

Alleviating Examination Malpractices in Nigeria's Tertiary Institutions through Human Values Education

Grace Olufolake Olufunmike Alofun, Ph.D

Tayo Raymond Ezekiel Eegunlusi, Ph.D

Grace Olukemi Adebola, Ph.D

Marcel Ikechukwu Sunday Onyibor, Ph.D

Moses Oludare Aderibigbe, Ph.D

Mayokun Joyce Olowoniyi, Ph.D

Kehinde Falana

Department of General Studies,

School of Physical Sciences,

Federal University of Technology, Akure

Abstract

In recent times, examination malpractices (EMs) have become a conspicuous and prevalent form of misconduct in Nigeria's tertiary institutions. Despite various regulations and interventions by government agencies and school administrators, through policy interventions, curriculum reforms, and the use of information and telecommunications technology (ICT), the yearly number of expelled students as a result of this academic fraud is on the increase. This surge is worrisome because it not only threatens the integrity and quality of education but also undermines individual and national development. The origin of examination malpractice is attributed to moral decadence and the neglect of fundamental values, has been the subject of extensive research. Yet, human value education, which is one of the key strategies capable of providing solutions to the problem of EMs, is given less attention. This paper employed the methods of conceptual and historical analysis, considering the postulations of three prominent philosophers (Plato, Aristotle, and Kant).who have discussed human values. It pursued the objective of filling the above lacuna by showing how emphasis on the importance of virtues, through the teaching of value education, can shape moral conduct. Thus, it argued for the necessity of introducing and teaching human values, particularly at the entry points of early education, to shape students' young and malleable minds so that they can imbibe good moral conduct that can discourage examination misconduct(s). These approaches aim at inculcating in students the right moral attitude to resist unethical conduct/behaviours so as to act right.

Keywords: Alleviating, Examination Malpractice, Values Education, Institutions

Introduction

Education, whether informal or formal, is the means of acquiring knowledge that leads to the development of skills, attitude, habits, values, that prepares individuals for the task of positively impacting society in all its spheres. As part of formal education, tertiary education is a tool which the government and the populace depend on to harvest a competent workforce, with requisite expertise, that will serve in different capacities and contribute positively to its socio-economic and political development (Olagbemiro, 2014). The Federal ministry of Education (2007) expresses the Nigeria Government's desire to make tertiary education relevant to manpower training, self-reliance, national unity and international understanding. This is why, apart from working in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4), which affirms the necessity of quality education, the Nigeria government aim at meeting the remaining 16 SDGs, is through quality education.

While the above national drive is lofty, the quest for certification by institutions and establishments' is endangering this objective. This poses a monumental and detrimental challenge to national integrity. Regrettably, despite various regulations and interventions by government agencies and school administrators in recent times, especially through policy interventions, curriculum reforms and the use of information and telecommunications technology (ICT), the number of rusticated students a result of EM is on the increase. Examination, which is a formal test of knowledge or ability in particular subjects, especially by means of answering questions or practical exercises (Bilyakovska, 2022), is generally adopted. As such, it has become a process of determining whether or not candidates have reached a certain level of performance, competence and learning that would certify them to be promoted to a higher level, or ascertain their qualifications for certain public and private positions at graduation ("Norms of Certification", 2023¹). On a definite note, EMs are various irregularities or negative acts or the deliberate acts of wrongdoing or cheating by candidates or any group of candidates before, during and after examinations (Bibi, Muhammad & Dahiru, 2020). Types of EM include impersonation, plagiarism, bribery, theft, falsification and collusion (Njoku & Njoku, 2016).

The surge of EMs in Nigeria is worrisome because it not only threatens the integrity and quality of education but also undermines individual and national development (Okanezi & Eguzozie, 2018). The origin of EMs, attributed to moral decadence and the neglect of fundamental values, has been the subject of extensive research. Yet, human value education, which is one of the key strategies capable of providing solutions to the problem of EMs, is given less attention. In order to avert this scourge of EMs in Nigerian universities, this research proposes the introduction of human values education to achieve the task of attitudinal changes and modification of conduct among students. To address this, this paper adopts the methods of conceptual and historical analyses through using the conceptual insights of prominent philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, and Kant who have discussed human values extensively in relation to education. Hence, the main objective of the paper is to stress the importance of virtues through the teaching of values as what is essential for shaping moral conduct.

Literature Review

Examination Malpractices is described by scholars as a deliberate and erroneous act, contrary to official rules and regulations governing an examination (Eneh and Eneh, 2014; Ndifon& Cornelius-Ukpepi, 2014). Alhassan and Anya (2017) added that EM is a deed or prearrangement from which an examinee is programmed to derive illegal and illicit advantage over and above other candidates in respect of a given examination. In Nigeria, Onyibe, Uma & Ibina (2015) reported that EM first occurred in 1914 when the Senior Cambridge Local Examination leaked. The next case was in 1948, when the history paper in Nigeria was cancelled for having a foreign paper related to the examination being conducted. In addition, the West African Examination Council, established in 1952, discovered leakages in the First School Leaving (WASSCE) and General Certificate of Education (GCE) Examinations, respectively, in 1963.

