

## Perception of Lecturers and Students of the Application of Examination Ethics in Reducing Examination Malpractices in Nigeria Tertiary Institutions: Implication for Counselling

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### **Abstract**

*The study examined teachers and students perception of the application of examination ethics in reducing examination malpractice in Nigeria's tertiary institutions. It also sought to ascertain the degree of fairness in trying examination malpractice suspects in Colleges of Education. The study adopted descriptive survey method and was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. The sample of the study comprised 300 student and 140 lecturers drawn from three Federal College of Education in South West zone of Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used. The hypotheses were tested using t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that there were significant level of compliance to examination ethics and also significant level of fairness in trying those that were involved in examination malpractice by the panel in the colleges. Based on the finding of the study recommendations were made on government provision of facilities, orientation and counseling, nature of offences and penalty written on students' answer scripts and execution of the examination ethics without prejudice to any suspect, in that this will help in reinventing the educational industry for greater productivity.*

**Keywords:** *Tertiary institution, examination ethics, examination, examination standard, examination misconduct.*

### **Introduction**

Tertiary institutions refer to the third level of the Nigeria educational system, after primary and secondary school. National Policy on education defines Tertiary education as the education given after secondary education in Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, Monotechnics including those institutions offering correspondence courses. The goals of education at this level are to contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training, develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society, develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments, acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society, promote and encourage scholarship and community service, forge and cement national unity, and promote national and international understanding and interaction (FRN, 2014). In line with the above, education is focused on transforming an individual for more desirable attitude and behavior to be useful to his/herself and society at large (Nworah, 2015). Formally foreigner came into the country for educational purposes during pre-war period. Presently reverse is the case, the military era conceived to mark the falling standard of education while the current post military marks the fallen standard of education (Okoro 2013).

Institutions of higher learning have set down rules and regulations guiding them, a set of code of conduct for students, as seen in undergraduate academic regulations, college prospectus etc, lecturers and administrative staff have their guiding code of conduct which moderate their excesses. These are what we refer to as ethic. Ethic according to Oxford Advanced Learners dictionary (Hornby, 2010) is

defined as moral principles that control or influence a person’s behaviour in a profession. Orenuga (2016) posited that ethic is a system at moral principles or rules of behaviour.

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with moral principles.

It deals with what is right or wrong, duties/obligations, rights/responsibilities. When behaving, students should perceive their actions on ethical standards etc.

Ethic can also be defined as collection of norms which govern the people to moderate their behaviour, it could be established by an association, schools, nation etc.

Examination malpractice is defined as violation of laid down rules and regulation associated with examinations for personal gain. The falling standard of education has given rise to exam malpractice. Okoro (2013) observed that during the Nigerian pre-war period education was of very high standard, the military era is conceived to mark the falling standard of education while the current past military period marks the fallen standard of education that breed exam malpractice.

Oyibo (2004) held the view that when these rules guiding its conduct are subverted in whatever form, the outcome of it will be invalid and will not be a reflection of what the learner had actually achieved. This act is technically referred to as exam malpractice or misconduct. Examination malpractice causes a lot of havoc to both the individual and nation at large. Agoamamam (2006) observes that it kills motivation for learning and lowers the standard of education. This cankerworm has eaten deep into the educational system to the extent that technology has sophisticated the means of exam malpractice in tertiary institutions. Students modernize their method from literal communication, giraffing and having access to “live” examination question before the time to electronically assisted material for example mobile phone, portable compact disc, organizer etc used for accessing the net, transfer questions and receive answers immediately which they use to send and receive messages inside the examination hall. The market value of certificate rather than competence in Nigeria society has raised the incidence of exam malpractice and assessment and certificates are no longer obtained through hardwork, honesty and transparency and these devoid examination from being test of knowledge. The market value of certificate according to (Sofala, 2004) lead to “Mad Rush” by most people, resulting in people trying to acquire certificate either legitimately or illegitimately, and over ambition of students to gain admission into next level of education. The resultant effect is that students who engage in exam malpractice usually end up being handicapped as the false, impression of demonstrated skill lead to wrong placement in occupational or educational position, (Ifeakor & Anekwe, 2010).

