

**PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE ON  
STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY,  
AWKA IN ANAMBRA STATE**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study examined the Perceived Influence of Examination Malpractice on Students Academic Performance in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka in Anambra State. The design of the study was a descriptive survey. Two research questions guided the study. The population of the study was 1,922. The sample of the study was 397 comparing of 201 male and 196 female students from the selected faculties in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. The instrument for data collection was a researcher developed questionnaire titled "Perceived Influence of Examination Malpractice on Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (PIEMSAPQ)". The instrument was validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha technique which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.72. Mean (x) and standard deviation (SD) were used to answer the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study found among other things that: lack of moral development among students, Unfair treatment of students, Inadequate teaching methods, students low self-esteem, corruption and dishonesty in society, poor examination security, students fear of failure, insufficient assessment guidance and lack of effective preparation among students are the causes of examination malpractice and that erosion of ethical values among students, relying on dishonest means during examinations hinders the development of critical thinking skills, students involved in cheating do not fully grasp the matter, effects on students understanding, undermines the principles of academic integrity, dependence on examination malpractice weakens students'

resilience in facing academic challenges, lack of responsibility for one's education and toxic learning environment which hinders academic atmosphere are effect of examination malpractice. Based on the findings, the study recommended that School Management Board should integrate moral education programs into their curricula to foster ethical values and character development among students, addressing the root cause of examination malpractice and that School Management Board should develop and enforce robust institutional policies that uphold academic integrity principles, including measures to prevent, detect, and address examination malpractice effectively.

**Keywords:** Examination, Malpractice, Students, Academic Performance, Perceived, Influence

## Introduction

Examination malpractice, or the use of unethical methods to gain an unfair advantage during examinations, according to Bannister (2011), is a growing problem in universities worldwide. Examination malpractice, also known as academic dishonesty, refers to unethical or dishonest behavior related to examinations, tests, or other academic assessments. This can include cheating, plagiarism, copying, fabrication, and other forms of dishonesty that aim to gain an unfair advantage.

The Center for Academic Integrity (2016) noted that examination malpractice can have a negative impact on students' academic performance, and it also undermines the integrity and reputation of educational institutions. On an individual level, examination malpractice can lead to academic failure, disciplinary action, or even expulsion from the university. It can also damage a student's reputation and affect their future career prospects. On an institutional level, examination malpractice can erode

trust in the academic system, and make it difficult for universities to maintain their reputation for integrity and fairness.

One common type of examination malpractice, noted by Sutherland (2013), is cheating, which can take many forms, such as copying another student's work, bringing unauthorized materials into an examination, or using electronic devices to look up answers. Another common type of examination malpractice, according to McCabe (2016), is plagiarism, which involves copying or using someone else's work without proper citation or attribution. This can include copying another person's ideas, text, or data without giving credit. There are also forms of examination malpractice that involve falsifying or fabricating information, such as inventing sources or data.

According to McCabe and Butterfield (2016), there are various possible causes of examination malpractice, including pressure to perform well, lack of resources, and a lack of understanding of academic integrity. Many students feel immense pressure to perform

well in examination, which can lead them to resort to dishonest methods in order to get good grades. Second, some students may lack the necessary resources, such as time, money, or access to study materials, which can lead them to cheat or plagiarize. Additionally, some students may simply not understand what constitutes academic integrity and what the consequences of examination malpractice are.

In addition to the causes mentioned above, there are a few other possible causes of examination malpractice, outlined by Butterfield (2016). One is a lack of support from peers or family members, who may pressure students to cheat or plagiarize in order to succeed. Another is poor communication from the university, which can leave students confused about the rules and consequences of examination malpractice. Additionally, the culture of the university can play a role, with some institutions having a reputation for being more lenient towards cheating or plagiarism than others.

According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary 11th Edition, (2020), Academic performance, in general, refers to how well a student is performing in their studies. This can be measured in a number of ways, including grades, standardized test scores, and teacher evaluations. However, Dweck and Dweck (2011), noted that academic performance is not just about grades, but also about developing skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. Additionally, it is not just about performing

well in the short term, but also about the ability to continue learning and growing in the future.

One important aspect of academic performance that is often overlooked is motivation as observed by Dweck (2016). Students who are motivated to learn and succeed will often perform better than those who are not. This is because motivation can help a student persevere through challenges, take risks, and set goals for themselves. Furthermore, motivation can influence other factors that impact academic performance, like time management and study habits.

