

# ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGIES FOR CONTROLLING ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT IN EBONYI STATE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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## **Abstract**

The study investigated the causes of academic misconduct in Ebonyi state tertiary institutions and administrative strategies to be adopted for controlling them. Questionnaire was used in the study to elicit the opinions of the respondents. The population for the study was 3809 academic staff in Ebonyi state tertiary institutions, while 450 academic staff formed the sample. The study was guided by two research questions. The research instrument was validated by five validators. Data collected were statistically analyzed using mean statistic. The study found many causes of academic misconduct and discovered many administrative strategies for controlling academic misconduct in Ebonyi state tertiary institutions. The study ended with some useful recommendations for tackling the problem of academic misconduct.

## **Introduction**

Academic misconduct in tertiary institutions has become a common thing that almost every staff both academic and non-academic is involved in. It is a social cankerworm working against academic standard in our tertiary institutions. According to Umeh (1996), academic misconduct is any action principally committed by workers in educational institutions and examining bodies, which results in the compromise of academic standard.

Thus, any fraudulent act by any worker in an educational institution that works against quality education could be termed academic misconduct.

There are various forms of academic misconduct in tertiary institutions in Ebonyi State of Nigeria. First and foremost, there exists, corporate academic misconduct. This is the most serious and debasing form of academic misconduct in tertiary institutions. This involves dishonesty leading to self-deceit. Obviously what is being practiced in our tertiary institutions today, for instance during accreditation of programmes, these institutions of higher learning borrow pieces of equipment and personnel to enable them pass the accreditation exercise. This is an act of academic misconduct.

After accreditation all the borrowed items and personnel are returned, then they turn round and cry that the institutions are poorly financed by the government, and so cannot provide the needed facilities for proper training of the students. This is the highest academic misconduct in our tertiary institutions (Umeh, 1996).

Tertiary institutions do collect money from students for services such as sports, screening, laboratory, library etc, but these institutions of higher learning never use the money collected for these purposes. This is dishonesty and academic misconduct.

Secondly, there exists academic misconduct committed by lecturers during lectures. These among others include: (1) Persistent lateness to scheduled lectures or arbitrary postponement of scheduled lecturer. (2) Writing lecture notes with the institutions' examination answer booklets. (3) Inability to communicate expertly to the students, the key elements of the lecture. (4) Getting angry and abusive when students ask intelligent question which he cannot handle immediately. (5) Abusing, insulting and threatening students with a failure if they refuse to comply with his demands. (6) Telling irrelevant but interesting stories during the lecture period to cover his ill- preparedness for the lecture. (7) Refusing to teach students until one month to the examination and to embark on the so- called block teaching, thus disrupting other lectures in the process. (8) Making the purchase of his course material compulsory. (9) Refusing to give course assessment and returning grades for in-course assessment and refusing to mark the submitted assignment. (10) Awarding marks in proportion to the amount of money paid by the students. (11) Collecting money .from students in order to give in-course assessment. (13) Collecting money from students before accepting their take- home assignments (Bayo, 2002).

Another form of academic misconduct is one committed during examinations. This type of academic misconduct according to Onyechere (1996) include among others:

1. Lateness to scheduled examination or refusal to invigilate a scheduled examination assigned to you.
2. Unauthorized change in the time and venues of a scheduled examination.
3. Refusing to see that all the students sign the examination attendance register at the appropriate time.
4. Using unauthorized persons such as students, friends, non-tutorial staff etc to invigilate examinations or carry examination answer booklets to and from the examinations venues:
5. Colluding with students to commit examination malpractice by refusing to take action when students are cheating.
6. Teaching students' answer booklets in the examination hall for whatever reason.
7. Refusing to forward cases of examination malpractice to the appropriate committee for whatever reason.
8. Conducting illegal examination, that is an examination not authorized, and not scheduled by the appropriate organ of the institution.
- 9 Refusing to submit examination question to your head of department for moderation by the departmental examination board.

Furthermore, the forth form of academic misconduct found in our tertiary institutions as observed by Aliyu (1991), is committed by lecturers during processing of results. This is committed in various ways to include among others:

1. Refusing to mark the answer scripts and turn in the results within the stipulated period.
2. Marking and submitting the results in piecemeal as students settle you.
3. Submitting result without surrendering the marked scripts to the head of department.
4. Awarding marks without marking the scripts.
5. Using unauthorized persons, students, friends etc to mark scripts and compile the result.
6. Publishing results after compilation before approval by the appropriate organs of the institution.
7. Returning grades for students whose answer scripts were destroyed in the examination hall.
8. Accepting answer script not written in the examination hall in exchange for anything.
9. Not returning grades for those students who did not buy your course material and declaring such scripts missing.

