



DEVELOPING STRATEGY TO TACKLE THE CHALLENGE OF EXAMINATION MISMANAGEMENT AND MALPRACTICE IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN THE NORTH- WEST GEO-POLITICAL ZONE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Colleges of Education as teachers training institutions in Nigeria have already established policies on the management of examinations but, examination malpractices

Keywords:

Developing, Strategy, Examination mismanagement, Examination malpractice, Colleges of Education

INTRODUCTION

All over the world, teacher education has been regarded as a magic for national development. In Nigeria, teacher education has been considered to be an instrument par excellence for sustainable national development.

Evidently, government have made enormous efforts since independence to develop the teacher education through expansion of teacher training institutions, Colleges of Education inclusive and increased funding. This is buttressed by Ajayi in Awe, Tiliye, Fatimayin & Adeyemi (2022) who equally noted that education is the bedrock of societal development and the level or rate of development of any nation cannot be isolated from its quality of education. The examination is not only

are still prevailing. Tackling this menace of examination malpractices there is needs for practical strategies different from what is already in operation in Colleges of Education. The purpose of this study was to develop strategies to effectively tackle examination mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education in the North-West Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. The institutional theory and deterrence theory guided the study. The sample size for this study constituted 836 from the total number of 8,360 populations. Proportionate stratified sampling was used to select lecturers and students, simple random sampling for Exams admin officer and further purposive sampling for Deans of schools and Deputy Provosts Academics. The study adopted a mixed methods

design. The data was collected using questionnaires, interview schedules, focused group discussions and document analysis. The reliability of the instrument was tested using the Cronbach's Alpha method and an index value of 0.742 was obtained. The Quantitative Data from the questionnaires were analyzed using frequency count, mean score and the Qualitative Data from interview and focus group discussion were analyzed using transcribed verbatim acquired from the audio recordings. The findings reveal that, students fear of failure, poor invigilation among others are the main factors contributing to examination mismanagement and malpractice. Also, Colleges of Education has already clear policies they are using to reduce exams mismanagement and malpractice and this have

shown some success in reducing overt cases of malpractice but their overall effectiveness is limited due to systemic challenges. Finally, increasing the penalties for examination malpractice, improving invigilators training, using biometric identification, installing CCTV cameras in exam halls, increasing public awareness of examination malpractice, and strengthening exam material security procedures are some of the major strategies to mitigate examination mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education. The study recommended installation of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras in examination halls to deter malpractice and improvement of invigilation processes among others.

• mportant but fundamental in determining the quality of any educational system. This simply means that, examination remains one of the quintessential instruments for objective assessment and evaluation of what students has achieved after a period of schooling. Hence any action that undermines examinations poses a great threat to the goal of examination (Olatunbosun, cited in Oguiche, Ahmadu & Usman, 2023). Basically, the examination system is an integral part of the formal school system. Every examination is guided by a code of ethics which is translated into rules and regulations of that exam and breaching these rules and regulations is considering

examination impropriety or irregularity and commonly called examination malpractice.

In recent times, however, examination malpractice has increased tremendously in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This is attributed to high degree of examination mismanagement that has become prevalent in tertiary institutions. Evidences proliferated of increasing involvement in examination mismanagement and malpractice by invigilators/supervisors, students, exams officers, administrative exams officers and institution leadership.

Examination mismanagement are varieties of issues including poor planning, logistical failures, inadequate supervision, and a lack of adherence to established protocols that ensure the smooth and fair administration of exams. Examination malpractice are unethical behaviors such as cheating, impersonation, leaking of examination questions, bribery, and collusion between students and academic staff to manipulate results (Ogunji, 2011). Both examination mismanagement and malpractice is in the increase in Colleges of Education to an extent that many desperate students, lecturers and other stakeholders think exams mismanagement and malpractice is the right habit. Studies have shown that several factors contribute to this problem in tertiary institutions. First, the pressure on students to succeed in a competitive academic environment leads some to resort to dishonest means to achieve high grades. Second, inadequate supervision and poor examination procedures create opportunities for malpractices to thrive. Third, insufficient training for invigilators and examination officers often results in ineffective management of the examination process. Additionally, corruption, lack of accountability, and the absence of strict penalties for offenders further exacerbate the problem (Okoko & Adie, 2016; Ayodele, 2023 and Ajayi, 2009).

No doubt examination malpractice is a challenge in College of Education that can be overcome provided the goals of Colleges of Education can be sustained by all the major stakeholders including those who manage examinations. In recent times, there has been a rising concern over the increasing levels of examination mismanagement and malpractice in Secondary and Post-secondary education in Nigeria as reported by few researchers (Ogunji, 2011; Ayodele, 2023; Oka & Adie, 2016; Oguiche, Ahmadu & Usman, 2023). The few researchers focused on exams malpractice in Secondary Schools and universities mostly in the South and Western part of Nigeria. There have been limited studies concerned on the mismanagement of exams which was observed as the major cause of examination malpractice in Colleges of Education in the North-West of Nigeria. This challenge of exams mismanagement and malpractice threatens the credibility of academic

qualifications, distorts meritocracy, and undermines the quality of teacher education in Colleges of Education.

