

Deontological Perspective of Understanding and Combating Examination Malpractice in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

In Nigeria, examination malpractice has become inimical to educational development. It is a social evil that can ruin the society and debar its growth and development. It has attained such a proportion that the actualisation of the goals of education in Nigeria is almost becoming impossible. New methods are being devised by its perpetrators, worsening the situation and frustrating the attempt to combat the syndrome. Examination malpractice involves almost all stakeholders in education in Nigeria. This paper aimed at investigating the extent of the deontological approach in understanding and combating examination malpractice in Nigeria.

The paper employed the descriptive, analytical and prescriptive methods of philosophical research in education to try to understand and combat the menace.

It was shown in the paper that examination malpractice has permeated the Nigerian educational system with debilitating consequences for the system and the society at large. The deontological perspective perceived examination malpractice in Nigeria as a practice which does not conform to the moral standards, rules and regulations guiding the administration of tests and examinations and therefore did not help the individuals and Nigeria.

It was concluded in the paper that from the perspective of deontology, examination malpractice is harmful to the society, and that the perspective should be applied in combating the menace in Nigeria. It was recommended, that parents should give sound training to their children with regard to appropriate examination conduct while the school system should deploy modern technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, to reduce examination malpractice to the barest minimum.

Keywords: Examination Malpractice, Ethics, Deontological and Teleological Perspectives.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most vital aspects of education is the means or methods by which a learner could be known to have been assessed or evaluated. Examination is the best method to assess and evaluate what students have learned over the course of a school year (Igwes, 2010; Jimoh, 2009). Any situation that erodes the sanctity of examination constitutes a serious threat to the justifiability and dependability of the educational system (Maheshwari, 2011).

Through education, teachers prepare learners to acquire relevant skills, be resourceful and patriotic in order to cope with any eventualities and circumstances (Edun, 2022). Through it, learners are also empowered with techniques that could help them to acquire appropriate skills and attitudes, both academic and moral. It is one of the ways through which the results of a teaching and learning process could be discovered (Olayiwola & Ajayi, 2015, Uduchukwu, 2012). In nearly all educational institutions in Nigeria, examination

malpractice seems to be a very common syndrome.

Examination malpractice has eaten deep into the fabrics of the three levels of education – the tertiary, secondary and primary in Nigeria (Ojerinde, 2008; Eneh & Eneh, 2014). Records of those involved in examination malpractice in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination and the General Certificate of Education O' level examination have been outrageous. In 2008, 74,956 candidates' results were withheld because of suspicions of fraud in examination (Atueyi, 2019). There were 77,168 candidates in 2010; 81,573 in 2011; and 112,000 in 2012 whose results were withheld (Atueyi, 2019). Additionally, according to the West African Examination Council, examination results of 112,865 candidates were withheld in 2013; 118,101 candidates in 2014; 137,295 candidates in 2016; and 214,952 candidates in 2017 (Atueyi, 2019). The records continued in 2022 when there was mass examination malpractice in WASSCE which led to the mass seizure of results (Ogwo, 2022).

The problem of examination malpractice has reignited debate on the causes and what might be done to stop or reverse the trend, both internationally and nationally. Stakeholders in education seem to be involved in this ugly act. Examination supervisors and invigilators give undue assistance to some students when examination is in process while some students take examination for other students and forge General Certificate in Education results among others (Ayanniyi & Anya, 2017). Due to the fact that almost all residents are affected by the educational crisis in some form, Eneh and Eneh (2014) highlighted that the disease appears to be incurable. The world's examination malpractice index placed Nigeria at the top in 2011, while the average annual examination malpractice index was 12% (Eneh & Eneh, 2014). According to Emiloju and Adeyoju (2012), the integrity and credibility of public examinations have been severely damaged and marked by immorality with increase in the prevalence of examination malpractice.

Examination malpractice has clearly put at risk the sanctity of certificates issued by Nigerian institutions of learning (Akpama, 2012). Its presence shows that it is an immoral or unethical behaviour, and where this exists there would be no common value.

