

PREVALENCE, FORMS AND FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE AND ITS CONTROL AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NORTH-CENTRAL NIGERIA

GIDADO, Bello Kumo *1 APEH, Hosea Abalaka *2 ODILI, Chizoba Abigail *3
gbkumo@gmail.com Apehhosea@gmail.com chizobaodili96@gmail.com

Department of Educational Foundations
University of Abuja, Nigeria.

Abstract

The study investigated the Prevalence, Forms and Factors Responsible for Examination Malpractice and its Control among Secondary School Students in North-Central Nigeria. Four research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The research design was survey. The sample was 380 senior secondary school students which were randomly selected from three states, in twelve schools. Prevalence, Forms and Factors Responsible for Examination Malpractice and Control Questionnaire (PFFREMCQ) was used to collect data. The data was analysed using mean with standard deviation for the research questions and ANOVA for the hypothesis. The results revealed that examination malpractice was prevalent among female and male students, private and public schools and in rural and urban schools. Copying was the most prevalent form of examination malpractice. Poor study habit, loss of interest in reading and school were found as major factors responsible for examination malpractice. Value and moral orientation, adequate learning environment and enlightenment are the effective preventive measures while expulsion of students, cancellation of students' results and blacklisting students were found most effective punitive measures. It was recommended that value orientation, provision of adequate physical structures, expulsion and blacklisting of students be employed to control examination malpractice in North-Central Nigeria.

Key Words: Prevalence, Forms, Factors, Examination malpractice, Control

Introduction

Examination malpractice in Nigeria dated back to the colonial era. The incidence of examination malpractice in Nigeria was traced to leakage of Cambridge examinations in the year 1914. This was followed by the West African Examination Council result fraud in the year 1967. The 1970s experienced a spate and consistency in the incidence of examination malpractice. In the modern day Nigeria, examination malpractice is evident in the least of examination, no matter the level or community (Okoroafor, 2019). This is to suggest that urban and rural schools are involved with examination malpractice. It has become so endemic in the country that majority of the stakeholders in education are either directly involved or are accomplices. Worse still is the fact that most stakeholders see examination malpractice either as just helping students or as an act that is considered non-offensive. The menace of examination malpractice is becoming a norm. Education aims at producing effective achieving individuals (Obilor & Ikpa, 2020). Education is ultimately to get students literate as well as self-reliant. Self-reliance is an act in which the

educated can fend for his or herself at any given time to meet the demands of the time. Self-reliance for a student begins with the ability to learn by oneself after a foundation has been laid and culminates in a student's ability to answer his/her examination questions unaided.

Sequel to this, examination sets the stage for selection, promotion or otherwise and certification. Examination is a tool for testing the extent of learning that has taken place in a set of learners at any given time. It is a tool for evaluating the level of knowledge, skills and behaviours that has been learned by students after a period of teaching and learning. It is a means of assessing competence after a period of training so as to ascertain areas of strength and weakness, depth of knowledge and areas of mastery. It is a very essential tool for drawing the graph of what has been learnt from what was taught; inclusive of all that are expected to have been learnt.

Although examination is a very useful tool for assessing the student, getting the level of performance, it has been fraught with all manner of irregularities. These irregularities were brought about by activities and inactivity of students, teachers, school authorities, parents, invigilators and the society at large (Wilayat, 2012). Examination malpractice has become persistent and entrenched in examinations organised and written in the country despite the investigative commission set up and the penalties slammed on the offenders especially examination officials.

Background

Writing about examination malpractice, Nwana (2000), stated that it is the abuse of rules and regulations pertaining to both internal and external examinations. It begins from the setting, preparation of examination, to its administration and culminates in the assigning of scores to students. All of these processes could affect the result and authenticity of certificate.

The Examination Malpractice Act of 1999 conceptualised 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. Akaranga and Ongong (2013) wrote that any misconduct or irregularity in examination administration distorts the feedback and gives a false outcome of examination process. Consequent on this, any use or judgement made based on that result will be misleading; a judgement which will affect the learner(s), teacher and the entire teaching process.