In response to this growing challenge, there is a pressing need to develop robust strategies aimed at tackling examination mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education in Nigeria. Such strategies must address the root causes, strengthen institutional frameworks, enhance examination security, and promote a culture of academic integrity. Without effective intervention, the future of teaching profession remains compromised, and the standards of academic excellence will continue to decline. This study sought to developed strategies to tackle the challenges of examination mismanagement and malpractice peculiar to Colleges of Education in the North-west Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Examination mismanagement and malpractice have become critical issues in Colleges of Education in Nigeria, undermining the credibility and reliability of the educational system. Despite the implementation of various measures by the major stakeholders in education, these problems persist, with significant negative consequences on the integrity of academic qualifications, the promotion of meritocracy, and the overall quality of teacher education. The lack of effective strategies to prevent or mitigate examination mismanagement and malpractice has created an environment where dishonest practices flourish, threatening the reputation of teacher training institutions and the future of graduate teachers who may lack the necessary competencies required in teaching effectively. This study addresses the urgent need to develop strategies to effectively tackle examination mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education in the North-West Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to develop strategies to effectively tackle examination mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education in the North-West Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. identify the key factors contributing to examination mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education.
2. examine the current measures employed by Colleges of Education to prevent and manage examination-related challenges in Colleges of Education.
3. propose a comprehensive strategy that Colleges of Education can adopt to minimize examination mismanagement and malpractice.

Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions were used to guide the investigation:

1. What are the main factors contributing to examination mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education?
2. How effective are the current measures employed by Colleges of Education in addressing examination-related challenges?
3. What strategies can be developed to prevent or mitigate examination mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education?

Significance of the Study

This study would be significant in several ways, as follows:

First, it addresses a pressing issue that directly affects the quality and integrity of Colleges of Education. By developing a comprehensive strategy to tackle examination mismanagement and malpractice, this research provides actionable solutions to improve the fairness and reliability of academic assessments.

Second, the findings of this study will benefit Policymakers, Educational administrators, and Stakeholders in Colleges of Education by offering recommendations that can be implemented at the institutional and governmental levels to strengthen examination processes.

Third, the study contributes to the broader conversation on academic integrity, fostering a culture of merit and honesty within educational systems.

Finally, students and future graduates will benefit from a fairer and more transparent examination process, ensuring that academic achievements are based on true merit, which will positively impact their career prospects and contribution to society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for this study outlines the relationships between examination mismanagement, malpractice, and the key factors that influence these issues in Colleges of Education. The framework anchored on the three main components as follows: contributing factors, institutional mechanisms, and outcomes.

1. **Contributing Factors:** These are the drivers of examination mismanagement and malpractice.(Oko & Adie,2016; Nnam and Inah(2015)).They include:
 - i. Institutional weaknesses: (poor planning, inadequate supervision, lack of training for invigilators among others)

- ii. Student-related pressures: (academic pressure, fear of failure, competition among others)
- iii. Corruption and ethical decay: (bribery, collusion between students and staff)

2. **Institutional Mechanisms:** These are the preventive and control mechanisms that institutions put in place to manage exams(Ayodele,2023 & Keter,2021) They include:

- i. Examination management procedures: (setting clear guidelines and policies, ensuring security of exam papers)
- ii. Supervision and invigilation practices (well-trained and adequately supervised invigilators)
- iii. Technology integration (use of surveillance, digital platforms for exam administration)

3. **Outcomes:** These are the results of effective or ineffective examination

management.(Oguche, Ahmadu & Usman,2023) They include:

- i. Positive Outcomes: Integrity of the examination process, merit-based evaluation, enhanced institutional reputation.
- ii. Negative Outcomes: Academic fraud, compromised quality of education, diminished student competence.

Theoretical Framework

This study anchored on two theories, these theories includes *institutional theory* and *deterrence theory* (Meyer,J.& Roman,B.(1977) and Bruinsma,G.J.(2018) respectively. These theories are discussed distinctly as presented below:

- i. **Institutional Theory:** The institutional theory was primarily propounded by John W Meyer and Brain Roma in 1977 in the context of education and organization sector. This theory examines how organizational structures, rules, and norms influence behavior. In the context of examination management, institutional theory posits that examination malpractice is influenced by the strength (or weakness) of the institutional frameworks in place to govern the process. If the rules, procedures, and monitoring systems are weak or not properly enforced, it creates room for malpractice. Institutional theory suggests that by strengthening the institutional frameworks and promoting a culture of accountability and integrity, examination malpractice can be significantly reduced. In other words, by applying Institutional Theory, this study can better analyze how and why tertiary institutions implement examination policies, how effective these

policies are, and what new strategies could better align with institutional and societal expectations for academic integrity.

