



Assessment of the Impact of Examination Malpractice on Academic Achievement of Students in Higher Institutions in Rivers State

¹OBILOR, Ezezi Isaac (Ph.D.) & ²IKPA, Augustine Ikechukwu

^{1&2}Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Rivers State University
Nkpolu Oroworukwo Port Harcourt | Emails:

¹esezirukanimgboh@gmail.com: ²ikpaikechukwu@gmail.com

Abstract: *The study assessed the impact of examination malpractice on academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study was 745 respondents which comprised 491 lecturers and students in the Faculty of Education of Rivers State University and 254 lecturers and students in the Faculty of Education of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 260 fixed using the Tsaro Yamen Formula. Data was collected through a questionnaire developed by the researchers titled Examination Malpractice and Academic Achievement (EMAA) with a reliability coefficient of 0.79 computed with the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation test statistic. The research questions were answered using means and standard deviations. The null hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance using the z-test. Results indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean perceptions of lecturers and students on the types, causes, consequences of examination malpractice that hinder academic achievement of students, and measures adopted to minimize the rate of examination malpractices to improve academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State. It was concluded that the act of examination malpractice is dishonest, illegal and immoral. Given the above, the study recommended that the enacted government legislations on examination malpractice should be enforced to the letter to serve as deterrent to others, adequate teaching and learning materials should be provided to make teaching and learning more effective, and parents and guardians should avoid putting undue pressure on children.*

Keywords: *Academic Achievement, Assessment, Examination Malpractice, Higher Institutions, Students.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is aimed at training the mind of its recipient for effective achievement. It prepares the individual with the information necessary for high level of human functioning. An individual is expected to pass through the whole process of examinations conducted by a competent and recognized body if he is to be regarded as an educated person (Okara, 2012). Examination as part of evaluation is aimed at determining a learner's level of skill acquisition or intellectual competence and understanding after a given training. Adequate and proper acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills in school subjects and disciplines of study are invariably a function of quality education. Examination is basically conducted for the purposes of selection, classification and certification. For examination to be valid and reliable it has to be

administered under conducive and uniform conditions where examinees are made to adhere to stipulated rules and regulations. Emaikwu (2011) asserted that an examinee has to respond to a sample of questions for the examinee's ability to be measured. A test score based on this sample of questions would be an approximate indicator of examinee's ability.

In Nigeria, the educational system and other systems are crisis-ridden. Nigerian educational system has degenerated into a decadent, morbid institution plagued with fear of blood-thirsty secret-cult members, drug-driven violence and anarchy as well as rampant cases of examination malpractice. Some Nigerian students have become so wild that they abduct their teachers and even heads of institutions to obtain undeserved grades and get away with it. Some institutions of higher learning can no longer boldly claim to be the citadel of excellence in which they have hitherto been noted for in Rivers State (Duze, 2011).

According to Usman (2005), examination malpractice is referred to as cheating in the examination or any intention to benefit or give undue advantage to oneself, or another by deceit or fraud, before, during and after examination. In Rivers State, examination malpractice is already becoming a norm in the educational scene because it is been condoned by most parents, students, teachers and lecturers (Ojerinde, 2010). Students often go into examination halls with pistols and daggers 'to take care' of anyone that would forestall them from cheating. At risk are invigilators and question papers; hence Rivers State educational system is gravely threatened. The frequency of occurrence of examination malpractice indicates a state of hopelessness and helplessness. The incidence of examination malpractice has become so endemic that the penalty hitherto meted out to its perpetrators is almost having no significant effects on them.

In the view of researchers (Eba & Emaikwu, 2007; Ogum, 2007), there is an astronomical increase in the number of people and institutions involved in this social malaise. As a result of frequent cases of examination malpractice, the society is losing confidence in the certificates awarded by some institutions and examination bodies in Nigeria. Cheating in examination has become so 'internalized and legitimized' that some people now regard it as a normal process of passing examinations in Rivers State.

