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## Study of Student's Perception on Examination Misconduct in National Examination in Jalingo, Taraba State

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Abstract: This study surveyed of student's perception on examination misconduct in national examination in Jalingo, Taraba State. The study which adopted a survey research design has students from Taraba State University, Jalingo and Collage of Agriculture, Jalingo who had written National Examinations to form the population of the study. Students from the two (2) schools were administered questionnaires, the data collected was analyzed to answer the research questions. The samples of the study was on 120 respondents. The samples were randomly selected from the study area where students had previously participated in National Examinations. Descriptive statistical tool was used The study showed student's perception of examination misconduct during National Examination in the study area was of cheating and other forms of examination misconduct. Students saw and believed that non-implementation of examination misconduct sanctions was a factor that encouraged examination misconduct. Students should be counseled against negative perceptions and encouraged to study hard in other to pass their examination rather than believe they can pass using self-help.

Keywords: Students, Perception, Examination Misconduct, National Examination, Examination Malpractice.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the guidelines for exams and the explicit consequences for examination offenses in the National Examinations held in Taraba State and at numerous other educational institutions in Nigeria, examination malpractice has grown stubborn. Exam malpractice is an ongoing problem that has grown alarming in light of the linked problems. For instance, it renders many holders' or graduates' certificates completely meaningless, and it results in

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deceptive judgment because employers, school administrators, and leaders of industries base hiring and admission decisions on examination results or certificates that may be inaccurate or distorted by malpractice. Even those who hold these credentials are wearing borrowed robes; they are forgers who display credentials that are not actually theirs. Additionally, cheating during exams lowers academic standards, and lowering standards is a surefire method to mortgage a people's future, if not their present.

Examination malpractice is a dishonest activity that includes many forms of malevolent tactics used by unmotivated students to cheat during exams in order to pass the tests and receive high grades. This claim is consistent with Sooze's (2004) definition of examination malpractice as any illegal methods used by pupils to pass a test. Examinee fraud is one of the issues that Nigeria's educational system, and that of Taraba State in particular, has been dealing with for some time. It is a problem that undermines the validity of education at all levels and in different kinds of exams, whether internal or external. Some Nigerian students find it impossible to take a test without engaging in one type of exam fraud or another. The instances of examination malpractices have long piqued the interest of those involved in Nigeria's educational system (Adeoti et al., 2015).

According to many definitions, examination malpractice is any action that prevents the administration of a fair test and gives one candidate an unfair advantage over another candidate or examinee (Nuraini, 2008; Aso Rock, 2007). Examination malpractice, according to Madaubum & Madaubum (1998), is any unethical behavior connected to an examination that justifies the imposition of a number of sanctions against the alleged or convicted offenders. It entails any type of unauthorized and unlawful aid provided to a candidate or student during an exam (Nigerian Tribune, 2012).

The problem of examination malpractices has grown to be so concerning for all parties involved in the educational system that the Nigerian government passed Act 33 of 1999, also known as the Examination Malpractices and Miscellaneous Offences Act, to stop these undesirable behaviors. The acts of examination malpractice that have extended to most university universities and are a typical occurrence there have their origins in secondary schools, and they frequently continue over into the qualifying examinations required to attend academic institutions. This assertion is in line with the finding made by Adenipekun (2004), who noted that five important exam bodies—the Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB), the West African Examination (WAEC), the National Examination Council (NECO), the National Business and Technical Examination Board (NABTEB), and the National Teachers' Institute (NTI)—cancelled an average of 740,000 results due to widespread exam malpractice.

The persons engaged, the variety of styles and levels of skill used to conduct the exams, and the environment in which they are conducted all contribute to the prevalence of examination malpractice in Taraba State Secondary Schools. Parents, instructors, students, school administrators, and our society's emphasis on certificates are all considered to be variables that are either directly or indirectly collaborating to support this unethical behavior. Due to the expensive expense of the national exams in Taraba State, the desire to gain admission to local universities or other higher institutions, or simply blatant disrespect for the laws and regulations of the exams, these groups of people push students to pass by whatever means.

