

## Examination Malpractice Tendencies Among JSS 3 Students of Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria: Implication For Educational Evaluation

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### ABSTRACT

*The study focused on carrying out on examination malpractice tendencies among JSS 3 students in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Implication for Educational Evaluation. The research adopted two (2) objectives, questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The research design adopted for this study is the “ex-post facto” research design with a population of 1,122 JSS 3 students drawn from all the public secondary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The stratified and simple random sampling technique were used to draw a sample size of 225 students (20%) of the students from population which constitute the sample. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled “Evaluation of Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (EEMQ)”. The instrument was face validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation and the research supervisor and the reliability was done with split-half reliability method and the index ranged from .71 to .92. The data analysis was done with independent t-test and the findings revealed among others that the level of examination malpractice among JSS 3 students in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State is significantly high.*

**Keywords: Examination Malpractice, Tendencies, Evaluation.**

### Background to the study

For every academic setting to strive maximally, the students must be subjected to one form of examination or the other. This is because examination is an exercise designed to examine progress or test qualification or knowledge; it is also termed a formal interrogation. Thus, for a successful assessment of students, examination is inevitable. In the light of this, Anzene (2014) defines examination as a formal test of one’s knowledge or ability in a particular subject, especially, through answering questions or practical exercises. Examination is a tool that is basically used in evaluating, measuring, determining the efficiency of teaching and learning in educational processes. Education is and will continue to be an essential tool for laying a solid foundation for nation building, increased growth and development in the states functionaries and also emancipating minds for further exploration to taking a position in the stage of this contemporary dispensation. In the foregoing, Akaranga and Ongong (2013) sees education as a necessary process through which young adults are equipped to lead productive lives according to their talents and interests. The views of individuals as it concerns education cannot be amenable to one uniform definition but points to the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values that will better the lives of the individuals and by extension, contribute to better their immediate environment.

In the course of engaging education in this contemporary dispensation, there has been a shift in paradigm. A shift in paradigm where the focus and reason for engaging education is being challenged, defeated and ridiculed. A shift in paradigm where article involvement in education has lost its values to just acquiring certification. A shift in paradigm where indolence, frivolities, lack of interest and the likes are the order of the day in the academic world. A shift in paradigm that is occasioned by the constant reminder that hard work isn't the key to success but one's contacts and connections; thus the birth, the increasing and the all-embracing practice of shortcuts (Malpractice) to achieving academic success. This has been the trend across the nation even as Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State is not exempted.

### **Problem of the study**

In every academic setting, examination is inevitable, thereby occupying the central role in the life of both the teacher and the students and the entire academic setting. Reports have shown that there have been high rate of examination malpractices of the junior secondary school level in Cross River State, particularly in Calabar South Local Government Area. Personal interaction and observation with most teachers in Calabar South Local Government Area has revealed that majority of the students cheat in examination. This act has been clearly seen in 2020 terminal examination, where 76% of students' were caught engaging in different forms of cheating such as stealing of question paper, giraffing, smuggling in of prepared materials, palm writing etc. are common traits among JSS3 students. It has become so serious that most of these students don't even have regards on seeing their invigilators while cheating. They feel it is a normal thing or practice and most of them into this act assume that they are being smart. Record has it that in 2019, about 58 students was expelled by their respective schools in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, for committing various crimes of cheating. Obviously, this seemingly situation has become an "octopus" in the academic environment. Government on their own part has tried to enforce some principles that could checkmate cheating and enhance learning. For example, provision of enhanced environment, equipping most school libraries where students can have access to materials etc. This has not really yielded the desired results as there still persist a rise in cheating amongst students. Parents on their own part have blamed the teachers for their inability to mentor the students by way of inculcating in them, the desired norms and values expected. Teachers on their own part have blamed parents for not educating their children effectively while at home. This problem will continue to deteriorate our academic system if urgent solution is not raised to tackle the problem of malpractice. Thus, the problem of this study is: What is the influence of examination malpractice amongst JSS3 students of Cross River State, in Calabar Local Government Area precisely.

