

Examination Malpractice and Recommended Penalties in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions: A Case Study of Kwara State College of Education, Oro

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Abstract

The study is on the empirical investigation of Examination Malpractice and recommended penalties in Kwara State College of Education, Oro. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consists of 64 lecturers and 64 students drawn from the 32 departments in the College. The instrument for data collection was a 25-item structured questionnaire. The instrument was subjected to validation by two experts. Cronbach Alpha was used to establish the reliability of the instrument which yielded a coefficient of 0.82. Data collected for the study were analysed descriptively, using mean and standard deviation to answer the five research questions. From the data collected and analysed, the study found that both lecturers and students are in total support of appropriate recommended sanctions/penalties such as issuing of warning letter, suspension, expulsion and hand over to the police for the prosecution of the candidates involved in examination malpractice. Among others, it was recommended that good moral values should be properly inculcated into the students and enhanced salary should be paid to lecturers, and special welfare packages given to examination officials.

Keywords: Examination Malpractice, Students, Lecturers, Tertiary Institution, Recommended Penalty.

Introduction

Examination is a method of testing the process of teaching and learning at the end of the learning period. Nnam & Inah (2015) defined examination as a yardstick against which students or candidates' competence and progress are formally measured and appraised in the educator sector. George & Ukong (2013) defined examination as the most common tool around which the entire system of education revolves. It is instrument designed to determine the candidates that will move to the next academic level. Also, Emaikwu (2012) defined examination as part of evaluation in education: is aimed at determining a learner's level of skill acquisition and intellectual competence and understanding after a given training. Thus, examination serves as a feedback to both students and teachers to ascertain the level of knowledge acquisition. Onyibe *et al.* (2015) emphasized that any misconduct or irregularity that distorts this feedback mechanism and gives a false outcome of the learning process is examination malpractice. Dusu *et al.* (2016) categorically stated that Nigerian education system is gradually degenerating as the sanctity of education process has been affected by malpractices.

Examination malpractice is an act of dishonesty before, during or after the examination. Examination malpractice is any form of misbehavior that leads to the alteration of or a tempering with the prescribed ways of conducting examination in any given system. Alhaji and Alpheause, (2017) stressed that examination malpractice is any wrong doing a student or candidate exhibits before, during or after any examination. This is viewed by researchers as a punishable offence committed in any normal and recognized examination. Aigbekeen (2006) defined examination malpractice as any action done or committed which makes it impossible to use an examination in determining the level of competence of candidate in absorbing, responding and where appropriate, applying knowledge. Thus, examination malpractice involves depending on fraudulent means to pass examination. Furthermore, Shishima and Apenda (2004) defined examination malpractice as any irregular behaviour exhibited by those charged with conduct of examination in examination halls, or outside these halls, during or after such examinations which contravenes the rules and regulations governing the conduct of such examinations. Onyibe, *et. al.* (2015) opined that whenever there is examination irregularity or malpractice the validity and resulting outcome is questionable. Hence, the result of such evaluation leads to wrong decision and judgment which affect the teacher, the learner, the entire education industry, as well as the society (Ojonemi, *et. al.* 2013).

Anzene (2014) noted that examination malpractice was first reported in Nigeria in the year 1914, when the question papers of the Senior Cambridge Local. Examinations were reportedly seen by candidates before the scheduled date of the examination. Also, Akinseye (2005) reported that in 1948 a Nigerian candidate's result was cancelled because of his possession of notes ready prepared and taken to the examination hall of the Cambridge examination.

The menace of examination malpractice is very alarming in Nigeria and it has constituted strong concern for researchers (Yahaya *et.al*, 2017). Genda (2008), reported that in 1977, the menace of examination malpractice in Nigeria had reached an alarming stage with the leakage of the West African Examination Council question papers which prompted an investigation and subsequent promulgation of decree 20 of 1984 by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Part of the Decree reads thus: "Any person who fraudulently or with intent to cheat or secure any unfair advantage to himself or any other person or in abuse of his office, produces, sells or buys or otherwise deals with any question paper intended for the examination of persons at any examination or commits any offences specified in section 3 (27) (c) of this Decree shall be guilty of an offences and on conviction be sentenced to 21years imprisonment... (Fagbemi, 1998 cited in Onisibe, *et .al.*, 2015). Onyibe *et al* (2015) reported that Examination Malpractice Acts 33 of 1999 revised the Decree 20 of 1984 and stipulated punishment ranging from a fine of N50, 000.00 and imprisonment for a term of 3-4 years with or without option of fine. Despite all these laws, examination malpractice has been on the increase and this is as a result of the government inability to enforce the laws. (Oredein, 2006)."

