

Determinants Of Examination Malpractices In Ebonyi State University

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Abstract: *The study examined the determinants of examination malpractices in Ebonyi State University. It explored the extent the various faculties, departments, and gender of the students determine the occurrences of examination malpractices in the university. The study covered a period of seven academic sessions – 2005/2006 – 2012/2013. The population comprised 25,709 undergraduate students of the university. All the 995 undergraduate students that took part in examination malpractices in the sessions under review were used as the sample for the study. The instrument used for data collection was the official documented report of the senate treated cases of examination malpractices in the university for the seven academic sessions under review. The document was used to categorize the malpractice cases across faculties, departments and gender of the students involved and in accordance with the years of occurrences. The study employed descriptive survey design. Based on the specific purposes of the study, three null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The hypotheses were tested with chi-square test of independence at 95% confidence level. The findings revealed that examination malpractices in the university are significantly dependent on students' faculties and departments. The findings also show that examination malpractice in the university is not a function of gender. The findings have implications for quality assurance in the university system. Having informed the Management about faculties and departments that are inflicted with the problem, the Management's focus will be better sharpened and the direction of action becomes clearer. The implication is that the Management should investigate such faculties and departments and root out the causes of malpractices in them.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The high rate of examination malpractices and the attendant consequences on competency based education and sustainable development is an issue of great concern in Nigeria. Although the trend is widespread at all levels of the educational system, the implications on university education that provides the highest levels of manpower in health, education, law, engineering sectors and economic growth is most outstanding and threatening to the human race.

Ebonyi State University with eleven faculties, 66 departments and student population of over 23,000 for both regular and Work and Study Programme (WASP) is not immune to examination malpractice. For the past fifteen years, the university has recorded cases of examination malpractices. The reported cases were investigated and appropriate sanctions meted on those found guilty of the charges in

accordance with general academic regulations of the university. Nevertheless, despite all the measures to stop or reduce examination malpractices in Ebonyi State University, it continued to be on steady increase. During the University's leadership retreat held between 29th – 31st January 2013, the Chairman, Senate Committee on Examinations lamented that EBSU receives about 132 cases of examination malpractices cases per session. This notwithstanding, a significant large proportion of other cases may remain undetected, or a high proportion of these might be dealt with on informal levels instead of being properly reported. The implications are overwhelming as examination malpractice weakens the validity of any examination and the results become unreliable and worthless. When this happens, it is difficult to assess candidates' performance based on the certificate they hold. It is against this backdrop that Ogbu (2013) called on researchers to look for solutions to examination malpractices in the

university. Also, the University Management is confronted with the task of minimizing the occurrences so as to put trust on the certificates it awards to graduating students. Incidentally, a concise template on which effective control measure could be transcribed depends on a thorough assessment of the determinants of the scourge.

Researchers in Educational Management are therefore faced with the challenges of exploring the determinants of examination malpractices in the university so that the school authorities could be most appropriately guided on procedures for addressing the ugly trend. This study is a response to the challenge, as it is faced with the problem of exploring the major determinants of examination malpractices in Ebonyi State University. It is therefore very important to find a lasting solution to this menace that leads to "... the bastardization of the university" (Ukpabi, 2013:26) by taking a firm stand on examination malpractices. Thus the problem of this study is to investigate the major determinants of examination malpractices in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

A. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted in Ebonyi State University. All the faculties in the University were included in the study. The researcher based her focus on cases of examination malpractices as documented by Senate Committee on Examinations. The researcher also restricted the study to such other factors like students' faculties, departments, and gender of students as determinants of examination malpractices in the university.

B. HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses that guided the study were tested at an alpha level of 0.05:

HO₁: The students' faculties do not significantly determine the occurrences of examination malpractices in Ebonyi State University.

HO₂: The students' specific departments do not significantly determine the occurrences of examination malpractices in Ebonyi State University.

HO₃: The gender of the students does not significantly determine the occurrences of examination malpractices in Ebonyi State University.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive Survey Design. This design is considered appropriate and adequate for this study because the researcher is interested in describing the determinants of examination malpractices in Ebonyi State University.

This study was conducted in Ebonyi State University. The population of this study comprised all students of the Ebonyi State University. Though the university has both regular and Work and Study Programme (WASP), the study concentrated only on the regular undergraduate students because they constitute majority of the students' population. The period of the study spanned from 2006/2007 to 2012/2013 academic years. According to the Directorate of Academic Planning unit of the

University, the population of the regular undergraduate students was 25,709 (twenty five thousand, seven hundred and nine).

All the 995 students in the list of official documents of the EBSU Senate treated cases on examination malpractices in the university in the years under review were used for the study.

