



## Ethical Administrative Process and Malpractices in Public Examinations: A Study of the West African Examinations Council (2010 – 2020)

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**Abstract.** Possessing the West African Senior School Certificate (WASSCE) in the Anglophone West African countries has become the basis for securing admissions into higher institutions, employments and elective positions. Consequently, candidates who are desperate resort to examination malpractices to obtain it. The government and WAEC are therefore compelled to devise measures to guarantee integrity in the management of the examination process. Despite these measures, the integrity of the examination continued to be compromised in the last ten years. This study therefore, investigated the relationship between the administrative processes and the accompanying increase in the examination malpractice. Mixed method design was adopted for the study. The population was 144,070 with a sample size of 1,157 determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Purposive and stratified sampling techniques were adopted in selecting the respondents with a response rate of 85%. Questionnaire and interview guide were used as data collection instruments. Descriptive statistics and content analysis were employed for the quantitative and qualitative data respectively. Findings showed that there was a significant relationship ( $r = -0.684$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) between the effectiveness of the pre-examination processes adopted by WAEC and the level of examination malpractice in the WASSCE, between the effectiveness of the processes employed during the conduct of the examination ( $R^2 = 0.73$ ;  $F = 117.64$ ;  $t = 7.560$ ) and the level of examination malpractice and the effectiveness of the post-examination processes ( $r = -0.652$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and the level of examination malpractice. The study concluded that though the pre and post-examination administrative processes adopted by WAEC were ethical enough and should have been effective in curbing examination malpractice, this has not really succeeded due to human factors. The study

recommended that the recruitment policy for examination officials should be reviewed to give special consideration to integrity while the ad hoc staff should be adequately remunerated.

**Keywords:** Ethical processes, Examination malpractice, Integrity, Compromised, Administrative.

### 1. Introduction

In the Anglophone West African sub-region, and particularly in Nigeria, there is a strong reliance on the WASSCE certificate issued by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) as the basis of securing admission into higher institutions, employments and elective positions in government. In view of the strategic importance of this examination, candidates have become desperate to obtain it by all means possible. The desperation of candidates to obtain the WASSCE certificate at all costs has led to the incidence of examination malpractices which have witnessed an alarming increase over the last ten years in spite of the seeming water-tight measures which the federal government of Nigeria and WAEC have been compelled to put in place to combat the menace. The situation therefore calls for closer examination to find out how ethical the administrative processes have been in curbing examination malpractice.

#### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

In view of the strategic importance of WASSCE certificate, the Nigerian government as well as WAEC has devised several measures to ensure that the process leading to the conduct of the examination is ethical and uncompromised. However, in spite of these measures and ethical administrative process, the integrity of the examination appears to be

compromised. In the last ten years, the incidence of examination malpractices has continued to give cause for concern having moved from single digit to double digits.

This study, therefore, investigated the ethical administrative process adopted by WAEC and the increase in examination malpractice in the period with a view to ascertaining the effectiveness of the adopted ethical processes in curbing malpractices in the WASSCE.

## 1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are to:

- investigate how effective the pre-examination processes are in curbing examination malpractice and ensuring the integrity of the WASSCE examination;
- find out to what extent the examination administrative processes employed by WAEC during the conduct of WASSCE are effective in putting examination malpractice in check;
- investigate the effectiveness of the post-examination administrative processes in operation in guaranteeing the integrity of the WASSCE examination;

## 2. Conceptual Clarifications

### 2.1. Ethics

Ethics which is also referred to as moral philosophy is the [discipline](#) that is concerned with what is morally good and bad or morally right and wrong. The term is derived from the Greek word “ethos”, which means “way of living” in a particular community. Ethics is therefore concerned with human conduct or, more specifically, the behaviour of individuals in society. Ethics consists of the standards of behavior which our society accepts as right and wrong. Ethics reflect beliefs about what is right, what is wrong, what is just, what is unjust, what is good, and what is bad in terms of human behavior. They therefore serve as a guide on how we should behave toward each other, understand and fulfill our obligations to society, and live our lives. Ethics are the principles that guide us to make a positive impact through our decisions and actions.

Ethics therefore is about the choices we make in our daily life and in our interaction with our fellow men and the environment in which we live. These choices have consequences, both for ourselves and others. And this is where ethics and value interact. Our

values are what seems desirable to us, what we consider as important to us, what we esteem and seek to achieve. It is what is of value to us that we put into practice through our daily actions.