According to the Nigerian National Policy on Education, Nigerian education centers on the development of each individual into a sound and successful citizen (FRN, 2013). To realise the goals of education in Nigeria, education activities should ensure maximum self-development and self-fulfillment. But the question arises: "Has education maximised the creative potential and skills of the person for his or her self-fulfillment or the general development of Nigeria?" An attempt to answer the above questions in the affirmative may be altered due to the debilitating effects of examination malpractice. Therefore, examination malpractice may be seen as a hindrance to achieving the Nigeria's philosophy and goals of education. This leads one to another question: "What kind of education can provide the atmosphere of fully achieving the goals of education as highlighted in the National Policy of Education?" Any attempt to answer the question or prescribe a solution may require a thorough understanding of the menace of examination malpractice before thinking of how to combat it.

Objectives of the Study

The paper inquired into the nature and extent of examination malpractice in Nigeria. It examined the causes and effects of examination malpractice on individuals, educational institutions and the Nigerian society. It also examined the measures put in place and assessed its effectiveness in combating examination malpractice in Nigeria. It inquired into the nature of deontological ethical theory as a relevant perspective in understanding and combating examination malpractice in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, it is observed that examination malpractice poses a great threat to both the moral and intellectual development of learners. It seems to be killing the potential in them and sweeping off the knowledge, skills

and competence at their disposal. Daily experiences have shown its ever increasing rise at the various levels of Nigeria's education system. It has equally been observed that various solutions which have been proffered seem not to yield any meaningful result to combat the syndrome. Literature reveals that studies on examination malpractice as an unethical behaviour in Nigeria has not been philosophically investigated. This paper, therefore, explores the deontological ethical perspective, since it is a moral issue, to understand and combat examination malpractice in the Nigerian education system.

Historical Development of Examination

Tracing the history of examination is as good as tracing the history of philosophy. The history of philosophy could be traced back to the pre-Socratic society of the ancient Greece. Pre-Socratic philosophers like Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes (Copleston, 1967) lived and worked in this era. The power of knowledge-testing was wholly based on speculation. This formed a state of academic development of the classical Greek philosophy which could not be omitted from the history of philosophy. Copleston (1962) for example, referred to classical Greek philosophers as "mere children whose innocent babblings are unworthy of serious attention". Attempts were made to examine their ideas underlying the first principle or discovering the ultimate reality or nature of the world. Clarity, in-ambiguity and richness of the diverse and complicated served as the basis for assessing the ideas of the Pre-Socratic philosophers' claims to be acceptable (Copleston, 1962).

Examination during the era of Socrates was the turn-away from seeking defence to cosmological or physical speculations towards man while abandoning natural philosophy. The questioning method of helping learners recognise their ignorance makes the learner to know (Copleston, 1962). Learners were assessed through inductive arguments and universal definitions which took the form of "dialectic" or conversation (Copleston, 1962). The method of oral examination was also noted to be used by the United States of America to measure educational achievement before 1815.

In Nigeria, the system of learning during the pre-colonial period was mainly informal with assessment of learning coming in form of practical to confirm whether the learner could perform efficiently or not. Public examinations in Nigeria were conducted by the West African Examination Council (established in 1952), and the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (established in 1976). Other examining bodies include The National Board for Education Measurement (NBEM), National Examination Council (NECO), National Teachers' Institute (NTI), State Ministries of Education and The National Business and Technical Examination Board (NABTEB) (Nweze, 2009).

The conduct of examination, however, is not limited to all the above bodies alone. Learning takes place in all educational institutions and internal examinations are conducted by the management of such institutions. There is no doubt, therefore, that examination is important to the different bodies, organisations and Nigeria in its entirety. What therefore is the importance of examination?

History of Examination Malpractice in Nigeria

Examination malpractice in Nigeria has a long history that extends back to the colonial era (Njoku & Njoku, 2016). Records revealed that the first noted examination malpractice in Nigeria was reported in 1914 during a leakage of question paper in the Senior Cambridge Examination (Njoku & Njoku, 2016; Ayanniyi & Anya, 2017); thirty-eight years before WAEC was established (Ayanniyi & Anya, 2017). A Nigerian student arrived late to the room where examination was taking place, with a foreign paper linked to the test being administered in 1948 and his history paper was cancelled (Ayanniyi & Anya, 2017). Leaks in the General Certificate of Education/School Certificate, Examinations, and the First School Leaving Certificate were detected by WAEC in 1963 (Ayanniyi & Anya, 2017). Examination malpractice continued in 1967, 1970, 1973, 1974, 1977, 1981, 1985, 1991, 1994, 1995, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2003 (Ayanniyi & Anya,

2017 citing Ajaja, 2010). Examination malpractice has come to stay in the country (Njoku & Njoku, 2016).

