
Strategic Program Development and Examination Malpractices

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ABSTRACT

This research study is designed to find out whether the change to boarding system, new stringent policies, reorganization of academic instructional program, installation of school campus law enforcement units, counter secret intelligent apparatus, exam invigilators retraining workshop, and student support service programs have any influence on the reduction of examination malpractices in secondary schools in Obio/Akpor and Phalga local government areas, Rivers State, Nigeria. Seven research questions and five null hypotheses were posed to guide the study to a logical conclusion. A structured research questionnaire was administered on a sample size of seven hundred and forty-five (745) secondary school teachers. Data generated from the research questions and null hypotheses were collated and analyzed using the descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlational Statistics (Pearson r) and statistical t-test of pooled and nonpooled variances. The results of the data analyzed indicated that the change to boarding system, and new stringent policies have no significant influences on the reduction/abolition of examination malpractices in secondary school campuses, while installation of school campus law enforcement units, retraining of exam invigilators, and students support service programs have noticeable influences on the reduction/abolition of examination malpractices in secondary school campuses in Obio/Akpor and Phalga. Recommendations were proffered based on the findings to improve the students confidence and performances in examinations in secondary schools in Obio/Akpor and Phalga local government areas, Rivers State, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Examination is one of the important instruments that every teacher uses to determine the rate and extent to which the learner has achieved the desired objective of instruction. According to Sofenwa (1977), it is used to measure the effectiveness of teaching strategy. Examination today has been part and parcel of the school system. As noted earlier, its basic role include: generating psychometric properties for clarification, prediction, motivation and for research purposes.

Furthermore, it is the desire of every examinee to pass every examination. It is viewed however, that good performance is based on honesty and in conformity with the rules governing proper conduct of examination. Unfortunately, according to Ojo (1983), most examinees have departed from the normal behaviour desirable in any known examination by engaging in various forms of examination malpractices. This has caused serious problems in our schools and in our educational system.

Examination malpractice is any unfair behaviour that is intended to enable an examinee score more marks than what his natural ability and honest efforts would enable him. To Ozigi (1979), it is the cheating which is used by candidates over others in an examination. In recent times, many sophisticated strategies have been employed by examinees to escape most laws and decrees promulgated by the government to stamp out the menace.

In the view of Peters (2002), these strategies had been very sophisticated that it becomes very difficult to detect. Most of these methods and strategies are thus itemized. They include: leakages and pre-clinical favour. Leakage involves the removal of question papers from the custodian with or without his consent before the commencement of the examination. The clinical method is the dictating of the answers to the students, going in with written materials, writing on the palm and copying answers on the blackboard.

Another used method is known as post clinical method. To Oladepo (1984), this involves the replacement or re-writing examination to replace the original one written by the student. Also involved is the inflation of scores for the students and influencing other teachers to inflate score in the internal examination. This situation had had a very

significant impact on the educational sector. Another method is impersonation. This is known as the use of mercenaries and outsiders to write for the student.

One other major technique is the unruly association with the typists, computer operators and pool clerks or observers. Most of the times, examiners extort or remove questions from the pool sometimes in collaboration with the secretarial staff. Most teachers also show some or all the papers to favourite students after the submission of question papers to the heads of departments. According to Bryne (1970), this method has assisted in the erosion of confidence in the school system.

To Wokocha (1994), at the detect of this anomaly, other devices were introduced; these include performing mode practicals for candidates on receiving instruction. Others include giving special lectures on the topics without the knowledge of other students, handing over pieces of papers by the invigilators and the connivance with the supervisors to look the other way during the examination “runs”. He further stated that most of the school principals are on know.

To Parson (1951), some teachers and invigilators apply the negative type of malpractice. This involves the throwing away of the scripts of hated students to deflating the scores of students. It is thus concluded that the issue is not peculiar to students but teachers who assist and perpetuate these anomalies. This trend has drawn the attention of the government. They have therefore stressed that good performance must be based on honesty and in conformity to rules governing examination.

