

TYPES AND LEVELS OF STUDENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE AS PERCEIVED BY UNDERGRADUATES IN BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate types and levels of students' involvement in examination malpractice as perceived by undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Edo State. This study is a descriptive survey. The population for this study was undergraduates in Benin City. The Stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents. The instrument adopted for the study was the researchers designed questionnaire tagged "Undergraduates Perceived Types and Levels of Involvement in Examination Malpractice Questionnaire" (UPTLIEMQ). To answer research question one the mean rating was used. For research question 2 a pie-chart was used to represent the findings. The hypotheses generated were tested using Chi-square inferential statistics. The study revealed the most frequent type of examination malpractice among undergraduates in Benin City was taking handwritten materials and textbooks into the examination hall; this is followed by copying or dubbing from another student. It was also discovered that the greater proportion of the undergraduates sampled were averagely involved in examination malpractice. There was a significant difference in the level of students' involvement in examination malpractice as perceived by undergraduates based on gender and age. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that proper checks before examination starts and effective invigilation of students during examinations was significant to preventing them from bringing in handwritten materials or textbooks to perpetuate in examination malpractice. It was also recommended that undiluted efforts should be made at improving the moral standard and discipline of students through counselling services in schools.

Key words: Examination, Examination malpractice, Undergraduate Students

Introduction

Education is a key to national development. In order to get the best brains examination has become a significant tool to ensure that the best products are fitted in the frontline of development. Examination is a test given to determine the knowledge, ability and skill of a student/learner. George & Ukpong (2013) opines that examination is the most common tool around which the entire system of education revolves, it is the instrument used to decide who is permitted to move to the next academic level. Examination is given at the end of a training period and a student/learner who takes an examination is known as a candidate. The person who decides how well the student/learner has performed is the examiner. An examination can be in a written form, oral or practical form. Examination not only serves as a feedback for the learner to determine the level of knowledge that has been acquired but also serves as a tool to measure the knowledge retention of the learner. Akaranga & Ongong (2013) observed that examination is not only a process of assessing the progress of students but, it also motivates and helps them to know their academic strengths and weaknesses apart from providing teachers with opportunities to try new methods of teaching. But when examination is not properly conducted, the expected feedback may not occur.

The National Policy on Education, (2014) states that the goals of tertiary education is to contribute to national development through high level manpower training; provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interest of all Nigerians and so on, however this training requires intermittent assessment and appraisal in form of examinations to determine the level of competence of students. Education remains the key to development in any nation without exemption. This has led to a pursuit to gain better grades by any or all means as employers of labour place emphatic premium on certificates from tertiary institutions before one can be given any reasonable position in any organization. The obsession of better grades has led to malpractice during and after examinations which has become an endemic issues in our educational institutions. The declining academic situation in tertiary institutions is unfortunate and has become so alarming that the achievement of the set goals of tertiary education for sustainable development is threatened. While examinations are not the only mechanisms for assessing students' knowledge in the university, they appeared to be the most established standard and the most practical way of school assessment. Since it is the foremost way of assessing the students, it has led to students devising every possible means to pass the examination at all costs thereby resulting in what we term "examination malpractice". Examination Malpractice is a menace that should be curbed with all seriousness. Examination malpractice is defined as the deliberate wrongdoing contrary to official examination rules (Maheshwari, (2011)). West African`s Examination Council (WAEC) (2003) defined Examination malpractice as any+irregular behaviour or act exhibited by candidates or anybody charged with the responsibility of conducting examination in or outside the examination hall, before, during or after such examination with the aim of taking undue advantage.

In every examination, students develop new methods of perpetrating examination malpractices. The instances of examination malpractices vary from institution to institution

ranging from impersonation, tampering with results, and leakage of questions, computer fraud to fraudulent practices by both students and invigilators.

