The Social Media Platforms and Examination Malpractice among Secondary School Students: The Possible Way Out

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Abstract: **The pursuit of certificates and the behavioral issues in the society amidst poor performances are identified as some root causes of examination malpractice in Nigeria. The study revealed that issues of examination malpractice through social media platforms persists as a result of the escalation of mobile phones and tablets in the hands of students which enables them easy access to the internet and the modern social media platforms such as; Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and so on. This paper essentially examined the relationship that exists between examination malpractice and the social media platforms. Descriptive method was used for data collection with the aid of simple percentage and content analysis. A total of 5 teachers out of 52 teachers were selected as the respondents in the study. This represented 19.2% of the teachers' sample. A total number of 5 teachers and a total number of 180 students out of 1800 senior secondary three students in public schools were selected which constituted 10% of the students' sample, by means of random sampling technique from five (5) secondary schools in Yola – North local government council of Adamawa state, Nigeria. The paper found that the relationship that exists between examination malpractice and the social media platforms include the use of WhatsApp which makes students vulnerable to examination malpractice. The paper recommended among others that; examination malpractice should be discouraged by seizing the students' internet and social media access during examination periods.**

Key words: **Examination Malpractice, Mobile Phones, Social Media**

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms have become an integral part of the global society. Nowadays, information is at the doormat of everybody because the world is in the era of information technology. In this technological era, information is no longer left for only a few privileged people who can afford the use of land line telephone in offices and homes. Even the people in the remotest villages in Nigeria and elsewhere can access information through the cell phone, available internet and social networking sites (Barker, 2013).

Social media is defined as "the relationships that exist between network of people" (Qingya, Wei & Yu, 2011:3). Social media emerged as a term frequently used to describe different types of electronic communication platforms. The availability of high speed internet broadband connection with massive use of desktop computers, laptops, e-readers, tablets and smart phones enable millions of undergraduates to actively engage in social networking, text messaging, blogging, content sharing, online learning, and much more.

Social media is a means of communication through which tools like wall posts, status updates, activity feeds, thumb-ups and profiles are used and perhaps characterized as online communications namely Facebook, MySpace, Met log, Flicker and Twitter (Akaneme, Ibenegbu & Nwosu, 2013). Also, Mashable (2015) reported that social media service is an online platform or site that focuses on facilitating the social relations among people who for example, share interests, activities, backgrounds or real life.

The advent and full embrace of social media, particularly WhatsApp and Facebook by all and sundry but more particularly by the youths who are students, have further increased the sophistication and diversification of the means by which examination misconduct are carried out. Examination malpractice is an example of actions that threaten the integrity of examinations, and /or damage the authority of those responsible for conducting them. Examination malpractice is also a threat to the validity and reliability of the educational system. It is harmful not only to the moral development, but also to the intellectual development of the student (Idakwo, 2011).

In Nigeria, for example, the first examination malpractice was recorded in 1914 when the Cambridge School Certificate Examination was leaked to candidates. Similarly, in 1948, a Nigerian candidate's result was cancelled because of his possession of notes already prepared and taken to the examination hall of the Cambridge Examination. Idako (2011) noted that in 1977 the menace of examination malpractice in Nigeria had reached an alarming stage with the leakage of the West African Examination Council question papers which prompted an investigation and subsequent promulgation of Decree 20 of 1984 by the Federal Government of Nigeria.

