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EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR CURBING EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DELTA STATE: EDUCATORS' PERCEPTION

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to determine effective strategies for curbing examination malpractices before, during and after examination. Three research questions guided the study. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The study was conducted in Delta State. Delta State is one of the thirty-six states in Nigeria and located in south-south geo-political zone of the country. The population of the study comprised 465 principals in public secondary schools in Delta State. There was no sampling since the entire population was relatively small and manageable. Therefore, the 465 public secondary school principals in Delta State were utilized for the study. A researcher-developed instrument titled ''Effective Strategies for Curbing Examination Malpractices Questionnaire (ESCEMQ)'' was used for data collection. The face validation of the instrument (ESCEMQ) was determined by presenting the title, purpose of the study, research questions, hypotheses and the copies of the questionnaire to three experts who were requested to examine and scrutinize the items in terms of contents, relevance, suitability, clarity and coverage of the dimensions of the study. The experts made several corrections that included modifications of the items and restructuring of the leading statements in all the tables. The data used for establishing the internal consistency of the instrument were single administration of copies of ESCEMQ administered to 30 educators in Bayelsa State. ESCEMQ was subjected to test for internal consistency using Cronbach alpha. Coefficient values of 0.81, 0.85, and 0.80 were obtained for clusters I, II, and III respectively. The researcher and 10 research assistants who are secondary school teachers in Delta State collected data for the study. The research assistants are representatives from each of the ten education zones in Delta State, while the researcher administered copies of the ESCEMQ to the remaining education zone. Direct approach was employed in data collection in order to ensure that copies of the questionnaire administered were properly filled and successfully retrieved. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The findings of the study are as follows: Effective Strategies for Curbing Pre-Examination Malpractices: Covering of the scheme of work by teachers curb examination malpractices; Detection of multiple registrations on time by authorities curbs examination malpractices; minimizing the registration of external candidates by centers curb examination malpractices; appropriate allocation of examination officers to various examination centers curb examination malpractices; Ensuring that the actual continuous assessment grades forwarded to examining bodies without falsification curb

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examination malpractices. Effective Strategies for Curbing Malpractices during Examination: Having adequate number of invigilators; Engaging honest supervisors; searching of students before they enter the examination hall; accurate time keeping; Monitoring of students closely; trusting the students; Presentation of identity cards by students before admission into examination hall. Effective Strategies for Curbing Post-Examination Malpractices: Orderly leaving of the examination hall by examinees; Immediate packaging of live scripts for dispatch by supervisors; Total number of answer scripts tallying with the total number of candidates; Examinees not having access to the examiners until results are published; De- registration of centers found guilty for three years, and cancellation of results of candidates involved in examination malpractices. Based on the findings of the study it was recommended: That Examination malpractice act 33 of 1999 is fully implemented; that the number of years a center is de-registered be reviewed upwards. There should be a study on the level of involvement in examination malpractices by all levels of examiners to get to the root of examination malpractice persistence in Nigeria.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Strategies, Curbing, Examination Malpractices; Educators.

Introduction

In Nigeria, achievements at any level of education are crowned with certification for those who successfully completed the course of study with good academic records. Thus, at the end of secondary school education, students are expected to sit for public examinations such as the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE), conducted by West African Examination Council (WAEC), Senior School Certificate (SSCE), conducted by National Examination Council (NECO), the National Technical and Business Certificate Examinations (NTCE/NBCE), also conducted by the National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB).

In addition, there are various certificate examinations conducted by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) for admission into Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. Professional bodies also have their professional examinations conducted for purposes of accreditation, professionalism and licensing of their membership. Such professional examinations conducted in Nigeria are: the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN), Nigeria Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) among others.

Examinations occupy a very strategic position in our lives (educational and industrial) today. Teachers and counsellors rely on them for a comprehensive evaluation of their students and clients. To decide whether a student merits being promoted to another class, a series of achievement tests that will eventually culminate in a well - founded decision has to be given. In industrial setting, experts in human relations and employment bureaux utilise tests in reaching a decision as to the employability of an individual applicant.

Despite the strategic importance of examination or test taking for diagnostic, placement, classification and quality control in Nigerian institutions, the integrity and credibility of public examinations have been greatly eroded and corrupted with increasing incidence of examination malpractice. Olagboye (2004) lamented that, the situation appears so bad that many Nigerians and interested stakeholders including employers of labour have almost lost confidence in the values of examinations and their results. In a study conducted by Arijesuyc (2010), he warned that Government and major stakeholders should feel sufficiently concerned because of the threat of examination malpractice to the educational system and national development. He further noted that, the preponderance, scope and sophistication of examination malpractice in the country, has rendered the products, and credentials of the schools suspect.

Examination is the process of testing and judging by standard. It is also a means of scrutinizing with a view to determine the level of performance and achievement. Examination malpractice is any irregular behavior 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, (Oluyeba & Daramola cited in Alutu & Aluede, 2006).Examination malpractice in this study is therefore any irregular action taken by examinees, examiners or any other persons associated with an examination whether before, during and after, that gives undue advantage to certain individuals.