In brief, the problem of examination malpractice as noted by Dweck (2011), can have a negative impact on students' academic performance by reducing their motivation. This is because students who engage in examination malpractice may feel guilty or ashamed, which can lead to a lack of motivation to continue learning. Additionally, Dweck (2016) added that students may not feel the need to put in the effort to learn the material if they believe they can just cheat to get by. Furthermore, students who cheat may not develop the study skills and habits that are necessary for success in future courses and in their career.

One potential cause of student cheating in examinations, as observed by Ryan and Deci (2017), is a lack of motivation on the part of the lecturer. This could be due to a variety of factors, such as a lack of interest in the subject matter, a lack of enthusiasm for teaching, or a feeling of being overworked or

under-resourced. This lack of motivation can lead to poor lectures and assignments, which can in turn lead to students feeling unmotivated and disengaged from their studies. As a result, some students may turn to cheating in order to pass the course.

According to various studies, carried out by McCabe and Butterfield (2016), the prevalence of examination cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty at universities can vary greatly depending on the institution and the specific course. However, one study carried out by Lewis M. (2014), found that approximately 40% of students at Nnamdi Azikiwe University admitted to cheating on examination at some point in their academic career. Another study carried out by Clark and McCabe (2015) found that students who engage in academic dishonesty are more likely to receive lower grades, experience higher levels of stress, and have lower levels of satisfaction with their academic experience.

Nnamdi Azikiwe University's policies and regulations regarding academic integrity are outlined in its "Code of Conduct for Students". The code emphasizes the importance of honesty, fairness, and respect for others, and outlines the procedures for addressing academic misconduct. These procedures include sanctions such as a warning, suspension, or expulsion, depending on the severity of the offense. Additionally, according to Nnamdi Azikiwe university's official website (2020), the university has established a number of committees and bodies that are responsible

for implementing and monitoring the code of conduct. In addition to its formal policies and procedures, Nnamdi Azikiwe University has taken a number of other measures to prevent and address academic misconduct. These include the use of anti-plagiarism software, awareness campaigns, and training for both staff and students. The university also has a code of conduct for staff, which includes a commitment to supporting and upholding the integrity of the academic process.

At Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Awka, Anambra State, there is limited research on the extent of this problem and its influence on students' academic performance. The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceived influence of examination malpractice in male and female students at Nnamdi Azikiwe University and to examine its potential causes on students' academic performance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Examination malpractice, or academic misconduct, is a serious issue facing universities around the world. According to McCabe, Ariely and Bekker (2018), examination malpractice can take many forms, including cheating, plagiarism, and other unethical practices. These behaviors not only violate university policies and standards of conduct, but can also have serious consequences for the students who engage in them. Aside from the potential academic consequences, such as failing a course or being expelled from the university, potential repercussions of examination

malpractice. For example, it can damage a student's reputation and future career prospects, as well as their personal integrity. It can also lead to feelings of guilt, shame, and anxiety, which can negatively impact a student's mental health and well-being. Furthermore, it can have a negative impact on the academic community as a whole, by undermining trust and fairness.

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, like many other universities, has implemented policies and procedures to address examination malpractice. One of the main policies that Nnamdi Azikiwe University has in place is the Code of Conduct for Students, gotten from Nnamdi Azikiwe university's official website 2020, clearly outlines the types of behaviors that are considered to be academic misconduct. The code also provides information on the disciplinary process, including the sanctions that can be imposed for violation of the code. In addition to the code of conduct, the university has established an Office of Academic Integrity, which is responsible for monitoring and enforcing the code. The office also provides resources and support for students and faculty on the issue of academic integrity.

Despite the implementation of policies and procedures by Nnamdi Azikiwe University to prevent and address academic misconduct, examination malpractice remains a problem, and it has a negative impact on students' academic performance. According to Nnamdi Azikiwe university's official website 2020, there have been a number of reports of examination malpractice at Nnamdi Azikiwe

University, including cases of students cheating on examination, plagiarizing assignments, and falsifying research data. In some cases, students have been expelled from the university for engaging in these behaviors. In addition, there have been reports of faculty members failing to properly enforce the code of conduct, and a lack of awareness and understanding of the issue among both students and faculty.

This study aims to investigate the nature and influence of examination malpractice in male and female student's academic performance at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, as well as its impact on students' academic performance. The study will explore the causes and contributing factors to examination malpractice, and will make recommendations for ways to reduce and prevent such behaviors. The study was conducted through a combination of surveys, interviews, and document analysis.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to examine examination malpractice and its effect on the students' academic performance in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State.