### 2.2 Ethical Standards

According to Nwaodike, Owolabi and Oni (2020) ethical standards are “principles that inspire greater values of trust, fairness and kindness in a workplace” and such principles vary according to the organization in question. The purpose in every situation, however, is to promote the cherished values and aspirations of the organization with a view to engendering goodwill through ethical behavior. Such principles are entrenched in the organization’s code of conduct which designs the pattern of ethical conduct expected of the employees. When ethical principles are brought to play in the management of an examination, it is then referred to as examination ethics. According to Examination Ethics Project (2001), examination ethics are “the moral principles laid down for the conduct of an examination or the moral correctness of an examination”. Animba (2003) also states that examination ethics should be viewed as the correct conduct and behaviour that underpin an examination system so as to give the resulting certification the required authenticity.

### 2.3 The Importance of Ethical Behaviour

Ethics is a guide that helps us to improve our life. Since our actions and decisions are influenced by our core values, it could therefore be said that what we become in life is the sum total of all the decisions we make.

McCartney and Parent (2015) state that when we enrich our lives by being ethical in our dealings, we also enrich the lives of those around us and make the society a better and secure place because in our decision-making, we take into consideration the effect of our decision/action on the people around us. Ethics also helps to create credibility. Any organization which is believed to have high moral standards will be treated with respect in the society. People will willingly wish to work for or associate with such an organization. Such an organization will in the long run and due to its goodwill become profitable. Similarly, in the process of staff recruitment organizations will hire only people of proven integrity.

### 2.4 Approaches to Ethical Theories

In order to guide us in making ethical decisions, philosophers and some religious teachers have

devised three major approaches which some thinkers also refer to as ethical decision-making frameworks. The three approaches are Utilitarian Ethical Approach (outcome/consequence based), Deontological Ethical Approach (duty based) and Virtue Ethical Approach (virtue based).

Utilitarian Ethical Approach has as its proponents the Greek philosopher Epicurus of Samos (341-270 BCE), the 18<sup>th</sup> Century British philosophers David Hume (1711-1776), Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). They argued that the best life is one that produces the least pain and distress. As such, they advised that we should weigh the different amounts of good and bad that will be produced by our action, noting that the best action will be the one that provides the most good or causes the least harm.

The philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is the proponent of the Deontological or duty-based Ethical Approach. Kant believed that doing the right thing is predicated on having the proper intention for carrying out the action. The action is taken because we owe it as a duty to do it. A behavior is believed to be right if it is in line of the duty a person owes to others in the society (Chukwuma, Atianashie, and Yeboah, 2021).

The proponents of the Virtue Ethical Approach (virtue based) are the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BCE) and Alasdair MacIntyre (1929). The questions often answered in this approach are what virtues should I cultivate and what vices should I keep away from in order to be the type of person I desire to be? (Prabhakar, 2019). To the proponents of this approach a behavior is deemed ethical if it is what a virtuous person would do in a similar situation.

It must be noted however that none of the three approaches is perfect. That is we do not use one approach exclusive of others. According to Dobrin (2007), a psychologist, in making ethical decisions, we have to take into consideration our integrity as a person, the possible effect that our action is likely to produce on the target/victim as well as the level of our adherence to the principles we hold dear in our life.

### 2.5 Integrity: A Conceptual Examination

Etymologically the term integrity originates from the Latin adjective integer which means the state or quality of being complete or whole. Monga (2016) says that integrity is a personality trait that has to do

with perceived consistency of one's actions, values, methods, measures, principles, expectations and outcome.

Integrity lays emphasize on the "wholeness" or "intactness" of a moral stance or attitude. It involves what it takes for a person to be whole and complete. And Jensen says that a person is whole and complete when he makes it a duty to honour his word. Integrity, therefore, is the link between our words and action.

To ensure the integrity of the public officer, therefore, there are provisions as to what the public officer can and should not be seen doing. These are spelt out in the Code of Conduct for Public Officers contained in Part I of the Fifth Schedule to the 1999 Constitution. The Code is aimed at establishing and maintaining in public officers the highest standards of public morality and accountability while carrying out their duties.