Examination malpractices in the developing countries of Africa are very alarming. Boakye, (2015) lamented that in Ghana it was obvious that examination malpractices were gradually turning out to be normal in that society and in the nation as a whole. Kagete, (2008) confirmed that currently, examination security is a major government's preoccupation in Kenya though not unique to that country alone. In Zambia, the menace of examination malpractice has taken a dangerous and disturbing turn in recent years. According to Ngosa, (2013), parents, teachers, supervisors and even school managers were directly involved in examination malpractices.

Phiri and Nakamba, (2015) pointed out that despite strong measures instituted to ensure the security of examination papers, conducting examinations in Zambia has become one of the major problems facing the education sector. In Uganda, Tanzania and many other developing African countries the story is the same (Anzene, 2014; Kato, 2015; Patrick, 2014). Examination malpractices seriously undermine the credibility of any nation's quality of education.

It is common knowledge that in the last two decades, Nigeria has witnessed an alarming rate of increase in incidents of examinations misconduct. Olatunbosun, (2009) noted that every examination season witnesses the emergence of new and ingenious ways of cheating. Vanguard Newspaper, Weekend Pointer and Daily Independent cited in

Olatunbosun, (2009) also remarked that evidences abound of increasing involvement of students, teachers and parents in examination malpractices. Nwadiani also in Olatunbosun, (2009) concluded that the process of examination in Nigeria Secondary Schools has become a 'Contemporary Shame". Examination malpractice is much more evident in external examinations in Nigerian Secondary School Certificate Examinations conducted by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and the National Examination (NECO).

The examination malpractices are graded into those that take place before, during and after examinations. Those that take place before the examinations include the following among others, the sale of live question papers; multiple registration, (where the same candidate makes two or more entries for the same examination, two candidates write the examination while only one submits a script. This is done with the help of Principals and Examination Officials). Others include impersonation; delay in commencement of examination, (to allow mercinaries" work out answers to questions for special candidates) and citing of examination centers in very remote areas of difficult terrain, (Nzene, 2014; Obudigha, 2010; Aworanti, 2012). The examination malpractices that take place during the actual examination among others include impersonation, collusion, swapping of scripts, "girrafing" (stretching beyond normal sitting space to copy from other candidates); "bullets" (hard squeezed papers containing answers thrown to well-wishers in the wall); and assistance rendered by the invigilators and supervisors, (Oreidein, 2014; Nwankwo, 2012 ; Omenu, 2015). Also involved is the use of electronic devices like global system of mobile telephone via SMS, smuggling answer scripts and question papers in and out of the examination hall, thuggery, hooliganism and physical assault that constitute confrontational means of perpetuating examination malpractices, (Wilayat, 2009; Adeyemi, 2010 ; Nwadiani in, Olatunbosun, 2009). Also, the use of guns, knives and horsewhip to intimidate examination officials to create enabling environment for cheating is another means of perpetrating examination malpractice during examination (Aworanti, 2012; Nwankwo, 2012). Aworanti, (2012) asserted that examination malpractices carried out at the end of examinations are considered by the perpetrators to be the safest, surest and most reliable form of malpractice capable of achieving their desired objectives. The agents commonly used here are supervisors, custodians, examiners, computer operators, subject officers, office clerks, typists and many others. This occurs by inducing the personnel with sex, gifts, money to buy the personnel of examining bodies as well as those connected with the marking and coordinating of candidates' scripts, storing of scores and other key functions. Also the unwillingness of the supervisors to move out used answer booklets immediately after the examination create room for substituting answer scripts from outside.

Asuru in Aworanti, (2012) also affirmed that the substitution of a candidate's original script with a re-written one, alteration of scores in favour of candidates and the falsification of

statement of results are very common at this stage of the examinations. However, despite all these desperate measures by perpetrators of examination malpractices, concerted efforts are being made by governments, administrators, and managers of public examination to alleviate this social plague. In 1984, an examination malpractice decree was passed in Nigeria with a sentence of 21 years imprisonment on conviction (Anzene, 2014). This was revisited and reviewed into Examination Malpractice Act No 33 of 1999 which stipulated a minimum punishment of fifty thousand naira (equivalent of 450USD) and a maximum of five years imprisonment, without option of fine for the violators of the offences stipulated. The offences include: cheating at examination, stealing of question papers, buying/selling of question papers, impersonation, disturbance at examination, obstruction of supervision, forging of result slip, breach of duty, conspiracy and aiding among others, (Nwankwo, 2012). The managing strategies for curbing examination malpractices depend on whether the malpractice occurred before, during and after the examination. Several management strategies have been preferred to curb the malpractice before the examination. These include, ensuring that teachers cover their scheme of work to reduce the anxiety often faced by students when they feel deficient (Onyechere, 2010; Anzene, 2014; Onuka & Durowoju, 2013). This is because teachers are regarded as having crucial roles to play in the success or otherwise of any education system (Omemu, 2015).