The calamity of examination malpractice is not just the havoc it wrecks in our educational system but the gradual introduction of youths into the practice of fraud. Owing to malpractices in universities, examination results tend to give a false picture of the state of affairs; hence a good number of school graduates cannot defend the grades obtained in examinations (Ada, 2004). A crisis situation is bound to develop in the educational sector, if the trend is not prevented. Malpractices in examinations have become so widespread that many people doubt the quality of graduates from the educational system in Rivers State. It has led to the questioning of the validity and reliability of the examinations as well as the authenticity of the results and certificates obtained in the state.

A widespread examination malpractice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State has led to a situation where the use of formal examination as basis for determining the level of candidates' proficiency at absorbing, reproducing and applying knowledge has become impossible. The ugly incidence of examination malpractice accounts for the existence of several qualifying examinations in Rivers State such as Post Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination, job

placement aptitude test, among others to verify candidates' certificate claims. Since academic credentials are the only acceptable indices of educational attainment, students now see passing examination as 'a do or die affair' in Rivers State. As a result of examination malpractice, many graduates in Rivers State cannot even write articulate letters, let alone read and understand newspaper articles. Some university graduates who are products of examination malpractice in the State have become a reserved army of the unemployable (Olusanya, 2003). There is a general worry about the poor quality of education in Rivers State resulting from high incidents of examination malpractices which characterise the higher institutions of learning in the State.

Maduabum (2009) noted that examination malpractice is noticeable in every state of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and in all the school systems. Uzoagulu (2008) affirmed that "giraffing", coping, and taking handwritten materials and textbooks into the examination hall rank first among the types of examination malpractice. Cheating has become a national phenomenon to the extent that forging certificates to gain admission or employment is a usual habit among desperate Nigerians even among the political class. Several members of the legislative and executive arms of government in the last few years have been accused of certificate forgery in Nigeria and some have fallen from grace to grass as a result of examination malpractice. The case of a former Speaker of the House of Representatives in Nigeria who falsely claimed to have acquired a degree from University of Toronto but to the utter perplexity of all and sundry, was only a secondary school certificate holder is still fresh in the minds of many Nigerians (Ariba, 2011).

Examination malpractice has adverse effects on all facets of society, the individual, the home, the school, the government, the private sector and the international community (Obasi, 2009). As observed by Ajayi (2009), examination malpractice cannot be curbed unless the entire society displays high degree of responsibility, integrity and honesty by fighting this menace with all vigour and rigour it deserves. There should a de-emphasis on paper qualification for determining the fate of candidates for job placement; enforcement of punishment for offenders; and public enlightenment campaigns to bewray the ills of examination malpractice.

Statement of the Problem

The issue of examination malpractice among students of higher institutions in Rivers State institutions is of serious concern and its impact on the State's educational system cannot be over emphasized. Examination malpractice has been rated as one of the greatest aspects of indiscipline that undermine the foundations of educational practice in Nigeria today. The magnitude of this social malaise has become a major source of concern to all the stakeholders in education. Of all the educational problems in Nigeria, none poses a greater threat than the problem of examination fraud. Parents even go as far as purchasing examination papers from staff of examining bodies and also enrol their wards in private 'special coach' centres, where special arrangements are made during examinations for such students to be allowed to cheat in various forms. In fact it has become an accepted aspect of school life in Nigeria's institutions that most students now believe that it is not possible to write an examination without cheating.

Hence, they are no longer interested in studying but rely heavily on cheating to pass

their examinations and are ready to tackle whosoever stands as obstacle to their inordinate ambitions. The scope of examination malpractice is escalating and it has become a chorus in our educational system. Various examination bodies, governments, individuals and groups have at various times tried to provide solutions to curb this menace. However, examination bodies in Nigeria have achieved little in the fight against examination malpractice as it has continued to grow in form and proportion.