Acts of examination malpractice are so widespread that they irreparably damage the admissions, training, assessment, certification, registration, and regulatory systems (Osuji, 2016). But with the widespread, one might want to find out whether examination malpractice just occur without being caused. The inquiry that follows therefore is: Is it true that this syndrome has no causes?

Importance of Examination

Looking at the various definitions and analysis of examination, it could be seen that examination aids in determining the viability of a teaching strategy and as well identifying learning issues in addition to other challenges that students face (Nweze, 2009). It assists in the identification of students with special skills. It is a source of data and information for placement purposes as well as for administrative decisions (Nweze, 2009). It could be used for both research and guidance and counselling purposes (Nweze, 2009). It can be inferred that it serves as data-base for determining students' performance.

But the question is asked: 'To what extent can examination be important when in actual fact the examinee lacks the moral ingredients which they should possess in order to make the results of or scores in that examination justified?' The need for examination guide is important therefore.

Theoretical Framework

Deontological ethical theories are different kinds of theories upon which human actions are based and why human beings behave in a particular way. According to deontological ethical theory, morality is determined by whether the action of the moral agent is in accordance with a set of rules, principles, or duties guiding a particular action. Deontological ethical theories show that perpetrators of examination malpractice for example would bear the consequences of their action if they do not follow the rules or ethical principles guiding the conduct of examination.

Concept of Examination Malpractice

Examination has been defined differently in this paper as a means of examining, observing or inspecting carefully or critically, or determining the aptitude, skills or qualifications of someone by subjecting them to a form of assessment. The clear meaning of examination features in Socrates' attitude of questioning or the dialectical method intended to find out the extent to which somebody could claim to know, or rather the basis or foundation of one's knowledge.

The implication of these definitions is that examination makes available to learners the opportunities for sound practical and moral judgement. It provides an avenue for proving the level of one's ability concerning the meaning, reason, or value of something or some things about the world. It makes one to naturally appreciate one's level of knowing or ability if and when one passes an examination. It implies or directs a learner to start thinking in a particular way that could make them be useful to their society. It is considered as a formal interrogation or an oral or written exercise put in place to inspect, assess, examine, investigate, and systematically search what has been previously taught. It is used to diagnose, x-ray, explore and formally ask questions or seek the source or progress report on what has been previously taught or expected to have been learnt or known, claimed to be known in a particular time, or on a particular area of knowledge.

Socrates sees examination as a way people's ignorance could be tested. His own way of examining people is to lead them out of ignorance by pursuing the truth about knowledge using the questioning method. It follows that what is tested in the examinee in the definitions given the truth of what he or she claims to know. Truth can always be relevant when we discuss moral issues. A learner, for example, who claims to

have passed an examination whereas he has cheated, has not said the truth. So, he has acted in an immoral way. Socratic candidate who claimed to possess the knowledge which he or she could not defend would equally have acted in an immoral way.

Examination then becomes a concept associated with the truth when well carried out. It is the morally upright person that will always act and associate with the truth. A test of examination becomes complete when learners have studied well, and examination papers are well secured, appropriately administered, and other stakeholders in education carry out their duties well without any interference. It is at this point that examination could mean the process of appropriately or truthfully examining the examinee to seek the truth in him or her. Examination becomes a complete test of the moral or truthful life of both the examiner and examinee. Whenever there is a complete test of the examined minus morality, then, it follows that all the different meanings and definitions of examination given by scholars are not adequate.

Malpractice is a morally-bad tradition employed wrongly or finds its way wrongly to alter the established standard of doing or carrying out an act like that of examination. It is morally bad because it is seen as a bad customary action, habit or behaviour; a bad manner or routine; and a bad experiment contrary to what operates or should operate in the society. It is morally bad because it is an affliction contrary to the normal, formal and generally approved practice.

