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The Perception of Senior Secondary School Teachers on Examination Malpractice in Western Rural District, Sierra Leone.

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Abstract

This study investigated the Perception of Senior Secondary school Teachers on Examination Malpractice in Western Rural District of Sierra Leone. The study was led by four research objectives which were to; find out the demographic characteristic of respondents, determine the forms of examination malpractice in senior secondary schools, examine the causes of examination malpractice in senior secondary schools. Assess the effects of examination malpractice in senior secondary schools. The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study and primary and secondary data were collected. A total of 297 teachers responded to the Questionnaire and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Interviews.

Data collection was done by using questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, observations and documentary review. The findings indicated that examination malpractices are prevalent in both private and public schools, affecting both male and female students. Forms of malpractice include leakages, impersonation, and borrowing materials. Teachers often resort to malpractice for various reasons, such as fear of failure, lack of confidence, and promotion. The effects of malpractice include poor academic performance, poor social life, low communication skills, memory loss, and diminished Intelligence Quotient. Lastly, to combat this issue, the researcher recommends that education bodies should intensify awareness about the dangers of malpractice and improve student study habits.

Keywords: Perception, Senior Secondary School, Teachers, Examination Malpractice, western Rural Sierra Leone.

INTRODUCTION

An examination is a veritable tool for evaluating the understanding of the knowledge gained in a particular task being exposed to. Examination is extremely important not just in educational system, but also for the society at large. Glaser, R et al (2021).

It is an activity undertaken to ascertain the level of mastery of certain skills. Hence, it is an activity embarked upon at both formal and informal settings of education since education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs, habits, and personal development for transmission of cultural heritage from one generation to the next. However, in educational institutions, students are groomed through teaching to build required skills in them and promote knowledge of the organized contents of study Jacob, et al (2020).

Apart from teacher-made examination conducted to quantify the extent to which the curriculum objectives are being achieved, examination bodies also conduct examinations especially at the completion of particular level in order for the award of certification or placement. Certain learning outcomes are set for the students to build their knowledge and skills and to check either the students have achieved those learning outcomes or not, the test is designed Kuril, S., Gupta, V., & Chand, V. S. (2021). In the early grades, schools are responsible to conduct an exam in school premises and evaluate students' performance. At the higher grades, students are appeared in standardized test.

Examination is a formal test of someone's knowledge or aptitude in a certain topic, notably via answering questions or practical exercises, and that it is used to determine how much of a subject matter in a particular field of study the applicant has learned.

Examinations are extremely important not just in our educational system, but also for our society. Taiwo Abass, I., Folorunso Sakinat, O., & Gbadamosi Solafunmi, C. (2020)

In Sierra Leone for instance, different types of examinations are conducted by different authorities, for example, common entrance examination conducted at the completion of primary education for placement into junior secondary school, Basic Education Certificate Examination at the end of the junior secondary education, West Africa Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination, a diploma or degree exams, entrance test among others etc. Students have to pass a particular examination in which they appeared to guarantee their achievement of the learnt concepts.

However, students have a variety of options for gaining success in these examinations, one of which is cheating in examinations by copying from others or leaking exams papers Situma, J., & Wasike, M. (2020).

Examination malpractice is defined as a purposeful violation of official examination norms intended to give unfairly advantage or disadvantage to a candidate (Aslam, Niazi and Iqbal, 2021).

Examination malpractice is any illegal act committed by a student single handed or in collaboration with others like fellow students, parents, teachers, supervisors, invigilators, printers and anybody or group of people before, during or after examinations in order to obtain undeserved marks or grades.

Examination malpractice is any form of misbehaviour that leads to the alteration of or a tempering with the prescribed ways of conducting examination in any given system. It is a punishable

offence which is committed during the process of normal and recognized examination Amadi and Opuiyo, (2018). The wide spread and persistence of examination malpractices have been attributed to various reasons. The causes examination malpractice include fear of failure, craze for certificate, desire of parents to have their children in choice professions and university, pressure on students to pursue courses which they have no aptitude, pressure on teachers who want to gain favour of student and overcrowded sitting arrangement.

Garba, C. D., & Okereke, C. E. (2022) links the increasing rate of examination malpractice to poor teaching, ineffective preparation by students, ill-equipped library facilities, and dubious admission policy. Also, Onyibe, C. O., Uma, U. U., & Ibina, E. (2015) views the cause of examination malpractice to parental upbringing. They opined that because of social status and economic ability, most parents are easily persuaded to bribe their way through for the sole success of their children and self-gratification. The overdependence on educational certificates as a measure of one's knowledge and competence has led to a mad rush by most people for educational certificates through unethical means. The Nigerian society today is characterized by a heavy emphasis on success and wealth without a corresponding emphasis on legitimate means and avenues to be used in achieving the success.

The country has become a commercial venture and no longer a place for selfless service Aslam, Niazi and Iqbal, (2021). Examination malpractice has been a problem affecting the quality of education worldwide and in turn has negative implications on the overall development of a nation. Despite all efforts by professionals in the education sector and policy makers to curb the wide spread of examination malpractice, examination malpractice still prevails in most secondary schools Akunne, L. I., et al (2021). This unethical behaviour has led to cancellation and seizing of examination results by examination bodies and so requires urgent attention for more serious reason. Curbing the unethical practices in examination conduct is achievable through a concerted effort of all the stakeholders in education. Researches were and are been conducted on the possible ways of curbing examination malpractices. Situma, J., & Wasike, M. (2020). Suggested, a way of reducing examination malpractices, the need for debates on examinations leakages on mass media to raise public awareness.

