
**EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES AND
CHALLENGES OF NATIONAL SECURITY: AN APPRIASAL**

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ABSTRACT

Universities play an important role in the Development and National Security of any country, as it remains the bedrock of society. Examination malpractices in Nigerian Universities in the recent years have reached an alarming level. This study takes a look at Examination malpractices with specific reference to Nigerian Universities. Two (2) research questions guided the study. The study adopted the survey research design where 1024 Students made up the population. 277 students were sampled for the study using simple random sampling techniques. Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (EMQ) was used for data collection. The reliability coefficient was 0.70 indicating high reliability coefficient of the instrument. Mean and standard deviation were used to answered research questions and Chi-square was used to test hypotheses. The result showed examination malpractice has significant effects on Nigeria's national security. Therefore, recommended that Educational authorities in this case University management should organize seminars and workshops on regular basis to intimate as well as remind students on the negative effects of examination malpractice not only to them but the society at large.

KEYWORDS: Examination, Universities, National Security, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria's 63 years old trajectory as an independent nation, several issues have been a setback to it statehood and nation building efforts. Earlier, several military interventions in

Nigeria's politics were the order of the day and caused distortions in Nigeria's democracy. This has become history with the advent of uninterrupted democratic rule from May, 1999 to date. However, in the recent years, as a nation state, Nigeria has faced series of national security challenges ranging from terrorism, kidnapping for ransom, ethno religious crisis, farmer herder conflicts and on the other hand, failing infrastructural development, collapse in health structures, food insecurity, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment just to mention a few.

Globally, education as a social institution is a very important ingredient and enduring instrument for societal development in all nations, Nigeria inclusive. This is at all levels but in this case specific reference is pointed towards university education. University education remains the bedrock of human capital development in sectors which include but are not limited to economy, agriculture, infrastructure, energy, oil and gas. Furthermore, the roles played by universities whether conventional, specialized, federal, state, private or individual in research generation, storage, retrieval and dissemination of knowledge and engagement with society are very pivotal towards achieving, nation building and national security (Ada, etal, 2021).

As Nigeria witnesses several national security challenges, universities education is vital bedrock of civilization and a major influence towards, achieving a positive national security status (Basawa, 2013). In all nations, Nigeria inclusive, education remains an important tool for societal change by inculcating values and knowledge. Education provides a platform through which the intellectual feat needed for maintenance and development of society is needed. Academic measurement and excellence are determined by examinations (Nnodum, and Uzoka, 2007). Examination is serious business used as a means of evaluation, classification, recruitment and certification since it remains a truism that the importance of examinations cannot be over emphasized, students have dabbled into several means of achieving success in examinations. Educational institutions in this case, universities are bedeviled with the evil vice of examination malpractice.

Examination malpractice is any irregular behavior exhibited by students or any other person saddled with the responsibility of conducting examinations before during or after an examination (Anchovur, 2013). Historically, examination malpractice dates back to 1914 where there was a leakage of Cambridge school certificate. (Onyechere, 1996). In Nigeria, the first incidents of examination malpractice were recorded by the West African Examination Council in 1977 (Agbe, 2003). Awoyinka, (2004) in his submission, observes that student's involvement in examination malpractice constitutes a deviant behavior and also

affects the reliability of examination results given to students who engages in examination malpractice. In his submission Anchovur (2013) notes that examination malpractice in Nigerian Universities weakens the validity of any examination, thereby making results worthless and unreliable, which further produces wrong scores where students earn marks that do not tally with their abilities, this eventually leads to wrong placement, in several sectors of the Nigerian society. He also notes that examination malpractice is fraud and it occurs at all levels of education from nursery/primary through secondary and universities level. Examination malpractice is any wrong unacceptable conduct capable of influencing results before, during and after an examination this is detrimental to society.