While condemning the disreputable act as detrimental to the well-being of society, scholars such as Alhassan and Anya (2017), Ndifon& Cornelius-Ukpepi (2014), Oko & Adie (2016), and Danmole (2023) have identified and organised the causal factors of EMs into the following categories:

- a. Society-related factors, which include undue emphasis on certificates, poor staffing of schools, laxity in prosecuting offenders, and inadequate funding;
- b. Institution-related factors – too difficult examination questions, poor invigilation, and lack of conducive examination conditions;
- c. Teacher-related factors – threat to fail students, lack of commitment, anxiety caused by non-completion of syllabus, obsolete course materials, and incessant strike actions;
- d. d. Learner-related factors – fear of failure, inadequate preparation, and desire to meet societal expectations, low self-esteem, and
- e. Group related factors, which include activities of parents/guardians, examination officials, examination boards, computer operators, and law enforcement agents.

Eneh and Eneh (2014), in a not completely dissenting voice, opined that EM is rampant in Nigeria because the education system lacks the appropriate education technology (AET), which aids in producing entrepreneur-ready school-leavers and graduates by enabling the learners to discover the environment and derive skills for economic self-reliance and poverty eradication. McCabe & Trevino (1997) averred that peer pressure or behaviour was by far the strongest influence on academic dishonesty. According to Anderman and Murdock (2007), students who belong to clubs, fraternities and other groups learn the strategies, innovations, motivations, values, beliefs, rationalisations and behaviour of their peers.

Other studies show that students model peer behaviour under certain social conditions, gender factors, for instance, while McCabe & Trevino (1997), and Hughes & McCabe (2006) argued that male students engage in EM more than female students, study by Uyanah (2020) showed that girls are as equally prone to engage in EM as boys in other to show affinity to and help a friend. EM, therefore, is a cankerworm that has devastating consequences on the educational system and society at large. It leads to a decline in the quality of education gained in the citadels of learning, and this has a resultant negative impact on the quality of the workforce, who are the drivers of the socio-economic sphere of the country. Thus, EM affects nation

building because candidates who graduated from the university through such fraudulent means would become square pegs in round holes when gainfully employed in the workforce of the nation (Okó & Adie, 2016). According to Newsman (2008), cited in Alofun (2014), the relationship between teaching and learning is that those taught acquire a prescribed body of knowledge and sets of values, which are taken to reflect a society's selection of what it wants most to transmit to its citizens and requires the future workforce to do.

One can infer from the literature reviewed so far that EM impedes the correlation between teaching and learning in the tertiary institutions, and many products of these institutions fall short of their expectations and are found unfit for employment in many companies. As Babalola (2007), Chiemeké, Longe, Longe & Shaib (2008), Adekola (2013), cited in Alofun (2014) and Abdulkareem&Fasasi (2012) noted, there is a mismatch between teaching in the educational institutions and the needs of labour markets. If graduates of the tertiary institutions fall below expectations, then it means that something is fundamentally wrong. We can situate EM as one of the effects of the gap between teaching and learning in the universities. Consequently, there is a backlash on the Ivory Tower of learning, for as Olagbemiro (2014:7) asserts, the Universities are regarded as the Ivory Tower ... and the staff ... are the torch bearers while the students are those to whom the torch is passed on. Therefore, Nigeria's formal workforce is "manufactured" in the universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, technical colleges and other tertiary institutions.

Different solutions have been proffered for the elimination of EM in the tertiary institutions of learning. Eneh and Eneh (2014) opined that the education system in Nigeria lacked appeal, attraction, credibility, and relevance, that it stresses the study of books and charts to fill the mind, like a vessel with much dangerous information that are blurred together and become incoherent, and thereby leaves room for EM by students who could not make head or tail of what they have learned. Thus, they recommended that appropriate educational technology (AET) be introduced into the educational system to engender entrepreneurship drive, build entrepreneurial skills, impart self-confidence in learners and empower them to tap into the munificent natural endowment in Nigeria.

Okó and Adie (2016), using the Cross River University of Technology as a case study, advocated and recommended that to curb EM in the tertiary institutions there must be attitudinal or value change from certificate acquisition to knowledge acquisition, reduction in students population per invigilator, building of examination halls to accommodate sizeable number of students, with wire net windows to forestall free flow of extraneous materials to and fro examination halls, and a general change in societal value system and attitude in the examination systems as measures.

While most of the above literature identified the causes and effects of EM, as well as recommended attitudinal change, none dwelt exclusively on the inculcation of human values to curb the negative effects of examination in tertiary institutions. This is the lacuna that this research work aims to address.

Values

The concept of value, on a general note, is wide in scope, but with particular reference to the context of this paper, it is through the lens of morality and education. Morality is a referent for the rules, standards or principles by which humans decide the conduct that is considered right or wrong, just or unjust, good or bad or good or evil. Morality is sometimes underpinned by considerations of values. Values are the fundamental standards or principles that individuals or societies hold as being essential, valuable or dear to them (Mohapatra&Serva, 2023). In other words, they are the ideals, goals, or attitudes that are important to an individual or a society. They serve as the guiding principles or standards of behaviour, providing a moral compass for navigating choices and decisions. Aravind (n.d) defines values as principles that reflect one's judgment of what is important in life, what promotes well-being, or what is prioritised according to a need level. To Lawrence Kohlberg, learning morals is a staged process, and only a few can rise beyond conventional morality to find their own subjective understanding of morality (Kohlberg, 1971; Kohlberg, 1981). However, when the individual can transcend the conventional morality to “find their own subjective understanding of morality,” then values are born.

