

## Improving Teachers for Public Examination Administration in Nigeria for 2020 Challenges

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### **Abstract**

*The improvement of the teachers for public examination administration, sees the teachers as the insider and fulcrum around, which the pendulum of teaching, learning and examination revolves. The myriad of problems besetting the conduct of the public examination can greatly be reduced when the (loce-in parenti) of the examination is adequately prepared to solve the institutionally grown problems of public examination. The malpractices that pervade the conducts: the endemic problems of funding, shortage of staff, large enrolments in examination, poor instructional facilities, and many more notwithstanding, the teacher when sufficiently endowed and empowered can surmount the gargantuan and hydra-headed problems of public examination administration as we approach the 2020 vision challenges. Some solutions as a way forward were proffered in this study.*

### **Introduction**

The unending crisis that pervades the administration of public examinations in Nigeria has reached a crescendo. It is so threatening that no-one including foreigners wants to take any Nigeria graduate seriously any more. The likes of Akanbi (1999), Ayoola (1997), Johnson (1978) and Fagbongbe and Talabi (1985), Obagah (2000) were all unanimous in their various studies, when they concluded that the quality of the product of any examination exercise is premised on the validity and reliability of the conduct and administration of that particular assessment endeavour. The products of any examination exercise are the highly needed raw materials to be fed-back or deployed into the school systems as future graduates, teachers, invigilators, lecturers, civil servants, armed forces, politicians, private businessmen and many more. When the administration of public examinations are flawed like the periodic rigging in Nigerian general elections, the results are very retrogressive as we observed in Nigerians inability to develop in every facets of its National endeavours. The annual cancellation of students results in publicly conducted examinations in the West African School Certificate (WASC), the Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSCE) the National Technical Certificate or the National Business Certificate (NTC/NBC). The National Examination Council (NECO), the National Business and Technical Examination Board (NABTEB), the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) are very clear signs that all is not well with the administration of public examination in Nigeria.

The outright rejection of the direct admission of the jambites into our universities without going through the Post-Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) is another indictment for our publicly administered examination in Nigeria. The teachers are at the centre of this gargantuan problem, who should be adequately equipped and empowered through several academic fora since

they wear different caps on several occasions as teachers, parents, lecturers, invigilators, supervisors, co-ordinators, custodians and so on.

No wonder (JAMB, 2010, UTME) warned sternly that "increasingly, candidates, examination officials and other persons are yielding to the temptation to cheat in examination. Cheating (aiding or abetting cheating) in examinations is a criminal act punishable in law. The Examination Malpractices Decree 1999 provides penalties for persons convicted of examination malpractice. Punishment provided included imprisonment for 3 – 5 years or a fine of N50,000 or more or both prison sentence and fine".

The decree also regarded the followings as the criminal acts: Cheating, stealing of question papers, impersonation, collusion with others with intent to cheat or secure unfair advantage for self or for another, disturbance and examination misconduct in the course of an examination, failure to obey lawful orders of supervisors, invigilators or agents of the examination body, forgery of result slip, breach of duty, conspiracy, aiding and abetting etc.

Nowadays, improving the teachers for modern days administration of public examination has gone beyond the precepts of the scholars like Ibraheem and Kolo (1996) enumerations thus: ensuring -

- (i) Environmental conditions such as sitting, lighting, and ventilation
- (ii) Appropriate invigilation to minimize cheating
- (iii) Clear instructions with reference to time allotted and number of questions required to be attempted.
- (iv) Provision of examination materials.

The burgeoning and awesome problems of administration of public examination have gone so bad that Ogunniyi (1994) had to remark that the teachers as the invigilator could not afford to lose sight of the following:

- (i) Checking the students and materials to ensure that no incriminating objects is brought into the examination hall.
- (ii) Avoiding nonchalant attitude to invigilation by using unauthorized substitute.
- (iii) Colluding with students to cheat.
- (iv) Leaving the examination hall
- (v) Reading of Newspaper, and outright lateness to examination centres or
- (vi) Absence from examination hall.

These and many more which will soon be unfolded are some of the numerous reasons why the public examination administration would need immediate up-grading to a more comfortable pedestal in our educational provision.

### **Problems Of Public Examination Administration In Nigeria**

It is most necessary to approach the presentation of this problem from its *tripartite* nature in the first place. It will look it at from what obtains in the primary, secondary and tertiary academic levels.

### **Examination Malpractice**

This is one of the most endemic problem of public examination administration in Nigeria. Examination malpractice is the act of breaking the rules governing the conduct of an examination in order to gain some advantages. According to Ojerinde (2003) examination malpractice has

remained a nightmare not only to WAEC, but also NECO, JAMB and others. The Daily Trust Editorial (2008) observed that government school authority, invigilators, examiners, teachers, parents and students are also guilty of the iniquitous trend of examination malpractice.

The following is a catalogue of malpractices at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels which must be avoided to allow for smooth management of public examination in Schools.

