

# **INFLUENCE OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE ON PHYSICS STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN KWANDE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF BENUE STATE, NIGERIA.**

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## **Abstract**

*The study investigates the influence of examination malpractice on Physics students' achievement in Kwande local government area of Benue state. Data is generated through the use of a structured questionnaire which is administered to 120 students and teachers in ten (10) secondary schools across the study area, using simple random sampling technique in each school visited. Reliability of the instruments is obtained using Cronbach Alpha formula. Reliability coefficient of 0.79 and 0.87 for students' questionnaire and teachers' questionnaire respectively confirm internal consistency of the instrument. Both students' questionnaire (SQ) and teachers' questionnaire (TQ) are administered; the data obtained are analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions asked. The study reveals some of the causes of examination malpractice among students to include; Pressure on students to pursue courses which they have no aptitude, lack of qualified personnel, poor supervision, poor sitting arrangement, societal expectation and inadequate preparation by the students (grand mean 2.84 and std 0.98). The study also reveals that the impacts of examination malpractice on secondary school students' achievement are: lowering of educational standards and discouragement of hard work among serious students. Recommendations are also made from the findings of the study.*

**Keywords:** Physics students, examination malpractice, achievement.

## **Introduction**

Education, being a process of teaching and learning is mostly evaluated through examination at the end of the teaching and learning period. Examination is a familiar concept in Nigerian schools. It is well ingrained in the school system as can be seen by the emphasis given to it at all levels of educational enterprise. Musa (2011) refers to

examination as the assessment of a person's performance when presented with questions, problems or tasks set with the aim of ascertaining the amount and quality of knowledge that has been acquired or imbibed and the extent to which the student have been able to utilize the acquired knowledge. According to Emaikwu (2012), examination as part of evaluation in education is aimed at determining a learner's level of Intellectual competence, skill acquisition and understanding after a given training. In agreement with this, Miawada (2006) pointed out that assessment of the learning is done for the obvious reason of determining what has been learned and for decision-making with respect to selection of candidates for higher studies or job placement. These explanations all point to the fact that examination is very important in many ways and is used for various purposes. No wonder the National Policy on Education (2004) states that education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because education is the most important instrument of change; any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution.

However, research in the Nigerian educational system shows that it is characterised by so many problems that achieving this laudable goal may be a mirage unless drastic measures are taken to solve some of the problems urgently. It is sad to note that examination malpractice is one (and the most disturbing) of the problems. According to Nuraini (2010), examination malpractice is an illegal behavior exhibited by a candidate before, during or after examination so that he or she can obtain success easily and cheaply, thus violating the worth of the examination. Esogbue (2009) further explains that examination malpractice is the act of breaking the rules governing the conduct of an examination in order to gain some advantages. Examination malpractice has gradually found its way into our educational system. The worst is that, it seems to be embraced by many people, students and teachers alike, parents and even supervisors, especially at secondary school level. This is in line with Olatoye (2009) who view examination malpractice as any illegal act committed by a student single handedly or in collaboration with others: fellow students, parents, teachers, supervisors, invigilators, printers or anybody or group of people before or after examination in order to gain undeserved marks or grades. A closer look at this definition shows that it emphasises some major collaborators in the act; students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders. It also uncovers the fact that examination malpractice can be carried out by single persons or a group of people. The presence of examination malpractice in our educational system can cause a lot of havoc to it, consequently hampering the development of the entire society. This is true because education is very basic and crucial for social, economic and technological development of any individual and nation (Igbo and Ako, 2006).

Examination malpractice in Nigeria, from historical perspective, has worsened with time. Solomon (2014) reports that the first case of examination malpractice in Nigeria occurred in 1914 during the Senior Cambridge Local Examination papers which were

leaked before the scheduled date of examination. The West African Examination Council (WAEC, 2017) had to cancel or withhold results of 214,952 candidates out of 1,559,662 candidates that sat for her publicly conducted examinations in May-June 2017 for various cases of examination malpractice. The story of the National Examination Council (NECO) is not different. According to PM Newspaper Nigeria of 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017, a report tagged “NECO releases results, seizes results of 50,586 examination cheats” reveals that the results of 50,586 students who engaged in examination malpractices out of 1,051,472 who wrote the examination in 2017 were withheld because of examination malpractice.

The Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) has a similar story. 1,386 out of 1,718, 425 candidates have their results cancelled over examination malpractice in her recent (2017) examinations; 57,646 results were also affected as a result of centers-induced malpractices while the results of 666 candidates were cancelled due to multiple examinations and 48 Computer Based Test (CBT) centers were blacklisted for aiding cheating. The National Business and Technical Education Board (NABTEB) also has her share in the scene.

What is more disturbing, according to Onyillom and Onyilo (2007), is the involvement in examination malpractice of tutors, lecturers, examiners, invigilators and supervisors entrusted with the conduct of the examination. The involvement of this group of people in examination malpractice gives way for many forms of examination malpractice to operate successfully, since they are bribed by students. Thus picking and dropping of copied materials at appropriate places according to plan, exchange of question papers with answers jotted on them, smuggling of question papers out of examination hall for teachers to answer for students, impersonating, detecting of answers for students, copying of answers on the chalkboard and many other sophisticated methods are very common today. Some parents also get involved by hiring people to write for their children/wards.

Looking at the nature of the subject Physics, one has to be worried about what becomes of the students who achieve excellent result in it through fraudulent means. This is because the careers in Physics cut across virtually all aspects of life. All hand must be on deck to combat the monster, so as to give hope to our educational system. It is in the light of the above that the research intends to evaluate the impact of examination malpractice on Physics students' achievement in Benue State.

### **Statement of the problem**

Education worldwide was created as an innocent and pure tool to provide humankind with sound knowledge, appropriate occupational skills and accepted attitude that will enable humankind harness the environment. As such, learners at all levels are supposed to study hard and perform excellently in their examinations through merit without any form of examination malpractice.

However, detailed explanations of the students' involvement in examination malpractice as contained in the Chief Examiners and Registrar's/Executive's report are no doubt indications that different people resort into one form of examination malpractice or the other in order to achieve good results that they cannot even defend. Students' involvement in examination malpractice especially at secondary school level has often attracted penalties ranging from cancellation of results to other stringent terms such as withdrawal from school, re-sitting for the examination among others. The researcher wonders what would be the influence of this examination malpractice on physics student achievement in the study area.

Hence, it is against this background that the study intends to examine the influence of examination malpractice on the academic achievement of students and suggest ways of curbing this worm.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to examine the impact of examination malpractice on senior secondary school Physics students' achievement in Kwande Local Government Area of Benue State. The study specifically seeks to achieve the following objectives;

1. to identify the major causes of examination malpractice among the Senior Secondary school three (SSS3) Physics students of secondary schools in Kwande local government area of Benue State.
2. to identify the impact of examination malpractice among the SSS3 Physics students of secondary schools in Kwande local government area of Benue state.
3. to identify the solutions to the issues of examination malpractice among the SSS3 Physics students of secondary schools in Kwande local government area of Benue State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guide the study

1. What are the major causes of examination malpractices among the SSS3 Physics students of secondary schools in Kwande local government of Benue State?
2. What are the impacts of examination malpractice among the SSS3 Physics students of secondary schools in Kwande local government area of Benue State?
3. What are the solutions to the issues of examination malpractice among the SSS3 students of secondary schools in Kwande Local government area of Benue State?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study will be of great importance in the following ways;

It will help create awareness of the negative impact of examination malpractice on Physics Students' academic achievement. Consequently, students will be encouraged to study hard to pass their examination through merit so as to avoid the consequences of examination malpractice.

Teachers will also benefit significantly from this study in that, they will come to realise that they ought to teach/promote good character to students rather than encourage moral decadence by aiding examination malpractice in schools.

It is the hope of the researcher that the study will serve as a useful reference record for government, examination bodies and institutions of higher learning since it reveals the causes and possible solution to issues of examination malpractice in our academic programmes.

