

# Predictive Factors Enhancing the Octopus Called Examination Malpractice among Undergraduate Students in Universities Incross River State, Nigeria: Implication to Educators and Evaluators

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## ABSTRACTS

The study focused on predictive factors enhancing the octopus called examination malpractice among undergraduate students in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria: Implication to Educators and Evaluators. In the course of the study, three objective, research questions and corresponding hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted the ex-post facto research design with a population of 13,509 final year study in four Faculties in University of Calabar and Cross River University of Technology respectively. The stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to sample 367 respondents (final year students) who participated in the study. The instrument for data collection was a researchers' developed instrument titled "Predictive Factors of Examination Malpractices Scale (PFEMS) which was validated by experts in psychology and Measurement and Evaluation using face and construct validity and the reliability was established using split half reliability. The co-efficient of internal consistency ranged from .87 to .93 which implies the credibility of the instrument for data collection. The data was analysed with simple linear regression analysis and the findings revealed that; quest for good grade significantly predict incidence of examination malpractices, Also, poor study habit coupled with lack of confidence on the part of the examinee significantly predict incidence of examination malpractices. It was recommended among others that

**Keywords:** Predictive, Enhancing, Octopus, Examination Malpractice and Undergraduate Students

## I. INTRODUCTION

The study likened examination malpractices to an "octopus". This id because the octopus is regarded as a soft sea animal with eight long closely related arms which is known as tentacles used for trapping preys. At first glance, the octopus looks perfectly innocuous. Its psychedelic coloring and pint-sized packaging make it seem more adorable than alarming. But if you are not conscious, its cuddly exterior will completely fool you as it can eat deep into the fabric of it pray even when the pray is alive. Biological oceanographers and marine biologists believe that octopus is one of the most dangerous animals in the ocean. This is because octopus, venom blocks nerve signals throughout the body, causing muscle numbness. Other symptoms include nausea, vision loss or blindness, loss of senses and loss of motor skills. Ultimately, it will cause muscle paralysis including the muscles needed for humans to breathe, leading to respiratory arrest. There is no known antidote, but victims can be saved if artificial respiration is started immediately.

The present study has likened the rate of examination malpractices in universities in Cross River State and beyond to the octopus. This is because of its unending negative effect examination malpractices have on the overall image of the institution. Today, most students see examination malpractices as the fastest solution to their academic success. These days, school principals, teachers and even external examination supervisors help candidates to pass their examinations through examination malpractice just for them to get paid. As the saying by most students goes "success is success no matter how it is conceived". Onyibe, Uma and Ibina (2015) informed that students have now resorted that to developing new techniques

this method ranges from impersonation, leakage of questions, tampering with results and computer fraud to fraudulent practices by invigilators. Others include collusion among candidates themselves and between them and examination officials. In most cases, collusion happens when candidates writing the same examination copy from one another.

When examination official leaks the examination materials to the intended examinees, parents, or overzealous school managers prior to the examination time, the malpractice committed also falls under collusion which leads to mass cheating in examinations. Another common form is Impersonation which involves a case where another candidate or hired stand-in sits for examination on behalf of the genuine candidate; Male candidates sitting in for girls or vice versa and twins writing examinations for each other. Another form of examination malpractice common is giraffing which originates from the animal called Giraffing it is an African wild animals with an extremely long neck, legs and small head (Akaranga&Ongong, 2013). Giraffing is among the oldest and the commonest form of examination malpractice. Again, inscription is another serious form of examination malpractice which have now advanced to the level of inscribing materials or information on anything like parts of their body for example palms, thighs, baby pampers; handkerchiefs, rulers, purses, chairs, tables, walls of examination halls and so on (Oredein, 2006). The situation has further increased due to the introduction of handsets (mobile phones) which would have assisted them is reading and researching .most students enter the examination hall with this device, browsing solutions to questions in the examination halls. It is also disheartening to say that the students who are supposed to read and write examination for mastery are being carried by examination malpractices.