- I. At the Primary Schools we have what is called –
  - (a) *Teaching Malpractice* – where the teachers engage in petty trading instead of the normal teaching.
  - (b) *Continuous Assessment Malpractice*: Here the teachers misrepresents continuous assessment grade of pupils either by omission or commission as noted by Adeyegbe (2000).
  - (c) *Aiding and Abetting* – Helping pupils to cheat during tests. Teachers do this to give a false impression of the results of their teaching efforts.
  - (d) *Common Entrance Malpractice*: The practice where parents, teachers, supervisors, or invigilators aid, abet or collude with pupils to pass entrance, examinations into JSS I
  - (e) *Automatic Promotion Malpractice*: The practice of moving all pupils from one class to the next irrespective of performance in preceding classes. This is the best way to encourage laziness among pupils as well as discourage hardwork (Obagah, 2000).
- II. At the Secondary School Level the poor management of the public examination manifests as follows:
  - (a) *Admission malpractice* – this is always through the backdoor by parents with enough money to pay or spread of influence.
  - (b) Teaching malpractice, as in primary schools.
  - (c) Continuous Assessment malpractice.
  - (d) Mass promotions.
  - (e) Malpractice in JSC examinations.
  - (f) *Illegal Registration of Candidates* – Some principals of post primary schools make illegal registration of outsider candidates for SSC examination. A fee is always attached for the principals.
  - (g) *Impersonation*: Often mercenary students (university undergraduates) are paid to impersonate other candidates. This is what leads to the Post UTME exams in Universities (Obagah, 2000).
  - (h) *Bringing in foreign Materials*
  - (i) *Leakage of question papers* before date of examination.
  - (j) *Assault and intimidation*: This is a situation where students harass, assault, intimidate or blackmail supervisors or invigilators. Between 1992 and 1996 WAEC reported 10,372 cases nationwide (Exam Ethics Project, 2003).
  - (k) *Collusion and Mass Cheating*.
  - (l) *Malpractice involving Practical*: Many schools collude with the candidates to rig result of experiments that wherever conducted. Such schools easily ascertain what practical will come up from the samples they are asked to prepare by the body responsible for the conduct of the examination.
- III. At the Tertiary Levels, we have the following problems:
  - (a) *Sale of Admission*: This is rampant in Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. Professional courses like medicine and law with very high demand are particularly vulnerable.

- (b) *Teaching malpractice*: where lecturers abandoned their classes and students for other engagements.
- (c) *Sale of Handouts*: the forceful sale of lecturers handout to students before they can pass the course is unacceptable.
- (d) *Malpractice involving Projects/Thesis*: These are conditions where students pay their lecturers or their surrogate consulting outfit to write their project.
- (e) *Sandwich Course malpractice*: Sales of marks to students who do not spend quality time in Universities to learn qualitatively is a sad malpractice.
- (f) *Accreditation Malpractice*: A situation where a tertiary institution gets accreditation to offer a particular course even though it lacks the materials and human resources for the cause. Sometimes, equipments and facilities are borrowed for the duration of the exercises.
- (g) *Assaults and Intimidation*: This is the stock in trade of members of campus cults. These students spend their time on cult related activities only to intimidate lecturers into awarding them grades for examination they never prepared for. It is even worse to know that some lecturers also patronize these cult groups whom they are also members.
- (h) *Sale of Grade*: A situation that involves the award of marks or grade to students by lecturers in return for monetary or material favours is quite unacceptable.
- (i) *Irregular Activities in Exam Halls*: Exam Ethics Project (2003) survey of seven tertiary institutions by the project showed that between 1992 and 1996, 727 students were sanctioned for irregular activities in exam halls. These include outright disobedience of invigilators instructions, complete disregard of rules and regulations of exams, violent behaviour, possession of copied materials, chewing and swallowing of evidence when challenged etc.
- (j) *Sale of Honorary Degree*: In May, 1998 the Federal Government of Nigeria; observed, that the practice of honouring deserving persons with honorary degrees/diplomas and fellowship etc. was being abused. This was a situation where awards were being given to those who are not honourable at all, but could afford to pay for them with ill-gotten wealth". The government then banned public officers from receiving honorary degrees. This is 2010, the last but one award that was done nationally was questionable in so many respects.

#### IV. Shortage Of Teachers In Schools

The dearth of highly qualified teachers in schools has further increased the problems of administration of public examination in schools. There is a growing lack of teachers in all schools to meet the increasing needs to staff all schools adequately. The few that are available are overworked.

#### V. Large Candidature for Examination

The annual turn out of candidates for public examination in Nigeria comes out in millions for a skeletal teacher and invigilators to manage in crowded halls. This is a problem on its own. Only a manageable size of candidature with the needed modern facilities can make public exams administration worthwhile.

#### VI. Poor Instructional Facilities in Schools

In most schools there are no instructional facilities to cope with the teeming number of students, some schools do not have halls, benches and tables. To mention laboratory with the requisite equipments for the sciences is a big luxury.

