



# FORMS AND CAUSES OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

The overall purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which school administrators try to contain the menace of examination malpractice. The study employed the descriptive survey design which covered all the secondary schools in Benue State Nigeria. Specifically, all public secondary schools and the private schools constituted the population of the study. The schools were specifically grouped into private and public as well as into rural and urban schools. The proportionate stratified Random Sampling Technique was used to collect the sample of 90 schools for the study. Mean statistic was used to analyse the research questions. The chi-square statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A self developed research questionnaire titled Examination Malpractice Assessment and Management Inventory (EMAMI) was used. The instrument was a two-part instrument; part 'A' concerned personal data reflecting the location and type of school of the respondent while part 'B' had three sections, sections 1 to 3 which sought to elicit responses concerning the forms and categories of examination malpractices, ways and methods of examination malpractices and efforts of school administrators in managing malpractices. The result shows that examination malpractices could be caused before, during and after the examinations. The outcome also shows that school location as well as type of school influence examination malpractice and that school administrators have various approaches that could be adopted to manage malpractices in school with a view to instituting an atmosphere of peace in the school. Appropriate recommendations were made for the administrators to contain malpractices and adequate conclusions were drawn.

**KEYWORDS:** Examination Malpractice, school administrator, security, peace education, threat, insurgency.

## Introduction:

The Nigerian society today is overwhelmed with serious cases of insecurity. These range from high level activities of insurgency as is hugely experienced in the Northern parts of the country, especially in the North-East, the militancy and kidnapping activities in the Southern parts especially in the South-South and South-East, the inter religious, ethnic and political conflicts and massacres as well as the destructive activities of nomadic pastoralists and very many other forms of terrorisms that today ravage the fabric of our nation State. These monstrous security challenges do not exempt the school environment as the schools are most unfortunately found to be the haven or source of raising and recruiting the perpetrators of these heinous crimes. The students especially those of ages 15 years to 20 years are found in our secondary schools. It is therefore pertinent to institutionalize peace education especially in the secondary schools with a view to educating the students on the benefits of peaceful co-existence and the damaging effects of crises of any kind to the society. It is equally imperative to expose the students to the negative implications of some of the activities they perpetuate while in school to their holistic personality development and to the development of their society. These activities include: Examination malpractice, cultism, drug abuse and addict, sexual harassment, rapism etc (Dzurgba: 2004). The mother of all these crimes is examination malpractice. Stamping out examination malpractice in our school system will paramountly help in instilling the culture of peace in our school system. The school administrator is therefore expected to properly manage the menace of examination malpractice so as to institutionalize peace in our secondary schools.

It is an obvious fact that in our schools today, our students are indulging in such vices as cultism, rapism, truancy, high headedness, drug addiction, nepotic behavioural indulgencies amongst others (Dzurgba, 2004). Students, who indulge in these criminal

and heinous activities, because they do not read, resort to examination malpractices to pass their examinations. Very many of these cadres of students adopt all means to cause examination malpractices as they even go to the extent of threatening their teachers to allocate to them undeserved scores. Others even attack their teachers who resist the threats (Peacewalk, 2005). These threats and attacks by the students for the sake of seeking to attract undeserved in examinations threaten the very peaceful co-existence and indeed general administration of the schools (Idoko, 2004).

Some students who are fortunately or unfortunately caught doing malpractice, the obvious punishment is to expel them or in some mild circumstances they are made to repeat a class. In most of these cases, the affected do not take the disciplinary actions against them kindly and they resort to using violent occult means to destabilize the peaceful co-existence of the schools. This no doubt affects the administration of the affected schools negatively by causing breaches to the general administrations and indeed peaceful living of the schools.

Since the last two or three decades, the Nigerian education sector has been facing serious problems of examination malpractice. The damaging effect of this monster on the education sector especially on the school administration's effort in instilling the culture of peace cannot be overstressed. It is the realization of the fact that examination malpractice is foundational to other deviant activities of the students including security threatening activities and the embarrassment it brings on the nation that the federal government enacted the Examination Malpractice Act No. 33 of 1999 with a view to dealing with the disgraceful menace which is equally laden with potential security breaches.

