

# Examination Malpractices as the Bane of Nigeria Education System: Implications for Educational Planning and Management

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## ABSTRACT

The study investigated examination malpractices as the bane of Nigeria education system with attention on its implications for educational planning and management. Descriptive survey design was adopted; population of the study consisted all lecturers in the 40 federal universities in Nigeria. Purposive sampling was used to select 24 universities and 2,400 lecturers across the 6 geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study while test-retest method in testing reliability of the instrument. The result of Pearson product moment correlation:  $r=0.84$  and was considered satisfactory. Arithmetic Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) was used for data analysis. The result showed that fear of failure, congested sitting arrangement in examination halls, ineffectiveness of lecturers, greed and corruption etc. are reasons why students and education implementer associate with examination malpractice. It was concluded that Examination malpractice of all kinds should be abhorred and discouraged irrespective of excuses as it leads to unproductive graduates.

**Keywords:** Examination malpractice, Educational planning, Education, Management.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In all countries of the world, examination which are in reality and frequently used in competitions, are designed to eliminate the majority of candidates and allocate the remainder to certain known vacancies. In the education system, examination is an avenue to assess the extent to which a student has learned the content of instructions either presented or not presented. It is a medium through which students are promoted, stagnated and or demoted. Examination is an integral part of how to ascertain if a student should be certified or not. In attempts to be successful through examinations, students resort to employing every tactics whether legal or illegal.

The illegal tactics being adopted to ensure success is achieved in examinations is called examination malpractice. Joshua (2008) opined that examination malpractice is any unauthorized or unapproved action, inaction, activity, behaviour or practice that is associated with the preparation, conduct and processing of examination and other forms of assessment and carried out by any person involved in preparing for, giving, taking and processing that examination at any level. This means examination malpractice is not limited to the illegalities that happen during examinations rather it included the wrongs done in the entire process of assessments. To Adeyegba (2006) examination malpractice is any act of wrongdoing or neglect that contravenes the rules and regulations of acceptable practice before, during and after an examination by any reason.

However, it should be noted at this juncture that whatever the definitions portray, examination malpractice is officially declared to be an 'anti-education' in terms of productive manpower development which higher institutions of learning in Nigeria are tasked to accomplish. Therefore, this study is set to examine how examination malpractices constitute the bane of the Nigerian education system. It will be pinned to the implications of examination malpractices in education planning and management of higher institutions of learning in Nigeria.

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

Examination malpractice is simply not a new concept among Nigerians and Internationals. Undoubtedly, examination malpractice is one of the most popular and commonly known terms among students, academia, parents, curriculum planners and designers, education administrators among others. It is perpetrated across every level (basic education, secondary and tertiary) of the Nigerian school system. It has become a turn on the Nigerian education system. As a cankerworm, it has eaten deep into the fabric of the education industry, and been a worrisome issue to the academia. In spite of the crusade made against it by the government and other lovers of education, it still grows speedily more than ever. Examination malpractice has become a threat to the integrity of the nation. Commonsensically in Nigeria, most people consciously or unconsciously support examination fraud, although it is officially condemned in Nigeria. In tandem with the foregoing claim, Orji *et al.* (2015) lamented that nowadays, it is not uncommon to hear people discuss examination malpractice as if it is a custom. This is because perpetrators of this 'anti-education act' view it as scenario which everybody partakes in, hence 'unintentionally' acceptable by most people. In attempt to deter people from indulging in examination malpractice, the Federal Government of Nigeria promulgated the examination malpractice act 33 of 1999 revised which stipulated punishment ranging from a fine of N50,000 to N100,000 and imprisonment for a term of 3-4 years with or without option of fine (Orji *et al.*, 2015). Regrettably, despite all these laws, examination malpractice has been on the increase. This is partly resulting from inability of education implementers to effectively implement education programmes.

### 1.2. Research Questions

The questions that strike the mind at this juncture include:

1. Why do students/people indulge in examination malpractice in higher institutions in Nigeria?
2. Why have education implementers not been able to administer examinations devoid of malpractices in higher institutions in Nigeria?
3. What are the consequences of examination frauds on Nigeria's quest for productive manpower development?

However, this study is intended to provide lasting panacea to the above research questions.

### **1.3. Examination Malpractice**

Examination malpractice is synonymous with examination fraud, anti-examination, examination crime or examination manipulation. [Adeyegba \(2006\)](#) defined examination malpractice as 'any act of wrongdoing or neglect that contravenes the rules and regulations of acceptable practice before, during and after an examination by any reason'. Hence, any deviation from examination standard before, during and after examination is simply known as examination malpractice.