Values and virtues are interconnected because they both shape human character. While values relate to the principles considered desirable that guide conduct, virtues are the moral qualities we possess to make good decisions so as to live the good life. Virtues such as truth, care, fairness, kindness, honesty, justice, duty, and peace are integral parts of the human identity, towards which societies and individual endeavours gravitate. As Sogolo (2004) posited, feeling and practising care, seeking peace of mind and adhering to truthfulness are intrinsic human values found among all men in all societies at all times. No society can last long if the majority of its citizens embrace the opposite of these values, say when people live on vices such as dishonesty, ideas of falsehood, hate, violence, conflicts and such other tendencies constituting tendencies towards self-immolation. To this end, having defined EM as a dishonest act, and the majority of those who engage in the dishonest acts are in the largest population of the country, to protect the nation from self-immolation, therefore, there must be a way to cultivate the mind of the teeming youthful population, to imbibe the values which promote human well-being and order in the society. Values such as truth, care, fairness, kindness, honesty, justice, duty and peace are needed to sustain and strengthen value education.

Value education, according to Gaur, Asthana, & Bagaria (2023), is concerned with teaching and picking up the important things in life, what is right and what is wrong, what to do and what not to do, as human beings who desire to live a fulfilling life. The scholars reasoned that the day-to-day interactions in the family, community and society in general usually help us to develop these values, but that, as of today, these avenues for learning values have been compromised, and we tend to pick up our values from other sources, such as social media. Moreover, Gaur and his co-authors maintained that social institutions have failed, and efforts in reviving and strengthening them will take a while. They argued that the educational institutions can play a crucial role in providing a comprehensive understanding of human values by developing a holistic, humane worldview, which is in the interest of living a fulfilling life.

In the same vein, Francisco González (2012), maintained that the world is now changing at an unprecedented pace, as it is being driven by technological development and globalisation, and that the speed, depth and measure of the changes to which people are subjected continually cast doubts on many things that we once believed. The world process generates uncertainty, imbalances and conflicts both socially and personally. He argued further that, as the problem is being exacerbated by the economic and financial crisis, there is a need for shared values and ethics, because they are fundamental to the proper functioning of the economic, political and social network and, thus, for the well-being and development of the potential of every world citizen.

Philosophers' Ideas on Values, Good Conduct and Education

Philosophers have, at different times, shown how the teaching of human values can shape moral conduct and virtuous acts. We will look at three philosophers whose views on education are important to this work, namely: Plato, Aristotle and Kant. Plato's ideas on education, which can be found in the following books: *The Republic*, *The Laws*, *Meno*, *Gorgias* and *Protagoras*, emphasised the need for proper education of the citizen to create a moral and just society capable of producing a just people that can always perform a moral self-examination and are true and morally virtuous. To Plato, the main aim of education is to train and prepare the citizens for a just and harmonious society capable of producing morally true and virtuous citizens who can perform their roles, develop the society and keep it just and harmonious (Plato, 1997, *Protagoras*, 325d326c).

The training of the citizens should start early in life so that the roles they ought to play will be identified as they grow in life. (Plato, 1997, *Laws I*, 643e). The training or education should culminate in the development of rationality and wisdom in the philosopher-king, a person of high reason and wisdom, who will govern society to help its different parts or groups to play their roles well. The education that will produce the philosopher-king should be a lifelong one (Plato, 1997, *Republic*, VII, 540a). At the early stage of the education of the citizens, ideas should be screened, while only the things that can lead to moral virtuousness, truthfulness, courageous acts, and moderation should be taught (Plato, 1997, *Republic*, VIII, 543a-549b). By this, the state should have control over the training of children because their minds are flexible and easy to control (Plato, 1997, *Laws VII*, 804d).

Invariably, as revealed in Plato's allegory of the cave, education is supposed to enlighten the mind and help individuals to gain a good understanding of various issues affecting their existence after provoking a rational search for the truth (Plato, 1997, *Republic*, VII, 514-523). The educated person must escape the shadowy pit of ignorance after the attainment of knowledge, having a better and more real grasp of life issues than ordinary people who do not see beyond their noses. It is by this that society will train competent and virtuous people who can prioritise its happiness, by making wise decisions through focusing on the good of all, and by properly harmonising private and public interests.

To Aristotle, education aims at human happiness and self-realisation. "The man who is to be good must be well trained and habituated" (Aristotle, 1999, *Nicomachean Ethics*, X, 1180a). Thus, happiness is the main goal of education. Education trains people to be virtuous, and by being virtuous, they live a happy life and attain total self-realisation. Invariably, by the virtues

developed through education, which include courage, justice, temperance and wisdom, individuals can live meaningfully and contribute to societal development. Education's holistic development of human beings should focus on the harmony of their character, mind and body. It should help them to moderate between the two extremes of virtue and vice to attain the mean in behaviour, to develop the self and the society without compromising virtue. Thus, Aristotle considers the mean as what is virtuous.

