CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS: (A CASE STUDY OF FIVE (5) SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BAUCHI METROPOLIS)

OKPE GABRIEL AND PHILIP LAR
Department of General Studies, Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi

ABSTRACT
Secondary School student’s perceptions of examination malpractices and examination ethics were assessed. The participants were drawn from secondary schools in Bauchi metropolis of Nigeria. The study revealed that majority of the students believed that the indulgence in examination malpractice was a common occurrence, which will be difficult to eradicate. Parents, teachers and school principals were found to encourage cheating in examinations. The study also revealed that majority of the students had a very wrong notion of examination ethics, believing that examination entails among other things sitting next to someone in order to copy from his/her paper in the examination hall. In all, counselling intervention strategies such as counsellors partnering with the school authorities and students to set up examination ethics club that will teach the virtues of hard work, Counsellors partnering with Parents Teachers Association and other relevant bodies on significant strategies that would help to inculcate in students the virtue of responsibilities. These among others were the recommendations made to eradicate the menace of examination malpractice in our schools and society at large.

Introduction
Teachers at different stages use examination to assess and evaluate the academic achievement of students in the school system. In all teaching and learning situations therefore, it is essential to find out from time to time how much the students are achieving from what they are being taught. In order to do this effectively, Teachers Examination Council, National Teachers Institute (NTI), Classroom Teachers etc. assess the students by administering weekly, termly, end of year test and or final examinations. The overall aim of education is to shape the behaviour of an individual, so that he or she can perform most effectively within his/her social milieu.

Bearing in mind the role that education plays in nation building, a nation stands the risk of being under developed in terms of accumulation of illiteracy, disease and poverty when its youths rejects the honour of getting sound education and seems to opt for fraudulent activities and deceptive ways in making ends meet as epitomized by examination malpractices thereby negating the philosophy of sound education. The products of such a system can only grow up to be cynics, unbelievers, insensible, dishonest, ignorant, narrow-minded, myopic, unintelligent, deceptive, close-minded, one sided beings who would be indifferent to the issues of development and powerless to act, create and succeed.
Examination malpractices have a paralyzing effect on the developing nation. It puts our youth, future leaders and professionals in a situation that leads to a future of social, political and economic insanity and bankruptcy. Engaging in examination malpractice leads to cancellation of results which means great waste of resources to society and parents, and provides sources of great agony and injustice to innocent students. The importance of examination or test taking for diagnosis, placement, classification and quality control in Nigerian institutions have been greatly eroded and corrupted with malpractice which constitute one of the most debilitating problems facing our education institutions today, and they are constantly manifested and reported in our schools, colleges and other higher institutions.

Examination malpractice is any activity of a student or group of students whose purpose is to give any of them higher grades than they would likely receive on the basis of their own achievements.

Fatai (2005) defines it as any irregular act exhibited by candidates or anybody charged with the conduct of examination which is clearly a breach of the rules governing the conduct and integrity of the examination. It is viewed as any act carried out before, during and after an examination, which is against the rules set out for the proper and orderly conduct of the examination, which is clearly a breach of the rules governing the conduct and integrity of the examination. It has been further described as an action done to gain undue advantage over other candidates which is against the rule and regulations governing the conduct of such examination for personal gain. Ojerinde (2000) revealed that cheating in examinations is motivated by:

i. The desperation to acquire certificate or get placed in a programme or be selected for a position.

ii. Carelessness on the part of the teacher/examiners in safeguarding the examination paper before it is administered.

The National Policy on Education (FGN 2004) stipulates that there is need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive and united Nigeria. To this end, school programmes needed to be relevant, practical and comprehensive: while interest and ability should determine individual direction in education.

**Purpose of the Study**

Evidence abound of increasing incidents of examination malpractices by students at schools and colleges, which conflict with the core purpose of education, the training of the mind and character for the acquisition of practical and theoretical skills, knowledge and functional ideas for development; and the search for truth and knowledge and the creation and communication of ideas.