Security is complex in nature; it requires not only counter measures to deal with but also concrete preventive and resilient decisions taking towards preventing loss of lives and property. (Ani, and Onyebokwa, 2016). To Aliyu (2012) security emphasizes means of putting states in check, national security is the ability of a nation to protect itself from external cohesion through military capability. Here a nation is safe once free from military and political threats. To Okigbo (2006) National Security is the application of economic variable for the enrichment of lives of the populous as well as the use of military force to ensure protection of citizens. (Gomez and Jasper, 2013) observe that from both internal and external aggression during the cold war era national security was all about defense, military hardware, military operations and military defense operations but after the cold war era, scholars, governments and policy makers gave a rethink with new world realities, national security was re-conceptualized to include other dimensions which include economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, political security and human security in general. With the above accretions, this research paper adopts national security as having to do with non-military security, weapons armory and military operations towards protection of the integrity of the state. In this research paper, national security is freedom from hunger (food security) wellbeing of human beings, political, social and economic well-being of citizens, infrastructural development, health security, environmental security, educational security unemployment and poverty reduction. This study adopted Weak States Theory. It was postulated by Rotber 1997. Theory stated that states are said to be weak when they are grossly inadequate in the combination of capacity and ability to fulfil basic governmental responsibilities.

It has flourished, and become an alarming detriment to Nigeria's growing educational system, resulting to certificates which cannot be defended in theory and practice. This in turn has had a trickle-down effect on Nigeria's national security thereby birthing and contributing to a

buildup of challenges of national security (Adejoh, and James, 2007). Despite the efforts of examination bodies such as JAMB and WAEC as well as university authorities to curb examination malpractice, the problem persists. Therefore, there is a need for further research to identify effective strategies for addressing examination malpractice in Nigerian universities and its implication for national security. While existing studies have explored the causes and effects of examination malpractice, there a need for more research on the impact of examination on national security which this study seeks to fill.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To find out the major causes of examination malpractices in Nigerian Universities.
2. To observe the major forms of examination malpractice that exists in Nigeria Universities.
3. To identify the effects of examination malpractice on Nigeria's National Security.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the major causes of examination malpractice in Nigerian Universities?
2. What are the major forms of examination malpractice in Nigerian Universities?
3. Does examination malpractice in Nigerian Universities have any effects on Nigeria's National Security?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant cause of examination malpractice in Nigerian universities.
2. Examination malpractice has no significant effect on Nigeria's national security.

METHOD

The study adopted the survey research design where 1024 Students made up the population. 277 students were sampled for the study using simple random sampling techniques. Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (EMQ) was used for data collection. The reliability coefficient was 0.80 indicating high reliability coefficient of the instrument. Mean and standard deviation were used to answered research questions and Chi-square was used to test hypotheses.

RESULT

Research Question One: What are the major causes of examination malpractice in Nigerian Universities?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on Major Causes of Examination Malpractice.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	U	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	Inadequate preparation for the examination	132	94	21	16	14	3.77	0.66	Accepted
2	Over emphasis on paper qualifications and certificate	118	103	22	19	15	3.7	0.62	Accepted
3	Wrong choice of course of study	124	95	20	21	17	3.68	0.61	Accepted
4	Desire to satisfy parents	115	98	27	21	16	3.64	0.59	Accepted
5	Lack of conducive examination halls	126	89	25	20	17	3.66	0.64	Accepted
6	Overcrowded sitting arrangements	129	93	21	19	15	3.7	0.57	Accepted
7	Fear of failure of exams by students	135	88	22	20	12	3.74	0.53	Accepted
8	Poor teaching of students by concerned lecturers	120	92	30	21	14	3.63	0.65	Accepted
9	School environment is prone to encourage examination malpractice	123	94	26	20	14	3.66	0.61	Accepted
10	Over ambition by students pushes them to engage in examination malpractice	131	85	23	22	16	3.68	0.58	Accepted
11	Libraries for studying are not well equipped and lack undated materials	116	102	25	20	14	3.65	0.63	Accepted
12	Insufficient resources and hunger cause examination malpractice	121	97	24	21	14	3.66	0.62	Accepted
13	Bad societal influence and poor orientation	119	100	26	20	12	3.66	0.6	Accepted
14	Access to bribing and corruption of lecturers	128	87	24	23	15	3.67	0.59	Accepted
15	Lack of sufficient invigilation during examination making proper supervision difficult	127	89	22	24	15	3.67	0.58	Accepted
16	Collaboration between lecturers and invigilators	122	91	27	23	14	3.63	0.6	Accepted
17	Involvement of students in extracurricular activities that distract learning process	119	95	27	21	15	3.63	0.61	Accepted
18	General degradation of today's society	120	93	28	21	15	3.62	0.62	Accepted
19	The inherent nature of student	124	90	29	20	14	3.64	0.59	Accepted
20	Admission of unqualified candidates by universities	118	96	27	21	15	3.62	0.6	Accepted

Source: Research Field Work, 2025.