- ii. **Deterrence Theory: Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham**, prominent philosophers and legal reformers of the 18th century propounded the deterrence theory in 1764. The theory emphasized that crime prevention could be achieved through appropriate punishment, marking one of the earliest expressions of deterrence in criminology. Deterrence theory argues that individuals are less likely to engage in deviant or criminal behavior when the costs (i.e., punishments) outweigh the benefits. In the context of examination malpractice, this theory supports the idea that students and staff are less likely to engage in dishonest practices if they know that severe and certain punishments (such as expulsion, suspension, or legal action) will follow. By enhancing the enforcement of penalties and creating awareness of the consequences, examination malpractice can be reduced. In other words, by integrating Deterrence Theory, this study can better analyze how well-designed examination policies and clear consequences could prevent malpractice, ultimately supporting the development of a strategy that leverages the certainty, swiftness, and severity of consequences to maintain examination integrity in tertiary institutions.

Review of previous empirical Studies

Several studies were conducted related to this study as follows:

Ayodele, J. (2023). Investigate the effective strategies for curbing examination malpractice before, during and after examination in public secondary school in Delta State. Three research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised of 465 principals of secondary school. There was no sampling since the entire population was relatively small and manageable. Therefore 465 principals were utilized for the study. The questionnaire was used to collect data. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The findings of the study revealed that the effective strategies to curb with the examination malpractice include: appropriate allocation of examination invigilators, corruption within the school and lack of strict penalties for malpractice. The study recommended that there should be a study on the level of involvement in examination malpractices by all levels of education to get to the root of examination malpractice persistence in Nigeria.

Nnam and Inah (2015) reported the study on examination malpractice in Nigerian institutions of higher learning in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. A cross-

sectional research design was adopted was adopted for the study. The Cluster sampling technique was used to cover a population of 250 final year students, the 30-item- Likert scale structured questionnaire was used as an instrument to collect data. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study. The findings of the study revealed, among others that overcrowded examination halls, loose invigilation, and ill-preparation of students induce examination malpractice in Ebonyi State University. This criminal act manifests in various forms such as smuggling of illicit materials relating to the course to be taken into the examination hall, widespread copying from one another during examination, the use of mobile phones and other electronic devices during examination. The study recommended that the school premises in every University in Nigeria should be made conducive and to reflect human dignity in all aspects.

Oguche,Ahmadu and Usman(2023) conducted the study on forms, factors, consequences and control of examination malpractices among Senior Secondary School Students in Kogi State: implications for Guidance. The research adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised of 2,573 Senior Secondary School students spread across the six educational zone of Kogi State. A sample of 257 students was selected for the study through a multi-stage sampling procedure. The questionnaire was used for data collection. The percentages, frequency counts and mean were used to analyze data to answer research questions while t-test was employed in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that, Leakage of question paper, inadequate exams preparation, poor examination management and sex for mark among others are the major forms of examination malpractices among secondary school students. Student's quests for certificate instead of knowledge among others are the major factors responsible for examination malpractices. General change in societal value system and prohibition of cell phones in the examination hall are some of the control measures of examination malpractices in senior secondary schools in Kogi State. The study concluded among others that, the menace of examination malpractices among students can be addressed.

Okon and Adie (2016) carried a study on the remote causes, types, forms, effects of examination malpractice in Cross Rivers State University of Technology, and possible ways of curbing the menace. The population of this study covers students and other stakeholders of Cross River University of Technology. The study sample consists of 250 respondents who includes; undergraduates, graduates of Cross River University of Technology and parents/ guardians who were randomly selected to complete questionnaires on causes, types, and possible ways of curbing examination malpractice. The Questionnaire was used as an instrument to collect data. The research findings revealed an array of factors responsible for

examination malpractice in Nigeria universities to includes what most respondents called “wrong value system which leads to serious quest for certification instead of knowledge and skills”, laziness, lack of preparation or inadequate preparation for examination, lack of self-confidence, poor school facilities, Lack of or inadequate examination hall, poor sitting arrangement, poor invigilation, weak, reduction in student population per invigilator, building of examination halls to accommodate sizeable number of students with wire net windows to forestall free flow of material to and fro the examination halls and a general change in societal value system and attitude in the educational system were advocated and recommended as measures to curb examination malpractice.

Keter, S.J. (2021) reported the research study on policy related strategies to curb examination malpractices among undergraduate students in Kenyan Universities. The purpose of the study was to evaluate policy-related strategies to curb examination malpractices among undergraduate students in Kenyan universities. The sample size comprised of 450 participants; Lecturers, Dean of students affairs, Heads of Departments, Examination Officers and undergraduate students from the selected universities in Kenya. The study adopted a mixed methods design and data was collected using questionnaires, interview schedules, focused group discussions and document analysis. Data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative statistics and results interpreted using frequencies, standard deviations, means and percentages. The findings of the study revealed that policies related to examination malpractices among undergraduate students include; overcrowded examination rooms which tempt students to cheat in examination, low lecturer/student ratio and lack of proper students’ records make students to lie. The study recommended that, Universities are better advised to adopt good policies that can curb examination malpractices and academic departments to review the minimum pass mark since the policy of minimum mark encourages students to be lazy and definitely engage in examination malpractices. It is also recommended that DVC and the Registrar in charge of academics to make spot checks during examination as a way of monitoring what is happening during this process of examinations.