When examination could no longer meet up or follow the moral standard put in place by the examination body to test learners objectively, then examination becomes valueless. But an issue like morality and its problems like examination malpractice could be well reasoned out to provide alternatives that could retain the value that examination should have. Hence, value becomes a morally accepted way of passing proper judgement put in place to determine a complete worth of a thing.

Examination Ethics

Examination takes place so that learners could be assessed. In order for learners to be appropriately assessed, there must be examination standard. Part of the standard put in place to ensure good examination is to ensure that there are rules and regulations guiding the conduct of examination. Simply put, examination ethics are ethics guiding the administration of any examination. A defaulter of examination ethics could be considered to have been involved in examination malpractice. What then is examination malpractice?

Deontological Perspectives

Deontological perspectives are philosophical perspectives that emphasise the moral duty to do what is right. It is concerned with the morality of actions rather than their consequences. They are rule-based, determining whether an action is permissible based on whether it complies with a given set of rules (Vallentyne, 1987). This is why the perspective emphasises the existence of universal ethical standards that must be adhered to regardless of the result (Baumane-Vitolina, Cals, & Sumilo, 2016).

Ethical Values

The question of ethical values is the question of human actions, the reason for human actions, and the understanding of such reasons, why certain actions are taken the way they are taken to bring about an act considered in its own merit as just. Ethical values of a society could lead it to make ethical decisions. An ethical decision is a decision that is both legally and morally acceptable to the larger community (Jones, 1991). This might lead one to ask the question: Could ethics not be considered as a way of solving problems?

Ethical principles put in place to either reduce the excesses of examination or prevent examination

malpractice might not be effective because all acts of human beings are not outside human beings. This is to say in essence that anything that would curb the actions of any human being must originate from human beings themselves who are the owners of such actions. An acceptable human action is established on morality. It is when human moral action is put in place therefore that one begins to talk of further principles and rules that would guide against or prevent any misconduct. Any human conduct that is not established on morality fails to prevent any immoral act in humans like an act of examination malpractice.

Examination Malpractice; Ethics; Deontological Perspectives; Teleological Perspectives

The Concept of Examination

Examination is a feedback mechanism which helps to measure the achievement of students in a given task (Nwaka, 2012). It can also be taken as what determines consideration for proper placement and certification (Ayanniyi & Anya, 2017). It is a means through which the educational objectives could be known to have been achieved or not (Akinyoade et al, 2012; Efed, 2012; Hamilton-Ekeke, 2012; Okey & Ndum, 2012). It is the end-point of the educational process; a stage at which the learners' knowledge, skills, abilities, affection and competencies are assessed, evaluated and judgement made on learning outcome (Anyago, 2012; Obunadike, 2012; Onuegbu, 2012). It takes different dimensions like essay, practical, objective, oral or spoken examination or viva and written examination (Anyago, 2012; Ayanniyi & Anya, 2017).

In today's society, examination plays a crucial role (Nweze, 2009). It may be dangerous to treat an examination or its certificate as valid when the moral principles, rules, and regulations for conducting examinations are violated (Nweze, 2009). Maheshwari (2011) observed that a well-carried out examination contributes greatly to the formation of the attitudes learners carry into public life. But, when there is a complete breakdown in the school system or the process of examination, will examination malpractice not be difficult to eliminate?

CONCEPT OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE

'Mal-practice' simply means a bad practice. It is a practice that does not conform with the approved values of the society where it takes place. It can be considered a generally unacceptable practice; a practice initiated by a person or a group of persons who are not in conformity with a set standard. It refers to an unaccepted approach adopted by anybody to influence the outcome of an examination (Amaele, 2004). It is any practice against the good conduct of examination.

Causes of Examination Malpractice

Any misconduct in public examinations has reason(s) or explanation(s). But whatever reason might be given, man is included. Man — who is at the centre of all the activities — needs to act in such a way that these other lapses or causes are adequately taken care of in order for things to be done rightly to prevent the occurrence of examination malpractice. Hence the question: What should examination organisers/supervisors and invigilators put in place in order to prevent the occurrence so as to avoid the consequences of examination malpractice?" But in order to answer the question, there is need to find out how one could know the different forms of examination malpractice and steps that can be taken to curb it.