By definition, the mean is what lies between the two extremes of excess (too much) and deficiency (too little). However, this may not be a strict mathematical midpoint, but it is a fair and relative situation. Though we will just name a few that are relevant to our work, Aristotle identified several virtues as the mean. To him, courage is the mean between cowardice (deficiency) and rashness (excess). The coward avoids risks, the rash is reckless, but the courageous balances fear with confidence and faces what is dangerous with utmost wisdom. Temperance is the mean between being insensible (deficiency) and being self-indulgent (excess) (Aristotle, 1999, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk II, 1107-1110; Aristotle, *Politics*, VIII, 1342b). The temperate is moderate in the way he approaches and enjoys pleasure. The insensible shuns pleasure, while the self-indulgent is uncontrollable in the enjoyment of pleasure. Liberality, wise handling of money, whether giving or taking it, is the mean between the extremes of being stingy (deficiency) and being prodigal or wasteful (excess). Having proper ambition is the mean between the extremes of lack of ambition (deficiency) and being too ambitious (excess). Truthfulness is the mean between the extremes of false or deprecatory modesty (deficiency) and boastfulness or exaggeration (excess). Modesty, respect for moral rules or boundaries, is the mean between the extremes of being shameless (deficiency) and being bashful (excess).

Kant identified two rules by which humans run their lives: the hypothetical imperative and the categorical imperative. The hypothetical imperative is conditional in nature. It deals with the way of attaining certain ends by following certain conditions to achieve one's aim. Whereas the categorical imperative aims at not using people to achieve ends but letting them be ends in themselves. Kant has many formulations of the categorical imperative, four of which are: the "universal law" (Kant, 2015), the "humanity law" (Kant, 2017), the "kingdom of Ends" (Kant, 2020) and the "law of autonomy" (Kant, 2011). Respectively, they are stated thus: (i) "Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature"; (ii) "Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always as an end and never as a means to an end"; (iii) "All maxims that stem from autonomous legislation ought to harmonize with a possible kingdom of ends as with a kingdom of nature."; (iv) "Act as if the maxims of your action were to become a universal law of nature through your will."

Invariably, a maxim becomes a law when an act is performed consistently. In dealing with the variants of the categorical imperative, common to them is that **individuals should never act unless they will their "maxim" (the reason for acting) to become universally applicable and leading to mutual respect because of wise choices deriving from acting in accordance with duty.** "In these various formulations, Kant expects persons to perform universally acceptable other-regarding actions which constitute general moral standards" (Eegunlusi, 2015). **Thus, the categorical imperative is the moral standard or principle stressing that one's reasons for performing an act should be that the performer of the act wishes his act to become the maxim**

that everyone in the world can imbibe. As discussed by Eegunlusi (2015) in his reflection on Kant's ideas,

To Kant, we are not just to be happy but be good. In being good, we need to give attention to our conduct. In doing this, Kant acknowledges the importance of acting based on duty. He thinks that duties are created by rules. Human action may run contrary to duty. It can also be in accordance with it and be carried out for different reasons than duty dictates. It may equally be performed because we lack other reasons for its performance, and act because it is our duty to do so. In seeking to understand what our duties are, Kant thinks we must not depend entirely on the passions and intuitions because they can mislead us. Rather, we must rely on a priori reasoning to arrive at a priori knowledge, which is obtainable without recourse to human experiences.

All the above, one way or the other, play out in Kant's views on education, in which he stresses the importance of dealing with the issues involving social responsibilities by allowing individuals to be autonomous. He believes that as humans develop moral principles, the moral principles will eventually shape their characters. As they get morally educated, they will develop autonomy and learn to make good moral judgements. To him, teachers are expected to train their students morally, to patriotically prioritise their duties to the state through devising a well-ordered curriculum that allows for a self-determined existence and acts influenced by critical reasoning and well-informed decisions. At this stage, while blending Kant's hypothetical and categorical imperatives, emphasising that individuals involved in examination issues need to follow certain conditions to achieve their goals to make things happen, we will emphasise the importance of virtue and moral duty in examination issues. Having outlined these philosophers' views, we will apply them to addressing Ems.

Addressing Examination Malpractice through Value Education: Plato and Aristotle in Focus

As seen above, philosophers have shown that teaching moral virtues can shape moral conduct and occasion morally virtuous acts, thereby promoting human values education. As emphasised by Plato, for there to be a just society, a nation's citizens must be educated to morally examine themselves and be morally virtuous. This should be inculcated early in life, as a child/student develops, whether at the initial entry point of his education or the various entry points along the different levels of his education (Kohlberg, 1984). This is necessary in Nigeria to assist children/students to appreciate the value of morality and develop the moral conscience to avoid vices, based on a very good understanding of issues that are morally virtuous and morally desirable. In the long run, this will help Nigerians to avert the moral crises that are the attendant consequences of lacking or improperly imbibing moral education.