The use of Continuous Assessment and the sending of correct grades to the examining bodies is an important measure of curbing malpractice before examinations, (Trakiriowei, 2016; Adeyemi, 2010; Akanni & Odofin, 2015). This is because Continuous Assessment (CA) compels students to make adequate use of their time for studies while teachers have early opportunity to review their teaching methods. The CA also reduces anxiety associated with one shot examination. Oladipo, Adenuga & Emanoselu, (2010) in their study on predictors of examination malpractice found that test anxiety significantly, dependently and jointly predicted examination malpractice. This directly emphasizes the key roles of the teacher covering the scheme of work and the important role of Continuous Assessments in external examinations. Another method include engaging officers regarded as honest and trustworthy as supervisors aid examiners (Onyebe, Uma and Ibina, 2015). Such people are recommended by the Ministries of Education. Other methods include; selecting centers with large halls that can make room for good sitting arrangement and easy movement by invigilators (Oladipo *et al.*, (2010). This reduces overcrowding of examination halls which gives room for cheating, such as “giraffing”, exchange of ‘bullets’/answer booklets and copying of answers from one another. Safe keeping of question papers and answer booklets is also crucial (Orji, Madu and Nwachukwu, 2016).

Concerted effort to allocate adequate number of supervisors and invigilators in all the examination centers is also one of the management strategies (Ukpabi, 2015). This

ensures that students are properly marked and closely watched by the examination officials. Some of such centers have also stopped registering external candidates as it is generally believed that they are a major source of examination malpractices (Adenipekun, 2016). Attention has critically been paid to proper time selection and adequacy for each paper as it is very crucial, (ACOPASS nd). Where this is not taken care of it may lead to students not being allowed to make full use of the time allocated to the paper creating room for cheating. Effective supervision is usually advocated, (Adeyemi, 2010). Jokthan (2013) has proffered the use of biometrics at the point of registration and at the gate of examination hall with adequate security but this has not been actually explored.

Some of the management strategies applied to curb examination malpractices during the actual examination include, increased number of invigilators and supervisors to match the population of the candidates; examination officers, principals and vice principals paying visits to examination halls to observe what goes on there; students being thoroughly searched by invigilators before they enter the examination hall (Ukpabi 2015, Jokthan, 2013). Other measures include adequate sitting arrangement for students; allowing only formally registered candidates to sit for the examination after thorough screening; support of the law enforcement agents like the police to restrain visitors such as parents, relations and mercenaries from entering the environs of the examination center when the examinations are on, (Orji, *et al.*, 2016; Jokthan 2013). The issue of proper time keeping cannot be over-emphasized. Sometimes when invigilators do not start the paper at the right time there is the tendency for invigilators to collect papers before the time was up. Accurate time keeping saves the invigilators from having a rowdy atmosphere in the examination hall which encourages fraud (Oladipo, et *al.*, 2010 and ACOPASS, n.d). Sometimes unqualified invigilators and supervisors are used but this is often discouraged (Adeyemi, 2010). Effort is also made towards curbing malpractice after the examination. The management strategies involve outright cancellations of candidates' results and the closing down of the "special" centers where monumental frauds take place, as well as de-recognition or de-registration of schools and centers involved in malpractices from being future centers for a period of time.

Others include safe keeping of used answer booklets, societal re-engineering and re-orientation to revamp moral values have been suggested and tried in some schools through counselors, (Trakiriowei 2016; Onyibe, Uma, and Ibina (2013) & Aworanti 2012). Peters and Okon (2013) also suggest effective counseling services in schools to assist students acquire effective study habits. Onuka and Durowoju (2013) have also suggested the building of large examination halls that could accommodate more students and also create adequate space between candidates. According to Akanni and Odofin (2015 and Trakiriowei (2016), others have asserted that reducing examination malpractices in Nigerian schools would work more effectively through effective continuous assessment technique which would act as an alternative to

one-shot examination.

Statement of Problem

The societal pressures on success and the acquisition of certificates have made all these efforts unsuccessful. As aptly expressed by Aworoanti (2012) these solutions by both the government, managers of public examinations have continued to defy solutions. Examinations in secondary schools should be true judgment by standard. With it, one can determine the true level of performance in each subject by students as well as their achievement standing from one level of class to the other.

For a long time, particularly in the last two decades examination malpractices have made it impossible for examinations at any level in the secondary schools in Nigeria to be a true test of students' knowledge. Many have graduated with very good results but could neither construct a simple letter nor express themselves effectively. A good number have acquired little or no skills taught at that level. The government and the citizens who were educated before this new trend find it very worrisome. If the situation is not arrested, Nigeria will definitely retrogress educationally and technologically while the rest of the world progress steadily. This will spell doom for the younger generation. The researcher therefore thinks it timely to identify the strategies currently in use to curb examination malpractices before, during and after examinations in secondary schools in Nigeria. Based on this premise, this research work assessed the various identified management strategies to curb examination malpractices at the secondary school level in Delta State to find out how relatively effective they are from the point of view of educators.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study;

1. To what extent are the identified pre-examination malpractices curbing strategies effective?
   - Covering of syllabus by teachers,
   - Detecting multiple registrations on time,
   - Minimizing the registration of external candidates,
   - Appropriate allocation of examination officers,
   - Forwarding of the actual continuous assessment grades to examining bodies.
2. To what extent are the identified curbing strategies of malpractices during the examinations effective?
   - Having adequate number of invigilators,
   - Engaging honest supervisors,
   - Searching of students before they enter the examination hall,
   - Accurate time keeping,
   - Monitoring of students closely,
   - Trusting the students,
   - Presentation of identity cards by students before admission into examination hall.
3. To what extent are the identified post-examination malpractices curbing strategies effective?

