

Stakeholders in education comprising representatives of Ministries of Education, other Government nominees, Examining Bodies, Universities, Principals of Secondary Schools, Parents, Teachers, Students, Mass Media and the Civil Society from The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone convened in Lagos on 19th and 20th October, 2017 for the first International Summit on Examination Malpractice organised by The West African Examinations Council (WAEC).

The dignitaries and participants were welcomed by the Chairperson of WAEC, Dr. D. Evelyn S. Kandakai and the Registrar to Council, Dr. Iyi Uwadiae. The Summit was declared open by the Hon. Minister of Education, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Mallam Adamu Adamu, who was ably represented by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry.

The Summit provided a platform for intense deliberations by seasoned educationists, school administrators, test administrators, policy formulators, teachers, parents, media practitioners, ICT experts, legislators, legal practitioners, law enforcement officers and other concerned citizens on the features, causes, agents, trends and consequences of examination malpractice. Remedies were also considered.

The Summit theme, Examination Malpractice: The Contemporary Realities and Antidotes, was explicitly presented in an insightful paper delivered by the Keynote Speaker - renowned educationist, Emeritus Professor Pius Augustine Ike Obanya. Other incisive papers presented included:

- Examination Malpractice: A threat to National Development - by Prof. Jonathan A. Fletcher (Ghana)
- Technology and Examination Malpractice - by Prof. Jonas A. S. Redwood-Sawyer (Sierra Leone)
- Curbing Examination Malpractice: Examination Bodies' Experiences
 - by Prof. Charles Uwakwe, National Examination Council, Nigeria
 - by Prof. Is-haq Oloyede, Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, Nigeria
 - by Prof. Ifeoma Isiugo-Abanihe, National Business & Technical Education Board, Nigeria
 - by Very Rev. S. N. N. Ollennu, The West African Examinations Council
- Statutory Provisions Against Examination Malpractice - by Shintema Binga, Esq. (Nigeria)
- International Collaborations in Curbing Examination Malpractice - by Prof. Pierre Gomez (The Gambia)
- Curbing Examination Malpractice: The Role of Government
 - by Mr. Mohammed B.S. Jallow, Head of delegation, The Gambia
 - by Prof. Kwasi Opoku-Amankwa, Head of delegation, Ghana
 - by Hon. Dr. Romelle A. Horton, Head of delegation, Liberia
 - by Mr. Jonathan A. Mbaakaa, Head of delegation, Nigeria
 - by Dr. Alhaji Mohamed Kamara, Head of delegation, Sierra Leone
- Curbing Examination Malpractice: School Administrators' Experiences

- by Mr. Karamo S. Bojang (The Gambia)
- by Mr. Samuel Gyebi Yeboah (Ghana)
- by Mr. Emmanuel O. Kparh (Liberia)
- by Mr. Anselm Izuagie (Nigeria)
- by Mr. Shekuba Raymond Sesay (Sierra Leone)

The keynote speaker broadly described examination malpractice as the upturning of the ethical guidelines for the setting, conduct, scoring and certification of the student learning process. Narrowing it down, examination malpractice was considered as encompassing all acts which contravene the rules and regulations that govern the conduct of an examination. Such acts include multiple registration for the same examination, collusion among candidates, impersonation, foreknowledge/leakage of question papers, insult/assault on examination officials, bringing unauthorised materials/prohibited gadgets into the examination hall, converting/substituting worked scripts, receiving undue assistance in the examination hall, and other irregular activities within the immediate precincts of the examination hall before, during or after the examination.

Participants were of the conviction that examination malpractice was an offshoot of the pervasive societal decadence and could be attributed to various causes such as the eroded societal values, emphasis on paper qualification/certificate, inadequate teaching/learning resources, lack of qualified teachers, inadequate preparation of students for examinations, and poor state of infrastructure in schools. The others include students' laziness and poor reading habits, inadequate coverage of the syllabus, peer pressure, mild sanctions against culprits, inactive laws, and perverted use of advancements in technology. It was also observed that the malaise entails the active involvement, collaboration, sponsorship or connivance of candidates, school authorities, parents, teachers, whole communities, cyber café operators, examination officials and custodians of examination materials.