However and unfortunately, in public schools in Obio/Akpor local government area of Rivers State, this trend of examination malpractices had reached an alarming proportion and in the recent times involving officials from government ministries. According to Adeyemi (1985) examination malpractice and cheating became so rampant in 1967 that the government had to set up the Alexandan Commission of Enquiry. The malpractices thus have a negative impact on the country’s academic programme and bad influence on the learning culture of students.

In the view of Despert (1976), he stated that the situation had led to a number of anomalies and abnormalities amongst students. He observed that most students in most government schools where malpractices are pronounced take advantage of the situation to engage in unruly activities and in anti-social behaviours with the sole aim of the deal being always present in any and every examination. This situation had led to students’ involvement in secret-cults and engaging in truancy.

Another problem posed by this menace is the refusal of student to do their assignment and home work. The situation had thus deteriorated to the extent that students do not copy notes in the class; most do not listen even as the class activities goes on in the class. The recent issue now is the refusal of students to come to class with writing materials. This situation has resulted to various conflicts in the school system.

The major issue that breeds this attitude is the students’ belief that whether they read or not, they are bound to excel through cheatings on the final examination. Balogun (1981) raised the fears that this led to the escalation of secret cults in school where most students expend their energies instead of in academics. This situation according to him had led to various conflicts in and outside the classrooms where students now threaten teachers and students.

These brewing conflicts led to the breakdown of law and order in most schools with most students flouting disciplinary measures. This situation had led to various schools unrests as witnessed in the recent times. Asiedu (1985) noted the evolving trend of students attending late to schools and classroom, most of the times. In most schools in Obio/Akpor especially in the public schools, students are known to walking into the class during lectures to attract attention.

Furthermore, the situation had led to the function of peer gangs who now relax under trees during effective lecture periods. It has also influenced the shabby dressing system. Bessert (1979) emphasized that the situation now was unobtainable in the time past when decorum was installed in the examination system and lamented the loss of moral academic values. He stated that research conducted recently shows that the situation had led to the falling standard of education in Nigeria.

Finally, the research conducted in public schools in Obio/Akpor local government area recently shows an increasing indices of absenteeism. Furthermore, students prefer to go to private schools where they idle away their times with peer groups. According to a research conducted by Sofenwa (1977), he stated the preference of students attending private lessons where they rather meet with school friends and peer groups without much attendance to their lectures.

In conclusion therefore, a research study is needed to examine various strategies available to develop programs effective enough to deal with the prevalence of examination malpractice among various secondary school campuses in Rivers State, Nigeria.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Do boarding systems, new stringent policies, installation of campus-wide law enforcement unit, retraining of exam invigilators, and installation of student support service program effective enough to get rid of examination malpractices among various secondary school campuses in Rivers State, Nigeria?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research study is to generate new knowledge for solving problems of examination malpractice currently militating against most of the secondary school campuses in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Besides, a thorough empirical analysis of such variables as examination malpractice and student performance would contribute immensely in the effort to advance the control of examination malpractice in secondary schools of Rivers State, Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. the change to boarding system have any influence on malpractice?
2. Do new stringent policies relate positively with reasonable reduction in examination malpractice?
3. Can the reorganization of academic instructional programs contribute in the agenda to abolish examination malpractice?
4. Does the installation of school campus law enforcement units help to control examination malpractice?
5. Can establishment of counter secret intelligence apparatus contribute to erase examination malpractices in secondary school campuses?
6. Does exam invigilators' retraining workshop help in the reduction of secondary school exam malpractice?
7. Can the development of student support service programs reassure the confidence in students to pass examination?

NULL HYPOTHESES

- H₀₁:** The change to boarding system does not have any significant influence on the reduction of examination malpractice.
- H₀₂:** New stringent policies do not have any significant difference in the reduction of exam malpractice.
- H₀₃:** The installation of campus wide law enforcement units will not have any significant contribution in the abolition of examination malpractice.
- H₀₄:** The retraining of exam invigilators will not have any significant influence in the reduction of exam malpractice.
- H₀₅:** The installation of student support services program cannot influence the control of examination malpractice.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research study is a descriptive research survey with A x B x C x D design matrix consisting of boarding system, stringent policies, campus law enforcement programs, retraining programs and students support services program as the independent variables while examination malpractice denotes the dependent variable.