The Examination Malpractice Act 33 of (1999) explained examination malpractice as any act of omission or commission by a person who in anticipation of, before, during or after any examination fraudulently secure any unfair advantage for himself or any other person in such a manner that contravenes the rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity, reliability, authenticity of the examination and ultimately the integrity of the certificates issued. Thus, examination malpractice is common everywhere and every examination season witnesses the emergence of new ingenious ways of cheating (Nnam & Inah, 2015, Anzene 2014, Dusu et.al., 2016, Ojo, et. al., 2019, Rabia, et. al., 2021 Ojonomi et. al. 2013, Yahaya, et. al., 2017).

The effects of examination malpractice in Nigeria is multidimensional in nature. Alhaji & Alpheause, (2017) stated that the impact of examination malpractice is so grave, and has seriously affected the quality of graduates from our higher institutions of learning in the country. Examination malpractice ruins the country's academic reputation. This has made most of the foreign countries to no longer value academic certificates issued in Nigeria (Amadi & Opuiyo, 2018). Thus examination malpractice has numerous effects on cheats, school systems and the larger society (Nnam & Inah, 2015).

Researchers had identified some major causes of examination malpractices. For instance, Reter et .al., (2020) identified cultural norms, such as poor study habits, high parental expectations and engaging in non- academics activities as the main causes of examination malpractice. Ena-Israel (2021) stated some factors sustaining examination malpractices include parental influence, lack of adequate learning facilities poor study habits, poor concentration during lectures, education system, indiscipline among the students are some other causes of examination malpractices (Adeoti et.al, 2015, Rabia et.al, 2021, Nnami & Inah, 2015, Osadebe & Bini, 2018).

Examination malpractice exists in different forms. Yahaya et. al.,(2017) stated that the types of examination malpractices as perceived by teachers of secondary school in Lagos State are dubbing, sorting, giraffing, expo, writing on the bodies, use of sign language, use of cell phones among others. However, Bbalo & Mulauzi, (2019) categorically stated three forms of examination malpractices namely: individually enhanced, technologically enhanced and collaborative cheating methods.

Yahaya et. al., (2017) stressed the need for examination body or officers to come up with more strict policies that would block all types of examination malpractices. Kwara State College of Education, Oro in affiliation with Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti and other tertiary institutions in the country have their own sets of examination rules and regulations published on examination guidelines/students handbooks. The handbooks are made available to fresh students to put them in the right pedestal for academic hard work. The sanction/penalty for candidates that involved in examination malpractice in Nigerian tertiary institutions ranges from warning letter, not allowing the candidates to write the examination, suspension for two semesters, expulsion and prosecution by the police depending on the degree of the examination malpractice.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate and determine the opinion of respondents on examination malpractice and recommended penalties in Kwara State College of Education, Oro. While the specific objectives were to:

- i. Determine the opinion of respondents on the penalty of issuing warning letter to candidates involving in examination malpractice in Kwara State College of Education, Oro.
- ii. Determine the opinion of respondents on the recommended penalty of not allowing candidates that came late to write the examination in Kwara State College of Education, Oro.
- iii. Examine the opinion of respondents on the recommend penalty of suspending candidates involving in examination malpractice for two semesters in Kwara State College of Education, Oro.
- iv. Assess the view of respondents on the recommended penalty of expulsion and hand over of the Police for prosecution of candidates involving in examination malpractice in Kwara State College of Education, Oro.
- v. Determine the opinion of the respondents on the recommended penalty of expulsion of candidates involving in examination malpractice in Kwara State College of Education, Oro.

Research Questions

These research questions were raised and answered:

- i. What is the opinion of the respondents on the recommended penalty of issuing warning letter to candidates involving in examination malpractice in Kwara State College of Education, Oro?
- ii. What is the opinion of respondent on the recommended penalty of not allowing candidates that came late to write the examination in Kwara State College of Education, Oro?
- iii. What is the opinion of respondents on the recommended penalty of suspending candidates involving in examination malpractice for two semesters in Kwara State College of Education, Oro?
- iv. What is the view of respondents on the recommended penalty of expulsion and hand over of candidates involving in examination malpractice to the Police for prosecution in Kwara State College of Education, Oro?
- v. What is the opinion of the respondents on the recommended penalty of expulsion of candidates involving in examination malpractice in Kwara State College of Education, Oro?

