

## ERADICATION OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE IN UNIVERSITIES WITH ICT AS A SOLUTION FOR QUALITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*The research paper focused on eradication of examination malpractice in universities with ICT as a solution for quality education in Nigeria. Malpractices and cheating by students and by education institutions is on the rise and it is a huge challenge to quality education. The study was carried out in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study was guided by the following objectives: to identify the factors responsible for examination malpractice, and the form of exam malpractice and the ICT strategies to curb exam malpractice. The instrument for data collection was a 30-item researcher structured questionnaire titled Eradication of Examination Malpractices with ICT for quality education Questionnaire (EEMQE). Face and content validity of the instrument was done by experts. Cronbach alpha was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument which yielded coefficient of 0.82. Three research questions were raised and answered. The data were analysed using mean and standard deviation. The respondents were 152 students of Rivers State University. After analyzed data, the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that exam malpractice has a negative effect on the quality of education but could be eliminated by the application of ICT devices. The study recommended that Schools should only admit pupils or students based on the availability of infrastructure and personnel. Over population has an inherent supervision problem.*

**Keywords:** Quality education, Exam Malpractice, ICT Nigeria.

### Introduction

The developmental process of any nation depends greatly on her educational sector. Education is a hedge of survival in the world. It is believed to be the bedrock of any nation's development; hence it is incumbent upon such country's government and relevant stakeholders to take the issues of education seriously. The regular decline in educational standard in Nigeria, especially in public examinations, is a serious concern for the country. Our education system is threatened and badly damaged, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also the result of our collective failure to make hard choices. However, the most challenging factor to the improvement of our educational standard is the fast-growing cancer called "examination malpractice" which has eaten deep into the bones and marrows of our educational system. Several factors can lead to examination malpractice and they

include lack of good societal and family upbringing, materialism, certificate over-consciousness, lack of self-confidence, poor remuneration of teachers and examiners, poverty and corruption.

Quality education equips people with the ability that will enable them explore the world and manipulate it for their survival and establishment (Njoku, 2016). It has been the backbone of development in most countries of the world because it propels both economic and social emancipation of a nation (Iniobong, 2013). Therefore, the means of providing education should be effective to promote quality sustenance so as to enable the educational system to be well developed and effective (Okoli, 2016). For quality education to be achieved in a nation, the principal actors of learning (teachers, learners and the environment) should be cooperatively organized. In other words, the teacher must be adequate in quality and quantity, the students must be well trained and required facilities must be provided as well (Adegbesan, 2011). The fact that Nigeria's education system is still characterized by a few high performing and many low performing schools is not acceptable to stakeholders in the education sector (Okebukola, 2013). The situation needs to be improved so that the country can compete with its peers in global competitive academic standards. In the education system, a vital mechanism required for the actualization of the educational objectives is to build a quality assurance model that will improve the quality of the teaching-learning process in the academic environment (Idialu, 2013). Many nations around the globe now agree that the way out of series of bondage plaguing their nations and their citizens is through quality education (Njoku, 2016). Education in Nigeria has gone below its expectations. The system has derailed from its original intentions because of general neglect of the education sector (Ajayi&Akindurite, 2007). The neglect has contributed to the present day collapse in the standard and quality of education in Nigeria (Uzorka and Okobia, (2011)

According Olutola and Olatoye (2020) opined that Quality education is a crucial tool for improving the prospects of higher income levels for individuals and for economic growth of nations therefore University of education has a major role to play in enhancing quality of education level of developing education system to ensure that the skills, understanding and values acquired by students are enough to make them useful and relevant in the society. A robust quality education status in a nation does not happen by chance but achieved through implementation of well thought out strategies that can upgrade the education standard and improve quality of products churned out from the various citadels of learning. Amongst the strategies needed to guarantee the desired quality of education is to build quality assurance mechanism into the learning process (Thom-Otuya and Inko-Tariah, 2013). Quality and standards must be derived from a coherent policy framework, which provides clear directives and guidelines as well as principles, assumptions, structures, roles and responsibilities (Federal Ministry of Education -FME, 2014).

