

## Examination Malpractice: Challenges to Human Resource Development in Nigeria

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**Manuscript ID: RCMSS/IJCBE/13010**

### Abstract

Education is the most significant part of human resource development practice that enables organizations (both public and private) to deal with their competitive challenges. The target of Human Resource Development is to develop the workforce so that organizations and employees can accomplish work goals. However, this paper is concerned with what it identified as now scarcity of skilled manpower, dearth of scholarship and inability to quickly react to dynamics of the world advancing organizational system among young school leavers in Nigeria due to rampant examination fraud in Nigerian educational system. This is prevalent amongst young school-leavers who have attempted at working in the public and private organizations. The paper examined this issue and suggested among others that certificates should not be the sole determinant of recruitment and selection processes into Nigerian workplace.

**Key Words:** Education, Examination Malpractice, Human Resource Development

### Introduction

In the submission of Ammani (2009:2) all societies require education to enable new members not only fit into their work roles in the world of work, but also to satisfy the labour needs of the economy. The development of human resources, national and economic development is two sides of the coin. Therefore, human capital is recognized as an agent of national development in all countries of the world (Isola & Alani, 2013:813). However, the later is dependent on the viability of the available human resources which its determinant is sound and standardized educational system. This according to Emaikwu (2012:748) is because; the more advanced nations of the world, with their superlative and result-oriented qualitative education have become the unassailable parameters for social transformation, innovation and social change. In consonance, Isola & Alani (2013:813) says, providing education to people is one of the major ways of improving the quality of human resources. Apart from being issues of social concern, education provides an economy with healthy trained human resources required for economic growth and development.

Education is programmed to develop the mind of its recipient for an effective outcome. Denga (1991:1) cited in Sule (2009:3) argues that, education is fulcrum on which all other spheres of development revolves and that investment in education means investment in manpower development, political sanity and survival, health and healthy living, economic



progress, socio-cultural development and industrialization. It equips the individual with the information necessary for high level of human functioning (Emaikwu, 2012:748). To be regarded as an educated person, an individual is expected to pass through the whole process of examination conducted by a competent and recognized body or agency. Adequate and effective acquisition of vital knowledge and skills in school subjects and disciplines of study is invariably a function of quality and sound education

Wiliyat (2009) opines that, the education system is an instrument a society uses to equip its entire people to lead productive public lives and full personal lives according to their talent and interest. She maintained that this system must be such a situation that gifted individuals have full opportunity to develop their skills; it must give scope for the training of the leadership group and at the same time provide for the development of all the vocational abilities needed for the creation of a progressive and democratic society. According to Emaikwu (2012:748), examination as part of evaluation in education is aimed at determining a learner's level of skill acquisition or intellectual competence and understanding after a given training. But when examination is not properly conducted, the expected feedback may not result. Consequently the result of such evaluation leads to wrong decision and judgment which affect the teacher, the learner (which is the human resource), the entire education industry, as well as the society. This is the condition that is mostly obtainable in the training and development of human resources across educational and training centres in Nigeria.

The challenges of developing human capital in Nigeria with a global comparability and competitiveness remains far from appreciable levels despite attempts by successive governments (Ugal & Betiang, 2009). Thus, Daarun'Naim (2011) argues that:

Cheating during examination has become commonplace. Not only that students are cheating during exams but they are also employing more and more sophisticated means of cheating. Gone are those days when students relied only on their brains to pass exams, they are also now bringing materials of different kinds into the hall. Worse still, students are also using mobile phones to aid them in cheating. Surprising but true, parents who are supposed to be the embodiment of good morals have been found to be soliciting for assistance for their children to pass examinations. Not forgetting the roles of scrupulous invigilators and supervisors who collect money and loosen the rope of invigilation. In fact, with advancement of technology, students more and more are devising various means to beat supposedly watertight security and invigilation during examinations.