Ojerinde (2008) listed the forms according to pre-examination, during examination and post-examination periods to include leakage of examination questions, preparation (Test preparation), administration or impersonation of examination candidate, external assistance, smuggling of foreign materials, copying, collusion/improper assignment, intimidation, substitution of scripts and improper assignment. Other forms include dishonesty and corruption relative to the sale of admissions, teaching practices, continuous assessment, and automatic promotions of students from one class to another (Agunwa & Ademola, 2014).

But, “Can there be forms of examination malpractice without its perpetrators?”

Students cheating are the first perpetrators of examination malpractice. Other than students caught cheating in public examinations, many other people are involved (Njoku & Njoku, 2016). Almost every segment in the society could be linked with examination malpractice in one form or the other.

Consequences of Examination Malpractice

Examination malpractice tends to virtually destroy the moral integrity of the persons involved (Amaele, 2013; Munachonga, 2014). It destroys the very essence of education (Munachonga, 2014). Examination fraud generally has a negative impact on society’s ability to function normally since it causes people to lose their moral compass (Munachonga, 2014). With the damaging effects on the society at large and the dire need to end the menace, it is necessary to provide a meaningful answer to the question: “What has been the effort made in Nigeria to curb examination malpractice?”

Measures Taken to Reduce Examination Malpractice

Different strategic approaches had been made to manage examination malpractice. One of such approaches is the implementation of the examination ethics and employment of the services of private security outfits to beef up security at all the examination centers with the aim of ensuring that only bonafide candidates are allowed into the examination halls. Examination materials are well secured before, during and after the examination, while security men or women are attached to every examination centre.

Ojerinde (2008) stated that for any examination centre/town found wanting in examination malpractice, the board ensured that those towns’ results were cancelled and schools caught for those affected centers were blacklisted until further notice. Examination ethics guiding the administration of tests were also put in place. Even with the above efforts, examination malpractice persists.

THE CONCEPT OF ETHICS IN PHILOSOPHY

Ethics is a word frequently applied during discussions on moral standards of a particular social group or a profession such as medicine (Baumane-Vitolina et al, 2016). In a broader sense, it refers to the science of morality or moral philosophy (Kocanjic & Kadoic, 2016). It explains the meaning and objectives of moral norms, criteria for moral evaluation, foundation and source of morality (Kocanjic & Kadoic, 2016). Ethics can be referred to as regulations and moral beliefs that influence people’s actions. It can be regarded as a society’s generally-accepted beliefs that influence people’s behaviour and action otherwise referred to as code of conduct, regulations and rules, moral values, moral principles, or laid down guidelines guiding the behaviour of a group or an organization (Nweze, 2009; Osuji, 2016).

The questions that ethical experts deal with are: “How much is needed for human happiness and total satisfaction?” and “How should people be made to look at other people’s benefits and not just personal well-being?” (Kocanjic & Kadoic, 2016).

Ethical Perspectives

Ethical perspectives are perspectives of ethical theories. An ethical theory is a systematic examination of a certain point of view regarding the origins and principles of right and wrong (Munachonga, 2014). In examining such theories, it can make use of theoretical explanation of morality. According to Munachonga (2014), an ethical theory offers norms or a reasonable foundation for determining if an act is acceptable or immoral while working to defend the norms (Munachonga, 2014). These standards relate to the goodness and badness of people’s deeds.

Deontological Ethical Perspectives

Deontological perspectives generally contend that morality should not be determined by the results of an action but rather by whether such activity is right or bad in accordance with a set of rules. Deontological theories are philosophical theories that emphasise the moral duty to do what is right. They are rule-based, determining whether an action is permissible based on whether it complies with a given set of rules (Vallentyne, 1987).

Divine Command Theory/ Theological Voluntarism

The Divine Command Theory is the view that morality is as commanded by God, and that moral obligation is dependent upon God's commands. Ethical principles are dependent on what God wills (Walter, 2011). Examples are God's commandments which are fixed, eternal, and absolute (Walter, 2011). The language of good is so because God wills it to be so, not because God recognises it to be good. However, someone might challenge the Divine Command Theory on the grounds that God's whims can arbitrarily choose what is good and bad. Morality is essentially a will to power or "might makes right" if good and evil are completely determined by God.

