

## **DETERMINANTS THAT INFLUENCE EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF FEDERAL COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE (FCAI), ISHIAGU.**

**<sup>1</sup>UDO, Joseph Sunday\*\*, <sup>2</sup>NWANKWO, Emeka Sebastian, <sup>2</sup>EBENEZER, Ogochukwu F., <sup>2</sup>NNODIM, Chibueze Z., <sup>3</sup> JOSHUA, Micah**

<sup>1</sup>Division of Entrepreneurship Development and Vocational Studies, Federal College of Agriculture, Ishiagu (FCAI), Ivo L.G.A, Ebonyi State.

**E-mail:** [josephudo69@gmail.com](mailto:josephudo69@gmail.com). **Tel.:** +234- 8161626367.

<sup>2</sup>Department of Business Administration and Management, Federal College of Agriculture, Ishiagu (FCAI), Ivo L.G.A, Ebonyi State.

<sup>3</sup>Department of Marketing, Federal College of Agriculture, Ishiagu (FCAI), Ivo L.G.A, Ebonyi State.

### **ABSTRACT**

This research project is aimed to analyze the determinants that influence examination malpractice in tertiary institutions in Nigeria using FCAI as a case study. The analysis is based on theoretical ideas that have been supported by empirical research findings that examination malpractice is the bane of under-development in Nigeria.

This research project depicts an analytical framework based on institutional theory, which focuses on three factors: the determinants, the effects and recommended solutions. Based on the analysis of these factors, the research project provides many significant policy implications on how to minimize, if not totally eradicate examination malpractice in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Determinants, influence, examination malpractice and under-development,

### **INTRODUCTION**

Examination malpractice is a deliberate act of wrong doing, it is a violation of the set rules and regulation of the examination bodies, it is an illegal behaviour or attitude by a student before, during or after the

examination so that he/she can attain success without stress or hard work, hence the worth of the examination is violated and rendered useless.

It is a proven case that examination malpractice causes under-development in

Nigeria. Its untoward effects breed societal vices such as stealing, corruption, backwardness, prostitution and fear, among others.

This paper, therefore, is to analyze the factors that influence or encourage examination malpractice in Nigeria, with the generic objective of making a modest contribution to the eradication of examination malpractice with special reference to FCAI in Ebonyi State of Nigeria. In the pursuit of this and other objectives, the following questions will be addressed, among others; does examination malpractice contribute to National development? Does mass promotion of students causes laziness among students? Does it mean that the students that cheat in examinations were not taught well by their lecturers? What is the consequence of laying much emphasis on paper qualification on job placement?, among other questions.

The study will also highlight the history of examination malpractice and will also discover the determinants that influence examination malpractice in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. In addition, the researcher will review the legislation that is in operation towards eradication of examination malpractice in Nigeria.

## **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

One of the signs of the collapse of the education system is the rampant incidence of examination malpractice. In simple

parlance, examination malpractice denotes any form of fraud committed by a candidate or someone else in order to enable a candidate pass an examination, which under normal circumstances such a candidate would not have passed. The system of corruption has reproduced different kinds of character such as prostitution, cheating, stealing, fraud, drunkenness, smoking, dishonesty, lying, insubordination, etc. The interaction of these delinquent behaviours in a pluralistic and permissive society, like ours, has given room for acceptance of the malaise as a way of life. Many that ought to have defended the cause of justice have thrown in the towel just to be in line with the slogan, *“if you cannot beat them, join them”*. This practice has rendered our educational system useless, thereby causes under-development.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines malpractice as a wrong or illegal behaviour exhibited by a person while discharging professional responsibilities. Nwana (2000), described examination malpractice as the “massive and unprecedented abuse of rules and regulations pertaining to internal and external examinations, beginning from the setting of such examinations through the taking of the examinations, their marking

and grading, to the release of the results and the issuance of certificates”.

In the light of these definitions, examination malpractice is simply a falsification of result or answer to an examination. It depicts a dishonest act associated with examination with a view to obtaining unmerited advantage- Salami (1994).