Research Method

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design which determines the opinion of lecturers and students on the recommended penalties for candidates involving in examination malpractice in Kwara State College of Education, Oro. The population of the study comprises of 64 lecturers and 64 students drawn from the 32 departments in Kwara State College of Education, Oro. A questionnaire containing 25-items was used for the study. The questionnaire was structured on 4 points scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). The face and content validity of the questionnaire was done by two experts in measurement and evaluation at the Kwara State College of Education, Oro. All their suggestions were taken into consideration before the final copy of the questionnaire was written for the study. The data collected were analysed using Cronbach Alpha which yielded reliability coefficient of 0.82, meaning the instrument is reliable. Mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis. The research questions have four options of Strongly Agreed (SA)-4 points, Agreed-3points, Disagreed- 2 points and Strongly Disagreed- 1 point. In decision rule, any item which has a mean of 2.5 and above was regarded as positive and any mean item of less than 2.5 was regarded as negative.

Presentation of Results

Research Question One:

What is the opinion of the respondents on the recommended penalty of issuing warning letter to candidates involving in examination malpractice in Kwara State College of Education, Oro?

Table 1: Mean rating of the respondents on the recommended penalty of issuing warning letter to candidates involving in examination malpractice in Kwara State College of Education, Oro.

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Soliciting for undue assistance during examination	3.27	0.87	Positive
2.	Writing before or after the official timing given by the invigilator for any specified examination	3.19	0.89	Positive
3.	Sitting for an examination for which a candidate is not registered	3.11	0.86	Positive
4.	Leaving the examination hall without the permission of the invigilator	3.14	0.93	Positive
5.	Smoking and drinking of alcohol in examination hall	3.10	0.98	Positive
	Total	15.81	4.53	
	Cluster Mean & S.D.	3.16	0.91	Positive

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 1 reveals the mean scores of the recommended penalty for candidates involving in examination malpractice in Kwara State College of Education, Oro. The data in Table 1 show that, all the responses of respondents were positive on all the items, giving a cluster, mean response 3.16 which is positive (i.e. it is above cut off point of 2.50). This implies that lecturers and students are in total support of the recommend penalty of issuing warning letter to candidates involving in examination malpractice in Kwara State College of Education, Oro. However, Keter, *et al*, 2020 has found that students have developed a culture of missing classes and some have joined bad companies which act as the norm causes of examination malpractices.

Research Question Two

What is the opinion of respondent on the recommended penalty of not allowing candidates that came late to write the examination in Kwara State College of Education, Oro?

Table 2: Mean rating of the respondents on the recommended penalty of not allowing candidate that came late to write the examination in Kwara State College of Education, Oro.

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
6.	Coming into the examination hall should not be later than thirty (30) minutes after the commencement of an examination	3.15	0.82	Positive
	Total	3.15	0.82	Positive

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 2 reveals the mean scores of the recommended penalty for candidates involving in examination malpractice in Kwara State College of Education, Oro. The data in Table 2 show that, all the responses of respondents were positive on all the items, giving a cluster, mean response 3.15 which is positive (i.e. it is above cut off point of 2.50). This implies that both lecturers and students are in total support of the recommended penalty of not allowing candidates that came late write examination. The study of Rabia *et al*, (2021) revealed that school culture, teachers' role, education system, social factors and students' attitude towards the studies have a significant contribution in examination malpractice.

Research Question Three

What is the opinion of respondents on the recommended penalty of suspending candidates involving in examination malpractice for two semesters in Kwara State College of Education, Oro?

Table 3: Mean rating of the respondents on the recommended penalty of suspending candidates involving in examination malpractice for two semesters.

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
7.	Being in unauthorized possession of any College examination material(s), answer scripts, booklets	3.02	0.91	Positive
8.	Giving any form of undue assistance (copying from or allowing copying by other students from answer booklets, continuation sheets or question papers	2.83	0.79	Positive
9.	Refusal to submit oneself for search by an invigilator of the same sex	3.10	0.92	Positive
10.	Mutilation or removal of any paper, answer script and other materials supplied by the College during examination	3.19	0.87	Positive
11.	Writing on the palm, piece of cloth, desks, seals, rulers, ceiling, walls, body parts	3.01	0.80	Positive
12.	Smuggling into or copying from unauthorized books, materials, programmable calculators, cell phone, palmtops, organizers or other gadgets in the examination	3.09	0.83	Positive
13.	Assaulting, fighting a fellow student, an invigilator or any other officers of the College assigned for the conduct an examination	3.19	0.93	Positive
14.	Leaving the examination hall to seek any assistance either in terms of personal contract or reading of notes. textbooks under the pretext of going to ease oneself during an examination	3.21	0.91	Positive
15.	Failure by a candidate to submit his/her answer scripts after taking part in an examination	3.20	0.89	Positive
16.	Attempt by a candidate to influence the marking of scripts or the award of mark by the internal or external examiner	3.12	0.86	Positive
	Total	30.96	8.71	
	Cluster Mean & S.D.	3.10	0.87	Positive

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 3 reveals the mean scores of the recommended penalty for candidates involving in examination malpractice in Kwara State College of Education, Oro. The data in Table 3 show that, all the responses of respondents were positive on all the items, giving a cluster, mean response 3.10 which is positive (i.e. it is above cut off point of 2.50). This implies that lecturers and students are in total support of the recommended penalty of suspending candidates involving in examination malpractice in Kwara State College of Education, Oro. Adeniran *et. al.*, (2020) revealed that indiscipline among the students, non- implementation

of examination malpractices decree and inadequate supervision of students during examination as the major causes of examination malpractices.