Examination malpractice has assumed an alarming proportion that it has almost become a norm at all levels of education in Nige-

ria in such a manner that the students, teachers and even parents and some school administrators believe that success in examination is, and can only be realized through examination malpractice (Onuka, 2013). Most people especially students today believe that examinations cannot be ordinarily passed except through 'help' (Suleiman, 2013). The Nigerian nation State also puts much premium on certification. This is why Ilayat (2009) maintains that all transactions, be they business, governmental, cultural and socio-political are predicated upon one's attainment of some level of certificate. Examination malpractice therefore, has become a booming business to the extent that there are fraudsters who make brisk business by engaging in this shameful and unholy act with its inherent implications for the administration of schools (Tyokyaa, 2014). It is also argued that the administrators in rural and urban secondary schools as well as public and private schools are indifferent in their approaches in combating malpractice.

It is also hoped that if the menace of examination malpractice is properly managed, there will be conducive academic atmosphere of peace and that all incidences of threats to security will be drastically reduced. This study therefore, seeks to investigate the forms and causes of examination malpractice, its influence on peaceful co-existence in schools and the strategies schools administrators adopt to manage the malpractice in both rural and urban settings with a view to harnessing the values of peace in our educational institutions.

**Statement of Problem**

In its strict conception, examination malpractice connotes all forms of cheating which directly or indirectly falsify the ability of the students in or outside an examination hall (Tyokyaa, 2014). Ilayat maintains that examination malpractice is any illegal examination related offence such as those specified by law. Peace education has to do with a process of consciously designing and providing learning outcomes that address issues of justice and respect for one another, inculcation of skills relevant to conflict resolution and appreciation of our social, cultural, religious, gender, racial, and political diversities or differences (Idoko, 2014). It emphasizes paramountly, the respect for the integrity of the earth.

The Nigerian nation State puts much emphasis on certification which pushes almost every student to seek to use every means mostly illegal to threaten peace on campuses so as to graduate with good certificates (Dzurgba, 2010). Educational administrators therefore are greatly challenged to not only expose the students and other stakeholders through peace education to the dangers of all vices in the school system including examination malpractices; they are expected to ensure the stamping out of the malpractices so as to institutionalize the much needed peace in our educational institutions. The extent to which school administrators manage examination malpractice menace in our secondary schools is the key problem of the study.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the extent to which school administrators manage examination menace in our secondary schools. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the various forms of examination malpractice.
2. determine the various causes of examination malpractices.
3. determine the extent to which school type influences the school administrators' efforts in combating examination malpractices.
4. determine the extent of the perception of the rural and urban school administrators with regard to combating examination malpractices.

**Research Questions**

Two research questions were structured as follows:

1. What are the various forms of examination malpractices in the study area?
2. What are the various causes of examination malpractices?
3. What are the various ways through which examination malpractice influences peaceful co-existence of secondary schools?
4. What strategies do school administrators adopt to manage examination malpractice menace?
5. How do rural and urban, public and private schools administrators combat examination malpractice menace?

**Hypotheses**

Two null hypotheses were formulated.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of rural and urban school administrators in combating examination malpractice as regards school location.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of administrators of private and public schools in combating examination malpractice with regard to school type.

**Methodology**

The instrument for the collection of Data was the questionnaire titled: Examination Malpractice Assessment and Management Inventory (EMAMI). The instrument was administered to secondary school administrators including Principals, Vice Principals and Heads of Departments and Units.

The instrument was a two part instrument. Part 'A' Personal Data and Part 'B' was segmented into two sections. Section one (1) had 25 items and section two (2) has 10 items. Section 1 and 2 adopted a three-point scale of Often (O) with weight of 3, Sometimes (S) with weight of 2 and Never (N) with weight of 1. The decision criterion was to accept a mean of 2.0 and above, otherwise reject. The instrument (EMAMI) was subjected to construct validation using factor analysis by means of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software and the items were found to be factorial pure and were subjected to reliability estimation. The internal consistency reliability estimation using Cronbach alpha approach was carried out for the entire EMAMI and the coefficients were as reflected in table 1 below.

**Table 1: Reliability Estimates of EMAMI Instrument**

S/N		
1.	Forms of malpractices	0.8130
2.	Causes of examination malpractices	0.7071
3.	Strategies of managing examination malpractice	0.6250
4.	Administrators' effort in combating malpractices as regards school location and type	0.6553
	Entire EMAMI	0.7001

**Research Procedure**

The researchers visited the selected schools personally and administered the questionnaire. The questionnaire was collected from the respondents and 90 of the 105 copies of the questionnaire given out were returned. This is about 86% successes registered in the questionnaire administration. The 90 copies that were responded to were then analyzed according to the research questions and the hypotheses. The mean statistic was used to analyze the data for the research questions while the chi-square was used to test the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Findings and Discussion

Research Question 1. What are the various forms of examination malpractice?