Hornby (2005) stated that malpractice refers to careless, wrong, or illegal and undesirable professional behaviour during and after examinations. It is regarded as the national tragedy of education in Nigeria. Ayanniyi & Anya (2017) identified forms of examination malpractices to include token, contract, expo, impersonation, tattoo, question paper leakage, aiding of students by lecturers, collusion among students, use of unauthorized materials in the examination hall, giraffe or extending of neck to copy from others and spying during an examination. Maheshwari (2011) identified leakage of question papers to spying, changing answer books, impersonation misconduct in the examination centre, approaching invigilators/examiners, making false entries in award list/examination registers, and issuing fake certificates/degrees are forms of malpractice. These different forms of malpractice are commonly committed at the pre-conduct, conduct, and evaluation periods of examinations.

Onyibe (2015) stated that general moral decadence and a high premium placed on achievement and certificates by Nigerians have in recent times produced examination fraud, prompting students and parents to bribe their ways in order to help score high grades. The general over-dependence on educational certificates as a criterion of one's knowledge and proficiency to secure jobs has led to this hazard by most people for educational certificates. In a bid to acquire certificates at all costs, many persons have resorted to disreputable means such as engaging in examination malpractices. Inadequate placement for the teeming Nigerian youth into tertiary institutions has been a serious challenge to candidates seeking admission. This challenge encourages examination malpractice to ensure they get good results for gaining admission. The number of students admitted yearly is trifling when compared to the number of applications.

In 2016 the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Education (FMOE) reported that the rate of admission into universities ranges between 5% and 32% from 1999 - 2016. A further breakdown shows that out of 417,773 candidates who applied for admission in 1999/2000, only 78,550 candidates were admitted, which represented an admission rate of 18.8%. In 2018 the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) says less than half (443,624 out of 1,662,762) of admission seekers who sat the 2018 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination were admitted into universities given a percentage of 26.67. This clearly shows that 72.33% of young people will be looking for a way out of this quandary.

Maheshwari (2011) stated that the phenomenon of examination malpractice has become endemic in the educational system because students are involved because they want to achieve success at all cost; parents are involved because they want good grades for their wards; teachers and others are involved because of the financial, material, high taste and many other intangible gains accrued from entangling in examination malpractice.

The Examination Malpractice Act 33 of 1999 (revised edition) was one of the punitive measures taken to serve as a deterrent to those involved in the act but the situation was not averted but became worse. The Act stipulates punishment ranging from a fine of N50, 000.00 to N100,000.00 and imprisonment for a term of 5 years in jail without an option of fine for violators of the offenses postulated in the Act. The revised Act was due to the failure of the appropriate authorities to enforce the old Decree 20 of 1985. Despite all these laws, examination malpractice has become endemic in the society. Several researchers' attention has been drawn to the look into the persistent attitudes toward involvement in examination malpractice issues with the concerns of curbing them.

Purpose of the Study

The study, seeks to investigate types and levels of students' involvement in examination malpractice as perceived by undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Benin City.

Research Questions

This study provided answers to the following research questions raised:

1. What are the types of examination malpractice perceived by undergraduates' in Benin City
2. What is the level of students' involvement in examination malpractice as perceived by undergraduates' in Benin City?

Research Method

This study is a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was Undergraduates of tertiary institutions in Benin City. Multi stage sampling technique was adopted in selecting the study sample. A total of three hundred and eighty five students (385) undergraduate participated in the study. The research instrument used was the "Undergraduates Perceived Types and Levels of Involvement in Examination Malpractice Questionnaire" (UPTLIEMQ). It was developed by the researchers and was validated by experts in measurement and evaluation Department of Education, of the Benson Idahosa University. The questionnaire was also trial-tested and its co-efficient of reliability determined at 0.80. Mean ratings and Pie charts were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents and to answer research questions 1 and 2. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested using Chi-square (χ^2) inferential statistics at 0.5 level of significance.