The outbreak of social media has both negative and positive implications. In recent times, students are becoming addictive in their social media communicative skills. No wonder, Boyd (2009) found out that students spend larger percentage of their time on social media platforms like E-mail, Facebook and 2go while they spend less time on the internet for academic proposes. Boyd (2009) maintained that social networking has

impacted negatively on the adolescents and this has caused anxiety on families and friends. The involvement of students in social media has deprived them the opportunity to read their books and other necessary things (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). Invariably, Idakwo (2011) lamented that school work and social interaction have been affected at the advent of these social media. In essence, students have lost control due to their unrestricted commitment and engagement in social media, making them vulnerable to academic problems such as poor results, poor study habits, truancy, examination malpractices, disrespecting school rules and regulations and other inappropriate behaviours.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Examination malpractice was negatively impacting the Nigerian education system. Over the years, incidences of examination malpractice had been reported in Adamawa state and had registered cases of cheating during examinations. Despite efforts by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology as well as the National Policy on Education (FGN, 2004), to curb the practice of cheating in examinations by students, the malpractice still continues. Every year the Ministry of Education deals with cases of unscrupulous school administrators, teachers, parents and students involved in examination fraud. As the cases of malpractice have increased, penalties have also become more severe. Large numbers of students have had their results nullified. Some schools have had results of all their candidates' examinations nullified and the schools themselves have had their licenses to serve as examination centers cancelled. Ordinarily, the social media or networking was supposed to aid the study habits and academic performance of students but it would appear that besides this manifest function of social media, it has latent and unintended social consequences. There has been increased concern on the negative use of media among the students which has affected the study habits and performance. Ahmad (2011) found out that students spend larger percentage of their time on social media platforms like E-mail, Facebook, and Twitter for anti-social activities while they spend less time on the internet for academic proposes. And this is at an astonishing rate. They use websites for pornography, fraud and for other social vices in the society.

Ahmad (2011) maintained that social media has impacted negatively on the adolescents and this has caused anxiety on families and friends. The involvement of students in social media activities have deprived them the opportunity to read their books (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). According to Osarumwense (2015), the increase in examination malpractice is due to the use of WhatsApp. He claimed that students now snap the questions in the examination hall and send the answer back through WhatsApp while others simply Google the answers.

It is through social media that students chat and share issues pertaining sex, examination malpractice, communicate embarrassingly or hostile information about others, engage in interaction that would arouse their desire to indulge in smoking, witch-hunting each other and exposing them to raping strategies (Collins, Martino & Shaw, 2011; Ogbevoen, 2012).

This study therefore aimed at finding the possible way out to the issue of examinations malpractices among secondary school students in Adamawa State, Nigeria. In addressing this problem, the following research questions were raised:

i. What are the relationships that exit between social media platforms and examination malpractice?
ii. What measures should be taken to abate examination malpractice in Yola – North secondary schools?

II. EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE AS A CONCEPT

Examination malpractice is commonly defined as deliberate wrongdoing contrary to official examination rules designed to place a candidate at an unfair advantage or disadvantage Ogbevoen, 2012). Examination malpractice may be understood as misconduct or improper practice, before, during or after any examination by examinees or others with a view to obtaining good results by fraudulent means. According to Asante-Kyei and Nduro (2014), examination malpractice is any act of omission or commission by a person who in anticipation of, before, during or after any examination fraudulently secures any unfair advantage for him or herself, or any other person in such a manner that contravenes the rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity, reliability, or authenticity of the examination and ultimately the integrity of the certificates issued.

Badejo and Gandonu (2010) saw examination malpractice as a deliberate act of wrongdoing, as contrary to the official rules, and is designed to place a candidate at an unfair advantage or disadvantage. The system is a careless, illegal or unacceptable behavior by a candidate in a formal test of his knowledge or ability in a particular subject. They further explained the concept as a counter-practice that is against the ethics of examination, and an act of disrespect to all rules and regulations guiding the good conduct of any examination or evaluation process.

In their study, Asante-Kyei and Nduro (2014) defined examination malpractice as any deliberate act of wrongdoing by academic authorities, learners, and parents before, during, and after an exam to give one an upper hand in the assessment or evaluation process. Khan, Khan, and Khan (2012) defined examination malpractice as an illegal way a student uses to pass an examination which could be in the form of bringing notebooks into examination halls, cheating during examinations, copying from friends, paying another person to help in attempting the examination, or gaining foreknowledge of questions before the examinations.