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Perceptions of Examination Malpractice in Taraba State National Examination by students or teachers vary from one person to the other. Depending on who is engaged, different people may have different opinions about examination fraud. Exam fraud is viewed differently by students and teachers than it is by teachers. Examinee fraud is viewed differently by different people. Some see it as a significant issue that needs to be handled in education and society, while others see it as a necessary part of taking exams that they would fail without. For test fraud committed by their teacher is a felony in the classroom. For instance, Kleiner (1999) confirmed that most pupils did not think cheating was always wrong. The act of cheating on an exam used to be considered dishonorable, but nowadays students celebrate it (Cornelius-Ukpepi, 2010). According to reports, students are willing to accept any reward—cash or otherwise—to pass a test for which they were not prepared (Olukotun, 1998).

Examination misconduct is an everyday occurrence, and students' willingness to accept it appears to be influenced by the general public's perception of the phenomenon. However, scientists have made an effort to investigate the possible causes or conditions that contribute to cheating. In a 1998 study, Anderman, Griesinger, and Westerfield investigated the reasons given by students for cheating and their propensity to do so. Additionally, due to increased pressure to achieve well, minor dishonesty that existed in childhood, such as casually glancing at a neighbor's test or unjustly playing a game, transforms into significant cheating in National Examinations. Some students who admit to cheating worry a lot about school, believe that their institution is performance-based, and believe that their courses are focused on extracurricular benefits. Students who cheat frequently engage in self-handicapping behaviors including making excuses or blaming failure to external factors rather than personal shortcomings. Cheating is more likely to occur among students who do not make an effort to utilize purposeful problem-solving techniques, who believe that extrinsic rewards are the main emphasis of their school and the pressure to achieve, as well as those who attribute failure to variables other than performance ability (Ukpepi & Enukoha, 2012).

#### **Statement of the Problem**

National Examinations in Taraba State are very serious due the important role it plays in the education of the students. It is a requisite examination that must be taken to qualify candidates in to the University or other Tertiary Institutions in the State to study any career of their choice. However, observations by key stakeholders in the education system had reported some cases of examination misconduct despite the fact that examination rules and regulations guiding the conduct of examinations, behaviors that constitute examination offences and prescribed penalties for examination offenders are carefully explained to the students before and during National Examinations. One will then therefore assume that these students are sufficiently informed about the rules guiding examinations, punishments for offenders and that examination misconduct or malpractice in National Examination in the State will be abated. This is not the case as some examination misconduct had been reported before and after the examination in National Examination in Taraba State. What then could be the possible causes? This study seeks to find out or survey student's perception on examination misconduct or malpractice in National Examinations in Taraba State University, Jalingo.

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#### **Research Questions**

- 1. What are the students' perceptions of examination misconduct in the study area?
- 2. What are the students' perceptions of examination misconduct National Examination?
- 3. What are the students' perceptions of examination misconduct by gender?

#### 2. METHODOLOGY

#### **Research Design**

The research design that that was used in this study was survey in nature. Survey research is one in which group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing the opinions or views of the sampled respondents considered as representative of the entire group in the study area.

### **Area of the Study**

The area of the study was Jalingo, Taraba State. Jalingo is geographically located in the North Eastern part of Nigeria, bordered by Adamawa, Gombe, Benue and Jalingo is the State Capital and the commercial heartbeat of the State and has two (2) tertiary Institutions; Taraba State University, Jalingo and Collage of Agriculture, Jalingo.

### **Population of the Study**

The populations of the study were the students of two (2) Tertiary Schools in the study area (Taraba State University, Jalingo and Collage of Agriculture, Jalingo) who had written National Examinations. Students from the two (2) schools in the study area were provided with questioners to collect data or information that was used to analyze student's perception on examination misconduct in National Examination.

#### Sample and Sampling Technique

The samples of this study was on sixty (60) respondents (Students) from each of the two (2) Government owned tertiary schools, making one hundred and twenty (120) respondents. This gave a total of one hundred and twenty (120) respondents (Students) from the schools in the study area. The samples were randomly selected from the study area where students had previously participated in National Examinations.

#### **Method of Data Collection**

A structured questionnaire was administered to the respondents or students in the various tertiary schools in the study area by the researcher. The respondents were required to respond to the items in the questionnaire independently at various times. Respondents who required more clarification on the items in the questionnaire were attended to by the researcher. Completed questionnaires from the respondents were collected personally by the researcher. Secondary data for the study were collected through the review of related literatures from books, journals and magazines.

#### **Method of Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistical tools were used, which include frequency distribution, mean,

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range and simple percentage. This showed the percentage of student's perception on examination misconduct in National Examination in schools in the study area.

