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Editorial Comment

This edition of JES is as usual aimed at furthering the course of research and development in Education. The articles which cover different facets of the Education enterprise are aimed at facilitating and highlighting the inter-relatedness among various areas of Education. They are either research findings or well researched theoretical papers.

We thank our numerous readers for their patronage as we look forward to more quality contributions in the future. HAPPY READING.

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06

Complimentary Roles of Religious Institutions on the Fight Against Examination Malpractices in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The campaign and the fight against examination malpractices have become the matters demanding a 'clarion call'. This study therefore investigated the roles that religious institutions play in the fight against examination malpractices in Nigeria. Three hundred respondents comprising students and adults from the Northern, Southern, and Eastern parts of Nigeria were involved in the study. They provided data on religious groups with which they associate. They also provided information on their religious leaders, how committed they are to religious activities and how aggressive they are on their fight against examination malpractices. The instrument used for data collection was Roles of Religious Institutions on the Fight Against Examination Malpractices Questionnaire (RRIFAEMQ). The Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient estimated on RRIFAEMQ was 0.81. The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency counts and cross tabulation). Compound bar charts were also used to present the results. It was found in the study that a good number of Nigerians are still not aggressive in their fight against examination malpractices. Greater percentage of Nigerians who received high-quality moral instruction from their affiliated religious groups are very aggressive in their fight against examination malpractices. It was also found that greater percentage of Nigerians who are very close to their religious leaders and committed to religious activities are very aggressive in their fight against examination malpractices. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that, religious leaders should rise up to their responsibilities through sound moral teaching instead of running after monetary gains from members. Government should encourage moral

instructions through religious institutions and media. 'Catch them young' approach should be employed too by integrating religious instructions into the school curriculum at all levels. There is a better future for Nigeria if special attention is paid to the above recommendations.

Background to the Study

Corruption, as the name sounds, tarnishes the image of individuals, communities and nations if it is not fought. According to Igbuzor (2005) corruption manifests itself in various ways. He cited, according to the political Bureau established in Nigeria in 1987, that, the manifestations of corruption include:

...the inflation of government contracts in return for kickback; frauds and falsification of accounts in the public service; examination malpractices in our educational institutions including Universities; the taking of bribes and perversion of justice among the Police, judiciary and other organs for administering justice and Various heinous crimes against the state in the business and industrial sectors of our economy, in collusion with multinational companies such as over – invoicing of good, foreign exchange swindling, hoarding and smuggling.

According to him, the African Union Convention on Preventing and Corruption and Related Offences lists acts of corruption to include:

- a. The solicitation or acceptance, directly or indirectly, by a public official or any other

- person, of any goods of monetary, or other benefit such as a gift, favour, promise or advantages for himself or herself or for another person or entry, in exchange for any act or omission in the performance of his or her public functions;
- b. The offering or granting, directly or indirectly to a public official or any other person of any goods of monetary value or other benefit, such as a gift, favour, promise or advantage for himself or herself or for any person or entity, in exchange for any act or omission in the performance of his or her public functions;
 - c. The offering or granting directly or indirectly to a public official or any other person for the purpose of illicitly obtaining benefits for himself or herself or for a third party;
 - d. The offering or giving, promising, solicitation or acceptance, directly or indirectly of any undue advantage to or by any person who directs or works for, in any capacity, a private sector entity, for himself or herself or for anyone else for him or her to act or refrain from acting in breach of his or her duties;
 - e. The offering, giving, solicitation or acceptance directly or indirectly, or promising of any undue advantage to or by any person who asserts or confirms that he or she is able to exert any improper influence over the decision making of any person performing functions in the public or private sector in consideration thereof, whether the undue advantages is for himself or herself or for anyone else, as well as the request, receipt or the acceptance of the offer or the promise of such an advantages in consideration of that influence, whether or not the influence is exerted or whether or not the supposed influence leads to the intended result; and
 - f. Participation as a principal, co – principal, agent, instigator, accomplice or accessory after the fact or in any other manner in the commission or attempted commission of in any collaboration or conspiracy to commit, any of the acts mentioned above.

The Corrupt Practices and other related offences Act 2000 lists offences which are punishable by the Act to include, among other things, gratification by an official, corrupt offers to public officers, corrupt demand by person, fraudulent acquisition of property, fraudulent receipt of property, making false statement or return, gratification by and through agents, bribing of public officers and using position for gratification.