Research Question Four

What is the view of respondents on the recommended penalty of expulsion and hand over of candidates involving in examination malpractice to the police for prosecution in Kwara State College of Education, Oro?

Table 4: Mean rating of the respondents on the recommended penalty of expulsion and hand over of candidates involving in examination malpractice to the Police for prosecution

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
17.	Engaging somebody else who is not a student of the College of write tests and examination on behalf of oneself	2.74	0.97	Positive
	Total	2.74	0.97	Positive

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 4 reveals the mean scores of the recommended penalty for candidates involving in examination malpractice in Kwara State College of Education, Oro. The data in Table 4 show that, all the responses of respondents were positive on all the items, giving a cluster, mean response 2.74 which is positive (i.e. it is above cut off point of 2.50). This implies that lecturers and students are in total support of the recommended penalty, expulsion and handover of candidates involving in examination malpractice to the Police for prosecution in Kwara State College of Education, Oro. Amadi & Opuiyo, 2018 stressed that the appropriate authorities were not doing enough to keep the trend in check. Also, Ojo *et al*, (2019) stated that impersonation cannot be easily detected especially in a large class and conspiring of some invigilator or teachers. He therefore suggested biometric control examination attendance register to deter impersonation during examination.

Research Question Five

What is the opinion of the respondents on the recommended penalty of expulsion of candidates involving in examination malpractice in Kwara State College of Education, Oro?

Table 5: Mean rating of the respondents on the recommended penalty of expulsion of candidates involving in examination malpractice

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
18.	Destruction or mutilation of any materials used as aid in the examination without authorization	2.84	0.92	Positive
19.	Having prior knowledge of examination questions	2.82	0.95	Positive
20.	Writing examination before during or after the officially specified examination period in an authorized place	2.79	0.96	Positive

21.	Possession of falsified examination document e.g. ID cards, examination permit, answer scripts, school receipts, etc.	2.77	0.96	Positive
22.	Examination misconduct by a student who had been previously involved in two cases of examination misconduct with penalties less severe than suspension	2.76	0.93	Positive
23.	Receiving or passing prepared answers to or from person outside the examination hall during an examination	2.70	0.99	Positive
24.	Refusal to sign irregularity form	2.79	0.98	Positive
25.	Being in possession of or harassing other with dangerous weapons before, during and after examination	2.70	0.92	Positive
	Total	22.17	7.61	
	Cluster Mean & SD	2.77	0.95	

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 5 reveals the mean scores of the recommended penalty for candidates involving in examination malpractice in Kwara State College of Education, Oro. The data in Table 5 show that, all the responses of respondents were positive on all the items, giving a cluster, mean response 2.77 which is positive (i.e. it is above cut off point of 2.50). This implies that lecturers and students are in total support of the recommended penalty of expulsion for candidates involving in examination malpractice in Kwara State College of Education, Oro. Researchers such as Amadi & Opuiyo, 2018, Adeniran et.al., (2020), among others identified indiscipline among the students, and lack of the appetite for studying but rather want to pass their examination at all cost as the major causes of examination malpractice. However, Nnam & Inah, 2015 revealed among other that this criminal act manifests in form of smuggling of illicit materials relating to the course to be taken into the examination hall, wide spread copying from one another during examination, the use of mobile phone and other electronic device during examination.

Conclusion

Examination malpractice jeopardizes the main objective of education which is to equip learners with requisite knowledge, attitudes and skills to enable them contribute meaningful to the development of the nation. In Nigeria, examination malpractice is rapidly acquiring the status of a social, moral and educational epidemic, which need to be urgently corrected. Examination malpractice has made it impossible to use examination to determine the level of a candidate intelligent quadrant. . In this study, both lecturers and students are in support of appropriate sanctions for candidates involved in exam

malpractice in the College. Therefore, all hand must be on deck to eradicate examination malpractice in our educational system in Nigeria before it goes beyond control.

Recommendations

- i. The student should be properly engaged to imbibe good moral values.
- ii. Enhanced salary should be paid to lecturers and special packages give to examination officials.
- iii. Tools for effective teaching and learning should be provided in libraries and laboratories.
- iv. There should be proper funding of education sector by relevant authorities.
- v. Electronic gadgets should be installed into the examination halls.
- vi. There should be effective continuous assessment in the school system.

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