Finally, the society will gain in no small measure from this study since students who pass their examinations without indulging in examination malpractice will no doubt be assets to the society. In this way, the society will have a crop of people who would be competent in their various fields of endeavor.

### **Research Methodology**

Research design is employed in the study. The study area is Kwande Local Government area of Benue State, Nigeria. The target population of the study comprised 120 SS3 Physics students and teachers from ten (10) secondary schools selected at random out of forty one (41) secondary schools approved by the government in Kwande Local Government Area of Benue state. A sample of ten (10) schools is randomly selected using the simple random sampling technique. From these ten (10) secondary schools selected, twelve (12) students and twelve (12) teachers were randomly selected from each of the school so as to have equal number of students and teachers. The total number of 60 students and 60 teachers are used for the study.

The instrument used to collect data for this study is a questionnaire. The questionnaire is used because of its validity and reliability in measuring the impact of examination malpractice on secondary school Physics student's achievement. For this study, the researcher made use of two questionnaires namely; Teacher's questionnaire (TQ) and Student's questionnaire (SQ). The teacher's questionnaire (TQ) is made up of two sections; A and B sections. A solicits for bio-data about the respondents, while section B comprises six (6) questions seeking to know why some students engage in examination malpractice in their school and the impact of this examination malpractice on students' achievement using the response option and scoring of Strongly Agree (SA= 4), Agree (A

=3) Disagree (DA = 2) and Strongly Disagree (SD =1). The students' questionnaire was equally made up of section A and B. Section A deals with some background information of the students while section B is made up of 14 questions seeking to know why some students engage in examination malpractice and the impact of examination malpractice on physics students' achievement. It is a four-point structure scale of strongly Agree (SA) Agree (AG), Disagree and strongly Disagree (SD).

The instrument is face and content validated by three experts; two from measurement and evaluation, University of Agriculture Makurdi and one secondary school Physics Teacher not below the rank of senior master 1. This is aimed at ensuring that the instrument measures what is supposed to measure.

The researcher administered the questionnaire to ten (10) secondary schools within the local government area through their dean of studies. The completed questionnaires are collected after two weeks from the date of submission and analysed. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation is used to answer the research questions. For any decision to be made, a cut-off mean point of 2.50 was considered appropriate. This is because the mean of a four-point scale instrument used for this study is 2.50. Any item having a mean rating below 2.50 was considered disagreed, any item having a mean rating of 2.50 and above were taken as agreed.

### **Result of data Analysis and Interpretation.**

The researcher distributes one hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires of which eleven (11) are not returned while nine (9) are wrongly filled. The analysis is tabulated based on the correct responses in the 100 questionnaires collected. Data obtained are used for answering the research questions.

### **Research Question 1**

What are the major causes of examination malpractice among the SSS3 Physics students of secondary schools in Kwande local government of Benue State?

Answer to this research question is presented in table 1.

**Table 1 .Major causes of examination malpractice among the SSS3 Physics students in Benue State.**

S/N	Items	N	??	Std	Remark
1	Pressure on students to pursue courses which they have no aptitude	100	2.92	1.00	Agree
2	Inability of Teachers to cover the specified syllabus before examination	100	3.21	0.97	Agree
3	Desire of parents to have their children in choice professions and university	100	2.55	1.02	Agree
4	Ill-equipped Physics laboratories	100	2.83	1.05	Agree
5	Students poor study habits and unpreparedness for examinations	100	2.63	0.98	Agree
6	Desire among many students to pass the examinations at all cost	100	3.09	0.85	Agree
7	Leakages of question papers by examination officials	100	2.67	1.02	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2.84</b>	<b>0.98</b>	<b>Agree</b>

The information in Table 1 shows that Students and Teachers responded positively to items 1-7 as shown in their grand mean scores of 2.84 and standard deviation .98. This is an indication that all the items (1-7) cause examination malpractice in the study area. This implies that they agreed with the items as being the major causes of examination malpractice among Physics students in Benue State

### Research Question 2

What are the impacts of examination malpractice among the SSS3 Physics students of secondary schools in Kwande local government area of Benue State?