- Orderly leaving of the examination hall by examinees,
- Immediate packaging of live scripts for dispatch by supervisors,
- Total number of answer scripts tallying with the total number of candidates.
- Examinees not having access to the examiners until results are published.
- Implementation of examination malpractice Act 33 1999.
- De- registration of centers found guilty for three years, and
- Cancellation of results of candidates involved in examination malpractices.

Research Method

Research Design: The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. According to Nworgu (2015), descriptive survey is the design which aims at collecting data on, and describing in a systematic manner the characteristic features or facts about a given population. Nwankwo (2013) also saw descriptive survey design as the research design that describes phenomena as they exist. The descriptive survey design fits into this study because the researcher collected data from population of the study in order to describe in a systematic manner the strategies for curbing examination malpractices as perceived by educators in secondary schools in Delta State.

Area of the Study: The study was conducted in Delta State. Delta State is one of the thirty-six states in Nigeria. It is located in south-south geo-political zone of the country. The state is bounded in the north by Edo State, south by Bayelsa State, east by Anambra and Rivers States and west by Atlantic Ocean. The capital of the state is Asaba. Warri is the biggest commercial city in the state. The major towns in Delta state are Warri, Asaba, Agbor, Abraka, Effurun, Ughelli, Kwale, Sapele and Ogwashi-Uku. There are 25 local government areas in the state with Urhobo, Igbo,Isoko, Ijaw and Itsekiri as the major ethnic groups. The state has eleven education zones namely: Agbor, Asaba, Bomadi, Koko, Kwale, Oghara, Oleh, Orerokpe, Sapele, Ughelli and Warri. There are also many private, mission and public secondary schools in the state. The Post Primary Education Board at Asaba, the state capital, centrally manages the public schools.

Population of the Study: The population of the study comprised 465 principals in public secondary schools in Delta State. This was reported according to data collected from Post Primary Education Board, Asabain June, 2019. There are 39 principals in Agbor, 64 in Asaba, 40 in Bomadi, 12 in Koko, 62 in Kwale, 48 in Oghara, 38 in Oleh, 48 in Orerokpe, 15 in Sapele, 74 in Ugheli and 25 in Warri.

Sample and Sampling Technique: There was no sampling since the entire population was relatively small and manageable. Therefore, the 465 public secondary school principals in Delta State were utilized for the study.

Instrument for Data Collection: A researcher-developed instrument titled ‘‘Effective Strategies for Curbing Examination Malpractices Questionnaire (ESCEMQ)’’ was used for data collection. The instrument was developed based on

literature review and consultation with experts in educational management. The instrument has two sections namely A and B. Section 'A' focused on personal information of respondents. Section 'B' has three clusters namely: I, II, and III. These clusters were based on the three areas of the research namely: pre-; during and post-examination malpractices. The instrument was structured on four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD) and weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Validation of the Instrument: The face validation of the instrument (ESCEMQ) was determined. To ascertain this, the researcher presented the title, purpose of the study, research questions, hypotheses and the copies of the questionnaire to three experts who are lecturers, two in the Department of Educational Management and Policy, and one in Department of Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation Unit) all from Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The experts were requested to examine and scrutinize the items in terms of contents, relevance, suitability, clarity and coverage of the dimensions of the study. The experts made several corrections that include modifications of the items and restructuring of the leading statements in all the tables. As a result of their suggestions, 6 items were structured; 1 item was expunged, while 6 items were added.

Reliability of the Instrument: The data used for establishing the internal consistency of the instrument were single administration of copies of ESCEMQ administered to 30 educators in Bayelsa State. The choice of Bayelsa State was because both Delta and Bayelsa States share the same characteristics in school administration as they are in the same south-south geo-political zone in Nigeria. Using data obtained, ESCEMQ was subjected to test for internal consistency using Cronbach alpha. Coefficient values of 0.81, 0.85, and 0.80 were obtained for clusters I, II, and III respectively. These coefficient values were adjudged high enough for the instrument usability. This is in line with Green (2007) who recommended that co-efficient value of 0.80 or above is adequate for any research work.

Method of Data Collection: The researcher and 10 research assistants who are secondary school teachers in Delta State collected data for the study. The research assistants are representatives from each of the ten education zones in Delta State, while the researcher administered copies of the ESCEMQ to the remaining education zone. The assistants were briefed by the researcher on the nature and purpose of the study and this enlightened and helped them to clarify and answer questions from the respondents. Direct approach was employed in data collection in order to ensure that copies of the questionnaire administered were properly filled and successfully retrieved. Follow-up visits were made where the respondents could not submit on the spot. The distribution and collection of the copies of the questionnaire lasted three weeks as to have enough time for follow visit in retrieving the questionnaire. A total of 465copies of the questionnaire were distributed, and 446 copies of questionnaire were successfully retrieved, indicating 96% return. The data collected was subjected to analysis.