The problem of cheating at examinations is of serious concern to parents, educators, educational administrators and governments because it is a major factor that has the capacity to destroy the entire education system of Rivers State, and indeed Nigeria. Therefore, this study assessed the impact of examination malpractice on the academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State and proffered measures to minimise examination malpractices and improve the academic achievement of students of higher institutions in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of examination malpractice on the academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives were to:

1. Identify the types of examination malpractice that hinders academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State.
2. Investigate the causes of examination malpractice that deters academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State.
3. Determine the consequences of examination malpractice on academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State.
4. Find out the measures that could be adopted to minimize the rate of examination malpractice and improve academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the types of examination malpractices that hinder academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State?
2. What are the causes of examination malpractices that deter academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State?
3. What are the consequences of examination malpractices on academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State?
4. What are the measures that could be adopted to minimize the rate of examination malpractice and improve academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were developed and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean perception of lecturers and students on the types of examination malpractices that hinder academic achievement of students in Higher Institutions in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean perception of lecturers and students on the causes of examination malpractices that deter academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean perception of lecturers and students on the consequences of examination malpractices on academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State.
4. There is no significant difference in the mean perception of lecturers and students on the measures that could be adopted to minimize the rate of examination malpractice and improve academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State.

METHODS

Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study was 745 respondents which comprised 491 lecturers and students in the Faculty of Education of Rivers State University and 254 lecturers and students in the Faculty of Education of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 260 fixed using the Tsaro Yamen Formula. Data was collected through a questionnaire developed by the researchers titled Examination Malpractice and Academic Achievement (EMAA) with a reliability coefficient of 0.79 computed with the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation test statistic. The research questions were answered using means and standard deviations. The null hypotheses formulated for this study were tested with the z-test at 0.05 level of significance using.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the types of examination malpractice that hinder academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State?

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Lecturers’ and Students’ Responses on Types of Examination Malpractice that Hinder Academic Achievement of Students in Higher Institutions in Rivers State.

S/No.	Items	RSU (n ₁ = 171)			IAUE (n ₂ = 89)		
		\bar{x}	SD	Decision	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
1	Script swapping	3.23	1.51	Agreed	3.33	1.24	Agreed
2	Continuous assessment malpractice	2.52	1.32	Agreed	2.51	1.56	Agreed
3	Alteration of marks and grade	3.44	1.72	Agreed	3.20	1.30	Agreed
4	Bringing in foreign materials.	2.71	1.08	Agreed	3.40	1.52	Agreed

5	Leakages.	3.04	1.32	Agreed	3.31	1.55	Agreed
6	Collusion to cheat/coping from one another	2.51	1.81	Agreed	2.62	1.20	Agreed
7	Marking malpractice by teachers	3.13	1.30	Agreed	3.43	1.71	Agreed
8	Impersonation	2.68	1.42	Agreed	3.01	1.42	Agreed
Grand Scores		2.91	1.44	Agreed	3.10	1.44	Agreed

The total sample for RSU and IAUE used for the study is 260 lecturers and students with n_1 and n_2 representing the sub-samples for RSU and IAUE respectively.

Decision: Lecturers and students of RSU and IAUE **AGREED** that items 1- 8 on Table 1 constitute the types of examination malpractice prevalent in higher institutions in Rivers State: ($2.50 \leq \bar{x} \leq 3.49$).

Table 1 above shows that the various types of examination malpractices prevalent in higher institutions in Rivers State that hinder academic achievement of students include script swapping, continuous assessment malpractice, altering of marks and grades, bringing in foreign materials, leakages, collusion to cheat/coping from one another, marking malpractice by teachers, and impersonation. Table 1 shows grand means of 2.91 and 3.10, and standard deviations of 1.44 and 1.44 for lecturers and students of RSU and IAUE respectively indicating an agreement that items 1 – 8 constitute the types of examination malpractice prevalent in higher institutions in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: What are the causes of examination malpractices that deter academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State?