2.1 Social Media

Social media is defined as "the relationships that exist between network of people" (Qingya, Wei & Yu, 2011:3).

Social media emerged as a term frequently used to describe different types of electronic communication platforms. The availability of high speed internet broadband connection with massive use of desktop computers, laptops, e-readers, tablets and smart phones enable millions of undergraduates to actively engage in social networking, text messaging, blogging, content sharing, online learning, and much more.

Social media, as defined by Adedeji (2011), "are technologies that facilitate social interaction, make possible collaboration, and enable deliberation across stakeholders". These technologies now include blogs, wikis, media (audio, photo, video, text) sharing tools, networking platforms, and virtual worlds. Social Media Online (2011) defines social media as primarily internet-and mobile-based tools for sharing and discussing information by users. The term, according to Bello, (2012), refers to "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content." Web 2.0 as defined by Bello (2012) was coined by Darcy Di Nucci in 1999 to describe interactive social websites which allow users to interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue.

The outburst of social media has both negative and positive implications. According to Adedeji (2011), excessive mental preoccupation with social networking, repetitive thoughts about limiting or controlling the use, failure to prevent the desire for access, craving for using the internet when access is not available are the remarkable problems with social media addiction. In the same vein, Itodo (2011) decried that there seem to be an alarming role of social media obsession among adolescents today; a trend that could affect their academic, social and spiritual lives negatively if not properly controlled. The pathetic position social media is taking towards falling standard of Nigerian educational system has become dangerous because it is left unchecked.

Due to addiction to social media, the individuals suffer complications and disturbances which affect them negatively in their academics. It therefore implies that adolescents have made social networking part and parcel of their lives and as such, cannot imagine life without that. This has made many students feel passive during family gatherings and school activities. In the class where students' attention is highly needed in order to adjust and make maximum use of the time, some students appear not to be paying attention to anything and to anybody even in the thick traffic roads, simply because of earphones (Bello, 2012).

Also, researches have shown that social media has positive implications. For instance, Itodo (2011) claimed that social media platforms have enough capacity for a good official education matching the social context of learning and promoting critical thinking in learners. It also has the capacity to change educational system radically, motivating students for better learning rather than being passive attendees of a classroom.

Ekponimo (2013) opined that social media can help to solve the problem of hunger and reduction of waste in the country. This is because social media adds value to the economy of the nation. Supporting the contribution of social media and internet to national economy, Juwah (2014) stated that the telecoms sector contributed over 8.53 percent increase to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the year 2013. The importance of social media sites cannot be glossed over especially to Nigerians because it explores their communicative skills and exposes them with current trends in the society.

2.2 Social Learning Theory of Itodo (2012) in A. Bandura (1963)

The proponent of the social learning theory was maintained by Itodo (2012) in Bandura (1963). According to Itodo, Bandura posited that children learn from their environment by observation, imitation and modeling. The assumption is that adolescents learn how to behave by watching and imitating those around them. This theory is relevant to this study because adolescents watch what is obtainable in the environment and copy them. Even with digitalization they may be in the remotest part of the country and still imitate who so ever they want to imitate through the use of internet.

2.3 Psychoanalytic Theory of Juwah (2014) in Freud (1938)

Juwah maintained that according to Freud who propounded the psychoanalytic theory, the fourth stage corresponds the adolescence period (11 years and above). Freud maintained that hormonal changes in puberty trigger off the psychic energy with result to sexual instinct and sexual urge. The action of the hormones increases sexual urge which will make the adolescents attracted to the same sex and then to the opposite sex. According to Freud, ID is the primitive component that is responsible for pleasure rest, engage in sexual activities and all that gives satisfaction even in excess. Ego brings about moderation in the ID pleasure activities and brings rationality into them. Ego is police or executive of ID. While the superego is the conscience and social voice that reminds one of the societal values Freud canvasses for proper management of the three components to produce a balanced personality. Proper management of the three components in a person (superego) blended with social networking. It is very important therefore the study is relevant to the present study.

