

PERCEPTION OF ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN EXAMINATION CONDUCT AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION LECTURERS IN KWARA STATE

BY

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Abstract

The study was carried out to examine the perception of ethics and integrity in examination conduct among business education lecturers. Three research questions were raised for the study and three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and the population of the study was made up of 71 lecturers in the department of business education in Colleges of Education and Universities and lecturers of Office Technology and Management (OTM) in Polytechnics. Sample and sampling technique was not considered necessary since the population is manageable. The instrument used for the study was structured questionnaire validated by experts. A reliability test was conducted with the use of Cronbach Alpha which yielded reliability coefficient values of 0.76, 0.81, and 0.79 respectively and was considered adequate. Mean rating was used to answer the three research questions while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics at 0.05 levels of significance was used to test the null hypotheses. It was revealed that having academic integrity is important for several reasons, this include; having academic integrity means that others can trust you. The people with whom you deal with know that they can rely on you to act honestly and to do what you say you will do. In reality the three hypotheses tested were not rejected. It was recommended among others that; there is need for proper management of examination right from the time of its construction, through other stages. It was also recommended that Business education lecturers need to encourage academic integrity among staff and students of the department to serve as a good example to the entire school.

Keywords: *Perception, Integrity, Ethics, Examination, Business Education*

Introduction

Honesty and integrity are crucial qualities required of every mankind in achieving success and living a purposeful life. They are important principles in every sector of the economy, education sector inclusively. Honesty and integrity are important traits to have in our academic and professional life. In school, good student-teacher relationships come from mutual respect and trust, and those relationships can lead to great references and recommendations. In the real world, employers are more likely to hire someone who has a reputation for being honest. Failing to adhere to school's rules and regulations can negatively impact on chances of continuing education in the schools of higher learning and can even affect chances of obtaining employment of one's dream job. It is very important to note that learning how to implement honesty and integrity in the classroom in order to be the best student and person you can be is therefore very necessary (Kim, 2015). According to Connors (2016), honesty is going to take a person to places in life that one never could have dreamed and it is the easiest thing one can practice in order to be happy, successful and fulfilled. Connors (2016) further stated that honesty is not just about telling the truth. It's about being real with yourself and others about who you are, what you want and what you need to live your most authentic life. Honesty promotes openness, empowers individuals and enables one to develop consistency on how facts are presented. Honesty sharpens individuals' perception and allows us to observe everything around us with clarity.

Simply put, honesty has been seen as a facet of moral character that connotes positive and virtuous attributes such as integrity, truthfulness, straightforwardness, including straightforwardness of conduct, along with the absence of lying, cheating, theft, etc. Honesty also involves being trustworthy, loyal, fair and sincere. All students at all levels

are expected to practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty from the teachers, lecturers and a disciplinary sanction by the school, college or university. This therefore entail that all students need to be familiar with the Student Code of conduct. Kim (2015) noted that honesty is a valuable trait in a world full of false promises.

Acting in a manner consistent with the university's policies will benefit every member of the community, not only while attending the school, college or university, but also in any future business endeavours. With respect to this, all students must practice academic honesty. Academic integrity is generally understood to encompass firm adherence to a Code of conduct especially moral or artistic values. According to Riaz (2019), having integrity means doing the right thing, even when no one is looking. It means upholding the academic honesty policies set forth by the University and the College. It means doing your own work even if your friend offers you help on a take-home examination. It means writing your own papers and properly citing your resources. It means taking an online quiz without the help from your textbooks or friends, if the quiz is supposed to be taken that way. Also, it could mean reporting someone you suspect has cheated in an examination or other assignment. Having integrity means believing in the principles and standards of our community and making sure that behaviour is consistent with those principles and standards.

Riaz (2019) also noted that having academic integrity is important for several reasons. First, having academic integrity means that others can trust you. The people with whom you deal with know that they can rely on you to act honestly and to do what you say you will do. When people know that you believe in doing the right thing, and that your behaviour is consistent with that belief, they trust you. Additionally, trust is one of the key characteristics of a successful leader. These individuals develop good reputations by being honest, fair, and trustworthy, for example. Individuals who are successful in business understand the benefits of acting with integrity. Our world (including the business community) is based on our ability to trust each other. Therefore, developing good ethical habits now, while you are in college, will help you as you enter the workplace and face ethical issues (which most certainly will happen). Having academic integrity is important because it provides value to academic degree. Employers prefer to hire graduates whom they believe have high personal integrity. They would rather invest in developing the human capital of someone who will be a positive influence on the organization and on someone whom they can trust to carry out the company's mission.