### 3. Examination Malpractice

The word 'malpractice' is coined from two words – 'mal' and 'practice'. 'Mal' as a pre-fix, connotes something bad or something that is not correct. When combined with the word 'practice' to form the word 'malpractice', it means a practice that is not properly done. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (8<sup>th</sup> Edition) defines the word as "careless, wrong or illegal behavior while in a professional job". A malpractice in examination is therefore a wrong and illegal practice by anyone connected in one way or the other with the conduct or taking of an examination. Osuji (2020) describe it as deliberate wrong doing designed to give an unfair advantage to an examinee by going contrary to the rules, regulations and guidelines guiding the conduct of the examination. In the opinion of Onuka and Dorowoju (2013), it is any dishonest or unauthorized action or deed committed by an examinee on his own or in collaboration with others such as fellow students, guardians, parent, teachers, examination officials, supervisors, invigilators, security officers or anybody or group before, during or after examination in order to obtain undeserved marks or grades. WAEC, as an examination body, defines examination malpractice as "any irregular behavior exhibited by candidates or anybody charged with the responsibility of conducting examination in or outside the examination hall, before, during or after such examination (Animasahun and Ogunniran, 2014). In the eye of the law, as contained in the Examination Malpractice Act, Cap E15 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, examination malpractice

is any act of omission or commission by a person who in anticipation of, before during or after any examination fraudulently secure any unfair advantage for himself or any other person in such a manner that contravenes the rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity, reliability, authenticity of the certificates issued.

### 3.1 Forms of Examination Malpractice

As information and communication technology continues to develop, candidates and their collaborators also develop new ways and daring strategies to perpetrate examination malpractice. Citing Ojerinde (2013), Adeniran, Bakare and Akinpade (2020) established three phases in the process of examination malpractice.

The malpractices associated with the first phase (Pre-examination) include over-registration of candidates by the school authority for pecuniary gains thereby creating avoidable strain on the available infrastructures. There is also the incidence of registering non-school. This happens where students troop to register in remote schools where the examination bodies may not have adequate monitoring and supervision. Closely related to this is the registration of “mercenary” who work as agents to register and write examinations on behalf of their principals. School authorities also collect from candidates “logistic fee”. This is the fund collected from candidates for use in lobbying/bribing supervisors/invigilators to subvert the rules guiding the conduct of the examination.

The second phase is during examination. The forms of examination malpractice that occur during examination as identified by Anyawu and Onwuakpa (2018) include impersonation, “giraffing”, dubbing and importation of foreign materials.

The third phase (post-examination) involves the malpractices perpetrated after the writing of the examination. Here, we have candidate’s scripts being swapped at the submission stage with another one already prepared from outside the examination hall. Adeniran, Bakare and Akinpade (2020) refer to this as “slot in” or substitution. Another form is where the staff of the examination bodies that work in the computer unit change candidate’s scores in the database.

### 3.2 Factors Responsible for Examination Malpractice

Asuru (2009) strongly believes that examination malpractices are essentially system-generated. In his view, Nigerian students “are not congenital cheats, but are merely responding to some fundamental disarticulation in the system”. He says that the situation has degenerated so badly because of our warped societal values. Our time-honored values of honesty integrity, perseverance and respect for dignity of labour have been jettisoned in favour of the Machiavellian idea that it is the end that justifies the means.

This situation has given rise to poor teaching and learning in our schools coupled with the appalling lack appropriate facilities. Accordingly, students are inadequately prepared for what lies ahead for them. According to Osarenren (2022), “the attitude of many students to school and schooling has increasingly become a source of concern to stakeholders in the education sector”. She goes further, affirming that “there is direct relationship between students’ values orientation and success orientation. The students’ perception of success goes a long way in determining how he or she approaches and prepares for success.

### 3.3 Effects of Examination Malpractice

There is no gainsaying the fact that examination malpractice has a very negative effect on the individual involved, his institution, his community as well as the nation at large. When is caught cheating, his results are usually cancelled and all his efforts come to naught. If he is prosecuted and convicted, the shame he brings upon himself and his family can only be imagined.

When a candidate successfully perpetrated the crime of examination malpractice and thereafter uses the unmerited certificate to secure employment, Onuka and Durowoju (2013) strongly believe that there would surely be a failure in his job performance because such a person will not be able to defend the certificate he obtains through fraud. His professional failure will also affect his organizational productivity negatively.

Osuji (2020) also opined that a country in which her students are noted for examination malpractice will no doubt lose its international credibility as any certificate emanating from such a country will be viewed with suspicion and doubt. Furthermore, in the opinion of Anzene (2014), examination malpractice has the effect of re-ordering the value orientation of the society. This is because there will be candidates with distinctions in examinations but such candidates will lack the quality of knowledge required in his purported area of specialization.