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Lecturers’ and Students’ Rating on the Causes of Examination Malpractices that Deter Academic Achievement of Students in Higher Institutions in Rivers State

S/No.	Items	RSU ($n_1 = 171$)			IAUE ($n_2 = 89$)		
		\bar{x}	SD	Decision	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
9	Lack of seriousness of seriousness and lack of proper supervision during examination	3.23	1.22	Agreed	3.34	1.94	Agreed
10	Fear of failure.	3.41	1.45	Agreed	3.15	1.39	Agreed
11	Inability of parents to provide textbooks.	2.76	1.82	Agreed	2.68	1.56	Agreed
12	Inordinate ambition by students and parents to pursue career that is beyond ability.	2.63	1.59	Agreed	3.20	1.06	Agreed

13	Too much emphasis on paper qualification.	2.90	1.43	Agreed	3.11	1.40	Agreed
14	Writing of examination in an overcrowded hall with poor sitting arrangement	2.72	1.35	Agreed	2.61	1.21	Agreed
15	Lack of adequate invigilators for examination supervision	3.11	1.42	Agreed	2.64	1.94	Agreed
16	Peer group influence especially after seeing those who have passed examination by cheating	3.48	1.24	Agreed	3.19	1.30	Agreed
17	Inability to cover schemes of work by lecturers	3.28	1.25	Agreed	3.39	1.74	Agreed
18	Lack of necessary instructional facilities and resources to facilitate easy learning by students	2.59	1.87	Agreed	3.40	1.87	Agreed
Grand Score		3.01	1.83	Agreed	3.07	1.93	Agreed

The total sample for RSU and IAUE used for the study is 260 lecturers and students with n_1 and n_2 representing the sub-samples for RSU and IAUE respectively.

Decision: Lecturers and students of RSU and IAUE **AGREED** that items 9 - 18 on Table 2 constitute the causes of examination malpractice in higher institutions in Rivers State: $(2.50 \leq \bar{x} \leq 3.49)$.

The data presented in table 2 shows the mean ratings of the responses of lecturers and students of RSU and IAUE on the causes of examination malpractices that deter academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State. From table 2, the grand mean score of 3.01 and a standard deviation of 1.83 were gotten from Rivers State University (RSU), while the grand mean score of 3.07 and a standard deviation of 1.93 were gotten from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) indicating a consensus that items 9 – 18 on table 2 constitute the causes of examination malpractices that deter academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State.

Research Question 3: What are the consequences of examination malpractices on academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State?

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Lecturers' and Students' Rating on the Consequences of Examination Practices on Academic Achievement of Students in Higher Institutions in Rivers State

S/No.	Items	RSU (n ₁ = 171)			IAUE (n ₂ = 89)		
		\bar{x}	SD	Decision	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
19	It undermines the value of work, honesty and discipline.	2.55	1.15	Agreed	2.54	1.30	Agreed
20	It frustrates the pursuit of merit and completion in excellence	3.11	1.93	Agreed	2.80	1.18	Agreed
21	It mortgages the future of the nation and its economy.	2.84	1.60	Agreed	2.54	1.31	Agreed
22	Creates lack of trust in our educational system.	3.10	1.37	Agreed	2.51	1.15	Agreed
23	Breeds a society that is bereft of people of integrity.	2.77	1.61	Agreed	3.02	1.13	Agreed
24	Makes it difficult to have an accurate and reliable assessment of the academic level of our school products.	3.04	1.11	Agreed	3.11	1.74	Agreed
25	It causes Nigerian degrees to be ridiculed and disregarded by the international community.	3.01	1.51	Agreed	2.50	1.40	Agreed
26	General decline in standard of education	2.53	1.63	Agreed	2.60	1.32	Agreed
	Grand Score	2.86	1.49	Agreed	2.68	1.32	Agreed

The total sample for RSU and IAUE used for the study is 260 lecturers and students with n₁ and n₂ representing the sub-samples for RSU and IAUE respectively.

Decision: Lecturers and students of RSU and IAUE **AGREED** that items 19 - 26 on Table 3 constitute the consequences of examination malpractice in higher institutions in Rivers State: ($2.50 \leq \bar{x} \leq 3.49$).

From table 3, the grand mean and standard deviation for RSU are respectively 2.86 and 1.49 and for IAUE the grand mean and standard deviation are 2.68 and 1.32 respectively. These indicate that the lecturers and students of RSU and IAUE agree that items 19 – 26 on table 3 constitute the consequences of examination malpractices in higher institutions in Rivers State.