Worse still, there exists a general academic misconduct by lecturers, as has been observed by Muhammadu (1995), to include the following:

1. Plagiarizing other people's work and presenting such to their students as a course material for them to buy.
2. Asking students to launch their new car in return for a percentage of examination marks.
3. Asking students to contribute money for the funeral of their parents in return for extra marks in the examination.
4. Accepting gifts from students as inducement in order to award underserved grades or change grades on approved results.
5. Assigning full-fledge courses to graduate assistants to teach, even final year course.
6. Refusing to attend departmental or faculty board meetings etc.

Last but not the least of the forms of academic misconduct in our tertiary institutions as has been observed by Umeh (1996), is the one committed by non-academic staff. That is administrative staff. These sets of workers often involve themselves in the following acts of misconduct:

1. Demanding and accepting money from ex-students before processing and issuing them with transcripts.
2. Accepting bribes from ill- qualified candidates in order to smuggle their names into the approved admission list.
3. Participating in illegal admission rackets.

4. Changing scores and grades in the student's record for money.
5. Demanding money from students before accepting their completed registration forms and files.
6. Changing grades on approved official results while in transit from the department to the registry etc.

#### **Effects of Academic Misconduct on the Quality of Education**

1. The existence of academic misconduct makes weak students to even score higher marks in examination than brighter students and this weakens the brighter students.
2. The existence of academic misconduct in our tertiary institutions encourages the admission of weak students into our higher institutions of learning who are not supposed to be in higher institution.
3. It turns out students who cannot defend their certificates.
4. It drags the institution to mud and thus, reduces the image of the institution before the public.
5. It does not encourage students to work very hard.

The nature and magnitude of academic misconduct in our tertiary institutions today is a task for thought to any patriotic Nigerian. It is a clog on the wheel of higher education in Ebonyi state and thus, requires strategies for solving the identified ones.

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

The level of academic misconduct in tertiary institutions in Ebonyi state of Nigeria is embarrassing to every patriotic Nigerian. It covers from top management staff down to the least staff. Many staff are involved in one way or the other. The custodians of education quality have turned round to become the worst enemy to the quality of education in our tertiary institutions. Lecturers have turned round to enslave the quality of education by allowing themselves to be bought over by students during and after examinations. The sales of scores and grades to students have gone a long way to injure the quality of higher education in Ebonyi state. Thus, the problem of this study therefore is how to salvage the quality of higher education in Ebonyi state through the adoption of some strategies for controlling academic misconduct in our tertiary institutions.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to determine various strategies that can be adopted for controlling academic misconduct in tertiary institutions in Ebonyi State of Nigeria.

#### **Research Questions**

This study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the causes of academic misconduct in our tertiary institutions?
2. What are the administrative strategies that could be adopted to control academic misconduct in our tertiary institutions?

#### **Methodology**

A descriptive survey design was used for the study because it sought the opinions of the sampled respondents. The population comprised of 1809 academic staff in Ebonyi state tertiary institutions. 450 academic staff formed the sample.

One instrument was developed by the researcher and used. Specifically, section one of the questionnaire covered the causes of academic misconduct. Section two of questionnaire covered administrative strategies that could be adopted to control academic misconduct in our tertiary institutions. This was administered on 450 academic staff drawn from Ebonyi state university, Abakaliki and Ebonyi state College of Education, Ikwo.

The instrument was validated by three lecturers from the Faculty of Education Ebonyi state University, Abakaliki and two lecturers from Chemistry Department of Ebonyi state College of Education, Ikwo.

#### **Reliability of the Instrument**

A test - retest statistic method was utilized to test the reliability of the instrument, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The correlation coefficient was 0.79 showing that the instrument was reliable. Questionnaire instrument for this study was structured along the Likert format. Each response category was given a

corresponding nominal value as shown below: Strongly Agree = SA — 4 points. Agree = A = 3 points. Disagree = D= 2 Points. Strongly Disagree -SD= 1 point. For an item to be accepted it must score a mean of 2.50 and above, while a mean score of less than 2,5 would be rejected. Data collected were statistically analyzed using mean.

Results /Data Analysis:

Research Question One: What are the causes of academic misconduct in Ebonyi state tertiary institutions?