Most often, examination malpractice is not seen as a challenge to human resources development due to what Obi (2013) in Ijomah (2013) has identified as the poor investment in human capital development in the country. One of the hurdles to the development of human capital in Nigeria, today, is the widespread examination malpractice in all the levels of her educational system. As noted by Suleiman (n.d), examination malpractice has been embraced by all and sundry in Nigeria; people no longer see it as a crime any longer, both the old and young engage in the crime, people no longer see examination as what you can sit and pass on your own unless you are 'helped'. This scourge is the order of the day in our primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions and training schools. This paper examines this issue from the essential roles that education plays in human resource development, the magnitude of examination malpractice and how it affects human resource development and thereafter, concludes with recommendations for policy and managerial implications

### **Education and Human Resource Development**

The significance of education in human resource development in particular and the society at large cannot be thrown overboard. This is so because education as seen by Okau (2001:1) is a social institution; it is an area of concern for the young, as well as the old, ; the educators as well as the students; the leaders as well as the led; and the legislators as well the executives. Aina (2005:109) pointed out that, education deals with those human development activities, which are designed to improve the overall competence of the employee in a specified direction and beyond the job currently held. It goes beyond the present job to the next. It entails preparing people for life. Purposeful education enables the individual to understand and study the real life situation and to develop an opportunity for creating confidence in the minds of the younger generation, and provide a strong base for rational and value oriented and nation building progress (Myers & Harbison, 1965; Mingat & Tan, 1086; Ravinder, 2006).

Jonathan (2013:13) supports that, education is the only means by which any society can develop. Attempt to separate the former from the latter results in scarcity of skilled manpower. Human resource development is an end product of education. According to Okau (2001:3), this leads to the field of applied education which is the release of mental, psychological and sometimes physical potentials and skills of the individual for the purpose of affecting change, usually positive and fundamental change. To this end, McLagan & Suhadolnik (1989) in Syeda & Syed (2012:1027) says, Human Resource Development is an integrated use of training and development, career development, and organization development to improve individual and organizational effectiveness. Emphatically;

Education is Human Resource Development (HRD). Although this equation indicates that both sides are equal in function and value, neither education nor HRD effectively embraces the other. Education works as a self-contained system that strives to provide skills and knowledge to youth, while HRD is viewed as a corporate function. However, a strategic blend of HRD and education would enhance the effectiveness of both systems and move us toward resolving the dual problem of reforming our beleaguered educational system and restructuring HRD programs. The end result might well be the development of more effective and efficient workers for the workplace of tomorrow (Dare, 1996).

The relationship between education system and human recourse development is highly significant, and these both indicators of the economy are interdependent (Syeda & Syed, 2012:1027). There is no overemphasizing the role that high standard education plays in human resource development of any nation. Wiliyat (2009:2) views education system as an instrument a society uses to equip its entire people to lead productive public lives and full personal lives according to their talent and interest. Educational system must be such that talented individuals have full access to develop their skills; it must give coverage for the training of the leadership group and at the same time provide for the development of all the vocational abilities needed for the creation of a capable state ([http://research-education-edu.blogspot.com/2009/07/examination-malpractice.html\\_br](http://research-education-edu.blogspot.com/2009/07/examination-malpractice.html_br).) The management and consideration of education as inseparable factor in the development of manpower for moving the national economy forward can be seen in the perspectives of how it affects the following:

- Skillful manpower

- Individual and national economy
- Moral upbringing of generations.
- Scholarship and research

It is amidst these contents that examination malpractice has been found to be a challenge to the development of effective and efficient human resource needed for the upliftment of both the political, private and public sector organizations of the Nigerian economy. This is paramount because the quality of education handed to youth determines the contribution largely to the formation of the attitudes they carry over into public life ([http://research-education-edu.blogspot.com/2009/07/examination-malpractice.html\\_br](http://research-education-edu.blogspot.com/2009/07/examination-malpractice.html_br)).

### **Examination Malpractice**

Examination malpractice is not a recent phenomenon to Nigeria and Africa educational system alone. This fact is established by Barnett & Dalton (1981), in Sule (2009:37) who states that examination malpractice has been a social problem for most of recorded history. They cited the case of ancient China where applicants for the civil service positions were made to take the examinations in individual cubicles to prevent copying from one another, and were thoroughly searched for assistance before entering the cubicles. To a greater extent, a death sentence was imposed on both examinees and examiners caught cheating as a final deterrent in ancient China (Brickman, 1983).