Research Question 4: What are the measures that could be adopted to minimize the rate of examination malpractices and improve academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State?

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on Lecturers’ and Students’ Rating on Measures to Minimize the Rate of Examination Malpractices and Improve Academic Achievement of Students in Higher Institutions in Rivers State

S/No.	Items	RSU (n ₁ = 171)			IAUE (n ₂ = 89)		
		\bar{x}	SD	Decision	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
27	Parents should be close to their children/wards to know their ability and not to force them to go beyond their capabilities.	2.70	1.81	Agreed	2.71	1.81	Agreed
28	Guidance Counsellors should be involved in helping students to define their goals and solve problems related to personal, social, academic and vocational concerns.	3.53	1.26	Strongly Agreed	3.05	1.28	Agreed
29	The school should be fair in setting questions, conducting exams, marking of answer scripts and grading of students.	2.52	1.40	Agreed	3.35	1.25	Agreed
30	Provision of adequate funding and equipment.	2.62	0.82	Agreed	3.18	1.28	Agreed
31	Adequate punishment to defiant and erring students as well as culprit lecturers and workers.	3.39	1.75	Agreed	3.40	1.63	Agreed
32	Organizing seminars and symposia for students at school	3.24	1.72	Agreed	3.57	1.24	Strongly Agreed
33	University management and student unions should join hands in re-orienting students.	3.37	1.63	Agreed	3.26	1.53	Agreed
34	Quality of teaching through adequate preparation by the lecturers should be improved on.	3.29	1.29	Agreed	2.58	1.80	Agreed
	Grand Score	3.08	1.46	Agreed	3.14	1.48	Agreed

The total sample for RSU and IAUE used for the study is 260 lecturers and students with n₁ and n₂ representing the sub-samples for RSU and IAUE respectively.

Decision: Lecturers and students of RSU and IAUE **AGREED** that items 27 - 34 on Table 4 constitute the measures to minimize the rate of examination malpractices and improve academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State: $(2.50 \leq \bar{x} \leq 3.49)$.

Table 4 shows a grand mean of 3.08 and a standard deviation of 1.46 for lecturers and students of RSU, and grand mean of 3.14 and a standard deviation of 1.48 for lecturers and students of IAUE. This implies that lecturers and students of RSU and IAUE agreed that measures 27 – 34 of table 4 can minimize the rate of examination malpractices and improve the academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean perception of lecturers and students on the types of examination malpractice that hinder academic achievement of students in Higher Institutions in Rivers State.

Table 5: Test of Difference in the Mean Perception of Lecturers and Students on the Types of Examination Malpractice that Hinder Academic Achievement of Students of Higher Institutions in Rivers State

Institution	\bar{x}	SD	N	df	α	z-cal.	z-crit.	Decision
RSU	3.36	3.29	171	258	0.05	1.28	1.96	H ₀ Not Rejected
IAUE	3.78	3.43	89					

Table 5 shows that the z-calculated value of 1.28 using degree of freedom of 258 at 0.05 level of significance is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 which indicates that the null hypothesis that “there is no significant difference in the mean perception of lecturers and students on the types of examination malpractice that hinder academic achievement of students of higher institutions in Rivers State” is accepted. This implies that the lecturers and students of higher institutions in Rivers State are in agreement on the types of examination malpractices that hinder academic achievement of students of higher institutions in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean perception of lecturers and students on the causes of examination malpractices that deter academic achievement of students of higher institutions in Rivers State.

Table 6: Test of difference in the mean perception of lecturers and students on the causes of examination malpractices that deter academic achievement of students of higher institutions in Rivers State.

Institution	\bar{x}	SD	N	df	α	z-cal.	z-crit.	Decision

RSU	3.49	2.36	171	258	0.05	1.05	1.96	H ₀ Rejected
IAUE	3.76	3.02	89					

Table 6 shows that the z-calculated value of 1.05 using degree of freedom of 258 at 0.05 level of significance is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 which indicates that the null hypothesis that “there is no significant difference in the mean perception of lecturers and students on the causes of examination malpractices that hinder academic achievement of students of higher institutions in Rivers State” is accepted. This means that the lecturers and students of higher institutions in Rivers State are in a consensus on the causes of examination malpractices that hinder academic achievement of students of higher institutions in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean perception of lecturers and students on the consequences of examination malpractice on academic achievement of students of higher institutions in Rivers State.