III. METHODS

The descriptive research design was adopted for the study and was carried out in Yola – North local government, Adamawa states Nigeria. Descriptive research design involves the collection of information from a large population for the purpose of analyzing the relationships between variables. The study population comprised five (5) secondary schools in Yola – North local government, Adamawa State, Nigeria. This formed a sample of five (5) schools out of the twenty-six (26) public secondary schools which constituted 38.5% of the schools sample. According to Itodo (2012) in Mugenda and

Mugenda (2003), a suitable sample size for a descriptive study should at least be 10% of the total population. A total number of 180 students out of 1800 senior secondary schools three (3) students in public secondary schools in Yola – North were selected which constituted 10% of the students' sample. The method of selection was stratified random sampling techniques. The data collected were from the perspective of the teachers as they were the respondents in the study. The instrument used to collect data for this study was a questionnaire titled "Social media platforms and examination

malpractices questionnaire". The data collected were analyzed using simple percentage and content analysis percentages.

IV. DISCUSSION

4.1 Research Question 1:

What are the relationships that exit between social media platforms and examination malpractice?

Table 1: Response on the relationships that exist between social media platforms and examination malpractice

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	SD	D	Agreed (%)	Disagreed (%)
1.	The use of WhatsApp makes students to be vulnerable to examination malpractice.	15	24	2	9	78%	22%
		(30%)	(48%)	(4%)	(18%)		
2.	Twitter activity makes me feel less depressed each time examination is approaching.	17	26	4	3	86%	14%
		(34%)	(52%)	(8%)	(6%)		
3.	Social media helps the perpetuation of examination malpractice in secondary schools.	12	20	8	10	64%	36%
		(24%)	(40%)	(16%)	(20%)		
4.	WhatsApp is a technological tool which nurtures the students' examination malpractice relationships.	10	17	12	11	54%	46%
		(20%)	(34%)	(24%)	(22%)		
5.	Frequent WhatsApp usage makes a student to have high academic grades.	15	23	7	5	76%	24%
		(30%)	(46%)	(14%)	(10%)		
Total	71.6%	28.4%					

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Table 1 above, item 1 revealed that 15 (30%) and 24 (48%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the use of WhatsApp makes students to be vulnerable to examination malpractice, while 2 (4%) and 9 (18%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with the facts.

Item 2 on the same table above indicates that 17 (34%) and 26 (52%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively with the view that twitter activity makes them feel less depressed each time examination is approaching, while 4 (8%) and 3 (6%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement.

Item 3 on the same table above indicated that 12 (24%) and 20 (40%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that social media helps the perpetuation of examination malpractice in secondary schools while 8 (16%) and 10 (20%) of the respondents have strongly disagreed and disagreed with the view.

Item 4 on the same table revealed that 10 (20%) and 17 (34%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that WhatsApp is a technological tool which nurtures the students' examination malpractice relationships while 12 (24%) and 11 (22%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement.

The last item on the same table indicated that 15 (30%) and 23 (46%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that frequent WhatsApp usage makes a student to have high academic grades while 7 (14%) and 5 (10%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with the facts.

Therefore, majority of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with the statements.

4.2 Research Question 2:

What are the measures that should be taken to abate examination malpractice in Yola – North secondary schools?

Table 2: Response on measures that should be taken to abate examinations malpractice in Yola - North secondary schools

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	SD	D	Agreed (%)	Disagreed (%)
1.	The need to make concerted efforts in enhancing discipline among students through counselling services in the schools in order to prevent them from acts of indiscipline during examinations.	10 (20%)	19 (38%)	8 (16%)	13 (26%)	58%	42%
2.	The full implementation of the examination malpractices decree which provides for the imprisonment of culprits to 21 years jail term.	9 (18%)	18 (36%)	12 (24%)	11 (22%)	54%	46%
3.	Electronic devices should be used to check students' pockets before entering the examination halls.	13 (26%)	22 (44%)	8 (16%)	7 (14%)	70%	30%
4.	Intensifying efforts should be made in effective supervision of students during examinations.	12 (24%)	25 (50%)	9 (18%)	4 (8%)	74%	26%
5.	The increased emphasis on the use of continuous assessment by schools and examination boards in determining students' success or failure in public examinations and the termination of appointment of officials of examining bodies and teachers involved in perpetrating examination malpractices in schools.	15 (30%)	20 (40%)	5 (10%)	10 (20%)	70%%	30%
	Total					65.2%	34.8%