Finally, having academic integrity is important because it can offer you peace of mind knowing that you believe in doing the right thing, and always try to act consistently with those beliefs. Acting with integrity can reduce a lot of unnecessary stress in your life, making you happier, healthier, and more productive. Price-Mitchell (2015) opined that students develop academic honesty when you build their moral vocabulary, respond appropriately to cheating, use meaningful quotes, and inspire them to believe in themselves. He therefore identified the five (5) ways to increase students' integrity which include; infuse integrity into the classroom culture, develop a moral vocabulary, respond appropriately when cheating occurs, use meaningful quotes to encourage students' conversations and help students believe in themselves

Teachers make integrity the norm in their classrooms in several important ways. They clearly articulate expectations about academic integrity and the consequences of cheating. But they go beyond the issue of cheating to create a culture that rewards success beyond grades. If students have only grades to measure themselves, then cheating is often a justifiable strategy to beat the system. If students are also rewarded for their courage, hard work, determination, and respect for classmates, they see and understand that the process of learning comes first. This kind of culture fosters integrity.

Develop the five fundamental values of academic integrity which are: responsibility, respect, fairness, trustworthiness and honesty. Incorporate the teaching of these five values into the curriculum and help students use the vocabulary to discuss a variety of historical topics and current events. While dishonesty and disrespect flourish in civil society, ask students to find examples of how individuals stood up for their beliefs and values in ways that made a difference for themselves or for the world. While teachers cannot control student behavior, they can respond with consistency when enforcing school and classroom policies. In a classroom culture that places learning first, dishonest behavior is a teachable moment. To help internalize learning, ensure that students reflect on and glean meaning from their behavior. Listen and show respect for their thinking, and then restate expectations that dishonesty is never acceptable in the classroom.

Famous quotes can be used as conversation starters, prompting students to reflect on topics related to integrity, moral development, and other attitudes that help them develop positive work habits and respectful relationships. Quotes can be used with students at almost any age. For older students, they are often used as starters for journal or essay-writing projects. Students who stand up for principles in which they believe have high degrees of self-efficacy. When studying students who developed integrity and a desire to become civically engaged, young people reported that their teachers helped them believe in themselves through their:

- Passion for teaching and giving back to the next generation
- Modeling a clear set of values and acting in ways that supported those values
- Commitment to giving freely of their time and talents
- Selflessness and acceptance of people different from themselves
- Ability to overcome obstacles and show students that success is possible. When young people learn to believe in themselves, dishonesty and disrespect no longer make much sense. Living with integrity will become a way of life.

Academic dishonesty has become a norm in some institutions of learning. The need to avoid committing the following common examples of academic dishonesty become very important:

- **Cheating** – The use of unauthorized materials, information, or notes in an academic exercise. Examples of cheating may include: using cheat sheets, copying material from other students, collaborating with other students without consent from the instructor, submitting the same academic work more than once without prior authorization from the instructor, using an unauthorized calculator on a math test, etc.
- **Plagiarism** – The reproduction of ideas, words, or statements of another person without acknowledgement. Examples of plagiarism can include: submitting a paper written by another student, purchasing and submitting a paper from an online source, failing to cite sources in a paper, etc.
- **Fabrication** – The invention of information, data, or citation in an academic exercise. Examples of fabrication in academics may include: making up sources for a paper bibliography, faking the results of a lab assignment, etc.
- **Deception** – The act of providing false information to an instructor regarding an academic exercise. Examples of deception in academics can include: giving a false excuse for missing a test, pretending to have previously submitted assignments, etc.
- **Complicity** – The act of helping another student commit academic dishonesty. Examples of complicity may include: allowing another student to copy exams, papers, or assignments, taking a test for another student, distributing test questions before the scheduled test, etc.

Not only can you face consequences from your school for committing academic dishonesty, but depending on your school's policy, the offense could stay on your academic record or transcripts for several years after graduation or possibly even permanently. Management of examination is an important aspect of the school examinations system. It is so important to the extent that a failure in any stage of examination management is a total failure of the school, college and nation's educational system. Examinations are generally used for evaluation of student's progress, evaluation of effectiveness of instruction, effectiveness of the teacher, and the teaching methods employed. Examination results are also used for selection of individuals for a particular educational institution, or specific type of employment. According to Kobiowu and Alamo (2005), formal examination can rightly be defined as the assessment of a person's performance, when confronted with a series of questions, problems, or tasks set for him, in order to ascertain the amount of knowledge that he has acquired, the extent to which he is able to utilize it, or the quality and effectiveness of the skills he has developed.

