

The Rule must be Broken: An Integrative-Anomie Perspective of Examination Malpractice in Nigeria

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Abstract

The Nigerian educational system is losing its potency and viability to examination malpractice. It is against this backdrop that this paper sets out to explain examination malpractice in contemporary Nigeria as a social problem. Using the integrative-anomie perspective as our theoretical framework, the paper revealed that examination malpractice represents part of the larger ills in the Nigerian society, and is, in addition, the outcome of undue emphasis on paper qualification as a sine qua non for recruitment into the labour market. Another salient driver to examination malpractice lies in the individual character traits, especially selfishness and acquisitiveness. The policy implications of the discussion in this paper are tripartite. First, each of the constructs in anomie-institutional theory is a potential focus for examination cheat intervention. Second, multiple interventions may be required because both multiple direct and indirect paths to examination malpractice exist. Third, interventions seeking to interrupt the causal processes in the development of examination malpractice should include measures, which seek to promote processes that enhance constructs on pro-examination ethics path. These policies are without prejudice to the importance of government reviewing its policy and extant laws governing the conduct of examinations at all levels in Nigeria with a view to making it harder for defaulters to go away with the criminal behaviour.

Keywords: Examination Malpractice, Nigeria, Anomie-Integrated perspective

INTRODUCTION

In an increasing competitive world, education is the most powerful instrument for developing and empowering the citizens to master their social and natural environments (Iloakasy, 1999). To all intent and purposes, examination remains the best known yardstick against which, knowledge, skills and

competence are formally tested, measured and positioned for proper placement both in the government and private corporations. However, it is widely acknowledged that the standard of education in contemporary Nigeria has plummeted owing largely to examination malpractice (see for example, Palu & Bodunde, 1999). The undue emphasis on paper qualifications to secure meaningful and sustainable employment in Nigeria may have forced many Nigerian educatees to resort to all manners of examination misconducts in order to achieve the goal of getting a job and remaining competitive. Examination

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malpractice is not a recent development in Nigeria; it arguably predates the British colonialists. However, examination malpractice attracted the attention of the Nigerian public largely in 1914 as a result of the leakage in the Senior Cambridge Local Examination papers in Nigeria (see Olujuwon, 2006 cited in Gbagolo, 2011; Emaikwu, 2012). Palu and Bodunde (1999), quoting Adabale (1997), explained that examination malpractice has been on the increase since the first widespread examination malpractice occurred in 1965—the first time the West African Examination Council (WAEC) fully conducted her examinations.

By 1984, examination malpractice in the Nigerian educational system had constituted a hydra-headed monster which culminated in a renewed legal war against it by the then military government. The highlight of this renewed fight was the slamming of 21 years imprisonment (without option) against anyone found to have been either involved, aided or abetted the commission of examination malpractice. When Nigeria entered democracy in 1999, the decree was amended as 'Examination Malpractice Act No. 33 of 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria'. The Act (As Amended) stipulates that any person or group of persons found guilty of examination malpractice shall be sentenced to a maximum of Five (5) years imprisonment, or pay an option of fine of Fifty Thousand Naira (N50, 000.00) or both as the case may be.

Certainly, the alarming rate of examination misconducts at all levels of the Nigerian educational sector is a source of worry to many stakeholders both in and out of the education sector (see Jimoh, 2009). Exam malpractice is growing in sophistry with new and other ingenious ways of doing it emerging. Students, teachers, examination officials, parents and even security personnel are all deeply implicated in the marauding

examination malpractices that have taken over the Nigeria educational sector (see Otu, 1992). Nigerian educational system continues to be maligned while Nigeria-awarded certificates continue to be suspicious at the international arena as a result of the menace of examination malpractice.

Oduwole (2013) reported in the *Saturday Sun* that WAEC cancelled individual subject results of 83, 745 candidates, released the results of 1, 549 and barred, for two years 3, 321 candidates from sitting for the Council examination over misconduct during the school examinations. The same source reported that a total of 112, 000 results of candidates out of 1, 695, 878 candidates that sat for the May/June 2013 WAEC were withheld for their involvement in various degrees of examination malpractice. With respect to WAEC, examination malpractice is so alarming that WAEC Committee on Examination Malpractice, in conjunction with the Nigeria Examinations Committee (NEC), recommended that 465 secondary schools in Nigeria be warned for aiding and abetting examination malpractice during the 2012 May/June WAEC.

