

# USE OF AFRICAN INDIGENOUS EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION TO IMPROVE TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE;

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## *Abstract*

*Examination malpractice is a plague that has eaten deep into the rubrics of many African countries' (and other countries of the world) education system leaving them with a lot of atrocities injurious to the products of the system and nation. This paper was on how the African indigenous Educational Evaluation could be used to improve teachers' perception of examination malpractice and help them find quick solution to this cankerworm. It traced the history of education in Africa from the informal era to the formal stage. Through this history, it looked at some of the issues that brought about examination malpractice in the educational system which deviated from the acceptable norms of the African people. This is to the extent that teachers who are supposed to teach, correct and direct students are now accomplice to this scourge called examination malpractice. The paper affirmed and proved that examination malpractice is not endogenous as the African people certified only those who have the required ability as capable. This has long been bastardized with the advent of foreign culture. The paper recommended several means of using knowledge of indigenous evaluation to correct teachers' perception of examination malpractice and specifically suggests that teachers should be educated on the indigenous method of evaluation which shows exact ability rather than enhances or devalues ability.*

## **Introduction**

Education is generally accepted as the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or a young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour that are of positive value to the society in which he lives- (Fafunwa 1975). Indigenously, education transferred the culture of the African people from one generation to another. It gave the people rational direction of the values of the society. Education, therefore was hinged on inculcating to the African child the natural, social and the spiritual world view of the

society. By way of developing the African people, formal education was introduced and this changed the whole processes of education and life in general for the African.

Observation has shown that most of the indigenous means of educating the African child is almost going into extinction, like the folklores, story telling, moonlight playing, proverbs, idioms, and indigenous games. Children can no longer tell their history or benefit from the wealth of knowledge and experiences accrued from these methods of teaching. Hence our moral, social and spiritual values were affected negatively. Students' priority moved from acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to acquiring certificate (the acceptable criterion for job employment) whether deserved or undeserved. To achieve this, children engaged in all sorts of atrocities with their teachers; tagged 'Examination Malpractices'. Teachers, who should have enlightened, corrected and directed the students in the right perspective became culprits and accomplices. This paper therefore looked at how indigenous nature of the African education can help to disabuse teachers' perception of examination malpractice.

## **Indigenous Nature of Education**

Originally, education was informal. Children learnt by doing. According to Fafunwa (1975), they engaged in participatory education through ceremonies, recitations and demonstrations. From the researchers's observation, children were educated vocationally on how to carve, knit, farm, fish, weave, on palm wine tapping, traditional medicine, blacksmithing, trade and the rest. Recreationally, they were taught to wrestle, dance, drum, race, play indigenous games that have mathematical and science inclinations; like '*Oga*', '*Swell*', '*Ikpo okwe*' ( are all games that are mathematics and

science oriented in Africa) Then, intellectually, they were educated on their local history and geography, about their legends and great personalities of the society, on their type of plants, animals, soil, proverbs, poetry, songs, riddles and jokes. Socially also, African people were taught discipline, integrity, obedience, cooperation, respect for one another especially the elders, they were taught contentment, greeting patterns, sensitivity, loyalty, basic rights, development of character, sense of responsibility and commitment. Spiritually, they were educated on the African traditional religion, their '*Chi*' and '*the gods*' who must be respected and feared; otherwise they sent to the offender, punishment commensurate to his offence. The '*Chi*' like the gods guided, protected and provided the needs of the people. Everybody was educated to bear this in mind as one lived, interacted with one another and in obeying the laws of the land.

The process of learning these were through practice, giving information, instruction, induction, deduction, preaching, indoctrination, habituation, imitation and observation. These were achieved through the agents such as: the family, members of the community and the peers. To ascertain the extent an individual achieved these traits, such individuals were exposed to practical evaluation directly or indirectly. Ukwuije (1996) said Evaluation was direct, authentic and performance assessment based. According to Ukwuije, evaluation means, direct examination of their performance on significant tasks. Evaluation then was by observation. Level of functional competence attained by apprentices was evaluated by their masters as well as the members of the community. For instance, if a master exposed his apprentice on how to mold a pot, the master evaluated his performance by observation to know the extent of learning. He can not because the

trainee is his son, a relation or a friend appraise him positively when he did not deserve it. He continued to educate him until he got it right and was able to do it by himself.