### **Specifically, the study sought to:**

- 1) Determine the causes of examination malpractice on student's academic performance in Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Anambra State.
- 2) Find out the effect of examination malpractice on student's academic



performance in Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Anambra State.

### Research Questions

Three research questions guided this study. They include:

1. What are the causes of examination malpractice on student's academic performance in Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Anambra State?
2. What are the effect of examination malpractice on student's academic performance in Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Anambra State?

### Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis were formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the causes of examination malpractice on student's academic performance in Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Anambra State.

### Causes of Examination Malpractice in University Students

There are many factors that contribute to examination malpractice among university students. Some of these factors include academic pressure, lack of integrity, poor academic performance, and peer influence. Academic pressure is a major cause of examination malpractice, and it can take many forms. Lee (2017) noted that, there is

the pressure to achieve high grades in order to get into a good university or to get a good job after graduation. Second, there is the pressure to achieve high grades in order to maintain a certain GPA or to avoid academic probation. Finally, there is the pressure to achieve high grades in order to meet the expectations of parents or other authority figures. All of these pressures can combine to create a situation in which cheating becomes a tempting option for some students.

Lack of integrity is another major cause of examination malpractice. Callahan (2014), noted that, when students lack integrity, they do not place a high value on honesty or ethical behavior. Instead, they may be willing to do whatever it takes to get ahead, even if it means cheating. This can be caused by a variety of factors, including a lack of role models, a lack of moral development, or a lack of understanding of the consequences of cheating. Poor academic performance can also be a cause of examination malpractice as noted by Kohn (2014). When students are struggling in their classes, they may feel tempted to cheat as a way to boost their grades or to avoid failure. This can be caused by a variety of factors, including a lack of motivation, poor study habits, or learning disabilities. It can also be caused by external factors, such as the pressure to succeed or a lack of support from parents or teachers. Peer pressure can be a very powerful factor in causing examination Malpractice. Turkle (2019), noted that when students are surrounded by peers who are cheating, they may feel pressure to do the same in order to fit in. This pressure can be even stronger

when students are part of a group that encourages cheating, such as a study group or a fraternity or sorority.

### **The Effect of Examination Malpractice on Student Learning**

Examination Malpractice can have a negative impact on a student's learning, both in the short term and the long term. In the short term, Micheltore and Dynarski (2014) observed that students who cheat on examination may not fully understand the material, which can lead to problems down the road. The lack of understanding that can result from cheating can have serious consequences in the long term. For example, students who cheat on a math examination may not understand the concepts they were supposed to learn, which could make it difficult for them to complete future math classes. Additionally, Peter (2014) said that these students may not be able to apply the knowledge they should have gained from the class in real-world situations. This can impact their ability to get a job in their chosen field, and it can even put them at a disadvantage in everyday life.

Furthermore, Aronson (2019) said that cheating can cause students to develop a sense of learned helplessness, in which they believe that they cannot succeed on their own merits. This can lead to lower levels of motivation and even depression. Learned helplessness is a psychological phenomenon in which individuals come to believe that they are unable to change or improve their circumstances, regardless of their efforts.

When students cheat on examination, they are essentially telling themselves that they cannot succeed on their own. This belief can lead to a lack of motivation, as they feel like no matter how hard they try, they will not be able to succeed. In some cases, this can also lead to depression, as students may feel like they are not good enough or that they are a failure.

### **Methodology**

Descriptive survey design was adopted in this study. Nwankwo (2016), remarked that a descriptive survey is a very effective method for collecting information about a population. This type of design can be used to describe the characteristics of a group, such as their demographics, attitudes, or behaviors. The study covers Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State. Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka is a public university located in Anambra State, Nigeria. It was established in (1992), and is named after Nnamdi Azikiwe, a political leader who was instrumental in Nigeria's independence movement. The population of the study consisted of 1,922 students from the selected faculties. The sample size of the research study was 397 students, which made up of 201 male and 196 female students. The instrument for data collection in this study was structured questionnaire titled Examination malpractice and Student's Academic Performance Rating Scale (EISAPRS). The instrument consisted of section A and B. Section A covered an introductory letter and demographic profile of the respondents, while B was arranged into