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Method of Data Analysis: The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: To what extent, are the identified pre-examination malpractices curbing strategies found effective?

Table 1: Mean ratings of the opinion of respondents on the effectiveness of the identified pre-examination malpractices curbing strategies

S/N	Items	$\bar{X}$	SD	RK
	Based on your perception as an Educator, to what extent does :			
1.	Covering of the scheme of work by teachers curb examination malpractices?	2.56	1.36	Accepted
2.	Detection of multiple registrations on time by authorities curbs examination malpractices?	2.59	1.14	Accepted
3.	Minimizing the registration of external candidates by centers curb examination malpractices?	2.68	0.68	Accepted
4.	Appropriate allocation of examination officers to various examination centers curb examination malpractices?	3.11	1.02	Accepted
5.	Ensuring that the actual continuous assessment grades forwarded to examining bodies without falsification curb examination malpractices?	2.50	1.34	Accepted
	Pooled mean score	2.67		Accepted
	Bench mark mean score	2 50		

Table 1 above presents the mean ratings of respondents on the effective management strategies for curbing malpractice before examination in secondary schools. The findings show that the covering of scheme of work by teachers was rated highly in effectiveness in curbing examination malpractice, (X 2.56). The respondents also rated highly items 2, 3, 4 and 5. These include, the detection of multiple registration early enough ($\bar{X}$ 2.59), minimizing the registration of external candidates ($\bar{X}$ 2.68), allocating examination officers appropriately to the various examination centers ($\bar{X}$ 3.11) and ensuring that the actual continuous assessment grades were forwarded to examining bodies without falsification (X2.50). All the means were above the bench mark of 2.5 which shows that the management strategies were accepted as effective. The grand mean for respondents was 2.67 which is above the bench mark of 2.5. This indicates that all the identified strategies before the examinations were accepted as effective.

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Research Question 2: To what extent, are the identified curbing strategies of malpractices during examinations found effective?

Table 2: Mean ratings of the opinions of respondents on the effectiveness of the identified curbing strategies of malpractices during examination

S/N	Based on your perception as an Educator, to what extent does:	$\bar{X}$		REMARK
6.	Having adequate number of invigilators in each examination hall curb examination malpractices?	2.60	0.84	Accepted
7.	Engaging honest supervisors curb examination malpractices?	2.51	0.23	Accepted
8.	Searching of students before they enter the examination hall curb malpractices?	3.01	0.41	Accepted
9.	Accurate time keeping during the examination curb malpractices?	2.97	1.01	Accepted
10.	Monitoring the students closely in the examination hall curb malpractices?	3.14	0.28	Accepted
11.	Trusting the students by allowing them to be in charge of their affairs like decent people curb malpractices?	2.31	0.65	Rejected
12.	Presentation of examinees' identity cards as they file into the examination hall curbs malpractices? Pooled mean	3.33	0.41	Accepted
		2.76		Accepted
	Benchmark	2.50		

Table 2 shows the mean ratings of the opinions of respondents on the effective management strategies to curb malpractices during examination in secondary schools. The table shows that the respondents rated highly items 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 while item 11 was rated low. Those rated highly include, having adequate number of invigilators in each examination hall (X = 2.60); engaging honest supervisors (X = 2.51); searching of students before they enter the examination hall (X = 3.01); accurate time keeping (X = 2.97); monitoring the students closely (X = 3.14) and the presentation of examinees' identity cards before filing them into the hall (X=3.33). The mean of each of the items was above the bench mark of 2.5 indicating that they were accepted as effective. However, the respondents rated low the idea of trusting the students to be in charge during the examination by leaving them to conduct themselves as decent people during examinations (item 11). This had a mean of 2.31 which was below the bench mark of 2.5.The item was deemed to be ineffective and was rejected. The grand mean was 2.76 which shows that generally the strategies applied during examinations were effective.

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Research Question 3: To what extent, are the identified post-examination malpractices curbing strategies effective?

Table 3: Mean ratings of the opinion of respondents on the effectiveness of the identified post- examination malpractices strategies.