The research methodology of this research study is the architectural blueprint of actions detailing the various and principled elements of action plans required to accomplish the desired end of this research study. The major steps are the design of the study, population, sample and sampling techniques, instrumentation, validity of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, instrument administration and data analysis techniques.

The target population for this research investigation are the secondary school teachers in Obio/Akpor and Phalga local government areas of Rivers State, Nigeria. This very population was chosen as a matter of incidences of examination malpractices in the past three academic years in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The total population sample of this study is 745 from Obio-Akpor and Phalga local government areas. The sampling technique was accomplished by stratified random sampling method.

The research instrument used to generate the data in this research study is a structured research questionnaire designed and developed by the researcher of this research study. The instrument was tendered to some experts in this field of study for proper screening and evaluation. The content and face validity were reaffirmed by this peer instrument review exercise. The instrument was piloted with 65 members of the research target population. The data generated was treated with Pearson Product Moment Correlational Statistics. The calculated instrument reliability index anchored at 0.74 which is good enough for this research study.

The research instrument was finally administered to seven hundred and forty-five (745) secondary school teachers in Obio-Akpor and Phalga local government areas of Rivers State, Nigeria. This exercise lasted for about six weeks. The completed instruments were collected, collated and decoded in numerical data and values. The subsequent data was treated with descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlational Statistics, and statistical t-tests of pooled and nonpooled variances.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 1: *Change to boarding system and its Influence on Malpractice*

N	df	Alpha Level (α)	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	S_1^2	S_2^2	T - cal	t-crit	Decision
745	743	.05	1.97	1.92	0.65	0.71	1.16	1.960	Nonsignificant

* $\rho > .05$ Nonsignificant

In responding to research question one, the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value at .05 alpha level, df, 743. $1.16 < 1.960 =$ nonsignificant at .05 alpha level. To answer the question posed in research question one, the calculated t-value reaffirmed the fact that the change to boarding system does not have any significant influence on examination malpractice.

Table 2: *Correlation Coefficient of New Stringent Policies and Reduction in Examination Malpractice.*

N	df	Alpha Level (α)	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
745	743	.05	.06	.1946	Nonsignificant.

* $\rho > .05$ Nonsignificant

In responding to research question two, the calculated r value (.06) at .05 alpha level with df, 743, is greater than the critical r value, i.e., $.06 < .1946 =$ nonsignificant at .05 alpha level. To answer the question posed in research question two, the calculated correlational value reaffirmed the fact that the extent of correlation between new stringent policies and reduction in examination malpractice is low (.06). Therefore, the result confirmed the fact that there is no significant correlation between new stringent policies and reduction in examination malpractice.

Table 3: *Reorganization of Academic Instructional Program and the Agenda to Abolish Examination Malpractice*

N	df	Alpha Level (α)	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	S_1^2	S_2^2	T - cal	t-crit	Decision
745	743	.05	2.15	1.92	0.69	0.68	5.35	1.960	Significant

* $\rho < .05$ Significant

In responding to research question three, the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value at .05 alpha level, df, 743. $5.35 > 1.960 =$ significant at .05 alpha level. To answer the question posed in research question three, the calculated t-value reaffirmed the fact that the reorganization of academic instructional program can contribute in the agenda to abolish examination malpractice.

Table 4: *Installation of School campus Law Enforcement Units Helps to Control Examination Malpractice.*

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage Response (%)
Yes	522	70.1
No	223	29.9
Total	745	100

In responding to research question four, to find out if the installation of school campus law enforcement units help to control examination malpractice, 70.1% of the respondents said yes while 29.9% said no, respectively.

Table 5: *Establishment of Counter Secret Intelligence Apparatus Contribute to Erase Examination Malpractices in Secondary School Campuses*

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage Response (%)
Yes	491	65.9
No	254	34.1
Total	745	100

In responding to research question five, to find out if the establishment of counter secret intelligence apparatus contribute to erase examination malpractices in secondary school campuses, 65.9% of the respondents said yes while 34.1% said no respectively.