### **1.4. Educational Planning**

Educational planning entails the critical activities of researching and discovering of education related problems, as well as forecasting, programming and development of pragmatic methods, strategies and mechanisms on when, where, who, to whom and how best to combat such discovered education related problems in order to achieve the goals of education ([Orji and Azubuiké, 2016](#)). Educational planning is the process of forecasting, guiding and directing all parties in the education industry on what, when and how education related matters should be done in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in all educational institutions.

### **1.5. Education Management**

Education management/administration according to [Orji and Umoren \(2016\)](#) entails 'the activities of planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling, commanding, directing, evaluating, staffing and motivating teachers, non-teaching staff members, students and others towards the attainment of the overall goals of the school system'. From the foregoing, it shows that education management remains an invaluable medium for ensuring the values of educational curriculum are effectively and appropriately implemented at all levels of education.

### **1.6. Research Design**

Descriptive survey design was used for data collection and analysis. [Orji \(2016\)](#) explained descriptive research design as one which elicits responses from a relatively large number of respondents by means of administering pertinent instruments for the purpose of collecting primary data on a portion of the population known as sample. The descriptive design will focus on collecting information relating to causes and consequences of examination malpractice as well as reasons why education implementers are not able to implement assessments objectively.

### **1.7. Area of Study**

The research was carried out in all the Federal Universities in Nigeria. Nigeria is located in West Africa between latitudes 5° North and 15° North of the Equator and longitudes 18° East and 30° East of the Greenwich Meridian. It is bounded in the West by Republic of Benin and Niger Republic; in the East by Cameroon; in the North by Niger Republic and Chad Republic and in the South by Atlantic Ocean/Gulf of Guinea.

### 1.8. Population of the Study

Population of the study consists of all the lecturers in federal universities in Nigeria. According to [Premium Times \(2017\)](#) 'there are 40 federal universities' as at the times this study was executed.

### 1.9. Sample and Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling technique was used for the study. [Orji \(2015\)](#) posited that Purposive sampling technique is a non-randomized method of sampling in which the researcher chooses certain sample composition and size which he considers appropriate, relevant and adequate for his study. Based on this technique, the researcher divided Nigeria into six (6) geopolitical zones and selected 24 universities and a sample size 2,400 lecturers. In each zone, 4 universities and 400 lecturers were selected as shown below:

**Table-1.** Sample size and composition of Lecturers

Geopolitical Zones in Nigeria	No. of Uni. Selected	Sampled Lecturers
North-Central	4	400
North-East	4	400
North-West	4	400
South-East	4	400
South-South	4	400
South-West	4	400
Sample Size	24	2,400

Source: Field Survey from 20th March, 2016 to 12th May, 2016.

### 1.10. Instrument for Data Collection

The researchers developed a well-structured questionnaire entitled examination malpractice as the bane of Nigeria education system and its implications for educational planning and management (EMBNSEPM). The instrument has two (2) sections, namely: section A (Demographic data) and section B contain 15 questionnaire items. The response patterns adopted was four-point likert-type rating scale, and these included the following: Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point.

### 1.11. Reliability and Validation of Instrument

Copies of the structured questionnaire were certified for face and content validity by 3 research experts at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, University of Lagos and University of Benin. Thus, their observations, corrections and suggestions helped in the production of the questionnaire. On the other hand, the reliability test of the questionnaire was ascertained through test-retest method. The questionnaires were administered to 50 lecturers, 25 of them were from the federal university setting while the other 25 were from private university. After 3 weeks, the questionnaires were reproduced and re-administered to the same 50 lecturer and thereafter, the responses were collated and analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and the result is 0.84 which was considered satisfactory.

## 2. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The study adopted Arithmetic Mean (X).

*Decision rule:*

Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4

Agree (A) = 3

Disagreed (D) = 2

Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1

Thus,  $\frac{4 + 3 + 2 + 1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.5$

Hence, theoretical Mean (X) or critical value = 2.5

Decision: accepts a research item if its calculated Mean (X) is greater than or equal to the theoretical mean (2.5), otherwise reject.