**Table 2: Forms of examination malpractices as perceived by school administrators.**

S/N	Form/type of Examination Malpractice	O	S	N	Total	Mean	Decision
1.	Leaking information concerning question papers.	(54) 162	(30) 60	(6) 6	228	2.53	A
2.	Allocating students to centres and invigilators of their choice.	(76) 228	(13) 26	(1) 1	255	2.83	A
3.	Influencing examiners, paper setters or invigilators through bribery or terrorism	(68) 204	(12) 24	(10) 10	238	2.64	A
4.	Being in possession of cheating materials	(57) 171	(29) 58	(4) 4	233	2.59	A
5.	Impersonation	(49) 147	(38) 76	(3) 3	226	2.51	A
6.	Smuggling answer scripts in or out of examination hall.	(60) 180	(15) 30	(15) 15	225	2.50	A
7.	Being in possession of arms and refusing to be arrested or submit the arms to invigilators	(2) 6	(39) 78	49 (49)	133	1.48	R
8.	Manipulating marks to favour or disfavour students	(64) 192	(21) 42	(5) 5	239	2.66	A
9.	Arranging with gangs to cheat	(77) 231	(12) 24	(1) 1	256	2.84	A
10.	Changing roll numbers or answer scripts and disclosing student's identity.	(48) 144	(26) 52	(16) 16	212	2.36	A
11.	Giving or receiving assistance to copy in examination	(49) 147	(29) 58	(12) 12	217	2.41	A
12.	Copying from one another, or exchanging questions or answer scripts	(80) 240	(10) 20	(0) -	260	2.89	A
13.	Copying from prepared materials	(78) 234	(12) 24	(0) 0	258	2.87	A
14.	Dictating or communicating information to students	(68) 204	(20) 40	(2) 2	246	2.73	A
15.	Communication amongst students during examinations.	(90) 270	(0) 0	(0) 0	270	3.00	A
16.	Refusal to stop writing at end of specified time/	(67) 201	(14) 28	(9) 9	238	2.64	A
17.	Withholding or replacing or removal of script by student.	(40) 120	(28) 56	(12) 12	188	2.08	A
18.	Using ICT materials to cheat during examinations.	(60) 180	(28) 56	(2) 2	238	2.64	A
19.	Writing projects for students by other persons or even teachers.	(17) 51	(36) 72	(47) 47	170	1.89	A
20.	Seeking to be given marks after examinations.	(31) 93	(39) 78	(20) 20	191	2.12	A
21.	Concealing noticed malpractice	(39) 117	(31) 62	(20) 20	199	2.21	A
22.	Lateness to examination by students, invigilators or supervisors.	(71) 213	(12) 24	(7) 7	244	2.71	A
23.	Possessing fake certificates	(12) 36	(13) 26	(75) 75	137	1.52	R
24.	Substituting fresh scripts with the original scripts.	(16) 48	(19) 38	(55) 55	141	1.56	R
25.	Presenting some other person's work as your work.	(2) 6	(13) 26	(75) 75	107	1.19	R

Considering the decision criterion, only items 7, 23, 24 and 25 were rejected by the respondents as not being forms or types of examination malpractices. The rest 21 were accepted as forms of examination malpractices.

**Research Question 2: What are the causes of Examination Malpractices?**

**Table 3: Causes of Examination Malpractices**

S/N	Methods of Causing Examination Malpractice	O	S	N	Total	Mean	Decision
1.	Actions and Inactions of examination bodies	(65) 195	(13) 26	(12) 12	233	2.59	A
2.	Invigilator's negligence	(44) 132	(29) 58	(17) 17	207	2.30	A
3.	Poor administrative practices by school heads.	(80) 240	(3) 6	(7) 7	253	2.81	A
4.	Inadequate preparation by students.	(19) 57	(38) 76	(33) 33	166	1.84	R
5.	Parents inordinate ambition for their wards successes in examinations	(74) 222	(12) 24	(4) 4	250	2.78	A
6.	Teachers inappropriate handling of their lessons	(36) 08	(40) 80	(24) 24	212	2.36	A
7.	Inappropriate security check on the part of management and examination bodies	(14) 42	(38) 76	(38) 38	156	1.73	R
8.	Teacher factor, ranging from proper training to devotion to professional responsibilities	(26) 78	41 (82)	(23) 23	183	2.03	A
9.	Country's, educational policy on certification	(40) 120	(15) 30	(35) 35	185	2.06	A
10.	Inadequate school facilities	(79) 237	(11) 22	(0) 0	259	2.88	A

Of the ten listed methods, items 4 and 7 were rejected and the rest 8 items were accepted as being causes of examination malpractices.