And t-test was carried out to show the variation of the perception of students in examination misconduct in National Examination by gender using GraphPhad Prism 5.01 (2007).

#### 3. RESULTS

# Response to Research Question One: Student's Perception on Examination Misconduct in National Examination

Table 1: Student's Perception on Examination Misconduct in National Examination

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	UD	Total
1	I am very knowledgeable about the rules governing exams.	58.33%	16.67%	16.67%	8.33%	0.00%	100%
2	I must admit that I regularly disregarded the guidelines established to guide examinations	41.67%	25.00%	25.00%	8.33%	0.00%	100%
3	Reminding a candidate of a concept they might have forgotten during the exam is beneficial.	33.33%	25.00%	16.67%	20.83%	4.16%	100%
4	We are seated so close to one another during an exam that I am unable to stop another candidate from copying my work, even though I am aware that they are doing it.	41.67%	20.83%	16.67%	16.67%	4.16%	100%
5	Exam cheating by students is not their fault, especially when the exam's questions are challenging.	29.16%	25.00%	16.67%	16.66%	12.50%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

## Student's knowledge about the rules governing examinations

The result of student's knowledge about rules governing examinations is presented in Table 1. The study revealed that seventy (70) respondents (58.33%) strongly agreed that they were knowledgeable with examination rules or regulations governing National Examination in the study area, twenty (20) responded agreed (16.67%), twenty (20) responded disagree (16.67%) and ten (10) respondents (8.33%) strongly disagreed respectively. This result indicated that students have general knowledge about rules and regulations governing National Examination in the study area.

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### Frequency in violation of rules set to govern national examination

The result of frequency in violation of rules set to govern national examination is presented in Table 1. The result showed Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD) and Uncertain (UD) respectively. The result showed that fifty (50) respondents (41.67%) strongly agreed that they were frequently violate rules set to govern National Examination in the study area, thirty (30) responded agreed (25.00%), thirty (30) responded disagree (25.00%) and ten (10) respondents (8.33%) strongly disagreed respectively. This result suggested that students in the study area generally are at one point or the other involved in examination misconduct during National Examination.

#### Student's perception on cheating during national examination

The result of student's perception on cheating during national examination is shown in Table 1. The result suggested that forty (40) respondents (33.33%) strongly agreed that it is not bad for a candidate to be reminded of a point he or she forgets in National Examination in the study area, thirty (30) responded agreed (25.00%), twenty (20) responded disagree (16.67%), twenty-five (25) respondents (20.83%) strongly disagreed and five (5) were uncertain (4.16%) respectively. This result suggested that student's perception is that students can be helped during National Examination in the study area.

### Student's perception on cheating in examination due to sitting arrangement

The result of student's perception on cheating in examination due to sitting arrangement is presented in Table 1. The result indicated that fifty (50) respondents (41.67%) strongly agreed that student's perception on cheating in examination was due to their sitting arrangement in National Examination in the study area, twenty-five (25) responded agreed (20.83%), twenty (20) respondents disagree (16.67%), twenty (20) respondents (16.67%) strongly disagreed and five (5) were uncertain (4.16%) respectively. This result suggested that student's perception is that their sitting arrangement or how tightly they seat in National Examination aided examination misconduct among the students in the study area.

### Student's perception on cheating in examination due to difficult questions

The result of student's perception on cheating in examination due to difficult questions is presented in Table 1. The result indicated that thirty-five (35) respondents (29.16%) strongly agreed that student's perception on cheating in examination was due to the difficult nature of National Examination in the study area, thirty (30) responded agreed (25.00%), twenty (20) responded disagree (16.67%), twenty (20) respondents (16.67%) strongly disagreed and fifteen (15) were uncertain (12.50%) respectively. This result suggested that student's perception is that they have to cheat in other to pass due to the difficult nature of questions in National Examination in the study area.

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# Response on Research Question Two: Student's Perception on Examination Misconduct in National Examination

Table 2: Student's Perception on Examination Misconduct in National Examination

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	UD	Total
1	I am very knowledgeable	58.33%	16.67%	16.67%	8.33%	0.00%	100%
	about the rules governing						
	exams.						
2	I must admit that I regularly	41.67%	25.00%	25.00%	8.33%	0.00%	100%
	disregarded the guidelines						
	established to guide						
	examinations						
3	Reminding a candidate of a	33.33%	25.00%	16.67%	20.83%	4.16%	100%
	concept they might have						
	forgotten during the exam						
	is beneficial.						
4	We are seated so close to	41.67%	20.83%	16.67%	16.67%	4.16%	100%
	one another during an exam						
	that I am unable to stop						
	another candidate from						
	copying my work, even						
	though I am aware that they						
	are doing it.						
5	Exam cheating by students	29.16%	25.00%	16.67%	16.66%	12.50%	100%
	is not their fault, especially						
	when the exam's questions						
	are challenging.						