Examination malpractice derived because rules of giving and taking examinations were broken by various persons involved in the process and art of examinations. It starts from the very conception of setting questions by examination administrators, its presentation to or reaching any student before the scheduled time, it stretches to preferring any student to the point that the student gains any score that he or she does not deserve looking at the student's work in its original form (Amadi & Opuiyo, 2018 and Adewale, 2014).

Consequently, examination malpractice goes beyond what takes place in and around an examination hall (Bertolini, Stremmel & Thorngren, 2012). It could have happened pre examination, during an examination, post examination. It is a combination of actions or inactions at any or all of the stages which gives a student undue advantage to gain higher than the student

would have scored. At whatever point it happens, it is still condemnable as long as it gives undue advantage that makes a student gain a score that he or she could not have ordinarily gained if being left to only his or her competence at the time the examination was administered.

Examination malpractice has become so organised that all the stakeholders tended to be working hand in hand. It now appeared as a corporate business in which everyone is working to promote its success. Prominent among the list of collaborators for the promotion of examination malpractice according to Arijesuyo and Adeyoju, (2012) are the students, the teachers, the invigilators, school authorities and host communities.

Examination malpractice also known as academic dishonesty is a social vice and crime. It mars the credibility of results ascertained from examinations (Fasasi, 2008). Its magnitude in any country at any given time is directly proportional to the extent to which examination managers uphold or violate the ethics of examination. The most disturbing side of examination malpractice is the fact that those who should transmit basic examination ethical rules are the ones massively involved in and scaling up examination malpractice (Ojiah & Shamo, 2012); anyone could be involved in the act of examination malpractice (Arijesuyo & Adeyoju, 2012).

Yusuf, Yunusa and Bamgbose, (2015) with Banjo, (2018) stated that there was virtually no examination taken in Nigeria that was not fraught with one form of examination malpractice or the other; whether it is an internal or external examination, termly examination or promotional examination. It has eaten deep into the fabrics of educational system (Njoku & Njoku, 2016). This was evidenced with the level of examination malpractice seen at primary, secondary and tertiary schools. The story of examination malpractice is a common place (Yusuf, Yunisa & Bamgbose, 2015, Banjo, 2018). Despite all the attempts to curb examination malpractice, it seemed to be increasing and had been entrenched into the Nigerian education system (Adelowo, 2021). Numerous factors were found to be responsible for examination malpractice; they are classified under three broad headings: personal, environmental and social factors.

There are many forms of examination malpractice observed in Nigeria (Amadi & Opuiyo, 2018). The most notable ones are as follows: leakage of examination question papers, impersonation, swapping of scripts, smuggling in of foreign items into examination hall, copying, collusion, sorting, results and certificate falsification, assault and intimidation of examination administrators (Onuka 2013, Mashanyare & Chinamasa 2014, Nnam & Inah 2015, Njoku & Njoku 2016 and Tyokyaa 2016).

Leakage of examination question papers occurs when an examination question paper or any component of the questions of any examination gets into circulation before the time of the scheduled examination. It is the illegal accessing or infiltration of examination question(s) into the hands of anyone to any candidate before the examination question is officially opened in the examination hall. Leakage could be either of the hard copy or soft copy of examination questions. This could be evidenced with the observance of uniform answers or uniform answer approach to questions by teachers or candidates (Mashanyare & Chinamasa, 2014).

Sorting is a sort of examination malpractice where negotiation is done by a student and the person who wishes to help the student in whatever way they may have negotiated. It could also be done by another person for the student. Anything can be used for the sorting negotiation. Each

party is expected to fulfil own part of the bargain. Among the items used for sorting are friendship, gifts, money and sex. Any other thing can and may be used depending on choice of the parties concerned. The parties could be between students, student(s) with teacher(s), teacher and teacher(s), teacher(s) with parent(s), teacher(s) with school authority, school authority with examination officer, school authority with examination body. The combinations vary; the list could be endless (Wiliyat, 2012, Adelowo, 2021).

Result and Certificate Falsification is examination malpractice that is usually seen at high level of schooling and in external examinations where someone gets results and certificate that is not his. In this case, he can pass through anybody he is conversant with who could help to get him his choice result or certificate. This is the case when people seek for choice school, choice work, work placement, promotion or privileged juicy office position (Onyechere, 1997).