Authorities of institutions of higher learning continue to suspend and rusticate culprits of examination malpractice, and also go ahead to cancel entire exams conducted below acceptable standard. For instance, out of the 150 cases of examination malpractice which occurred and were reported between 2002 and 2007 in Taraba State College of Education, Jalingo, 125 students were expelled, an action which resulted in the high rate of dropout from the institution. In 2006, The Federal Ministry of Education blacklisted and de-recognised 324 Secondary Schools in Nigeria as centres for conducting public examinations between the periods of 2007–2010 owing to their involvement in various examination offences. These schools were in the following order: North Central 54; North

East 08; North West 12; South East 48; South West 86; and South-South, 116 (Gbagolo, 2011).

Against the backdrop of unabated examination malpractice, its growing sophistry, intriguing modus operandi, and its wide range negative implications, the primary purpose of this paper is to present a plausible and sustainable explanation of the exceptionally high levels of examination malpractice in contemporary Nigeria. This explanation is attempted using the integrative-anomie perspective within the context of providing an explanation of the sociology of crime and criminal behaviour in Nigeria. It also aims to analyse, narrate and discuss the drivers to examination malpractice, the modus operandi (MO), and its wide range of implications.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A number of reasons coalesced into theories to provide insight into the causal process leading to persistent and sustained involvement of young Nigerians in examination malpractice over the years (see for instance, anomie, social learning, social bond, contagious, biological and psychological theories). Each of this plethora of theories offers only a partial explanation of examination malpractice (for similar argument, see for examples, Linde, 1978; Johnson, 1979; Johnstone, 1983; Downes & Rock, 1988; Brown, Esbensen & Geis, 1991; Thio, 1998; Otu, 2012b; Nnam, 2014; Agboti & Nnam, 2015). For this reason, the framework of integrative and what Otu (2012b) referred to as 'Alliance theory' is apt in discussing the offending behaviour of examination malpractice. Earlier on, Otu emphasized that alliance-theory is conceived both as a corollary and reminiscent of an integrated approach, a product of several theoretical strands and is dependent on the criminal behaviour under focus. Thus, for the purpose of examination

malpractice, alliance theory integrates elements of social contagious theory, social bond and, social learning, and rests on the anomie-end-mean paradigm of Emile Durkheim and Robert Merton. The theory hypothesizes that examination malpractice in Nigeria is a learned behaviour, from the socialising agents and significant others of family, schools, peer groups, and community institutions.

Learning here is facilitated by the kind of intimate personal relationships, which a habitual examination cheat shares with another cheat or potential cheat. Learning also entails learning the skills, motives, rationalisation and all other mechanisms of carrying out the malpractice behaviour (see also Sutherland, 1939; Sutherland & Cressey, 1960). Such skills and techniques include innovating different MOs, and rationalising the behaviour with such aphorism mindset as 'everyone in Nigeria is a cheat', 'I need good grade to get a job', 'no success without element of crime'. Social learning theory further emphasizes that criminal behaviour is learned through the reinforcement and punishment of behaviour (see Burgess & Akers, 1966; Bandura, 1973, 1977; Akers, 1977; Akers, Krohn & Lanza-Kaduce, 1979). The public domains and the socialising agents from whereupon examination malpractice behaviour is learned are groups or contexts that constitute the individual learner's major source of reinforcement. Consequently, many young Nigerians get involved in examination malpractice because they are surrounded by groups or individuals who give tacit, overt and covert approvals to the behaviour. They are motivated to continue in the act because they are rewarded (not condemned), given preference in job allotment, eulogised, worshiped and extolled rather than being sanctioned (disdained, ostracised and reprimanded). Young Nigerians who cut corners to excel in paper qualifications are often branded as 'genius', 'flyers', and

‘achievers’ by members of the public. This is what Thio (1998: 25) illustrated rather more technically as reinforcement when he argued that social learning theory of the reinforcement order goes to suggest that given a number of available operants, all of which produce the same reinforcer, that the operant which produces the reinforcer in greater amount, frequency and probability will have the higher probability of occurrence.