The conduct of examinations in Nigeria is not totally free from the above mentioned practices. In fact, Odia and Omofonmwan (2007) reveals that in some cases, some teachers at the secondary school level are involved by way of encouraging students to contribute money (cooperation fees) in order to secure the needed assistance during such examinations. Presently, village secondary schools are recording higher enrolment for external examinations than those in the cities mainly because of shady practices. Interview conducted by Odia and Omofonmwan (2007) with fifty school heads in Benin City, reveals that more than fifty percent of Nigerian secondary school students, on annual basis, chose to enroll and write their final examinations in schools in the interior and some private schools where they were sure of success at the end of the day.

Concerned citizens have been trying their best to fight this menace. Babalola (2006) classified examination malpractices as acts of indiscipline. Afemikhe (2007) expresses concern on the public outcry about confidence in examinations conducted due mainly to examination misconduct and irregularities. In the attempt to reduce examination malpractices to the barest minimum in our society, to what extent are the civil society are carried along? Quoting the words of Gyimah – Boadi:

As the main stakeholders in national governance and ultimate victims of Corruption, Civil Society is a key sector in the fight against corruption. Civil society in general and the media in particular as well as moral and religious leaders can help to create awareness, deepen appreciation of deleterious consequences, and generate demand for effective measures to reduce corruption. This is important for getting

political leaders and policy makers to initiate reforms against corruption.

Following the holistic approach campaign by the ICPC Act 2000 to fight against corruption, which encompasses enforcement, prevention and educational measures (<http://www.icpc.gov.ng/history.php>), it could be observed that the last two measures seem to be neglected. This might be as a result of non – involvement of religious institutions to which an average Nigerian belongs, in the fight. The following reasons were provided by Akintola in “The tide Online (2007)” why roles of religious institutions are prominent in the fight against examination malpractices:

- ⇒ ‘The Imam, Pastors and other religious leaders know their members and are close to them, it is therefore easy for them to separate the Wheat from the Chaff’.
- ⇒ An average Nigerian is a religious person, the religious institutions they belong are in a better position to screen them and clean the stable thereafter.
- ⇒ They also have the capacity to exercise control over dirty members.
- ⇒ They have the capacity to sensitize both students and parents on the menace of examination malpractices.

The review of past literature reveals that the roles of the religious institutions to fight examination malpractices have always been suggested. No attempt in the past has been made to get to the grass root and investigate how the roles are being played and how valid and effective are those roles in the fight against examination malpractices in Nigeria. These informed the urgent need for this paper that empirically investigated the effect which the activities of religious institutions have on the fight against examination malpractices by their members. The findings would definitely reveal those roles that needed to be enhanced to reduce examination malpractices in Nigerian Communities.

The Objectives of the Study

Based on the above background, the following form the objectives of the study:

- To investigate the examination malpractices tendencies in Nigeria

- To find out the effect of closeness to religious leaders on Nigerians’ fight against examination malpractices.
- To investigate the impact of religious association membership on Nigerians’ fight against examination malpractices.
- To establish the effect of Nigerians’ involvement in religious activities on their fight against examination malpractices.

Research Questions

The following research questions shall be answered based on the stated objectives above:

- (1) How aggressive are Nigerians on their fight against examination malpractices?
- (2) Is the aggressive fight of Nigerians against examination malpractices a function of the quality of moral instruction received from affiliated religious group?
- (3) Is the aggressive fight of Nigerians against examination malpractices a function of their closeness to religious Leaders?
- (4) Does commitment to religious activities bring about aggressive fight against examination malpractices in Nigeria?

Methodology

Research Design

The survey design was adopted for the study.

Sample:

Stratified and judgmental Sampling techniques were used to select 100 respondents from each of Northern, Southern and Eastern parts of Nigeria. In all, 300 people constituted the sample. The sample comprises students and adults.

Instrument

Roles of Religious Institutions on the fight Against Examination Malpractices Questionnaire (RRIFAEMQ)

This instrument was designed to obtain information on the roles which religious institutions play on the fight against examination malpractices in Nigeria. It consists of two Sections: Section A sought personal information from the respondents while Section B presents three areas (Relationship with religious leaders, attitude towards religious activities and the fight against examination malpractices) on which respondents indicated their positions. The Cronbach Reliability Coefficient Alpha estimated on RRIFAEMQ was 0.81. This

implies that the instrument posses high internal consistency.

Procedure

Four research assistants were used to administer the questionnaire (RRIFAEMQ) to the selected respondents from Northern, Southern and Eastern parts of Nigeria.

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics: frequency count, percentage, cross tabulation and graphical illustrations were used to analyze and present the data collected for this study.