Swapping of Scripts is a form of examination malpractice in which answer booklets are exchanged; either between students for comparison, exchange for copying of answers from each other, or one another. In this form, a candidate's answer script gets into the hand of another candidate(s). Swapping could be between a candidate and his mercenary. It could also be done by retrieving an answer booklet or script after submission and replacing it with another —well written and preferred answer script. When this is done, there must be a connivance with at least an examination administrator (Ojiah & Shamo, 2012).

Smuggling of Materials is a form of examination malpractice where candidates bring into examination venues any unauthorised materials for an examination. The materials are called foreign materials because by rules of the examination, such materials are not permitted. Foreign materials in examination vary from examination to examination. The onus lies on the candidates and the invigilators to check which materials are permitted for each examination then make sure nothing besides those are introduced into the examination. Foreign materials smuggled into examinations could be: phones, calculators, organisers, iPods, text and note books, hand copied items, maps, graphs, etc (Osadebe, 2018). Smuggling of materials is called various nicknames by various candidates. Examples are: escort, bullet, super print, pregnant biros, hide and seek, designers, microchips, tattoos, magic desk and containers, contra ban and such like. They have also been branded in various Nigerian languages and sign languages. Some of the names are codified as the users may choose.

Examination administrators are in some cases assaulted by students, candidates, parents or machineries. Any of these people could physically or verbally insult examination administrator who is not letting them have their way during an examination. They keep finding ways to intimidate examination administrators so they could perform their examination malpractice enterprise (Emaikwu, 2012).

Impersonation is the form of examination malpractice in which a mercenary is hired to sit and write examination for a candidate. This form involves someone writing examination for another. The impersonator identifies himself as the candidate he is impersonating. He writes the name, number of the candidate he is impersonating and any other information that may be required for the examination. In some cases of impersonation, the candidate does a multiple entry. In this case, the candidate will sit for the examination as well as his impersonator. The issue will be that

the two will exchange identities on their examination scripts; while the impersonator writes the identity of the candidate, the candidate identifies himself with a different set of identity. It is hoped that the impersonator will perform well then the student will claim the result since the identity used was his. This second method of impersonation appears a bit easier and natural to play as both the candidate and the impersonator are registered and entitled to write the examination (Uche, 2005).

Collusion is a prior arrangement by candidates on how to help one another with an examination. It could be between students or among students. It could as well be an arrangement between student(s) and examination administrator(s) (Diego, 2017). It involves all manner of actions by students like filing into examination hall together, sitting together and copying from one another (Iheanacho & Ekpenyonganwan, 2019; Kebuya & Mekongtso, 2020). It could be some form of disorganising examinations to gain some pre-planned advantage, destabilising or engaging invigilators, sharing answers verbally and otherwise. Sometimes, they bring in contra ban for the use of their group. Anything done in line with the group's intention to help their own is in the line of collusion. It could be disturbing to others but as long as they gain their objective, they are satisfied with it. They also brand the methods of collusion. With this in mind, some students in the group relax and may not bother to study for themselves since they have a cooperating group that would always help out by supplying answers. It is a deal within a group to outsmart examiners. Member(s) are relied upon to supply answers to the group. Those are supply answers are called the distributors while the others are the collectors.

Imposition is a form of examination malpractice where someone is forced or coaxed into indulging in examination malpractice which he ordinarily will not do (Diego, 2017). Imposition is usually done by an authority, a superior on a subordinate; the high, senior, privileged and even mates, sometimes with emotional blackmail. In most cases of imposition, student, or examination administrator may not be able to answer back to the imposing or influential figure. Such student or examination administrator being imposed upon obliges grudgingly as he is made to act against his will.

Iheanacho and Ekpenyonganwan (2019) studied frequencies of examination malpractice by type, gender and faculty in University of Calabar, Nigeria. The findings were that collusion was the highest type of examination malpractice; followed by sorting. Impersonation was the least of the type of examination malpractice option employed. Male students were more involved in examination malpractice than the female students.