A called for increased efforts on effective supervision of students during examinations, for instance, checking for electronic devices on students before entering examination halls, termination of examination officials and teachers involved in perpetrating examination malpractices so as to deter others from doing the same. Schools are to conduct intensified sensitization to both teachers and learners; the relevant Ministry, through the standards officers and school managers, should intensify monitoring in order to ensure quality delivery of lessons so as to develop confidence in learners; conduct student awareness campaigns and workshops to highlight the importance of the integrity of the education system and also to stiffen and enforce security policies Muchemwa, S., & Dhliwayo, A. (2017) recommended withdrawal, rustications and imprisonment of culprits while. In Kenya, Bifwoli, A., & Momanyi, M. (2020) recommended that governments should develop policies that ensure examinations are only manned by security officers trained on examination management and that security officers should be training on examinations management and their role expectations. Muchemwa and Dhliwayo (2017) concluded in their study that it is possible to curb examination

malpractices at all examination related levels, that is, student, teacher, examination boards, examination storage and transportation by providing necessary facilities, establishment of standing examination policies and decrees, proper training to all involved, awareness campaigns and workshops, arresting and terminating the culprits and abolishing ranking of schools per examination results.

The use of examination to promote learners from one level of education into the next level and for certification of candidates has brought about competition among learners leading to examination malpractice. This is because candidate at all levels of education desire to pass examination to enable them a transition from one level of education into the next or admission into tertiary education. These recent trends in the education system have resulted into different kinds of examination malpractice in all forms of examination.

Examination malpractice is as old as examination. It is a concern not only to Sierra Leone, but globally and it is already a cankerworm. Most recommended solutions to curb examination malpractice have failed to work out because it has attained an alarming level which is of concern to the education system all over the world. This is because it takes place both internal and external examination. Examination malpractice involves different categories of people. Teachers and students perceptions of examination malpractice are many, and they forms are becoming sophisticated every day. This, therefore, implies that it is a concern to all stakeholders in the education system.

Many reasons have been given for the prevalence of examination malpractice. This include, inability of students to cope with school work, candidates' inadequate preparation for examination, the desire by candidates to pass examinations at all costs and too much emphasis that is placed on paper qualification Adamu, A., Cobbinah, B. B., & Alhassan, R. (2021). . There are many factors that contribute to examination malpractice and there are many categories of people involve in examination malpractice. Any lasting solution to examination malpractice should, therefore, consider the categories of people involved and the factors contributing to its continuous occurrence. Ampofo, J. A. (2020) identified that the major reason for examination malpractice is high stakes of examinations. This implies the long-term impact of examination results on a candidate's life and where the teacher and the school status depend on public examination results.

Examination malpractice is an academic disease that has affected and infected many members of the instructional team or many stakeholders in the education industry and has posed a very serious threat to education standards and credibility of school certificate awarded. It is an academic fraud and it is form of corruption which derives from the corrupt nature of the social system operating in many countries today. Examination malpractice has become a disaster in many countries and every disaster brings an emergency situation that requires the attention of all stakeholders. Many strategies have been advanced in the literature and devised by government to curb this menace, but, as a monster, it is still thriving and looming in the school system Alhassan, A. B., & Anya, C. A. (2017).

Examination malpractice can be describe as a form of cheating and as an illegal practice that derails the purpose of examinations, hence, the need to identify the forms of the prevailing malpractice and their dynamics and taking the appropriate measures to curtail

this menace. Some candidates may be relatively academically weak but still desire to go at the same pace in terms of studies with the relatively academically strong ones. Other candidates know they are weak but because of laziness they will not want to study hard to pass, but prefer to take the risk of engaging in examination malpractice while others may be addicted to examination malpractice and have over the years been involved in examination malpractice . Kawugana, A., & Woyopwa, A. K. (2017).

Candidates sometime directly or indirectly aided to indulge in examination malpractice by their parents. This, therefore, implies that examination malpractice comes in different forms and there are different factors that contribute to examination malpractice. Although candidates may achieve their set objectives of engaging themselves in examination malpractice, there are consequences to the candidate him/herself, the institution and above all, the nation whether the culprits are caught or not.

Some teachers get involved in examination malpractice because of the financial benefits accruing from such illegal transactions. Sometime they go as far as asking the students to pay a certain amount so that they can assist them to pass examinations. Often times, teachers find it difficult to report cases of cheating for those students or their parents will confront them. In order to avoid this confrontation, some teachers always overlook incidents of academic dishonesty by students. At times they prefer to leave the examination hall for a while or read newspaper when they are supposed to be supervising the learners. This encourages the learner to do whatever they like Mukhebi, S. G., Malenya, L., & Kandagor, D. (2024)

Examination malpractices also come about when teachers have not taught effectively and the candidates have to pass examinations. Anderman, E. M., & Koenka, A. C. (2017) assert that there is little incentive to cheat when learning is most highly valued by both teachers and learners. But when grades matter most, cheating increases as learners begin to use every available means to increase their class ranking or be seen as helpful when they offer work to be copied. Examination is, therefore, induced by grading pressure at least as much as that of individual character failure.

Parents have a role to play to enhance the behaviour of learners and also academic performance in the school. Nevertheless, parents sometime fail to provide the necessary materials that will help their children to learn and prepare for examination. When realize that their children are not performing up to their expectations, they turnaround to pressurise their children, blame the teachers and most often resort to fraudulent means to help their children pass the examinations. Corroborating this view, Adekunmisi, S. R. (2021) affirmed that some rich parents go to the extent of buying actual examination papers for their children before the actual date. This gives the children the impression that 'end justifies the means'. In a society where emphasis is placed on individual success, parents see nothing wrong in assisting their children to perpetuate the act of cheating as long as they succeed in the examination.