The findings in Table 1 indicate that all the items from 1-20 are above the mean cutoff mark of 2.50 respectively. All the respondents strongly agreed on the major causes of examination malpractice. High mean values indicated that inadequate preparation (Mean = 3.77), fear of failure (Mean = 3.74), and over importance on certificates (Mean = 3.70) were the strongest causes. Other accepted factors included poor teaching, insufficient invigilation, societal influence, and corruption among lecturers. With an overall cluster mean of 3.67, the findings confirm that multiple institutional, personal and societal issues drive examination malpractice in Nigerian universities. The table above reveals that the major causes of examination malpractice in Nigerian Universities is inadequate preparation by students, the fear of possible failure and high emphasis of the importance of certificates. This goes in line with Iornngurem, (2010) who notes that over dependence on educational certificates as a means of measuring one's knowledge and competence is a major factor responsible for examination malpractice in Nigerian Universities collaborating with this, Oloshola, (2006) observes that in Nigeria, undue emphasis is placed on certificates. These certificates, mentally make Nigerians to feel obtaining certificates is the only way of securing a good job. Denga and Denga (1998) in their submission note that inadequate preparation for examination by students contributes to examination malpractice, they observe that students have poor study habits and cannot cover their course outline before examinations. Nnam, and Inah, (2015) also agree to the submission that University students get involved with examination malpractice due to fear of failing the examination.

Research Question Two: What are the major forms of examination malpractice in Nigerian Universities?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on Forms of Examination Malpractice.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	U	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
21	Impersonation candidate (hire) arranged to write for another	133	95	21	16	12	3.77	0.65	Accepted
22	Giraffe neck stretching and copying by one student to another	125	98	24	18	12	3.7	0.61	Accepted
23	Sorting and bribing of lecturers by students for marks or freedom in examination hall	128	92	22	21	14	3.69	0.6	Accepted
24	Leakage of examination questions before examination	130	90	23	21	13	3.69	0.62	Accepted
25	Taking and use of unauthorized scientific materials into the hall, handset, phone cameras, ear piece	132	91	22	20	12	3.72	0.59	Accepted

26	Sneaking in with obvious exhibits papers not allowed (microchips)	127	93	24	19	14	3.69	0.61	Accepted
27	Arranging to alter examination results by those concerned	126	95	23	20	13	3.68	0.62	Accepted
28	Changing or awarding of unreserved marks during continuous assessment	123	97	25	19	13	3.66	0.61	Accepted
29	Sitting according to arrangement with the aim of cheating during	122	94	27	21	13	3.64	0.63	Accepted
30	Inscription of hidden body parts	120	98	26	20	13	3.64	0.62	Accepted
31	Intimidation of examination invigilators by students	124	94	25	21	13	3.65	0.61	Accepted
32	Exchange of answer for scripts/sheets/booklets for comparison	121	96	26	20	14	3.63	0.62	Accepted
33	Communication by arrangement by students outside the hall	118	99	27	20	13	3.62	0.63	Accepted
34	The use of coded and sign languages in the examination hall	122	95	26	21	13	3.63	0.62	Accepted
35	Irregular and unauthorized movement within the examination hall	120	97	27	20	13	3.62	0.62	Accepted
Cluster Mean/Std. Dev.							3.67	0.62	