However, not only is examination malpractice learned from one’s significant others, it has become what Loftin (1988) describe as contagious; hence, his contagion theory. Loftin’s argument is that behaviour—both prosocial and antisocial—is infectious in nature. That is to say that examinational malpractice behaviour in Nigeria is contagious. When a particular behaviour is played out, such behaviour spreads in a communicable disease manner to other vulnerable members of the society. Once examination malpractice (like corruption) is learned and is being perpetuated by a cheat, and sanctions against perpetrators are either found not to be forthcoming or weak, other interacting individuals find justification to get involved so that the behaviour becomes increasingly a part of the institution or group’s way of life as is the case in Nigeria.

Durkheim’s (1951) anomie appears to us as standing out clear among other competing theories within the Alliance paradigm in boosting an explanation of examination malpractice in contemporary Nigeria. Anomie thesis suggests that every society creates its own brand of crimes and criminals. It does so by prescribing ideal goals, standards and values while also setting the rules or norms guiding the pursuit of these goals. However, because man by nature is selfish and acquisitive lustful, man will stretch the limit of the norms to achieve these goals. This man’s behaviour is not helped by the limited opportunities available to achieving these goals. Merton (1938) and

Agnew (1994) described this limited opportunity as deprivation which brings about strain on individuals in the society, especially those in the lower class who would, then, naturally respond in a negative way by choosing the path of illegitimacy (in this case, examination malpractice) to meet societal expectations.

While leaning to the Durkheim’s anomie and Merton’s end-means paradigm to explain examination cheat, Jimoh (2009) explained that the disjunction between the culturally acclaimed goals and the normative means to achieving these goals, coupled with the cultural practise of emphasizing on success-goals at the expense of the normative means, is what creates an environment that predisposes some students, teachers, parents and others to examination malpractice. Therefore, the very basic assumptions of anomie-end-means theory encapsulate the true situation in contemporary Nigeria. In addition, it is very valuable in explaining the criminal behaviour of examination malpractice. Igbo (2007) explained that contemporary Nigeria is a conscious material (wealth) one. Greater emphasis is placed on the success goal at the expense of the normative (legitimate) means.

In contemporary Nigeria, there are other salient features of anomie-end-means paradigm, which help to drive the wanton increase in examination malpractice behaviour. These factors include (but by no means limited to) the dwindling job prosperity in Nigeria, the undue emphasis on general paper qualification and the fact that employers of labour now specifically insist on ‘first class and second class (upper class divisions)’ as a precondition for job applications. Under the pressure of these combined forces, many young Nigerians and even parents take to the route of examination malpractice. Otu (2012b) explained that Nigerians have been exposed and socialised to accept the Western values, aspirations and

goals without having corresponding opportunities to achieve them, so that typical young Nigerians feel frustrated and are under pressure to succeed within the culturally accepted means. Blocked or truncated legitimate opportunities to achieving success in the educational careers (being a legitimate means to achieve success goal), many young Nigerians simply choose the illegitimate means of examination malpractice to achieve success in the education sector (see also Akinyemi, 2002 cited in Ikoh, 2011; Nnam & Inah, 2015).

Our integrative perspective reveals the complexities of examination malpractice in contemporary Nigeria. For instance, holders of excellent results or certificates are accorded undue honour and recognition in modern-day Nigeria regardless of how they were acquired. Students and other examinees thus take to examination malpractice not only to pass the said examination but also to pass with flying colours. Those who do not cheat but have found that the behaviour is rewarding (cheats not being punished but get praised and rewarded with good jobs) find justification to join in the bandwagon (the bandwagon effect) and learn all the mechanisms necessary to do the behaviour. Our integrated/alliance framework is further strengthened by incorporating key features of some criminological theories such as differential association, social learning and social control theories and known in criminology literatures as Social Development Model (SDM). SDM organises a broad range of risks or predisposing factors, more fully describes causal, and mediating processes hypothesized to predict behaviour over the course of development (see Catalano & Hawkins 1996).

