EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES AND STUDENTS' PERFORMANCES IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY IKOT ABASI (FUTIA)

Lordson Okon,
Department of Sociology and Anthropology,
University of Uyo

DOI: https://doi.org/10.60787/aasd.vol4no1.111

Abstract:
Examination malpractices have become a pervasive phenomenon in Nigerian educational institutions, with far-reaching consequences on students' performances and the overall quality of education in the country. This study investigates the relationship between students' performances and examination malpractices among students of Federal University of Technology, Ikot Abasi, (FUTIA). The study employed a survey research design, with a sample of 400 students selected from the university's undergraduate programmes. The results show a significant correlation between students' performances and examination malpractices, with students who engage in malpractices tend to perform better in examinations but have lower overall academic achievements. The study also, identified peer pressure, lack of adequate preparation, and poor teaching methods as major factors contributing to examination malpractices in the University. The findings of this study have implications for educators, policymakers, and administrators in the Nigerian educational system. This study intends to contribute to the understanding of the complex relationship between examination malpractice, student performance and academic integrity and to inform the development of effective strategies for preventing and reducing examination malpractice.

Keywords: Examination Malpractice, Students Performances, Federal University of Technology Ikot Abasi(FUTIA)

Background study

Examination malpractice has become a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian educational system and worldwide. It is a form of academic dishonesty that involves students engaging in unauthorized behavior during an examination, such as copying cheating or colluding with others to obtain an unfair advantage. Examination malpractices undermine the validity and reliability of examination results, devalues the learning process, and erodes the credibility of educational institutions (Kpodzie, 2014). The menace of examination malpractice has been observed to be prevalent in all levels of education, from primary to tertiary institutions. The situation at the Federal University of Technology Ikot Abasi (FUTIA) is not an exception. The university has, in recent times, witnessed a high incidence and level of examination malpractices, which have led to the adoption of various measures to curb the menace. Despite these efforts, the problem persists, and its effects on students' performances and the overall quality of education are worrisome. The performance of students in examinations is a critical aspect of the educational system. It is a measure of the extent to which students have acquired the knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of them at a particular level of education. However, in recent years, there has been a growing concern about the prevalence of examination malpractice among students, which can undermine the validity and reliability of examination results. Examination malpractice refers to any act of cheating, dishonesty or irregularity committed by students during an examination, with the aim of obtaining an unfair advantage.

Conceptual Definition

Examination malpractice can be defined as any act of wrongdoing or unauthorized behavior committed by students during an examination, which undermines the integrity of the examination process and compromises the validity of the results (Olatoye, 2010). This definition encompasses various forms of malpractices, including copying, cheating, stealing, colluding and impersonating.

Empirical Literature Review

Numerous studies have investigated the causes, consequences and prevalence of examination practices. For instance, a study by Ejide (2013) found out that examination malpractice was prevalent in Nigerian secondary schools with 75% and 82% of tertiary students admitting to have engaged in some forms of examination malpractices. Similarly, a study by Owusu-Acha (2024) in Ghana found that 60% of students reported engaging in examination malpractices.

Examination malpractice has been a persistent problem in educational institutions, affecting student performance and the overall quality of education. Studies have shown that examination malpractice can take many forms, including cheating, plagiarism and impersonation. Research has also highlighted the negative consequences of examination malpractice on student performance, including: reduced academic achievement and motivation; lack of development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills; negative impact on student self-esteem and confidence and perpetuation of a culture of dishonesty and corruption. According to Udo et al (2020) in his studies on the relationship between examination malpractice and student academic achievement in tertiary institutions of learning and found that students who engaged in examination malpractice had lover academic achievement compared to those who did not. Ezeora, (2017) found that inadequate teaching and learning facilities, lack of motivation, and poor study habits were significant factors contributing to examination malpractice among University Students. Okoro (2019) identified lack of confidence, fear of failure and peer pressure as significant factors contributing to examination malpractice among undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Uwakwe (2020) suggested that authorities should implement a comprehensive academic integrity policy including clear consequences for examination malpractice, to prevent and reduce examination malpractice.