At this time, no marks were assigned but ideal performance. Fair play was the watchword. There was no cheating, evaluation was honestly done. Learners were the ones evaluated, the masters or teachers in no way felt threatened as if they were the ones directly evaluated. There was self reliance and judicious use of time. People were patient to learn their trades to a logical conclusion. If they did not persevere to the end, they were not certified to start their own or practice and the story would be told every where. The person lacked patronage from members of the society. The business would not thrive. People therefore avoided such a practice. From this stage the African society transcended to another advanced level: the formal education. As summarized by Fafunwa (1975): Education then, in the old Africa was an integrated experience. It combined physical training, character molding and natural activity with intellectual training

### **Formal Education and Examination Malpractice**

Formal education chronicled the advent of the other religious groups like the Christian and the Muslim missionaries into Africa. Education in the African society during this period took a different and formal turn and was guided by the curriculum. According to Stotsky in Bartleby Research (2016), curriculum is a plan of action that is aimed at achieving desired goals and objectives. It is a set of learning activities meant to make the learner attain goals as prescribed by the educational system. The curriculum was an amalgamation of the needs of the members of the society. Knowledge and skills were compartmentalized according to subjects. The objectives of education remained the same

but with a broader focus. Individuals experienced different methods of teaching, learning and evaluation. Teachers, like the indigenous masters of unskilled labour, produced experts at the expiration of the learners' program. Unlike the indigenous method of education, teachers found out the extent the learner had learnt through formal evaluation. This reveals students' abilities in form of marks. 'It involves insight and good judgment'- ( Ohuche & Akeju (1988:19). Evaluation of learning outcome did not enhance nor devalue abilities but gave the exact position of someone's ability as best as it could as in assessment in other areas of life.

A lot of new developments came up at this time which according to Fafunwa (1975:17) were attributed to the fact that

Indigenous education failed to conform to the ways of the western system, some less well informed writers have considered it as primitive, even savage and barbaric. But such contentions should be seen as the product of ignorance and due to a total misunderstanding of the inherent value of informal education.

This ignorance led the African people to abhor their cultural traits and embraced most western worlds of doing things. These changes affected indigenous African society both positively and negatively .African culture was not nurtured. As observed by Rao (2006), a culture can die if not nourished properly by creative activities. A newly born culture is exposed to series of challenges and its survival depends on effective responses. A culture therefore can become extinct or succumb to the influence of alien culture. These changes were accompanied by behaviours that replaced the African culture instead of enhancing it. The process therefore created a gap between the indigenous perception of education and what was introduced as formal education.

As the gap continued to widen, so are the educational practices by both students and teachers. For instance, indigenously, interpretation of evaluation outcomes was based on the extent an individual measured up to a certain criterion (criterion referencing). Evaluation was on 'ideal performance' or 'adequacy of knowledge' by each learner. Then, one is certified fit to practice if he/she showed necessary attributes associated with his vocation. With formal education, emphasis of interpretation of evaluation results shifted to how the individual performed in relation to other people that took the test (norm referencing). It is such that even when no person achieved all the necessary abilities, all of the persons will still be ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> --- according to their performance among the people in the distribution. Because of this shift in emphasis, individuals struggled to be 1<sup>st</sup> to achieve success and acquired certificates by hook or crook even when there is no relative corresponding ability.

Education was drastically affected. It gradually begun to deviate from being a process of acquiring knowledge, attitude, skill, competency to acquiring intrigues on how to scale through so many examinations and tests in the school in order to acquire the so called certificates. This was the influx of examination malpractices in the educational sector.