Table 6: *Exam Invigilators Retraining Workshop and the Reduction of Secondary School Exam Malpractice*

N	df	Alpha Level (α)	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	S_1^2	S_2^2	T - cal	t-crit	Decision
745	743	.05	1.94	2.26	0.77	0.66	7.27	1.960	Significant

* $\rho < .05$ Significant

In responding to research question six, the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value at .05 alpha level, df, 743. $7.27 > 1.960 =$ significant at .05 alpha level. To answer the question posed in research question six, the calculated t-value reaffirmed the fact that exam invigilators retraining workshop help in the reduction of secondary school exam malpractice.

Table 7: *The Development of Student Support Service Programs Reassure the Confidence in Students to Pass Examination*

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage Response (%)
Yes	502	67.4
No	243	32.6
Total	745	100

In responding to research question seven, to find out if the development of student support service programs reassure the confidence in students to pass examination, 67.4% of the respondents said yes while 32.6% said no respectively.

NULL HYPOTHESES

H0₁: *The change to boarding system does not have any significant influence on the reduction of examination malpractice.*

Table 8: Independent Statistical T-test Result

N	df	Alpha Level (α)	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	S_1^2	S_2^2	t - cal	t-crit	Decision	
745	743	.05	2.34	2.20	0.76	0.84	1.57	1.960	Nonsig.	Fail to reject the null hypothesis

* $\rho > .05$ Nonsignificant

The result of the independent t-test analysis (nonpooled variance) is not significant ($p > .05$). The critical value for t required for the rejection of the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance and df, 743 is 1.960, but the calculated t-value = 1.57. But, $1.57 < 1.960$ = nonsignificant at .05 alpha level. Therefore, failed to reject the null hypothesis.

H0₂: *New stringent policies do not have any significant difference in the reduction of exam malpractice.*

Table 9: Independent Statistical T-test Result

N	Df	Alpha Level (α)	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	S_1^2	S_2^2	t - cal	t-crit	Decision	
745	743	.05	2.21	1.98	0.74	0.75	2.9	1.960	Sig.	Reject the null hypothesis

* $\rho < .05$ Significant

The result of the independent t-test analysis (pooled variance) is significant ($p < .05$). The critical value for t required for the rejection of the null hypothesis is 1.960. But the calculated t-value = 2.9. But, $2.9 > 1.960$ = significant at .05 alpha level. Therefore, reject the null hypothesis.

H0₃: *The installation of campus wide law enforcement units will not have any significant contribution in the abolition of examination malpractice.*

Table 10: Independent Statistical T-test Result

N	df	Alpha Level (α)	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	S_1^2	S_2^2	t - cal	t-crit	Decision	
745	743	.05	2.01	1.80	1.02	0.85	7.00	1.960	Sig.	Reject the null hypothesis

* $\rho < .05$ Significant

The result of the independent t-test analysis (nonpooled variance) is significant ($p < .05$). The critical value for t required for the rejection of the null hypothesis is 1.960, the calculated t-value = 7.00. But, $7.00 > 1.960$ = significant at .05 alpha level. Therefore, reject the null hypothesis.

H0₄: *The retraining of exam invigilators will not have significant influence in the reduction of exam malpractice.*

Table 11: Independent Statistical T-test Result

N	df	Alpha Level (α)	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	S_1^2	S_2^2	T - cal	t-crit	Decision	
745	743	.05	2.27	1.03	0.77	0.66	28.2	1.960	Sig.	Reject the null hypothesis

* $\rho < .05$ Significant

The result of the independent t-test analysis (pooled variance) is significant ($p < .05$). The critical value for t required for the rejection of the null hypothesis is 1.960, calculated t-value = 28.2. But $28.2 > 1.960$ = significant at .05 alpha level. Therefore, reject the null hypothesis.