**4. Theoretical Framework: The Aristotelian Theory of Virtue Ethics**

Aristotle was a Greek philosopher who lived around 350 B.C.E. He was very practical in his approach to the study of ethics as he based his ideas on the behavior of people and how such behavior impacted on their subsequent actions. Aristotle is of the assumption that human beings think and behave with a view to achieving happiness (Eudaimonia). To him, virtue which can be acquired through practice, is the ‘mean’ between excess and deficiency, two undesirable extremes. It is therefore a character-based approach to morality which teaches that an action is only right if it is an action that a virtuous person would carry out under similar circumstances.

Boylan (2017) refers to this as “ethics of character”. According to Mitchell (2018), moral character is formed by one’s actions. He opines that character cannot be separated from the person; a man of good character is he whose habits, actions, and emotional responses all are united and directed toward the moral and the good. As such, a man’s public and private actions cannot be separated one from the other because both sets of actions affect his character.

Julia Annas (2018) in her analysis, sees virtue as a disposition to act “for reasons”, a disposition to do the right thing for the right reason and in the most appropriate way. As such, it calls for the individual’s affective and intellectual reasoning. That is, the individual, at every stage should use his mind to

think about his action based on the environment in which he finds himself and to try to achieve an understanding of it in achieving his goal of happiness (Eudaimonia or flourishing as Annas prefers to call it). Virtues therefore, are character traits that enable us to pursue the ideals we have set for ourselves such as honesty, integrity, compassion, courage, fairness, fidelity, self-control as well as prudence. These virtues are personal habits which are developed by the individual through learning and practice within and by his community (environment).

**5. Methodology**

The research design adopted was a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data. The sample size of the study was 1,157 consisting of examination officials of WAEC selected through stratified and simple random sampling technique. The four categories of WAEC personnel were the staff in the Test Development Division (TDD) and the Test Administration Division (TAD), the Printing and Warehousing Department, the Invigilators/Supervisors and the Examiners at the Marking Centres. A structured Questionnaire was the major instrument of data collection complemented by interview guide. The response rate was 85%. Reliability test of the instrument yielded Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the construct ranging from 0.70 to 0.90. Data collected were tabulated and analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis.

**6. Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Research Questions**

**Research Question 1:** How effective are the pre-examination processes in curbing examination malpractice and ensuring the integrity of the WASSCE examination?

**Table 8.1:** Effectiveness of the pre-examination processes in curbing examination malpractice and ensuring the integrity of the WASSCE examination

| S/N | Statement   | SA        | AG        | UD        | DG       | SD      | Mean | SD   |
|-----|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|---------|------|------|
| 1.  | The scope of the syllabus for most of the subjects is too large to be adequately covered in a 3-year course of study.   | 252(28.0) | 556(56.0) | 39(4.0)   | 98(10.0) | 39(4.0) | 4.3  | 1.39 |
| 2.  | In the course of setting examination questions the Examination Officers take for granted that candidates have covered every part of the syllabus.                           | 315(32.0) | 590(60.0) | 79(8.0)   | 0(0.0)   | 0(0.0)  | 4.9  | 1.08 |
| 3.  | WAEC maintains a well stuffed question bank from where questions are selected at random for every diet.   | 178(18.0) | 590(60.0) | 216(22.0) | 0(0.0)   | 0(0.0)  | 3.8  | 1.44 |
| 4.  | The final vetting and selection of questions is done by examination officers quite distinct from those who set the questions.   | 295(30.0) | 630(64.0) | 39(4.0)   | 0(0.0)   | 20(2.0) | 3.5  | 1.29 |
| 5.  | The Printers engaged for the production of the questions are closely monitored by WAEC officials to ensure a leakage-free exercise.   | 787(80.0) | 197(20.0) | 0(0.0)    | 0(0.0)   | 0(0.0)  | 3.2  | 1.39 |
| 6.  | All the staff of WAEC printing Houses, not just their production crew, are made to take the oath of secrecy prior to commencement of the production of the question papers. | 590(60.0) | 394(40.0) | 0(0.0)    | 0(0.0)   | 0(0.0)  | 3.70 | 1.46 |

|                       |   |           |           |           |        |           |      |      |
|-----------------------|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------|-----------|------|------|
| 7.                    | Live question papers are stored in fool-proof strong rooms with restricted access prior to dispatch to examination centres.                               | 590(60.0) | 296(30.0) | 98(10.0)  | 0(0.0) | 0(0.0)    | 3.76 | 1.30 |
| 8.                    | Question papers are counted and packed by the printers based on the number of entries for each centre to prevent over or under supply of question papers. | 374(38.0) | 492(50.0) | 118(12.0) | 0(0.0) | 0(0.0)    | 4.08 | 1.03 |
| 9.                    | Packaged question papers are dispatched to designated Examination centre strong rooms using police escort.  | 610(62.0) | 197(20.0) | 0(0.0)    | 0(0.0) | 177(18.0) | 4.4  | 1.22 |
| Average Weighted Mean |   |           |           |           |        |           | 4.38 | 0.78 |