Examination Council (NECO) of 2001 to date. The major forms of examination malpractice are; bringing in foreign materials, substituting worked scripts, collusion in the examination hall (copying), mass organized cheating involving assistance from teachers and outsiders, and insult/assault on supervisors/invigilator. This trend in examination malpractices is inimical to academic development and advancement, and needs to be drastically addressed.

Review of Related Literature

Causes of Examination Malpractices

The study of Makoju et al (2004) reported the responses of parents of secondary school students when asked the factors they think encourage examination malpractices in Nigeria? Many parents indicated that questions are not related to the syllabus and as a result examination malpractice is encouraged. The syllabus is developed by Nigeria educational research and development council (NERDC) known as teaching syllabus. Although the syllabus should be common in scope, the report has always been that JAMB syllabus is overloaded and difficult for candidates, so candidates often times find it difficult to cope. This promotes examination malpractices.

Some parents were of the opinion that objective questions encourage examination malpractices. This is because students have developed different skills in using their finger to pass information to their colleagues on the correct answer in objectives tests. In the same study by Makoju et al (2004) secondary school teachers were to indicate their views on factors responsible for examination malpractice? Out of 1685 teachers 879 (52.17%) said that students are not ready to learn.

In most public schools, students are seen roaming the streets, some with video games and some playing football. Since they are not ready to learn, the next thing they can do when examination comes is to engage in examination malpractice. Other factors responsible for examination malpractice such as emphasis on paper qualification, parents desire for their children to pass at all cost or means possible.

Supervisors and custodians of examination papers are reflection of the wider society. Apart from those two potent factors, another strong reason for examination malpractices is the emphases on paper qualification.

Until less emphasis is laid on paper qualification and we place emphasis on the skills acquire in order to function well in the society, the issue of examination malpractice will persist. The craze for paper qualification is the off shoot of the poor implementation of our National Policy on Education. Emphasis is gradually being removed from paper acquisition to demonstrable skills and academic excellence. Possession of paper qualification not backed up with practical experience to show for it will sooner or later become meaningless.

Incidence and Forms of Examination Malpractice

There had been one form of examination malpractice or the other before 1977, but since the early 70s when mass cheating was first perpetrated in WAEC examination, it has become a national problem starting from primary schools to tertiary institutions.
However, 1977 marked a watershed in the history of examinations in Nigeria by the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) which was the only organ saddled with the responsibility of conducting public examinations at that level in Nigeria. That was why a judicial commission of inquiry was set up to look into the affairs of the (WAEC) in relation to the problem of efficient conduct of examinations and prompt release of results. Among other things, the committee acknowledged the excessive work load of WAEC and recommended among other things, that the workload of WAEC should be reduced by establishing some more examination bodies which could take over some of its numerous examinations. Registration of too many candidates over and above the facilities available in schools is another vice some school principals employed to perpetuate examination malpractice. With limited facilities and unlimited candidates, supervision becomes extremely difficult as many candidates are crammed into a hall. A situation was reported where 200 candidates registered in a school which equally had halls that could accommodate them, but the arrangement was such that when supervisor was in one of the classes that were so wide apart, dictation would be going on in the remaining classrooms. (Ojerinde 2004) During examinations, materials which candidates feel could assist them answer the questions could be brought in. This form of examination malpractice involves copying, sometimes in a small sheet of paper like the size of a complementary card which could be hidden in shoes or mathematical sets, the information could be written on unexposed parts of the body.