In the words of Olushola (2006), examination malpractice is an unlawful behavior or activity engaged in by students to have personal advantage in an examination over their colleagues or mates who are taking the same examination. This implies that when students use any unethical means (crooked means) other than the one spelt by the examiner is said to be examination malpractice. Examination malpractice from the context of psychological refers to all forms of cheating which directly or indirectly falsify the ability of the students (Dike, 2005). It refers to counter practice that is against the ethics of examination. It is also an act of disrespect to all rules and regulations guiding the good conduct of any examination or any evaluation process. Examination malpractice is not only a threat to the examination conduct but to

the entire educational system. The society demands from its members a diversity of specialized functions. In the Nigerian school system various forms of examinations are noticed. These are the entrance examinations, the terminal and promotion examinations, the senior school certificate examination and the degree or diploma examinations. Students are required to pass any forms of examinations they partake in. But these days' students now find various means of achieving success in these examinations and one of such ways is by cheating in examinations through leakage in examination papers, impersonation, external assistance, copying, smuggling of foreign materials, substitution of script and improper assignment. The fact remains that examination malpractice has become usual practice in Nigeria. Examination has been recognized as forming the nucleus of education without which the enterprise will be incomplete.

One of the principal aim of examination is to assess how much learning has taken place and to what extent the educational objectives and goals have been achieved. One serious problem plaguing Nigeria system of education today is large examination malpractice coupled with intellectual dishonesty. Our pupils and students devise as a daily routine, new tricks to beat genuine supervisors and examiners. They insult, embarrass, threaten and even assault invigilators and supervisors who failed to co-operate with them in their unholy and nefarious acts.

. Also, George and Ukpong (2013) link the increasing rate of examination malpractice to poor teaching, ineffective preparation by students, ill-equipped library facilities, and dubious admission policy. Akaranga andOngong (2013) opined that because of social status and economic ability, most parents are easily persuaded to bribe their way through for the sole success of their children and self-gratification. According to Ejimogu (2001) cited in Nsisong (2011), general moral decadence and the high premium placed on achievement and certificates by Nigerians has in recent times spawned examination fraud. The overdependence on educational certificates as a measure of one's knowledge and competence has led to a mad rush by most people for educational certificates through unethical means.

In an empirical study by Petters and Okon (2014) on the perception of university students on the causes and effects of examination malpractices in Nigerian Educational System, two research questions were raised and analysed for possible answers using a survey research design method. Four hundred university students were randomly

selected from the research area. A questionnaire consisting of twenty-five (25) items was constructed, and duly validated by the researchers for the study. The results obtained from the study indicated that a test-retest reliability index ranging from 0.77 to 0.85 were feasible. It was also indicative that societal preference for paper qualification, lack of positive self-concept, lack of effective study skills, inadequate preparation and laziness are some of the causes of examination malpractice among university students. The identified effects included discouragement of candidates from studying hard, denial of admission to deserving students, underachievement in labour market and overall reduction in quality of education. Based on this, it was concluded that personal and societal factors could cause examination malpractice and the society is likely to suffer from low productivity because of this malaise, examination malpractice.

Yahaya, Odebode and Akinyemi(2017) study investigated the types of examination malpractices as perceived by teachers of secondary school in Lagos State. Moderating variables such as gender, subject taught and length of years in service were also examined. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. A total of 600 respondents were selected in three senatorial districts were selected using a three-stage sampling procedure which comprised simple random and purposive sampling techniques. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Types of Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (TCEMQ)". The validity of the instrument was established by five experts in the Departments of Counsellor Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria while, the reliability of the questionnaire was determined using test re-test method and a correlation coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test statistical tools were used to analyze the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. Result showed that the types of examination malpractices as perceived by teachers of secondary school in Lagos State are dubbing, sorting, girraffing, expo, writing on the body, use of sign language, use of cell phones among others. The findings showed that there was a significant difference in the types of examination malpractice as perceived by teachers of secondary schools in Lagos State based on gender, subject taught and length of years in service. By implication, counsellors should enlighten candidates on the need to cultivate good reading and study habits and they should shun any form of examination malpractices. Counsellors should liaise with Examination body officials to come up

with more strict policies that would block all types of examination malpractices.

Study by Udim, Umar andEssien (2018) which sought to examine the issue of examination malpractice in Nigeria. The use of secondary sources of data was the main method of data collection adopted in this research work. The secondary sources adopted in this study include materials like Newspapers, magazines, textbooks, internet, journals, government publications, official documents etc. After analyzing the data, it was deduced that collusion among candidates, impersonation, girraffing, inscription, scientific malpractice and bribery were some of the forms of examination malpractice in Nigeria. This study also found that fear of failure, craze for certificates, desire of parents to choose the profession and university, pressure on students to pursue courses which they have no aptitude for were some of the causes of examination malpractice in Nigeria. This study also found that the examination malpractice has a negative effect on the society, leads to irreversible loss of credibility, has negative consequences on the individuals and institutions of learning, leads to moral decadence and brain drain, leads to corruption, it discourages hard work among students. This study also found that measures of curbing examination malpractice include: societal reengineering and re-orientation to revamp moral values, retraining and reassessment of teachers, appropriate recognition and remuneration of teachers and examination officials.