**Research Question 3: What are the various ways through which examination malpractice influences peaceful co-existence**

**Table 4: Influence of examination malpractice on peaceful co-existence of secondary schools.**

S/N	Influence of Examination Malpractice	A	S	N	Total	Mean	Decision
1.	It leads to increase in the culture of violence in schools	(70) 210	(15) 30	(15) 15	225	2.83	A
2.	Leads to cancellation of examination papers and in some extreme cases, exam centres.	(68) 204	(13) 26	(9) 9	239	2.66	A
3.	Decreases job efficiency as those who pass through the process of examination malpractice do not actually have the skills.	(53) 159	(22) 44	(15) 15	218	2.42	A
4.	Malpractice results to lose of focus as hard work is relegated and this negatively affects general administration.	(67) 210	(12) 24	(11) 11	245	2.72	A
5.	Discourages hard work on the part of students as the corrupt students by their deeds pull the hardworking students to abandoned their studies and join them.	(49) 147	(21) 42	(20) 20	209	2.32	A

**of secondary schools?**

All the five items were accepted by the respondents as factors of malpractice that influence peaceful co-existence in schools.

**Table 5: Strategies of managing examination malpractice**

S/N	Strategies of Examination Malpractice management	A	S	N	Total	Mean	Decision
1.	Generate more than one set of question papers to create uncertainty as to which one will actually be used.	(45) 135	(30) 60	(15) 15	210	2.33	A
2.	The education system should deemphasize terminal examinations which have the tendency of inducing the students to insist to pass at all costs.	(50) 150	(25) 50	(15) 15	215	2.39	A
3.	School administrators should secure the right to arrest and prosecute culprits.	(62) 186	(17) 34	(11) 11	231	2.57	A
4.	School administrators should conduct public awareness campaigns on the evils of malpractice and the grave consequences on apprehended offenders.	(70) 210	(18) 36	(2) 2	248	2.76	A

5.	All forms of cheating before, during and after examinations must be properly blocked.	(66) 198	(20) 40	(4) 4	242	2.69	A
6.	Managers must organize regular workshops and seminars for staff, students, parents and other stakeholders on value-reorientation, nationalism, and all associated society norms with a view to enhancing hard work, self actualization and peaceful co-existence amongst stakeholders.	(80) 240	(6) 12)	(4) 4	256	2.85	A
7.	Parents must be compelled to sign an undertaking that their wards must be of good character and conduct in schools.	(49) 747	(22) 44	(19) 19	210	2.33	A
8.	The school administration should design the school programme such that students have less time to indulge in extra-curricular activities.	(16) 48	(36) 72	(38) 38	158	1.76	R
9.	There must be frequent and unscheduled visits to examination centres.	(12) 36	(40) 80	(38) 38	154	1.71	R
10.	Ensure proper checks of students before they enter examination halls.	(41) 123	(30) 60	(19) 19	202	2.24	A

**Research Question 4: What strategies do school administrators adopt to manage examination malpractice menace?**

Considering the decision criterion, eight (8) of the items were accepted as being strategies for combating examination malpractice. Two (2)

of the items were rejected.

**Research Question 5: How do rural and urban, public and private school administrators combat examination malpractice menace?**

Research question 5 is analyzed using hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of administrators of rural and urban secondary schools in their effort to combat examination malpractice menace.

**Table 6: Impact of school location on the principals' efforts in combating examination malpractice menace**

School Location	More cases of malpractice		Less cases of malpractice	
Rural	34 (25.56)	12 (20.44)	46	
Urban	16 (24.44)	28 (19.56)	44	
TOTAL	50	50	90	

The calculation shows that chi-square (x<sup>2</sup>) calculated equals 12.83 at a degree of freedom of 1, the table or critical value of chi-square at 0.05 level of significance equals 3.841 implying that calculated chi-square x<sup>2</sup> (12.84) is greater than table value chi square x<sup>2</sup>(3.84).