The key point of social development model as it applies to our main subject of discussion is that multiple biological, psychological and social factors at multiple stages in the different public domains (i.e. within the individual actor, family, school, peer

group and community) all contribute in some degree to the aetiology of examination malpractice. By this, it hypothesizes that young Nigerians either learn and get involved in examination malpractice or refrain from it from the socialising agents of family, school, peer group and other society (community) institutions. This socialisation follows the same process of social learning. Social Development Model, however, also takes into account other external factors hypothesized to influence the socialisation process (see Catalano & Hawkins 1996). These factors include external inhibitors (e.g. school policies, legal sanctions), position in the social structures (e.g., ethnicity, gender), individual constitutional factors (e.g. cognitive abilities, hyperactivity, degree of selfishness and acquisitiveness). This is the interface between the constructs of the anomie-end-means paradigm and those of biological, psychological and social learning theories so that examination malpractice is no less a product of interaction between the micro (individual) level risk factors and the macro (societal) risk factors.

PRIOR STUDIES

Predictors of Examination Malpractice in Nigeria: A Sociological Insight

Although examination malpractice remains a very big challenge to the Nigerian educational system, only a relatively small amount of research has examined the phenomenon. A little less of these studies has examined the nature and dimension of examination malpractice. Worst still, most of what we know about examination malpractice has come from the media and social commentators. Interestingly, even a couple of academic pieces have almost exclusively relied on newspaper accounts and professional trade magazines as their primary source of information (Chukwu, 1980; Onyechere, 2004; Oduwole, 2013). Most of these academic pieces have dwelt mainly on identifying one causative factor or another. For

instance, a foremost study by Chukwu (1985) revealed that the undue emphasis on paper qualification in Nigeria, as the sole means of rating people's capabilities, competences and adequacies is a major drive of examination cheat in Nigeria. This finding is in consonance with the findings of Ndifon and Ndifon (2012) and Emaikwu (2012). These authors found that there is a significant relationship between over-emphasis on paper qualifications in the Nigerian labour market and examination malpractice.

Onyechere (2004) views examination from the macro level of analysis. He explained that the Nigerian society, as it is presently constituted, is but one that is founded on faulty and fragile education, political, economic, physical and social environment which cannot produce a better tomorrow. The location and environmental nature of schools and examination centres are vital contributory factors to examination malpractice in Nigeria. The author substantiated his claim when he explained that organised examination fraud thrives at 'special examination centres' and schools in remote areas of the country. Examination contractors—as he described some categories of cheats'—recruit candidates who can afford the 'co-operation fees'. Most of these special centres operate under the guise of tutorial centres, and the examination fees charged each student range from ₦15, 000.00 to ₦50, 000.00 depending on the nature of services required and the purse of the student (Onyechere, 2004).

Soyombo (2009) offered a more subsumed aetiology of examination malpractice when he described it as a product of anomie. He explained that condition offers people the pressure to innovate various means, especially illegitimate ones, to attain societal goal of success. This pressure is usually weighty on the working class people who are structurally disadvantaged in the society. It is in

this sense that Igbo and Anugwom (2002) explained that examination malpractice is caused by negative changes brought about by the acceptance and adoption of certain innovations in society.

Gbagolo (2011) summarised the seminal works of Awanbor (2005), Nwandiani (2005), Badmus (2006), Okafor (2006), Ayua (2006), Azare (2006) and Aminu (2006) on examination malpractice and came to the conclusion that some school programmes, teaching-learning environment, teachers, students, over-valuation of certificates, parental support and the general decadence in the Nigerian society are factors which animate examination malpractice in Nigeria. The author cited overcrowding in examination halls, loose supervision, weak security network, dearth of chairs and desks as some of the specific environmental issues that cause examination malpractice in contemporary Nigeria.