Irimiya and lukman (2019) worked on causes and effects of examination malpractice on Social Studies students in secondary schools of Apa L.G.A of Benue state, Nigeria. The findings were that lack of professional teachers, dearth of teaching materials and emphasis on certificate were the major causes of examination malpractice in the area.

Oguzie, Oguzie, Nnadi, Mokwelu and Obi (2019) researched on the topic effect of group counselling in reducing examination malpractice tendency among secondary school students in Imo state Nigeria. The results showed that group counselling was effective for reducing examination malpractice tendency among secondary school students and that group counselling was more effective for reducing examination malpractice tendency in female students than in

male students. They recommended that group counselling should be used as a means to curbing examination malpractice and for reducing the tendency of examination malpractice among secondary school students

Akinrefon, Ikpah, Bamigbala and Adeniyi (2016) investigated examination malpractice in Nigerian Universities: factor analysis definition. The findings showed that the two major causes of examination malpractice were anxiety and the fact that parents encouraged their children to indulge in examination malpractice. The study discovered that applying severe punishment was top on the list of solutions as opined by the students.

Situma and Wasike (2020) researched on the challenges of examination malpractices in institutions of higher learning in Kenya. The findings showed that leakage, collusion and unauthorised writings were the main types of examination malpractice. Poor preparation, lack of integrity, financial gain and sexual factor were top on the list of causes of examination malpractice.

Ojiah and Shamo (2012) researched on factors and effects of examination malpractice among undergraduate students of the University of Abuja: Implications for guidance. The study found among others that examination malpractice had defied the punitive, palliative and preventive measures. The findings showed that the major cause of examination malpractice was inadequate infrastructure.

Gidado (2000) investigated Environmental factors and students_ poor academic performance in Bauchi state secondary schools. It found that students_ environment was a major indicator of their academic performance. Gidado, Apeh and Akinwade (2023) researched on learning environment as correlates of academic achievements of senior secondary school students in North-Central Nigeria. The study found and emphasised the relevance of environment as a major indicator of students_ academic performance.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design employed for this study was the survey research design. Survey is appropriate for this study because it sought and gathered a large volume of data from a large population using a small representative sample. Survey research design has evolved over the years as a method of conducting researches that are non-experimental in nature. Being descriptive in nature, it tried to describe the distribution, frequency and incidence of specific issues about a given population. The sample chosen have similar characteristics and data was collected over a short time frame in different locations using same instrument (Anikweze & Danladi, 2021). Survey research design was appropriate for this research as it set out to gather information about a large population using a representative sample using the instrumentality of a questionnaire in different locations over a short period of time

Population of the Study

All the secondary schools students in North-central Nigeria were used. It comprised six states and the FCT. The states were: Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau and the Federal capital territory (FCT). The population of secondary school students in North-Central Nigeria

was 574,782. The target respondents are students in senior secondary school. They have experienced a great deal of students' life as far as life in secondary school is concerned. They have interacted with the system and one another enough to be able to state what is obtainable in their lives and schools.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

Stratified sampling technique was employed for the selection of States, schools and for school location (urban and rural schools). Using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for determining sample size for research activities, a sample of 380 was derived as the appropriate sample size and used. Three States were sampled out of the six States and The Federal Capital Territory which made up North-Central Nigeria. The three States are Kogi, Nasarawa and Plateau. A total of 12 schools were sampled, four schools from each of the three States. For every State, data was collected in both urban and rural schools. Two schools in each urban setting of a State and two schools in each rural setting of the States were used. For every setting used, data was collected from one private school and one public school. The respondents were selected using a variety of probability sampling (McMillan, 2000; Araoye, 2003; Anikweze, & Danladi, 2021).

Instrumentation

Prevalence, Forms and Factors Responsible for Examination Malpractice and Control Questionnaire (PFFREMCQ) was used to carry out the study. PFFREMCQ is an instrument designed by the researchers which elicited data from students about the prevalence, forms and factors responsible for examination malpractice and control. It has sections A and B containing 51 items. Section A elicited data on demographic variables while section B elicited data on prevalence, forms, factors and control of examination malpractice among secondary school students in North-Central Nigeria.

Reliability of Instrument

The reliability was derived using the Spearman-Brown formula. With the odd-even correlation of 0.6 substituted into the formula, the correlation coefficient of 0.75 was obtained indicating an internal consistency.