As a result of important roles that examinations play while in school, after school and in socio-economic life entirely, it is very important to manage examinations adequately, effectively and efficiently. If we want our examination results to be valid, reliable and also to maintain its value, we must see the management of examination as an important issue to be considered. It is very important to note that if ineffective management techniques are employed in the management of examination at any stage, it may result to various forms of examination malpractices. These ranges from leakage of examination questions, smuggling of examination answer scripts, bringing unwanted materials into the examination hall, such materials could be textbooks, phones and other hand written documents.

If at any stage of the managing examination process some ineffective management techniques are employed, different forms of examination malpractices may occur. These could be examination leakages, or examination cheating. In such circumstances question papers get into possession of examinees prior to the writing of the examinations and can be traceable to printing press or to persons connected with the custody of the examination question papers. It could also involve smuggling of examination answer scripts, examination candidates may have external assistance in taking to, or from the examination hall answer scripts duly done by syndicates in connivance with invigilators and/or supervisors and other examination officials. The situation could as well involve bringing unwanted materials into the examination hall; such materials could be textbooks, past questions papers containing numerous notes, or photocopies of prior prepared answers.

Though the teacher may construct the best examination questions, if the examination is not well managed right from the time of its construction, through other stages and also to the level of evaluation of the examination process, the purpose of the examination will be defeated since the quality of the examinations will not be ensured. Ineffective management of examinations at any stage is a social evil that can damage our society. It is regarded as cankerworm in our educational institutions and nation at large. It has very serious social, economic and political consequences. This is because graduates of various schools and colleges are the same people who fill different employment positions in our society that require trust-worthy and highly qualified individuals mostly from effective quality examination systems. According to Notice, Asabi and Jim (2018), Business education programme is concerned with teaching the skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary for a successful career in office and business world. Business education is an educational programme which involve acquisition of skills, knowledge and competences, which make the recipient proficient in the area of business (Salami, 2017). Business education is a wide area of study which is always being misunderstood and misrepresented or misinterpreted by general public both literates and illiterate. Generally, people usually look at business education from the micro point of view rather than the macro point of view. According to Oyedele and Oladiji (2016), business education is a systematic and organised programme of instruction aimed at transmitting business knowledge, skills, ideas, aptitude and technical know-how to recipients which is required for usage in business offices and for teaching others. Business education programme is an umbrella under which all business courses take cover.

Notice, Asabi and Jim (2018) concluded that business education is an indispensable tool in achieving sustainable development because of its relevance in providing the needed manpower in industries. The skill acquired by the recipient could help them to be self employed by establishing small scale business. By doing so, the sustainable development goals of ending poverty and promoting the well-being of individuals could be achieved through business education programme which will eventually lead to sustainable development. In the view of Monazite (2016), business education encompasses education programme for business, office occupation, economic understanding, entrepreneurship and it seeks to develop in the learners basic skills for personal use in the future. Business education programme is concerned with teaching the skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary for a successful career in office and business world. It therefore becomes necessary for business educators to manage all examinations effectively and efficiently in order to achieve the objective of such examination and the expected competencies mentioned above.

Statement of the Problem

Honesty and integrity is an important value which every individual is expected to acquire and practice be it students, teachers and all education managers, and stakeholders in education. Honesty and integrity goes a long way in the conduct and management of examinations at all levels, this is why it needs not be handled with levity. The outcome of ineffective management of examinations can result to leakage of examination questions, various forms of cheating during examination and altering of examinations results have become a great concern to business educators and which need to be looked into critically and find lasting solution to the menace. Skshidlevsky (2022) noted that a growing number of high school and college students all over the world are tending to opt for easy ways to get good grades, thus breaking the ethical rules of their educational institutions. Therefore, this paper determines the perception of business education lecturers on how to maintain honesty and integrity in the management of examinations in business education and proffer solution to such.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to determine the lecturers' perception of how to maintain honesty and integrity in the management of examinations in business education. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the perception of lecturers and school managers on how to maintain ethics and integrity in examinations in business education.
2. Determine the perception of male and female lecturers on strategies suitable for the management of examinations in business education.
3. To find out the perception of business education lecturers and school management on the extent of students adherence to examination code and ethics.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for the study:

1. What is the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on the ethics and integrity suitable for managing examinations?
2. What is the perception of business education lecturers and managers on suitable strategy for maintaining ethics and integrity when managing examinations?
3. What is the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on the extent of compliance to examination code and ethics?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were also raised for the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on the type of honesty and integrity required in examinations in business education.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of the perception of male and female business education lecturers on how to maintain suitable strategy for honesty and integrity in managing examinations.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of the perception of lecturers and school management on students’ adherence to examination code and ethics in business education.