The Categorical Imperative

In his search for a formula that may support claims, Kant aims to express moral rules as principles that hold true for all rational creatures (Bordum, 2002 noting Kant, 1964; Gwinn, 1781). This formula was discovered by Kant in what he refers to as the "categorical imperative". Kant's Categorical Imperative formulated as a principle of universalisation is in the following formats: "I should never act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law" (Gwinn, 1781; Bordum, 2002 quoting Kant, 1964); "Act only according to that maxim, whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law" (Bordum, 2002 quoting Kant, 1964); "Act according to the maxim which can at the same time, make itself a universal law" (Gwinn, 1781; Bordum, 2002 quoting Kant, 1964); "Act in a way that treats humanity as an end in and of itself, never just as a means, whether it be in your own person or in the person of another" (Gwinn, 1781; Bordum, 2002 quoting Kant, 1964). Applying the deontological perspective may go a long way in resolving the problem of examination malpractice in Nigeria.

However, there could be limitation to actions that could conform to certain rules. Such a limitation, which comes in form of "actions that are absolutely required to be done or prohibited", should conform to "all behaviours of that type". What happens when behaviours of some people differ where behaviours of all people are expected to conform to a set standard or rules? Can there ever be behaviours that could be uniform to such an extent that a lateral decision or agreement is taken to ensure that all moral agents should comply with a particular standard? Deontological theory may at this point be seen as an inadequate theory to take charge of human moral problems. Determining the level of moral rightness or badness of an action or activity could only be absolute when all involved agree, are seen and confirmed to have agreed, and are practically seen to have agreed through continuous proof that such an agreement is working. This is what happens, for example, when there is an agreement to follow the ethics of examination put in place to prevent examination malpractice. It might not work when in actual fact the individual involved might be restrained from working against the ethics or the standard put in place to guide against examination malpractice.

The Nature of Deontological Perspective in Understanding and Combatting Examination Malpractice in Nigeria

The nature of the deontological perspective in understanding and combating examination malpractice in

Nigeria is in understanding the various rules or guidelines for the conduct of examination and using this to combat examination malpractice in Nigeria. The nature of the deontological ethical perspectives could be made clear in some of the ideas of Kant and Plato for example. Plato and Kant would claim that the power of reason remains the special power that reveals the eternal moral truths (Walter, 2011). According to them, the power assists to see beyond mere appearances and surface features and helps in discerning deep underlying moral truths.

Discovering absolute moral principles is not a natural capacity like sight or hearing that we share with other animals but the power that sets human apart from the natural world (Walter, 2011). Just like some hold that moral truths are dictated by God through special revelation, others believe that each human person has a special innate capacity like a conscience, or a moral sense that implants in a person the basic moral truths (Walter, 2011). Objectively allowing the application of these moral truths, which are like rules or principles, would go a long way in combating examination malpractice in Nigeria.

Morality and its effects on the deontological approach when examined could go a long way in combating examination malpractice. Morality can be taken as an unusual word that can be associated with any group like that of the Christians or in the sense of universality. When morality is taken as an unusual word that is often associated with a group like “Christian morality” and “the morality of the Greeks” for example, which are obvious and unquestionable or sure requirements or variations of a universal morality or moral system, then in this sense, people’s actions, decisions, and judgments could be tested to see if these are in line with the universal sense of morality (Gert, 2005). But when morality is regarded in the sense of universality, it holds that all rationally thinking person who could satisfy certain indubitable and infallible conditions could employ it as the people’s way of governing the behaviour of everyone who could understand it and equally govern their own behaviour (Gert, 2005).

In the above sense, every feature of morality must serve a purpose which is rational, must be known to, and could be chosen by all rational persons (Gert, 2005). Any moral system could be adopted as a universal guide. The implication is that all rational persons who use only beliefs shared by all other rational persons desire to reach agreement with them. The moral agent concerned must know when one is moral, how one could be moral, and which language could be regarded as moral, because he or she is bounded by morality. This is in the sense in which one could agree with Gert’s (2005) assertion that ‘everyone who is judged by morality must know morality’. It might not be adequate for the moral agent to know morality outside the principles that guide it. This is necessary for one to be able to act based on such principles.