Students or lecturers caught in examination malpractice are given penalty or punishment ranging from reprimanding, shaming, suspension, repeating a session or the course and expulsion from the institution. This disciplinary measure differ from one institution to another.

**The following are the examination ethics and penalty of Nwafor Orizu College of Education Nsugbe, in affiliation with university of Nsukka (Degree Examination)**

<i>S/N</i>	<i>NATURE OF OFFENCE</i>	<i>PENALTY</i>
1.	Impersonation aiding and abetting. The impersonator and the person impersonated are both liable	Expulsion. Any impersonator who is not a student of the College shall be handed over to the police.
2.	Presentation of fake I.D. card or submission of a fake external candidate’s form or class admit photo card with intention to impersonate	Expulsion

<i>S/N</i>	<i>NATURE OF OFFENCE</i>	<i>PENALTY</i>
3.	Direct involvement in examination leakage obtaining and making use of leaked examination question and/or solution	Expulsion
4.	Smuggling out/in of examination script and/or examination question paper	Expulsion
5.	Substitution of duly submitted answer scripts	Expulsion
6.	Forging/altering result grades and signature of an officer	Expulsion
7.	Physical assault on a lecturer or invigilator	Expulsion
8.	Coming into examination hall with a gun or any dangerous weapon	Expulsion
9.	Threatening a lecturer or invigilator's life physically or in writing	Expulsion
10.	Exchanging examination script and writing for each other	Expulsion
11.	Procuring and altering a medical certificate in order to obtain a deferment of examination	Suspension for one academic session and rustication from hostel. Every examination taken from that session will be cancelled and given a fail grade. The student re-registers and repeats the year
12.	Lobbying for examination grades by whatever means	” ”
13.	Submission of forged registration materials including add/drop card	” ”
14.	Bringing in unauthorized materials, books, notes, papers etc.	” ”
15.	Exchanging of answers by whatever means; papers, electronic etc.	” ”
16.	Mutilation of and/or in computer registration form that is not officially endorsed	Stepped down for one semester and rusticated from hostel. Cancellation of/and giving a failed grade for other examination taken that semester and re-registration in the next appropriate semester

<i>S/N</i>	<i>NATURE OF OFFENCE</i>	<i>PENALTY</i>
17.	Forcing oneself into examination hall by an unregistered student	” ”
18.	Copying from another student (“giraffing”) or discussing in the examination hall.	Student not to continue the examination & cancellation of that paper
19.	Deliberately exposing one’s script for another to copy	” ”
20.	Refusal and/or failure to submit examination to copy	” ”
21.	Escaping from examination hall with or without the examination script	” ”
22.	Writing on any part of the human body with the intention to cheat	” ”
23.	Unruly behavior in examination hall e.g. disobedient to lawful order	” ”
24.	Insulting an invigilator or investigators	” ”
25.	Any other form of cheating acts not specified calculated to confer undue advantage on the student whether discovered in or outside the examination hall	Shall be appropriately punished

Source: Examination scripts Nwafor Orizu College of Education Nsugbe, in affiliation with university of Nsukka (Degree Examination).

In a study carried out by (Ifeakor and Anekwe, 2010) on “Achieving standard in secondary education through the eradication of examination malpractices” with their recommendation on rules and regulations being strictly adhered to serve as a deterrent to intending examination cheats. Cognizance of these, this study was designed to find out the extent of the application of examination ethics in Federal College of Education in South-West Zone of Nigeria.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The main purpose of this study is to examine whether the application of examination ethics would reduce examination malpractices in Federal Colleges of Education in South-West zone of Nigeria. Specifically, the study is set out to a certain:

how the colleges comply with the examination ethic.

check if the examination malpractice committee (EMC) is just in trying suspects in colleges of Education.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- RQ<sub>1</sub> What is the extent of compliance with examination ethics in colleges?  
RQ<sub>2</sub> To what extent is Examination Malpractice Committee (EMC) fair in trying examination malpractice suspect in Colleges of Education?