Moral crises are imminent in every nation where people lack moral conscience and do not do a proper moral self-examination (Plato, 1997, *Apology*, 38a). One of the main problems of those involved in EMs – students and their accomplices – is that they do not think deeply about the moral implications of their activities or embark on thorough critical self-examination. In this situation, the salient questions they ought to ask themselves so as not to be immoral are

neglected. Children/ students in Nigeria should be trained to ask important questions and embark on proper self-examination to avoid a life of dishonesty, which leads to cheating and EM in school. The questions they should be taught to ask themselves include: Can I ever be regarded as a morally good person, one known for integrity, honesty, just moral standing, self-control, fair dealings, who is a good example to others and a pride to my nation, if I involve myself in EMs? Will cheating in an examination ever guarantee my having a moral collateral to be a patriotic person whom society can deeply respect, trust and cooperate with to ensure development? Involving myself in EMs, will my activities not violate human dignity, human freedom and self-respect, which will negatively reflect on my state in the comity of nations? By casting aspersion on educational integrity, through participation in EMs, will society ever consider me as a righteously courageous individual who can stand by its laws, defend the truth governing its affairs, or defend its national integrity in ways that guarantee peace and stability, or even consider me as a good or worthy ambassador deserving respect? EM can be curbed in any nation if students are taught to consciously and personally reflect on these questions (Eegunlusi, 2024).

Besides the above, the process of moral self-examination should affect every stratum of the Nigerian society, starting from the home (Plato, 1997, *Apology*, 38b-40b). Parents, in every family, should embark on self-examination to be effective in training their wards. Since this is basic to what they do and how they live in later years, socialising a nation's people, which should start early, should begin from the family, the primary agent of socialisation and the basic unit of society, which will inculcate in the child the ability to identify early the various divergent role expectations of the society.

In addition, parental self-examination can also help to train Nigerian children in manners that can lead to their pursuit of good and enviable moral conduct, as against what is obtainable in modern society, where some parents are the ones taking the lead in illicit moral conduct and examination practices. Parenting without a proper and high level of critical reasoning, wisdom and morally virtuous conduct will contribute to poor development of children and easily lead them to get involved in illicit examination practices without concern. Since people cannot model the moral conduct they lack or have not developed cannot be good role models to their children. A self-evaluation, with the mindset towards effecting positive changes in young people, will assist parents to be good role models. Good role models, parenting, usually spend their time impacting their children positively because of the legacy they wish to leave for posterity, their image and dignity, the integrity of their nations and the life they think is worth preserving for future generations. Paying attention to the emphasis on moral duty can help in this (Deign, 2010).

As seen in Aristotle's works, moderation can help the shaping of duties. Part of the personal orientation of self-examination parents' need is that of a proper understanding of moderation. Thus, Nigerian parents should train their children to be virtuous without going to any extreme in anything, if we follow Aristotle's teachings. Extremes can lead to violations of exam conduct (Eegunlusi, 2023). A rash or thoughtless action can lead to a violation of the courage to stand for the truth or promote morally virtuous acts, thereby revealing ignoble acts of EMs. Also, instead of being temperate and acting in accordance with good reason, self-indulgence in EM can ruin a good reputation, becoming an anathema, jeopardising the future. In the same way, shameless

and bashful involvement in EMs is already a denial of good, modest and sane conduct. Students who exhibit shameless and bashful examination conduct cannot be good contributors to the family and society, especially as the ideals for moral revolution concerning national integrity, cohesion and development are concerned, because their lack of a sense of morality and justice will continue to propel them towards immoral acts.

The family and the Nigerian society – through its various organs and institutions, viz: educational institutions, examination bodies; governmental arms (legislature, executive and judiciary; security agencies), non-governmental institutions (religious bodies, civil society groups, non-governmental organizations, etc.) and the media – should hugely influence Nigerian children's moral development through their programmes, by helping them to develop the consciousness of good moral conduct and reason well to moderate extremes (Eegunlusi, 2023). This can help them to be accountable to society, lead a disciplined life, consider the importance of a life of integrity, and the need to meaningfully contribute to societal growth through dedication to enviable moral conduct. Thus, they can be helped to act in line with moral duties, in which Kant prioritises rational reflections in his deontological ethics.

Application of Kant's Four Versions of the Categorical Imperative in Overcoming Examination Malpractices in Nigeria's Tertiary Institutions

Nigerian parents and society should aim at inculcating in their wards our earlier prescribed Kant's categorical imperative, namely, the “universal law”, the “humanity law”, the “kingdom of Ends” and the “law of autonomy.” Regarding EMs, the “universal law” which expects individuals to act such that their acts can become globally acceptable or universally applicable standards of moral conduct conveniently denies universal applicability of the practice of cheating during examinations because it is wrong. It should then be the joint duty of the family, society and the various institutions of society to ensure that individuals in society, students and everyone that can be linked to the conduct of examinations in any way, trained from childhood and at the various levels of their education, imbibe moral ideals and practice the right moral conduct that can make them avoid involvement in Ems.