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

#### Student's knowledge about the rules governing examinations

The result of student's knowledge about rules governing examinations is presented in Table 1. The study revealed that seventy (70) respondents (58.33%) strongly agreed that they were knowledgeable with examination rules or regulations governing National Examination in the study area, twenty (20) responded agreed (16.67%), twenty (20) responded disagree (16.67%) and ten (10) respondents (8.33%) strongly disagreed respectively. This result indicated that students have general knowledge about rules and regulations governing National Examination in the study area.

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The result of frequency in violation of rules set to govern national examination is presented in Table 1. The result showed Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD) and Uncertain (UD) respectively. The result showed that fifty (50) respondents (41.67%) strongly agreed that they were frequently violate rules set to govern National Examination in the study area, thirty (30) responded agreed (25.00%), thirty (30) responded

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The result of student's perception on cheating during national examination is shown in Table 1. The result suggested that forty (40) respondents (33.33%) strongly agreed that it is not bad for a candidate to be reminded of a point he or she forgets in National Examination in the study area, thirty (30) responded agreed (25.00%), twenty (20) responded disagree (16.67%), twenty-five (25) respondents (20.83%) strongly disagreed and five (5) were uncertain (4.16%) respectively. This result suggested that student's perception is that students can be helped during National Examination in the study area.

## Student's perception on cheating in examination due to sitting arrangement

The result of student's perception on cheating in examination due to sitting arrangement is presented in Table 1. The result indicated that fifty (50) respondents (41.67%) strongly agreed that student's perception on cheating in examination was due to their sitting arrangement in National Examination in the study area, twenty-five (25) responded agreed (20.83%), twenty (20) respondents disagree (16.67%), twenty (20) respondents (16.67%) strongly disagreed and five (5) were uncertain (4.16%) respectively. This result suggested that student's perception is that their sitting arrangement or how tightly they seat in National Examination aided examination misconduct among the students in the study area.

### Student's perception on cheating in examination due to difficult questions

The result of student's perception on cheating in examination due to difficult questions is presented in Table 1. The result indicated that thirty-five (35) respondents (29.16%) strongly agreed that student's perception on cheating in examination was due to the difficult nature of National Examination in the study area, thirty (30) responded agreed (25.00%), twenty (20) responded disagree (16.67%), twenty (20) respondents (16.67%) strongly disagreed and fifteen (15) were uncertain (12.50%) respectively. This result suggested that student's perception is that they have to cheat in other to pass due to the difficult nature of questions in National Examination in the study area.

# Research Question Three: Perception of Students on Examination Misconduct by Gender Female students cheat more during examination

The result of female students cheat more during examination is presented in Figure 1. The result indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the perception of male and female cheating in National Examination following the t-test analysis at P < 0.05 where the difference between means was  $29.20 \pm 10.60$  for male vs females in the study area. This result indicated that male and female perception does not significantly differ by gender in the study area.

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Figure 1: Female Students Cheat More During Examination

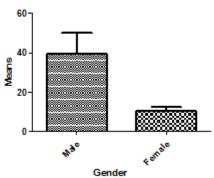


Fig. 1 Invigilators are more lenient to female students during examination

The result of invigilators more lenient to female students during National Examination is presented in Figure 2. The result indicate that there is no statistical significant difference between the perception of male and female students regarding invigilators more lenient to female students than male students during National Examination in the study area. The t-test analysis at P < 0.05 showed difference between means was  $37.50 \pm 14.70$  for male vs females in the study area. This result indicated that male and female perception does not significantly differ by gender in the study area.

Figure 2: Invigilators are more Lenient to Female Students During Examination

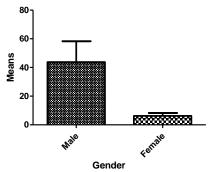


Fig. 2 Most males get away with cheating through crooked ways

The result of the perception that most males students get away with cheating through crooked ways during National Examination is presented in Figure 3. The result indicate that there is no statistical significant difference between the perception of male and female students regarding who gets away with cheating during National Examination in the study area. The test analysis at P < 0.05 showed difference between means was  $6.25 \pm 8.59$  for male vs females in the study area. This result indicated that male and female perception does not significantly differ by gender in the study area.

