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# Revolutionising Assessment and Evaluation Procedures in Education

Edited by  
**Charles V. Abe**  
**Adams O. U. Onuka**

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and Evaluation Procedures  
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**A Book of Readings in Honour of  
Professor Promise N. Okpala**

*Edited by*

**Charles V. Abe  
Adams O.U. Onuka**

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## Educational and Cultural Factors as Predictors of Examination Malpractice Among SSCE Candidates in Benue State

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### Introduction

Quality education is a veritable tool through which the society achieves effective growth and development. Examination malpractices in schools and indeed in public examination bodies have affected the quality of education in Nigeria; this makes education to lose its value to the society thereby, constituting impediment to socio-economic, political and technological development of the country. According to Adikwu (2011), the incidence of malpractices in WAEC and NECO is currently undermining the value and integrity of the certificate issued by these bodies. This has made the quality of school graduates doubtful. Federal Government, examination bodies, and other concerned agencies have made efforts to check the incidence of examination malpractice and its associated problems. These efforts seem not yielding sufficiently positive result.

Ada (2010) states that the quality of teachers in the school system is a major factor that determines the extent to which educational objectives are realized. According to him, the poor attitude of teachers, arising from inadequate motivation, wrong choice and application of teaching method as well as professional skills, combined to determine the extent at which available learning instructional materials could be utilize for effective learning outcomes. He argued that no nation can rise above the quality of its existing teachers.

Also, Jega (2006) observes that many teachers in Nigerian public secondary schools seem to develop negative attitude to work because of economic factors. The teachers, Jega claimed, do not work to cover prescribed syllabus in their subjects, but pay more attention to private lessons and other businesses that bring additional income. According

to him, such teachers are bound to collude with students to cheat in examination hall. Also, Toranyin (2005) in his investigation of causes of examination malpractice among students in Benue State, discovers that most teachers in rural secondary schools do not teach, instead, they take students to work on their farm lands. Such students he argued are bound to cheat during examinations to pass because they are not well grounded or prepared by their classroom teachers for the eventual examinations.

In addition, the availability and usability of school facilities is seen as a factor in students' achievement. Thus, the Nigerian Academy of Educational Report (2004) states that 38% of the problems hindering students' academic achievement in schools, are attributed to inadequate provision of teaching and learning facilities or equipment. The report disclosed that over 66% of the total secondary schools in Nigeria have no minimum library and laboratory facilities and equipment requirement to operate as WAEC/NECO examination centres. Okafor (2006) states that, students learn more and acquire permanent knowledge through interaction with physical learning materials under the guidance of a teacher. The availability of learning material is very important in teaching and learning process, because it makes learning real and concrete. It is suspected that if students are not adequately taught with necessary teaching materials, they may result to cheating in examinations.

Joshua (2008) observes that most examination centres in Nigeria do not have enough seats and other necessary facilities for students. This he claimed, often results in over-crowded classrooms or examination halls, thereby giving students ample opportunity to cheat during examinations. He goes further to add that, within the school environment, most teachers teach with obsolete instructional materials and work in unexciting classroom environment that lack motivation for effective teaching and learning. In fact, most secondary schools have very poor and inadequate library facilities that are of little or no use to both students and staff. Some school libraries, where they exist at all, are filled with outdated textbooks.

Culture is a set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterises an institution, organisation or group. Culture also includes beliefs and behaviour and it forms the attitude of members in



every given society. Some cultural traits are suspected to be factors influencing examination malpractice in Nigeria. For instance, Zuga (2000), claimed that, in a complex and pluralised Nigerian culture, some traditional practices, beliefs and custom or values, are bound to influence students' attitude and behaviours in school and in examination. Certificates at times, have become means through which people acquire chieftainship titles and kinship in Nigeria. the changing cultural beliefs and value system in Nigeria could be a factor that motivates people to employ extra ordinary means to cheat in examination. Among some ethnic groups in Nigeria, according to Ubwa (2002), western education is considered a veritable tool through which individuals stand to gain or lose their birthright and recognition in the family or community.