Still aligning to the notion of examination malpractice as a true reflection of the moral decadence in Nigerian society, Jimoh (2009) explained that examination malpractice is a form of corruption that is sustained by whatever sustains corruption in the country. The author further maintained that capitalism has so eroded the moral values of the Nigerian society that social, economic, political, religious and educational vices are now celebrated and rewarded in the country while virtue is punished. The Nigerian education industry is just a miniature of the macro society. By implication, therefore, we should expect that what obtains at this micro level is a reflection of what happens in the larger society.

Bruno and Obidigbo (2012), quoting Hiko (2008), averred that most of the strategies so far adopted in fighting examination cheats have not been able to yield the desired result because people who are supposed to be actively

involved in the crusade are themselves aiding and abetting it in one way or another. Onah (2010), cited in Bruno and Obidigbo (2012), on his part depicts a sympathetic tone for those who are out to ensure that examination cheats do not succeed. He explained how some examiners have fallen victims in their bid to enforce examination regulations. The author cited instances of a female examiner bathed with acid, the Dean of Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Nigeria, Nsukka assassinated, and a female examiner in Gombe killed and her corpse burnt to ashes for making efforts to halt examination cheats.

METHODS

This study uses data collected by the *Teachers in Action Project* that were conducted from 2006-2010 during examination times involving both O'Level and undergraduates of institution of higher learning in Ebonyi State. The purpose of this project was to have a glimpse of the prevalence of examination cheats, and in particular, the various dimensions and/or MOs being engaged by culprits in perpetuating the malpractice.

Because of the nature of the study which is purely descriptive and narrative, no designed tool was used to elicit information from examination cheat suspects. Instead, we relied on daily reports of examination cheats from our field teachers (supervisors and invigilators of examinations). We simply asked them to make note on the number of cheats caught in each examination and the *modus operandi* used by the cheats/students. Therefore, members of the project team served as non-participation observers who were able to write first-hand notes on what they saw. Data were also complemented with data generated by the two researchers who have been directly involved in series of examination invigilation and supervision—and have seen it all. In

addition, some 'runsmen' (current name for experts in examination malpractice) were informally interacted with to get a glimpse of what they do and how they do it as they collaborate with examination cheats for pecuniary rewards.

Examining some Modus Operandi (MO) of Examination Malpractice in Nigeria

The criminal behaviour of examination malpractice in Nigeria has assumed a certain level of sophistry and scientific status. Perpetrators of examination malpractice continue to develop some mindboggling techniques to accomplish this act. Research reveals some of the weird and popular techniques (MOs) to include the following:

Microchips

The concept of microchips is a common MO and is known with different code names in contemporary Nigeria. In Igbo land (Southeastern Nigeria), it is called 'Mgbo' (Bullet) and 'Omokirikiri' or 'Omo-reminder' (small reminder) in the Yoruba land (Southwestern Nigeria). It is an improvement on the traditional method of smuggling prepared examination-related materials into the examination hall with the intention of using it as a guide during an examination. Microchips usually come in tiny pieces of paper summarising major points of a subject/course to be taken in an examination. Bruno and Obidigbo (2012: 200) called it 'Pengo', and they described it as the most common form of malpractice which entails coming into the examination hall with small pieces of paper full of tiny written materials. Ndifon and Ndifon (2012: 329) explained that microchips have to do with small pieces of extraneous materials imported into the examination hall.

'Mgbo' or 'Omokirikiri', whichever name it is called, is a piece of paper not bigger than a complimentary card. It contains pieces

of information on some topics of a victimised course smuggled stealthily into the examination hall. HB-pencil and stiletto pen are often preferred to any other, and the writing usually in shorthand and abbreviations. Microchips are smuggled into the examination hall via either mathematical sets, purses/wallets, socks, shoes, calculators, mobile phones, handbags, hairs (both natural and artificial), and other females' body wears.