Prevalence of Examination Malpractice
There was a time in Nigeria when teachers knew their students not only by names but to their family. Teachers at that time served the functions of both teachers in the school and in role model to the students. There was a strong link between the home and the school. The home, society and school cooperated to raise the children properly. There came the history of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Nigeria where there was an explosion of student’s enrolment in schools without adequate preparation in terms of staffing and classroom accommodation. The limited number of teachers remaining in the schools could no longer cope with their functions as teachers and parents. Apart from the fact that moral standards declined, teaching and learning deteriorated. Since the emphasis shifted from what one could do to what paper qualifications a person has, many students resulted to what is referred to as examination malpractice. Mass cheating is another form of examination malpractice that takes place during examinations. This could involve a teacher dictating solutions to questions, writing on the chalkboard for candidates to copy or use of external body to import materials that could be distributed to the candidates. This could be detected if all the candidates in a particular centre make the same mistake, for example spelling mistake. This is a pointer to the fact that there is mass cheating in that centre or school. Post Examination malpractice includes such activities after examinations as a supervisor leaving the envelope containing examination scripts open on previous arrangement, so that submission of script (s) written outside the hall could be included in the envelope before sealing and submitting it to the examination body. Substitution is another method
of post examination malpractices. In this case, a candidate submits his/her script and later another script/already prepared for him/her is brought in under arrangement and the supervisor is supposed to remove the first one submitted and substitute the one brought in from outside.

Another form of post examination malpractice has to do with officials in the computer department of an examination body changing a candidate’s result on a computer storage facility or illegally issuing certificates or statements of result to candidates to enable them gain admission into tertiary institutions or gain appointment.

Students now devise different methods of examination malpractice ranging from crude methods of giraffing to such sophisticated ones as the use of electronic devices capable of storing information and the use of cell phones.

**Efforts so Far in Curbing Examination Malpractice**

There are different approaches adopted by different examination bodies, federal, state and local government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and concerned individuals. A good example is the head count in Oyo State where the commissioner for education called a team to schools to ascertain the number of students in each school in Oyo state in a bid to forestall examination malpractices. WAEC also has embarked on public campaign on the effects of examination malpractices and the punishments attached to each offence using handbills, posters, jingles, seminars and workshops. NECO also conducted workshops, seminars and public enlightenment campaign and NGO known as exam ethics project has worked tirelessly on curbing examination malpractices. Concerned individuals like Jegede (2003) have made effort to check these vices. The federal government in the bid to curb examination malpractice enacted laws prohibiting examination malpractice. The most recent one is the computer based examination conducted by JAMB

**Quality Assurance: a Practical Way out to Examination Malpractice in Nigerian Secondary Schools**

- **Quality:** something good, ideal, or of high standard
- **Quality assistance:** consistent provision and utilization of good and high standard resources to foster effective teaching and learning, in every stage and aspect of the educational system.
- **Quality assurance** is meaningful when application of its strategy is not differed till the end of an educational programme.
- **Examination:** Test, assessment, evaluation. It is an instrument for assessing individual’s skills and knowledge in general, and specific areas of studies and overall academic achievements.
- **Examination malpractice:** a misconduct or improper practice before, during or after any examination by the examiners or others with a view to obtaining good results, by fraudulent means.
- **Input:** Human and non-human resources provided into an organization from the beginning of a programme to the implementation stage and to the end of the programme.
Process: activities such as teaching, learning and counselling, in which person and the educational institutions engage.

An examination, which can be in essay or objective type, oral or written, theory or practical, constitutes an integral part of the education process. It is conducted in order to determine the extent to which knowledge and skills have been acquired based on examination results, decision could be taken on admission into educational institutions and employment in the labour market.

As an instrument for decision making, examination is always prone to fear and anxiety. Many candidates would want to pass the examination by all means. Also many school authorities and parents would want to explore means of getting good grades, for their students and children.

The federal government promulgated laws which stipulated a 21 year jail term for those found guilty of examination malpractice.

In spite of these measures, the menace continued to occur in virtually all public and institutionally organized examinations.

In 2006 the federal ministry of education blacklisted and derecognized 324 secondary schools across the nation as centres for conducting public examinations from 2007 to 2010.