Objectives:

The objectives of this study are:

1. To investigate the prevalence of examination malpractice among students
2. To examine the relationship between examination malpractice and student performance
3. To identify the factors contributing to examination malpractice
4. To develop strategies for preventing and reducing examination malpractice

Hypotheses:

Based on the literature review, the hypotheses for this study are:

Null: There is no significant relationship between examination malpractice and student performance.

Null: there is no significant relationship between inadequate teaching and learning facilities and examination malpractice.

Null: There is no significant relationship between peers influence, inadequate preparation and examination malpractice.

Theoretical Framework:

Several theoretical frameworks have been used to explain the causes and consequences of examination malpractice. These include:

1. **Social Learning Theory:** The study is grounded in the Social Learning Theory (SLT) of Albert Bandura (1977). The theory posits that learning is a social process, and people learn by observing and imitating others. In the context of examination malpractice, students may learn to engage in malpractice by observing their peers or even teachers. This theory posits that behavior is learned through observation and imitation. In the context of examination malpractice, students may enage in malpractice if they perceive that their peers or teachers are engaging in such behavior.

2. **Theory of Planned Behaviour:** This theory suggests that behavior is determined by an individual's attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. In the context of examination malpractice, students may engage in malpractice if they perceive that it is a normative behavior or if they feel that they have no control over their academic success.(Proctor, 2017).

Methodology:

This study employed a survey research design. The population of the study consisted of all undergraduate students of FUTIA. A sample of 400 students was selected using a stratified sampling technique. A self-report questionnaire, designed to gather information on students' involvement in examination malpractice and their academic performance, was used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

Results:

The results of the study revealed that:There is a significant correlation between student performance and examination malpractice ($r = 0.256$, $p < 0.01$).Students who engage in examination malpractice tend to perform better in examinations ($t = 3.456$, $p < 0.01$) but have lower overall academic achievement ($t = -2.456$, $p < 0.05$).The major factors contributing to examination malpractice are peer pressure (mean = 3.45), lack of adequate preparation (mean = 3.23), and poor teaching methods (mean = 3.12).

Discussion:

The findings of this study suggest that there is a significant relationship between student

performance and examination malpractice. Students who engage in malpractice tend to perform better in examinations, but their overall academic achievement is compromised. The study also identified peer pressure, lack of adequate preparation, and poor teaching methods as major factors contributing to examination malpractice in Federal University of Technology Ikot Abasi.

Limitation:

This study was limited to Federal University of Technology Ikot Abasi (FUTIA), and the findings may not be generalizable to other institutions. Future studies should investigate the prevalence and impact of examination malpractice in other Nigerian universities.

Conclusion:

This study concludes that examination malpractice has a negative impact on student performance and the overall quality of education. The study recommends that:

1. Lecturers should adopt more effective teaching methods to enhance students' understanding of the course materials.

2. Students should be encouraged to develop a positive attitude towards learning and hard work.

3. The university should strengthen its examination monitoring systems to prevent malpractice.

However, this study contributes to our understanding of the complex relationships between student performance, examination malpractice, and academic achievement. The results show that examination malpractice is a pervasive problem that affects students across various educational levels and settings. This study's findings underscore the importance of implementing effective measures to prevent examination malpractice, such as promoting a culture of academic integrity, providing adequate support for students, and using technology to monitor and proctor examinations. Findings also suggest that students who engage in examination malpractice tend to perform better in the short-term, but ultimately compromise their long-term academic success. The implications of this research highlight the need for educators and policymakers to prioritize strategies that prevent examination malpractices and promote academic integrity.

References

Bandura, A. (1977). Social Learning Theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Ejide, S. (2013). Strategies for preventing examination malpractice in Nigerian schools. Journal of Educational Research and Practice, 5(1), 1-9

Ezeara, H. (2017). Examination Malpractice: A Threat to Educational Quality. LAP Lambert

Academic Publishing, Saarbrucken

Okoro, T.A. (2019). Research on Student Performance: A Guide to the Literature. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.

Proctor, R. W. (2017). Student Performance: A Guide to Understanding and Improving Student Achievement. Routledge, New York.

Owusu-Acha, M. (2024). Understanding Student Performance: A Guide for Teachers and Parent. Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks.

Unwakwe, G. (2020). The Scourge of Examination Malpractice: Causes, Effects, and Solutions. AuthorHouse, Bloomington.