Telewire

'Telewire' is the most sophisticated, scientific and current, but though a relatively expensive method of examination malpractice. The method thrives in both unruly and serene examination halls and centres. Under this MO, students sitting for an examination send questions through Short Message System/Service (SMS) or smuggle the question paper out of the examination hall to some arranged 'runsmen' (expert mercenaries in examination malpractice) who solve the questions and 'telewire' (SMS) the answers back to the candidates/students. There are allegations that this MO is sometimes done with the connivance of the invigilators and security agents detailed to ensure a malpractice-free examination. Bruno and Obidigbo (2012) submitted that mobile phones are now used to perpetrate examination malpractice. Nnam and Inah (2015) explained that old forms of examination malpractice in Nigeria have either ebbed away or have been deftly supplanted by more sophisticated and scientific ones. Their survey report shows that an acceptable mean score of 3.6 indicated that the use of mobile phones during examination is common in Nigeria.

In recent times, students have started to upload lesson notes into Simcards, and smuggle same into examination hall for use during the examination proper. The Simcard enables cheats to store pieces of information

and data on the subjects they have chosen to cheat on. Even now, students use phones that are connected to the internet, or have inbuilt and configured scientific equations and calculators. This now enables cheats to quickly and secretly work out the answers either through 'Google' or other service providers while in the examination hall. Anzene (2014) explained that the introduction of the Global System Mobile (GSM) in Nigeria has revolutionised examination malpractice in the school system.

Tattoo

Tattoo is a resurgent form of examination malpractice. It is an act of writing salient points and vital information relevant to a subject/course on strategic and somewhat hidden parts of the body and clothes by a cheat with the intention of using them as a guide during an examination. Some students interviewed explained that tattoo although is time consuming, is considered relatively safe since the writings can be erased-off within seconds and thus leaving no preponderance of evidence to indict the offender (candidate/student) for examination malpractice. Female students employ tattoo method with high level of success more than their male counterparts due to their natural peculiarities. Major parts of the body that are used in committing this crime are thighs/laps covered with skirts, linings of short gowns and the reverse sides of wrappers. Palms are also used, but they have lost their attraction and usage owing to easy detection. Tattoos are sometimes mistaken for a heavy make-up which has become commonplace among female students, thereby giving an edge above other MOs. Tattoo is what Issa (2012) and Ndifon and Ndifon (2012) referred to as 'laptop' strategy, where students' laps are used as a writing surface of relevant information for the purpose of examination cheat. From several revelations made on examination cheat, tattoo has found to be more prevalent among female

students in view of the fact that it is rather easier to do with the wearing of skirts.

Graffiti/Epitaph

Graffiti and/or epitaph is a form of examination malpractice whereby relevant information—either in coded form or not—are scribbled or engraved on the desks and/or walls of an examination hall prior to examination time. Prospective cheats would ensure that their sitting arrangement covers the graffiti spread across the walls of the examination hall and desks to be used. Bruno and Obidigbo (2012) explained that this form of examination malpractice is also done by ‘giraffing’ or spying on a neighbour’s work, whispering of answers, scribbling answers on desks, tables of examination rooms, ceiling and cloths.

Graffiti is accomplished by what has been technically referred to as ‘vibration’. This is an argot common among student members of Kegite International Club of Nigeria (a palm-wine club). By this, members develop a strange system of passing messages and information during examination. Vibration technique comes about in three interactive ways: firstly, students exchange question papers or answer booklets on which relevant notes have been made; secondly, students disseminate information and points elicited from the graffiti through vibration medium; and thirdly, students surreptitiously swap their sitting position in order to copy the epitaph in their colleague’s desk.

Designers

There are different types of examination malpractice in Nigerian institutions of higher education. A recent study on this area revealed that major forms of examination malpractice include collusion to cheat or copy from fellow students/candidates, possession of different “foreign materials” during examination, continuous assessment malpractice, script

swapping and leakages, cloth-writings, among others (Emaikwus, 2012). The concept of designers as a form of examination malpractice is a generic term for different kinds of writing on clothes, especially on white handkerchiefs. The texts are written in codes, shorthand and abbreviations, and thereafter arranged in a manner they will appear from a distance as common flowery designs. This method of examination malpractice usually goes with the slang ‘walkabout’—a pattern of examination malpractice whereby cheats hide their designed handkerchiefs or even textbooks in a designated place, usually in the toilet and thus make frequent consultations on the materials in the guise of answering the call of nature.