Examination malpractice has been defined as a deliberate illegal act contrary to the rules and regulations designed to place a candidate at an unfair advantage or disadvantage, it is careless, illegal or unacceptable behavior by a candidate in a formal test of his knowledge or ability in a particular subject. (Philemon in Dajwan., Mafwalal, Davou, Mandung, & Davou, 2021) It has also been said to be an act of omission or commission, which compromises the validity and integrity of any examination (Okwu, in Dajwan et al., 2021). Wangane & Simwa, (2022) stated that Examination malpractice is improper or illegal conduct by an examination candidate (examinee) with the purpose of passing the examination. Examination Malpractice simply means the use of illegal methods by students to pass examinations and obtain certificates. It includes acts such as bringing of textbooks or written materials into examination hall for the purpose of answering questions. Others include writing of points on palms, spying on other people's work during an examination, dictation of answers by invigilators or fellow candidates etc (ClassNotes.ng).. Even outside the formal school system, there is evidence of one form of sharp practice or the other in the country (Graves & Stephen, 2008). According to Wokocha in Ubulom and Ukwuije (2001) says that exam malpractice is an improper or illegal conduct by an examination candidate (examinees) with the aim of passing the examination. It is an illegal act by the examinee or examiner or both, before, during or after the exam with intent to make the examinee earn an unmerited grade or gain unfair advantage (Asuru in Ubulom & Ukwuije, 2001)

Nwana in Dajwan et al. (2021) argue that examination malpractice is described as the massive and unprecedented abuse of rules and regulations pertaining to internal and external examinations, beginning from the setting of such examinations through the taking of the examinations, their marking and grading to the release of the results and the issuance of certificates. Choji (2008), defined examination malpractice as any wrongdoing before, during or after the examination, such wrongdoing may be on the part of the students or candidate, invigilators, examiner, supervisors, printers, clerks or any person who is directly or indirectly involved in such an examination. Akpan in Ukah & Ukwuoma (2018) opined that examination malpractice is said to be any act of omission or commission which contravenes stipulated rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity and reliability of tests and ultimately the integrity of the certificates issued.

Adenipekun (2004) espouses that examination malpractice is not a recent phenomenon in Nigeria but has been there for a long time and manifests now in a new dimension. Asuka in (Dajwan et al., 2021) observed that the organization, coordination and administration of both internal and external examinations involve the federal and state governments, examination councils, teachers and parents with much commitment of money, energy and time but these huge efforts are most often frustrated by the act called examination malpractice which has become a ritual in the secondary school system. University system is reforming itself by introducing

transparency, better management and effective usage of ICT. The examination system within a university bears the brunt of increasing number of student enrolment whereas ICT promises better handling of data, ease of access and user friendliness. However, while introducing ICT, enforcing data security is imperative otherwise it will be subjected to numerous cyber threats i.e. unauthorized disclosure, modification or destruction. The Automated Centralised database will help in reducing the redundancy in database in addition to maintaining consistency, integrity and security of data.

According to Efrain,Pollard, Gregory (2021) and *Neelankavil (2007)*. *Opined that* centralized database (sometimes abbreviated CDB) is a [database](#) that is located, stored, and maintained in a single location. This location is most often a central computer or database system, for example a desktop or server [CPU](#), or a mainframe computer. In most cases, a centralized database would be used by an organization (e.g. a business company) or an institution (e.g. a university.) Users access a centralized database through a computer network which is able to give them access to the central CPU, which in turn maintains to the database itself. The Automated integrated exam system (AIES) will lead to effective monitoring of Examination related processes by the concerned authorities (the possibility of occurrence frauds will be minimized). The IES software is integrating with an examination system that is related to the exam board institution as they provide with exam rule and regulation and the education organisation where they provide the student data. The integrated examination system (IES) will offer each student with the facility to have all the formatting tools to write their answers and to have a feature where the system can support in understanding of the questions so it can be answered in a correct way. Business (November 2018).The centralised system will facilitate in integrating all sections/units/ departments/colleges who are affiliated to the University and will bring the system under a single umbrella. This will definitely improve the efficiency at workplace. The ACD and AIES will create a secure, robust and permanent database of students who have enrolled with the university. IAIES is the need of the hour with appropriate security measures. If effective measures and architecture are introduced in Nigerian University examination system, it will go a long way to instil efficiency in the examination system and will be able to check the examination malpractices and fraudulent acts associated with the management of examination system. Some of the measures to curtail exam malpractice according to Nwovike and Ibara (2021)