Also, Zumve (2009) reports that the cultural and superstitious belief among students in some parts of the country influence their perception of examination malpractices. Indeed, the cultural practice and religious belief in northern Nigeria influence students to use weapons and charms in examination hall. According to Zumve (2009), some people are culturally bound from standardise public examinations. This belief gives students opportunity to smuggle foreign materials into examination hall. Public examining bodies have rules and ethics governing their examinations. However, it is usually difficult to implement these rules due to some cultural beliefs and practices that must be respected.

Wadeh (2010) in his study on the causes of poor performance in Biology among secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis, discovered that 41% does not take active participation in some practical Biology lessons because it is culturally prohibited to touch some animals and plants. The study revealed that such dogma affects their learning ability in the subject. This means that, for these students to pass the subject in WAEC, they may indulge in examination malpractice.

The causes and effects of examination malpractices in public examinations (WAEC and NECO) over many decades and hitherto is a major concern to stakeholders in education. Government and public examination bodies have made several attempts to identify the causes of this phenomenon and eradicate its occurrence in public

examinations. In spite of the effort, outcome of studies on the menace have not really being conclusive on the causes and ways to eradicating the problem of examination malpractices in Nigeria. No extensive research has been carried out to examine school environment and cultural values, beliefs and practices as combine causes of examination malpractice among candidates in public examinations.

It is in this vein that the study is set to find out the extent at which educational factors (teachers attitudes to work and condition of teaching-learning facilities) and cultural factors (beliefs, values and traditional occupation) predict examination malpractice among candidates in public examinations.

## **Research Questions**

The study aimed at answering the following research questions;

- i. Do senior secondary school students have knowledge of examination malpractices before seating for SSCE examinations in Benue State?
- ii. What is the relative contribution of the variables to the prediction of examination malpractices among SSCE candidates in Benue state?
- iii. What is the composite contribution of educational and cultural factors to examination malpractice among SSCE candidates in Benue state?

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

The study is a survey research.

### ***Population***

The target population for the study comprises all Senior Secondary School students across the three senatorial zones of Benue state. There are 313 public and 775 private secondary schools in the state with the total of 1088 government approved secondary schools. All the senior secondary school students from these public and private schools constitute target population for the study.

### ***Sampling Technique and Sample***

The study employed multi-stage sampling technique in selection of location governments, schools and respondents as representatives in the study. The schools were selected from three Local government areas across the three senatorial zones using simple random sampling technique.

From the three Local Government Areas chosen, 12 secondary schools (4 schools from each local Government Area) were purposive selected because it is not all the secondary schools that present candidates for both WAEC and NECO. Also, it is not all the schools that are approved as centres for public examination bodies. 600 Senior Secondary School (SS3) students were selected through simple random sampling technique. That is, 50 respondents were selected from each of the 12 secondary schools.

### ***Instrumentation***

The instruments used for data collection were questionnaire and check list developed by the researchers, and it is named "Students' Examination Malpractice Questionnaire". The Students' Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (SEMQ) had four sections. Section 'A' had items bothering on the students' Bio-data, Section 'B' contains items on students knowledge of examination, Section 'C' of the instrument bears items on educational factors capable of influencing examination malpractice. Section 'D' contains items on Cultural factors that may be responsible for examination malpractice. The checklist elicits information on the availability and condition of teaching-learning facilities/materials. The SEMQ instrument was subjected to Conbach's Alpha reliability estimate thereby giving reliability co-efficient of .922 while checklist had co-efficient of .861.

### ***Method of data collection***

Data for the study was collected by the two researchers, assisted by two research assistants who were trained on the use of the instruments. The two researchers handled the administration of the instrument in one each of the senatorial zones while the remaining senatorial zone was administered by the two research assistants. The instruments were



administered to students and collected at the spot after the successful completion by the respondents.

### *Method of data analysis*

The study employed two statistical tools for data analysis. Descriptive statistic (frequency count) was used to answer research question I which measures students' knowledge of examination malpractices. Research question II and III which bothered on relative and composite contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable were answered using Multiple Regression. This was done with the aid of SPSS computer analysis.