Impersonation

Impersonation is an act of contracting or hiring a professional or expert colloquially known in local parlance as ‘runman’ to write examination for another person. It is a multi-skilled but most expensive pattern of examination malpractice. Whether as ‘runmen’, ‘mercenaries’ or impersonators, providers are usually intelligent ones who can afford to take risks. Usually, ‘runmen’ charge large amounts of honorarium from their clients.

The MO of impersonators requires keeping two identity cards and in case of either WAEC and/or NECO, involves purchasing two forms with closely related serial numbers. One of the cards which the mercenary uses is either defaced to beat security network, or a forged one is provided in collusion with the invigilators. Impersonation malpractice is mostly practised by men because it requires some level of trepidation; it specifically thrives among WAEC, NECO, NABTEB, JAMB as well as other examinations in Nigerian institutions of higher learning. Gbagolo (2011: 36) defined impersonation as the hiring of touts to take examinations by appearing in the halls as genuine candidates.

Ndifon and Ndifon (2012) asserted that a major difference between mercenary (impersonation) and other forms of examination malpractice is that the actual candidates in question perpetrate other kinds of malpractice while mercenary involves the recruitment of an external body to take or sit the examinations on behalf of the bonafide candidate. Issa (2012) explained that a mercenary is considered as the intellectual giant who takes examinations for the person who has engaged his services. This is because such an individual either comes from an institution of higher learning or had already succeeded in similar examinations in the past. When a mercenary is used in institutions of higher learning, the impersonator is either a more competent hand in the course concerned or is regarded as such.

Giraffe

Giraffe is the oldest and less incriminating form of examination malpractice (see Otu 1992). It has permeated all institutions of learning in Nigeria. Those who adopt this method may or may not conspire with anybody, but do cast occasional glances at the answer booklets of their target. Like the animal giraffe itself, cheats who adopt this strategy strain their necks to copy from colleagues suspected to be better off in a given subject. Recently, magnifying eyeglasses have been found to be engaged by 'giraffers' (examination cheats) as a vital aid for the malpractice. Issa (2012) affirmed that giraffe is an age-long form of examination malpractice, whereby candidates or students in examination hall use neck stretching to look into another person's work in order to copy.

Although 'giraffing' is relatively safe, it can be immensely frustrating as the 'giraffer' uncomfortably swivels around in order to copy. When the 'giraffer' commits the crime of giraffe with the consent of an invigilator, it is

often referred to as co-operation and among students as either 'ECOMOG Force', 'Academic Alliance' and/or 'Igwebuiké'. Giraffing of this kind eventuates into a kind of parasitic relationship between brilliant students known as distributors or engine rooms and below average students called subscribers or copycats. The beneficiary is expected to reciprocate the criminal gesture of the 'distributor' either in cash or kind.

DISCUSSION

Since the classic study of Emile Durkheim, criminologists have theoretically explained and empirically demonstrated why one should anticipate that living in a society where rules and regulations are broken, will calibrate even ordinary law-abiding citizens to take to rule-breaking behaviour as an accepted norm. A major thrust of their explanation, which receives empirical support, concerns an examination into how strains undermine individual's ability to withstand deviating from the rules (see Durkheim 1951). Walsh (2000) explained that when social norms break down in response to changing political, social and economic changes, the threshold for this 'willingness' is lowered so that more and more persons succumb (to the whims and caprices of criminal behaviour like examination malpractice).

Clearly, examination malpractice in Nigeria is tied to the very anomic condition that is the characterisation of the Nigerian society. The social structure and political economy of Nigeria encourages the principles which uphold that 'all is fair in love and war' and the Machiavellians' philosophy 'that the end justifies the means'. Thus, the apparent breakdown in rules and regulations guiding human conducts in Nigeria—with near certainty that outlaws often go unpunished—suggests that existing legal sanctions against examination malpractice are simply enfeebled.