Result and Findings

Research Question One

How aggressive are Nigerians on their fight against corruption?

Table 1: Aggressive positions of Nigerians on their fight against corruption

	Item	Disagreed		Agreed	
		Freq	%	Freq	%
1.	Anybody found guilty of examination malpractices should be sentenced to death.	223	74.4	77	25.6
2.	Examination malpractices should not be called corruptions.	219	73	81	27
3.	Life imprisonment should be the punishment for committing examination malpractices.	169	56.3	131	43.7
4.	A person found guilty of examination malpractices should be disowned by his / her family.	204	68	96	32
5.	Society should disown the cheat	145	48.3	155	51.7
6.	Certificates of anybody involved in examination malpractices should be seized by the government.	77	25.6	223	74.4
7.	Examination malpractices should not be punishable.	230	76.7	70	23.3
8.	I will dissociate from a friend if found guilty of examination malpractices.	110	36.6	190	63.3
9.	Religious institutions should ex – communicate any member found guilty of examination malpractices.	141	47	159	53
10.	Since men are not angels, those found guilty of examination malpractices should be left alone.	228	76	72	24

Table 1, presents the positions of the respondents on items that bother on their fight against corruption. A sizable number, 77(25.6%) of the respondents indicated their support that 'anybody found guilty of examination malpractices should be sentenced to death' while majority, 223(74.4%) disagreed. Among the respondents, 81(27%) indicated that 'examination malpractices should not be called corruptions', but 219(73%) disagreed with this. A reasonable number, 131(43.7%) of the respondents indicated that 'life imprisonment should be the punishment for

committing examination malpractices' but this was opposed by 169(56.3%) of them.

Among the respondents, 96(32%) indicated that a person found guilty of examination malpractices should be disowned by his / her family' while 204(68%) disagreed. Interestingly, 155 (51.7%) of the respondents indicated that 'society should disown the cheat', 145(48.3%) however disagreed with the view. Majority of the respondents, 239 (74.4%) indicated their support that 'Certificates of anybody involved in examination malpractices should be seized by the government but 77(25.6%) of them disagreed with

this. Some 70 (23.3%) of the respondents indicated that examination malpractices should not be punishable. Majority, 230(76.7%) of them, disagreed with the above view.

Many, 190(63.3%) of the respondents indicated that they would dissociate from friends if found guilty of examination malpractices but some, 110(36.6%) of them indicated that they would not. More than half, 159(53%) of the respondents indicated that 'religious institutions should ex - communicate any member found guilty of examination malpractices while 141(47%) disagreed with this. Some, 72(24%) of the

respondents indicated that, 'since men are not angels, those found guilty of examination malpractices should be left alone' but majority, 228(76%) of them opposed the view. The above findings show that not all Nigerians are aggressive on the fight against examination malpractices.

Research Question Two

Is the aggressive fight of Nigerians against examination malpractices a function of the quality of moral instruction received from affiliated religious group?

Table .2: Impact of quality of moral instruction on aggressive fight of Nigerians against examination malpractices

Level of fight against examination malpractices	Quality of moral instructions received from affiliated religious groups.			
	Low	Moderate	High	Total
Less Aggressive	20 (25.3%)	37 (28.2%)	19 (21.1%)	76 (25.3%)
Aggressive	38 (48.1%)	57 (43.5%)	34 (37.8%)	129 (43.0%)
Very Aggressive	21 (26.6%)	37 (28.2%)	37 (41.1%)	95 (31.7%)
Total	79 (100%)	131 (100%)	90 (100%)	300 (100%)