ten research questions covering the three variables of the study. The responses were rated on a 4-Point Rating Scale of Strongly Agree (SA = 4 points), Agree (A = 3 points), Disagree (D = 2 points), and Strongly Disagree (SD = 1 point) respectively. The validity of the instrument was established by giving it to two experts from Educational Management and Policy, Department and one expert from Educational Foundation, Department in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, for critiquing and editing. These experts were requested to examine the instrument on the basis of relevance, items format, suitability and clarity. The reliability instrument was estimated using Cronbach's Alpha co-efficiencies. The reliability co-efficient

obtained for clusters A - D were 0.71, 0.80, 0.78, and 0.72 respectively while the grand reliability co-efficient of the instrument was 0.81s. This indicates that the instrument is reliable. Data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research question. A criterion mean of 2.50 was adapted since the instrument was modeled on a four point rating scale. The research question was answered using the real limit of numbers in the mean values as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 3.50 - 4.00, Agree (A) = 2.50 - 3.49, Disagree (D) = 1.50 - 2.49 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.00 - 1.49. Therefore, a mean of 2.49 was not accepted while a mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted.

## Results

**What are the causes of examination malpractice on student's academic performance in Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Anambra State?**

**Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Responses on the causes of examination malpractice on student's academic performance in Nnamdi Azikiwe University**

S/No.	ITEMS STATEMENT	X	SD	DEC.
1	Lack of moral development among students causes examination malpractice	3.00	0.48	Agree
2	Unfair treatment of students causes involvement of examination malpractices	2.84	0.54	Agree



3	Inadequate teaching methods causes involvement of examination malpractices	2.79	0.57	Agree
4	Students low self-esteem leads examination malpractice	2.66	0.47	Agree
5	Corruption and dishonesty in society causes involvement of examination malpractices	2.96	0.53	Agree
6	Poor examination security leads to examination malpractices	2.04	0.53	Disagree
7	Students fear of failure leads examination malpractice	2.71	0.88	Agree
8	Insufficient assessment guidance leads to examination malpractice	2.58	0.57	Agree
9	Lack of effective preparation among students causes examination malpractice	2.82	0.47	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.71</b>		<b>Agree</b>

In Table 1, the study revealed that responses of the respondents in items 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8, and 9 agreed that: Lack of moral development among students, Unfair treatment of students, Inadequate teaching methods, students low self-esteem, corruption and dishonesty in society, poor examination security, students fear of failure, insufficient assessment guidance and lack of effective preparation among students causes examination malpractice with mean scores of 3.00, 2.84, 2.79, 2.66, 2.96, 2.71, 2.58, 2.82 only item 6 recorded disagreed.

**What are the effect of examination malpractice on student's academic performance in Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Anambra State?**

**Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Responses on the effect of examination malpractice on student's academic performance in Nnamdi Azikiwe University**

S/No.	ITEMS STATEMENT	X	SD	DEC.
10	Examination malpractice contributes to the erosion of ethical values among students.	2.84	0.54	Agree
11	Relying on dishonest means during examinations hinders the development of critical thinking skills.	2.66	0.47	Agree
12	Students involved in cheating do not fully grasp the matter, effecting their understanding.	2.71	0.88	Agree
13	Examination malpractice undermines the principles of academic integrity.	2.58	0.57	Agree
14	Dependence on examination malpractice weakens students' resilience in facing academic challenges.	2.82	0.47	Agree
15	Examination malpractice contributes to educational inequality by creating disparities in skills	2.79	0.57	Agree
16	Examination malpractice strains the rapport between teachers and students.	1.87	0.60	Disagree
17	Engaging in examination malpractice fosters a lack of responsibility for one's education.	2.96	0.53	Agree
18	A culture of examination malpractice leads to a toxic learning environment hindering academic atmosphere.	2.72	0.88	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.66</b>		<b>Agree</b>

From the above table, all items served mean rating above the cutoff point with a grand mean of 2.66. It was concluded that examination malpractice contributes to the erosion of ethical values among students, relying on dishonest means during examinations hinders the development of critical thinking skills, students involved in cheating do not fully grasp the matter, effecting

their understanding, examination malpractice undermines the principles of academic integrity, dependence on examination malpractice weakens students' resilience in facing academic challenges, engaging in examination malpractice fosters a lack of responsibility for one's education and that culture of examination malpractice leads to a toxic learning environment hindering academic atmosphere. Only item 16 which was on examination malpractice strains the rapport between teachers and students scored low.