Curbing examination malpractice depended on our will power. This study revealed that examination malpractice is not perpetrated by Angels but human beings. Based on the findings above, this study recommended that aggressive campaign should therefore be mounted, educating all the stakeholders about the dangers in engaging in the act and let them be informed of the dignity in having a clean examination system, the Federal Government should try and make the salary of teachers reasonable, quality and affordable education should be made available for all, this study concluded that Parents should not celebrate. The continuous rise in examination malpractices to our educational system may have a lasting effect on the productivity of the country. This is a child who graduates successfully through crooked means may end up securing a good job through such crooked mean. If giving position of leadership, may display high level of crooked behaviors which in daunting to the overall success of the country educational advancement. Thus, there is urgent need to eradicate this octopus in order to have a free and fair educational system devoid of corruption. It is

on the basis of this backdrop that the study seeks to carry predictive factors enhancing the octopus called examination malpractice among undergraduates in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria: Implication to Educators and Evaluators.

## II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Observation by the researcher has likened examination to an “octopus”. This is because of its destructive power and persistent decline in the quest for quality assurance in education. Examination malpractice has continued to degrade the standard and good quality of education of the country. The situation has become worrisome considering how the malpractice is affecting the performance of our students both socially and academically. This situation has reduced the quality of our educational system compared to other western world. The situation has become so serious that most school authorities fold their hands and continue to look at the issue without taking proper measures. Personal interaction with most school authorities has shown that sometimes students are even hired to write internal and external examinations for others. In other cases, most students take materials in to the examination hall such materials may include; textbooks, copy materials in form of brain support, memory aid, microchips, master piece, helping hands to call by the perpetrators. The worse part of it is at in most universities institution most students sort for rewriting of their booklets through the lecturers or anybody close to such lecturer who can proffer such assistance in return with some financial benefits. This problem has seriously affected our academic system and may continue to pose greater challenges to the credibility of examination conduct in our universities, as such; there is urgent need to study predictive factors responsible thereby proffering lasting solution to the problem of examination malpractices. The problem of this study is: what are the predictive factors enhancing the octopus called examination malpractice among undergraduate students in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria: Implication to Educators and Evaluators

### Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to carry a study on predictive factors enhancing the octopus called examination malpractice among undergraduates students in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria: Implication to Educators and Evaluators. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine how quest for good grade predict incidence of examination malpractices

2. Examine the predictive influence of poor study habit on incidence of examination malpractices
3. Determine the predictive influence of lack of confidence and incidence of examination malpractices

### Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated in the course of this research study

1. To what extent has quest for good grade predict the incidence of examination malpractices?
2. How does poor study habit predict incidence of examination malpractices?
3. To what extent has lack of confidence predict the incidence of examination malpractices?

### Statement of Hypotheses

The study formulated three hypotheses which were tested at .05 level of significance. Thus;

1. Quest for good grade does not significantly predict incidence of examination malpractices
2. There is no significant relationship between study habit and incidence of examination malpractices.
3. There is no significant relationship between lack of confidence and incidence of examination malpractices

## III. RESEARCH METHODS

The study centered on predictive factors enhancing the octopus called examination malpractice among undergraduate students in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria: Implication to Educators and Evaluators. The study adopted the ex-post facto research design. This design was appropriate because the researcher is studying the variables in retrospective. The associable population of the study was 13,509 final year study in four Faculties (Faculty of Education, Faculty of Management Science, Faculty Engineering and Faculty of Environmental Sciences) in University of Calabar and Cross River University of Technology respectively. A sample of 367 was drawn using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The instrument for data collection was a researchers’ developed instrument titled “Predictive Factors of Examination Malpractices Scale (PFEMS) which was validated by experts in psychology and Measurement and Evaluation using face and construct validity and the reliability was established using split half reliability. The coefficient of internal consistency ranged from .87 to .93 which implies the credibility of the instrument for data collection. The data was analysed with descriptive (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (simple linear regression analysis).