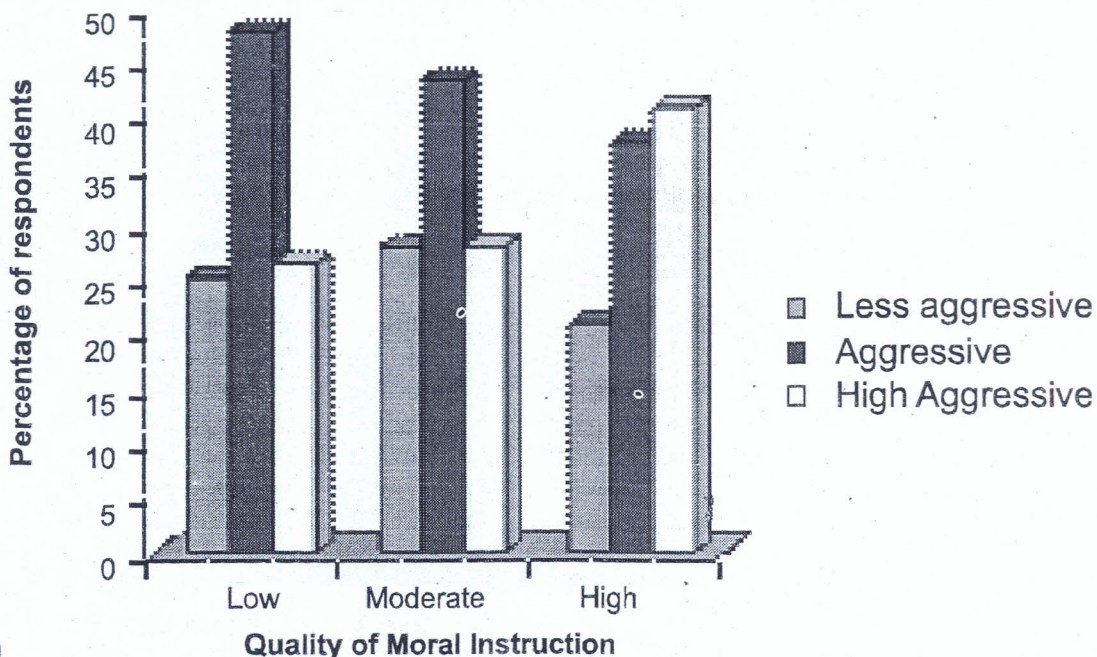


Fig.1

Table 2 and fig.1 show that, among 79 respondents that indicated that the quality of moral instruction they received from their affiliated religious group was low as shown in table 2; 20(25.3%), 38(48.1%) and 21(26.6%) indicated less aggressive, aggressive and very aggressive respectively on their fight against examination malpractices. Among 131 respondents that indicated moderate moral instruction from affiliated religious groups, 37(28.2%), 57(43.5%) and 37(28.2%) also indicated less aggressive, aggressive and very aggressive respectively on their fight against examination malpractices. Amidst 90 respondents that indicated High moral instruction from affiliated religious group, 19(21.1%),

34(37.8%) and 37(41.1%) indicated less aggressive, aggressive and very aggressive respectively on their fight against examination malpractices.

It is observed that the percentage of respondents with High quality of moral instructions from their affiliated religious groups who are very aggressive in their fight against examination malpractices is higher than those with moderate and low quality of moral instructions.

Research Question Three

Is the aggressive fight of Nigerians against examination malpractices a function of their closeness to religious leaders?

Table 3: Impact of Nigerians' closeness to religious leaders on their fight against Examination Malpractices

Level of fight against Examination Malpractices	Level of closeness to Religious Leader			
	Not Close	Close	Very Close	Total
Less Aggressive	19 (28.4%)	34 (21.8%)	23 (29.9%)	76 (25.3%)
Aggressive	29 (43.3%)	75 (48.1%)	25 (32.5%)	129 (43.0%)
Very Aggressive	19 (28.4%)	47 (30.1%)	29 (37.7%)	95 (31.7%)
Total	67 (100%)	156 (100%)	77 (100%)	300 (100%)