### 2.1. Presentation, Interpretation and Discussion of Results

**Table-2.** Mean rating of lecturers on why students/people indulge in examination malpractice

Questionnaire items	$\bar{X}$	Decision
Fear and attempt to avoid failure	3.71	Accepted
Congested sitting arrangement in examination halls	3.73	Accepted
Ineffective, incapacitated and unqualified lecturers' factor	3.11	Accepted
Parent/guidance pressure and demand for good results/certificates	2.94	Accepted
Inadequate, careless and compromised supervision	3.22	Accepted

Source: Analysis of answered questionnaires that were administered to lecturers, 10th November, 2016

From table 2 above, calculated Mean(X) of each questionnaire item is greater than theoretical Mean (2.5). This shows that all the proposed items were accepted. Therefore, fear of failure, congested sitting arrangement, unqualified lecturers' factor, parents demand for good results/certificates and compromised supervision are the reasons people indulge in examination malpractice. The finding is in tandem with Orji *et al.* (2015) who reported that academic laziness, lack of dedicated teachers, rush for good result, poor sitting arrangement and fear of failure are causes of examination fraud among students.

**Table-3.** Mean rating of lecturers on why education implementers are not able to administer examinations devoid of malpractices

Questionnaire items	$\bar{X}$	Decision
Inadequate/poor remuneration of supervisors	2.64	Accepted
Greed and corruptive behaviour of lecturers	2.81	Accepted
Pressure, threat and lobby from students	3.44	Accepted
Relationship influence	2.84	Accepted
Compromised and biased supervision	3.64	Accepted

Source: Analysis of answered questionnaires that were administered to lecturers, 10th November, 2016

Table 3 above revealed that all the questionnaire items were accepted as being greater than 2.5. Thus, education implementers are not able to administer examinations devoid of malpractices because of inadequate/poor remuneration, corruptive behaviour of lecturers, pressure from students, relationship influence and compromised supervision. Similarly, Jimoh (2009) reported that students' non-challant attitude, parental indiscipline, supervisors and invigilators' gratification and compulsive demands, poor teachers' motivation and emphasis on certification bring about examination fraud.

**Table-4.** Mean rating of lecturers on the consequences of examination frauds on Nigeria's quest for productive manpower development

Questionnaire items	$\bar{X}$	Decision
Unproductive and unemployable graduates	3.94	Accepted
Destroys standard/quality of the school system	3.82	Accepted
Wastage of scarce resources	3.42	Accepted
Threat to national reputation and respect	2.71	Accepted
Breeds antisocial behaviours/persons in Nigeria	3.74	Accepted

Source: Analysis of answered questionnaires that were administered to lecturers, 10th November, 2016

Table 4 above showed that all the questionnaire items were accepted. Therefore, unemployable graduates, poor standard/quality school system, wastage of scarce resources, threat to national reputation respect and antisocial behaviours/persons constitute the long term effects of examination malpractice. Jimoh (2009) also lamented that examination frauds lead to loss of integrity, unproductive and non-functional graduates. Edikpa (2006) equally decried that 'examination malpractices have continued to threaten the relevance and quality of education'.

## 2.2. Implications of Educational Planning and Management

- The study found that many reasons, such fear of failure, congested sitting arrangement in examination halls, ineffectiveness of lecturers etc., attested to why students indulge in examination malpractice. These imply that education planners and managers should pay more attention on how best to address the findings of this study.
- The study further reported that education implementers find it difficult to objectively implement assessments because of students' pressure, threat and tempting lobby for success, relationship influence (plea from colleagues, parents/guidance, superior, friends) etc., poor remuneration, greed and corruption. These imply that education planners and managers have been availed with relevant information to enable them re-plan and re-strategize on a way forward.
- The study also reported that the overwhelming unproductive and unemployable graduates from higher institution of learning are resultant of examination fraud. This is because students are no longer reading to understand but simply focus on passing examinations by all means. The indication is that education planners and managers are partly blamable for this, and should make ceaseless efforts to revamp the system by collaborating with relevant bodies.

## 3. CONCLUSION

Examination malpractice remains a setback to education and sustainable development of Nigeria. Anyone who encourages examination fraud is an enemy to education and manpower development. Examination malpractice of all kinds should be abhorred and discouraged irrespective of excuses.

## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings made so far, the researchers wish to recommend the following:

- There should be re-orientation on the dangers of examination malpractice to individuals and the society at large.
- There should be adequate examination halls in school to ensure sitting arrangement is standard.
- Examination malpractice of Nigeria should be strictly enforced.
- Supervisors and staff should be adequately remunerated through collaborative efforts of both government and private.

- Parents, guidance, friends and well-wishers should extol hard work, dignity of labour and discouraged dubious and fraudulent examination behaviours.

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