Participants rose from the Summit with the consensus that strategies must be developed urgently to assuage, halt and reverse the menace and its devastating effects on the various stakeholders, education system, manpower production, and economic development of the West African sub-region. They, therefore, presented the following recommendations for serious consideration and relentless implementation by the stakeholders:

1. SCHOOLS

(1) Teaching methods should be revised to aid deep learning. (2) There should be retraining/capacity-building of teachers to improve the teaching and learning processes and build capacity for creative teaching and learner psycho-social support. This would make learning more interesting and meaningful, and awaken the innate abilities of students. (3) Approaches to pedagogy should be reviewed in the light of emerging technologies so as to equip students with requisite knowledge and skills. (4) Teachers should be adequately remunerated to keep them from corrupt tendencies. (5) Regulations and quality standards for all schools should be enforced. (6) The school system should recognise individual differences and skills of students through practice-oriented examinations and accommodate failure through re-sit and remedial interventions. (7) More emphasis should be placed on development of

work-oriented skills than mere possession of certificates. This includes a reorientation towards increased acceptance of Technical and Vocational Education/Training (TVET) for sustainable manpower development and more inclusive access to higher education.

2. LAW

(1) The rules and regulations governing examinations should be revised to cover issues relating to technology. (2) Tougher sanctions should be meted out to offenders to serve as deterrent to others. This should include “naming and shaming” by publishing their photographs in the local dailies. Where necessary, the legislative provisions should be reviewed and made more punitive. (3) The Police and Judiciary should be sensitized on the rise in cases of malpractice and its effects on society. (4) Special Courts should be set up to enforce dormant laws on examination malpractice. (5) Other institutional structures such as an Examination Fraud Unit should be established in the Police Service to assist the Special Courts to expedite the prosecution and conviction of violators of examination laws.

3. SOCIETY

(1) Societal re-engineering and re-orientation (through proper parenting) is imperative to restoring/entrenching moral values and fostering ethical standards. (2) There must be a change in the reward system that will lower the regard given to certificates. (3) A culture of integrity and pride should be instilled through counselling and open discussions on the grave consequences of cheating. The discussions should cover all perspectives - moral, religious and community. (4) Integrity Clubs in schools and award of prizes at speech day ceremonies should be utilized to encourage the development of personal integrity. (5) All stakeholders should intensify public enlightenment campaigns on the dangers of examination malpractice.

4. GOVERNMENT

(1) Government should give continuous support for the conduct of examinations. (2) Government should consider the establishment of an Examination Ethics Committee to complement the efforts of examining bodies to fight malpractice. (3) Contact time in schools should be increased to enhance curriculum coverage. (4) All available means should be used in the public enlightenment campaigns and to stress the importance of ethical values such as self-worth, dignity of labour, integrity and personal responsibility. (5) Government should provide the necessary infrastructure and equipment for all public schools to ensure adequate preparation and standard seating of students for examinations. (6) Government should establish enough tertiary institutions to absorb the majority of students who graduate from the senior high school. (7) Qualified teachers should be employed and equipped with instructional materials to bring quality to the classrooms and create appropriate learning environments. (8) Periodic training/refresher courses should be organised for teachers to familiarize them with the teaching curriculum and examination syllabuses. (9) Combating examination malpractice should be considered a national and regional concern and treated as an emergency, given its wider international implications on quality assurance.

5. EXAMINING BODIES

(1) Educational assessment should be institutionalized in the true sense of the term. (2) Examining bodies should speed up the process of adopting modern techniques in assessment and deploying modern technology in checking malpractice. (3) Examining bodies should further customize examination stationery by printing on them their logo, candidate's name, photograph and examination number to curb impersonation. (4) Examination officials should be well remunerated and motivated to strengthen them against temptation. (5) Teachers, proctors or invigilators should be properly trained on how to detect the technologies currently being used to cheat. (6) Devices that are capable of storing, transmitting, receiving and displaying digital information should be prohibited from examination halls. (7) Examining bodies should carry out full biometric checks (fingers or palm-prints) at the entrance of examination halls, deploy closed-circuit TV cameras (with real time or faster viewing) in the halls, and employ eavesdropping technologies to remotely track every mouse click and key stroke of CBT testees. (8) Examinations at remote locations should be monitored through webcam feeds, screen sharing and high speed internet connections. (9) Examining bodies should consider setting examinations that test the thinking skills/grasp of concepts and their application instead of those that require mere regurgitation.

6. GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

The Examination Malpractice Summit should be held periodically by the examining bodies and other stakeholders to review progress made and develop new strategies to combat new features and trends.

Signed

Dr. Iyi Uwadiae
Registrar, WAEC