The instruments used for data collection was the official documents of the University Senate Treated Cases on Examination Malpractices which included reports of Senate Committee on Examination Malpractices. The documents were used to collect summary data on the determinants of examination malpractices in Ebonyi State University. The documents were also used to classify them according to faculties, departments and gender of the students and in accordance with the years of occurrences.

The instrument used for data collection was the official university document. As such the researcher did not subject the document to any validation exercise. The instrument was a classified document that does not require any reliability assessment. The data were personally collected by the researcher.

The research Hypotheses were tested using Chi-Square test of independence at 95% confidence level.

A. HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were tested at an alpha level of 0.05:

HO₁: The students' faculties do not significantly determine the occurrences of examination malpractices in Ebonyi State University.

Cases of examination malpractices for the seven years period were listed across the various faculties. The frequencies were subjected to chi-square test of independence. Summary of data analysis is presented on Table 1.

Faculties	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	X ² cal	Alpha	X ² crit	Decision
FARM	2 (3)	30 (12)	0 (3)	15 (15)	35 (44)	27 (27)	11 (16)				
FARTS	1 (1)	5 (3)	2 (1)	0 (3)	4 (9)	4 (5)	8 (3)				
FEDU	13 (10)	7 (37)	9 (10)	38 (47)	175 (140)	124 (87)	14 (49)				
FHST	0 (4)	16 (16)	11 (4)	38 (20)	57 (61)	25 (38)	18 (21)				
FBS	3 (2)	8 (7)	1 (2)	7 (9)	15 (27)	10 (17)	29 (9)				
FMS	3 (2)	20 (8)	1 (2)	2 (10)	24 (31)	4 (19)	29 (9)				
FSS	2 (3)	2 (12)	2 (3)	19 (14)	55 (43)	31 (27)	7 (15)				
FPS	2 (1)	10 (2)	0 (1)	3 (3)	0 (8)	2 (5)	6 (3)				
FLAW	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (2)	0 (1)	6 (1)	382.821	0.05	79.082	Reject H ₀
FBMS	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)				
FCM	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)				
Total	26	98	26	122	366	228	129				

Table 1: Chi-Square Test of Independence on the Students' Faculties as determinants of Examination Malpractices in Ebonyi State University

Result on table 1 indicates that the calculated Chi-square value of 382.821 is greater than the critical value of 79.082 at an alpha level of 0.05. Since the calculated chi-square value is greater than the critical value, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that the students' faculties significantly determine the occurrences of examination malpractices in EBSU.

HO₂: The students' specific departments do not significantly determine the occurrences of examination malpractices in Ebonyi State University.

Cases of examination malpractices for the seven years period were classified across the various departments. The

frequencies were subjected to chi-square test of independence. Summary of data analysis is presented on Table2.

Departments	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	X ² cal	Alpha	X ² Crit	Decision
Agric Econ	2 (1)	14 (5)	0 (1)	5 (6)	16 (17)	6 (11)	4 (6)	857.1121	0.05	124.342	Reject H ₀
Animal Science	0 (1)	4 (2)	0 (1)	1 (3)	12 (9)	6 (6)	2 (3)				
Crop Sc & Landscaping	0 (0)	2 (1)	0 (0)	2 (1)	5 (4)	1 (3)	1 (1)				
Fisheries & Aqua culture	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (0)	2 (1)	0 (2)	4 (1)	0 (1)				
Food Sc & Tech	0 (0)	2 (1)	0 (0)	0 (1)	2 (3)	3 (2)	0 (1)				
Soil Sc & Env Mgmt	0 (1)	7 (2)	0 (1)	5 (1)	2 (9)	8 (6)	2 (3)				
English Lang & Lit	1 (0)	5 (1)	2 (0)	1 (1)	2 (4)	1 (3)	0 (1)				
HR	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (4)	2 (2)	8 (1)				
Philosophy	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1)	1 (1)	0 (0)				
Arts & Soc Sc Edu	0 (4)	1 (16)	2 (4)	14 (20)	83 (59)	57 (37)	3 (20)				
Bus Edu	8 (1)	1 (6)	0 (1)	5 (7)	18 (21)	22 (13)	2 (7)				
Edu Foundations	3 (1)	3 (6)	0 (2)	7 (7)	29 (22)	16 (13)	0 (7)				
HKE	0 (0)	2 (1)	0 (0)	0 (1)	4 (3)	2 (2)	0 (1)				
Home Economics	0 (0)	2 (1)	0 (0)	2 (1)	5 (4)	1 (3)	1 (1)				
Science Edu	0 (1)	1 (4)	0 (1)	2 (5)	23 (16)	14 (10)	2 (5)				
Tech & Voc Edu	1 (1)	0 (5)	7 (1)	10 (6)	13 (17)	12 (11)	4 (6)				
Med Lab	0 (3)	10 (11)	2 (3)	17 (13)	50 (40)	19 (25)	10 (14)				
Nursing	0 (1)	6 (6)	9 (1)	22 (7)	7 (21)	6 (13)	7 (7)				
Applied Micro Bio	2 (1)	2 (2)	0 (1)	2 (3)	8 (8)	2 (5)	6 (3)				
Applied Bio	1 (0)	2 (1)	1 (0)	0 (1)	4 (4)	0 (3)	3 (1)				
Bio Chem	0 (1)	4 (3)	0 (1)	4 (4)	3 (11)	2 (7)	18 (4)				
Bio Tech	0 (0)	2 (1)	0 (0)	2 (1)	5 (4)	1 (3)	1 (1)				