- ❖ Issuing of Permanent Identity Card (PIC)
- ❖ Photo of the Student
- ❖ Permanent Identification Number of student (PIN)
- ❖ Signature of the candidate
- ❖ Name of Student: Candidate who are enrolled with the university and are

eligible to appear in the opted examination will be provided with Permanent Identification Card (PIC). This PIN will be unique number and will be required for all the queries. PIN will be supplied to the candidate and can also be downloaded from the website. In PIN, photograph and signature of the candidate will be shown, which will help in checking authenticity of the candidate

Examinations have become a major and universal means to assess achievement. Through education each individual will be able to acquire knowledge, skills, and values which is necessary in the development of every nation. At the completion of any educational course or programme, certificate is issued. According to Hornby (2000) certificate is an official document proving that students have successfully completed a training course, especially for a particular profession. In our society, certificate is highly relied upon as the basis for employment. As a result of this, the zeal for acquisition of certificate has risen and turn gave birth to examination malpractice. However, exam malpractice is one of the biggest challenges in carrying out assessment which cannot be ignored. It is a cankerworm that is posing a serious problem in the Nigerian Educational system and on the increase across the world; it is a threat to quality education. The aim of the study was to eradicate of examination malpractice in universities with I.C.T as a solution for quality education in Nigeria. The specific objectives guiding the study are to:

1. Determine the factors responsible for examination malpractice?
2. Ascertain the forms of exam malpractice?
3. Determine ICT strategies to curb exam malpractice

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were postulated to guide the researcher in the study;

1. What are the factors responsible for examination malpractice?
2. What are the forms of exam malpractice?
3. What is the ICT strategies to curb exam malpractice?

### **Methodology**

A survey research design was used to carry out this study. The study was carried out in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of final year students of three universities in Rivers State. A simple random sampling technique was used in selecting one hundred and fifty-two (152) students, drawn from the population. The instrument for data collection was a 30-item researcher structured questionnaire titled Eradication of Examination Malpractices with ICT for quality education Questionnaire (EEMQE). Face and content validity of the instrument was done by experts in measurement and evaluation. Cronbach alpha was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument which yielded coefficient

of 0.82. Three research questions were raised and answered. The result was analysed using mean and standard deviation. The respondents were 152 students at Rivers State University. The researchers personally administered the questionnaire copies to the respondents involved in the study and were retrieved immediately thereby ensuring 100% return. Means below the cut off point 2.5 indicated that the respondents disagreed with the item on the questionnaire while a means above 2.50 indicated students' agreement.

## Results

**Table 1:** Mean responses of the factors responsible for examination malpractice

S/N	Items	SA (4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	TOTAL	MEAN	DECISION
1	Intimidation of secret cult member on the part of Lecturers.	60(240)	50(150)	28(40)	14(14)	152(460)	3.0	Agreed
2	Lack of teaching and learning facilities.	60(240)	40(120)	28(56)	24(24)	152(440)	2.9	Agreed
3	Bribery and corruption on the part of the teachers and lecturers	70(280)	60(180)	11(22)	11(11)	152(493)	3.2	Agreed
4	Poor competences to carry out quality education.	80(320)	50(150)	12(24)	10(10)	152(504)	3.3	Agreed
5	Importance placed on certificate.	70(280)	50(150)	8(16)	24(24)	152(470)	2.7	Agreed
6	Admission of so many students in a department.	60(240)	50(150)	30(60)	12(12)	152(462)	3.1	Agreed
7	Lack of self-confidence.	90(360)	40(120)	12(24)	12(12)	152(505)	3.3	
8	Trying to protect the reputation of teachers and school status.	50(200)	40(120)	38(40)	24(24)	152(420)	2.8	Agreed
9	Outdated books on the shelves of our libraries.	65(260)	65(195)	12(24)	10(10)	152(489)	3.2	Agreed
10	Desire of some parents to place their children in lucrative jobs.	60(240)	50(150)	40(80)	2(2)	152(472)	3.1	Agreed
Grand mean		3.06 Agreed						

