

Effect of Computer-Based Test (CBT) on Examination Malpractice in General Studies (GST) Examinations in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki

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Received: May 03, 2023; Accepted: June 01, 2023; Published: June 09, 2023

Abstract

This research work investigated the level of reduction of examination malpractice in General Studies examinations in Ebonyi State University through computer-based test (CBT) mode of examination. The population of the study consists of 2022 year 1 and year 2 students of Ebonyi satate university, Abakaliki. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. A sample of 200 students was selected for the study through stratified random sampling technique. A 15 item likert 4-points of questionnaire was used in data collection. It had reliability Coefficient of 0.70 determined using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The data generated was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions while the hypotheses were analyzed using chi-square and t-test statistical tools tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study showed that CBT effectively reduced examination malpractice in General studies examination in Ebonyi state university, Abakaliki. In-view of the result, the researcher has to recommend that both the government at all level and non-governmental agencies should join hands in encouraging computer-based examination system.

Keywords: *General studies (GST); Computer based test (CBT); Examination malpractice*

1. Introduction

At the creation of Ebonyi State in 1996, the Abakaliki campus of the then ESUT, was upgraded to Ebonyi State University College by Edict no. 5 of Ebonyi State 1998 still affiliated to ESUT with Prof. Fidelis Ogah, former ESUT Deputy Vice-Chancellor as the first Rector. In 1999, His Excellency, Dr. Sam Ominyi Egwu, 1st Executive Governor of Ebonyi State announced the upgrading of the University College to a full-fledged multi-disciplinary University. The establishing law (Ebonyi State University law No 7,1999) received executive assents of His Excellency on January 14, 2000, with Professor Fidelis Ogah as the first Vice-Chancellor

Professor Francis Igboji Idike took over from Professor Fidelis Ogah as the then Vice-Chancellor of the University in January 2009. He served as the Vice-Chancellor till 24th November 2017 when His Excellency Professor Chigozie N. Ogbu took over as an acting Vice-Chancellor. It was Prof. Francis Igboji Idike that introduced Computer Based Examination system in the university in 2016 following the challenges associated with manual conventional examination in use then. This action was also due to his passionate hatred for examination malpractice, especially the general studies courses.

Examination is the process of assessing understanding, knowledge, and academic ability of an individual within a given period. Examinations are arranged to evaluate the academic achievement of students and to know whether they have achieved a standard of academic learning and knowledge [1]. Nnam and Inah [2] opined that examination is a yardstick against which students or candidates' competence and progress are formally measured and appraised in the education sector. According to Kpangban, Ajaja and Umedhe, examination is an assessment intended to measure knowledge, skills, attitude, physical fitness or classification in many other topics such as beliefs. Omemu [3] noted that teaching and learning become more effective when the students are subjected to an examination process to determine the extent to which the students have assimilated the content of the instruction given and the teacher can also assess himself from the performance of the students. The outcome of examinations goes a long way to determine whether the objectives of the academic process are being met or not. Irrespective of the huge relevance of examination in academic process, a lot of factors have be-deviled its reliability, one of such factors is examination malpractice.

Examination malpractice is illegal behaviour by a candidate before, during or after the examination in order to achieve undue success easily. Adedojun [4] defined examination malpractice to include misconduct or any other act not in consonance with the rules and regulations guiding the examination with a view to obtaining good result by fraudulent means. Wilayat [5] noted that examination malpractice is any illegal act committed by a student single handedly or in collaboration with others; like fellow students, parents, teachers, supervisors, invigilators, printers and anybody or group of people before, during or after examination in order to obtain underserved marks or grades. Nwana [6] defined examination malpractice as behaviour contrary to a set of expected code of conduct or contrary to a set of ethics and norms exhibited in the cause of examination by person or group of persons. Examination malpractice has become a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the academic fabrics of students in Nigerian schools. This has created doubts on academic certificates issued to graduates from Nigerian schools. Examination malpractice comes in different forms which includes, coping, sorting, bringing foreign materials into examination halls, impersonation, exchange of scripts, use of electronic devices such as phones, calculators' collusion with invigilators, and exam officers smuggling scripts written outside into exam halls.

Innovative approaches in education have also given rise to innovations in examination malpractice as students can now send questions and answers to their colleagues in any part of the country through electronic means which negates the conduct of examination. Bolarine [7], Akanni and Odofin [8] opined that the great emphasis on certificate as a means of employment or progress from one point to the other makes students more desperate to acquire certificates by all means thus culminating in examination malpractices. Zakka [9] noted that the desire to pass at all costs is responsible for examination malpractices. School management and parents tend to push on wards to get their certificates and good grades by all means in order to secure employment or admission into the best higher institution. Ukpabi [10] indicated that the major causes of examination malpractices include, laziness of students, large population of students in many schools, desperation among students to pass

exams, wide and difficult syllabus in many subjects, inadequate preparation for exams, corrupt invigilators and supervisors. The adverse effect of examination malpractice in the standard of education in Nigeria cannot be overstretched. Students no longer take their studies seriously, creativity and resourcefulness among the students is thrown to air. Teachers are not respected anymore; employees are not competent in jobs they are employed for as a result of their certificate. This worrisome trend has warranted Ebonyi state university management to source remedies to examination malpractice in general study examination, because it could lead to a total collapse in the education system if allowed to continuously prevail.

Hence the introduction of computer Based Test (CBT) mode of examination. Computer Based Testing (CBT) mode has emerged as one of the recent innovative approaches to assessments by examination bodies against the Pencil and Paper Testing (PPT) mode. Computerbased test (CBT) is the taking of an examination/ test on computer instead of using Paper and Pencil. Computer-based examination/test can also be defined as test or assessments that are administered by computer in either stand-alone or networked configuration or by other technology devices linked to the internet or the World Wide Web [11]. Ojirinde [12] noted that the introduction of computer-based test (CBT) has led to reduction in exam malpractice in the country. It was noted that the introduction of the CBT was for the development of the Nigerian child and the betterment of all Nigerians desirous of improvement in the educational standard. Ojirinde further expressed that with CBT our schools will be forced to follow our school curriculum as it affects Information Technology and above all, the Board opted for CBT so as to ensure global best practice in the

2. Statement of the Problem

Examination malpractice is the greatest academic ill disturbing the Nigerian tertiary education system. Studies have shown that a lot of failures and anomalies happen in the careers of individuals because of the impact of the scourge of examination malpractice [9]. Many attempts have been made by government agencies, school authorities, examination bodies to redirect the Nigerian students from the menace of examination malpractice, but to no avail. Therefore, this study was carried out to determine whether the Computer Based Testing (CBT) technique will reduce malpractices in general study examination in Ebonyi State University.

3. Recommendations

Based on the results of the study the following recommendations are made: 1. The government, NGOs and private organizations should join hands with the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) to build CBT centers across the nation to enhance their carrying capacities during examinations. 2. The government and the board should employ and train more hands to enhance the smooth running of CBT mode of examinations. 3. Considering the success witnessed in public examination, CBT mode of examinations should be gradually introduced into institutions of higher learning especially through general studies to also reduce the academic crime rate.

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