From the previous studies conducted on examination malpractices and malpractice so far. This study is similar in some aspect but different in the sense that, the study not only advances the academic discourse on examination integrity in secondary level and tertiary level of education but also equips policymakers, educators, and exams administrators with practical measures peculiar to Colleges of Education in North-west Geo-political Zone in order to foster a culture of accountability and excellence.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative Approach involved a survey which was used to collect numerical data and Qualitative Approach involves semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to explore the perspectives of key stakeholders such as students, lecturers, exams officers and institutional leaders. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the issues related to examination mismanagement and malpractice by using numerical data to quantify the extent of the problem while qualitative data provides deeper insights into the underlying causes, institutional practices, and possible solutions to examination mismanagement and malpractice in colleges of education.

Population for the study

The population of this study constituted twenty thousand Seven hundred and Forty Eight (20,748) respondents, comprised of students, lecturers, exam officers and institutions leaders of the Thirteen (13) Colleges of Education in the North-west Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.(Sources: Statistics departments of thirteen Colleges of Education in the North-West Nigeria, 2024).

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study constituted 836 respondents from the total number of 8,360 students, lecturers, exam officers and institutional leaders in two sampled Colleges of Education for the study. Also, the selection of the sampled size was based on Glenn (2012) who specified that 10% is appropriate for a sample size of a specific population.

A multistage sampling technique was first used to select the sample for the study. The sampling involved the following steps:

- i. **Institutional Sampling:** A purposive sampling method was used to select two Colleges of Education (one from Federal and One State own college) from the region for the study. In the second stage simple random sampling was used to select one state and one federal college of education from the state colleges and federal colleges of education in the region. This allowed for comparison between the exams process in state and federal institution.
- ii. **Stratified Sampling:** Within each institution, the sample was stratified based on the categories of respondents (students, lecturers, administrative staff, and institutional leaders).
- iii. **Random Sampling:** A random sampling technique was used to select 668 students, 88 lecturers, 64 exams officers, and 16 institutional leaders from

the two already sampled institutions. This resulted in a total sample size of 836 participants.

Instrumentation

The instruments used for data collection in this study include; Questionnaire, interview guide, Focus Group Discussion Guide developed by the researcher and Exams documents. Details are as follows:

- i. **Questionnaire:*** The questionnaire was designed to collect quantitative data from students, lecturers, and exams officer about the causes, and institutional responses to examination mismanagement and malpractice. The questionnaire is divided into Four sections as follows: *Section A:* Demographic Information which includes: institution, status of the participants, type of student, study level for students, gender and years of experiences for lecturer. *Section B:* contributing factors, *Section C:* Institutional measures and effectiveness and *Section D:* proposed strategies to tackle exams malpractice. The response Type of the questionnaire is Likert scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD),
- ii. **Semi-Structured Interview Guide:*** Interviews was conducted with institutional leaders such as Deputy Provost Academic and Deans of schools to collect qualitative data on institutional policies, challenges, and potential solutions to examination mismanagement and malpractice.
- iii. **Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide:*** Focus group discussions were also conducted with selected groups of students and lecturers to explore their collective views, experiences, and suggestions for curbing examination mismanagement and malpractice. FGDs allowed interactive discussions, which led to the emergence of new ideas and insights about the examination mismanagement and malpractice..
- iv. **Document Review Checklist:*** To gather additional information about the institutional policies and records related to examination malpractice, a document review which include; past cases of examination misconduct, types of penalties enforced and the documents of the existing examination management policies (Student hand book) were carried out.

Validity and Reliability

Validity: To ensure content validity, the questionnaire, interview guide and FGD guide were reviewed by experts in the Department of Educational Foundation, University of Abuja. The suggestions made were used in make the improvement of the instruments in other to ensure the face, content and construct validity of the instruments.

Reliability: In other to ensure reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted with a sample of thirty (30) students, ten (10) lecturers and five (5) exam officers in Federal College of Education Panshin which were not part of the research sample to refine the research instruments. The reliability of the instrument was tested using the Cronbach's Alpha method to ensure internal consistency. The result of the pilot test led to an index value of 0.742 .This shows that the instrument is good and reliable.