Examination malpractice in the understanding of Onah (2012) in Bruno & Obidigbo (2012:199) is anything done by the examination candidate that is likely to render the assessment useless. Examination malpractice is, therefore, anything made by the stakeholders such as examination administrators, teachers, parents or students that is likely to render the assessment or examination ineffective or useless (Bruno & Obidigbo, 2012:199).

Wilayat (2009:3) on the other hand describes examination malpractice as any illegal act committed by a student single-handedly or in collaboration with others like fellow students, parents, teachers, supervisors, invigilators, printers and anybody or group of people before, during or after examination in order to obtain undeserved marks or grades. Nuraini (2008:1) asserts that an examination malpractice is an illegal behaviour by a candidate before, during or after the examination so that he/she can attain success easily and cheaply.

The value of any functional educational system dwells in its ability to achieve the goals of education. Until date, examination still remains an important tool for an objective assessment and evaluation of what students or trainees have achieved after a period of training. The Examination Malpractice Act (2012) explains examination malpractice as any act of omission or commission by a person who in anticipation of, before, during or after any examination fraudulently secure any unfair advantage for himself or any other person in such a manner that contravenes the rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity, reliability, authenticity of the examination and ultimately the integrity of the certificate issued ([http://ozelacademy.com/EJESV1N3\\_1.pdf\\_br](http://ozelacademy.com/EJESV1N3_1.pdf_br)).

In another perspective Nwankwo (2012) discussed examination malpractice as any irregular behavior exhibited by a candidate or anybody charged with the conduct of examination before, during or after the examination that contravenes the rules and regulations governing the conduct of such examination. Examination malpractice can be learnt as a determined wrong



doing opposite to official examination rules and regulations coined to place a candidate at an unfair gain or loss. Examination malpractice can be found as acts capable of subverting the right judgment in the case of assessment after a given teaching or training. It is an examinees pre and post mindset targeted at committing fraud in the examination and evaluation period.

### **Human Resource Development**

According to Heathfield (1998), Human Resource Development (HRD) is the framework for helping employees develops their personal and organizational skills, knowledge, and abilities. Human Resource Development includes such opportunities as employee training, employee career development, performance management and development, coaching, mentoring, succession planning, key employee identification, tuition assistance, and organization development.

Duru (2013:50) examined the concept from the angle of human capital development. To her, it is the process that relates to training, education and other professional initiatives/interventions in order to increase the levels of knowledge, skills, abilities, values, and social assets of an employee which will lead to the employee's satisfaction and better performance, and eventually improved organizational performance. Business Dictionary (2013) discovers human resource development as a part of human resource management that specifically deals with training and development of the employees. It gives further that, human resource development includes training an individual after he/she is first selected, providing opportunities to acquire new skills, distributing resources that are beneficial for the employee's tasks, and any other developmental activities. United Nations Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination Human Resources Development (2013) explains human resources development as empowering people by fostering the contributory capacities that they can bring to the improvement of their own quality of life and that of their families, communities, enterprises and societies.

In the Texas College Department of Education and Human Resource Development (HRD) (2013:1), the concept means the process of improving learning and performance in individual, group and organization contexts through domains of expertise such as lifelong learning, career development, training and development, and organization development. In compacted terms Frank (1998), in Syeda & Syed (2012:1027) overhauls the theoretical belief of Human Resource Development so as to make distinction from other disciplines and identified three assumptions on which it is based:

- HRD is based on the research and theories drawn from the field of adult education and is different from the learning that occurs in children. Learning is based on creating the appropriate circumstances, in which adults can learn and thereby change behavior.
- HRD is concerned with improved performance within the work environment; it is not concerned with the improving people's health or their personal relations with their family.
- HRD utilizes the theories of change and how these relate to the organization. Change affects individuals, groups and the organization where as HRD is predominantly concerned with the change of individuals.

Over the years, the concept of human resources development has evolved from solely focusing on individual capacity to also building institutional capacity at the national level, through socio-economic policies and development plan and strategies. Human resources development is therefore regarded as facilitating the development of national human capacities to achieve sustainable, inclusive, equitable development and, at the same time, enhance well-being of individuals ([http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/oesc/humanresources.shtml\\_br](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/oesc/humanresources.shtml_br)).