## **Results**

**Table 1: Senior Secondary School Students' Knowledge of Examination Malpractices in Percentage**

S/N	Statement	Agreed	(%)	Disagreed	(%)
1	I do copy from my mates during examination if I find any difficult question	421	(70.2)	179	(29.8)
2	I sometimes copy answers on parts of my body during examination	259	(43.2)	341	(56.8)
3	I once attempted having access to questions before examination date to reduce the stress of reading	309	(51.4)	291	(48.6)
4	I do ask my mates who are intelligent to explain difficult questions to me during examination	393	(65.5)	207	(34.5)
5	I once wrote on question paper and pass to my friends in the examination hall.	396	(66)	205	(34)
6	My teachers do explain to the class specimen sent by WAEC for science practical before examination date	393	(65.5)	207	(34.5)

The study revealed that senior secondary school students (WAEC/NECO candidates) have adequate knowledge of examination malpractice before seating for WAEC/NECO examinations in Benue State.

Table 1 revealed that students who may copy from their mates when they faced with difficult questions in examination hall, have the highest percentage of 421 (70.2%) among the respondents while only 179 (29.8%) of the respondents claim that they cannot copy from their peers even when faced with difficult questions. This is followed by 396 (66%) of the respondents who can write answers on question paper and pass to their friends in examination hall against 205 (34%) of the respondents who cannot write on question paper to assist their friends. This finding confirms that of Azuka, Alutul & Aluede (2006) who in their study on perceptions of secondary school students on examination ethics and malpractices in Benin Metropolis of Nigeria, revealed that the most common act of examination malpractice among students, is copying from one another in examination hall.

The findings of the study also revealed that 393 (65.5) of respondents agreed that they may ask their mates to explain difficult questions to them in examination hall while only 207 (34.5%) of the respondents disagreed that they cannot ask their mates to explain difficult questions in examination hall. This finding is in line with Toranyiin (2005) who observes that intelligent students always by passing answers across their friends or exchange answer booklets with friends in examination hall. He further reinstated that, during internal examination in most schools, some students who are criminally minded answer examination questions at home and summit during examination hours. These types of students are prepared to cheat in any kind of examination.

The study finally revealed that students who agreed teachers in their school do explain to class the specimen sent by WAEC before examination date, have the highest percentage of 393 (65.5%) among the respondents while only 207 (34.5%) of the respondents claimed that teachers in their schools cannot explain to students the specimen sent by WAEC before examination date. This is synonymous to Okwori's (2008) observation that most schools that are custodian centres for public examinations tend to expose the materials under



their custody to students. Orhungul (2004) likewise, corroborated the view of Okwori that, it is unethical to expose candidates to any suspected examination questions, specimen or related material before taking the said examination. This trend and develops attitude in the students to cheat in an examination.

**Table 2: Parameter Estimates of the Relative Contributions of Two Independent Variables to the Prediction of Examination Malpractices**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	19.154	1.196		16.014	.000
Educational Factors	.194	.069	.114	2.815	.005
Cultural Factors	.163	.054	.123	3.040	.002

Furthermore, the findings of the study revealed that cultural factors (gender discrimination, traditional occupation and chieftaincy affairs) have the potent significant contribution ( $b = .123$ ,  $t = 3.040$ ,  $p < .05$ ) to examination malpractices among SSCE candidates in Benue State. These candidates involved in examination malpractices because they valued their cultural practices such as going to farm before and after school hours with little or no attention given to their studies. Also, the culture of people in the state do not allow individuals to be searched by the opposite sex so, students used this influence to smuggle mobile phone into examination hall.

More so, other students employ all possible means to pass WAEC/NECO because the culture gives preference to those who are successful in their career. The study also discovered that most students cheat to WAEC because their culture gives preference to those who are successful in their career. This finding is in line with Zumve (2009)

who submits that the culture of a particular group of people determine their value system and way of life. It therefore means that, students' attitudes in examination is influenced by their cultural believes and practices.

The study also discovered that, educational factors (teachers' attitudes to work and school teaching-learning facilities/materials) have significant contribution ( $b = .114, t = 2.815, p < .05$ ) to examination malpractices among SSCE candidates in Benue State. It implies that secondary school teachers in the state have negative attitudes to work such as taking students to work on their farm land, not attending their lesson regularly, poor instructional delivery among others. Such attitudes on the part of classroom teachers do not give students confident and ample opportunity to write independently without cheating in examination hall.