Some Forms of Examination Malpractice

Below are the different forms of examination malpractice in Nigeria:

1. Impersonation: Is simply the act of pretending to be another person for the purpose of helping that person to write an examination. This form of examination malpractice is very rampant in Nigeria because, the country has not attained the kind of technological advancement that is needed to avoid any type of impersonation. Usually this involves collusion between the chief examiner and the examination supervisor. It frequently involves tertiary institutions students taking the test for monetary reward or a favour for a girlfriend or a boyfriend.
2. Smuggling of extraneous materials: This is another form of examination malpractice is the bringing of extraneous materials into examination hall, It relates to the introduction of unauthorized materials (parts or whole note books, text books, micro-chips and answers) into the examination hall. Foreign materials are frequently smuggled in pants, shoes, hems, bras, inner pockets of pants or jackets, wrapped as sweets or chewing gum or deposited or fixed in the hall prior to the examination or even smuggled in by the candidates, or their aids during the examination to source for information. Bringing extraneous materials into examination hall is prohibited in most of the examinations conducted in the school. Yet many students still engage in this form of

examination malpractice, not minding what will be the punishment or outcome of their actions.

3. **Inscription:** Students have now advanced to the level of inscribing materials or information on anything like parts of their body for example palms, thighs, baby pampers; handkerchiefs, rulers, purses, chairs, tables, walls of examination halls and so on, (Oredein, 2006). Some nursing mother converts the tender skin of their baby to inscribe information for malpractice; during examination they seek for permission to breastfeed their baby only to use such avenues for note reading or revision.
4. **Copying during examination:** Copying from another candidate's work with or without permission. In Nigeria, the act of coping during examination is known to be done by smart students because it is only a smart student that can copy from his classmates without being caught by their teacher/lecturer. Students who did not prepare very well for their examination end up coping from their classmates or friends just to pass the examination.
5. **Collusion:** This form of examination is used during written examinations like WAEC and NECO. Students share information passed (in paper) to them by their teachers to pass external examinations. Afolabi (1998) said that collusion involves exchange of scripts, passing notes for help from outside and inside the hall; deliberately delaying commencement of examination in one Centre to obtain question paper from a nearby Centre which started earlier, collusion arises from bribes or threat to the lives and or property of invigilators.
6. **Bribery:** This form of malpractice may be used to enhance teacher-student collusion to cheat. It brings in the economic perspectives in examination malpractices. A student pays an examination official to be allowed to use illegal materials smuggled into the examination halls or to extend the examination scheduled period. This is rampant and referred to as "sorting" in tertiary Institutions. Male students offer money or other valuables while female students use money or sex to bargain for "upgrading" of their examination scores. Bribery is common in both secondary and tertiary levels of education examination.
7. **Use of mobile phones/scientific malpractice during examinations:** Nowadays, candidates employ unauthorized scientific calculators, compact disc, organizers, and mobile phones to take undue advantage. Mobile phones with camera (imaging functions) are used to take snapshots of a whole textbook in a much reduced format for use during examination. Candidates also use these devices to receive the answer from their agents' even outside.
8. **External assistance:** This form of examination malpractice is normal in examinations. In this form of examination malpractice, it is actually the exam officers that come rescue students who did not prepare for the examination in return for some money. Sometimes, the exam officers can also threaten students to pay some money so that they can be helped or else, they will fail. In this case, both students who prepare very well for the examination and those who did not must engage in examination malpractice since that is the only way they can pass the examination.
9. **Intimidation/Assault on examination officials:** There are reported cases where students and touts brandish dangerous weapons like daggers, pistols, axe, in the examination venues to intimidate invigilators to have a free day while committing the heinous crime. Some secret cult members are prone to this violent act. The case of intimidation is more evident during final semester of undergraduate examinations.

10. Disarrangement (Obstruction): These are irregular activities inside and outside the examination halls: Students, who have made up their minds to cheat, display unwholesome behaviours during examination. For instance, smuggling out question papers and answer booklets out of the examination hall, tearing part of the question paper or answer booklet during the examination to perpetrate malpractice.
11. Other forms of examination malpractice includes the use of coded sign languages by some candidates, exchanging of answer booklets for note comparison, mass cheating, leakage of question papers and so on.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were drawn to direct the process of the research:
 H1: There is no significant difference in the level of students' involvement in examination malpractice as perceived by undergraduates in Benin City based on gender.
 H2: There is no significant difference in the level of involvement in examination malpractice as perceived by undergraduates in Benin City based on age.

Research Question 1:

What are the types of examination malpractice perceived by undergraduates' in Benin City.

