alpha ( $\alpha$ ) formula.

**Administration of Instrument:** The questionnaire was directly administered by the researcher to all the respondents for interaction and was collected back after two weeks, and 430 out of 439 were collected.



**Method of Data Analysis:** Chi-square was used to analyse the data. It was chosen because it is a statistical device for testing the null hypotheses, that is no different between the observe and the theoretical events that are predicted by chance.

## RESULTS/FINDINGS

**Table I: Chi-Square Contingency Table for Inadequate Facilities and Examination Malpractice**

	Lack classroom	Lack of seats	N	$\chi^2$ observed	$\chi^2$ critical
Male Teachers	(109) 80	(71) 100	180	28.3	3.84
Female Teachers	(151) 180	(99) 70	250		
	260	170	430		

$P < .05$

Table I showed the Chi-square contingency table. The Chi-square observed was 28.3 while the  $\chi^2$  critical was 3.84 at 0.05 level of significant. Since the  $\chi^2$  observed was greater than  $\chi^2$  critical, the null hypothesis was rejected. So there was significant relationship between the inadequate infrastructural facilities and examination malpractice.

**Table II: Chi-Square Contingency Table for Parental Pressure and Examination Malpractice**

	Imposing professional interest	Parents offer money to principal	N	$\chi^2$ observed	$\chi^2$ critical
Male Teachers	83 (108)	97 (72)	180	25.0	3.84
Female Teachers	175 (150)	75 (100)	250		
	258	172	430		

$P < .05$

Table 2 showed the Chi-square contingency table. The Chi-square observed was 25.0 while the Chi-square critical was 3.84 at 0.05 level of significant. Since the Chi-square observed was greater than Chi-square critical, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there was significant relationship between parental pressure and examination.



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**Table III: Chi-Square Contingency Table for Teacher Utilization and Examination Malpractice**

	Inadequate Staff	Teachers are used to carry out malpractice	N	$\chi^2$ observed	$\chi^2$ critical
Male Teachers	(107) 82	(73) 98	180	12.5	3.84
Female Teachers	(148) 173	(102) 77	250		
	255	175	430		

$P < .05$

Table 3 showed the Chi-square contingency table. The Chi-square observed was 12.5 while the Chi-square critical was 3.48 at 0.05 level of significant. Since the  $\chi^2$  observed was greater than  $\chi^2$  critical, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there was significant relationship between teacher utilization and examination malpractice.

**Table IV: Chi-Square Contingency Table for Principal and Population of Students.**

	Attraction of students	To increase the enrolment of students	N	$\chi^2$ observed	$\chi^2$ critical
Male Teachers	80 (71)	100 (75)	180	7.75	3.84
Female Teachers	(145) 170	(105) 80	250		
	250	180	430		

$P < .05$

Table 4 showed the Chi-square contingency table. The Chi-square observed was 7.75 while the Chi-square critical was 3.84 at .05 level of significant. Since the  $\chi^2$  observed was greater than  $\chi^2$  critical, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there was significant relationship between principal and population of students.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the data analysed, it was observed that principals are fully involved in



examination malpractice. They indulge in this devilish act by making flexible rules, collecting money from parents, using teachers to carry out the art, and bribing some corrupt WAEC and NECO officers. Principals encourage examination malpractice to attract more students to their schools which leads to increase in the enrolment of students. This idea was supported by Alan and Roberts (1964) and Fieldler, (1967) when they said that the leaders of our educational institutions are also aiding and abetting examination malpractice. The principal exerts some influences on the members of the group i.e. the teachers in a work situation with intent of accomplishing a specific goal. Edukugho (2005) also said that some operators of private colleges, study centres and tutorial schools appear to be the worst culprits in the leakage Oroko (2006) opined that within the secondary school system the principal is the principal examination malpractioner. Jegede (1996) identified three principal factors responsible for examination malpractice. These include (i) irregular payment of teachers salaries and allowances leading to frequent strike actions which make it impossible for effective coverage of the syllabus or the course content,(ii) instances of lazy teachers who habitually lay about even when things are normal to the effect that they cannot cover the syllabus but when examination come, such teachers present themselves as friends of students,(iii) inadequate teaching materials and staffing arising from government desire to curtail expenditure on education. To support the idea that lack of facilities cause examination malpractice, Ossiage (2005) asserted that the explosion in the secondary school enrolment, faulty planning, inadequate facilities, inadequate classroom and instructional materials, problems of finance and lack of trained and