The distribution of the schools which were found guilty of examination malpractices is shown below;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>No. of schools involved</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North - central</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North - east</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North - west</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South - east</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South - south</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South - west</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: week end times 17th & 18th February, 2007 p4

Table shows that examination malpractice in secondary schools is a national problem. It occurs in all geopolitical zones in the country.
Consequences of Examination Malpractices
According to Ija’iya (2001), examination malpractice indicates a declining quality of education. This implies that the quality of education in Nigeria is low, since involvement in it spreads across the country. This will affect national development adversely. Moreover, those who engage in cheating at a lower level age are likely to continue at higher level of education. When they graduate into the society, their previous attitudes can easily lead them into corrupt practices. Another consequence is that, people who possess certificates through cheating could use the certificates to secure jobs which they would not be able to perform. Poor performance would lead to poor productivity. Thus, development and sustenance of human and material resources would be at stake. There have been occasions when students are suspended, examiners are black listed and schools are derecognized as centres for public examinations, as a result of one form of malpractice or the other. The steps are meant to serve as deterrent to others.

Quality Assurance Input, Process and Output of the Educational System
Quality assurance in education deals with proactive means of ensuring quality of inputs, teaching, learning, process academic achievement of pupils and school environment before things get out of hands. Thus, an education of high quality should have high quality student, teachers, faculties, school curriculum and government policies as inputs. The manner in which the inputs are processed from the beginning to the final years of an educational programme and the quality of assessment of the entire teaching learning activities, also constitute important aspect of quality assurance.

Students as Input to the Educational System
Students constitute a vital input to the education system without them; all other input cannot achieve educational objectives. At the entry point of the educational system, the students are expected to be of high quality. That is, they should meet the expected standard of level of class in which they are to be enrolled. Incidentally, students of poor ability have been admitted or promoted into higher classes in our educational institutions.

Teachers as Inputs to the Educational System
No education system will rise above the quality of its teachers. Incidentally many teachers are lacking in good quality which can enhance meaningful teaching. As at 2004/2005 session, 25.65% of teachers in Nigerian secondary schools were not professionally qualified (Teacher’s Registration Council of Nigeria June 2006). Quality of teaching to be given by this category of teachers is likely to be low, and this will have adverse effects on the learners. Conversely, teachers of high quality could impact right skills, knowledge and attitude. Teachers as inputs, therefore, constitute a major factor of quality assurance.
**Curriculum as Input to the Educational System**

In curriculum planning and implementation, attention is expected to be paid to the four pillars of learning which were advocated in the report to UNESCO. These are learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together. When these aspects are adequately considered in the curriculum, the educational system will be functional and its recipient will be self-reliant. Besides student’s poor skill and knowledge acquisition in the four areas, there is virtually no subject on the secondary school curriculum where there are no topics which teachers find difficult to teach. Though, this problem may be due to poor teacher preparation or poor teaching and learning environment, the problem may be inherent in the curriculum itself.

**Facilities as Input to the Educational System**

Facilities are material resources in the schools; they are physical and spatial enablers of teaching and learning which will increase the production of results. They include building structures, equipment, water, electricity textbooks, furniture and recreational facilities, among others. They constitute vital inputs which are capable of achieving good results when combined with other resources in adequate quality and quantity. However, poor supply and poor maintenance of facilities are regular features in many primary and secondary schools.

**Government Policies as Input to the Educational System**

A policy in terms of programme and guideline constitutes an input to the education system. In the past, the government evolved many education policies which were meant for execution in order to achieve national objectives. However, some of the policies were characterized by an on the implementation planning. That is implementation had stated before proper planning. For example, the universal primary education (UPE) of 1976 was pronounced by the federal government in 1974 in Sokoto; and the implementation started without a prior discussion of its logistics. Similarly the UPE of 1979 embarked upon by state government in the south western Nigeria, had no long term planning. It started immediately the politicians assumed duties in the second republic. The on - going universal basic education (UBE) embarked upon by the federal government as from 1999, was not different from the previous programmes in terms of planning. The UBE was launched in 2000 with an act backing it which was signed in 2004. Meanwhile, implementation had already started in 1999. An education policy embarked upon without adequate planning will not have good quality and sufficient teacher and other resources. Full implementation of the law: government and its agencies should hence forth stop handling cases of examination malpractices with kid gloves. The law should be implemented without fear or favour.
There should not be sacred cows. Anyone caught cheating should be made to face the full wrath of the law to serve as deterrent.
To make the fight against examination malpractice very effective, all the agents of civilization and socialization must participate actively in orienting Nigeria children to work and study harder, making it known that hard work pays and cheating ruins.
If we fail to do all these, the ugly trend would continue with greater proportion, and in no time, our education section will totally collapse, rendering the workforce completely incompetent and unproductive. Any certificates issued by the nation’s institutions will also become useless, losing recognition both locally and internationally.