Besides, in this respect, children should be trained such that their conduct will be socially appealing and respect the laws of the land. In Nigeria, there are various laws against EMs, instituted nationally and by the various educational institutions. Violating these is already a deep sign of contempt for the nation and the institutions that instituted the laws. Yet, because every just society plays by its own rules, which are implemented by its people to ensure the protection of morality and justice, any violation of the rules is already a conscious rebellion against these rules, which will not ensure that the society becomes well-ordered (Rawls, 2001). The society, through its various organs, should train its members to be morally upright, to have the moral conscience to obey its rules and keep it well-ordered or void of anarchy. Where examination rules are obeyed and EMs are avoided, educational order and national development will be ensured in the long run.

The “humanity law” does not expect an individual to be used as a means to an end or as mere cannon fodder in achieving self-interest, which implies that the family and society should train individuals from childhood not to use other humans as means to an end. Nigerian children/students who are involved in EMs are deceptively and disrespectfully using others,

their fellows, examiners, the entire academic and national educational systems, security agents, etc., as means to the end of passing examinations. One way by which these individuals can avoid using others as means to an end is to see them as the “kingdom of ends”. The “humanity law” then complements the law of the “kingdom of ends”, which considers the essentiality of acting in good faith for others' mutual respect and benefits or treating others well or with dignity by first putting them in our own shoes (Piromalli, 2015). Those who think like this will not wish to use others but will first consider their importance and refrain from acts injurious to their interests. Hence, to avoid cheating in examinations is to avoid using others for one's selfish interest (Eegunlusi, 2015). By this, one aims at promoting a sensible and enduring academic culture that can guarantee mutual respect, dedication to collective duty and a good sense of fairness to others and the nation at large.

The law of autonomy, which emphasises the need for acting such that one's acts can become autonomous conducts or determinant of good moral acts, or the idea of subjecting oneself to ones' personal rational legislation, as against allowing oneself to be personally controlled by emotions, expects individuals/students to act from duty in obedience to their self-given, self-ordained or self-governed moral rules (Eegunlusi, 2024). Considering this, to act against the academic community by participating in examination theft is a violation of personal morality and sensible rationality. This equally violates personal, corporate dignity and human sense of responsibility. Thus, to avoid societal anomalies and pressures brought about by EMs, individuals should be trained to develop virtuous rules that will govern their affairs and help them to be individuals who are not susceptible to Ems.

If given adequate attention, the above versions of Kant's categorical imperative can help Nigerian individuals/students to become good moral agents who are responsible for the consequences of their conduct and guard against violating moral norms, including abstaining from EMs, in accordance with the demands of human values.

However, in considering the superiority of the categorical imperative to the hypothetical imperative, the latter should not be jettisoned but, in a way, should complement the categorical imperative. By this, in Nigeria, parents and guardians, teachers, educational administrators, governments, etc., should encourage individuals they influence to act based on the hypothetical imperative, to be driven by good life goals, usually the reason for cheating in examinations to obtain good grades that will result in excellent certificates. Students should be trained to think beyond certificates and acquire knowledge that will enable them to acquire skills and competence (Olagbemiro, 2014). They will excel more if they allow themselves to be driven by the goals of success beyond the mere acquisition of certificates. They should be trained, through self-assessment and rational consideration for others' interests, to be morally virtuous, by consistently performing good moral acts and never acting unless they consider **their reasons for acting as what can be imbibed by all or model good moral conduct. Such can lead to wise choices; occasion self-respect, other-respect, and mutual respect, in conformity with the demands of moral duty as far as dealings regarding examination sanctity are concerned.**

Conclusion

Arguing from the angle of the importance of virtues which advocate for teaching of human value, especially at early family life of a child and at academic entry points, as means of addressing Ems and sanctity of examinations in Nigeria, this paper **advocate for application of the views of Plato, Aristotle and Immanuel Kant for introduction and inculcation of moral values and virtues at the early entry levels of all schools.**

It also advocates parental and societal contribution to the moral development of youths through proper training based on proper individual self-assessment and intentional moulding of children into highly responsible persons who, through good personal moral evaluation, can lead morally virtuous lives (Aristotle, 1999, *Nichomachean Ethics*, X, 1180a-1181b). This will aid in avoiding EMs, contributing to having very wise, rational and morally enlightened Nigerians. As a follow-up to this paper, the Nigerian society should fully boost parental efforts to intentionally educate the citizens and back this up with good laws. By concerted efforts, the philosopher-king in Plato's type of national education will produce citizens with an uncompromised moral standard. Thus, because of the malleable nature of the minds of children/young people, (Plato's and Aristotle's views,) the Nigerian state and its various agencies should influence them and assist students to develop into moral agents that can always in or out of examination halls.(Bibi, Muhammad &Dahiru, 2020). This may involve controlling the curriculum that is used in training students, since education can help them to get enlightened and gain a good understanding of the various issues of existence as well as contribute to raising them into wise, courageous, just, temperate, competent and virtuous people who can work things out based on proper self-realization and ingeniously balance private and public interests for overall advantage.