Table 2 above, item 1, indicated that 10 (22%) and 19 (44%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the need to make concerted efforts in enhancing discipline among students through counselling services in the schools in other to prevent them from acts of indiscipline during examinations, while 8 (16%) and 13 (26%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with the facts.

Item 2 on the same table above showed that 9 (18%) and 18 (36%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively with the view that of the full implementation of the examination malpractices decree which provides for the imprisonment of culprits to 21 years jail term, while 12 (24%) and 11 (22%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement.

Similarly, the 3rd item on the same table shows that 13 (26%) and 22 (44%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that electronic devices should be used to check students' pockets before entering the examination halls, while 8 (16%) and 7 (14%) of the respondents that strongly disagreed and disagreed with the view.

Item 4 on the same table revealed that 12 (24%) and 25 (50%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that intensifying efforts should be made in effective supervision of students during examinations, while 9 (18%) and 4 (8%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement.

The last item on the same table above indicated that 15 (30%) and 20 (40%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the increased emphasis on the use of continuous assessment by schools and examining bodies in determining students' success or failure in public examinations and the termination of appointment of officials of examination boards and teachers involved in perpetrating examination malpractices in schools, while 5 (10%) and 10 (20%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with the facts.

Therefore majority of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with the statement.

V. CONCLUSION

The finding revealed that the relationships that exist between social media platforms and examination malpractice include the use of WhatsApp which makes students' to be vulnerable to examination malpractice. Twitter activity makes students' feel less depressed each time examination is approaching. Social media helps the perpetuation of examination malpractice in secondary schools. WhatsApp is a technological tool which nurtures the students' examination malpractice relationships and frequent use of WhatsApp makes a student to have high academic grades. This is in line with Ayodele (2014) when he observed that some students in secondary school these days quietly go to the examination with mobile phones and browse the answers to the questions without the knowledge and sometimes to the knowledge of some unscrupulous invigilators. He further added that right inside the examination hall, students through WhatsApp share answers to questions, sometimes without the knowledge of the invigilators. It is obvious that with this level of technology, examination malpractices will continue unabatedly while the standard of education will continuously keep nose-diving.

This view is further given credence to by Osarumwense (2015) when he observed that with the aid of social media, students have advanced in their cheating. He explained how an undergraduate went into the examination hall, snaps the picture of the questions in the examination hall through WhatsApp and sent it to a friend who was comfortably sitting in his room with textbooks. The friend answers the questions and sent through the same WhatsApp medium which was then copied out into the answer booklet. Clearly, the causes for today's student examination malpractice in secondary schools are complex and stem from many sources. Therefore, there should be an increased emphasis on the use of continuous assessment by schools and examination boards in determining

students' success or failure in public examinations and the termination of appointment of officials of examining bodies and teachers involved in perpetrating examination malpractices in schools. Also, there is need to make concerted efforts in enhancing discipline among students through counselling services in the schools in other to prevent them from acts of indiscipline during examinations.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. It is of great importance that educational authorities should adopt a holistic institutional approach for addressing student examination malpractice. This is due to the fact that education must be a significant component of any effort to create a culture of academic honesty.

ii. It is crucial that administrators discuss academic honesty expectations, policies, and procedures so that a culture of integrity, learning, and teaching can be fostered in the education institutions.

iii. Examination malpractice should be discouraged by seizing the students' internet and social media access during examination periods.

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