**Table 1:
 Ranking Order of Types of Examination Malpractice among Undergraduates in Benin City**

No	Types of examination malpractices perceived by undergraduates in Benin City	Frequency	Mean	Ranking
1.	Taking handwritten materials and textbooks to the examination hall	385	2.55	1 st
2.	Copying or dubbing from another student	385	2.47	2 nd
3.	Giraffing (extending neck to copy from another student)	385	2.22	3 rd
4.	Collusion (collaboration in order to cheat)	385	2.17	4 th
5.	Use of phones	385	2.14	5 th
6.	Inscription	385	2.10	6 th
7.	Impersonation (writing on behalf of another student)	385	2.00	7 th
8.	Exchange of answer scripts among students.	385	1.98	8 th
9.	Examination leakage	385	1.85	9 th
10.	Exchange of Bribery (giving gift or money to invigilator)	385	1.54	10 th
11.	Disarrangement (Obstruction)	385	1.53	11 th
12.	Use of mercenaries	385	1.52	12 th
13.	Aiding students by lectures	385	1.50	13 th
14.	Smuggling prepared answer script into the hall	385	1.50	13 th
15.	Tattoo	385	1.45	15 th
Weighted Mean Score			28.52	

Significant at P < 0.05

Table 1 showed 385 undergraduates participated fully in this study. The table revealed that the most frequent type of examination malpractice among undergraduates in

Benin City was taking handwritten materials and textbooks into the examination hall. This is followed by copying or dubbing from another student, Giraffe, Collusion (collaboration in order to cheat), use of phones, inscription and so on. On the end of the table is tattoo and smuggling prepared answer script into the hall.

Research Question 2: What is the level of students' involvement in examination malpractice as perceived by undergraduates in Benin City?

Level of Students' Involvement in Examination Malpractice as Perceived by undergraduates in Benin City.

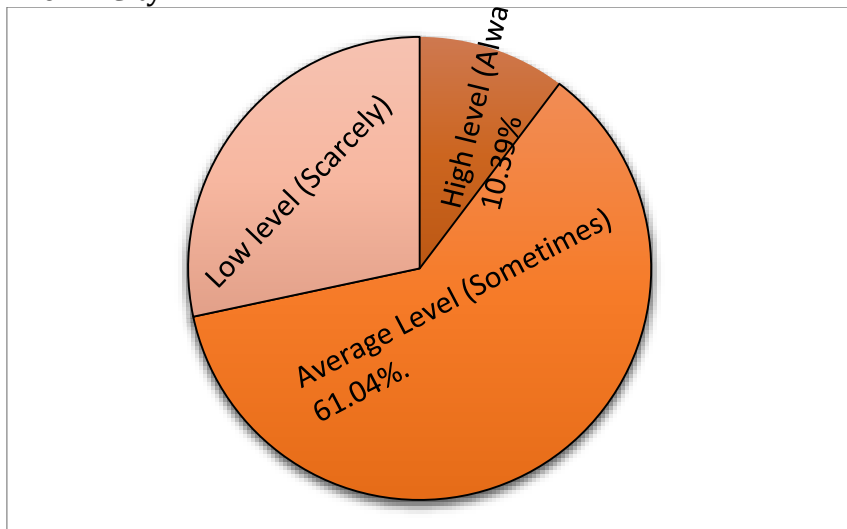


Fig. 1: PIE CHART

- High Level (Always) 40 =10.39%
- Average Level (Sometimes) 235 =61.04%
- Low Level(Scarcely) 110 = 28.57%

Figure 1 indicates that out of 385 undergraduates that participated in this study, a total of 40 (10.39%) were on the high level. This shows that over 10% of respondent may not do without copying in an examination, they were highly involved in examination malpractice; 235(61.04%) were on the average level. This means they were sometimes involved; while on the low level we had 110(28.57%) respondents were scarcely involved in examination malpractice. This shows how deep the cankerworms of examination malpractice had eaten deep into our society.

Hypotheses Testing

H1: There is no significant difference in the level of students' involvement in examination malpractice as perceived by undergraduates Benin City based on gender.