Source Researchers Field Work, 2025

Table 2 indicates that all the items from 21-35 are above the mean cutoff mark of 2.50 respectively. The entire respondent's widespread acknowledge multiple forms of examination malpractice. Impersonation (Mean = 3.77), use of gadgets (Mean = 3.72), and question leakage (Mean = 3.69) were identified as the most common. Other prevalent forms included sorting, sneaking in exhibits, alteration of results, intimidation of invigilators, and use of coded signals. With an overall cluster mean of 3.67, the findings show that Nigerian universities experience diverse and organized forms of examination malpractice. The above findings reveal that impersonation, use of gadgets and examination leakages are the major forms of examination malpractice in Nigerian Universities. This goes in line with Kalgoo (2001) who notes that impersonation of having someone write an exam for you, having knowledge of the content of the examination and bringing unauthorized foreign materials into the examination are the most common ways of examination malpractice in Nigerian universities. Also, Nwosu (2003) also agrees that the above are very common ways of examination malpractice in Nigerian Universities. He observes that the use of electronic modern gadgets is the latest and fastest way of carrying out examination malpractice as students also impersonate by having others to write the examination on their behalf.

Research Question Three: What are the effects of examination malpractice on Nigeria's National Security?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on Effects of Examination Malpractice on National Security.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	U	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
36	Examination malpractice has made the Nigerian certificate unreliable in the international community, thereby making foreigners look at Nigerians with an eye suspicion	134	92	24	18	9	3.76	0.64	Accepted
37	Human resources recruitment systems is faulty as a result of caliber of type of graduates that are produced by Nigerian Universities	127	95	25	19	11	3.7	0.62	Accepted
38	Since students caught in examination malpractice are expelled it increase the number of out on the street, unruly criminals thereby increasing crime rate in society	128	93	23	20	13	3.69	0.61	Accepted
39	Examination malpractice produces criminals and cheats who cheats to get employed, cheat to work and cheat in everything that has to do with survival in society	132	91	22	21	11	3.71	0.6	Accepted
40	Examination malpractice produces half backed graduates who cannot defend their degrees affecting practical knowledge application	133	94	21	18	11	3.74	0.59	Accepted
41	Those who cheat in universities can easily be influenced to engage in other offenses detrimental to society	124	97	24	21	11	3.66	0.63	
42	Examination malpractice is a major factor responsible for short cuts in engineering and infrastructural development in society, eventually leads to collapsing of infrastructure like buildings, bridges etc.	123	95	26	22	11	3.64	0.62	Accepted
43	Examination malpractice is responsible and leads to faculty diagnosis in hospitals by Nigerian doctors	125	92	26	22	12	3.64	0.64	Accepted

44	Examination malpractice leads to ignorance by pharmacist and poor administration of drugs	121	95	28	21	12	3.62	0.64	Accepted
45	Examination malpractice leads to a generally incompetent workforce	129	94	23	20	11	3.69	0.61	Accepted
46	Examination malpractice lead to security risks with incompetent professionals in critical sectors of the nation. The law enforcement and faulty professionals	126	96	24	21	10	3.67	0.62	Accepted
47	Examination malpractice has the potential to affect all facets of the Nigerian society in diverse ways negatively	128	92	25	21	11	3.68	0.61	Accepted
48	Due to examination malpractice, it will be difficult for Nigerian to realize its maximum potentials economically, socially, politically and technologically	124	95	26	21	11	3.66	0.62	Accepted
49	A compromised educational system leads to an incompetent workforce which leads to a faculty foundation thereby building a society without necessary skills, leads to a society where poverty, food clothing, shelter and faculty electoral system become the order of the day	123	96	27	21	10	3.65	0.62	Accepted
50	Examination malpractice has serious negative implications on Nigerian's Security Cluster Mean/Std. Dev.	131	91	23	20	12	3.7	0.6	Accepted
							3.68	0.62	

Source: researchers field work, 2025

The result in the table indicates that all the items from 36-50 are above the mean cutoff mark of 2.50 respectively. All the respondents agreed that examination malpractice has far-reaching implications for Nigeria's national security. The most severe impacts include the production of half-baked graduated (mean =3.74) unreliability of Nigeria certificates internationally (mean =3.76) and increased crime rates from expelled students (mean =3.69) other negative outcomes include collapsing infrastructure. Faulty medical diagnoses. And incompetent professionals in critical security sectors. With an overall cluster mean of 3.68, the findings strongly indicate that examination malpractice undermines national security and threaten sustainable development in Nigeria.