Recommendations

The paper suggests the following recommendations to curb Ems:

1. Educational institutions should focus on fostering the culture of integrity and ethical behaviour within schools at the point of entry, rather than relying solely on rules and punishment.
2. The schools should incorporate character education into their curriculum that will teach students about virtues like honesty, integrity and diligence.
3. Tertiary institutions should provide students with opportunities to practice ethical decision-making through case studies, discussions and real-life scenarios related to examination integrity.
4. Students should be encouraged to strive for excellence through diligent study and seeking help when needed, but not to the point of Ems.
5. Educational institutions should use teachers, alumni, and other positive role models to demonstrate virtuous behaviour that will inspire students to emulate them.
6. Tertiary institutions should strive to create a supportive community environment where students feel encouraged to uphold ethical standards and understand the natural consequences of unethical actions and the benefits of virtuous behaviour.
7. The laws guiding educational institutions on EMs should emphasise the consequences of immorality more than the punitive measures.

By integrating the above time-tested principles, educational institutions can create a culture where students are motivated to act ethically not just during examinations, but in all aspects of their lives. It is imperative, therefore, that we engage undergraduates of Nigerian tertiary institutions in value education to reorient them about EM, and to prepare them to live a meaningful life, allowing them to have a holistic perspective about life and existence, which will open channels for a happy and prosperous life.

Acknowledgement

We thank TETFUND, Nigeria for the approval of our project and the release of funds for actualizing the study. We appreciate the Management of Federal University of Technology, Akure, especially the Centre for Research and Development (CERAD) for facilitating the delivery of the first tranche of the grant that made it possible to commence the project. Reference number: TETF/DR&D/CE/UNI/AKURE/IBR/2024

Work Cited

- Abdulkareem, A. Y. & Fasasi, Y. A. (2012). Reforms in Higher Education and the Challenges of Globalisation. *Educational Thoughts*, 9(1), 4-11.
- Alhassan, A.B. & Anya, C.A. (2017). Forms and Consequences of Examination Malpractices in Nigeria's Schools and Universities: What Should the Stakeholders Do? *International Journal of Education, Training and Learning*, 1, (1), 9-21.
- Alofun, G. O. O. (2013). The Value System in Nigeria: The Need for Social Reconstruction. *International Journal of Advancement in Development Studies*. 8(1), 90-94.
- Alofun, G. O. O. (2014). Improving the Quality of Teaching in Nigeria's Higher Institutions. In A. S. Ayodele & A. S. Aremu (eds.), *Repositioning Nigeria's Tertiary Education for the 21st Century Global Market*. Intanitina Gim Publishers, 149-157.
- Anderman, E. M. & Murdock, T. (2006). *The Psychology of Academic Cheating*. New York. Academic Press.
- Aravind, A. (n.d). Ethics, Morals and Virtues. Retrieved on 11.09.2024, from, www.rajagiritech.ac.in
- Aristotle. *Nichomachean Ethics*. 1999. Bk X, 9, William D. Ross (Trans.). Kitchener: Batoche Books.
- Aristotle. 2017. *Politics*. C.D.C. Reeve (trans.) Cambridge University Press.
- Badru, O. R. & Eegunlusi, T.R.E. (2015). Colonial Legal Reasoning in the Post-Colonial African State: A Critique and a Defence of the Argument from African Metaphysical Epistemology. *Thought and Practice: A Journal of the Philosophical Association of Kenya (PAK) New Series*, 7 (2), 11-39.
- Bibi. M., Muhammad, D.K. & Dahiru, U. (2021) Types and Levels of Involvement in Examination Malpractice as perceived by Undergraduates in Gombe State University. [Ajol-file-journals_351_articles_205019_submission_proof_205019-4189-511747-1-10-20210324.pdf](https://ajol-file-journals_351_articles_205019_submission_proof_205019-4189-511747-1-10-20210324.pdf)
- Bilyakovska, O. 2022.** Test As An Effective Means Of Assessing The Quality Of Students' Knowledge, Academic Notes Series Pedagogical Science, 1(204):16-20. DOI:10.36550/2415-7988-2022-1-204-16-20.
- Onyibe, C.O., Uma, U.U. & Ibina, E. (2015). Examination Malpractice in Nigeria: Causes and Effects on National Development. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6 (26), 12-17.
- Danmole, B. (2023). The Menace of Examination Malpractice among Young People in Nigeria. *Human and Environmental Development Agenda*. A Non-Government Organisation Publication. Retrieved 20.8.2024, from, www.hedang.org.
- Deign, J. 2010. *Introduction to Ethics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Egunlusi, T. R. E (2013). Democracy, Federalism and Nigeria's Multi-Ethnic Culture. *Journal of Philosophy and Development*, 14 (1&2), 127-146.
- Egunlusi, T.R.E. (2023). Ethics and Moral Education. *African Journal of Stability & Development* 15 (1&2), 61-74.
- Egunlusi, T.R.E. (2024). Ethical Problems, Ethical Interrogations and Ethical Responses. *African Journal of Stability & Development*, 16 (1), 181-197.
- Egunlusi, T.R.E. 2024. Morality, Law and Civil Disobedience in Nigeria's Democratic Era. In Tayo R.E. Egunlusi, Mike O. Omilusi, Michael A. Adeoye & Tope E. Akinyemi (eds). *Democracy and Democratic Governance in Nigeria: Principles, Practices, Problems and Prospects*. Calabar: Academic Publishing Centre, South-South Zone, 56-81.
- Eneh, A. N. and Eneh, C. O. (2014). The Menace of Examination Malpractice in Nigeria: Causes and Solutions. *Sustainable Human Development Review*. 6(1-4), 53-73. Retrieved on 19.8.2024 from www.researchgate.net.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2007). *National Policy on Education*, 6th Ed. Lagos: Federal Ministry of Education Press.
- Gaur, R. R., Asthana, R. & Bagaria, G. P. (2023). *Foundation Course in Human Values and Professional Ethics. Presenting a Universal Approach to Value Education through Self-Exploration* (3rd Ed.) Kanpur: UHV Publications.
- González, F. (2012). Ethics in Business and Finance: the Great Post-Crisis Challenge. In BBVA Values and Ethics for the 21st Century. Retrieved on 20.8.2024 from, www.bbvaopenmind.com
- Hughes, J. M. C. & McCabe, D. L. (2006). Academic Misconduct within Higher Education in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 36(2). 1-21.
- Kant, I. (2011). *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: A German–English Edition* (M. J. Gregor, Rev. J. Timmermann, Trans.). Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. (2015). *The Metaphysics of Morals* (M. J. Gregor, Trans.; L. Denis, Ed., 2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. (2017). *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (J. Bennett, Trans.). Early Modern Texts.
- Kant, I. (2020). *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (R. Stern, J. Saunders & C. Bennett, Trans.). Oxford University Press.
- Kohlberg, L. (1971). *From Is to Ought: How to Commit the Naturalistic Fallacy and Get Away with It in the Study of Moral Development*. New York: Academic Press
- Kohlberg, Lawrence (1981). *Essays on Moral Development, Vol. I: The Philosophy of Moral Development*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row.
- Kohlberg, L. 1984. *Essays on Moral Development. Volume II. The Psychology of Moral Development*. San Francisco. Harper & Row, Publishers.
- Kristjánsson, K. (2006). Habituated Reason: Aristotle and the 'paradox of moral education', *Theory and Research in Education*, 4, 101-122.
- McCabe, D. L. & Trevino, L. K. (1997). Individual and Contextual Influences on Academic Dishonesty: A Multi-Campus Investigation. *Research Higher Education* 38, 379-396.
- Milumbe, B., Phiri, J. & Nyirenda, M. (2022). A Descriptive Survey of Teachers' Perception of Triggers in Examination Malpractices: The Case of Public Examination in Zambia. *Education Research International*, 2022 (286), 1-15, <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/5545406>
- Mohapatra, P. & Serva, C. (2023). Ethics, Morals and Values: Definition, Examples and Differences. Humanities Courses. Retrieved on 11.9.2024 from www.study.com.
- Ndifon, R. A. & Cornelius-Ukpepi, B. U. (2014). Examination Malpractice in the Primary School: Problems and Prospects. *International Journal of Humanities, Social Science and Education*. 1(9). 118-121.