The education system is dependent on examination as a tool of assessing the skills, knowledge, ability and competencies of the learners. Examination help in placing value judgment on learners' performance and the outcome of this judgment is often used to diagnose and place learners accordingly.

Nevertheless, it is now difficult to place value judgment on examinations because of the occurrence of examination malpractice. Whenever examination occurs, the validity and the

resulting outcome are questionable. Ampofo, J. A. (2020). Defines examination malpractice as “a deliberate wrong doing contrary to official examination rules”. Ampofo, J. A. (2020) further adds that examination malpractice is a misconduct or improper practice, before, during or after any examination by examinees or other within a view to obtaining good results by fraudulent means. Examination malpractice is an unethical act because it encourages mediocrity in that students who succeed through such unorthodox methods may be rated equal to those who struggle on their own to excel.

The rate at which examination malpractice occur in African educational system is quiet disturbing; hence it needs urgent attention by all stakeholders. From the study conduct by Kawugana, A., & Woyopwa, A. K.(2017). Which investigated the perception of teachers and students on the causes of examination malpractice, it was discover that examination malpractice rather than being abated is on the increase in the African educational system. The forms of examination malpractice are becoming sophisticated day by day and it is being perceived by students in diverse ways.

From independence till date, individuals, missions, communities, groups and government have established schools in an effort of ensuring production of a generation of hardworking, selfless and creative citizens. However, it is difficult to realize this because of examination malpractice which has become rampant probably because of limited admission vacancies into the next levels of education. This has resulted into candidates doing what is humanly impossible in order to excel through at any particular level of examination.

Tyokyaa, C. I. (2016) describes examinations as an inevitable part and parcel of the education system which are used for among other things measure the level of the candidates’ achievement and certify the candidates’ level of education, do training and employment and also provide the basis for evaluating the cost effectiveness of the curriculum both at school and at national level. At policy level, examination results are used to make decisions that have far reaching implications on the lives of learners. Apart from being used for certification and selection, examination results help to measure learning thereby giving some indication of the successes of the curriculum. The results of the achievement are reported to government, parents, teachers, curriculum developers and the department of education standards.

Katete, R. S., & Kalonga, G.(2019). They reported how mobile phones enabled students to swap notes and search the web. She also quoted American Research in which 74% of students at some 4,500 high school students admitted to serious test cheating and 97% owned up to copying homework. This shows that examination malpractice is a problem not only in Africa but the world at large Abubakari, Y. U. S. I. F. (2023).

Every examination season witness a new and ingenious method of cheating. The examination process has become endangered to the extent that certification has almost lost credibility. Certificate no longer seem to reflect skill and competence. Accusing fingers have been pointed at teachers, school principals, parents, students, examination officials and even security agents as those responsible for examination malpractice in the school system Koufie, Patrick, (2016)

Over the years, examinations have become one of the basic characteristics of the school system. It is used as one of the important indices upon which most decisions about the learner are

based. It is therefore, used to generate data for decision making about the learner or the examinee. In context, examination is the assessment of the examinee’s performance or behaviour when confronted with series of questions, problems, tasks or situation in order to ascertain the amount of knowledge, skills, attitudes or other behaviours that he or she acquired, the extent to which he/she is able to utilize them or their quality and effectiveness Asuru, (2019).

May 2020, Anti-Corruption Commission’s Scorpion Squad raid and arrests a Principal and 11 pupils taking the Mathematics WASSCE Examination in the house of Ibrahim Turay, the proprietor of a school near his house at Deep Yai Water in the Western Rural District. According to the ACC commissioner Mr. Francis Ben Kaifala, the culprates were caught with all examination materials. In the exam hall itself dozens of pupils had their mobile phones with them (all allowed by supervisors)’. The ACC commissioned believes that integrity start at that level and they will chase them in their hiding places, arrests and detain them, said the commissioner. WASSCE examination malpractices have become a common practice among pupils in senior secondary schools, these practices have led to fall in standards in Sierra Leone’s educational system, he added.

Nowadays, paper qualification or the emphasis on certificate has become the measure of success with education playing only an extrinsic role. This is because the acquisition of certificates by whatever means has taken precedence over the acquisition of knowledge, competencies, observable skills and worthwhile attitudes and values. Certificates whether a true reflection of a candidate’s ability or not, are used as means for admission, employment and placement. This has, therefore, turned into craziness for certificates whose end result is high incidences of examination malpractice.

The West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) in Sierra Leone whose mission is to “set and conduct examinations of high comparable standards that reflect the quality of educational system in Sierra Leone” has not been spared. ‘the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) recorded over 4270 cases of examination malpractice’.

At a review workshop of the 2022 examination by the WAEC, it was observed that of late the characteristics and forms of examination malpractice have been taking new twists and turns largely due to the advancement in information technologies.

Tembo, H. (2016). Reported cases of examination malpractice in the year 1999 where a teacher from Lusaka province was charged with the loss and misuse of grade nine Environmental Science. he also reported that in 2001, a teacher was jailed for 18 months for leaking 2001 grade twelve papers which spread to Lusaka and that in the same year, a female teacher was arrested after she found with photocopies and handwritten questions for grade nine and twelve examinations in her bedroom which were meant for sale.

Alhassan, A. B., & Anya, C. A. (2017). Stated that nowadays learners involve themselves into an immoral behaviour of cheating which seems to preoccupy their minds. Learner’s today aim to exhibit academic excellence without regard to moral uprightness which goes hand with academic excellence. He further said the majority of the learners do not mind the means through which they obtain good grades what matters most of them are the good results that they obtain at the end of the examination period.