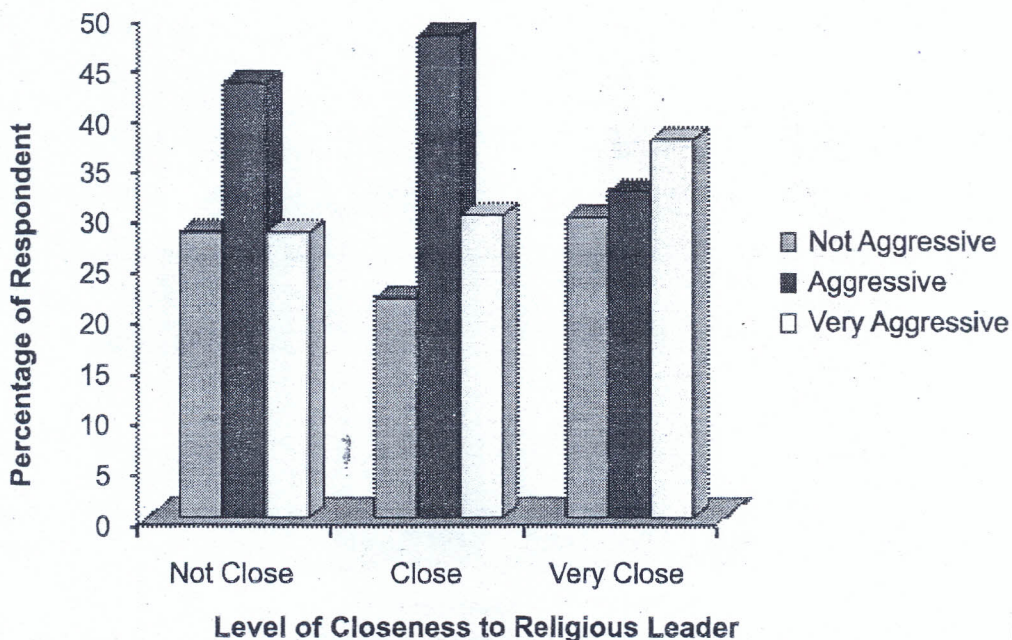


Fig. 2

Table 3 and fig. 2 reveal that, of the 67 respondents that indicated that they were not close to their religious leaders, 19(28.4%), 29(43.3%) and 19(28.4%) indicated that they were less aggressive, aggressive and very aggressive respectively in their fight against examination malpractices in Nigeria. Similarly, among 156 respondents that indicated that they are close to their religious leaders, 34(21.8%), 75(48.1%), and 47(30.1%) indicated that in their fight against examination malpractices they are 'Not aggressive, they are aggressive and they are very aggressive respectively.

The respondents that indicated that they are very close to their religious leaders pose a

different picture. Among 77 respondents, 23(29.9%), 25(32.5%) and 29(37.7%) indicated that in their fight against examination malpractices in Nigeria, they are not aggressive, they are aggressive and they are very aggressive respectively. It is observed therefore that greater percentage of Nigerians who are very close to their religious leaders are very aggressive in their fight against examination malpractices.

Research Question Four;

Does commitment to religious activities bring about aggressive fight against examination malpractices in Nigeria?

Table 4: Effect of Nigerians' Commitment to Religious Activities on their fight against Examination Malpractices.

Level of fight against Examination Malpractices	Level of commitment to Religious Activities.			
	Low	Moderate	High	Total
Less Aggressive	20 (28.6%)	30 (21.7%)	26 (28.3%)	76 (25.3%)
Aggressive	28 (40.0%)	65 (47.1%)	36 (39.1%)	129 (43.0%)
Very Aggressive	22 (31.4%)	43 (31.2%)	30 (32.6%)	95 (31.7%)
Total	70 (100%)	138 (100%)	92 (100%)	300 (100%)