Under-development is the condition of being insufficiently developed due to maladministration problem. Such problems may include: lack of strong will power, inability to profess what one actually claimed to be, etc.

### **History of examination malpractice in Nigeria**

The phenomenon of examination malpractice is not new in Nigeria and indeed all over the world. In Nigeria, the history of examination malpractices could be traced back to the colonial days when the “Nigerian Chronicle” of January 9, 1912 widely reported how the questions of Senior Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate leaked (Fasasi; 2008). After independence, there was hardly any year when there was no examination malpractice recorded by the leading examining bodies in Nigeria. Adesina (2005) reported incidences of examination leakages in West African Examination Council (WAEC). The papers in 1963, 1967, 1971, 1977 and 1981 leaked, as a result of which the Federal Government set up a panel of enquiry to investigate the

1977 examination leakage; the panel recommended *inter alia*; “sanctions for WAEC officials who were involved in the malpractice, introduction and use of continuous assessment as a factor for award of certificate and shedding of WAEC workload and the establishment of new examination bodies”. Consequently, new examination bodies were established. These were Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) established in 1978 now renamed Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) in 2010 to conduct matriculation examinations for admission into universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. National Business and Technical Examination Board (NABTEB) was established in 1992 to conduct business and technical examinations; National Board for Educational Measurement (NBEM) was established in 1992 and later changed to National Examination Council (NECO) in 1999 to conduct school certificate examinations (Arijesuyo, 2010).

### **Forms of Examination malpractice**

Examination malpractice take many forms; these include:

- Leakage by some Lecturers to some of their friends and cronies,
- Leakage in the process of printing, packing, storage of question papers or during distribution;

- Entry into examination venue with prepared answers and other written materials,
- External assistance to candidates through lecturers, invigilators and supervisors who have either friends, relations or clients as candidates,
- Collusion between candidates and invigilators,
- Substitution of worked scripts after examination by corrupt officials,
- Mercenary Service/impersonation: Employing the service of another person to write the examination for another.
- Tattoo: This is when a student writes information on the tender part of the body where they can easily adjust to reveal the materials and can be cleared within a second when there is a problem (Samuel, 1995).
- Computo: This involves the use of calculators, which have facilities for multiple entries. The invigilator may not know that it has such facilities; he may think it is an ordinary calculator.
- Tokens: Jotting points on the mathematical set, calculator, razor blades, rulers, hankies and others for referencing during examinations.
- Body Aids: Jotting points on the underwear, under dress for referencing during examination.
- Time Out: Going out to the 'urinary or toilet' to read up answers.
- Snap shot: The use of camera phone to snap pages of textbooks for examination purposes.
- Swapping of answer scripts; the answers written by the examination mercenaries are smuggled into the examination hall in replacement of the actual scripts. This most of the time is done by officials to aid their cronies. According to Anwarbor (2006), it is the most violent means of dishonesty in an examination because of the unruly atmosphere created by the candidate and their agents to execute this plan.

These practices promote corruption and moral decadence, above all, the essence of going to school is defeated.

### **Causes of Examination Malpractice**

Research has shown that some of the causes of examination malpractice are corrupt officials, invigilators and supervisors. Other causes of examination malpractice in our institutions include:

- Unpreparedness by students.
- Pressure by students to pass exams at all cost.
- The fear of failure.

- Non taking of continuous assessment work seriously by students.
- Leakages of papers through officials.
- Inability of some students to cope with school work.
- Late and non-resumption/attendance of classes by students, etc.