### Research Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the causes of examination malpractice on student's academic performance in Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Anambra State.

**Table 3: t-test of difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the causes of examination malpractice on student's academic performance**

Items	Category of Responds	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t.crit.	Decision
1	Male	.10	.39	95	.07	1.96	Not Significant
	Female	.06	.41	96			
2	Male	.82	.55	95	.75	1.96	Not Significant
	Female	.86	.54	96			
3	Male	.67	.47	95	.28	1.96	Not Significant
	Female	.65	.47	96			
4	Male	.73	.89	95	.59	1.96	Not Significant
	Female						

	Female	96	.68	.87					
5	Male	01	.58	.58	95	.09	96	1.	Not Significant
	Female	96	.58	.56					
6	Male	01	.83	.45	95	.09	96	1.	Not Significant
	Female	96	.82	.48					
7	Male	01	.67	.55	95	.25	96	1.	Not Significant
	Female	96	.65	.52					
8	Male	01	.62	.53	95	.27	96	1.	Not Significant
	Female	96	.61	.51					
9	Male	01	.57	.54	95	.23	96	1.	Not Significant
	Female	96	.66	.55					
	Average				.40		96	1.	Not Significant

The result of t-test analysis presented in Table3 indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the causes of examination malpractice on student's academic performance in Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Anambra State.

This is because from the table above, most of the items obtained a t-calculated value that was less than the t-critical value. The average t- calculated value of 0.40 was also less than the average t-critical value. Based on this, the researcher hereby failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the causes of examination malpractice on student's academic performance in Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Anambra State.

## Discussion

Research question one which was on the causes examination malpractice on student's academic performance in Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Anambra State. Based on the responses of the respondents as analyzed on the study, the following were revealed as the causes of examination malpractices: lack of moral development among students, Unfair treatment of students, Inadequate teaching methods, students low self-esteem, corruption and dishonesty in society, poor examination security, students fear of failure, insufficient assessment guidance and lack of effective preparation among students. The findings is in line with Lee (2017) who observed that, there is the pressure to achieve high grades in order to get into a good university or to get a good job after graduation. Second, there is the pressure to achieve high grades in order to maintain a certain GPA or to avoid academic probation.

In research question two, focused on the effect of examination malpractice on student's academic performance. The study discovered that examination malpractice affect students in difference dimensions which ranges from the contributes to the erosion of ethical values among students, relying on dishonest means during

examinations hinders the development of critical thinking skills, students involved in cheating do not fully grasp the matter, effecting their understanding, undermines the principles of academic integrity, dependence on examination malpractice weakens students' resilience in facing academic challenges, engaging in examination malpractice fosters a lack of responsibility for one's education and that culture of examination malpractice leads to a toxic learning environment hindering academic atmosphere. The findings is in agreement with Micheltmore and Dynarski (2014) who observed that students who cheat on examination may not fully understand the material, which can lead to problems down the road. The lack of understanding that can result from cheating can have serious consequences in the long term. For example, students who cheat on a math examination may not understand the concepts they were supposed to learn, which could make it difficult for them to complete future math classes. Additionally, Peter (2014) said that these students may not be able to apply the knowledge they should have gained from the class in real-world situations. This can impact their ability to get a job in their chosen field, and it can even put them at a disadvantage in everyday life.

## Conclusion



In conclusion, the research underscores the imperative for educational institutions to implement holistic approaches to address the pervasive issue of examination malpractice. By integrating moral education programs into curricula, fostering ethical values and character development among students can be achieved. Emphasizing teaching methods that promote critical thinking and deep comprehension of subjects is crucial in mitigating the temptation for dishonest behaviors during examinations. Robust academic integrity policies must be developed and enforced to effectively prevent, detect, and address instances of examination malpractice. Furthermore, resilience-building strategies should be prioritized to equip students with the necessary skills and mindset to navigate academic challenges with integrity. Cultivating positive teacher-student relationships is essential in creating a supportive learning environment conducive to academic honesty and student motivation.

These findings highlight the multifaceted nature of examination malpractice and underscore the need for comprehensive interventions to foster a culture of academic integrity within educational institutions.

### Recommendation

In the light of the finding, the following recommendations were made:

1. School Management Board should integrate moral education programs into their curricula to foster ethical values and character development among students, addressing the root cause of examination malpractice.
2. School Management Board should develop and enforce robust institutional policies that uphold academic integrity principles, including measures to prevent, detect, and address examination malpractice effectively.

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