Moral Effects of Deontological Ethical Theory as a Relevant Perspective in Understanding and Combating Examination Malpractice in Nigeria

If deontological ethical theory addresses the question of moral issues that should guide human actions, then, all actions of moral agents would be evaluated based on whether such actions adhere to moral principles or not. The justification for any action could then be determined whether such an action adheres to or is in conformity with certain ethical rules. For example, moral principles which should guide examinees and examiners during examinations would be the basis for determining whether the action of any examinee or examiner is right. It follows that any perpetration of examination malpractice could be understood to be wrong at the point in which it violates certain ethical rules like discipline, hardwork or study, truthfulness, fairness, integrity and honesty. It is further implied that anyone caught engaging in any examination malpractice would be understood to be violating the laid-down ethical rules and on this basis would be acting immorally.

Deontological ethical perspective addresses the question of moral principles that need to guide actions of

moral agents. It emphasises that actions are based on whether it adheres to moral principles or not. Therefore, emphasis is on the importance of ethical principles put in place during examinations, understanding of these principles, and practically putting the understood into action by students could assist in combating examination malpractice.

An understanding of the above principles by students and the implications of such actions would most likely make them to avoid examination malpractice. As a moral requirement, when examination malpractice is avoided, the practice naturally disappears. A further implication of the above is that, if all stakeholders in education adequately understand ethical principles put in place before, during and after examination, and they know the importance, they would work to prevent the occurrence of examination malpractice in the society.

Looking at the deontological ethical perspective like the divine command theory for example, the case of studying hard or not studying hard by a student could be used to explain. The basis of an individual moral agent for studying hard might be or not be on the ground that it is in line with the mandate or command of God. This becomes a morally right or morally good action when it is obeyed; and morally-wrong or bad when it is disobeyed. Whether the action therefore attracts a bad or wrong consequence does not matter since it is commanded by God. When somebody refuses to study or study hard and either the person or the society could not benefit, there is no blame if and since it is all that God commanded that was done. The basis for an individual's action according to the categorical imperative might come in form of making reference to what is thought to be good or a rule or principle or standard put in place and that is self-evidently good like Bordum (2002) claimed. The individual who is studying hard might be doing so on the basis that he is doing it in order not to deviate from the principle that he met in the society, or the standard that the people in the society has always maintained.

Implications of Deontological Ethical Perspective in Understanding and Combating Examination Malpractice on Education in Nigeria

Learners in educational institutions would begin to learn according to the standard set for education. This is because learning standard would now be guided by principles and rules. Also, academic life worthy of value would cut across all educational institutions. This becomes possible when the carriers of the value are seen to be responsible, rule-following and disciplined individuals. There would be a set of honest, dedicated and hardworking students competing for good names rather than bad ones. This is especially when students start cultivating and maintaining the culture of standard of studying and learning. Employing any legal means to end examination malpractice would be a thing of the past. There would no longer be need for punishing offenders especially when offences relating to such acts do not surface. It then follows that determination, personal efforts and total commitment to study, and positive thinking to make it without any negative thought would take precedence in learners' lives rather than the opposite.

CONCLUSION

Examination malpractice has been found to negatively affect the individuals, education system and Nigeria as a nation and does no one any good. Different strategies put in place to end this social malaise have failed in recent times. Rather, new innovations by its perpetrators reveal that it is in the increase. The question of morality has been omitted. It has therefore explored the ethical perspective like deontology and analysed the syndrome in terms of morality to actually understand and combat the problem in Nigeria.

It can, therefore, be argued that from the perspective of deontology, examination malpractice is hazardous to the society. Developing a deeper understanding of the deontological perspective would provide for an acceptable standard that would not earn the nation negative consequences but combat examination

malpractice in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Under the deontological perspective, stakeholders in education have the following duties to perform and roles to play:

Managers of educational institutions should ensure enforce discipline and make it an established culture and value. All stakeholders in education should also be disciplined appropriately in order to check their excesses. However, there should be adequate provision in all areas of need for all to function as required.

Teachers should stimulate learners' interest especially when and where they observe that learners manifest skills and imaginative knowledge which could help them pick up new ideas. This would easily prevent immoral behaviours like committing examination malpractice.