	Teachers			
S/N	**Based on your perception as an Educator, to what extent does:**	$\overline{X}$	**SD**	**REMARK**
13.	Students' working out quietly from examination hall after submitting their answer scripts curb malpractice?	2.76	1.36	Accepted
14.	Immediate packaging of all examination materials for onward transmission to the appropriate quarters curbs malpractices?	3.41	1.02	Accepted
15.	Examiners ensuring that the total number of answer scripts tally with the total number of examinees in attendance curb malpractices?	2.60	1.34	Accepted
16.	Security agents' making it impossible for candidates to have access to staff of examining bodies until results were published curb malpractices?	2.68	0.63	Accepted
17.	The implementation of the examination malpractice Act 33 1999 by the Federal Government curb malpractices?	1.49	1.14	Rejected
18.	De-registration of examination centers involved in examination malpractice for a period of three years curb malpractices?	2.17	0.95	Rejected
	Pooled mean score	2.52		Accepted
	Bench mark	2.50		
19.	Cancellation of the results of those found guilty of malpractice curb examination malpractice	2.50	0.9	Accepted

Table 3 presents the mean ratings of respondents on the effective management strategies for curbing post examination malpractices. The results on table 3 show that items 13, 14, 15, 16, and 19, were rated highly by the respondents and they all had means above the decision bench mark of 2.5. These were, students working out quietly after submitting their answer scripts, ($\overline{X}$ = 2.56) ; immediate packaging of all examination materials for onward transmission to the appropriate quarters by examiners ($\overline{X}$ = 3.11); ensure ring that the total number of answer scripts tally with the number of candidates on the attendance register, ($\overline{X}$ = 2.6); security agents making it impossible for candidates to have access to staff of examining bodies until results were published, ($\overline{X}$ = 3.68) and the cancellation of the results of those found culpable ($\overline{X}$ = 2.50). This indicated

that these identified strategies were effective and were accepted. The respondents rated items 17 and 18 low and they both had mean values below the decision mark of 2.5. These were, the implementation of examination malpractice Act 33 of 1999, (X =1.49) and de-registration of examination centers involved in examination malpractices (X =2.17). These strategies were therefore found to be ineffective and were rejected. The grand mean was 2.52 indicating that the strategies applied at post examination were generally effective.

Findings of the Study

The findings of the study are as follows:

1. Effective Strategies for Curbing Pre-Examination Malpractices:
   a. Covering of the scheme of work by teachers curb examination malpractices
   b. Detection of multiple registrations on time by authorities curbs examination malpractices
   c. Minimizing the registration of external candidates by centers curb examination malpractices
   d. Appropriate allocation of examination officers to various examination centers curb examination malpractices
   e. Ensuring that the actual continuous assessment grades forwarded to examining bodies without falsification curb examination malpractices
2. Effective Strategies for Curbing Malpractices During Examination:
   a. Having adequate number of invigilators,
   b. Engaging honest supervisors,
   c. Searching of students before they enter the examination hall,
   d. Accurate time keeping,
   e. Monitoring of students closely, Trusting the students,
   f. Presentation of identity cards by students before admission into examination hall.
3. Effective Strategies for Curbing Post-Examination Malpractices:
   a. Orderly leaving of the examination hall by examinees,
   b. Immediate packaging of live scripts for dispatch by supervisors,
   c. Total number of answer scripts tallying with the total number of candidates.
   d. Examinees not having access to the examiners until results are published.
   e. De- registration of centers found guilty for three years, and
   f. Cancellation of results of candidates involved in examination malpractices.

Discussion of Results

The research questions that guided this study focused on the assessment of management strategies that were effective in curbing examination malpractices before, during and after secondary school external examinations. On the management strategies applied before the examinations, the respondents rated highly all the five management strategies identified as effective. These were, covering of the scheme of work by teachers; detecting multiple registrations on time; minimizing the registration of

external candidates by centers; appropriate allocation of examination officers to examination centers and the forwarding of actual continuous assessment scores to examining bodies in that order. Item one agrees with the findings of Onyechere, (2010) that students often engage in examination malpractice when the teachers fail to cover the scheme of work thus inadequately preparing them for the examination. Onuka and Durowoju, (2013) also thinking in the same line pointed out that teachers should ensure that they adequately cover the syllabi, work to their conscience by ensuring that they attend school and classes regularly. This is usually an issue in Nigeria where poor teachers' remuneration and late payment of salaries as much as three months in areas often lead to incessant industrial actions. The students at the end of the day bear the brunt. The teachers therefore have crucial roles to play in reducing anxiety on the part of the students to enable them face their examinations with confidence.

On item 2, the respondents pointed out that detecting multiple registrations early enough was an effective way of curbing examination malpractice. This was supported by the assertion of Jokthan, (2013) that surprise visits should often be paid to officials involved in registration of candidates since according to Aworanti, (2012) the multiple registrations was usually done with the help of examination officials and principals. On item 3, respondents also showed that the registration of external candidates in schools should be minimized. This agrees with the findings of Inyang, (2012) who called for the registration of external candidates in schools is stopped forthwith. Many believe that external candidates were one of the sources of examination malpractices. Adenipekun, (2016) a school proprietor claimed that his school stopped the registration of external candidates since 2007 because they did not know much about the academic and moral backgrounds of such candidates. He pointed out that many of them were ready to cheat if given the opportunity and he did not want them to corrupt his regular students. The respondents also rated highly item 4, that there should be appropriate allocation of examination officers to the various examination centers for effective curbing of examination malpractices. This agrees with the findings of Aworanti (2012) that thuggery, hooliganism and assault are usually perpetuated by some candidates in the examination hall to intimidate strict examination officials with a view of creating an enabling environment for examination malpractice. Having adequate number of invigilators would go a long way to match those who want to foment confusion. This will also curb spying or 'giraffing', illegal inter-group communication and the bringing in of prohibited material into the examination hall as adequate eyes would be on all the examinees.