From the foregoing, Human Resource Development can be formal such as in classroom training, college course, or an organizational planned change effort. Human Resource Development can be informal as in employee coaching by a manager. Human resource development can be seen as a movement towards the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and behaviours that improves an individual/employees' enablement to meet changes in job descriptions and customer-centric demands.

In this paper, human resource development involves learning of skills that may not be related to the employees' current job. This can be supported by Duru (2013:50) who highlighted human capital development to involve viewing people as assets that can be used as a competitive advantage by strategically investing in them through learning and development programmes, employee engagement and retention, talent management and career development. In other words, individuals tend to acquire knowledge and skills through the current educational system in order to key into competitive challenges of the world dynamic model of globalization and high growth in the technological sphere of organizational management. It can be deduced that national manpower planning and development cannot be separated from a standardized educational and training system.

### **The Magnitude of Examination Malpractice in Nigeria**

The incidences of examination malpractice have become so widespread that there is virtually no examination anywhere at all levels and outside the formal school system without any form of shoddy practice or the other. Examination malpractices are common everywhere and every examination season witnesses the emergence of new and ingenious ways of cheating ([http://nigeriaworld.com/articles/2012/mar/061.html\\_br](http://nigeriaworld.com/articles/2012/mar/061.html_br) ). Exclusively, Sule (2009:2) situates the present Nigerian education system in a state of serious crisis, painful stress and an undiminished state of malpractice. Schools have failed in their responsibility of producing citizens that are worthy, both in character and learning; they now serve merely as gateways to meaningless certification (Ammani, 2009:2).

The sporadic convulsions and epilepsy which were in the past associated exclusively with other sectors of Nigerian economy has crept into educational management with attending features of examination malpractice and academic dishonesty. Students now devise different methods of examination malpractice ranging from crude methods of giraffing and asking questions to such digitalised ones as the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capable of storing information and the handsets. Some of the information from west Africa Examination Council (WAEC) indicated that as many as 54,579 out of 50,479 (6.22 percent) were involved in examination malpractice of one sort or the other in the November/December examination (Adewale, 2004:9). WAEC (2004) in Ezenwa (2008) reports major situations of examination malpractice in 1963, 1967, 1970, 1973, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1985, 1987, 1991, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003. The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board Examinations (JAMB)



are not also free from the ugly trend. The table below shows the magnitude of examination fraud among the youths who aspire to be trained in Nigerian Universities between 1999 and 2005

**Table: JAMB Reported Cases of Examination Malpractice, 1999-2005.**

<b>Year of Reporting</b>	<b>No. of Candidates</b>	<b>No. of withheld Results</b>	<b>Percentage Withheld</b>
1999	400,194	8,073	2.01
2000	448,901	9,809	2.189
2001	763,053	16,282	1.133
2002	975,065	46,448	4.763
2003	1,039,183	116,990	11.257
2004	839,051	58,121	6.938
2005	877,408	95,985	10.939
Total	5,341,045	351,705	

Source: Ezenwa (2008).

Omeri (2012) documents that Nigeria occupies the number one position in the world's Examination Malpractice Index. In his words, report on examination malpractice in the country contains very disturbing information as it puts the average annual examination malpractice index at 12 per cent that, in May/June school certificate examination conducted by NECO, a total of 615, and 010 cases of malpractice were recorded while 439,529 were recorded in the 2011 examination ([http://www.naijalatestnews.com/nigeria-rank-top-in-world-examination-malpractice/\\_br](http://www.naijalatestnews.com/nigeria-rank-top-in-world-examination-malpractice/_br)).The phenomenon has turned into a highly complex and organized crime perpetuated by private and community owned schools. The level of the situation has made (Nwankwo, 2012) to put a question thus:

Is there still need of studying in this country? Attending school nowadays is it still crucial? Reading and studying hard in order to pass one's exams are they still possible in this country? Being anxious about one's examinations is it still prevailing among the students of this country? Our youths are no longer studying their books because miracles are happening in their various examination halls. Examination malpractice has spontaneously dominated many of the Nigeria schools including private schools. Examination malpractice is among the serious problems and the worm that is plaguing our educational system nowadays.