Table 7: Test of difference in the mean perception of lecturers and students on the consequences of examination malpractice on academic achievement of students of higher institutions in Rivers State

Institution	\bar{x}	SD	N	df	α	z-cal.	z-crit.	Decision
RSU	4.21	3.14	171	258	0.05	1.12	1.96	H ₀ Not Rejected
IAUE	4.40	3.26	89					

Table 7 shows that the z-calculated value of 1.12 using degree of freedom of 258 at 0.05 level of significance is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 which indicates that the null hypothesis that “there is no significant difference in the mean perception of lecturers and students on the consequences of examination malpractices on academic achievement of students of higher institutions in Rivers State” is accepted. This means that the lecturers and students of higher institutions in Rivers State are in a consensus on the consequences of examination malpractices on academic achievement of students of higher institutions in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the mean perception of lecturers and students on the measures that could be adopted to minimise the rate of examination malpractices and improve academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State.

Table 8: Test of difference in the mean perception of lecturers and students on the measures that will minimise the rate of examination malpractices and improve academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State.

Institution	\bar{x}	SD	N	df	α	z-cal.	z-crit.	Decision
RSU	3.24	3.17	171	258	0.05	0.98	1.96	H ₀ Not Rejected
IAUE	3.80	3.38	89					

Table 8 shows that the z-calculated value of 0.98 using degree of freedom of 258 at 0.05 level of significance is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 which indicates that the null hypothesis that “there is no significant difference in the mean perception of lecturers and students on the measures to minimise examination malpractices and improve on academic achievement of students of higher institutions in Rivers State” is accepted. This implies that the lecturers and students of higher institutions in Rivers State are in agreement on the measures to minimise examination malpractices and improve on academic achievement of students of higher institutions in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The study assessed the impact of examination malpractice on academic achievement of students of higher institutions in Rivers State and found the major types of examination malpractices include collusion to cheat/copying from one another, possessing ‘foreign materials’ during examination, continuous assessment malpractice, script swapping and leakages, altering of marks and grades as well as marking malpractice by lecturers. This result agrees with the study conducted by Uzoagulu (2008) who noted that “giraffing”, coping from one another, taking handwritten materials and textbooks into the examination hall rank first among other types of examination malpractice at all levels of education in Nigeria. This finding is also consistent with that of Obasi (2009) who observed that culprits employ different methods coded with various deceptive names and many lecturers hardly mark continuous assessment scripts and so students are awarded marks arbitrarily which also constitute examination malpractice.

The study further found that the causes of examination malpractices in higher institutions in Rivers State include inordinate ambition by students and parents to pursue careers that are beyond their abilities, lack of necessary instructional facilities and resources to facilitate easy learning by students, lack of seriousness and proper supervision during examination, too much emphasis on paper qualification, and many others as indicated in table 2. This result is supported by the findings of Ariba (2011) who opined that students appeared desperate to study courses which they were not suited for as a result of pressure from parents, peers, and society; some students cheated during examination as they believed that one must cheat in order to advance educationally or economically in life; and some lecturers who ordinarily should correct this anomaly aided the students to commit this heinous crime.

The results of the study also showed that the consequences of examination malpractices on academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State include that examination malpractice undermines the value of work, honesty and discipline; frustrates

the pursuit of merit, competition, and excellence; mortgages the future of the Rivers State and its economy, breeds a society that is bereft of people of integrity, produces of mediocre graduates, and more. Ariba (2011) corroborated this finding when he posited that the consequences of indulging in examination malpractices are overwhelming and have holistic effects on moral integrity, economy and progress of the nation.