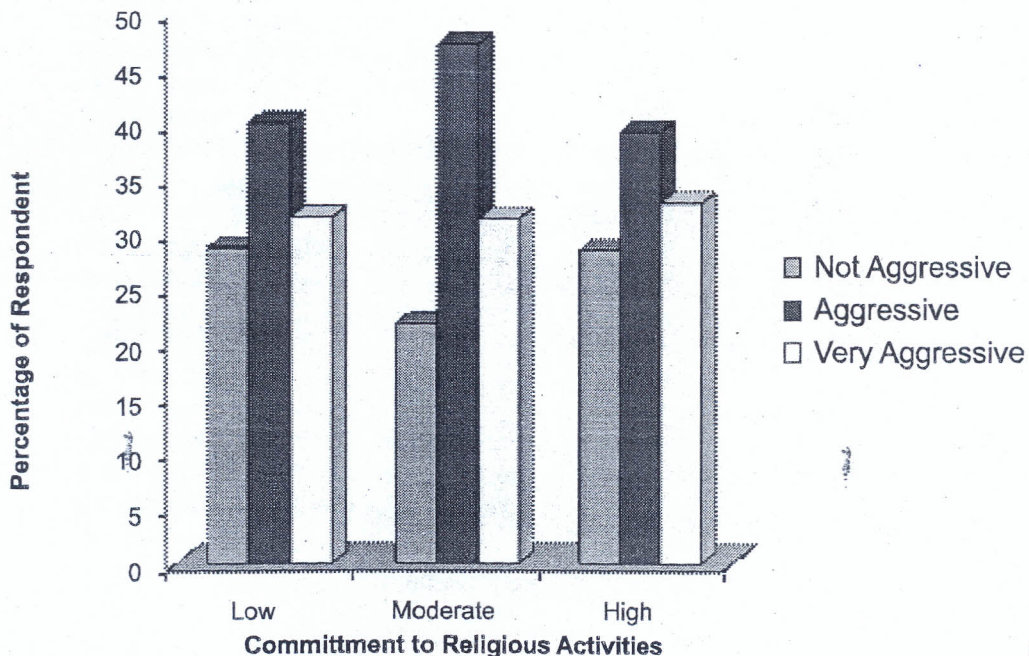


Fig.3

Of the 70 respondents that indicated that their commitment to religious activities is very low as shown in table 4 and fig.3, 20(28.6%), 28(40.0%) and 22(31.4%) indicated that they are not aggressive, they are aggressive and they are very aggressive respectively in their fight against examination malpractices. From the total number of 138 respondents who indicated that the level of their commitment to religious activities is moderate, 30 (21.7%), 65(47.1%) and 43(31.3%) indicated that they are not aggressive, they are aggressive and they are very aggressive respectively in their fight against examination malpractices.

Among 92 respondents that indicated that they are highly committed to religious activities, 26(28.3%), 36(39.1%) and 30(32.6%) indicated that they are not aggressive, they are aggressive and they are very aggressive respectively in their fight against examination malpractices in Nigeria.

The percentage of those who are highly committed to religious activities and are very aggressive against examination malpractices is slightly higher than those who are either moderately or not committed religious activities.

Summary of the findings

It was found in this study that:

- (i) A good number of Nigerians are still not aggressive in their fight against examination malpractices.
- (ii) Greater percentage of Nigerians who received high quality moral instructions from their affiliated religious groups are very aggressive in their fight against examination malpractices.
- (iii) Greater percentage of Nigerians who are very close to their religious leaders are also very aggressive in their fight against examination malpractices.
- (iv) The percentage of Nigerians who are highly committed to religious activities and are also aggressive in their fight against examination malpractices is slightly higher than those who are either moderately or not committed religious activities.

Discussion

Test is important in the educational process, because it is the major means by which the level of attainment or accomplishment of educational outcomes (whether cognitive, affective or psychomotor) is determined. It is usually utilized to determine the level to which a particular knowledge area and/or skill has been acquired by a learner or participant in a course. Therefore, test can be seen as a regulated procedure to sample behaviour as well as to describe the behaviour in terms of scores or categories. It is worth noting that the essence of test does not lie in just determining achievement, but also to predict ability and other types of behaviour. If the purpose of a test must be realized, the test must be protected from malpractices.

The Quality of moral instructions which Nigerians have from their affiliated religious groups is found to have effect on their aggressiveness in their fight against examination malpractices. Regardless of the type of religion to which one belongs, the expectation is that such religion should shape the moral lifestyle of members.

The findings of this study seems to support Gylman – boadi's (2000) submission that:

Anti-corruption work is often a lonely project. Co-operation among civil society organization, NGO's and other advocacy groups in their common efforts to promote transparency, accountability, and integrity in public administration as well as the private sector will increase their collective clout and produce positive synergies.

It is surprising that some Nigerians that are very close to religious leaders and committed to religious activities are still less aggressive in their fight against examination malpractices. This reveals the extent to which Nigerian's Society has negatively influenced the citizens. Akintola's (2007) suggested roles that might be the best option. He supported the fact that most decent and upright Nigerians will not want to get involved in examination malpractices because of the general belief that examination malpractices is a dent on student's personality. Since an average Nigerian is a religious person, the religious institutions to which they belong are in a better position to prepare their minds against examination malpractices. More importantly, religious institutions have the capacity

to exercise control over wayward members. The religious institutions will gain more credibility as champions of transparency, integrity, accountability and malpractice-free examinations if they themselves practice what they teach.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following are hereby recommended:

- (i) Religious leaders should rise up to their responsibilities through sound moral teaching instead of running after monetary gains from members.
- (ii) Government should encourage moral instructions through religious institutions and media so that citizens would benefit from the teachings and get orientated.
- (iii) Special committees appointed by government on eradication of examination malpractices should include representatives from religious institutions because they are very close to people.
- (iv) The approach of 'Catch them young' should be employed by stakeholders in Nigeria's education industry by integrating religious instructions to school curriculums at all levels of education. This will enhance preparation of God – fearing students and leaders for tomorrow.

Conclusion

Religious institutions have been seriously infected by the full – blown cancer of examination malpractices like the society itself. Many seem not to have trust in many religious leaders again because of their covetousness, lack of integrity when it comes to moral matters and non – accountability. This study has empirically revealed the exploits that could be done in combating examination malpractices in Nigeria if religious institutions can rise up to their responsibilities imposed on them by the challenges of the time. Nigeria can then reach that expected examination malpractice – free height if

all the identified roles of the religious institutions are adequately played.

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