Studies have shown the handsome returns to various forms of human capital accumulation: basic education, research, training, and learning – by doing and capacity building. Education enriches people's understanding of themselves and the world. It improves the quality of their lives and leads to broad social benefit to individual and society. Education raises people's productivity and creativity and promotes entrepreneurship and technological advances, demonstrated in several countries such as Malaysia, Bolivia, China (World Bank, 1999).

Adeyemi & Akindele (2002:57) upholds the high magnitude of examination malpractice that there has been much 'hue and cry' concerning the fall in the standard of Education in Nigeria. Serious points being raised by those in support of this statement as they noted include among others: the myopic academic capability and standard being displayed by

students of today's educational institutions vis-à-vis their counterparts of yesteryears and the prevailing cases of examinations malpractices that have enveloped the entire educational system.

### **Reality on Human Resource Development**

Human capital is recognized as an agent of national development in all countries of the world (Isola & Alani, 2013:813). Providing education services to citizens is one of the major dimensions of improving the quality of human resources. Apart from being the issues of social concern, it provides the economy with healthily trained manpower required for economic growth and development.

The devastating effect of examination malpractice is the perpetual moral decadence which it entrenches in the society. Everyone now feels that it is the fastest, easiest, though most expensive way of passing examinations. Nuraini (2008) highlights that examination malpractices have consistently remained a bane of Nigerian educational system to the extent that most foreigners says, the academic certificates being issued to graduates in Nigeria are no more valuable than the pieces of paper on which they are printed. The effect of examination malpractice on the capacity building of human resources will results in situation that is described by Nwankwo (2012) that:

This generation of Nigeria graduates will end up producing doctors who will forget scissors and towel in the stomach after surgical operation as long as malpractices are prevailing. This generation will continue to produce students with Alphas (distinctions) in WACE result, first class honours in the universities without a single knowledge in any definite course or subject. This generation will continue to produce teachers, who are unable to spell the names of their school correctly. This generation will end up producing lawyers who cannot differentiate between an accused person and the complainant.

Furthermore, the production of fake drugs by pharmacists and massive fraud in the financial sectors of Nigerian economy are the consequences of examination malpractices. Poor handling of examination malpractice at the earlier stage has escalated to high scale malpractices and corruption that pervades the strata of the Nigerian society.

Examination malpractices lead to irreversible loss of credibility. A country that becomes noted for examination malpractices loses international credibility ([http://nigeriaworld.com/articles/2012/mar/061.html\\_br](http://nigeriaworld.com/articles/2012/mar/061.html_br)), acceptability and honour. The resultant effect is that certificates and skills obtained from such country's educational system will be treated with a second thought. Consequently, such country's academic institutions are as good as non-existence as far as international cooperation and recognition in education are concerned. Certificate is becoming worthless in Nigeria because of this social malaise that has become inimical to educational development in Nigeria. From the foregoing, this paper identifies the realities of examination malpractice on human resource development to include:

- **Poverty of skilled human resource:** Considering the present situation, there will be no supply for the demand for skilled workers giving the high rate of examination malpractice in the training/educational system of Nigeria. Dare (1996) declares that, employers continually cry for skilled and knowledgeable workers; however, our

educational system, because of the new and increasingly complex demands being placed upon it, is not adequately preparing young people to enter the workforce. In the view of Cashio & Zamuto (1987); Fullerton (1985) in Goldstein & Gilliam (1994:434), a large number of individuals who will be available for entry into the work force will be undereducated youth. Examination malpractice equally leads to professional inefficiency, because a country that lacks a credible examinations system will have very poor manpower as the psychometric value of certificates obtained through malpractice in examinations will be worthless (Abbas, 2009; Lawan, 2010:141). In the same way, Omerri (2012) decries that the malpractice situation in the country has led to the production of half baked graduates and collapse of the education sector.