Table2: Chi-Square Test of Independence on the Students' Specific Departments as determinants of Examination Malpractices in Ebonyi State University

Departments	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	X ² cal	Alpha	X ² Crit	Decision
Accountancy	3 (0)	3 (1)	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (3)	0 (2)	3 (1)				
Banking & Finance	0 (0)	8 (1)	1 (0)	0 (1)	0 (3)	0 (2)	0 (1)				
Business Mgt	0 (0)	8 (1)	0 (0)	0 (2)	0 (5)	0 (3)	5 (2)				
Marketing	0 (1)	1 (3)	0 (1)	0 (3)	14 (8)	2 (5)	5 (3)				
Public Admin	0 (1)	0 (3)	0 (1)	2 (4)	10 (11)	2 (7)	16 (4)				
Economics	0 (1)	2 (4)	1 (1)	9 (5)	14 (14)	5 (9)	6 (5)				
Mass Com	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (0)	2 (1)	4 (4)	5 (2)	0 (1)				
Pol Sc	0 (0)	0 (2)	1 (0)	2 (2)	11 (7)	5 (4)	0 (2)				
Psychology	2 (0)	0 (1)	0 (0)	1 (1)	2 (4)	7 (3)	0 (1)				
Soc & Anthropology	0 (1)	0 (4)	0 (1)	6 (5)	24 (15)	9 (9)	1 (5)				
Ind Physics	0 (0)	5 (1)	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (3)	2 (2)	2 (1)				
Ind Maths	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (0)	0 (1)	0 (1)	0 (0)				
Ind Chem	2 (0)	4 (1)	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (2)	0 (1)	0 (1)				
Geology	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (1)	4 (0)				
Compt. Sc	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)				
Law	0 (0)	0 (1)	0 (1)	0 (1)	0 (2)	0 (1)	6 (1)				
Anatomy	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)				
Med Surg	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)				
Surgery	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)				

Table 3: Conts

Result on table2 shows that the calculated Chi-square value of 857.1121 is greater than the critical value of 124.342, at an alpha level of 0.05. Since the calculated chi-square value is greater than the critical value, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that the students' specific departments significantly determine the occurrences of examination malpractices in EBSU.

H₀₃: The gender of the students does not significantly determine the occurrences of examination malpractices in Ebonyi State University

Cases of examination malpractices for the seven years under review were classified across gender of the students in the university. The frequencies were subjected to chi-square test of independence. Summary of data analysis is presented on Table 3.

Gender	Year/Session							X ² cal	Alpha	X ² crit	Decision
	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013				
Male	19 (14)	51 (52)	13 (14)	60 (65)	191 (194)	123 (121)	67 (65)	5.178	0.05	12.592	Accept H ₀
Female	7 (12)	47 (46)	13 (12)	63 (58)	178 (175)	107 (109)	56 (58)				
Total	26	98	26	123	369	230	123				

Table 3: Chi-Square Test of Independence on the Gender of the students as determinants of Examination Malpractices in Ebonyi State University

As shown on Table 3, the chi-square calculated value (5.178) is less than the critical value (12.592). Since the calculated value is less than the critical value, the researcher upholds the null hypothesis and concludes that the gender of

the students does not significantly determine the occurrences of examination malpractices in EBSU.

III. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The major findings of the study are as follows:

- ✓ The students' faculties significantly determine the occurrences of examination malpractices in EBSU.
- ✓ The students' specific departments significantly determine the occurrences of examination malpractices in EBSU.
- ✓ The gender of the students does not significantly determine the occurrences of examination malpractices in EBSU.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. THE EXTENT THE STUDENTS' FACULTIES/DEPARTMENTS DETERMINE THE OCCURRENCES OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES IN EBSU

The findings on table 1 and 2 indicate that cases of examination malpractices are higher in some faculties and departments than others. Accordingly, the null hypotheses 1 and 2 were rejected because the calculated chi-square values were more than the critical values. This implies that the students' faculties/departments determine significantly the occurrences of examination malpractices in Ebonyi State University. A possible explanation for the high cases of examination malpractices in these faculties and departments is that some students are admitted into specific areas of study based on vacancies and examination scores and not on individual student interest or to labour demand requirements. As a result, most of the students in these faculties/departments lack interest in their areas of study because they may believe that they have no prospects in those areas and hence they resort to examination malpractices. This finding is in tandem with the observations of Boateng (2002), who opined that faculties vary in a number of ways ranging from course specifications, population size, staff discipline and culture.