#### **The government policies to eradicate examination malpractice in Nigeria**

- As a result of the alarming and worrisome trends in the figures and statistics of examination fraud given by the leading examination bodies in respect of post-primary examinations, and the attendants' crises on the country's educational system, the Federal government of Nigeria promulgated a number of legislative and administrative laws; some of which include:
- Decree 20 in 1984, which stipulated a 21-year jail term for those found guilty of examination malpractice.
- Decree 33 of 1999, stipulates imprisonment for a term up to five years or fine of N50, 000.00 to N100,000.00 for any person convicted of examination malpractice (Arijesuyo; 2010).
- Different examination bodies churn out different rules and regulations to guide examinations in Nigeria, in

spite of these measures, the menace continued to occur, unabated, in virtually all public and institutionally organized examinations and the situation appears to have defied recommended solutions.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

**Procedure and Sample:** The research design adopted in this study involved five basic steps, namely: research objectives, exploratory research findings, formal survey research, data collection and data analysis. The exploratory research was necessary to uncover the relationship between examination malpractice and national development as well as the challenges/problems facing examination in Nigeria. The design is basically descriptive in approach in the sense that it tries to establish relationship between two or more variables. The data for this study have been collected from primary and secondary sources through a structured questionnaire prepared and administered in FCAI. Among the major secondary sources are the publications of major stakeholders, Government of Nigeria and academic journals. Personal interviews were conducted with some of the respondents. The questionnaire consisted of three sections, each containing a different set of questions

dealing with demographic and personal profiles of the respondents as well as certain questions related to the challenges/problems of examination in Nigeria. Tables were used to portray descriptive analysis of the data. A thorough interpretation and analysis of the data was carried out to draw the inferences.

## DATA INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

Out of a sample of 150 questionnaires administered, 120 were completed and returned, giving a response rate of 80%. The population was made up of the students, administrative staff, lecturers and management staff of FCAI. With regards to age, the respondents came from the adult age group of 18 and above. The actual sample mean and standard deviation were used to

calculate and actualize the meaningful presentation.

### Data Analysis

In testing the answers to questions, the actual sample mean and Standard Deviation ( $\delta$ ) distribution model were used. The formulae of the statistical method used are as follows:

a) Mean variable ( $\bar{x}$ ) of the frequency distribution =  $\bar{x} = \frac{\sum fx}{\sum f}$

b) Standard Deviation ( $\delta$ ) =  $\frac{\sqrt{\sum fx^2 - \frac{(\sum fx)^2}{\sum f}}}{\sum f}$

- where  $\delta$  = Standard Deviation,  $\sum fx$  = the summation of  $fx$ .
- 'n' analysis the factor statement, **5** for any factor under consideration;
- to have mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) less than **3** shows negative reaction by the respondents

**Table 1:** Demographic Composition of the Sample

Items	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	52	43.33
	Female	<u>68</u>	<u>56.67</u>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100%</b>
Marital status	Single	50	41.67
	Married	69	57.5
	Widowed	<u>01</u>	<u>00.83</u>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100%</b>
Educational	WASC/GCE/SSCE	11	09.17
Qualification	OND/NCE	40	33.33
	HND/B.Sc./BA	37	30.83
	MBA/M.Sc & others	<u>32</u>	<u>26.67</u>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100%</b>
Status	Students	65	54.17
	Admin. staff	15	12.50
	Lecturers	30	25.00
	Management Staff	<u>10</u>	<u>08.33</u>
		<b>120</b>	<b>100%</b>

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***Hypothesis 1:***

**Ho:** Examination malpractice contribute to National development

**Hi:** Examination malpractice does not contribute to National development

*The calculated value equals 1.6 and the mean 2.9 is less than 3 and this shows that the notion, “Examination malpractice contributes to National development” is rejected. The Null hypothesis (Ho) is therefore rejected.*

***Hypothesis 2:***

**Ho:** Mass promotion of students causes laziness among students.

**Hi:** Mass promotion of students does not cause laziness among students.

*The calculated value equals 1.4 and the mean 3.7 is above 3 and this shows that the statement that Mass promotion of students causes laziness among students is accepted. The null hypothesis (Ho) is therefore accepted.*