Data collection procedures

Data collection for the study involved various stages as follows:

- i. Seeking approval to access institution and requesting students, lecturers, and administrative officer and institution leaders consent for their participation in the study.
- ii. Administration of Questionnaires to collect Quantitative data from students, lecturers, and exams officers while interview was conducted to collect qualitative data from institutional leaders on institutional policies, challenges, and potential solution institution leader.
- iii. Collection of documents from institutions such as past cases of examination misconduct, types of penalties enforced and the documents of the existing examination management policies (Student hand book) and were reviewed to gather additional information about the institutional policies and records related to examination malpractice.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentage and mean were used to analyzed data collected using Quantitative method(i.e. questionnaires from lecturers, exams officers and students).while data collected using qualitative method(interview) were analyzed using transcribed verbatim acquired from the audio recordings from the interviews for interpretations and analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate

A total of 836 copies of the research questionnaires were administered to the selected 836 participants in the study for onward completion. Nevertheless, only 816 returned copies were found valid for use in the study. This implies that the study achieved a response rate of 97.6 percent, which is deemed acceptable to continue with the study. Consequently, the basis for data analysis in the study was 816 and not 836. (Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024)

Research Question 1: What are the common examination mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education?

Table 1: Prevalence of Examination Mismanagement and Malpractice

S/N	STATEMENT	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Remarks
1.	Examination malpractice is common in my institution	40	165	160	326	125	3.41	Agreed
2.	Students frequently cheat during exams in my institution	44	170	150	323	109	3.37	Agreed
3.	Examination mismanagement has occurred during my exams	89	182	105	335	105	3.23	Agreed
4.	Some students receive exam papers before the exam day	75	345	93	194	109	2.90	Disagreed
5.	Students collaborate with staff to cheat during exams	80	171	103	323	139	3.33	Agreed
6.	Invigilators often ignore students cheating during exams	94	166	110	351	95	3.23	Agreed
7.	Examination papers are not well-secured before exams	151	182	95	262	126	3.04	Agreed
8.	Examination malpractice has negatively impacted my academic performance	89	183	83	346	115	3.26	Agreed
9.	Academic dishonesty is normalized in my institution	85	284	115	269	64	2.93	Disagreed
10.	There have been cases of impersonation during exams	82	191	110	337	96	3.21	Agreed

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024 **N = 816; Mean Cutoff Point = 3.00**

Table 3 shows the distributions of responses on the common examination mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education in the North-west Geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The Table indicates that respondents agreed with the following statements (Means ≥ 3.00); 'examination malpractice is common in my institution', 'students frequently cheat during exams in my institution', 'examination mismanagement has occurred during my exams', 'students collaborate with staff to cheat during exams', 'invigilators often ignore students

cheating during exams’, ‘examination papers are not well-secured before exams’, ‘examination malpractice has negatively impacted my academic performance’ and there have been cases of impersonation during exams’. However, respondents disagreed with the following statements (Means < 3.00); ‘some students receive exam papers before the exam day’ and ‘academic dishonesty is normalized in my institution’. The participants in focus discussion group further revealed some forms of examination malpractice that are found in Colleges of Education, include; collaboration and leakages of exams questions, bringing into exams hall with unauthorized materials, assault to an invigilator, impersonation, copying the scripts of other candidates and attempting to influence the invigilators.

Research Question 2: What are the main factors contributing to examination mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education?

Table 2: Contributing Factors to Examination Mismanagement and Malpractice

S/N	STATEMENT	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Remarks
1.	Fear of failure drives students to cheat during exams	57	170	133	224	182	3.43	Agreed
2.	High academic pressure contributes to exam malpractice	59	313	124	233	87	2.97	Disagreed
3.	Poor invigilation creates opportunities for cheating	101	175	98	321	121	3.23	Agreed
4.	Inadequate preparation leads students to engage in malpractice	95	130	113	295	183	3.42	Agreed
5.	Peer pressure encourages students to participate in exam malpractice	84	292	98	254	88	2.96	Disagreed
6.	Corruption within the institution contributes to examination malpractice	94	163	101	322	136	3.30	Agreed
7.	The lack of strict penalties for malpractice promotes cheating	134	156	105	287	134	3.16	Agreed
8.	Poor examination management leads to mismanagement of exams	95	237	123	141	84	2.93	Disagreed
9	The desire to maintain high grades drives students to cheat	110	163	101	306	136	3.24	Agreed
10.	Lack of resources for adequate invigilation leads to examination mismanagement	86	306	114	209	110	2.92	Disagreed

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2024 N = 816; Mean Cutoff Point = 3.00

Table 4 shows the distributions of responses on the main factors contributing to examination mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education in the North-west Geo-political zone of Nigeria. The Table indicates that respondents agreed with the following statements (Means ≥ 3.00); 'fear of failure drives students to cheat during exams', 'poor invigilation creates opportunities for cheating', 'inadequate preparation leads students to engage in malpractice', 'corruption within the institution contributes to examination malpractice', the lack of strict penalties for malpractice promotes cheating', and 'the desire to maintain high grades drives students to cheat'. However, respondents disagreed with the following statements (Means < 3.00); 'high academic pressure contributes to exam malpractice', 'peer pressure encourages students to participate in exam malpractice', 'poor examination management leads to mismanagement of exams', and 'lack of resources for adequate invigilation leads to examination mismanagement'. Furthermore, summaries of comments made by focus group discussion and interviewee participants that reflect the factors that contribute to exams mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education includes; logistical issues, security concerns, human resource management, candidate-related issues, administrative challenges, policy and Governance Issues.