Population
The sampled population used in this study is based on the type of examination malpractice in Nigeria. Since it has attained a frightening proportion and it has been institutionalized, government and stakeholders efforts at curbing the ugly trend have not yielded any serious fruit, hence this population sample is considered. A total population sample of two hundred (200) students drawn from five (5) secondary schools in Bauchi metropolis was considered. The schools are; Federal Polytechnic Staff School, Divine International School, Harmony Secondary School, Baptist Royal Academy and Government Day Secondary School.

Instrument for Data Collection
The instrument is based on the questionnaire methods administered to students from selected secondary schools in Bauchi metropolis and some literature material of other sources.

Methods of Data Collection
This source of data collection for writing this research is primary and secondary sources. The primary sources employed are questionnaire administered. Secondary data collected includes materials from libraries and other related magazines. All were used in an attempt to collect reasonable amount of information for the research in order to sharpen argument prepared and to arrive at a more reasonable recommendations.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion
The National Policy on Education stipulates that there is need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive and united Nigeria. To this end, school programmes need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive; while interest and ability should determine individual direction in education, the school system should be able to determine individual’s direction in education, then we can say that the school is having high achievement among all students. Secondly, having high student and staff attendance; thirdly having high staff and student’s satisfaction and fourthly having high public confidence in schools. In order to have high achievement among all student groups and high public confidence in schools there must be an acceptable method of measuring the achievement of students which in turn would promote public confidence in the school.
The search for a measure of student’s achievement has led to the adoption of examination among other measures. Examination, therefore, is the series of questions asked in order to determine whether knowledge has been acquired. Although, students’ performance in examination may not be the true reflection of their ability, those with higher grades are given preference above those with lower ability or grades. Those with lower ability would want the same preferential treatment and in the bid to demonstrate high ability, they go into all kinds of vices. One of such vices is examination malpractice.

**Presentation of Data Analysis**

Data obtained from the research finding is presented and analysed. A sample of two hundred (200) students was drawn from five (5) secondary schools randomly selected from Bauchi metropolis. Students of senior secondary within the age range of 14-17 years were the targets of this study.

The first instrument for this study is examination malpractice questionnaire administered to 200 students (100 male and 100 females). The second instrument for this study was examination ethic questionnaire (EEQ) that was administered on a sample of another 45 students.

**Measures**

The first questionnaire, examination malpractice questionnaire was 24 - item questionnaire which elicited responses on student’s personal perception and their opinion on the perception of others about examination malpractices. The second instrument; examination ethics questionnaire was made up of 14 items which was geared towards perception as well as their opinion towards others as regards examination ethics.

**Results**

The results of the study presented according to the first questionnaire: The majority of the students believe that cheating in Nigeria has become a common occurrence at examinations because some parents/teachers encourage their children/students to cheat in examinations. Majority of the students also reported that they would cheat in examinations when the examination is difficult. However, 83% of the respondents believe that cheating would not be necessary in any examination if a student prepares well. Majority of the students also reported that they would cheat in any examination if they do not have enough time to prepare for the examination (about 85% indicated this).

On the other hand, some of the students do not believe that they would cheat in any examination to have high scores at internally or externally conducted examinations (about 56% indicated this). In addition, majority of the students believe that they cheat in examinations because the Nigerian society encourages it or because their friends cheat in examination halls.

The second questionnaire presents the general perception of students towards examination ethic.
From the answers to the questions, the following interpretation can be made from the responses. Majority of the students believe that examination ethic implies among others: that some teachers could help their student to pass examinations, that some principals could arrange children to cheat in examinations, and student arrange to sit next to someone in order to copy from his/her work. 