#### IV. TEST OF HYPOTHESES

The data generated from the administration of the research instruments were analysed hypothesis-by-hypothesis as presented below

##### Hypothesis one

Quest for good grade does not

significantly predict incidence of examination malpractices. The criterion variable in this hypothesis is quest for good grade while the criterion variable is incidence of examination malpractice. To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression analysis was employed and the result in presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Simple linear regression analysis quest for good grade and incidence of examination malpractices

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Incidence of examination malpractices	12.9656	4.64721	349
Quest for good grade	16.8080	4.00723	349

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Significance
1	.717 <sup>a</sup>	.504	.011	4.62198	.014	.029

  

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Regression	102.736	1	102.736	4.809	.029 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	7412.851	347	21.363		
Total	7515.587	348			

  

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	10.687	1.068		10.004	.000
Quest for good grade	.136	.062	.117	2.193	.029

\*p< .05

The results in Table 1 showed that the r-value for.717 was obtained giving an R-squared value of .50 for quest for good grade and incidence of examination malpractices. This means that about 51% of the total variation accounted for incidence of examination malpractices. The p-values of .029 is less than the chosen alpha of .05. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that quest for good grade does not significantly predict incidence of examination malpractices. In order word, most undergraduate students of universities indulge themselves in examination malpractices because of

their hunger for better grade.

##### Hypothesis two

There is no significant relationship between poor study habit and incidence of examination malpractices. The predictor variable in this hypothesis is poor study habit while the criterion variable is incidence of examination malpractice. To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression analysis was employed and the result in presented in Table 2.

Table 2:Simple linear regression analysis of poor study habit and incidence of examination malpractices

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Incidence of examination malpractices	12.9656	4.64721	349
Poor study habit	15.3181	5.57697	349

  

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the	Change Statistics
1					

		Estimate			Sig. F
		R Square Change			Chan
					ge
	.145 <sup>a</sup>	.021	.018	4.60456	.007
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Regression	158.506	1	158.506	-7.476	.007 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	7357.082	347	21.202		
Total	7515.587	348			
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	p-value.
(Constant)	11.112	.721		15.404	.000
Poor study habit.	.121	.044	.145	2.734	.007

\*p<.05

It can be discerned from Table 2 that the value of .145 was obtained, giving an R-squared value of .021 for the poor study habit and incidence of examination malpractices. This means that about 21% of the total variation accounted for incidence of examination malpractices as a result of poor study habit. The p-value of .007 is less than the chosen alpha of .05. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between poor study habit and incidence of examination malpractices. In other words, most undergraduate students of universities indulge themselves in examination malpractices

because of poor preparation before and during examinations.

### Hypothesis three

There is no significant relationship between lack of confidence and incidence of examination malpractices. The predictor variable in this hypothesis is lack of confidence while the criterion variable is incidence of examination malpractice. To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression analysis was employed and the result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Simple linear regression analysis of lack of confidence and incidence of examination malpractices

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N			
Incidence of examination malpractice	12.9656	4.64721	349			
Lack of confidence	17.2178	3.68885	349			
Change Statistics						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Sig. F Change
1	.191 <sup>a</sup>	.036	.034	4.56850	.036	.000
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value	
1	Regression	273.293	1	273.293	13.094	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	7242.295	347	20.871		
	Total	7515.587	348			
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	p-value	
1	(Constant)	8.829	1.169	7.553	.000	
	Lack of confidence	.240	.066	.191	3.619	.000

\*p<.05

Table 3 revealed the r-value of .191 was obtained, giving an R-squared value of .036 for the poor study habit and incidence of examination malpractices. This means that about 36% of the total variation accounted for incidence of examination malpractices as a result of poor

study habit. The p-value of .000 is less than the chosen alpha of .05. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between lack of confidence and incidence of examination malpractices. In other words, most undergraduate students of universities

indulge themselves in examination malpractices because of they lack confidence in their ability to write and pass examination.

## V. DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

The finding revealed that quest for good grade does significantly predict incidence of examination malpractices. The result did not come as a surprise to the researchers because most student in universities are driven by grades even if they do not work hard. They tend to use any possible means to get good grade in school due to the Nigeria syndrome where paper qualification is the ultimate goal for securing white collar job opportunities. The finding is in consonance with that by Yahaya, Odebode and Akinyemi (2017) result showed that the types of examination malpractices as perceived by teachers of secondary school in Lagos State are dubbing, sorting, girraffing, expo, writing on the body, use of sign language, use of cell phones among others which originates as a results eagerness by the test and examination takers. The finding also agrees with Nsison (2011) who found that the overdependence on educational certificates as a measure of one's knowledge and competence has led to a mad rush by most people for educational certificates through unethical means.