Research Question 3: How effective are the current measures employed by Colleges of Education in addressing examination-related challenges?

Table 3: Institutional Measures and Effectiveness in Managing Examinations

S/N	STATEMENT	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Remarks
1.	My institution has clear policies to prevent examination malpractice	69	318	317	205	87	2.91	Disagreed
2.	The penalties for examination malpractice are strictly enforced	110	302	122	189	93	2.82	Disagreed
3.	Invigilators in my institution are well-trained to handle exams	111	292	125	179	109	2.86	Disagreed
4.	Technological tools are used to monitor exams in my institution.	125	317	107	174	93	2.75	Disagreed
5.	My institution takes reported cases of examination malpractice seriously	115	300	127	196	78	2.78	Disagreed
6.	The institution regularly reviews its examination management policies	117	287	91	241	80	2.85	Disagreed
7.	Students are well-informed about the consequences of examination malpractice	119	288	126	169	114	2.84	Disagreed
8.	There is adequate security in place to safeguard examination materials	134	292	120	166	104	2.77	Disagreed
9	Examination malpractice cases are handled fairly and transparently	96	276	111	206	124	2.98	Disagreed
10.	My institution effectively prevents impersonation during exams	150	268	115	180	103	2.78	Disagreed

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024 N = 816; Mean Cutoff Point = 3.00

Table 5 shows the distributions of responses on the effectiveness of the current measures employed by Colleges of Education in the North-West geo-political zone of Nigeria in addressing examination-related challenges. The Table indicates that respondents disagreed with all the stated current measures (Means < 3.00); ‘my institution has clear policies to prevent examination malpractice’, ‘the penalties for examination malpractice are strictly enforced’, ‘invigilators in my institution are well-trained to handle exams’, technological tools are used to monitor exams in my institution’, ‘my institution takes reported cases of examination malpractice seriously’, ‘the institution regularly reviews its examination management policies’, ‘students are well-informed about the consequences of examination malpractice’, ‘there is adequate security in place to safeguard examination materials’, ‘examination malpractice cases are handled fairly and transparently’, and ‘my institution effectively prevents impersonation during exams’. This is an indication that the current measures employed by Colleges of Education in the North-West geo-political zone of Nigeria in addressing examination-related challenges are not effective. Contrary interviewee participants disagree that some current policies and measures taking by colleges of education to addressed examination malpractice have shown some success in reducing overt cases of malpractice, though their overall effectiveness is limited due to systemic challenges such as: inconsistent enforcement, corruption, Infrastructural Gaps and cultural tolerance.

Research Question 4: What strategies can be developed to prevent or mitigate examination mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education?

Table 4: Proposed Strategies to Curb Examination Malpractice

S/N	STATEMENT	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Remarks
1.	Increasing the penalties for examination malpractice would reduce cheating	47	198	128	273	170	3.39	Agreed
2.	Improving invigilator training would reduce examination malpractice	79	206	104	306	121	3.23	Agreed
3.	Using biometric identification would help prevent impersonation.	137	207	88	278	106	3.01	Agreed
4.	Installing CCTV cameras in exam halls would reduce cheating	134	182	108	248	144	3.11	Agreed
5.	Providing psychological support to students would reduce exam-related stress and malpractice	152	158	83	290	133	3.12	Agreed
6.	Conducting exams online would reduce opportunities for cheating	118	148	76	292	182	3.33	Agreed
7.	Randomizing exam questions for different students would prevent cheating	124	367	85	182	58	2.61	Disagreed
8.	Implementing anonymous marking would reduce bias and cheating	95	388	81	176	76	2.69	Disagreed
9	Increasing public awareness of examination malpractice consequences would deter students from cheating	95	167	81	302	171	3.35	Agreed
10.	Strengthening exam material security procedures would prevent exam paper leaks	126	190	66	298	136	3.16	Agreed

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2024 N = 816; Mean Cutoff Point = 3.00