Methodology

The study area is Kwara state, North-Central of Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population for the study comprises the entire lecturers of the higher institutions in Kwara state. All the lecturers in the department of business education in Colleges of Education and Universities and lecturers of Office Technology and Management (OTM) in Polytechnics were used for the study. Also the deputy provost/rector and deputy vice chancellor (Academics) represent the management. Sample and sampling technique was not considered necessary since the population is manageable. The instrument used for collecting data for the study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers. A four point rating scale of Very High Extent, High Extent, Low Extent and Very Low Extent as well as Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree was used. The instrument was tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha reliability method which yielded coefficient values of 0.76, 0.81, and 0.79 respectively. The 71 copies of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents but only 69 were collected back. Mean rating was used to answer the three research questions while Chi-square statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 levels of significance. The boundary limits of numbers were used to facilitate decision making for research questions.

Table 1: Distribution of Schools of higher learning in Kwara State/Population of the Study

S/N	Name of Colleges	No of Lecturers		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin	9	3	12
2	Kwara State College of Education, Oro	9	-	9
3	Kwara State College of Education, (Tech), Lafiagi	8	1	9
4	Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin	3	5	8
5	Federal Polytechnic, Offa	7	3	10
6	University of Ilorin	4	2	6
7	Kwara State University	8	2	10
	Total	48	16	64

Source: Researchers survey 2021

Results

Answers to Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on the ethics and integrity suitable for managing examinations?

Table 2: Mean Rating on the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on the ethics and integrity suitable for managing examinations

Respondents	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Lecturer	62	27.000	2.5969
School manager	7	28.333	2.5742
Total	69	27.667	2.5855

Source: Researchers survey 2021

The result presented in table 2 shows that the mean rating for the 62 lecturers has a mean of 27.000, standard deviation of 2.5969, for the school managers, the table indicates a number of 7 mean of 28.333, standard deviation of 2.5742. The entire group of 69 has a mean of 27.667 standard deviation of 2.5855. The above result indicates a consensus in the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on the ethics and integrity suitable for managing examinations.

Research Question Two: What is the perception of business education lecturers and managers on suitable strategy for maintaining ethics and integrity when managing examinations?

Table 3: Mean Rating on the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on suitable strategy for maintaining ethics and integrity when managing examinations.

Respondents	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Lecturer	62	22.0356	2.8036
School manager	7	21.0395	2.0395
Total	69	21.8985	2.0716

Source: Researchers survey 2021

Table 3 displays that the mean rating of the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on suitable strategy for maintaining ethics and integrity when managing examinations, for the 62 lecturers it has a mean of 22.0356, standard deviation of 2.8036, for the school managers, the table indicates a number of 7 mean of 21.0395, standard deviation of 2.0395. The entire group of 69 has a mean of 21.8985, standard deviation of 2.0716. The above results indicate a high consensus in the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on suitable strategy for maintaining ethics and integrity when managing examinations.

Research Question Three. What is the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on the extent of compliance to examination code and ethics?

Table 4: Mean Rating on the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on the extent of compliance to examination code and ethics

Respondents	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Lecturer	62	22.8600	1.9403
School manager	7	21.7060	2.1032
Total	69	22.8213	2.0218

Source: Researchers survey 2021

The result presented in table 4 indicates the mean rating for the 62 lecturers as 22.8600, standard deviation of 1.9403, for the school managers, the table indicates a mean of 21.7060, standard deviation of 2.1032. The entire group of 69 has a mean rating of 22.8213, standard deviation of 2.0218. The above results indicate a consensus in the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on the extent of compliance to examination code and ethics.

Test of Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on the type of honesty and integrity required in examinations in business education.

To test hypothesis one, responses to the various items on the type of honesty and integrity required in examinations in business education was analyzed with chi-square.

Table 5: Results of Chi-Square Tests on various items on the type of honesty and integrity required in examinations in business education as perceived by business education lecturers and school managers.