Serious measures must therefore, be taken to address the issue of examination malpractice. Failure to curb examination malpractice may result in producing graduates whose results may not be a true reflection of their abilities and may impact negatively on our economy. The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary School Education (M.B.S.S.E.) and all other stakeholders in the education system should put their efforts together to overcome this menace if they are to give a credible account for future generations

Objectives of the Study

1. Determine the forms of examination malpractice in senior secondary schools.
2. Examine the causes of examination malpractice in senior secondary schools.
3. Assess the effects of examination malpractice in senior secondary schools.

Research Questions

1. What are the forms of examination malpractice in Western Rural District of Sierra Leone?
2. What are the causes of examination malpractice in Western Rural District of Sierra Leone?
3. What are the effects of examination malpractice in Western Rural District of Sierra Leone?

Methodology

The mixed method design was used in this study. The descriptive survey design was implemented, by the use of questionnaires to obtained current status of opinions, beliefs and attitudes. The survey acquired both quantitative data from the participants (Sally & Mc Millan, 200) and the qualitative data from participants by using closed open-ended questions respectively.

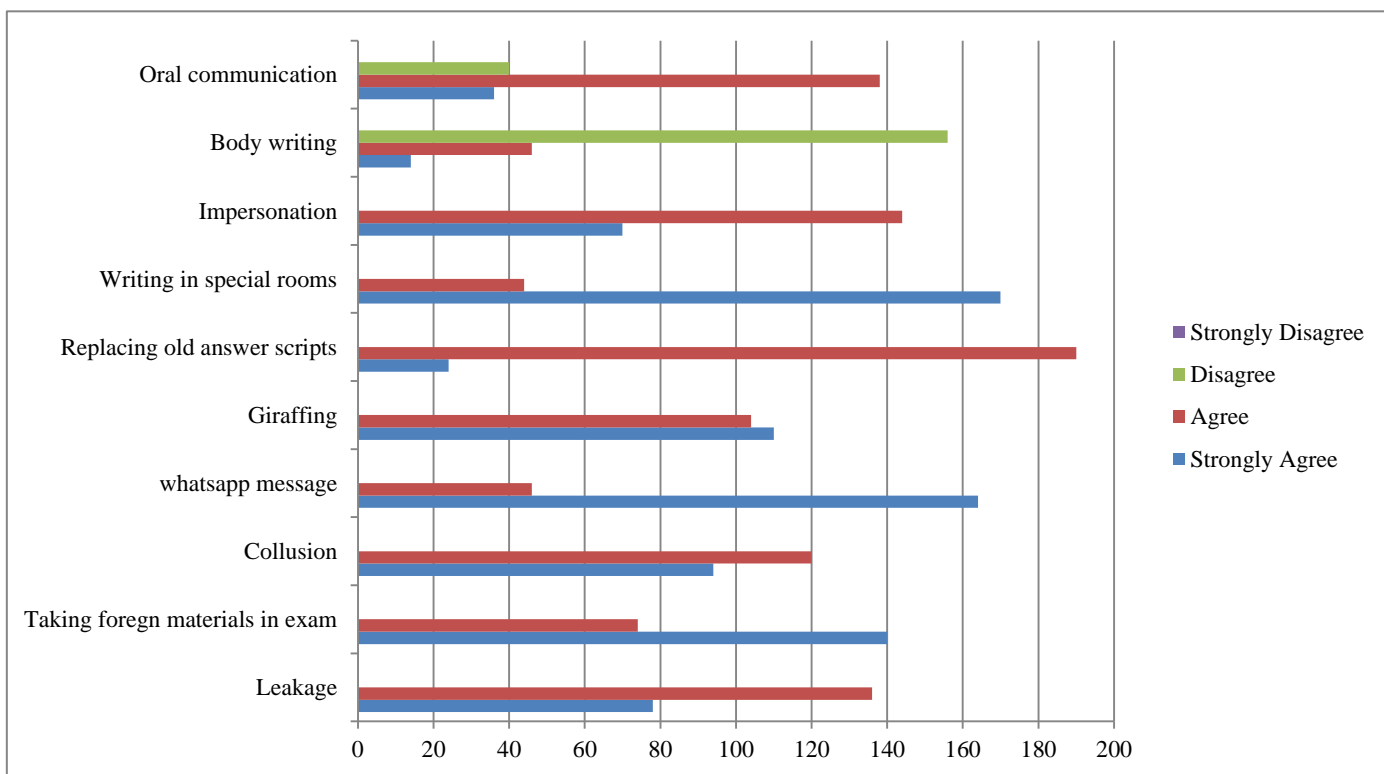
Ampofo (2020), explain that descriptive study can answer questions such as, what is or what was. A descriptive survey design was chosen because it gives the researcher the opportunity to use quantitative data in order to find data characteristics about the population that is been studied. A major advantage is that information can be collected from individuals, personal accounts and from written data which can remove the barriers of strict academic approaches and researchers can witness how people experience an event.

Results and Discussion

Analysis for Answering the Research Questions

Research Question One: What are the forms of examination malpractice in Western Rural District of Sierra Leone?

Figure 1. Forms of Examination Malpractice.