Considering the decision criterion, since calculated chi-square is greater than table value chi-square, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is significant difference between administrators of rural and urban schools in their perception and management of examination malpractices.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals of private and public schools in their efforts to combat examination malpractices

**Table 7: Impact of school type (private and public) on the efforts of principals in combating examination malpractice menace**

School Type	More cases of malpractice		Less cases of malpractice	
Private	37 (28.8)	11 (19.2)	48	
Public	17 (25.2)	25 (16.8)	42	
TOTAL	54	36	90	

The calculated chi-square (x<sup>2</sup>) is 12.50 and at the degree of freedom 1, the table or critical chi-square (x<sup>2</sup>) is equal to 3.841. This means chi-square calculated (x<sup>2</sup>) 12.50 is greater than table or critical value chi-square (x<sup>2</sup>) 3.841. In consideration of the decision criterion, the null hypothesis is rejected because chi-square calculated is greater than table value chi-square. In other words, there is a difference in the perception and administration of examination malpractice between principals of private and principals of public schools.

From the foregoing analysis as presented in tables 2 to 5, it is certain that for research question one (1), 21 of the 25 items were accepted as forms or types of examination malpractices that are practiced in the secondary schools. This agrees with the previous dispositions of scholars (including Dzurgba, 2004; Onuka, 2013, and Tyokyaa, 2004) when they identified different forms which examination malpractice could take. Findings of research question two (2) presented in table 3 also accepted 8 of the 10 items as causes of examination malpractices. This also is in tandem with the works of Ilayat when she found that malpractices are caused differently even by the stakeholders and the findings also are in congruence with the works of Onuka who identified the different publishing approaches used by students from lap top, palm, table top through microchips in causing malpractices during examinations. There is no revealed literature that runs counter with this finding.

The findings of research question three presented in table 4 accepted the five (5) items of influence that examination malpractice exerts on the peaceful co-existence of secondary schools. These findings are in agreement with Idoko (2014) who maintains that the examination malpractice activities negatively affect the peaceful atmosphere of the school. Eight (8) of the ten items in research question four which examined the strategies used by secondary school administrators in managing examination malpractice menace were accepted while two (2) of the items were rejected as strategies for combating examination malpractice menace. The findings of the two research questions three and four are in agreement with the previous works Ilayat (2009) who believes that examination malpractice has influence on the administration of the schools and they could be managed by administrators.

The findings of the study as revealed by the two hypotheses which sought to address research question 5 were presented in tables 6 and 7. The findings clearly show that, there is a difference in the extent to which principals of rural and urban schools and principals of public and private schools in their effort to combat examination malpractices. These findings seem to hold that principals



in rural and private schools mostly indulge in malpractices more than their counterparts in urban and public schools obviously because of the monitoring and inspection that the urban and public schools are exposed to. These findings run counter to the position of Suleiman (2013) when he opines that most students irrespective of school location and school type believe that examinations cannot be passed except through 'help'. Onuka also maintained that some school administrators believe that success in examination is and can only be realized through malpractices.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Nigeria's over reliance on certification has had negative influence on the quality of the products of our schools today. This is why the 6-3-3-4 policy was introduced to encourage skills acquisition and self reliant education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). The over reliance on certificates rather than skills no doubt is a major reason why students indulge in the unwholesome activities of examination malpractices which are perceived as the major reasons for security threat on campuses. Examination malpractice menace takes different forms, it occurs, before, during and after examination. Malpractices have varying degrees of occurrence between rural and urban schools and between public and private schools as environmental conditions and prevalence of monitoring organs of government affect them. It was found and can be concluded that, the prevalence of examination malpractice influences the very foundation of peaceful co-existence in the schools. Finally, for school administrators to achieve the desired peace in their schools, concerted efforts must be made to stamp out the menace from their schools.

### Recommendations

1. School heads should strive to be conversant with the various forms of examination malpractices and different ways of causing examination malpractices with a view to stamping them out at whatever stage they are noticed.
2. All staff of examination bodies or schools must attend regular workshops and seminars on strategies of stamping out malpractices in our schools.
3. Examination malpractice menace and their consequences should be taught to all students and teachers so as to expose them to their damaging effects.

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