The respondents also indicated in item 5, that continuous assessment grades sent to the examining body without falsification as a component of the examination would go a long way to curb examination malpractice. This agrees with the findings of Trakiriowei, (2016) that continuous assessment is capable of reducing examination malpractice since it is marks accumulated from various class assessments to complement the examination.

This is corroborated by Akanni and Odofin, (2015) who pointed out that continuous assessment compels students to make adequate use of their time for studies which reduces anxiety associated with one-shot examination. Such anxiety is likely to tempt a student to cheat in an examination. However, it is one thing to carry out a continuous assessment and another to send the actual scores earned by the students to the examining bodies. Since the continuous assessments have scores that complement the examination scores there is the tendency for teachers to manipulate the scores by beefing them up to ensure that many students come up with good grades which is a malpractice. In this study, the respondents indicated that the actual scores genuinely earned should be forwarded. When this is done, it will make the students work harder if they found out that they were not doing well. However if they made good grades with manipulated scores they would be tempted to depend more on malpractices with their teachers. This kind of situation of manipulated scores occurs when teachers lack the zeal to work but want to be praised for job not done as pointed out by Olatunbosun, (2009). On the whole all the item statements were found to be effective strategies of curbing malpractice before the examination. The most effective strategies identified in this study in order of importance include, appropriate allocation of examination officers to examination halls, minimizing the registration of external candidates, detecting multiple registration in time, covering of the scheme of work by teachers and ensuring that the actual continuous assessment grades were remitted to the appropriate examination bodies. It is surprising that the role of the teacher in terms of covering the scheme is almost the least. This could be because the teachers have never been making their impact felt. On the effective management strategies during the examination, the respondents indicated that having adequate number of invigilators for each examination hall was an effective way of curbing examination malpractice. This agrees with the assertion of Ukpabi, (2015) who after considering the number of invigilators and supervisors who actually participate in the external examinations stated that the number of invigilators and supervisors should be increased according to the size of the hall and the population of candidates. He went further to add that examination officers vice principals and principals should occasionally pay visits to the examination halls in their centers to observe what was going on. Adequate number of invigilators in an examination hall is very necessary such that it would be easy for the invigilators to monitor every move of every student in the examination hall.

The respondents also indicated that engaging honest supervisors was an effective way of curbing examination malpractice. This agrees with the findings of Jokthan, (2013) which stated that the appointment of supervisors of proven integrity should be encouraged. It also agrees with the finding of Onyibe, Uma and Ibina, (2015) which pointed out that only honest persons should be engaged in examination management. There is a great deal of sense in these findings because a supervisor of proven integrity would make it a duty to prevent examination malpractice. However with the depth of fraud in the Nigeria society it may be difficult to identify all the supervisors of proven

integrity correctly .Where such persons were however found they may not be enough to go round all the examination centers in the whole country during the secondary school external examinations. And besides, most people of proven integrity do not offer themselves easily for such jobs because of the risks of bodily harm involved.

The respondents also indicated that thorough searching of students before they enter the examination halls was an effective management strategy. This is to ensure that no prohibited materials such as scientific calculators in which mathematical formulars and short- notes were stored, cellular phones, pieces of papers with relevant materials written on them and students coming in with materials relevant to the exam written on their bodies (Aworanti 2012; Obudigha 2010; Daramola in Alutu and Aluede, 2006). This finding agrees with the finding of Ukpabi, (2015) that students should be thoroughly searched before entering the hall.

Respondents indicated that accurate time keeping during examination was an effective way of curbing examination malpractice. This agrees with the findings of ACOPASS, (n.d) which stated that time selection and adequacy were crucially associated with examinations. In other words, the system should allow student examinees full use of the allocated time. The examination should also start at the stipulated time and end at the stated time. Delay in starting examinations gives room for examination malpractice. Aworanti, (2012) noted that there is usually intentional delay in the commencement of examination in some centers to allow "mercenaries" work out answers to questions for some special candidates who may have concluded arrangement with principals and supervisors. The respondents further indicated that the close monitoring of students writing examination is an effective strategy for curbing examination malpractice. This is supported by the findings of Adeyemi, (2010) which asserted effective supervision of students during examination. For this to be possible there should be adequate examination halls to accommodate all the students without taking the examination in batches. The examination halls should not be crowded, giving adequate room for the invigilators and supervisors to move around. This will minimize cheating through varied means like 'giraffing', exchange of papers containing answers and copying answers from one another. The respondents also indicated that keeping people who have no business with the examination away from the vicinity of the examination centre to avoid distracting the invigilators is an effective management strategy. Law enforcement agents could be used to restrain visitors from entering the environs of the examination centre.