## **Hypotheses**

The following null hypothesis were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance.

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no statistically significant level of compliance to examination ethics in the Colleges of Education.  
Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant level of fairness by the Exam Malpractice Committee (EMC) in trying suspects of examination malpractices in Colleges of Education.

## **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This design was adopted because it seeks to document and describe what exists or the present status of existence or absence of what is being investigated. It is also a measure of public opinions on major burning social, political and educational issues [Ali, 2006]. The above attributes of descriptive survey met the requirement of the researcher, hence the justification for the use of descriptive survey. The area of the study is south west zone of Nigeria. This Zone consists of seven states out of thirty seven states in Nigeria. The six states are: Lagos, Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Kwara, Oyo and Osun.

The population of the study comprised all the students and lectures in three [3] Federal Colleges of Education in the zone; Federal College of Education Osiele Abeokuta, Ogun State, College of Education (special), Oyo and Federal College of Education (technical) Akoka Yaba Lagos. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 500 respondents from Federal Colleges of Education. A questionnaire titled Lecturers and students perception of the application of examination ethics [LESPEEE] constructed by the researcher and validated by two experts. The questionnaire was made up of two sections. Section A was on bio-data of the respondents, while section B contained items for lecturers and students. Section B elicited information on application of examination ethics in the conduct of examination of colleges, and the fairness of EMC. The response format adopted were [Modified Likert] four point scale of strongly agreed [4 points] agreed [3 points] disagreed [2 points] and strongly disagreed [1 point].

The researchers, with the help of two [2] trained research assistants administered five hundred [500] copies of the questionnaire using on the spot administration and collection method. four hundred and forty [440] were retrieved from the respondents, (three hundred students [300] and one hundred and forty [140] lecturers) which were used for data analysis. The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation scores to answer the research question. The cut-off point for decision was mean of 2.5 and above for positive responses and 2.49 and below for negative responses. Whereas the null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

## **RESULTS**

Research question 1: What is the extent of compliance with examination ethics in Colleges of Education?

**Table 1: Level of compliance to Examination Ethics (N = 440)**

S/N	Variable Statement	(4) SA	(3) A	(2) D	(1) SD	X	STD	Decision
1.	Student to examination ethics is high	228	146	22	44	327	0.95	Agreed
2.	The extent of compliance to examination ethics is reflected in the following activities by students:							
i)	Having no zeal for examination malpractice	176	206	22	36	3.19	0.86	Agreed
ii)	Willingness to assume responsibility of any act of examination malpractice	198	157	40	48	3.14	0.71	Agreed
iii)	Willingness to surrender to an invigilator any suspected unauthorized materials.	202	176	36	26	3.26	0.84	Agreed
iv)	Willingness to sign Examination Misconduct Form (EMF)	136	172	62	70	3.85	1.73	Agreed
v)	Willingness to report examination malpractices suspect	58	12	206	114	2.15	0.95	Disagreed
vi)	Willingness to report cheating in examination hall	124	132	92	118	2.65	1.10	Agreed
vii)	Willingness to bear oral witness	186	198	70	66	2.78	1.98	Agreed
viii)	Willingness to bear written witness	150	194	38	58	2.99	0.98	Agreed

Table 1 shows the level of compliance to examination ethics by lecturers and undergraduates of Colleges of Education. The extent of compliance to examination ethic had a mean of 3.27. The extent of compliance were thus; having no zeal for examination malpractice = 3.19, willingness to assume responsibility of any act of examination malpractice = 3.14; willingness to surrender to an invigilator any suspected unauthorized materials 3.26, willingness to sign Examination Misconduct Form (EMF) = 3.85, willingness to report examination malpractices suspect = 2.15, however the respondents disagreed with the item V since it is below 2.5, willingness to bear oral witness = 2.78 and willingness to bear written witness 2.99. above all there was indication that the respondents comply with examination ethics.