H0₅: *The installation of student support services program cannot influence the control of examination malpractice.*

Table 12: Independent Statistical T-test Result

N	df	Alpha Level (α)	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	S_1^2	S_2^2	t - cal	t-crit	Decision	
745	743	.05	2.15	2.04	0.7	0.8	3.67	1.960	Sig.	Reject the null hypothesis

* $p < .05$ Significant

The result of the independent t-test analysis (pooled variance) is significant ($p < .05$). The critical value for t required for the rejection of the null hypothesis is 1.960, calculated t-value = 3.67. But, $3.67 > 1.960$ = significant at .05 alpha level. Therefore, reject the null hypothesis.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The fundamental content of this research study conclusion is based on the empirical findings of the statistical results of the respective variables and the null hypotheses.

The result of change to boarding system within the population parameter of this research study indicated a nonsignificant result at the .05 alpha level. The subsequent interpretation is that the change to boarding system is not considered effective in the concerted effort to remove examination malpractices among secondary schools in this research study.

The introduction of new stringent policies to check on examination malpractice had a significant result at .05 alpha level. Though this result was not on the conservative scale of the continuum yet the measurement interpretations demonstrated that new stringent policies is more effective to counter the existence of examination malpractices.

The installation of campus wide law enforcement unit indicated a significant result at .05 alpha level. The indication is furtherly reassuring that the introduction of law enforcement apparatus will contribute to get rid of examination malpractices from the secondary school campuses.

The retraining of examination invigilators indicated a significant result at .05 alpha level. This means that the retraining of examination invigilators by the ministry of education will contribute positively in the effort to control examination malpractices.

The planning and development of student support services program yielded a significant result at .05 alpha level. This measurement calibrations among other options, reaffirmed the fact that the planning and development of student support services program within the context of examination malpractice will contribute positively in the obliteration of examination malpractices.

CONCLUSION

The results of the data analyzed indicated that the change to boarding system, and new stringent policies have no significant influences on the reduction/abolition of examination malpractices in secondary school campuses, while installation of school campus law enforcement units, retraining of exam invigilators, and students support service programs have noticeable influences on the reduction/abolition of examination malpractices in secondary school campuses in Obio/Akpor and Phalga. Based on the findings of this research study new lines of measures should be initiated into the system to improve the students confidence and performances in secondary schools examinations in Obio/Akpor and Phalga local government areas, Rivers State, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To recap this empirical research study the following recommendations are proffered:

The secondary school boarding policy should be made compulsory to all secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Students dormitories should be adequate enough to match the number of students currently enrolled from J.S.S. 1 to S.S.S.3 at any point in time.

The Rivers State Ministry of Education should make new laws through government concerning the abolition of examination malpractices among secondary schools in the state. Such new policies should have constitutional provision against the existence of examination malpractices in all the secondary schools.

The Rivers state judiciary should develop law enforcement offices in all the individual campuses of the secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The abatement of examination malpractices should be made part of the city ordinances with its associated disciplinary measures on violation.

The state ministry of education should design and develop annually operated examination invigilation workshops tailored to develop the capability to conduct and maintain school certificate examinations free of exam malpractices.

All the secondary schools in Rivers State should have student support services programs capable of providing extra time for adequate preparations towards any of the expected examinations.

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In July 1977 the author was admitted into the Teachers College of OklahomaCity University where he did a post-graduate study and specialized in teaching supervision, measurement and evaluation a program he completed with excellence in December 1979 and earned an M.A. Degree.

In January 1980 the author proceeded to the Texas Southern University (TSU), Houston, Texas and undertook a Doctoral Program in University Administration and Planning. This doctoral program was full-time and intensive. At the end of the first year he passed his qualifying examination. Almost at the end of the third academic year the author passed his Doctoral Comprehensive Examination and was offered his doctoral candidacy, an upper academic echelon of the graduate school for the TSU doctoral program.

On the 2nd of July 1984, the author defended his doctoral dissertations in University Planning, a moment in history that featured an audience of 2,500 persons in attendance. On the 18th of August 1984, Dr. John Nyemaichechi Okendu was born to the guilds of experts in University Administration/Planning. His doctoral dissertation in planning was displayed in the showcase of excellence, school of education, downstairs, for three years after his graduation. Dr. Okendu has his professional membership with American Association of Higher Education since 1983.

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