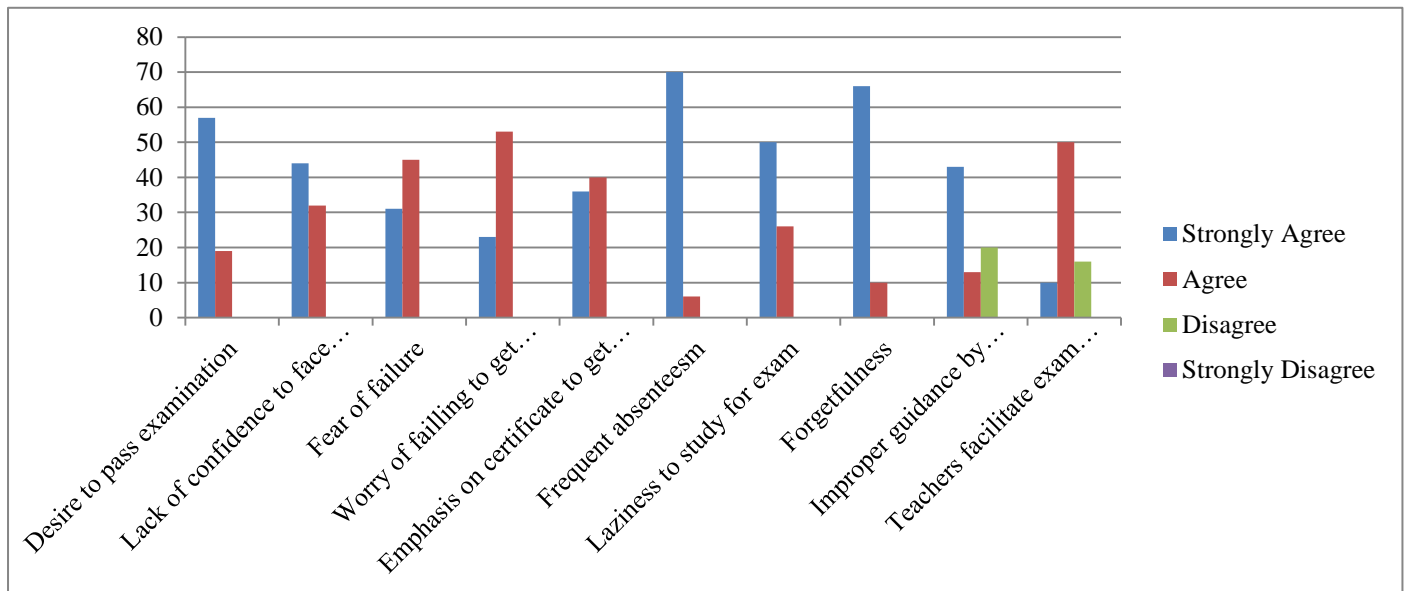
Source: Field Survey 2024

Figure 1. Forms of examination malpractices as perceived by teachers

Figure 1 above shows the forms of examination malpractice committed by learners as observed by principals. Using the rule of 50% as a decision point the most frequent examination malpractices were taking foreign materials in the examination room, collusion, text message and borrowing of stored material using cell phones, giraffing and replacing old answer scripts with new ones after examinations. Body writing, communicating orally through gestures and impersonation were considered to be uncommon examination malpractices.

Research Question 2: What are the causes of examination malpractice in Western Rural District of Sierra Leone?

Figure 2. What are the causes of examination malpractice in Western Rural District of Sierra Leone?