## **Examination Malpractice**

Examination malpractice is any act before, during and after a test that can inhibit or mar the process of ascertaining the actual ability of the tested. Tinibu (2018) defined it as academic dishonesty or academic fraud. Examination malpractice is any form of deliberate cheating on examination which provides one or more candidates with unfair

advantage or disadvantage. It is illegal. It can be practiced by the learner, teacher, parent, school, peers, government and the society. As listed by Anugwo (2002) exam malpractice includes:

- Students exchanging information in the hall
- Bringing into the hall foreign materials like textbooks, notebooks, pages of textbooks, prepared answers,
- Students conniving with the invigilator to get answers to exam question
- Impersonation
- Exam question leakage
- Substituting answer scripts with the one written by another person from inside or outside the hall
- Multiple entry for the same examination

Ways of examination malpractice are not exhaustive as new methods are introduced daily by these miscreants. Examination malpractice is the bane of any educational system. This is because the result of such examination yields scores that do not have desirable psychometric properties. As stated by Impeme (2010), exam malpractice leads to a situation where the school products seem virtually unusable and reduce government investment on education to a colossal waste. Exam malpractice places individuals where they are not supposed to be. Alfred (2010:7) said it is the cause of the high rate of unemployment in most African countries and asserted that

Unemployment is a situation whereby one lacks the basic mental, social communication skills that will enable him source a job or excel at a given job. Even if he has the basic qualification, he still lacks the mental capacity to get a good job and excel at it. It means the person is unemployable because the employer is looking for competency and competency is what he/she lacks.

Wrong people are selected for the primary, secondary and tertiary schools as a result of exam malpractice. Some of the candidates given admission in the secondary and tertiary institutions have no business being there but exam malpractice has enhanced their access to these places via their erroneous good grades. At the end, the products of education are empty and unsuitable for the next level. Examination malpractice had led to the cancellation of many results which affected innocent students and has led students to frustration and consequently push them to drug pushing, armed robbery and other vices. Students have lost confidence in themselves because of their dependence on exam malpractice. They believe their best is not good enough. Every body knows that there is not much one can achieve in this life without self confidence. Exam malpractice has affected students' reading culture. Their interest is now focused on watching films and cult activities because there is no need to read when they know they can copy and be aided by their teachers to pass. Students are now morally bankrupt. They can spend the periods of teaching and learning in prostitution, clubbing, drinking, smoking and the rest, to procure money for sorting teachers and paying fellow students who sit the exam for them. Many students are now hopeless, careless about their future, lazy, non-challant and academically unambitious. The list of the evils of exam malpractice is endless.

### **Teachers, Involvement in Examination Malpractice**

Malpractice as defined by Yerkes (1989;868) is a 'failure of a professional person to render proper services through reprehensible ignorance or negligible or through criminal intent'. It can also be seen as wrongly or illegal behaviour while in professional job.



Teachers aid in examination malpractice in the following ways from the researcher's experience:

- Leaking their papers to students prior to the exam.
- Receiving gratification from the students in cash or kind to connive with them in the exam hall.
- In awarding undeserved mark.
- In secretly conducting special examination for a student.
- Teachers as supervisors/invigilators could ask to be settled financially to enable students write the examination freely without supervision.
- Teachers oblige the students even if it means getting another person to write the answers for a student (s).

Any teacher who indulges in the above or any related activity is not a teacher but a cheater or malpractitioner. According to Nwana (2007) aiding malpractice as a teacher is providing training in a way not stipulated by the law of the land, the culture of the people and the constitution. As advised also by Ughamadu. Onwuegbu & Osunde (1991), students should be taught to know that cheating in any test is a serious mark of dishonesty that should not go unpunished. Onyechere (1996) warned that teachers should make them know that malpractice can blow them up like a bomb, dent their character and make them fraudsters. These sets of people are not fit to be public office holders. These are moral issues which is the main stance of the endogenous education in Africa.

### **Reasons for Teachers' Involvement in Examination Malpractice**

Many reasons have been attributed to teachers' participation in exam malpractice such as:

- They feel they are the ones being evaluated (Okpala (2011)). They therefore aid students in exam practice to make their students successful and hence, be
- hailed as good teachers by the principal and community.
- The image of their schools are promoted, this gains them admission patronage.
- For the financial and material benefits they derive from it. Like they are paid in cash or kind by the students when they oblige the students in exam malpractice.