Data Collection Procedure

There was a pilot test. PFFREMCQ was administered to public senior secondary school students in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. Consent was granted by the principal of the school and a class of 36 SSII students was assigned where the questionnaire was administered by the researchers after instructions as to how to fill the questionnaire was given. The students completed the PFFREMCQ on their own, of their own accord. There was 95% retrieval of the questionnaire.

Method of Data Analysis

The mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (SD) was used to analyze all four research questions and ANOVA used to analyze the hypothesis raised.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the prevalence and forms of examination malpractice among secondary school students in North-Central Nigeria?

Table 1: Prevalence and forms of Examination Malpractice among Secondary School Students in North-Central Nigeria

N = 380

S/N	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
5	Students copy from one another	3.14	.98	Agree
6	Students copy on different parts of their bodies	2.88	.99	Agree
7	Leakage of examination questions	2.74	1.02	Agree
8	Copying from own prepared materials	2.91	1.02	Agree
9	Use of textbooks and other print materials	2.72	1.05	Agree
10	Using mercenary or impersonation	2.54	1.05	Agree
11	Going out to read up forgotten answers	2.62	1.09	Agree
12	Exchanging answer scripts	2.83	1.07	Agree
13	Students are allowed more time than allotted for examination	2.67	1.03	Agree
14	Arranging with gangs to cheat in examination	2.67	1.12	Agree
15	Invigilators connive with students to cheat during examinations	2.48	1.11	Disagree
16	Students physically assault invigilators	2.51	1.10	Agree
17	Invigilators are bribed	2.74	1.09	Agree
18	Teachers supply answers to students during examination	2.44	1.11	Disagree
19	Falsification of results	2.68	1.10	Agree
Sectional Mean		2.70	1.06	

Table 1 showed the mean score of respondents on the prevalence of examination malpractice among secondary school students in North-Central Nigeria. The sectional mean score of respondents for prevalence of examination malpractice was 2.70, which showed that the respondents agreed that there were cases of examination malpractice such as students copying from one another, copying on different parts of their body, copying from own prepared materials and exchanging answers scripts. Students copying from one another ranked highest with a mean of 3.1 while teachers supply answers to students during examinations ranked the least with a mean score of 2.4.

Research Question Two: What factors are responsible for the prevalence of examination malpractice among secondary school students in North-Central Nigeria?

Table 2: Factors Responsible for the Prevalence of Examination Malpractice among Secondary School Students in North-Central Nigeria

N = 380

S/N	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
20	Overcrowded classrooms	3.15	.99	Agree
21	Poor invigilation	2.93	1.01	Agree
22	Poor teaching by teachers	2.83	1.08	Agree
23	Lack of conducive learning environment	2.85	1.04	Agree
24	Non-coverage of syllabus	2.94	.95	Agree
25	Lack of commitment and incompetence of teachers	2.89	.96	Agree
26	Peer pressure	3.08	.91	Agree
27	Fear of failure	3.17	.93	Agree
28	Poor study habit of students	3.20	.95	Agree
29	Loss of interest in reading	3.19	.89	Agree
30	Lack of interest in school	3.18	.90	Agree
31	Inadequate preparation for examinations	3.15	.95	Agree
Sectional Mean		3.05	0.96	

Table 2 showed the mean score of factors which made examination malpractice prevalent among secondary school students in North-Central Nigeria. The sectional mean score of respondents for factors responsible for the prevalence of examination malpractice was 3.05. Factors like poor study habit, loss of interest in reading, lack of interest in school and overcrowded classrooms contributed to examination malpractice in the region.

Research Question Three: What are the preventive measures effective for control of examination malpractice among secondary school students in North-Central Nigeria?

