Strategies for Managing Examination Malpractice as Students’ Unethical Behaviours in Tertiary Institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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Abstract
This study investigated strategies for managing examination malpractice as students’ unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. One research question and one null hypothesis were developed to guide the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design with a population of 3,578 respondents made up of 601 from federal and 2,977 staff from state in the seven tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. A sample size of 716 respondents made up of 120 staff from the federal and 596 from state institutions was drawn using stratified random sampling technique to respond to the data collecting instrument of the study. A reliability index of 0.83 was obtained using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Mean and standard deviation statistics were used to answer the research question, while the null hypothesis was tested using the z-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that expulsion, rustication of erring students, planting of secret cameras and monitoring devices were some the strategies for managing examination malpractice as students’ unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. The null hypothesis was accepted. Some recommendations were made amongst them was that Government should provide adequate facilities for the institutions in order to promote teaching –learning process.

Keywords: Strategies, Managing, Students, Examination Malpractice, Tertiary Institutions

Introduction
Education is generally acknowledged by scholars as a vehicle for accelerating individual, community and national development. It is a catalyst through which the society generates the knowledge and skills required for its survival and sustenance. The Federal Government of Nigeria in setting up tertiary institutions as an agent of socio-economic change and national development stipulated the goals of tertiary institution as enunciated in the national policy on education are thus:

a. Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training;
b. develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society;
c. develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;
d. acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;

e. promote and encourage scholarship and community service;

f. forge and cement national unity, and

g. promote national and international understanding and interaction (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004:30).

These objectives could only be achieved in a learning environment devoid of unethical behaviours among staff and students. Thus, unethical behaviours are any behaviour prohibited by law (Civil Service Commission of Philippines, 2000). It further implies that it is a behaviour that is not morally honourable or one that is prohibited by law. An unacceptable behaviour, a behaviour devoid of good, a bad act or illegal act punishable by law. Ogunleye (2000) observed that unethical behaviours occur when decisions enable an individual or organisation to gain at the expense of the larger society. Giving credence to this, Cumming, Maddux, Cleborne and Dyas (2002) observed that if students are allowed to indulge in wrong or unethical working processes, it will adversely affect their prospective jobs and may cause economic damages, and harm on other person’s reputation. This is because academic dishonesty is seen by students as ordinarily practiced by them (Sankaran and Bui, 2003). These academic dishonesty are of different forms such as examination malpractices, plagiarism, sabotaging others and peers group work, illegal using of school computers in order to change certified grades, internet copying and pasting (Jensen, Feldman, Arnett and Cauffman, 2002) among others.

In the context of this study, ethical bahaviour is a good or expected type of conduct which is a desired moral type of legal behaviour from a professional. This is to say that school ethics are designed to provide equal teaching and learning opportunities for all students and lecturers for the achievement of its goals and objectives in particular, and the national education goals in general (Nwakpa, 2010). Thus, indulging in examination malpractice is tantamount to the unrealisation of the education goals. Asinya, (2012) saw examination malpractices as massive and unprecedented abuse of rules and regulations pertaining to internal and public examination, beginning from the setting of such examinations through the taking of the examinations, their marking and grading to the release of the results and the issuance of certificate. Dalton (2006) observed that this unethical behaviour has permeated into the fabric of the students as different styles and methods are employed to help themselves and their fellow students through exchange of financial gratification. With the introduction of different styles and methods such as impersonation, thuggery, hooliganism & physical Assault, use of mercenaries & delay in commencement of examination, spying or giraffing, carrying prohibited materials to the examination halls, configured calculators, illegal communications, exchange of answer booklet, exams or question papers, Dalton, 2006; Alutu, & Aluede, 2005) cautioned that continuous conferences, seminars and campaigns should be organised by all educational and institutional stakeholders to educate them of the dangers of such act. To further discourage staff from monetary and material incentives from parents, guidance, students, and others who might want to destabilise the process of examination Dalton(2006); McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield (2001) suggested that in every examination settings, each invigilator should be assigned to one to twenty students, and that changes should always be made on students’ sitting arrangement on daily basis.
A cursory look at these suggestions by scholars on examination malpractice reveals that it has posed several challenges in tertiary educational system, which has further resulted to various empirical studies in. However, since the inception of tertiary education in Nigeria, different researches on students unethical behaviours have been conducted, yet none of the empirical studies has been conducted to the best knowledge of the researcher on strategies for managing examination malpractice as students’ unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. This has provided a knowledge gap which this study intends to fill. It is against this background and in realisation of the goals of tertiary institutions that this study is designed to critically examine the strategies for managing examination malpractice as students’ unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

Statement of the Problem
From the background, it is obvious that examination malpractice as students’ unethical behaviours is not just a recent occurrence in tertiary institutions. This unethical behaviour is manifested in different forms such as impersonation, thuggery, hooliganism & physical Assault, use of mercenaries & delay in commencement of examination, spying or giraffing, carrying prohibited materials to the examination halls, configured calculators, illegal communications, exchange of answer booklet, exams or question papers among others. These indecent actions and activities in higher institutions of learning have resulted to decline in the standard and quality of education. This decline in quality education in tertiary institutions has led to various empirical studies on how examination malpractice as students’ unethical behaviours could be managed in order to achieve qualitative education (Alutu, & Aluede, 2005). Despite these studies, the rise in examination malpractice as students’ unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions of learning has remained unabated (Dalton, 2006). This has given rise to the question: have there been any strategies identified for management of examination malpractice in tertiary institutions?