The finding of hypothesis two showed that there is a significant relationship between study habit and incidence of examination malpractices. The researcher are in support of this finding because most students n universities institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria who are expected to spend quality time reading are seen spending such time in viewing centres, playing bet9ja, clubbing and spending time charting with friends at the expense of their academic activities in school. This result agrees with that by Petters and Okon (2014) who found that effective study skills, inadequate preparation and laziness are some of the causes of examination malpractice among university students.

The result of the finding for hypothesis three showed that there is a significant relationship between lack of confidence and incidence of examination malpractices. This most students do not have confidence on their academic ability. This is because of the poor background in education when they were in primary and secondary school. The present finding agree with Study by Udim, Umar and Essien (2018) who found that fear of failure, craze for certificates, desire of parents to choose the profession and university, pressure on students to pursue courses which they have no aptitude for were some of the causes of

examination malpractice in Nigeria. The present finding is also in conformity with that by, George and Ukpong (2013) who link the increasing rate of examination malpractice to poor teaching, ineffective preparation by students, ill-equipped library facilities, and dubious admission policy

## VI. SUMMARY

It is a well-known fact that every society that wants to strive technologically must embrace quality education. To successfully accomplish these aims and objective in the society, all forms of factor or vice that tarnish the outcome quality examination delivery in the country must be halted in all ramifications. From the discussion so far, examination malpractice which has remained an octopus in the education sector requires urgent attention to be eradicated. Hence if we must compete in this global era, then we must join our hands together to eradicating examination malpractice in our educational system should be a thing of urgency not only on the part of government but to all stake holders in the educational section. Summarily, there is great need to revisit section of Decree 20 from 1984 which stipulated twenty-one years imprisonment on conviction without option of a fine into the 1999 constitution (as amended) will be a right step in the right direction in winning this war. Fear or favour should not be considered to any one cougnt of examination malpractice irrespective of the degree to which it was committed. Today countries like Finland, Singapore, Ghana and China could boast maximally in the education. There is absolute need for use to emulate such countries if we must achieve vision 2020 Agenda

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the harmful effect of the octopus called examination malpractice in our educational sector, the following recommendations were drawn which could enhance quality in the process and product of our graduate were drawn

- 1 Strict measures should be adopted and implemented in totality by stake holder in the educational sector on the punishment attached to examination malpractices at all levels of education. Such measure should be imprisonment and expulsion from academic exercises in and outside the country. In order words, when a students' is caught in any form of examination malpractices, he will forfeit school in at all levels within and outside the country.
- 2 Since most high level of examination malpractices are committed by teachers at all

level, the government should create other forms of motivation such as fringe benefits (allowances) that can make teacher to be contented. Also paper qualification should not be the only means of securing a job in Nigeria. Aptitude should be the emphasis of gainful employment opportunities. This will help reduce students quest for grade. They will also fight to gain knowledge

- 3 Parents should imbibe on their children the right culture, norms, value and belief on the dangers of examination malpractices before the child starts school. This would go a long way to prepare the mind of the child before schooling.

### IMPLICATION OF THE FINDINGS TO EDUCATORS AND EVALUATORS

The need for quality education in Nigeria is a priority not only to the government but to all educators and evaluator. As educators the right norms and values should be taught in school. This is because every deviation from the character of the child lies in the shoulders of the teachers (educators and evaluators). To this end, educators and evaluators should design instruments that will discourage cheating among examinee. To the researchers' point of view, most examination constructed, administered and scored by the examiners lacks content validity and reliability. In other cases, they are prone to propelling cheating among test takers. Also, educators should understand the need for concentrating more on the affective and psychomotor domain of learning. This is because there have been over emphasis on the cognitive domain of learning at the expense of the affective and psychomotor. Obviously most of the cognitive assessment techniques used by educators and evaluators has encourage the incidence of examination malpractices among test takers. Educators and evaluators at primary, secondary and universities levels should educate the masses on the side effect of cheating in an examination. Educators should bear in mind that death in our educational system as a result of the octopus called examination malpractices is a total failure not only to the government but to the evaluation system.

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