Table 3: Preventive measures for Control of Examination Malpractice among Secondary School Students in North-Central Nigeria

N = 380

S/N	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
32	Public enlightenment on the effects of examination malpractice	3.26	.90	Agree
33	Enlightenment on the punishment for offenders	3.18	.88	Agree
34	Provision of good teaching and learning environment	3.28	.92	Agree
35	Value and moral orientation to students	3.29	.86	Agree
36	Strict invigilation of examinations	3.23	.91	Agree
37	Use of computer in writing examinations (CBT)	2.94	1.03	Agree
38	Prompt and public sanctioning of examination offenders	3.11	.90	Agree
	Sectional Mean	3.18	0.92	

Table 3 showed the mean score on curbing examination malpractice among secondary school students in North-Central Nigeria. The sectional mean score of respondents on ways of curbing examination malpractice was 3.18. This showed that the respondents agreed strongly that examination malpractice could be curbed through using all the means stated. They agreed to all the test items with value and moral orientation for students ranking highest with a mean of 3.29 while CBT ranked lowest with a mean of 2.9.

Research Question Four: Which punitive measures are effective for control of examination malpractice among secondary school students in North-central Nigeria?

Table 4: Punitive Measures effective for Control of Examination Malpractice among Secondary School Students in North-Central Nigeria

N = 380

S/N	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
39	Making schools pay fines can reduce examination malpractice	2.86	1.09	Agree
40	Dismissal of principals	2.68	1.08	Agree
41	Blacklisting schools	2.69	1.07	Agree
42	Cancellation of entire school results	2.55	1.12	Agree
43	Cancellation of individual student results	2.96	1.00	Agree
44	Expulsion of students	2.97	.97	Agree
45	Listing students into the school's black book	2.91	1.04	Agree
46	Jailing offenders of examination malpractice	2.67	1.08	Agree
47	Closing down schools for indulging in examination malpractice	2.54	1.15	Agree
	Sectional Mean	2.76	1.07	

Table 4 showed the mean score of punitive measures effective for control of examination malpractice among secondary school students in North-Central Nigeria. The sectional mean score of respondents for punitive measures effective for control of examination malpractice is 2.76. This showed that the respondents agreed that some punitive measures were effective and can be applied to control examination malpractice. Expulsion of students has a mean of 2.97; ranking highest while closing down of schools ranked the lowest with a mean of 2.5.

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the prevalence of examination malpractice in secondary schools in North-Central Nigeria on the basis of state.

Table 5 ANOVA for the Difference in Prevalence of Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools in North-Central Nigeria on the basis of State

School States	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	1.958	2	.979	2.159	.117	Accepted
Within Groups	170.995	377	.454			
Total	172.953	379				

The analysis in Table 5 was carried out to test the difference in the prevalence of examination malpractice in secondary school in North-Central Nigeria on the basis of state. With a significant value of 0.11 (greater than the 0.05 level of significance), the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the prevalence of examination malpractice in secondary schools in North-Central Nigeria on the basis of state was therefore accepted and concluded that states did not differ significantly in the prevalence of examination malpractice in North-Central Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that examination malpractice was prevalent among secondary school students in North-Central Nigeria. Examination malpractice was prevalent among female and male secondary school students, in private and public secondary schools, in rural and urban schools in North-Central Nigeria. This study is consistent with the earlier findings of Ojiah and Shamo (2012) who found out that examination malpractice was prevalent and had defied the punitive, palliative and preventive measures. This established the prevalence of examination malpractice and its deep rootedness in Nigerian educational system. It is also in accord with the findings by Iheanacho and Ekpenyonganwan (2019) who found that examination malpractice was prevalent in all the faculties in their study. They also found that male students were more involved in examination malpractice than the female students. This could be as a result of the age disparity in the sample and the high risk environment. Literature supported that where the risk is higher, more males indulge in examination malpractice than female students.

The study found that copying of all sorts was the form of examination malpractice most prevalent among secondary school students in north-Central Nigeria. This could be because it is the easiest form of examination malpractice to indulge in. The fact that classrooms were

overcrowded makes it even easier. Examination environments are tempting and allowed room for looking into another's work without much effort. This finding is consistent with that of Situma and Wasike (2020) whose findings showed that unauthorised writings were major type of examination malpractice. Iheanacho and Ekpenyonganwan (2019) found that collusion was the highest form of examination malpractice. This did not agree with the finding of this study as it found copying to be the highest form of examination malpractice indulged in by the students in North-Central Nigeria. They are consistent on impersonation as the least form of examination malpractice indulged in by students. This can be explained because of the high risk involved with impersonation and the penalty it attracts.

