

TRENDS IN HI-TECH EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES: LESSONS FROM NIGERIA

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Abstract

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have revolutionized every sphere of human endeavor including education. However, the use of ICTs in Education is not without challenges. One of the major challenges of ICTs in education is examination malpractice. Educational assessment and evaluation are the means through which the attainment of educational objectives is validated. Examination malpractice is considered as a huge challenge to these processes.

This paper focuses on the trends and threats of hi-tech examination malpractice in the Nigerian educational system. It discusses the factors that precipitate examination malpractices and implications on the attainment of educational objectives. The paper identified proliferation of mobile phones and other private digital assistants (PDAs) as a major driving factor for e-cheating. It further outlined corruption, poor funding, legal and moral issues as challenges militating against efforts to end the ugly trend. It concludes that the co-operation of Government, parents, school administrators, examination bodies and security agencies is required to chart a way forward.

Keywords: Examination malpractice, Information and Communication Technology, Hi-tech, Education, Assessment and Evaluation, e-cheating, Nigeria.

1 INTRODUCTION

Twenty-first century has witnessed unprecedented development and deployment of hi-technologies in all facets of human endeavors. The emerging technologies enhance speed, accuracy and versatility of diverse functionalities. The devices include the mobile phones, computers, Personal digital assistants (PDAs), I-pads, digital calculators etc. Literature abounds with tremendous benefits of hi-tech in improving the quality of human lives. In the same vein, there is a growing incidence of inappropriate use of hi-technologies which has resulted into cybercrimes, corruption, and numerous social vices. The unfortunate thing is that it has led to discovery of new methods of academic dishonesty through technology-mediated approaches.

The word 'hi-tech' simply put is a short form for high technology, also known as advanced technology, or technology of the 21st century. The Merriam Webster's dictionary defines 'hi-tech' as "technology involving the production or use of advanced or sophisticated devices". These emerging devices are supposed to enhance the activities carried out by individuals to ensure speed and accuracy are attained and at such achieve the best result that can ever be. The devices as mentioned earlier with the availability of internet are used to connect, interact and communicate with people- friends, families, business associates, students, teachers, mentors and others. Unfortunately as earlier alluded, these devices are now used to undermine academic integrity.

Examination is a test given to examinees to ascertain their level of knowledge or understanding on a particular or various subject matters in a field of study. It is often given in order to determine how much knowledge grasp a candidate has got. Okoye (1986) as cited by [1] states that 'examination is an organized assessment technique which presents individuals with series of questions or tasks geared toward ascertaining the individual's acquired skill and knowledge'. It is a formal means of testing student's knowledge or ability in a particular subject especially by means of written and oral questions or practical exercises (Stephen, 2008) as cited by [1]. [2] posits that an examination is an instrument for decision-making on the performance and consequently on the job opportunity and education advancement for an individual. In most parts of the world including Nigeria, the result of an examination goes a long way to show the level of intelligence or competence of a student and subsequently determines the judgment of the examiner on the examinee.