Finally the study proffered measures that can minimize examination malpractices and improve the academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State. These measures include parents should be close to their children/wards to know their ability and not to force them to go beyond their capabilities; guidance counsellors should be involved in helping students to define their goals and solve problems related to personal, social, academic and vocational concerns; adequate punishment to be meted out to defiant and erring students as well as culprit lecturers and workers, University management and student unions should join hands in re-orienting students; and more on table 4. This result is in line with the findings of Olusanya (2003) who revealed that guidance counsellors should be used to educate parents to avoid forcing their children into offering courses they are unsuited for; educate parents on the consequences of examination malpractice and the need to discourage their children from such practices; and to use the mass media - radio, newspaper, television, etc, - with special focus on the prevention of examination malpractices.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have revealed the types of examination malpractices prevalent in higher institutions in Rivers State, the causes of such examination malpractices, their consequences, and measures to minimise the malpractices. Given the enormity of the consequences of examination malpractice, it is pertinent that government and every well-meaning and patriotic citizen of Rivers State (and indeed Nigeria) must stand up and face the challenges posed by this menace, otherwise, our future and the future of our children shall be in perpetual jeopardy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Even though, various examination bodies, government, individuals and group have at different times tried to provide solution to curb this heinous crime, little have been achieved in the fight against examination malpractices. It is recommended therefore that:

1. The administration and conduct of examination should be entrusted to the care of men and women of proven integrity in Universities.
2. Government has enacted the relevant legislations on examination malpractices. These laws should be enforced to the letter to serve as deterrent to others.
3. Guidance and counselling services should be adopted in Universities so as to reduce cases of examination malpractices.

4. There is need to provide adequate teaching and learning materials. Libraries and laboratories should be stocked with the needed textbooks, chemicals and apparatuses to promote effective teaching and learning.
5. Universities should be fair and thorough in setting questions, conducting exams, marking of answer scripts, awarding marks and grading of students.
6. Adequate punishment should be meted out to defiant and erring students as well as culprit lecturers and workers.
7. Guidance and Counselling should be much involved in helping students to define their goals and solve problems related to personal, social, academic and vocational concerns.
8. Government should be much involved in the provision of adequate funding and equipment that will aid effective teaching, learning and proper conduct of examination.

REFERENCES

- Ada, N. A. (2004). *Issues in sociology of education*. Makurdi: Peach Global Publications.
- Ajayi, I. (2009). *Examination Ethics Handbooks: An Examination Ethics Projects*. Lagos: Protomac Books Limited.
- Ariba, O. (2011). A study of the causes and implications of examination malpractices in colleges of education (Technical). *Technology Education Journal*, 8(1), 112-119
- Duze, C. O. (2011). Falling standard in Nigeria education: traceable to proper skill-acquisition. *Journal of Educational Research*, 2(1), 803-808,
- Eba, E., & Emaikwu, S. O. (2007). Examination malpractices in tertiary institutions: Implications and the way forward. *Journal of Educational Foundations*, 4(12), 34-41.
- Emaikwu, S. O. (2011). Evaluation of student's ability in schools. Being a paper presented and accepted for publication in the book of readings on teaching practice. *Journal of College of Agricultural & Science Education*, 21(7), 145-150.
- Maduabum, O. (2009). *Towards functional and qualitative education in Nigeria*. Owerri: Destiny Ventures.
- Obasi, E. (2009). *Certificate syndrome*. Owerri: Stateman Publishers Limited.
- Ogum, D. N. (2007). On the declining literacy among trainee teachers in Nigeria. *African Journal of Educational Development Studies*, 4(1), 143-149.
- Ojerinde, B. B. (2010). *Examination and students' performance*, Vanguard, January 16, 30

Okara, V. (2012). *When a University site swims in politics*. Retrieved on Friday March 09, 2012 from <http://www.sunnewsonline.com>.

Olusanya, S. O. (2003). *Current trends in examination malpractices in Nigerian tertiary institutions*. Paper presented at the seminar organized by School of Technical Education. FCE (T), Akoka.

Usman, I. T. (2005). *Examination malpractices*. Concord Magazine, February 23, 6.

Uzoagulu, A. E. (2008). Combating examination malpractice in Nigerian universities: A case study of Enugu State university of Science and technology. *Technology and Research Journal*, 2(1), 94-102.