- Njoku, N.C.&Njoku, D. I. 2016. Curbing Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools in Nigeria through Moral Education. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 6 (18), 2016
- "Norms of Certification for the Higher Education Sector within the Context of the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework." 2023. Council on Higher Education. Pretoria. www.che.ac.za
- Okanezi, B. & Eguzozie, N. G. 2018. Menace of Examination Malpractice in Nigerian Educational Institutions: Implications for National Productivity and Economy.** *American Journal of Educational Research*, 6(12), 1625-1628. DOI: 10.12691/education-6-12-6. <https://pubs.sciepub.com/education/6/12/6/index.html>
- Oko, S. U. & Adie, R. I. (2016). Examination Malpractice: Causes, Effects and Possible Ways of Curbing the Menace. A Study of Cross Rivers University of Technology. *International Journal of Managerial Studies and Research*. 4(1). 59-65. Retrieved on 5.9.2024 from www.arcjournals.org.
- Olagebemi, T. O. (2014). Re-Engineering Nigeria's Tertiary Education for the 21st Century Workforce. In A. S. Ayodele & A. S. Aremu (Eds.), *Repositioning Nigeria's Tertiary Education for the 21st Century Global Market*. Intanitina Gim Publishers, 1-19.
- Piromalli, E. (2015). "Authority and the Struggle for Recognition". *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 23 (2), 205-222.
- Plato. 1997. Laws I, VII, 643e, VII, 804d. *Complete Works*, John M. Cooper (ed.): Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1318-1490.
- Plato. 1997. Protagoras, 325d–326c. *Complete Works*, John M. Cooper (ed.): Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 746-790.
- Plato. 1997. Republic. VII & VIII, 514a-549b. *Complete Works*, John M. Cooper (ed.): Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1132-1179.
- Rawls, J. 2001. *Law of Peoples*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sogolo, G. (2004). Human Values and Social Order. A Keynote Address Presented at the Conference of the Department of Philosophy, Marking the 30 Years of Philosophy in the University of Ibadan.
- Uyanah, D. A. (2020). Preferred Sitting Position, Gender, Age and Examination Malpractice Tendency among University Undergraduates. *Multi-Disciplinary Journal of Educational Issues and Practice (MJEIP)*, 1 (1), 20-32.