Walsh (2000) further maintained that anomic condition serves as ‘releasers’ of criminal behaviour which occurs at lower thresholds for some individuals than for others. Examination malpractice is no less seen as a kind of organised crime which is carried out by a syndicate of ‘runsmen’. These ‘runsmen’ are composed of disgruntled and greedy teachers, students, parents, security personnel, examination officials, and even street urchins who have taken advantage of the breakdown of the normative rules in Nigeria to promote examination malpractice. However, it is important to stress here that participating in examination malpractice is also a function of individual character trait (see also Cohen & Machalek, 1994). Key components of these traits are selfishness and acquisitiveness.

It is noteworthy that the MOs of examination malpractice in contemporary Nigeria reflect the character of the Nigerian State and the Nigerian people. Following Agnew (1994) aetiology, it seems reasonable to suggest that Nigerians (and worst still, Nigerian youths) continue to show lack of commitment to examination ethics which continues to foster examination misconduct. Thus, the desire for easy and fast success in an examination—an orientation that seems to be the opposite in the belief in hard work and delayed gratification in examination success—is a strong driver for low self-control of all categories involved in the exam cheat cartel (see also Agnew, 1994). That is, the measure of what we refer here to as ‘certificate success attitudes’ could be assessing an underlying orientation for immediate and easy gratification—the kind of *criminogenic* factor Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) defined as low self-control which is linked to criminal behaviour.

Messner and Rosenfeld’s (1994) macro level institutional anomie theory clearly illuminates the very possibility that young Nigerians and their collaborators in examination cheat—much more than their

counterparts in other developing countries—have been ‘penetrated’ by the dominance of economic institution and its manifest and latent encouragement of what Messner and Rosenfeld called ‘fetishism of money’, but which we elect to refer here to as ‘fetishism of certificate’. Thus, at the individual level, the overweening emphasis on good certificate has indeed increased examination malpractice by attenuating norms regulating success goal in examinations through legitimate means by fostering a crass utilitarian individualism that justifies securing goals through the ‘technically most expedient means’, as it were (see Messner & Rosenfeld 1994).

CONCLUSION

The negative impacts of this examination malpractice remain incalculable on the individual cheats, their significant others, stakeholders and the larger Nigeria society. Umaru (2005) and Jimoh (2009) reported that examination process has become so endangered that the certificates it produced have almost lost their credibility in Nigeria and beyond. Examination bodies like WAEC, JAMB, and NECO continue to withhold, partially release and/or outrightly cancel examination results of many candidates, thereby causing untold hardships on both the candidates and their parents/guardians. Besides higher institutions of learning continue to mete out different degrees of sanctions to examination cheats. This ranges from cancellation of results, suspension to outright expulsion from the institution. Nnam and Inah (2015) argued that the main and immediate fallout of examination malpractice is that it tends to discourage hard-work. Students go into examination malpractice ill-prepared and therefore lack the wherewithal to compete favourably within and outside the school system. Other consequences of examination malpractice in Nigeria include expulsion, cancellation of results, withdrawal of certificates, etc.

Given the above discussion, we asked two key questions. (1) What is the obvious policy implication arising from thereto? (2) Where should researchers focus their attention in future aetiology of examination malpractice? For the first question, we emphasized six specific implications of the framework adopted in this study. Firstly, each of the constructs in anomie-institutional theory is a potential focus for examination cheat intervention. Secondly, multiple interventions may be required because both multiple direct and indirect paths to examination malpractice exist. Three, interventions seeking to interrupt the causal processes in the development of examination malpractice behaviour should include measures which seek to promote processes that enhance constructs on pro-examination ethics path. Fourth, the involvement of critical stakeholders in the education sector as collaborators to examination malpractice suggest the importance of value reorientation which should be vigorously carried to all concerned. It also suggests the importance of strengthening the penal sanctions on violators of examination malpractice. Fifth, appointment and job placement based on the face-value of certificates is untenable.

Thus, all certificate holders irrespective of class of grades should be subjected to further screening examination and oral interview to authenticate or otherwise the certificates they present. Sixth, with the increasing sophistry of examination malpractice, it is suggested that examination officers should be proactive in handling both the design and handling of examinations. For the second question, we note that lack of a robust and rigorous approach to generating data for the present study is its greatest albatross. To this end, we suggest that future studies should focus on developing more sophisticated tools to generate data which are both hypothetical and testable.

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