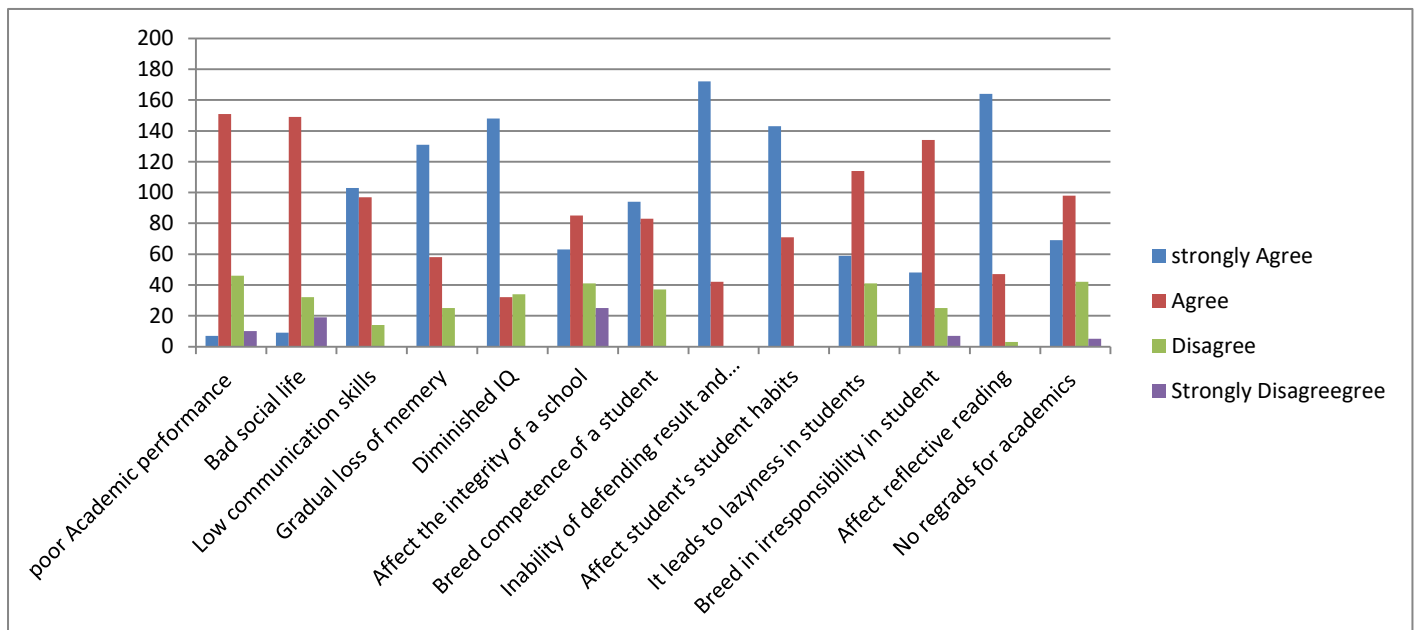
Source: Field Survey 2024

Figure 2 causes of examination malpractice as perceived by principals

Figure 2 above shows the reasons teachers advanced as to why learners committed examination malpractices. Using the rule of majority and taking 50% as a decision point, the principal's reasons with the highest scores for examination malpractices including: Desire to pass, Lack of confidence, Fear of failure, Worry of failing to get certificate, Emphasis on certificate to get job, Improper guidance by teachers to face examinations, Frequent absenteeism, Laziness to study for examination, Forgetfulness, Most heads of school or teachers facilitate examination malpractice in order to earn promotion 'Improper guidance by teachers to face examination' was not considered to be a reason by teachers.

Research Question 3: What are the effects of examination malpractice in Western Rural District of Sierra Leone?

Figure 3:



Source: Field Survey 2024

Figure 3: Effect of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers

Figure 3 above shows the Effect of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers. Using the rule of majority and taking 50% as a decision point. Examination malpractice also known as cheating has several negative effects on students, teachers, schools (educational institutions) and society as a whole. Here are some of the effects of examination malpractice discussed during the

research. Poor academic performance, Bad social life, Low communication skills, Gradual loss of memory, No regards for academics, No reflective reading, Diminished IQ, It affects the integrity of a school, Its breed incompetence, Inability to defend results and certificates, Its affect student's study habits, Its breed laziness and Its breed irresponsibility.

Discussion of Findings

The study explored the forms of examination malpractice in Western Rural District. A review questionnaire, interviews with school principals education officers and WAEC officers showed that there are different forms of examination malpractices such as, leakages, impersonation, taking foreign materials into the examination room, collusion body writing, communicating orally through gestures, text message and borrowing of stored materials using cell phones, giraffing, writing examination in specials room noted for examination malpractice, replacing old answer scripts with new one after examinations were among the forms of examination malpractice in the Western Rural District. Figure 1 above shows the forms of examination malpractices committed by learners as observed by teachers. Using the rule of majority and taking 50% as a decision point, the most frequent examination malpractices were leakage, taking foreign materials into the examination room, collusion, text message and borrowing of stored material using cell phones, giraffing and replacing old answer scripts with new ones after examinations. Impersonation, body writing, communicating orally through gestures were considered to be uncommon examination malpractices.

Observing the two figures, there were cross cutting of examination malpractices between the two groups. During interview, the principals were willing to share with the researcher their experiences. From the excerpts below, we see that learners are expediently bypassing cultural and organizational legacies through anticipatory thinking and defensive, future oriented cheating.

Leakages;

A male teacher had this to say regarding leakages;

Leakages are always there and learners make use of them because everyone else uses them and nothing happens whether they are caught or not. So why students study when leakages are there and they have seen people using them, go to colleges again use them until they finish school. They are the one even have good jobs.

A male principal from one of the secondary school in Western Rural District stated that;

Last year most of the learners at this school had access to leaked material and during examinations they got into the examination room with the original paper which they were writing. Some had answers I mean exact answers the way they appeared on the marking key written on small pieces of paper and sneaked into the examination room.

A female principal from one of the schools in Western Rural District stated that;

Yes learners in all schools engage themselves in examination malpractices. What we have experienced at this school is leakage; you find that learners will be writing answers without reading the questions.

A female teacher had this to say;

Sometime these leakages are because we don't finish the syllabus and then examiners who set the examinations go up to the last topic so what can you do its just to buy leakage. Sometime is due to lack of better teaching skills from within teachers it is difficult to understand some topics when some teachers teach so because the student fear to fail the exam they look for leakages.

Impersonation;

During interviews with education officer he had this to say;

These days WAEC officials don't produce photo album for their candidates so, supervisors and invigilators allow other individuals to take examination for learners. When you ask those individuals to produce their BRS they will tell you that it is missing.

A female principal had this say;

Learners will pay university student to take examination for them especially in the area of English Language and Mathematics, with the help of the attendance from WAEC we can able identify them.

Taking Foreign into the Examination Room;

Regarding taking foreign material in the examination room, a female teacher had this to say;

Students want to have good results so that they can go to the university so they buy already answered script from examination malpractice agent, so with the help of the invigilator or supervisor it can be replaced with the unanswered script.

Collusion;

Asked whether learners are able to collude during examinations? One female teacher had this to say;

The students don't work alone they are in groups. If once 'ngeba' (piece of papers with answers written on them) was confiscated by the invigilator the others will use theirs and pass it on to the one whose ngeba was sized.

During interviews one of the principal explained the forms of examination malpractice that they experienced at their school. The male principal had this to say;

During examination we see a lot of malpractices at this school. The most common form of examination malpractice that we experienced at this school is those whereby learners come with pre written answers into the examination room and they share it among each other.

Body writing;

One male teacher had this to say about body writing;

Answers can be written on the palms, but girls even write on their legs because them they wear skirts so it is easy to see the answers, but for boys who wear trousers cannot write on legs because difficult to assess the writing during exams.