**Research question 2:** To what extent is Examination Malpractice Committee (EMC) fair in trying examination malpractice suspects in Colleges of Education?.

**Table 2: Level of fairness to examination malpractices suspects (N= 440)**

S/N	Variable Statement	(4) SA	(3) A	(2) D	(1) SD	X	STD	Decision
3.	The Examination Misconduct Committee (EMC) is fair in handling examination malpractice suspects in my college  The fairness to suspects is reflected in the following activities	176	162	40	62	3.03	1.01	Agreed
i)	Inviting suspects officially in writing	154	84	106	96	2.67	1.16	Agreed
ii)	Ensuring that the invitation reaches the suspect	140	158	54	88	2.80	1.1	Agreed
iii)	Giving suspects ample time to appear before Exam Malpractice Committee (EMC)	128	224	40	48	2.59	0.90	Agreed
iv)	Giving suspects equal opportunity to defend themselves	128	92	132	88	2.59	1.11	Agreed
v)	Giving suspects opportunity to invite a witness for or against	106	132	106	96	2.56	1.08	Agreed
vi)	Basing reports on evidence on the ground	118	260	14	48	3.02	0.86	Agreed

Table 2 reveals the level of fairness to examination suspects. The entire item scored above 2.50 which is the mean cut-off points. This showed that EMC was fair in trying examination malpractice suspects in Colleges of Education in the South West zone of Nigeria.

In order to make decision concerning the level of compliance to examination ethics and the fairness of Examination Malpractice Committee (EMC) to examination malpractice suspects, two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test statistics.

HO1: There is no statistical significant level of compliance to examination ethics in the college of Education.

Table 1 also showed the mean and standard deviation more than the mean of 2.50 with standard deviation higher than the cut-off mark of 2.50. expect item V. This also showed that the hypothesis so stated stands rejected. This means that there is significant level of compliance to examination ethics in Federal Colleges of Education.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no statistically significant level of fairness by the Examination Misconduct Committee (EMC) in trying examination malpractice suspects in the Colleges of Education. The table showed higher level of compliance since all the item agreed and are above 2.50 the cut-off mark.

### **Discussion**

The results showed a high level of compliance to examination ethic in the Federal Colleges of Education. All the variable statements had mean ratings above 2.50 except one (1) which was an indication of high compliance. This is in line with the views of Ifeakor & Anekwe (2010) who noted that rules and regulations guiding examination malpractice should be strictly enforced to serve as a deterrent to intending examination cheats. Sulaimon (2015) reported case of thirty two (32) students involved examination malpractice in 2009/2010 session, twenty seven (27) in 2010/2011 and fifteen (15) students 2011/2012 in Federal College of Education Abeokuta. Some of the students were rusticated for a session, while others were expelled, the reduction in subsequent years signifies compliance. The findings from the hypothesis revealed that there is a significant level of compliance to examination ethics in the Colleges of Education. This must be in keeping with the NCCE regulations as seen in undergraduates' academic regulation that any act of omission or commission by any staff or student before and after examination is liable to one form of punishment or the other.

The result showed the level of fairness to examination suspects (Table 2). All the variable statements obtained a mean rating above 2.50 which indicated high level of fairness to examination suspects (Table 2). Furthermore, there is significant level of fairness or justice in trying examination malpractice suspects by EMC in colleges. This was in consonance with Ezugwu (2011) who argued that fairness in taking decisions against those suspected to have cheated in examination exonerate innocent students and brings sanity in schools' administration.

### **Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to find out the application of examination ethics in reducing examination malpractices in Colleges of Education in Nigeria. The results of the study revealed that both staff and students in Colleges of Education to a very large extent complied with the examination ethics and that the EMC is fair in trying examination malpractice suspects. The implications of this study was that there was sanity in the conduct of examination in Colleges of Education.

### **Recommendations**

1. Orientation, reorientation and counseling of student on examination ethics.
2. The College authorities should never relax in following the examination ethics.
3. Students should be made to understand the consequences of examination malpractices
4. The students examination script should contain nature of offence and penalty.

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