### **Research question**

The following research questions have been formulated and stated to guide the study;

- i. To what level does JSS 3 students in Calabar South Local Government Area involve in examination malpractice?
- ii. To what extent does JSS 3 students in Calabar South Local Government Area involve in stealing of question paper?

### **Statement of hypotheses**

The following null hypothesis were formulated and stated to guide the study:

- i. The level of examination malpractice among JSS 3 students in Calabar Local Government Area is not significantly high

- ii. The extent of stealing of question paper among JSS 3 students in Calabar South Local Government Area is not significantly high

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Level of examination malpractice among JSS 3 students**

Within the context of Nigeria, the law frowns bitterly at examination malpractice in the educational system of our Nation and therefore sees examination malpractice as any act of omission or commission by a person who in anticipation of , before or after any examination to 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 certificate issued (FGN,1999).

According to Nwadiami (2005), the process of examination in Nigeria secondary schools has become a “contemporary shame”. If at this point of contemporary advancements, we are still made to critically consider the level of examination malpractice within the context of our geographical location, then I must say that it is a shame to us as a people and to our educational system. The European Journal of Education (2009), states that it has been widely reported that parents and teachers aid and abet examination malpractice directly or indirectly. Aluta and Aluede (2006) reveals that parents go to the extent of bribing their way through to ensure that their wards get unearned grades while teachers encourage examination malpractice because they lack the zeal to work but want to be praised for the job not done.

Onyibe, Uma and Ibina (2015) conducted a study on examines the causes and forms of examination malpractice in Nigeria, the consequences on the national development, previous efforts made at curbing it and recommended ways of eradicating examination malpractice in the country. Relevant journals and conference papers consulted, and the writers’ personal experiences during examination invigilation were the sources of data used in the paper. It is discovered that the perennial lack of political will on the part of government to enforce the Decree 20 of 1984 and now, Examination Malpractice Act 33 of 1999 has caused the examination misconduct to remain on the increase in Nigeria. This paper recommends strongly that the Examination Malpractice Act of 1999 should be amended to incorporate that section of Decree 20 of 1984 which stipulated twenty-one years imprisonment without option of a fine for a convicted culprit. And the Act should be diligently enforced no matter whose ox is gored

In another empirical study by Meshak, Muhammad and Umar (n.d) conducted a study on types and levels of students’ involvement in examination malpractice as perceived by undergraduates at Gombe State University. This study is a descriptive survey. The population for this study was all undergraduates of Gombe State University drawn across five faculties of the University. Stratified sampling and random sampling techniques were used in selecting the respondents. The instrument adopted for the study was a researcher-designed questionnaire tagged “Perceived Types and Levels of Involvement in Examination Malpractice Questionnaire” (PTLIEMQ). A percentage table was used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents and a pie-chart to answer research question 2. Also, the mean rating was used to answer the research question one. The null hypotheses generated were tested using Chi-square inferential statistics. The study revealed that the commonest type of examination malpractice among undergraduates at Gombe State University was a giraffe. It was also discovered that the greater proportion of the undergraduates sampled were averagely involved in examination malpractice. There was a significant difference in the level of students’ involvement in

examination malpractice as perceived by undergraduates at Gombe State University based on gender, age, level, and faculty of study. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that more effort should be put in place to ensure the effective supervision of students during examinations to be able to curb giraffe. It was also recommended that concerted efforts should be made at improving the level of discipline among students through counseling services and there should be full implementation of the examination malpractice decree

### **Stealing of question paper and malpractice tendencies among JSS 3 students**

From the stance of Merriam Webster's Dictionary (11<sup>th</sup> Ed), the word "steal" or "stealing" as the case may be is "to take the property of another wrongfully and especially as a habitual or regular practice". It also explains the word "stealing as "to gain advantage on unobserved" then the other two components of the subheading - Question and paper - implies a paper that is carrying all typed written instruments (question) that is to be used to measure the mental, emotional and psychomotor abilities of a student or students.