Interviews with a male principal revealed that students engaged in body writing he had this to say;

In 2023 I went to supervise the West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination in the neighbour school, when I was going round I entered a particular room I saw this student sitting almost naked. I went closer to the girl I found out that she had written essays on her legs it was an English Language paper.

Communicating orally through gestures

Communicating during examination is the most common forms of examination malpractices, a teacher had this had this to say;

During the exam if the invigilator is strict his or her exam room will be noisy. Especially when you sized once foreign material may ask for another one from friends.

WhatsApp messages using cell phones

Using cell phones during examination a male teacher had this to say;

Learners value cell phones during examination more than calculators. They will go extract miles to charge and top up those phones with mega bite (MB) so that when their agent are sending answers through what sap they can get access to it. And can use those cell phones to borrow.

Concerning text messages and borrowing of stored material using cell phones, female teacher had to say this;

They use phones to tell friends what they write. For instance, if one learner gets or buys a leakage here in WRD and they have a friend or relative outside WRD they will send it through the phone.

Giraffing;

Giraffing is where student in the examination room stretch their neck in order to copy what another student is writing. Asked whether they giraffe during examination, a male teacher had this to say;

Learners want to write examination at the back or in in an examination room where there is no space for the invigilator to move about. Learners don't want enough space between the desks because if they don't an answer they will look in to another student's paper and copy, it is only difficulty for those that are in front because of the invigilator.

Writing examination in special room noted for examination malpractice

In an interview question with a WAEC official, how will you identify a special room? He had this to say;

This is room where the index numbers are mixed up, that is the numbers are not in order. Subjects like Mathematics and English Language it not possible for you to see 005 for example you did not see 006.

An education officer had this to say;

These are rooms learners pay a lot of money for, because when you are in there you will be free to use whatever foreign material during the examination and you will be guided by the invigilator.

Replacing old answer scripts with new one after examination

In an interview with the school principals he had to say this;

During the exams subject experts are out there to answer the questions after the actual examination time those scripts will be replaced with the one learners were using.

This section presents the views of quality education officers from the District Education Office, principals, WAEC officers and teachers on the factors contributing to examination malpractice. Figure 2 below shows the reasons for examination malpractices as perceived by principals. Using the rule of majority and taking 50% as a decision point, the teacher's reasons with the highest scores for examination malpractices including; Desire to pass, Lack of confidence within pupils, Fear of failure, Worry of failing to get certificate, Emphasis on certificate to get job, Improper guidance by teacher to face examination, Frequent absenteeism, Laziness to study for examination, Forgetfulness, Most heads of school and teachers facilitate examination malpractice in order to earn promotion. 'Forgetfulness and Most heads of school or teachers facilitate examination malpractice in order to earn promotion' were not considered by the principals to be a reason for examination malpractice

Poor Academic Performance

Figure 3 shows that Poor academic performance directly affects examination malpractice.

A female teacher had this to say;

When students actually have the hope to cheat during exams they are not actually learning anything. And this can have negative impact on their ability to succeed in future exams.

A female principal had this to say;

Here in this school when student is guilty of examination malpractice he/she may leave the school for two academic years and later come back if you still want to attend this school.

Bad Social Life

An examination malpractice can have a negative impact on a student's social life.

During interview a teachers had this to say;

Examination malpractice can lead to a loss of trust from others. If a student known to cheat on exams, others students may not trust their word or their integrity. This can lead to a loss of friendship and social relationship.

Low Communication Skills

One effects of examination malpractice is low or poor communication skill.

In an interview with a male he had this to say;

Those who have been found to be cheating may be unwilling to talk about experience, because he/she don't want to be judged or punished this can lead to lack of communication with others.

A principal had this to say;

Those who engage in examination malpractice may feel the need to keep their actions secret, and this can create a barrier to open and honest communication.

Gradual Loss of Memory

There are several ways in which examination malpractice can lead to gradual loss of memory. In an interview with a male principal he had to say this,

Whenever students are rely on cheating during exams, they are not learning anything and therefore they are not strengthening their brains which help them to retain information.

An education officer had this to say during an interview;

Whenever students cheat they often do so by copying down answer from another source such as friends, internet and so on, this will not help in long term retention of information and over time the student may forget what they have learned.

Diminished the Intelligence Quotient (IQ)

Many researches have shown that examination malpractice can lead to a decrease in student's IQ, as it is the ability to measure the cognitive aspect of a student.

In an interview with a teacher he had this to say;

Examination malpractices could totally destroy the ability to think creatively and solve problems, both of which are important for maintaining a high IQ.

Another female teacher had this to say;

Other research has proven that examination malpractice can lead to a reduction of student's IQ.

Affect the Integrity of a School

Examination malpractices can have devastating effects on the integrity of a school.

During an interview a principal had this to say;

Nowadays examination malpractice will give a reputation to a school. Parents admire at a school that aid their children during examination through examination malpractices. And you find out that those schools have more students than those who do not aid exam malpractice.

Another principal had this to say;

On the other hands examination malpractice undermines the credibility of a school and it make it appear to the public that the school is not adequately preparing their students especially for public exams.

An education had this to say;

It leads to a lack of trust among students, parents and even teachers as everyone begins to doubt the integrity of the exams process in a school.

In another interview with a male teacher had this to say;

It can impact the school's reputation in the community as the word examination malpractice can quickly speared and have a negative impact on the enrolment.

Breed Competence of a Student

During an interview with a teacher concerning how exam malpractice destroys student's competence a male teacher had this to say;

Examination malpractice can lead to a student's lack of competence as it does not allow them to develop the skills and knowledge that is necessary for their success in future.