SA=Strongly Agree

A= Agree

D= Disagree

SD= Strongly Disagree

Criterion Mean=2.50

The data presented in table 1 showed that the mean ratings of the responses of the factors responsible for examination malpractice on the 10 items in the table ranging from 2.70 to 3.30 which are all greater than the cut-off point value of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This indicated that the 10 identified items in the table are in agreement with the statement about the factors responsible for examination malpractice. The conclusion is that they are factors responsible for examination malpractice.

**Table 2:** Mean responses of the forms of exam malpractice

S/N	Items	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	TOTAL	MEAN	DECISION
1	Exam paper leakage	114(456)	20(60)	10(20)	8(8)	152(544)	3.6	Agreed
2	Prepared answers cells taped to the uniform at the back.	110(440)	30(90)	10(20)	2(2)	152(552)	3.6	Agreed
3	Mass cheating	80(320)	38(114)	20(40)	14(14)	152(488)	3.2	Agreed
4	Copying&Giraffing	72(288)	62(186)	8(16)	10(10)	152(500)	3.3	Agreed
5	Bringing in foreign materials	92(368)	40(120)	15(30)	5(5)	152(523)	3.4	Agreed
6	Collusion among candidates	79(316))	57(171)	10(20)	6(6)	152(513)	3.4	Agreed
7	Use of short-hand	60(240)	40(120)	30(60)	22(22)	152(442)	2.9	Ag
8	Use of mercenaries	67(268)	38(114)	30(60)	17(17)	152(459)	3.0	Agreed
9	Entering the hall with prepared scripts, hidden socks, pockets	62(248)	59(177)	20(40)	11(11)	152(476)	3.1	Agreed
10	Smuggling out question paper and answers scripts.	81(324)	57(171)	10(20)	4(4)	152(519)	3.4	Agreed
Grand mean					3.3 Agreed			

SA=Strongly Agree

A= Agree

D= Disagree

SD= Strongly Disagree

Criterion Mean=2.50

The data presented in table 2 showed that the mean ratings of the responses of the forms of exam malpractice on the 10 items in the table ranging from 2.90 to 3.60 which are all greater than the cut-off point value of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This indicated that the 10 identified items in the table are in agreement with the statement about the forms of exam malpractice. The conclusion is that they are forms of exam malpractice.

**Table 3:** Mean responses of the ICT strategies to curb exam malpractice?

S/N	Items	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	TOTAL	MEAN	DECISION
1	Computer based test	85(340)	15(45)	22(44)	30(30)	152(459)	3.0	Agreed
2	Online registration	100(400)	10(30)	20(60)	22(22)	152(512)	3.4	Agreed
3	Biometric data capturing should be used in all public examinations;	118(472)	8(24)	20(40)	6(6)	152(548)	3.6	Agreed
4	Airport style security scanner	122(488)	5(15)	20(40)	5(5)	152(548)	3.6	Agreed
5	Electronic monitoring services	101(404)	19(57)	12(24)	20(20)	152(505)	3.3	Agreed
6	Marking/grading software to detect Collusion/group work among candidates.	106(424)	20(60)	20(40)	6(6)	152(530)	3.5	Agreed
7	Electronic Detectors	70(280)	50(150)	8(16)	24(24)	152(470)	2.7	Agree
8	Phones signal	60(240)	50(150)	30(60)	12(12)	152(462)	3.1	Agreed
9	Short Message Service (SMS) tracking devices should be installed	60(240)	40(120)	30(60)	22(22)	152(442)	2.9	Agreed
10	Installation of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras in exam halls.	80(320)	38(114)	20(40)	14(14)	152(488)	3.2	Agreed
Grand mean						3.23 Agreed		