Furthermore, since the establishment of tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, several empirical studies have been conducted, yet to the best knowledge of the researcher, none has been carried out to ascertain the strategies for managing examination malpractice as students unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions in the state, hence the gap this research study intends to fill. The problem of this study therefore was to investigate the strategies for managing examination malpractice as students’ unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study was to investigate the strategies for managing examination malpractice as students’ unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. Specifically, the objective of the study is to:

- Examine strategies for managing examination malpractice as students’ unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

Research Question
The research question that guided the study is as follows:

- What are the strategies for managing examination malpractice as students’ unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State?
Hypothesis
The null hypothesis was formulated in this study and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

$H_0_1$ There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of respondents from federal and state institutions on the strategies for managing examination malpractice as students’ unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

Methodology
The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The design sought to examine the opinions of staff on strategies for managing examination malpractice as students’ unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The population for the study was three thousand, five hundred and seventy eight (3,578) staff variously spread across the seven (7) tertiary institution in the state. This comprised six hundred and one (601) from the two federal institutions and two thousand nine hundred and seventy seven (2,977) from the five state institutions. A sample size of seven hundred and sixteen (716) (20% of the total population) was drawn from the population using the stratified random sampling technique. Data collecting instrument for the study was a questionnaire titled, ‘Strategies for Managing Examination Malpractice as Students’ Unethical Behaviours Questionnaire’ (SMEMSUBQ). The instrument was face and content validated by two experts in Educational management and an expert in Measurement and Evaluation from the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained in a trial test using the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Data collected from the respondents were analysed using the mean, standard deviation and grand mean for the research question, while the $z$-statistic was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the strategies for managing examination malpractice as students’ unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State?

Table 1: Mean ratings of respondents on strategies for managing examination malpractice as students’ unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Federal $\bar{x}$ (SD)</th>
<th>State $\bar{x}$ (SD)</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Expulsion and suspension of students caught in the act of examination malpractice.</td>
<td>2.94 (0.68)</td>
<td>2.88 (0.80)</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Assigning invigilator to manageable size of students in examination.</td>
<td>2.92 (0.70)</td>
<td>2.97 (0.73)</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Planting secret cameras and monitoring devices in every examination hall in the institution.</td>
<td>3.09 (0.67)</td>
<td>3.01 (0.76)</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ensuring proper orientation is given to students by their parents and communities.</td>
<td>3.02 (0.66)</td>
<td>2.87 (0.75)</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Thorough checking of student’s identity by supervisors before, during and after examination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (SD) 1</th>
<th>Mean (SD) 2</th>
<th>Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.01 (0.67)</td>
<td>3.01 (0.78)</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand mean</td>
<td>3.00 (0.68)</td>
<td>2.95 (0.74)</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures in bracket represent standard deviation.

Table 2 shows that items 1(2.94, 2.88), 2(2.92, 2.97), 3(3.09, 3.01), 4(3.02, 2.87) and 5(3.01, 3.01) have mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, as such were all agreed. With the grand mean of 3.00 and 2.95 for both respondents in federal and state tertiary institutions, the table reveals that rustication of students caught in examination malpractice, planting of secret cameras and monitoring devices in examination halls and assigning of few students to invigilators are some of the strategies for managing examination malpractices as students unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of respondents from federal and state institutions on strategies for managing examination malpractice as students unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

Table 2: z-test analysis of significant difference between the mean ratings of respondents from federal and state staff on strategies for managing examination malpractice in tertiary institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>No of Respondents</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>z_cal</th>
<th>z_crit</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.00 (0.26)</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>±1.96</td>
<td>HO_H3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>2.95 (0.34)</td>
<td>657</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data on table 2 show that the calculated z-value (1.43) is less than the critical z-value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance and df (657), hence the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of respondents from federal and state institutions on strategies for managing examination malpractice as students unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

Discussion of Findings

In research question one, findings of the study indicated that examination malpractices as students unethical behaviours were managed in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State using different strategies. Respondents noted that expulsion and suspension of student caught in the act and the supervision of manageable size of students in examination by an invigilator as some of the strategies. The expulsion of student caught on the act serves as a deterrent to others as Sankaran and Bui (2003) rightly observed that University students are always aware of the implications of cheating, and they are aware it is ethnically wrong, yet they cheat as
they perceive that it will favour them than harm, thus see cheating as a normal behaviour. In support of the findings, Adeyemi and Akindele (2002) noted that any student found guilty of cheating have to be expelled or rusticated, their names and identification numbers ought to be published in the school and the parents and guardian of such students must be informed by the school authority.

Findings in hypothesis one showed that significant difference was not found between the mean ratings of respondents from federal and state institutions on strategies for managing examination malpractice as students’ unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. The significant difference not found in the hypothesis is an indicative that respondents in both federal and state tertiary institutions share similar views on the strategies for managing examination practice in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

Conclusion
Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn: The expulsion and rustication of students caught in examination malpractice, assigning few students to an invigilator, planting of secret cameras and monitoring devices in examination halls and proper orientation of students were some of the strategies for managing examination malpractice as students’ unethical behaviours in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

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

1. Government should ensure adequate facilities are provided for the schools in order to promote teaching-learning process.
2. Facilities such as secret cameras and monitoring devices should be planted by school management as a way of checking the conduct of examination.
3. Tertiary institutions’ authority should ensure that handbook on code of conduct is provided to every student and the signing of anti-social form by students should be taken as a pre-requisite for their admission and also at the point of registration.
4. Higher institutions management should ensure that orientation to fresh students is adequately plan to accommodate various facets of the school system.

References