The findings of this study are in consonance with Adike (2008) who in his study on the causes of students' poor performance in West African Examination Council (WAEC) from 2003-2007 in Kaduna State, discovered that poor school teaching-learning facilities/material and students' attitudes were significant causes of students' poor performances. This implies that variables influence students to cheat and pass examination with good grades.

However, this finding contradicts assertion by Aliogba (2011) who states that the provision and expansion of teacher training programs, school facilities and information technology by government as well as individuals and organization in Benue state enhanced effective teaching and learning in the schools. The finding of this study also contradicts the assertion by Ugoh (2009) who observes that, the 21<sup>st</sup> century teacher has changed his ability, teaching approach (skills) and general attitude towards teaching profession for functional education the contemporary society. Based on this finding, the proliferation of examination malpractices in secondary schools is not related to the quality of teachers in the new age. Students were also found to be given adequate opportunities (learning materials and sources of information) to interact and explore their environment.

**Table 3: Presents Regression Model Summary of the composite contribution of educational and cultural factors to examination malpractice among SSCE among candidates in Benue State**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.172 <sup>a</sup>	.030	.026	4.429

The result on table 3 shows that the contributions of Educational and Cultural factors have a multiple correlation (R) of .172. The cause of examination malpractices is linked with these independent variables. This implies that the 3.0% of the total variance in the causes of examination malpractice in SSCE among senior secondary school students can be explained by the combined contribution of the two independent variables built into this regression model as shown by co-efficient of determination  $R^2$  (.030). The result shows that the model is a good model.

This result confirms Agbe (2008) who submits that many ethnic groups in Nigeria have low value for moral behaviour when achievement of social status is at stake. However, the result tend to be at variance with Ukeh (2011), who reports that with the present development of education in Nigeria, the issue of school facilities is not longer a factor in examination malpractice.

**Table 4: Presents Analysis of Variance**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	358.114	2	179.057	9.127	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	11711.671	597	19.618		
	Total	12069.785	599			



More so, the study revealed that when educational and cultural factors are combined they contributed significantly to examination malpractice in SSCE among senior secondary school students [ $F(2,597) = 9.127$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. When these factors are considered on a relative stand, all the predictor variables (educational and cultural factors) have significant contributions to the present causes of examination malpractices in the state. This result also confirms Alarape and Onakoya (2003) who finds that cheating in an examination has become a means of academic progress in schools and also Denga (2009) who claims that lack of adequate school facilities expose students to examination facilities malpractice.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, the menace of examination malpractices in public examination (WAEC/NECO) among candidates in Benue State is caused by educational (teachers' attitudes to work and poor condition of school facilities/materials) and cultural factors such as gender discrimination, traditional occupation and chieftaincy affairs. Candidates of public examinations (WAEC/NECO) in Benue state indulge in examination malpractices because they are not properly taught by their school teachers and lack learning facilities/materials to interact with, explore and acquire the necessary information. The cultural beliefs, values and practices also influence candidates to cheat in public examinations. Therefore, to curb examination malpractices in public examinations in Nigeria, educational and cultural factors must be properly addressed for effective teaching and learning process.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are hereby made:

- i. The school administrators at all levels of education should ensure who are involved in all kind of examination malpractices should be expel and banished for five years from seating for another examination in the country.
- ii. School administrator should frequently supervise, inspect and monitor classroom teachers to ensure that teachers attend their

- lessons and use appropriate teaching methods for instructional delivery.
- iii. Government and school administrators should provide examination halls with adequate space where students can take examinations without copying from others.
  - iv. Government should ensure adequate motivation of teacher to enhance their positive attitude to work.
  - v. The educational curriculum planners should redirect school curriculum to achieve mastery learning at secondary school. This will help learners to develop their cognitive ability and self confidence to pass any form of examination without seeking external support.
  - vi. The West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) should provide verification machines or electronic devices to properly check every candidate going into examination hall, irrespective of sex or cultural belief and dogma.
  - vii. Government should make secondary education free and compulsorily for students across the country. This may help students from poor family background not to take up some traditional occupations as a mean to survive in school.

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