committed teachers have lowered the standard of education. Stressing on the involvement of principals and teachers in examination malpractice, Agbo (2005) opined that in the so-called special centres, principals and teachers work with the syndicates to ensure that all the candidates pass their examinations with the required credits. The candidates pay as much as N15,000 which is shared by all the stakeholders, including the invigilators and some supervisors. Ikolo (2004) also noted that teachers are being engineered by head-teachers who give them kickbacks they received from parents who hang around indiscriminately at examination centres. Commenting on the consequences of examination malpractice Suleiman and Abdulazccz (1997) states that one of the major effects of examination malpractice is that students now tend to be lazy and gradually the culture of learning in our educational institutions is being eroded, thus there is high rate of failure in examination especially public examinations. They also listed other consequences of examination malpractices as:

- (i) Killing of motivation for learning,
- (ii) Lowering the standard of education by default,



- (iii) Production of quacks as professionals,
- (iv) It leads to high level of crime and
- (v) It makes nonsense of the educational system.

## **FINDINGS**

From data analysis, the following findings were made:

1. Principals are fully involved in examination malpractice.
2. Inadequate infrastructural facilities lead to examination malpractice.
3. Parents impose their professional interest on their children by mounting pressure on them on the choice of career. They also pressurize the principal to assist their children.
4. Principals engage teachers in the art of examination malpractice.
5. Principals are engaged in examination malpractice to attract more students to their schools.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Examination malpractice is a canker worm that has eaten deep into the educational system, therefore urgent attention is needed to savage this system which is the bedrock of our national economy.

The following ways have been recommended for overcoming the devilish art:

1. The consequences of examination malpractice should be discussed at the All Nigerian Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools (ANCOPSS) and Decree No.33 of 1999 should be enforced. It recommends that in the case of teacher, principal, invigilator, examiner when involved in examination malpractices, such as person will be sentenced to imprisonment for a term of four years without an option of fine, if found guilty.
2. Adequate infrastructural facilities should be provided by government in the public schools. For the external examinations, schools should not be allowed to enroll more than the number of students that their facilities can accommodate.
3. Parents should stop mounting pressure on the students on the choice of career. The children should be allowed to choose the courses that they are capable of studying. They should also stop pressuring principals to aid their children.
4. School councilors should organise seminars, conferences and workshops for students, teachers, principals and officials in the examination process.
5. Teachers should be motivated and remunerated. Poorly paid teacher cannot be patriotic, they should be made to feel that they are important and that their roles in nation building are indispensable.
6. Paper qualification should be deemphasized in job placements.



7. Trained and competent administrators should be appointed as principals of schools.
8. Students should be encouraged to develop reading culture.
9. Examination malpractice can also be reduced by emphasising on continuous assessment methodology.
10. The appointed examination marshals should be up and doing.

## CONCLUSION

Examination malpractices have bedeviled the educational system in the country. Many factors have been attributed as the causes of examination malpractices among which are over emphasis on paper qualification, non reading culture of students, inadequate infrastructural facilities and lack of dedicated teachers. The practitioners of this canker worm in the educational system include the principal, teachers, parents and students. The paper recommends among others that, adequate infrastructural facilities should be provided, parents should stop mounting pressure on their children in respect of choice of subject, paper qualification should be deemphasized and students should be encouraged to develop reading culture.

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