Table 6 shows the distributions of responses on strategies that could be developed to prevent or mitigate examination mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education in the North-West geo-political zone of Nigeria. The Table indicates that respondents agreed that the following strategies would help prevent or mitigate examination mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education in the North-West geo-political zone of Nigeria (Means ≥ 3.00); 'increasing the penalties for examination malpractice would reduce cheating', 'improving invigilator training would reduce examination malpractice', 'using biometric identification would help prevent impersonation', 'installing CCTV cameras in exam halls would reduce cheating', 'providing psychological support to students would reduce exam-related stress and malpractice', 'conducting exams online would reduce opportunities for cheating', 'increasing public awareness of examination malpractice consequences would deter students from cheating', and 'strengthening exam material security procedures would prevent exam paper leaks'. However, respondents disagreed the following strategies would help prevent or mitigate examination mismanagement and malpractice (Means < 3.00); 'randomizing exam questions for different students would prevent cheating', and 'implementing anonymous marking would reduce bias and cheating'. Furthermore, the interviewee participants acknowledged the following measures to address the examination mismanagement and malpractice in colleges of education in Nigeria; implementing rigorous processes for handling question papers, including digital encryption, deploying CCTV cameras and other surveillance technologies in examination halls to deter malpractice, regular workshops on ethical practices of effective invigilation techniques and the use of technology in examination management, use biometric registration to ensure that only the registered candidate sits for the exam, Make a clear enforceable guidelines on examination conduct, malpractice penalties, and staff responsibilities, expanding and upgrading examination halls to reduce overcrowding and establishing independent units to oversee examination processes and detect irregularities.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The study revealed the following findings:

1. Student fear of failure, poor invigilation, inadequate preparation, corruption within the institution, lack of strict penalties for malpractice, and the student desire to maintain high grades. Others include; logistical issues, security concerns, human resource management, candidate-related issues, administrative challenges, policy and governance issues are the main factors

contributing to examination mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education in the North-West Geo-political Zone of Nigeria.

2. Institution clear policies such as; strict enforcement of penalties for examination malpractice (ranged from warning, repeating the semester/session to outright expulsion), well trained examination invigilators to handle exams, technological integration used to monitor exams, taking reported cases of examination malpractice seriously, regularly reviews institution examination management policies, awareness Campaigns on examination malpractice, adequate security in place to safeguard examination materials during exams, handling examination malpractice cases fairly and transparently, and effectively measures to prevents impersonation(providing students with exams and ID cards) are the current policies and measures colleges of education are adopting to reduce exams mismanagement and malpractice and this have shown some success in reducing overt cases of malpractice but their overall effectiveness is limited due to systemic challenges such as; inconsistent enforcement, corruption, Infrastructural Gaps and cultural tolerance.
3. increasing the penalties for examination malpractice, improving invigilator training, using biometric identification, installing CCTV cameras in exam halls, providing psychological support to students, conducting exams online, increasing public awareness of examination malpractice consequences, and strengthening exam material security procedures to prevent exam paper leaks as some of the major strategies to help prevent or mitigate examination mismanagement and malpractice in colleges of education in the North-West Nigeria. Other measures to addressed examination malpractice includes: implementing rigorous processes for handling question papers, including digital encryption, expanding and upgrading examination halls to reduce overcrowding and establishing independent units to oversee examination processes and detect irregularities.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The main factors contributing to examination mismanagement and practice in Colleges of Education were examined and identified as follows: student fear of failure, poor invigilation, inadequate preparation, corruption within the institution, lack of strict penalties for malpractice, and the student desire to maintain high grades are the main factors contributing to examination mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education in the North-West Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. This findings is in line with the findings of Adebaye and Osamoka(2024) who pointed out that students are still engaged in examination

malpractice in tertiary institutions and fear of failure, high academic pressure and poor examination management are the major causes of examination malpractice in tertiary institution in Nigeria.

The current examination management policies and its effectiveness were analyzed and reveal that, institution clear policies such as; strict enforcement of penalties for examination malpractice (ranged from warning, repeating the semester/session to outright expulsion), well trained examination invigilators to handle exams, technological integration used to monitor exams, taking reported cases of examination malpractice seriously, regularly reviews institution examination management policies, awareness Campaigns on examination malpractice, adequate security in place to safeguard examination materials during exams, handling examination malpractice cases fairly and transparently, and effectively measures to prevents impersonation(providing students with exams and ID cards) were the current policies and measures colleges of education are adopting to reduce exams mismanagement and malpractice and this have shown some success in reducing overt cases of malpractice but their overall effectiveness is limited due to systemic challenges. This findings are in line with the findings of Keter(2021) who revealed that any existing policies related to examination malpractices have positive effect on curbing examination malpractices. Similarly, the existing policies related to the examination malpractice have great effect on the degree to which students can practice examination cheating. Colleges of Education in Nigeria are better advised to adopt good policies that can curb examination mismanagement and malpractices. Furthermore, the findings is in agreement with the findings of Ngwaru and Oluka (2017) who revealed that most institutions had policies in place but lack of proper enforcement and monitoring which could lead to a high prevalence of malpractice..