A principal had this to say;

The results of examination malpractice can create a false sense of security, as students may believe that they are competent than they actually are when compared to their peers.

Another male teacher had this to say;

It leads to entitlement when student cheats in an exam; they believe that they deserve a certain grade even if they do not earn it.

A female teacher had to say this in an interview;

Competence can disconnect peers. It can lead to the feelings of isolation, as students may feel disconnected from their peers who are not engaging in in examination malpractice.

Inability of Defending Results and Certificates

One of the significant effects of examination malpractice is the inability to defend one's result or certificates.

In an interview with the a male teacher he had this to say;

When a student is engage examination malpractice their results are not true reflection of their abilities, and this can make it difficult to defend their results and certificates when they are called upon.

A principal had this to say;

Student who engages in examination malpractice may find it difficult to explain their qualifications during an interview, as they are not able to demonstrate their true abilities.

Affect student's Study Habits

Examination malpractices have very serious effects on student's study habits.

In an interview with a principal he had this to say;

Examination malpractice has a detrimental effect on student's study habits. When students cheat on exams they are not being held accountable for their deeds, this can create a vicious cycle of poor study habits.

A teacher this to say;

When students have the hope to cheat in an exams they will never have time with their books or note to study. They don't even have time to do assignment he added.

It Leads to Laziness in Students

Examination malpractices can encourage students to become lazy about their education.

In an interview with a teacher she had this to say;

Exam malpractice may lead to laziness in student because, they may rely on cheating as a way to get ahead, rather than putting in the hard work required of achieving success.

A male teacher had this to say;

Exam malpractice can encourage students to become lazy and apathetic about their education. Whenever student cheats in an exam they are not putting in the necessary effort to learn and succeed.

Breed in Irresponsibility in Student

A male principal had this to say in an interview;

When students cheat in an exam they are being irresponsible in their education, they are not taking responsibility for their own learning and they are not being responsible for their actions.

Another female principal had this to say;

The lack of responsible which examination malpractice may cause can be carry over into other areas of a student's life such as work and relationships.

A female teacher had this to say;

When students cheat they are not learning how to be responsible for their own action and decision which can lead to a lack of personal responsibility in the future.

A male teacher had this to say;

Examination malpractice can breed irresponsibility, this can simply manifest in a variety of ways such as a lack of self-control poor decision-making and inability to take responsibility for their own actions

Affect Reflective Reading

Reflective reading is a skill that requires concentration, critical thinking and willingness to learn.

A teacher had this to say;

Now students don't have the time of reading the questions in an examination room, what is their target is to open and look into their phones and start writing numbers and their answers.

A principal had this to say;

Examination malpractice can negatively impact students' ability to read, it can lead to feeling of stress and pressure, which can make it difficult to focus and concentrate on their exams.

A teacher this to say; students who engage in examination malpractice may feel that they don't need to put in the effort understand the question(s) as they can simply cheat their way to a good grade.

No Regards for Academics

When students engage in examination malpractices they are essentially disregarding the value of their academics.

A teacher had this to say;

Since they have the confidence to cheat in an exams, they are not taking their time to learn what is being given to them and they are not putting the effort to succeed.

A female teacher had this to say;

The lack of regards for academics can have serious consequences not only on students themselves, but also for the school they attend and the society they live in.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study concludes that examination malpractice do exist in Western Rural District. Examination malpractices are around in almost every school. The study reveal the perception of teachers on examination malpractice includes; it's a problem that destroy the educational system, it's motivated the desire to achieve high grades and succeed academically, in the absences of law enforcement and monitoring strategies it is difficulty to prevent examination malpractices. The evolution of cheating methods which have been elicited by teachers in this study; text messages and borrowing, taking foreign materials in exam room, collusion, writing in special room, giraffing, impersonation and leakage are comparable to sophisticated thefts such as motor vehicle thefts whereby the thieves are always a step ahead of the car owners. In this dissertation for instance, the teachers described both classic and novel cheating methods and provided of how the learners go about doing things without any embarrassment at all. Based on these findings, the study makes the following recommendations;

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are some of the recommendations;

1. The MBSSE, TSC and WAEC through the school guidance and counselling teachers should intensify sensitisation to learners on the dangers of engaging in examination malpractices. Learners should be made to understand the effects of examination malpractice before the commencement of examinations so as to reduce the likelihood of engaging in examination malpractice.
2. The TSC and school principals through the Free Quality Education should intensify monitoring of teaching and learning in order to ensure that teachers are doing their work and that there is quality delivery of lessons so as to

develop confidence in learners to enable them to face examinations.

3. There is need for MBSSE and TSC to ensure that School Based Continuing Professional Development (SB-CPD) is enhanced so that teachers share knowledge on how to teach the seemingly challenging topics. This will help learners to learn and comprehend the materials and this will result in learners developing confidence to write examinations.
4. The WAEC and the department in the MBSSE that is responsible for managing examinations should conduct staff and students' awareness campaigns and workshops to highlight the importance of the integrity of the examination system and to develop awareness about the dangers of examination malpractices. In addition, seminars and campaigns would help learners to uphold the moral values of honesty, hard work, dedication and uprightness that characterize education in Sierra Leone.
5. There is need to stiffen and enforce security policies. This can be successful if there is an organizational policy on cheating which clearly states what aids are allowed to use on a specific type of examination and which ones are not. The policy has to contain directives about caught cheaters, and it should describe the teachers' responsibilities in the case of busting a cheater. Teachers have to be trained on how to discover forbidden actions. Students have to be aware of this policy as well, so they know all the consequences of dishonest behaviour.

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