This study found poor study habit, loss of interest in reading and school, with overcrowded classrooms as factors responsible for examination malpractice. This means that factors causing examination malpractice is resident with the students and their environment. Irmiya and lukman (2019) found lack of professional teachers, dearth of teaching materials and emphasis on certificate as the major causes of examination malpractice. Akinrefon, Ikpah, Bamigbala and Adeniyi (2016) found anxiety and the fact that parents encouraged their children to indulge in examination malpractice as the major causes of examination malpractice. This is consistent with the findings of this study. They however did not agree in the order or the basic cause of examination malpractice. This could be as a result of the differences in the questionnaire items.

This study established that value and moral orientation, provision of good teaching and learning environment, and enlightenment on the effect of examination malpractice as the preventive measures found to be effective for the control of examination malpractice. This is in line with Gidado (2000); and Gidado, Apeh and Akinwade (2023). Both studies emphasised the relevance of environmental factors as major indicators of academic performance.

Expulsion of students, cancellation of individual student's results, listing students into the school's black book were found to be the most effective punitive measures for control of examination malpractice. This means that the punitive measures that impact highly on students are the ones that are meted out on them directly as individuals. Their persons are valued but the collective measures do not have as much effect on them as no one's face is shamed. Oguzie, Oguzie, Nnadi, Mokwelu and Obi (2019), Akinrefon, Ikpah, Bamigbala and Adeniyi (2016) are in agreement with the present study that examination malpractice can be controlled with preventive and punitive measures. It however, did not agree with the findings of Ojiah and Shamo (2012) who found that no preventive or punitive measure was effective for control of examination malpractice.

It was recommended that value and moral orientation, provision of adequate physical structures that can allow for proper spacing during examination and enlightenment on the effect of examination malpractice be employed as preventive measures while expulsion of students, cancellation of students' result and listing students in schools' black book be employed as punitive measures for the control of examination malpractice among secondary school students in North-Central Nigeria.

This study found that punitive measures such as expulsion of student, blacklisting of student and cancellation of student results which affected students directly as individuals were more effective

measures to curbing examination malpractice than measures that punish them as a group. It also established that examination malpractice could be controlled.

Conclusion

This study investigated prevalence, forms and factors responsible for examination malpractice and its control in North-Central Nigeria. It established that examination malpractice was prevalent among secondary school students in North-Central Nigeria. Examination malpractice was prevalent among male and female secondary school students in North-central Nigeria. It was prevalent in both rural and urban secondary students as well as in private and public secondary schools. Copying was the form of examination malpractice most prevalent. Poor study habit, loss of interest in reading and school with overcrowded classrooms were factors responsible for examination malpractice.

Recommendations

1. Secondary schools in North-Central Nigeria should be checked to minimise prevalence of examination malpractice.
2. Adequate physical structures should be made available for adequate spacing of students; particularly during examinations to curtail the incidence of copying.
3. There should be constant value orientation for students and effects of examination malpractice should be communicated to students to help them desist from the act of examination malpractice.
4. Strict invigilation should be implemented during examination
5. Students should be helped so as to cultivate the right attitudes to school and learning.
6. Punitive measures that directly affect students should be constantly used to curb their indulgence in examination malpractice.
7. Examination malpractice should be tackled generally as it affects both male and female secondary school students, private and public schools, urban and rural secondary schools alike.

References

- Adelowo, A. (2021, March 11). Examination malpractice as a nemesis of academic excellence and development. *Guardian Newspapers*
- Akaranga, S. I. & Ongong, J. J. (2013). The Phenomenon of examination malpractice: An example of Nairobi and Kenyatta universities. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 4(18), 87-96.
- Akinrefon, A. A., Ikpah, O. C. & Bamigbala, A. O. (2016). On examination malpractice in Nigeria universities: Factor analysis definition. *Bulgarian Journal of Science and Education Policy*, 10(1), 174-190.
- Amadi, E. C. & Opuiyo, A. R. (2018). Forms and causes of examination malpractice among university students: A case of Rivers state university Port Harcourt. *International Journal of Innovative Education and Research*, 6(1), 37-41.