The proposed strategies or measures to curb examination malpractice in colleges of education were examined and revealed that; increasing the penalties for examination malpractice, improving invigilator training, adopting biometric identification, installing CCTV cameras in exam halls, providing psychological support to students to reduced exams stress, conducting exams online, increasing public awareness of examination malpractice consequences, and strengthening exam material security procedures to prevent exam paper leaks as some of the major strategies to help prevent or mitigate examination mismanagement and malpractice in Colleges of Education in the North-West Nigeria. The findings are in agreement with Ngwaru and Oluka (2017) who identified training invigilators and using technology (e.g., CCTV surveillance) to monitor exam halls as effective deterrents.

CONCLUSION

The management of examination process in Colleges of Education has becomes shame. The examination malpractice of various forms takes place in all exams. This is attributed to basically the mismanagement process of examinations. The consequences could be catastrophic to both the education system and the society at large. The study highlights the prevalent and systemic issues surrounding examination management and malpractice in Colleges of Education within the North-West Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. Common forms of malpractice, such as cheating, smuggling unauthorized materials, impersonation, and collusion between students and staff, demonstrate widespread ethical lapses. Contributing factors, including fear of failure, corruption, poor preparation, inadequate invigilation, and weak institutional policies, underscore the complexity of the problem. While existing measures such as stricter penalties, improved invigilation, technological integration, and awareness campaigns have shown promise, their limited effectiveness highlights the need for a more robust and systemic approach to addressing examination malpractice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In reference from the findings and conclusion from this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Management of institutions should enhance examination security by strengthen the security of examination materials by employing advanced safeguards, such as biometric verification and tamper-proof storage for exam papers.
2. Government and management of the institution should install CCTV cameras in examination halls to deter malpractice and provide evidence for resolving disputes.
3. Management of the institutions should improve invigilation processes by providing comprehensive training programs for invigilators to handle examination management efficiently and uphold strict supervision standards .Also by increasing the number of invigilators per examination hall to improve oversight and reduce opportunities for malpractice.
4. Management should promote ethical awareness by conducting regular workshops and seminars for students and staff to highlight the consequences of examination malpractice on personal integrity and institutional reputation. Also by introducing moral education and ethical training into the curriculum to instill a culture of honesty and accountability.
5. Government and management of the institution should implement technological solutions by adopting biometric identification systems to

prevent impersonation and improve student authentication processes. Also by exploring the feasibility of online examinations with secure platforms to minimize physical security breaches.

6. National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in collaboration with management of institutions should strengthen institutional policies by enforcing strict and transparent penalties for malpractice, ranging from warnings to expulsion, depending on the severity of the offense. Also by regularly reviewing and update examination management policies to adapt to emerging challenges and maintain fairness in colleges of education.
7. Management of the institution should address underlying student concerns by provide psychological and academic support to students, including counseling and study skill workshops, to reduce the fear of failure.
8. Government and Management of the institutions should enhance stakeholder collaboration within the college and outside the college by fostering collaboration between institutional administrators, students, parents, and policymakers to create a united front against examination malpractice. Also by advocating for national-level reforms to address systemic issues like corruption and resource inadequacies in higher education.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study contributes to the understanding of examination management and malpractice in Colleges of Education by identifying specific patterns of malpractice, their root causes, and the effectiveness of existing countermeasures. The findings provide a comprehensive framework for improving examination integrity, particularly in resource-limited contexts such as the North-West Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. Key contributions include:

1. Enhancing the understanding of malpractice dynamics by delineating the types of examination malpractices, including smuggling materials, impersonation, and invigilator-student collusion, offering nuanced insights into the complexity and pervasiveness of these practices. Also, highlights systemic factors, such as fear of failure, inadequate preparation, and institutional corruption, which can serve as focal points for targeted interventions.
2. Analyzing the limitations of current policies and measures in Colleges of education regarding exams and underscores the need for a multi-faceted approach combining institutional reforms, technological integration, and stakeholder collaboration.
3. Proposed roadmap for institutions that are seeking to reduce malpractice effectively, including enhanced invigilators training, the use of advanced

security technologies, and the promotion of ethical awareness among students and staff.

4. Lays the groundwork for future research by documenting the interplay between institutional weaknesses and malpractice, offering a basis for longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impact of recommended interventions.
5. Contributes to global discourse on examination management by addressing challenges common to many developing regions likened to North-West Nigeria. The recommendations can inform broader policies and practices in similar educational environments worldwide.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following were limitations of this study:

1. The study focuses on Colleges of Education in the North-West Geo-political Zone of Nigeria, which limited the generalizability of the findings to other regions with different socio-economic or educational contexts. Similarly, much of the data collected relied on self-reported information from participants, which were subject to biases such as under-reporting due to fear of repercussions or over-reporting due to exaggerated perceptions.
2. The study's findings were based on data collected at a specific point in time and therefore the evolving nature of examination malpractice and management strategies required continuous reassessment to remain relevant.
3. Despite all efforts made to collect the data, not all participants were ready to participate in the study. Out of 836 participants, 816 participants responded and this reduces the sample of the study.
4. Due to insecurity challenges, collections of data was in some institutions within the study area.

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