According to Gerdeman (2000), some faculties offer courses that are very challenging and in such courses students are prone to malpractices if not properly checked. It is known that some faculties are larger than others in terms of students' population. When physical facilities like examination hall are inadequate, students are more likely to indulge in malpractices during examinations. This may have contributed to differences across faculties/departments in cases of examination malpractices.

On the issue of staff discipline and academic culture, Adebi and Arogundade (2013) noted that some faculties by the nature of their training are more cultured and disciplined than others. The authors noted that when the moralities of faculties/departments are low, not only would the students be motivated to engage in examination malpractice, the entire faculties/departments would be involved. Perhaps this is why Hughes and McCabe (2006 17:16) affirmed that:

Examination malpractice does indeed reveal the moral deficiencies of those students who engage in them, responsibilities also lie, however, with administrators (faculties and departments) who knowingly tolerate conditions that would allow examination malpractice to flourish in any generation of students.

The likely differentials in academic cultures of different faculties/departments may have contributed to the observed differences in the cases of examination malpractices in the various faculties/departments of the university.

B. THE EXTENT THE GENDER OF THE STUDENTS DETERMINES THE OCCURRENCES OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES IN EBONYI STATE UNIVERSITY

Summary of result on table 3 and the result of null hypothesis 3 shows that there is no significant difference in the cases of examination malpractices among male and female students; hence, null hypothesis 3 is accepted. This implies that students' gender is not a significant factor that determines the occurrences of examination malpractices in Ebonyi State University. This by implication means that both male and female students have equal tendencies to be involved in examination malpractices. Hence anybody can decide to cheat depending on his or her gender disposition. The reason may be due to the psychological and moral state of the individual. This finding is consistent with that of Athanason and Olasehinde (2002). They found that there was no significant difference in the average proportions reported for males and females that involved in examination malpractices. The finding is also consistent with the views of Olatoye (2004) who revealed that examination malpractice is a general phenomenon among male and female students. This means that both male and female students have equal chances of being involved in examination malpractices.

In contrast to the above findings, Anderson (1968) cited in Hill (1972) reported that females tend to cheat more frequently in some subjects like mathematics while males cheat more frequently in vocabulary tests. On the other hand, Amobi (2009) and Obidigbo (2011) found that males cheat more often in examination. According to them, females have gentler disposition unlike males and that makes them have a differentiation perception of the evils of examination malpractices. They argue that males are more aggressive and they see examination malpractice as one of the avenues of showing their stuff.

Judging from the above contrary findings, it means that gender may have influence on the occurrences of examination malpractices or may not depending on the situation the students find themselves. Ward and Beck (1990) also cautioned that the distinction may not be in behaviour but in the willingness to admit to malpractices. The authors added that gender differences in examination malpractices appeared to have attenuated over time as sex role socialization of male and female students converged.

V. CONCLUSION

The study centered on the determinants of examination malpractices in Ebonyi State University. Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

- ✓ Although the occurrence of examination malpractices in EBSU fluctuates over the years, it however, rises as the years go by with FEDU, FARM and FHST recording the highest occurrences of examination malpractices in the academic sessions under review.
- ✓ Department of Arts and Social Science Education had the highest occurrences of examination malpractices while Departments of Surgery (in the Faculty of Clinical Sciences), Anatomy, and Medicine & Surgery (in the Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences) had the least.
- ✓ The occurrence of examination malpractices in the University is significantly dependent on student faculties and departments.
- ✓ The occurrence of examination malpractices in the University is not a function of gender

A. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Management should take appropriate steps to investigate the causes of examination malpractices in those faculties and departments where examination malpractices cases are endemic.
- ✓ Pending the provision of adequate halls, seats and other essential facilities, secret cameras and videos can be planted in large examination halls.

The University Management should take the responsibility of clarifying which behaviours will be operationally defined as examination malpractices by ensuring that detailed information regarding examination malpractices and the sanctions for their violations appear in the Academic Regulations Handbook. Presently, the defining examples of examination malpractices in the Handbook are very scanty. While this list was not intended to be all inclusive, it should be expanded to include some of the non-traditional forms of examination malpractices such as the use of technological gadgets and plagiarism. This will minimize the use of discretion in applying sanctions.

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