Table 2: Chi-square Analysis on Level of Students' Involvement in Examination Malpractice based on gender

Group	High (Always)	Average(Sometimes)	Low(Scarcely)	Total	χ^2
Male	50 (22.22)	150 (66.67)	25 (11.11)	225	101.24
Female	20 (12.50)	40 (25.00)	100 (62.50)	160	
Total	70 (18.18)	190 (49.35)	125 (32.47)	385	

Critical level of sig. = 0.05; df=2; Critical $\chi^2 = 2.996$

Table 2 shows that the calculated value (χ^2) is 102.24 with a significance of 2.996 computed at the critical alpha level of significance 0.05. Since the calculated value 101.24 is greater than the critical value (2.996) at critical alpha level of significance (0.05), this shows the hypothesis that *there is no significant difference in the level of involvement in examination malpractice as perceived by undergraduates Benin City based on gender* is therefore rejected. The analysis shows that gender has a role to play in the perception of undergraduates. As shown female are less involved in examination malpractices than male. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the level of students' involvement in examination malpractice as perceived by undergraduates Benin City based on gender.

H02: *There is no significant difference in the level of involvement in examination malpractice as perceived by undergraduates in Benin City based on age.*

Table 3: Chi-square Analysis of Level of Students' Involvement in Examination Malpractice based on Age

Age range	18-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	Total	χ^2
High	11 (59.77)	3 (15.79)	4 (21.05)	1 (5.26)	19	267.06
Average	221(88.75)	23 (9.24.)	1 (.40)	4 (1.60)	249	
Low	7 (6.19)	81 (71.66)	24 (21.24)	5(4.42)	113	
Total	239	107	29	10	385	

Critical level of sig. = 0.05, df=8, critical $\chi^2 = 2.18$

Table 3 shows that the calculated Cal. (χ^2) value is 267.06 with a calculated significant of 2.18 computed at the critical alpha level of significance 0.05. Since the calculated value 267.06 is greater than the critical value (2.18) at critical alpha level of significance (0.05), this shows that the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Therefore there is no significant difference in the level of involvement in examination malpractice as perceived by undergraduates in Benin City based on age.

Conclusion

Examination malpractice is a growing global scourge with negative impact on human/formation, especially in developing countries and as such every stakeholder should discourage the tendencies of all those involved in it. To checkmate or curb this menace of examination malpractice in Nigerian schools, students discipline should not be handled with levity, those found guilty should be made to face the consequence as in the Examination /Malpractice Act of 1999. The study showed that the most frequent type of examination malpractice among undergraduates in Benin City was taking handwritten materials and textbooks into the examination hall, this was followed by copying or dubbing from another student, Giraffe, Collusion (collaboration in order to cheat), Use of phones, inscription and so on. It was also concluded that the greater proportion of the undergraduates sampled were averagely involved in examination malpractice. Also, there was a significant difference in the level of students' involvement in examination malpractice as perceived by undergraduates in Benin City based on gender and age. The implications of examination malpractice among students are frightening and devastating. It makes formal assessments unreliable, educational objectives unattainable, and threatens a bleak future for any society especially in the developing world such as ours. All stakeholders are advocates of examination malpractice. Orientations, guidance, and counselling programmes should be organized often to change the student's perception of examination malpractice.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore recommended that

1. Proper checks before examination starts and effective invigilation of students during examinations was significant to preventing them from bringing in handwritten or textbooks to perpetuate in examination malpractice.
2. Undiluted efforts should be made at improving the moral standard and discipline of students through counselling services in schools.
3. During examinations there should be increased efforts by stakeholder for the effective supervision of students to be able to curb giraffing in the examination hall.
4. A concerted effort should be made at improving the level of discipline among students through counselling services and talk shows on morals and godly character in the schools.
5. There should be the full implementation of the examination malpractice decree by the Federal Government of Nigeria Act of 1999.
6. The Examination departments in Higher Education institutions should conduct training workshops for all undergraduates, invigilators, tutors, lecturers, and administrators on best practices in examination management and awareness of the various forms of malpractice.
7. Assessors should use other means of evaluation to test proficiency rather than only examination
8. There should be a deliberate effort to put less emphasis on certificate and stress more of proficiency.

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