**Table 1 :Causes of Academic Misconduct in Ebonyi State Tertiary Institution**

S/N	ITEM	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	NO.	FX	X	Decision
1.	Students' inordinate ambition to get high grade.	250	150	30	20	450	1530	3.40	Accepted
2.	Students' unseriousness in pursuit of academic excellence.	230	200	15	5	450	1555	3.46	Accepted
3.	Existence of corruption every sector of the economy.	300	100	35	15	450	1590	3.53	Accepted
4.	Students' mounted pressure on academic staff for help after examination	270	160	20		450	1600	3.56	Accepted
5.	Collection of illegal fees by the education managers induces other staff to do the same,	200 5	201	29	15	450	1496	3.32	Accepted
6.	Excess work load on lecturers makes some of them to commit academic misconduct,	208	191	31	20	450	1456	3.30	Accepted
7.	Unseriousness on the part of some lecturers makes them to indulge in academic misconduct.	306	111	20	13	450	1610	3.58	Accepted
8.	Poor monitoring of administrative officers by their super ordinates makes them to perpetrate or perpetuate academic misconduct.	341	101	8		450	1683	3.74	Accepted
9.	The syndrome of get rich quick in Nigeria calls for perpetuation of academic misconduct.	411	20	11	8	450	1734	3.85	Accepted
10.	Selfishness on the part of the officer is another factor responsible for academic misconduct.	391	49	8	2	450	129	3.84	Accepted
11.	Poor teaching could	311	109	25	5	450	1626	3.61	Accepted
12.	Poor handling of examination materials especially answer scripts could cause academic misconduct.	210	176	44	20	450	1476	3.28	Accepted
13.	Being too friendly with students could cause academic misconduct	315	101	24	10	450	1621	3.60	Accepted
14.	Poor supervision over the activities of lecturers by the concerned authorities.	391	50	9		450	1732	3.85	Accepted

15.	General decline disciplinary behaviour Nigeria is a good cause academic misconduct	312	65	50	23	450	1566	3.48	Accepted
1C.	Existence of admission vacancies in almost nil departments	214	20!	2.1	ID	450	1519	3.38 ,	Accepted

Results from the analysis in table 1 above show that all the 16 items in Table 1 were all rated very high and accepted by the respondents as causes of academic misconduct in Ebonyi State tertiary institutions.

Research Question 2: What administrative strategies could be adopted for controlling academic misconduct in Ebonyi state tertiary institution?

**Table 2; Administrative Strategies for Controlling Academic Misconduct in Ebonyi State**

S/N	ITEM	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1 •	NO.	1-X	X	Decision
t.	Lecturers should submit their results, to their hand of departments not later than one month alter the semester's	300	105	30	15	450	1590	3.53	Accepted
2.	Continues assessment scores should be submitted to the HOD a week before the commencement of (lie semester's examination	231	180	29	20	450	1542	3.43	Accepted
3.	Examination answer scripts should be stamped and signed, not by the very course lecturer.	1971	199	30	24	450	1469	3.27	Accepted •
4.	List of the registered students for each course should be made available to the HOD and course lecturer before the examination day/date	210	180	20	40	450	1460	3.25	Accepted
5-.	Marked scripts should be sent to the HOD along with the results and marking scheme/question papers	321	101	8		3450 •	1683	3.74	Accepted
6.	A panel should see how the scripts were marked	301	97	20	32	450 ,	1567	3.48 .	Accepted
7.	The HOD should ensure that the ' continuous assessment score submitted to him before ,the commencement of the examination arc still	337	89	11	13-	450	1650	3.67	Accepted

	the same with those recorded against each student.								
8.	Answer scripts found not dully stamped and signed should not be acknowledged by the examination committee	329	96	17	8	450	1646	3.66	Accepted
9.	A semester's examination results should be published within two weeks after submitting to the HOD.	319	91	31	9	450	1620	3.60	Accepted
10.	Lecturers should enforce the NUC 75% attendance regulation.	211	101	80	58	450	1345	3.03	Accepted
11.	Lecturers should not be allowed free access to examination answer scripts.	309	102	19	20	450	1600	3.56	Accepted
12.	A copy of student attendance list during examination should be kept by the HOD while the course lecturer keeps a copy.	199	197	20	34	450	1461	3.25	Accepted
13.	Invigilators should ensure that every student submits his/her answer script before leaving the examination hall by signing out after submission.	319	89	31	11	450	1616	3.59	Accepted
14.	Lecturers should be held responsible for student's missing scripts.	211	109	31	99	450	1332	2.96	Accepted
15.	Lecturers should not be overloaded with academic work.	353	97			450	1703	3.79	Accepted
16.	Graduate assistants should not be given a full course to teach especially final year courses.	380	70			450	1730	3.85	Accepted
17.	Any. staff who tries to truncate any of the above measures should be made to forfeit his/her one month salary	208	171	41	30	450	1457	3.24	Accepted

Results from the analysis in table 2, show that all the 17 items in Table 2 were all accepted by the respondents as good administrative strategies that could be adopted for controlling academic misconduct in Ebonyi State tertiary institutions.

### Findings of the Study

The findings of the study show: 1. That the following are the causes of academic misconduct in Ebonyi state tertiary institutions.