SA=Strongly Agree

A= Agree

D= Disagree

SD= Strongly Disagree

Criterion Mean=2.50



The data presented in table 1 showed that the mean ratings of the responses of ICT strategies to curb exam malpractice on the 10 items in the table ranging from 2.70 to 3.60 which are all greater than the cut-off point value of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This indicated that the 10 identified items in the table are in agreement with the statement about ICT strategies to curb exam malpractice. The conclusion is that they are ICT strategies to curb examination malpractice.

### **Discussions of Findings**

Findings from the study showed the factors responsible for exam malpractice. This is in line with the study of Dajwan et al (2021) who stated the cause of examination malpractices such as Lack of teaching and learning facilities, Poor societal parental orientation, Bribery and corruption on the part of lecturers, Lack of good learning condition, Favouritism, Admission of so many student in a department and Intimidation of secret cult member on the part of Lecturers. The majority of the respondents strongly agree that exam malpractice has a negative effect on the quality of education.

Findings from the study showed the forms of exam malpractice in research question two. This corroborates with the study by Agabi & Egbezon in (Dajwan et al, 2021) who says that West African Examination council in 1992 classified examination malpractice into the following: Irregular activities inside the examination hall, Collusion, Impersonation, Assault / insult or supervisors or invigilators, Mass cheating and special cases. The findings is in agreement with the views of Olaguni, in Dajwan et al, (2021) who listed seven (7) ways through which examination malpractices occurs among students in Nigeria : Giraffing (stretch the neck with intention of cheating, Entering the examination hall with text book as reminder, Prepared answers cells taped to the uniform at the back, Use of short-hand, Use of mercenaries, Entering the hall with prepared scripts, hidden in socks, pockets. Smuggling out question paper and answers scripts. In higher institutions, the Nigeria are faced with the determiner of coping with the various aspects of examination malpractices such as leakage, cheating.

Findings from this study showed the strategies that curb exam malpractice. This finding is in agreement with the views of Nwovike & Ibara (2021) who observed the strategies in Curbing internet related examination malpractices in public examinations in public schools are: biometric data capturing should be used in all public examinations; writing examination online should be encouraged to replace the manual methods being used now; Mobile phone in examination hall should be prohibited; Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras should be installed in all examination halls to check malpractices; Short Message Service (SMS) tracking devices should be installed at all examination centres that can access network; the use of ear piece in examination hall should be discouraged. UkEssays (2015) is also in agreement with the steps to curb malpractice in the

examination hall: Student's registration, PID Card issued, Swipe through Card reader, Verification from Integrated Exam System through Web interface, Attendance Sheet generated and Exam Day

### **Conclusion**

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is making an ever-stronger impact on country's culture, society, economy and public administration, at the macro as well as micro levels. Applications of computing technologies and the use of modern communication technologies trigger effects of broad variety. Rapid advances in information technology play a vital significance to stay connected with global trends and to remain competitive. The installation of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras lead to effective monitoring of Examination related processes by the concerned authorities (the possibility of occurrence frauds will be minimized). This system will surely help in reducing errors which otherwise are caused by human intervention and will definitely minimize malpractice in the examination system

### **Recommendations**

1. Need for both the government and school administrators to organize workshops, seminars and conferences at regular intervals to teach students, teachers, parents and even school administrators on the aftermath of examination malpractice.
2. Schools should only admit pupils or students based on the availability of infrastructure and personnel. Over population has an inherent supervision problem.
3. Ensuring that only formally registered candidates sit for the examination
4. Prohibit the use of electronic devices by candidate during exams.
5. Expulsion of students who do not meet up a stipulated minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA).

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