Teachers should put extra efforts in knowing students well: Teachers should prevent short-lived understanding but ensure continuous study and understanding of the students. They should gain more knowledge about the students including what makes the students happy, angry, afraid, or to withdraw. They should try to understand, encourage and support students' good vision in life, goals and hopes and in view of this should help to understand the students' feelings.

Teachers should put up attitudes that should forgive after checking students' wrongs. This would prevent bitterness in the students. It could further prevent immoral attitude like making the students to employ odd means not to fail the examination but to pass it at all costs due to possible fear of failing the teacher's subject or course. k

Teachers should show and give respect. Teachers should not always expect that they should be respected alone. They should also respect their students especially their opinions even if such teachers do not share such opinions. It is in this manner that students would love the teacher's manners of relating and this could prevent bad attitudes that could lead students to commit examination malpractice.

Assessment should not be left alone in the hands of those who teach the subject(s) to be assessed. This is why seminars are organised and attended by every personnel in the academic environment, and rooms are given for critical appraisal of presentations.

Teachers should promote moral attitude, values and virtues in education. Values and virtues in education environment should reflect the spirit of love in teaching and assimilation by learners.

A morally-upright teacher should teach based on problem-solving, and not problem-creation. Problem-creation could make the students to think of a bad alternative like getting involved in examination malpractice. A standard put in place to suit the above could build the confidence in learners so that rather than making them to look for alternative and immoral ways to pass.

Teachers should possess moral qualities like always having good class control, constantly maintaining good character, adequately and appropriately keeping students' moral records. Teachers should also display other moral qualities for example in the areas of patience, building confidence in their students through decent communication; be enthusiastic while being firm, be dedicated in order to teach and lead by these moral examples and show in them all sense of faithfulness in their chosen career.

Teachers should initiate contact with parents. One way of doing this is by calling and chatting with the parents of those they teach from time to time to feed them back on how their children morally perform and

behave in schools.

Students should learn to return to the good aspects and methods of African indigenous education of preparedness, functionalism, communalism, wholisticism whose foundations are discipline, hardworking, honesty, trust and moral uprightness, and commitment to and faithfulness towards society's set standard. They should learn to prepare well in their study life so that it would bring about good and rewarding future for them, to see how they could function effectively when it comes to knowledge acquisition and use theory and practice. They should imbibe the spirit of good relations and idea-sharing when difficulty arises in the process of learning. They should learn to read all aspects of what they have learnt and make efforts to understand all that they have read. They should imbibe modern culture or civilization that would not alter the moral attitude of common good, discipline and hard-work. It should allow for students sharing ideas with other other students. Students should also learn values that the society uphold like hardwork and study, honesty, faithfulness, integrity, truth, love, loyalty, respect and all forms of discipline should be learnt.

Students should believe in themselves and their abilities. They should appropriately define their goals and set a target for achieving the set goals. They should recognise distractions and avoid those that could draw them back in their studies. They should devote time and continuously spend time teaching oneself where and where teachers are not available to do so. Believing that there is no height one could not attain is a moral step and attitude established on discipline. Learners should never be intimidated by other's success. They should put away pressures or negative attitude from their mates from influencing them negatively.

Students should constantly concentrate on and emulate, appreciate, celebrate, accommodate, and promote values that the Nigerian society upholds. These should be internalised, perpetrated, perpetuated by learners just like their teachers and as it is expected of the management of educational institutions and government agents and representatives.

Parents should ensure that these values become parts and passle of their children right from their birth through every stage of their children's education as much as they are oppotuned to do that.

Parents should be seen to be honest in character and be bold enough to defend their children's or ward's true characters. They must be seen demonstrating good team spirit with management of the schools which their children or wards attend. This should be in addition to a life of modesty and responsibility always.

Government and managers of educational institutions should put in place policies, programmes and guidelines that promote the integrity of the examination process. Such policies, programmes and guidelines should ensure strict penalties for any examinee caught in any act of examination malpractice. It is in this sense that morality could be promoted in schools and immorality guided against.

The school system should deploy modern technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, and Closed Circuit Tele-vision cameras to schools and should be used to reduce examination malpractice to the barest minimum.

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