**Hypothesis 3:**

**Ho:** Students that cheat in examination do bother about the penalty of examination malpractice

**Hi:** Students that cheat in examination do not bother about the penalty of examination malpractice

*The calculated value equals 39.7 and the mean 3.5 is above 3 and this shows that the null hypothesis (Ho) is therefore accepted.*

**Hypothesis 4:**

**Ho:** Examination malpractice committee helps in curbing examination malpractice in Nigeria

**Hi:** Examination malpractice committee does not help in curbing examination malpractice in Nigeria

*The calculated value equals 0.6 and the mean 4.6 is above 3 and this shows that the null hypothesis (Ho) is therefore accepted.*

**Hypothesis 5:**

**Ho:** Poor delivery of lectures by Lecturers contribute to examination malpractice in Nigeria

**Hi:** Poor delivery of lectures by Lecturers does not contribute to examination malpractice in Nigeria

*The calculated value equals 0.9 and the mean 4.1 is above 3 and this shows that the null hypothesis (Ho) is therefore accepted.*

**Hypothesis 6:**

**Ho:** Poor preparation by students causes examination malpractice

**Hi:** Poor preparation by students does not cause examination malpractice

*The calculated value equals 1.2 and the mean 4.6 is above 3 and this shows that the null hypothesis (Ho) is therefore accepted.*

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This research project has investigated the causes of examination malpractice and its attendant consequences. The study has revealed the rampant rising rate of examination malpractice and the influence of poor study habits among students and lack of educational facilities. The dearth of effective study habits has therefore accelerated students' involvement in examination fraud.

The research has highlighted veritable areas that should henceforth be given more attention. It therefore becomes imperative that these areas should not be ignored in the struggle to eradicate examination malpractice in Nigeria.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The problem of examination malpractice in institutions of learning is aggravated by inadequate or failed internal processes, stakeholders (parents, teachers, lecturers, security agents, printers, and staff of examination bodies) involvement and



external threats. In a bid to salvage the situation in Nigeria and especially in our College, the following highlighted points are recommended:

- 1) Examination bodies should make sure they have penalty to impose on candidates who are caught in the act. They should not just have penalty but enforce them strictly. By so doing, others would learn and also tell those who are planning to indulge in such act to eschew from such intentions.
- 2) The law, rules and regulations guiding examination malpractice should not be rendered useless. An example, Decree 20 in 1984 and Decree 33 of 1999 have been tactically pushed to the dustbin as cases of exam malpractice are hardly reported in the court of law.
- 3) Renewed awareness should be intensified. Students should be re-oriented before examinations. This can be done through seminars and workshops and attendance made compulsory.
- 4) Students should be thoroughly searched before entering examination halls. This can, at least, reduce the rate at which students go into the halls with unwanted materials.
- 5) The number of invigilators and supervisors should be increased in examination halls. The examination bodies should not engage any official of unquestionable character to conduct examinations.
- 6) Examination malpractice committee members should be stern and strict and should be able to make strong decisions and enforce penalty when the need arises. This cannot be achieved without Management strong backing. Management should support the committee (Examination Malpractice Committee) for it not to be a bull dog that barks without biting.
- 7) Any student caught during examination with any foreign material or phone should be made to appear for trial at the examination misconduct panel.
- 8) Students' Attendance at lectures should be made compulsory. At least 75% attendance otherwise the student should be allowed to carry over the course.
- 9) Any Official found guilty of examination malpractice should be allowed to serve the punishment.
- 10) The members of examination malpractice panel should live up to expectation. Culprits should be allowed to face the music.

- 11) The Schools should ensure that only formally registered candidates sit for the examination with their registration ID cards.
- 12) Annual Lecturer Best Award should be instituted in the College. This will spur the Lecturers to work toward a better performance.
- 13) Invigilators should be motivated and rewarded adequately so that they do their work satisfactorily.
- 14) Training and development should be encouraged among the officials.
- 15) Mass promotion of students in any examination should not be encouraged.
- 16) 360% Appraisal of lecturer/students should be introduced and encouraged, especially in knowledge impartation.

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