	Value	Df	Asymp. (2-sided)	Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	39.432 ^a	34	.000	
Likelihood Ratio	40.236	34	.000	
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.198	1	.000	
N of Valid Cases	69			

*Significant P- value < 0.05 Source: Researchers survey 2021

To take a look at the column on the far right of the output table 5. The Asymptotic Significant value or P value was 0.000, this value determine the mean rating of the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on the type of honesty and integrity required in examinations in business education. Since the value is less than 0.05 level of significant we can therefore say that there was no significant difference in the mean rating of the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on the type of honesty and integrity required in examinations in business education.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of the perception of male and female business education lecturers on how to maintain suitable strategy for honesty and integrity in managing examinations.

Table 6: Results of Chi-Square Tests on how to maintain suitable strategy for honesty and integrity in managing examinations as perceived by the male and female business education lecturers.

	Value	Df	Asymp. (2-sided)	Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	54.234 ^a	51	.000	
Likelihood Ratio	44.310	51	.000	
Linear-by-Linear Association	.018	1	.000	
N of Valid Cases	69			

*Significant P- value < 0.05 Source: Researchers survey 2021

The asymptotic significant value from table 6 revealed 0.000 this value determine the mean rating of male and female business education lecturer on how to maintain suitable strategy for honesty and integrity in managing examinations. Since the value revealed that there was a significant as P – value of 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. Which means there is no significant difference in the mean rating of the perception of male and female business education lecturers on how to maintain suitable strategy for honesty and integrity in managing examinations.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of the perception of lecturers and school management on students’ adherence to examination code and ethics in business education.

Table 7: Chi-Square Tests on students’ adherence to examination code and ethics in business education as perceived by the lecturers and school management.

	Value	Df	Asymp. (2-sided)	Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	180.910 ^a	34	.000	
Likelihood Ratio	219.550	34	.000	
Linear-by-Linear Association	74.521	1	.000	
N of Valid Cases	69			

*Significant P- value < 0.05 Source: Researchers survey 2021

The asymptotic significant value from table 7 revealed 0.000 this value determine the mean rating of lecturers and school management on students’ adherence to examination code and ethics in business education Since the value revealed that there was a significant as P – value of 0.000 which is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. Which means there is no significant difference in the mean rating of the

perception of lecturers and school management on students' adherence to examination code and ethics in business education.

Discussion

The study revealed clearly in table 2 above that there is consensus in the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on the type of honesty and integrity suitable for managing examinations. The study also indicated in table 3 that there is a high consensus in the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on suitable strategy for maintaining honesty and integrity when managing examinations. This is in line with Price-Mitchell (2015) who concluded that students develop academic honesty when you build their moral vocabulary, respond appropriately to cheating, use meaningful quotes, and inspire them to believe in themselves. The study also revealed a consensus in the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on the extent of compliance to examination code and ethics. The result obtained from table 4 shows that there was no significant difference in the mean rating of the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on the type of honesty and integrity required in examinations in business education. The result of the hypothesis tested in table 5 indicated clearly that there was no significant difference in the mean rating of the perception of business education lecturers and school managers on the type of honesty and integrity required in examinations in business education. This is because the P value is less than 0.05 level of significant. In reality the three hypotheses tested were not rejected. This is because the result obtained (P value) is less than the level of significant. This is evident in Riaz (2019) when he noted that having academic integrity is important for several reasons. First, having academic integrity means that others can trust you. The people with whom you deal with know that they can rely on you to act honestly and to do what you say you will do. When people know that you believe in doing the right thing, and that your behaviour is consistent with that belief, they trust you.

Conclusion

This paper looked into the lecturers' perception of how to maintain honesty and integrity in the management of examination in business education. It was revealed that having academic integrity is important for several reasons. First, having academic integrity means that others can trust you. The people with whom you deal with know that they can rely on you to act honestly and to do what you say you will do. When people know that you believe in doing the right thing, and that your behaviour is consistent with that belief, they trust you. In essence, we can however say that there is nothing better than living a life of integrity where ever we find ourselves and more importantly in the academic environment.

Recommendations

Base on the findings of this paper, the following recommendations are made:

1. There is need for lecturers of business education in various Colleges of Education to engage in the training and re-training in the management of examinations.
2. There is need for proper management of examination right from the time of its construction, through other stages and also to the level of evaluation of the examination process otherwise the purpose of the examination will be defeated since the quality of the examinations will not be ensured.
3. To avoid all forms of examination malpractices, effective management techniques should be employed in the management of examination at any stage.
4. Business education lecturers need to encourage academic integrity among staff and students of the department to serve as a good example to the entire school.

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