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Figure 3: Most Male Studentsget away wih Examination Misconduct

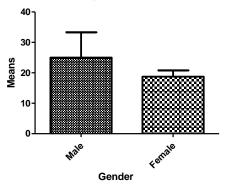
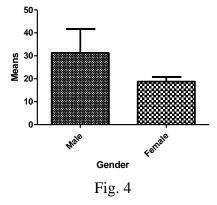


Fig. 3 Female students are not properly searched before the examination

The result of the perception that female students are not properly searched before the commencement of National Examination is presented in Figure 4. The result indicated that there was no statistical significant difference between the perception of male and female students regarding searching students before the commencement of National Examination in the study area. The t-test analysis at P < 0.05 showed difference between means was  $12.50 \pm 10.60$  for male vs females in the study area. This result indicated that male and female perception does not significantly differ by gender in the study area.

Figure 4: Female Student are not Properly Searched before Examination



#### 4. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The result from the study indicated that students have general knowledge about rules and regulations governing National Examination in the study area. This agrees with the findings of Oede (2014) and supported by the report of Adeyemi (2010). The result of the study also suggested that students in the study area generally are at one point or the other involved in examination misconduct during National Examination. This result is supported by the works of Cornelius-Ukpepi (2010). The result showed that student's perception was that students can be helped during National Examination in the study area. This result might be due to lack of confidence the students have on themselves and their study habits.

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This result is supported by the work of Tamunosisi (2015) who reported that the average Nigerian student does not want to give his/her studies the seriousness it deserves.

Students play away their time they fail to do home- works and assignments. They attend few or no classes at all yet, they belong to-the category of students who want to make good grades during exams. They therefore resort to short and easy means to success. This leads them to ways of cheating during exams, lack of self confidence in students leads to exam malpractice this also supports the findings of Shaire (2000) which says that the greatest causes of exam malpractice is the student ability and lack of confidence. The study also showed that the perception of students in that study area is that it was not bad for a candidate to be reminded of a point in the examination hall. This result agrees with the findings of Omede (2014) who reported that students responses showed that it is not bad for a candidate to be reminded of a point he/she forgets in an examination.

The result suggested that student's poor study habit is not responsible for examination misconduct in National Examination in the study area. This result contradicts the report of Adeoti et al. (2015) who reported that poor concentration during lectures and inadequate preparation for the examination would lead to examination malpractices among students. Result from the study indicated that students despite having knowledge on rules and regulations governing National Examination in the study area misbehave during the examination. This misbehavior leads to sharp practices in the examination. The study showed that students blame non-implementation of examination misconduct sanctions as a factor that encourage other students to engage in examination misconduct since they are aware that nothing will be done to offenders at the end of the day. Omede (2014) reported similar result.

The findings id in line with the report of Onokerhorage (2000) who asserted that all other things being equal, the school atmosphere should be suitable enough to prevent cheating and the like. The study also showed that the students agreed that the exam seating arrangement favours cheating in exams. According to Onuka and Obialo (2004), one of the causes of examination malpractice is overcrowding, and the usual examination technique is to leave enough room between each candidate when they are being examined.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

The study has shown that student's perception of examination misconduct during National Examination in the study area were of cheating and other forms of misbehavior or examination misconduct. This was partly responsible from poor study habit. Students see and believe that non-implementation of examination misconduct sanctions as a factor that encourage them to engage in examination misconduct since they will not be caught or action taken against them.

### Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made;

1. Students should be counseled in their various schools before any National Examination to have confidence in what they were thought in school and what they have studied for the examination.

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- 2. Furthermore, students should be counseled regarding perception that they have to cheat to pass National Examination in the study area and that female students might be given undue advantage than their male counterparts.
- 3. Students should be search thoroughly before they are admitted into the examination hall before any National Examination.
- 4. Students who were caught cheating during National Examination should be sanctioned according to the rules and regulations governing the examination to serve as deterrent to other who may want to cheat during examination.
- 5. The sitting arrangement in National Examination in the study area should be ideal for the examination with adequate space between and within their sitting area.

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