From the dimension of the school, students resorts to stealing question papers because they possibly lack teachers who are supposed to take them on the said subject. Being that they are not properly or adequately prepared, they resort to stealing the question paper before exams or during the cause of writing the examination (steal from anybody that is considered knowledge in the subject). Another factor that could lead young students to stealing of question papers is the show of unseriousness on the part of their teacher. Perhaps the teacher puts up this lackadaisical attitude towards the teaching/training of these young students. More so, the teacher could possibly not be grounded in his area of specialty (subject), thereby always making the teaching/learning situation boring. This scenario could cause the students to lose interest and resort to stealing of the question paper before or during the exams. Furthermore, the inability of the teacher, invigilators or school management to successfully carry out a supervision/invigilation and security routine before, during and after the exams may quail and incite the stealing of question papers in examinations.

In a correlational study by Ekeh and Oladayo (2016) who sought to determine psychosocial correlates of examination malpractices among secondary school students in Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State. The population of the study consisted of 6,252 senior secondary school (II & III) students in all the 25 Public Secondary schools in Ughelli North Local Government Area. However, a sample of 400 students in SS II and III were drawn from 8 secondary schools. The sample was obtained through purposive and proportionate random sampling techniques. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the conduct of the study. The instrument used for data collection Psychosocial Correlates of Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (PCEMQ) was developed by the researchers. It consisted of eight sections. The instrument was validated by experts in Educational Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation. The resource persons were requested to vet the instruments in terms of suitability and adequacy of the items contained therein. The Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine internal consistency of the items. However, the overall co-efficient obtained by the mean scores of the subscale is 0.78. Data collected were analyzed using multiple regression for research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using t-value associated with multiple regression at 0.05 alpha level. Results got after data analysis indicated that all psychosocial factors combined (test anxiety, low self-concept, stress, study habit, parental influence, gender and peer pressure) correlated positively with examination malpractice among secondary school students; peer pressure had the strongest correlation while stress had the

weakest positive correlation respectively. Based on the results, recommendations were made including the need to organize enlightenment programmes for parents and the community on the dangers of examination malpractice.

Idang (2014) study investigated 'causes and effect of examination malpractice on the performance of secondary school students in Orumba South Local Government Area. Three (3) research questions were used for the study with descriptive survey design adopted. Purposive sample technique and sample size of 200 respondents composed of fifty (50) teachers and hundred and fifty (150) students were used for the study. The responses were analyzed using arithmetic mean ( $\bar{X}$ ). The study was reported, among other things, that population explosion, corruption, fear of examination failure, parents' pressure, laziness on the part of the students, bring about examination fraud. It was further reported that parents' withdrawal of their children from the affected schools, emergence of bad reputation, employers' loss of confidence on the educational system, inadequate performance of graduates at work places and cancellation of examinations constitute the effects of examination fraud. It was recommended that adequate funding of schools, adequate re-orientation of all parties to examination fraud, safe keeping of examination question papers and answered scripts, adequate sitting arrangement of students during examinations would help to solve the menace of examination misconduct in our school system

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this study, the ex-post facto design was adopted. This design perfectly fits the evaluation process of examination malpractice tendencies hence its adoption. The population for this study comprises of all JSS 3 students of public schools drawn from the total number of schools in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. There are accessibly eight (8) secondary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area with about 1,122 thousand students with the stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The first stage was to stratify JSS3 students in all the accessible secondary schools within Calabar South Local Government Area. The second stage was to work with the sample of accessible schools within Calabar South Local Government Area and the final stage was to use simple random technique to select respondents from the schools accessed. The sample of this study comprises of the 20% of JSS3 students drawn from all the public schools accessed within the Local Government Area of Calabar South. The instrument for data collection was titled evaluation of examination malpractice questionnaire (EEMQ). This instrument was validated by three experts. Two in measurement evaluation and one in Elementary Education. They were given the instrument for validation. Their comment where used in the final draft of the instrument. This was established using split-half reliability method. After the first administration, the instrument was subjected to Pearson's product moment correlation which was later converted to Spearman Brown's prophecy formula and the index raised from 0.71 to 0.92 which indicates that the instruments was highly reliable. This study is been analyzed using the descriptive and instrument statistical analysis. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions

## **RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Hypothesis one**

The level of examination malpractice among JSS3 students in Calabar South Local Government Area is not significantly high. The only variable involved in this hypothesis is the level of

examination malpractices. To test this hypothesis, population t-test was employed and the result is presented in Table 1

Table 1  
Population t-test of the level of examination malpractice among JSS 3 students in Calabar South LGA of Cross River State.

Variable	n	$\bar{x}$	Std. D	Std. Error Mean	df	LS	t-value	p-value
Level of examination malpractice	225	11.9156	3.34837	.22322	224	0.05	26.5	.000

\*p<.05

Table 1 reveals the analysis of the population t-test with the level of examination malpractice among JSS 3 students in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. While the t-value of 26.5 accompanied by a p-value of .000 at 0.05 alpha level with 224 degrees of freedom. Thus the null is the rejected. This implies that the level of examination malpractice among JSS 3 students in Calabar South Local Government Area is significantly high.

### Hypothesis two

The extent of stealing of question papers among JSS 3 students in Calabar South Local Government Area is not significantly high. The only variable involved in this hypothesis is the level of stealing of question papers. To test this hypothesis, population t-test was employed and the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2  
Population t-test of the extent of stealing of question papers in examination among JSS 3 students in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Variable	n	$\bar{x}$	Std. D	Std. Error Mean	df	LS	t-value	p-value
Extent of stealing of question papers	225	12.6311	3.33968	.225	224	0.05	27.732	.000

\*p<.05

Table 2 that the above analysis of the population t-test carried out on the variable level of stealing question paper in/during examination among JSS 3 students in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria; is accompanied by a t-value of 27.732, a p-value of .000 and an alpha level of 0.05 with 224 degrees of freedom, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis. This implies that the level of stealing of question paper in examination among JSS 3 students in Calabar South Local Government Area is significantly high.

### Discussion of findings

The extent to which students indulge in examination malpractices has a very serious effect on the overall examination conduct in Nigeria. This is because most students feel that the

only solution to academic excellence is centered on the fact that most student want to pass their examination by all means. This findings agrees with Onyibe, Uma and Ibina (2015) whose finding discovered that the perennial lack of political will on the part of government to enforce the Decree 20 of 1984 and now, Examination Malpractice Act 33 of 1999 has caused the examination misconduct to remain on the increase in Nigeria. Also, Meshak, Muhammad and Umar (n.d) found a significant difference in the level of students' involvement in examination malpractice as perceived by undergraduates at Gombe State University based on gender, age, level, and faculty of study. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that more effort should be put in place to ensure the effective supervision of students during examinations to be able to curb giraffe.

The result reveled that there is a high level of stealing question paper among JSS 3 students in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State. Thus, students attitude to stealing of other students question papers in examination halls has grave consequences on the individuals and institutions of learning. Dismissal, termination, loss of position, and lack of self-confidence are effects and have caused a lot of embarrassment and suffering to individuals, families and the nation. The guilty ones who were not caught and punished cannot defend the certificates procured not to talk of delivering at their duty posts. It is not gainsaying to note that cheated to pass examination will cheat to get employed, have spouse, and even to win election through electoral violence or other sharp malpractices. The findings agrees with the study of

The present finding is in harmony with the study by Ekeh and Oladayo (2016) results got after data analysis indicated that all psychosocial factors combined (test anxiety, low self-concept, stress, study habit, parental influence, gender and peer pressure) correlated positively with examination malpractice among secondary school students; peer pressure had the strongest correlation while stress had the weakest positive correlation respectively. In the same vein, Idang (2019) study was reported, among other things, *that population* explosion, corruption, fear of examination failure, parents' pressure, laziness on the part of the students, bring about examination fraud. It was further reported that parents' withdrawal of their children from the affected schools, emergence of bad reputation, employers' loss of confidence on the educational system, inadequate performance of graduates at work places and cancellation of examinations constitute the effects of examination fraud.