From the table above examination malpractice has a lot of effects on Nigerians national security. The major effects are that it produces half baked graduates it increases the crime rate in society and has made Nigeria University certificates unreliable. This result goes in line with Olatumbosun (2009) who submits that a country that produces half-baked graduates has lost confidence within the international community, thereby making interactions with such countries suspicious. Nnodum and Uzoka (2007) also observe that when a countries certificates are not recognized globally, the country has lost credibility especially consideration, the fact that education is the bedrock of any society that aspires to develop. Onyibe, C. O Uma, U.U and Ibina E. (2015) note that the high rate of bank failure, collapse of building's economic sabotage, vandalism, kidnapping, hostage taking for ransom, drug trafficking fake drug manufacturing and sales are all practical effects of moral decadence which has emanated from examination malpractices. They further observe that other negative effects of examination malpractice on Nigerians national security is seen in low productivity of and poor job performance, bribery and corruption in society. They conclude that no nation can progress with all these vices. Also, Nnam, M.V, Inah, A.F (2015) submit that the impact of examination malpractices on Nigerians national security is catastrophic, as it affects all facets of the society, government services, delivery on educational services as well as relationships within the international community.

Research Hypotheses I: These is no significant cause of examination malpractice in Nigerian universities.

Table 4 Chi-square Test on Significant Causes of Examination Malpractice in Nigerian Universities. (N=277)

Opinions	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Df	X ² cal	X ² tab	Level of Sig	Decision
No cause	83 (30.0%)	138.5 (50%)	1	29.41	3.84	0.000	Significant
Cause	194 (70.0%)	138.5 (50%)					

Values in parentheses are percentage ($X^2 = 29.41$, $df = 1$, $p > 0.0000$)

Table 6 shows the chi-square test on the causes of examination malpractice in Nigerian Universities. Out of the 277 respondents, 194 (70.0%) agreed that there were significant causes of examination malpractice, while 83 (30.0%) disagreed. The chi-square calculated value of 29.41 was greater than the chi-square table value of 3.84 at the 0.05 level of significant cause of examination malpractice in Nigerian Universities is rejected. This implies that the causes of examination malpractice in Nigerian Universities are statically significant.

Research Hypothesis II: Examination malpractice has no significant effect on Nigeria's national security.

Table 5: Chi-square Test on the Effect of Examination Malpractice on Nigeria's National Security. (N=277)

Opinions	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Df	X ² cal	X ² tab	Level of Sig	Decision
No effect	72 (26.0%)	138.5 (50%)	1	43.17	3.84	0.000	Significant
Effect	205 (74.0%)	138.5 (50%)					

Values in parentheses are percentage ($X^2 = 43.17$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.05 > 0.000$)

Table 7 presents the chi-square test on the effects of examination malpractice on Nigeria's national security. Out of the 277 respondents, 205 (74.0%) agreed that examination malpractice has an effect on Nigeria's national security, while 72 (26.0%) disagreed. The chi-square calculated value of 43.17 was greater than the chi-square table value of 3.84 at the 0.05 level of significant with 1 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that examination malpractice has no significant effect on Nigeria's national security is rejected. This implies that examination malpractice significantly affects Nigeria's national security.

CONCLUSION

This study finds out the causes of examination malpractice in Nigerian Universities, the most common forms of examination malpractices in Nigerian universities and the effects on Nigeria's National Security. The study reveals that the most common causes of examination malpractice in Nigerian universities are inadequate preparation by students, fear of failure and over importance and emphasis on certificates. The research study also reveals that examination malpractice does has serious negative effects on Nigeria's National Security.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the research study, The following Recommendations are made.

1. Nigerian society should address the factors causing examination malpractice.
2. Educational authorities in this case University management should organize seminars and workshops on regular basis to intimate as well as remind students on the negative impact of examination malpractice not only to them but the society at large.
3. University premises should be conducive with good facilities for adequate spacing and sitting arrangements for students to write examinations.

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