Other reasons according to Maciver included emphasis on high grade and certificates, non completion of the syllabus by the teacher, low moral standard, greed, lack of proper preparation by candidates, overcrowded examination halls, lack of professional prowess by teachers and teachers' poor training.

There is no justification for an exam malpractitioner not even from God who condemns all evil doing. Examination Malpractice will be brought to the barest minimum if teachers decide today to stop partaking in this evil. Nwana (2007) opined that education is within the ability of the learner not the teacher. Education is to discover the real ability of the individual and enhance it for a purposeful living of that individual.

## **Indigenous Means of Using Measurement and Evaluation to Correct Teachers' Perception of Examination Malpractice**

Examination malpractice is not endogenous as African people were afraid of engaging in societal taboos in order not to offend their gods. This has today been bastardized by the advent of foreign culture. Haverkort (2010) opined that foreign culture should complement and not replace endogenous knowledge. This paper is of the opinion that if

the indigenous methods of teaching and evaluation complement the formal education process, success will be achieved in correcting teachers' perception of exam malpractice.

These methods include:

- Re-educating teachers what evaluation in the indigenous method is all about. Evaluation does not enhance the ability of the learner or devalue it, rather evaluation reports abilities the way they are.
- When teachers partake in exam malpractice they are doing the society more harm than good because the inability certified excellent today will one day haunt every body including teachers either directly or indirectly. This they should be meant to know.
- Teachers should be educated to know that they are not the ones accessed but the students. When students fail, they are not the ones that fail. They should rather exonerate themselves from blame by teaching well and making sure that the knowledge, skills and abilities are perfectly inculcated to the students.
- Teachers should use the indigenous method of observation by exposing students to practical work which will enable them ascertain precisely the extent they have achieved, when it is found otherwise, they should continue to educate the students until learning takes place.
- Students (future teachers) and teachers should be meant to know that exam malpractice is evil. Participating in it is a mark of dishonesty and deception. These contradict the teachings of the African people and amount to a societal taboo. None of these go unpunished.

- Teachers should focus on achieving in the learner one significant task at a time. Every learner is unique even in ability. Teachers should identify each person's ability and build on it.
- No person should be employed for a job or admitted in a school without a show of the ideal performance needed for the job or the admission. Use of certificates alone should be de-emphasized. Actual ability should accompany it. Where the latter is not exhibited, the person should be denied both.
- Exam malpractice is cheating. Evaluation is all about fair play therefore it is totally wrong to give marks unnecessarily or distort evaluation process in any form.

## **Conclusion**

The menace of exam malpractice has assumed an embarrassing level in Africa and most countries in the world. Ogunji (2011) has proven that examination malpractice is a global problem as his work has evidence of examination malpractice in American, Africa, China, India South Korea and Britain. If not checked and curbed, it can turn the whole society into something more dangerous than a monster. The ideas raised in this paper should be implemented by teachers. They should know that they are models to these students. Their participation in exam malpractice is quite unexpected from them and a taboo in the African setting. The Igbos of Nigeria will say that '*okenye anaghi ano n'ulo, ewu amuo n'ogbu*' ( an elder does not stay at home and the goat delivers in an uncomfortable position). An elder mends, rectifies, adjusts and not destroys or spoils. So should teachers. They are producing these students to be useful to themselves and the society and not to be useless, unsuitable and problematic to the same society. Morality

issues should also be addressed. Politicians who are the leaders should show good examples to these students by making their money through honest means. Excessive desire for wealth has done the African nations great harm. Honest, dedicated and hardworking people are no longer commended in our society. Hence children take to many delinquent means to opt for their needs, including exam malpractice. These means are not endogenous in nature. Elders should make a U- turn and direct the children well so that African people will maintain the African personality, essence and nature that stand us out as Africans.

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