On the other hand, majority of the student do not believe that examinations malpractice is bad, Permitting students to cheat a little during examinations provided that they are not caught, allowing a friend to copy from ones work during examination, writing for another person, holding to a belief that without cheating it would be difficult for anyone to pass examination.

**Summary of the Findings**

Researchers on examination malpractice had argued and contributed to the factors responsible for examination malpractices. Students, parents, school management tend to push hard on wards to get the certificate and good-grade by all “means” to secure employment. Others prefer to manipulate to be admitted in higher institution (s) to study courses of their choices.

The much importance attached to certificate in this country had made the education advocates and government to introduce the 6-3-3-4 and later the 9-3-4 system of education with the best intention. Today, as a result of the crazy illusion attached to the paper issued in Nigerian schools called certificates, the 3-3- aspect of the system has been abused. What is left behind is 6-4: A practice where a student leaves secondary school and moves to the tertiary institution irrespective of whether he/she merits the certificates presented to the tertiary institution for admission is a thing to worry about. The truth remains that most certificates flaunted and brandished by Nigerian youths are obtained through dubious means. Who would be blamed? The invigilator, WAEC, NECO, or JAMB official, the parents or even the candidate for savouring this anti -intellectual, anti-progress, detractive means of achieving academic excellence? Each of these stakeholders knows that the political leadership is no less transparent than the invigilator. Therefore, the following summary is reached; Quality of inputs into education system would affect the quality of the output. High quality inputs are likely to enhance knowledge and skill acquisition. This will reduce the tendency to cheat in examinations. Teaching, learning and counselling activities should be enhanced.

Finally, quality of examiner and the manner in which an examination is administered, would determine the extent of involvement of students in malpractices.

**Conclusion**

Examination malpractice is one of the bottlenecks associated with the conduct of examinations in Nigeria. Although examination malpractice started before the early 70s, the situation worsen in 1977 when people began to question the credibility of examinations conducted by the West African Examinations Council which was the only organ saddled with the responsibility of conducting public examinations in Nigeria. The
forms of examination malpractice that have been identified include bringing in foreign materials, irregular activities inside and outside examination hall, collusion, impersonation, leakage, mass cheating insult/assault on supervisor and others. If less emphasis is placed on paper qualification, it is likely that many of our students would not engage in examination malpractice

Recommendations
Since the whole segments of national life are connected to the issues of education, it is for this reason that the following recommendations become imperative:
The government should organize enlightenment campaigns that will highlight the consequences of examination malpractice on the individuals, schools and the society. This should be mounted and sustained at all tiers of governance through the use of modern and traditional communications media.
The government should sensitize all citizens on basic ethical values of self-worth, dignity of labour, integrity and personal responsibility.
Society itself should lay good examples by deemphasizing ostentations life style, unbridled and flagrant display of materialism which could very easily be associated with good grades and good jobs as a result of examination success.
Only teachers who are qualified, certified, and competent and of good moral standing should be employed to teach the students. They should be dedicated; teachers who would serve as role models in mattes of punctuality, self-discipline, accountability, integrity and sound leadership styles.
Likewise, examination bodies should appoint people of proven integrity to work in their administrative and operational sectors and as well as supervisors for their various examinations.
Also, there should be an enabling environment for examination ethics where good teaching takes place.
Furthermore, well equipped functional libraries should be in place to promote good reading habit. Facilities like laboratories and amenities for basic needs should be available and continuous assessment procedure should be given to students to ignite the zeal to study and develop self-confidence with less emphasis on certification.
Guidance counsellors should be employed and posted to secondary schools and other tertiary institutions to help students in self-understanding and self-management, in relation to how they can utilize their assets and manage their abilities, capabilities for optimal development.

References
JEGEDE O. T. (2003). Checkmating the unabated crisis of examination malpractice in Nigerian educational system
TEACHERS Registration Council of Nigeria (June 2006), statistical digest.