Answer to this research question is presented in table 2

**Table2. Impact of examination malpractice among the SSS3 Physics students of secondary schools in Kwande local government area of Benue State.**

S/N	Items	N	???	Std	Remark
1	Examination malpractice can discourage hard work among serious students	100	2.58	0.98	Agree
2	Examination malpractice can lower our educational standard	100	2.62	1.02	Agree
3	Examination malpractice leads to high drop outs from our educational institutions	100	3.15	0.85	Agree
4	Examination malpractice makes a country's educational institution to produce quacks and inferior manpower as graduates	100	3.20	0.75	Agree
5	Students who cheat in secondary school continue with it even in higher institution.	100	3.06	0.90	Agree
6	Examination malpractices increases lack of confidence among students	100	3.29	0.76	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2.90</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>Agree</b>

From table 2 above, six impacts of examination malpractice on students' academic achievement can be seen. It is observed that the respondents responded positively to the items 1-6 as shown in their grand mean scores (2.90) and standard deviation (0.88). This implies that they agreed with the items as being the impact examination malpractice has on students' achievement.

### Research question 3

What are the solutions to the issues of examination malpractice among the SSS3 students of secondary schools in Kwande Local government area of Benue State?

Answer to this research question is presented in table 3.

**Table 3. Solutions to the issue of examination malpractice among the SSS3 students of secondary schools in Kwande Local government area of Benue State.**

S/No.	Items	N	???	Std	Remark
1	Good moral values should be properly inculcated into our youth	100	3.14	0.80	Agree
2	Only honest people should be charged with the responsibility of examination management	100	3.25	0.89	Agree
3	School libraries and laboratories should be adequately equipped.	100	3.16	0.92	Agree
4	Employment of qualified physics teachers	100	2.97	0.93	Agree
5	Promulgation and enforcement of examination malpractice (prohibition) laws	100	3.16	0.85	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3.14</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>Agree</b>



From table 3 above, responses from items 1-5 indicate that the respondents responded positively to the items as can be seen from the grand mean score of 3.14 and standard deviation of 0.88. This is an indication that all the items represent the possible solution to the issue of examination malpractice in the study area.

### **Discussion**

Findings of this research reveal that examination malpractice is an ugly virus that has devastated our educational system. The study reveals, based on the responses from students to the research questions, that the causes of examination malpractice among students are; Pressure on students to pursue courses which they have no aptitude for, Inability of Teachers to cover the specified syllabus before examination, lack of qualified personnel and facilities, poor supervision, poor sitting arrangement, societal expectation and inadequate preparation by students. These findings are in line with Onyibe, Uma and Emmanuel (2015) who assert some of the causes of examination malpractice to be; fear of failure, craze for certificate, ineffective preparation by students, and pressure on teachers who want to gain favour of students and overcrowded sitting arrangement.

This study is based on the responses of teachers and students. Table 2 shows also that examination malpractice by secondary school physics students lowers educational standard and discourages hard work among serious students. Other impact of examination malpractice, based on the responses of both teachers and students used in this study, include; high rate of drop outs and turn out of unqualified manpower that affects the society adversely. These findings are in line with the findings of Musa (2011) who agreed that examination malpractice has negative impact on the students and the society.

### **Conclusion**

From the findings of this research, it is evident that the rate which students in our schools engage in examination malpractice is still on the increase. Examination malpractice is capable of ruining the entire educational system. It can also impair the efficiency of the labor force by bringing in those who are mentally and intellectually defective. This menace should be stopped and this is a collective responsibility of all the stakeholders in education. If education will continue to be used as a tool for development then, there is no option than to ensure that education given to our children is as effective and functional as possible.

### **Recommendations**

As a result of the foregoing discussions and conclusion, the study recommends that relevant examination bodies and Education stakeholders charged with the responsibility

of monitoring examination at all levels should promulgate and enforce examination malpractice (prohibition) laws.

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