- **Imminent collapse of the economy:** Beyond the massive impact on the students, the effects of examination malpractice on the society are reflected in the production of incompetent labour force that cannot competitively drive the economy in the areas of production of goods and services, research, administration, education and technology (Lawan, 2010:142). By extension, contributions to solving organizational problems are lacking and these formed one of the cogs in the wheel of large and small scale business sartorial survival in Nigeria.
- **Moral and social decadence:** Ezenwa (2008) maintains that examination malpractice usher in corruption, criminality, abuse of due process and mediocrity, bad leadership culminating in foreign exploitation, domination and further underdevelopment of a given society. To this end, Lawan, (2010:142) opines that perpetrators of examination malpractice may eventually be involved in other forms of social vices like drug abuse, gangsterism, prostitution, poverty with long term effects on the nation.
- **Dearth of scholarship and research:** Examination malpractice results in the danger of absence of researchers and managers/administrators with knowledge and expertise. Supportively, Okogie (2012) says hard work; value and integrity have been eroded in the nation's educational system, lamenting that emphasis is being placed on paper qualification instead of productivity. In the same development, Okebukola (2013) insinuates that study habit (of many Nigerian students) is poor; they still bask in examination malpractice and are engaged in bad gangs and internet fraud.

Following these developments, Sani (2013) concludes that many graduates are nothing to write home about and that; some graduates find it difficult to express themselves in English in the manner expected of those who have passed through higher institutions of learning. It is obvious that the products of the educational institutions where examination malpractice is rampant cannot compete favourably with their counterparts from other climes. By extension, the hitherto scholastic cherished image of the country becomes irredeemably smeared in the eyes of the international community([http://dailyindependentnig.com/2013/02/effects-of-exam-malpractice-in-nigeria/\\_br](http://dailyindependentnig.com/2013/02/effects-of-exam-malpractice-in-nigeria/_br)).

## **Conclusion**

The alarming rate of increase in examination malpractice in academic institutions (which is the nursing ground) for the abundant human resource in Nigeria draws attention from all

stakeholders in the education/training sector. This is because, the development of human resource as Duru (2013:50), notes, presupposes investments, activities and processes that produce knowledge, skills, health or values that are embodied in people. Ammani (2009) posits that Accountants, Architects, Bankers, Doctors, Engineers, Pharmacists, Lawyers, Journalist, Scientists, and even Teachers are direct products of the educational system. It, therefore, means that, whatever compromises the efficiency and credibility of the education system damages the quality and competency of human resource.

The examination system is a paramount factor that determines the sustainability of the development of human resource, training and research. From all indications, the widespread phenomenon of examination malpractice can be best described as the 'new age suicide' because; both persons who indulge in the act have killed themselves already.

### **Recommendations**

Prompt intervention in the Human Resource Development ill-activities requires combined efforts of stakeholders among the educationists and employers of labour in order to solve the short- and long-term needs of the world of work. To this end, government should strengthen the enabling policy environment and put stringent measures in place curb this monster. It is the responsibility of everyone to fight this social malaise. In response therefore, this paper precisely recommends that:

- Education and good-character profile should be emphasized and recognized above paper certification. Recruitment/selection processes of employees into positions of workplace in both public and private organizations in Nigeria should prioritize this recommendation. This is fundamental because, gaps now exist between education and certification.
- Since human resource is the carrier/driver of the economy, changing the attitude of 'reaping without sowing' for sound examination results, is a necessity and not a choice among the stakeholders of education/training in Nigeria. This should be based on the fact that, hard work is the only investment that never fails, and it outlives life itself. Therefore, any rot in it hinders economic growth and development of any nation.
- Value and cultural reorientation which is the missing link in the observance of laid down rules and regulations in Nigeria should be emphasized most importantly through the informal education system. Parents should not celebrate success without a commensurate input. Examination malpractice should be discouraged in its entirety. The government, the citizens, the teachers/trainers, the students/trainees, the family and the school, employers and employees, must take this as a critical assignment that must be done.
- Education/training institutions should be mandated to identify and encourage talented scholars who have distinguished themselves in the course of undergoing studies/training. This promotes scholarship, thereby relegating cheating and short cut to achieving success in the course of any studies, training and evaluation process in Nigerian educational system to the background.

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