The respondents however rejected the idea of trusting the students to be in- charge of their affairs during examination and act as decent people as an effective management strategy. This is supported by Olatunbosun, (2009) who pointed out that Nigeria in the last two decades has witnessed an alarming rate of increase in incidents of examination misconduct. He further lamented that every examination season witnesses the emergence of new and ingenious ways of cheating. Aworanti, (2012) further regretted that despite concerted efforts by government, administrators and managers of

public examinations to alleviate this social plague, it has continued to defy solutions. With this parading atmosphere over examination there is therefore no way invigilators can leave the examinees to work on their own on trust. The respondents also indicated that the presentation of the examinees identity cards of the examining body was an effective way of curbing examination malpractice. This was supported by the findings of Jokthan, (2013) that using biometrics at the point of registration and at the gate of examination hall with adequate security was an effective way of curbing examination malpractice. This seems to be a good check on impersonation as only the candidate for the examination whose photograph appeared on the ID card would be allowed to take the examination. It will also help in the easy identification of trouble makers who may want to cause confusion to create enabling environment for cheating. However, this may not have any effect on multiple registrations since each candidate would have his or her own identity card.

On the whole the strategies that were found to be most effective during the examination in order of importance were, presentation of identity cards by examinees before entering the examination hall; close monitoring of students during the examination; accurate time keeping; searching the students thoroughly before entering the hall; adequate number of invigilators in an examination hall and engaging honest supervisors.

On the effective management strategies after the examination, the respondents indicated the following as effective. That the students should workout quietly after submitting their answer scripts. This was supported by (ACOPSS paper n.d) which noted that at the end of examinations the atmosphere are sometimes, rowdy and noisy with people hurrying to compare notes interjected with the commotion caused by those arrested for fraud or invigilators dealing with one fraud action or the other. If students are made to walk out quietly there should be no enabling environment for cheating.

The respondents also accepted as effective strategy the immediate packaging of all examination materials for onward transmission to the appropriate quarters at the end of the examination. As noted by Aworanti, (2012) that post examination malpractices are considered by perpetrators to be the safest, surest and the most reliable in achieving its objective, it is therefore necessary that examination materials were all collected as soon as the examination ended and packaged for onward transmission to the appropriate quarters. This is strengthened by the fact that supervisors and examiners are some of the people that can be induced by the examinees to commit fraud (Aworanti, 2012).

Examiners ensuring that the total number of the answer scripts tally with the number of examinees in attendance, was also seen as effective management strategy by respondents. In other words, there should be no false entry in examination register (Willayat, 2009). This also forestalls the smuggling out and in of answer scripts as noted by Wilayat, (2009) and Aunu in Aworanti, (2012). If the number of examination answer scripts tally with the number of candidates who sat for the examination, the examination would be judged to have been

successful all other things being equal.

The respondents also saw as effective management strategy, where security agents make it impossible for candidates to have access to staff of examining bodies until results were published. This agrees with the findings of Aworanti, (2012) that examination malpractice perpetrators tend to concentrate more on post examination malpractices since they consider fraud after the examination to be the safest, surest and most reliable that was capable of achieving its desired objectives. The agents commonly used were supervisors, custodian examiners, computer operators, subject officers, typists, clerks and many others. These people are said to be usually induced with, sex, gifts, and cash to buy the personnel of examining bodies as well as those connected with the marking and coordination of candidates' scripts and storing of scores.

Asuru in Aworanti, (2012) also pointed out that at this stage there was usually substitution of a candidate's original script with a re-written one. Others include alteration of scores in favour of candidates and the falsification of statements of results. The respondents rejected the Federal Government implementation of the Examination malpractice Act 33 of 1999 as effective management strategy to curb examination malpractice. This is because no culprit has actually been sentenced and jailed by the judiciary. It is therefore necessary for the government to demonstrate the political will to curb examination malpractice, since every examination season now witnesses the emergence of new and ingenious ways of cheating (Olatunbosun, 2009).

De-registration of examination centers found wanting by examining bodies was also indicated as effective strategy. This is one of the strategies currently explored. From the responses of the participants, it shows that the duration of the blacklisting was not adequate and effective. Hence, there is need for a review of the duration of de- registration.

Conclusion

From the study, it was found that all the strategies for curbing examination malpractices before and after the examinations were considered effective. Also six out of the seven strategies applied during the actual writing of the examinations and five out of the seven strategies at post examination were found to be effective. But surprisingly examination malpractices have been growing in leaps and bounds in the secondary schools which indicate that there may be other factors that can be considered to help check examination malpractices. Finally, it is noteworthy that the examination malpractice Act 33 of 1999 is yet to be fully implemented and the current number of years a school is de-recognized has not deterred other centers. These two strategies need to be respectively implemented fully and reviewed for final decision to be taken on their effectiveness.

The findings of this study show that 16 out of the 19 strategies employed to curb examination malpractices were effective. What then could have been responsible for the persistence of examination malpractices in Nigeria?

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study it was recommended:

1. That Examination malpractice act 33 of 1999 is fully implemented.
2. That the number of years a center is de-registered be reviewed upwards.
3. There should be a study on the level of involvement in examination malpractices by all levels of examiners to get to the root of examination malpractice persistence in Nigeria.

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