- Anikweze, C. M. & Danladi, A. B. (2021). *A textbook of educational research*. Enugu: Rabboni Publishers International.
- Araoye, M. O. (2003). *Research methodology with statistics for health and social sciences*. Ilorin: Nathedex Publishers.
- Arijesuyo, A. E. & Adeyoju, C. A. (2012). The challenges of maintaining the integrity of public examination in Nigeria: The ethical issues. *International Education Studies*, 5(2), 18-23.
- Bertolini, K., Stremmel, A., & Thorngren, J. (2012). *Student achievement factors*. Brookings USA: SD.
- Diego, L. A. B. (2017). Friends with benefits: causes and effects of learners' cheating practices during examination. *IAFOR Journal of Education*, 5(2), 121-138.
- Emaikwu, S. O. (2012). Assessing the impact of examination malpractices on the measurement of ability in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Science and Education*, 2(4), 748-754.
- Gidado, B. K. (2000). Environmental factors and students' poor academic performance in Bauchi state secondary schools. *Abuja Journal of Education*, 3(1), 5-15.
- Gidado, B. K., Apeh, H. A. & Akinwade, A. O. (2023). Learning environment as correlates of academic achievements of senior secondary school students in North-Central Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 6(4), 34-44. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7881430
- Iheanacho, R. A. E. & Ekpenyongawan A. (2019). Frequencies of examination malpractice by type, gender and faculty in the University of Calabar. Retrieved on 7/9/2023 from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication>
- Irimiya, R. A. & Lukman, S. (2019). Causes and effects of examination malpractice on Social Studies in secondary schools of Apa L.G.A of Benue state, Nigeria. *KIU Journal of Social Sciences* 5(1), 223-229.
- Mashanyare, I. & Chinamasa, E. (2014). Schools examination leakage: Case of Zimbabwe schools examination councils. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19(4), 47-54.
- Njoku, N. C. & Njoku, D. I. (2016). Curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Nigeria through moral education. *Research in Humanities and Social Sciences*, 6(18), 161-169.
- Nnam, M. U. & Otu, S. E. (2015). The rule must be broken: An integrative anomie perspective of examination malpractice in Nigeria. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1(2), 63-77.
- Nwana, O. C. (2000). *Aberrations in the Nigeria education system and the state of education in Nigeria*. Abuja: UNESCO.

- Obilor, E. I. & Ikpa, A. I. (2020). Assessment of the impact of examination malpractice on the academic achievement of students in higher institutions in River state. *International Journal of Management Sciences*, 8(1), 63-77.
- Ojiah, P. O. & Shamo, I. I. (2012). Factors and effects of examination malpractices among undergraduate students of the University of Abuja: Implications for guidance. *Abuja Journal of Education*, 7, 133-139.
- Okoroafor, C. (2019, August 30). NECO de-recognises three Schools, blacklists 17 supervisors. The Nation retrieved on 5/9/2023 from [www.//thenationonline](http://www.thenationonline)
- Onuka, A. O. U. & Durowoju, E. O. (2013). Stakeholders_ role in curbing examination malpractice in Nigeria. *International Journal of Economy, Management and Social Sciences*, 2(6), 342-348.
- Onyechere, I. (1997). *Promoting examination ethics: The challenges of a collective responsibility*. Lagos: Potomac.
- Osadebe, P. U. & Esegbue, T. O. (2018). Evaluation of students_ academic performance in JAMB chemistry test under computer based testing and paper pencil media in Delta State University, Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 6(5), 415-426.
- Tyokyaa, C. I. (2016). *Forms and causes of examination malpractice in secondary schools in Nigeria*. Makurdi: Sabo Printers.
- Uche, O. S. (2005). *National disgrace: Examination malpractice*. Enugu: Onyigbuo Steve.
- Wilayat, B. (2012). *Examination malpractice; causes of examination malpractice/unfair means*. Peshawar: I.E.R. University of Peshawar.
- Yusuf, F. A., Yunisa, R. O., & Bamgbose, O. R. (2015). Factors responsible for examination malpractices as expressed by undergraduates of Osun state University, Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6, 75-80.