- a. Students' inordinate ambition to get high grade.
- b. Students' unseriousness in pursuit of academic excellence.
- c. Existence of corruption in every sector of the economy.
- d. Students' mounted pressure on academic staff for help after examination.
- e. Collection of illegal fees by the education managers.

- f. Excess workload on lecturers.
  - g. Unsersiousness on the part of some lecturers.
  - h. Poor monitoring of administrative officers by their super ordinates.
  - i. The existence of get rich quick; syndrome in Nigeria.
  - j. Selfishness on the part of the officers/lecturers,
  - k. Poor teaching by some lecturers.
  - l. Poor handing of examination materials especially answer scripts by the concerned personnel.
  - m. Being too friendly with students by lecturers.
  - n. Poor supervision over the activities of lecturers by the concerned authorities.
  - o. General decline in disciplinary behaviour in Nigeria.
  - p. Existence of limited admission vacancies.
2. That the following administrative strategies should be adopted to control academic misconduct in Ebonyi State tertiary institutions:
- a. Lecturers should submit their results to their head of departments not later than one month after the semester's examinations.
  - b. Continuous assessment scores should be submitted to the head of departments a week before the commencement of the semester's examination.
  - c. Examination answer scripts should be stamped and signed not by the very course lecturer.
  - d. The list of registered students for each course should be made available to the head of department and the course lecturer before the examination day/date.
  - e. Marked scripts should be submitted to the head of department along with the results and marking scheme / question paper.
  - f. A panel should observe how the scripts were marked.
  - g. The head of department should crosscheck the scores of continuous assessment earlier submitted to him with the ones recorded for each student on the result sheet.
  - h. Answer scripts found not dully stamped and signed should not be acknowledged by the examination committee or screening panel,
  - l. A semesters' examination results should be published within two weeks after submitting them to the head of department.
  - j. Lecturers should enforce the NUC 75% attendance regulation.
  - k. Lecturers should not be allowed free access to examination answer scripts.
  - i. A copy of student attendance list during examination should be kept by the head of department, while the course lecturer keeps a copy.
  - m. Invigilators should ensure that every student submits his/her answer script before leaving the examination hall by signing out after submission.
  - n. Lecturers should be held responsible for students' missing scripts.
  - o. Lecturers should not be over loaded with academic work.
  - p. Graduate assistants should not be given a full course to teach especially final year courses,
  - q. Any staff who tries to truncate any of the above measures should be made to forfeit his/her one month salary.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

Strictly speaking, research question one, Table one, items 1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10,1 1,12,14, and 15 indicated that indisciplinary behaviours are responsible for academic misconduct in Ebonyi State tertiary institutions. This discovery agreed with Nwakpa's (2006) submission that indiscipline is a clog on the wheel of higher education in Ebonyi State.

The educational implication of this is that if something very serious is not done, the products of these tertiary institutions cannot favourably complete with their counterparts elsewhere academically, and thus cannot defend their certificates. Economically, they cannot do well at their job places if at all they get job.

Items 1-17 under research question 2 in Table 2 confirmed that those strategies should be adopted as working tools in controlling academic misconduct in Ebonyi state tertiary institutions.

Item 8 in table 1 which said that poor monitoring of staff by their super ordinates makes them to commit academic misconduct is in perfect agreement with Ude (2004). Ude said that majority of secondary school teachers commit academic misconduct as a result of poor supervision of schools by\_ the relevant authorities.

The writer is of the opinion that if all the discovered administrative strategies are employed effectively, "the cankerworm, academic misconduct" in our tertiary institutions will be reduced drastically, and there will be a rise in the quality of our tertiary education.

### **Recommendations/ Conclusion**

The findings of this study have important implications for the schools, students, lecturers,-parents and governments. Thus, the researcher hereby recommends that:

1. Students should take their studies very serious since they are the victims of academic misconduct.
2. Lecturers should be self-disciplined and avoid being used by students to commit academic misconduct.
3. Lecturers should take their job very seriously. They should not allow the candlelight in their hands to quench because of material things. They should know that they are custodians of quality education and for that, need not to toy with the quality of education for whatever reason.
4. All that are concerned with academic misconduct should say No! No!! No!!! to academic misconduct by adopting all the seventeen discovered administrative strategies for controlling academic misconduct in Ebonyi state tertiary institutions.

Conclusively, the result of this study has provided empirical evidence in respect of the causes of academic misconduct in Ebonyi state tertiary institutions, and administrative strategies to be adapted for controlling academic misconduct.

Obviously, if these administrative strategies are adopted, academic misconduct in Ebonyi state tertiary institutions and elsewhere will be drastically minimized if not eradicated.

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