## **SUMMARY FINDINGS**

Examination malpractices has been regarded as an octopus that has eaten deep into the fabric of our educational system. The level of examination malpractice, stealing of question paper, smuggling in of prepared materials and determining giraffing- are to evaluate and analyze examination malpractice tendencies among JSS 3 students in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted a research design of "ex-post facto". The study worked with a population of 1,122 JSS 3 students in the 2020/2021 academic session. More so, the study the study adopted the stratified and simple random sampling technique in selecting the representative sample.

The study sample consist of 20% of the total population and that brings us to a total number of 225 students as the study sample. The instrument for data collection was the evaluation of examination questionnaires (EEMQ). The face validity was carried out by the supervisor of this study and two other experts in measurement evaluation. The split half reliability was employed and the index raised raised from 0.71 to 0.92 which indicates that the

instrument was valid; thus, highly reliable for data collection. The researcher ensured a 100% return rate on the data collected. All data collected were prepared by coding the scores gotten from the test instrument to yield numerical data for analysis. The mean and the standard deviation were used to prepare the result while the population t-test was used to test the stated null hypothesis. The findings revealed that:

1. The level of examination malpractice among JSS 3 students in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State is significantly high.
2. The level of stealing question paper among JSS 3 students in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State is significantly high

## **CONCLUSION**

The usefulness of a good, sure, quality and solid education cannot be over emphasized; even as it is the gateway to a continuous growth and development of a nation. Having a nation where educational activities and engagements are treated with all sense of levity without any approach to remedying the decaying situation, will only leave the said nation in doom. Specifically, a thorough work has been done to pinpoint the loopholes on the cause of this menace – examination malpractice, in Calabar South Local Government of Cross River State, Nigeria. Efforts should be made to ensure this menace is brought to a minimal level, thereby, paving way for productivity and sustainability of upright academic standard. With this done, academics in Calabar South Local Government Area will not only be a reference point but a seat of academic standards.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The following recommendations are made from the findings of the study:

1. Parents' should inculcate in their children from their early days, the spirit of reading and research. This will enable the children abhor malpractice activities because they are not used to the act but are used to preparing adequately beforehand.
2. Class room teachers' should ensure their students grasps the contents of whatsoever that is being taught. The teacher should ensure to use appropriate teaching methods that will appeal to the student's reception and retention organs. By this, the student can function effectively when the need arises.

## **Implication for Educational Evaluation/stakeholder**

This study seeks to point out loopholes that lead to examination malpractice. Students, teachers, parents, government/stakeholders are beneficiaries of this study.

**Students:** The study on evaluating examination malpractice tendencies among JSS 3 students in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria, will help most importantly, the students to identify the cause and effect of malpractice. This study will help young students understand the implications of indulging in fraudulent activities in education. It will educate them to know that it pays to work hard as a student.

**Teachers:** The teachers on their own part will benefit from this study because it will add to their awareness of what to do to curb the rising menace of malpractice in the educational system. Therefore, putting more effort to ensure that students learn with the most appropriate methods in the most appropriate way.

**Parents:** Parents on their own will benefit from this study because the study will broaden their scope of understanding as to how they are expected to raise their children with the right values. By this, students will not solely depend on examination fraud to pass their examinations.

**Government/Stakeholders:** The government also benefits from this study even as the study will help them enact appropriate laws that will guide the educational sector against educational fraudulent activities. Furthermore, stakeholders such as educational administrators, implementers of policies etc. are not left out of the benefits of this study because this study will help them have a better understanding of what is expected of them in the field during the course of implementing the laws and policies made by the government.

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