VII. The Funding of examination Bodies to Pay Staff/ Invigilators

The general funding of the examination bodies to pay for the public examination is too poor. Teachers/invigilators/supervisors are easily bought over when they are enticed with money, because what they get as honoraria is comparatively too small. A situation where a supervisor or invigilator gets a feeding allowance of N100 a day for an examination that will last the whole day is quite unimaginable. The final take-home pay for a three-day exercise for JAMB exams supervision may not be more than N5,000.

VIII. Shortage of Trained/Committed Examination Experts/ Supervisors

To become a committed examination officer, some level of education is needed for all the teachers. The basic training for current assessment need cannot be over-stressed. Ayodele, Adegbile and Adewole (2003) remarked that teachers that are not adequately equipped with the nuance of educational evaluation theories and practices will always not deliver well.

These and many more are among those problems that have be-deviled the proper administration of public examination in Nigeria.

### **Consequences Of Poorly Managed Public Examination In Nigeria**

The poorly managed public examination in Nigeria has a lot of devastating consequences.

- ✓ It has prevented thousands of youth and adult from identifying and pursuing their true talents.
- ✓ It has promoted the habit of laziness in some people.
- ✓ It has rendered most certificate useless as the only basis for assessing their skills and capabilities.
- ✓ The poorly managed examinations plants in people, the seed of fraudulent behaviour and starts people on the route of corruption crimes, cover-ups and brigandage.
- ✓ Malfeasance in examination distorts and thwarts the concept of academic excellence.
- ✓ Poorly managed public examinations promotes the culture of fraud and corruption in schools and the society.
- ✓ It negates the ideals of the Institution as a place for transmission of moral and ethical values to youths.
- ✓ The institution is easily turned into an academy for breeding recruits for fraud syndicates.
- ✓ The mediocre in the system are afforded the opportunity to rise to power and authority with the aims to plunder the nation with impunity.
- ✓ It leads to the breakdown of laws and order, and manifest in immoral and unethical standards in the society.
- ✓ This promotes low and wayward professional ethics among the various professions.
- ✓ It produces leaders who rise to the top through cultist arranged mechanism, who are totally lacking in integrity.
- ✓ The promotion of very low quality labour force is extolled.
- ✓ Poorly administered examination also leads to the production of an armies of unemployable graduates.
- ✓ It leads to increased unrepentant criminals.
- ✓ It constitutes an effort and impediment to the realization of organizational or national goals, policies and objectives.

- ✓ The current rejection of our graduates in foreign companies nationally and international are some of the consequences of this bad practice.
- ✓ The current perpetuation of international crimes like arms-deals, importation, money-laundering, drug-trafficking, pipeline vandalization are the pastime of these fraudsters.

### **The Way Forward to Meeting The Challenges of 2020 Vision**

- 1) **Application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to the operation of Public Examinations:** The gradual change from the manual writing of exams to the use of computers assisted exams in some designed centers will minimize the problem associated with teachers qualified or not.
- 2) **Regular and Continuous Training of Staff and Examination Functionaries/Teachers:** Teachers should be trained in organized workshops and seminars on the conduct of public examination. Areas to be covered in such workshops include: Item-writing, script checking, validation of test items, supervision of tests, operation of continuous assessment, and moderation of public examinations.
- 3) **Appointment of Teachers as Invigilators and Supervisors** to be supervised by the Examination Bodies and the various Ministries so that only teachers with Integrity are so appointed and trained.
- 4) **The swapping of teachers from place to place** depending on the mood of the Ministries and the examination bodies must be allowed to remain a regular feature for proper administration.
- 5) **Prompt Replacement** of compromised teachers/supervisors/ Invigilators.
- 6) **Review of Supervisors/Teachers Remunerations** must be made a regular practice for all examinations.
- 7) **Training of more teachers/invigilators and supervisors:** This is to ensure a steady supply of dedicated teachers to do the work of invigilators/supervisions.
- 8) There must be **Steady Feedback/Correction** to the Teachers/ invigilators/Supervisors of their strength and weaknesses of their performance so that they can continue to improve in what they are doing.
- 9) **The extant Laws Governing the Administration of Public Examination** must be applied to the letter so that criminals would be discouraged.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the issues of improving teachers for public examination administration in Nigeria as we prepare for the 20 – 2020 vision challenges. The problems of public examination administration in Nigeria are myriad and difficult to overcome in a short time. The malpractices that are found at every facet and levels of our educational offerings are daunting. The institutional and the societal drawbacks like poor funding, over-enrolments in schools, shortage of manpower, shortage of qualified teachers and invigilators, the much greed on the part of Nigerian to get everything at expense of others notwithstanding there is good hope that the teachers when adequately trained and empowered will reduce the crises of public exams administration in Nigeria before 2020.

Adequate funding, workshops, seminars, training, regular feedbacks of the strength and weakness to supervisors, invigilators and teachers as well as increases in teachers remunerations must be made a regular feature. Therefore, the reality of the 20, 2020 vision can be assured.

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