**Source:** Field Survey, 2021/2022

**Key:** [SA] = Strongly Agree, [A] = Agree, [UN] = Undecided, [D] = Disagree, [SD] Strongly Disagree

\*\*\* Decision Rule: If mean is less or equal to 1.49 = Undecided, 1.5 to 2.49 = Disagree, 2.5 to 3.49 = Strongly Disagree, 3.5 to 4.49 = Agree, 4.5 to 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 8.1 shows the effectiveness of the pre-examination processes in curbing examination malpractice and ensuring the integrity of the WASSCE examination.

The data in Item 1 in Table 8.1 shows that 252 respondents representing 28% strongly agreed that the scope of the syllabus for most of the subjects is too large to be adequately covered in a 3-year course of study. 556 respondents representing 56% agreed that the scope of the syllabus for most of the subjects is too large to be adequately covered in a 3-year course of study. 39 respondents, that is, 4% were undecided on this statement. 98 respondents representing 10% disagreed while another 39 respondents representing 4% strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, majority of the respondents agreed that the scope of the syllabus for most of the subjects is too large to be adequately covered in a 3-year course of study.

The data in Item 2 in Table 8.1 shows that 315 respondents representing 32% strongly agreed that in the course of setting examination questions the Examination Officers take for granted that candidates have covered every part of the syllabus. 590 respondents representing 60% agreed that in the course of setting examination questions the Examination Officers take for granted that candidates have covered every part of the syllabus. 79 respondents, that is, 8% were undecided on this statement. No respondent disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, majority of the respondents agreed that in the course of setting examination questions the Examination Officers take for granted that candidates have covered every part of the syllabus.

The data in Item 3 in Table 8.1 shows that 178 respondents representing 18% strongly agreed that WAEC maintains a well stuffed question bank from where questions are selected at random for every diet. 590 respondents representing 60% agreed that WAEC maintains a well stuffed question bank from

where questions are selected at random for every diet. 216 respondents, that is, 22% were undecided on this statement. No respondent disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, majority of the respondents agreed that WAEC maintains a well stuffed question bank from where questions are selected at random for every diet.

The data in Item 4 in Table 8.1 shows that 295 respondents representing 18% strongly agreed that the final vetting and selection of questions is done by Examination Officers quite distinct from those who set the questions. 630 respondents representing 64% agreed with this statement. 39 of the respondents, that is, 4% were undecided on this statement. None of the respondents disagreed with this statement while only 20 of them (2%) strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, majority of the respondents agreed that the final vetting and selection of questions is done by Examination Officers quite distinct from those who set the questions.

The data in Item 5 in Table 8.1 shows that 787 respondents representing 80% strongly agreed that the Printers engaged for the production of the questions are closely monitored by WAEC officials to ensure a leakage-free exercise. 197 respondents representing 20% agreed that the Printers engaged for the production of the questions are closely monitored by WAEC officials to ensure a leakage-free exercise. None of the respondents was undecided on this statement. No one disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, a good majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the Printers engaged for the production of the questions are closely monitored by WAEC officials to ensure a leakage-free exercise.

The data in Item 6 in Table 8.1 shows that 590 respondents representing 60% strongly agreed that all the staff of WAEC printing Houses, not just their production crew, are made to take the oath of secrecy prior to commencement of the production of the question papers. 394 respondents representing 40% agreed that all the staff of WAEC printing Houses,

not just their production crew, are made to take the oath of secrecy prior to commencement of the production of the question papers. None of the respondents was undecided on this statement. No one disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, a good majority of the respondents strongly agreed that all the staff of WAEC printing Houses, not just their production crew, are made to take the oath of secrecy prior to commencement of the production of the question papers.

The data in Item 7 in Table 8.1 shows that 590 respondents representing 60% strongly agreed that live question papers are stored in fool-proof strong rooms with restricted access prior to dispatch to examination centres. 296 respondents representing 30% agreed that live question papers are stored in fool-proof strong rooms with restricted access prior to dispatch to examination centres. 98 respondents, that is, 10% were undecided on this statement. No respondent disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, majority of the respondents agreed that live question papers are stored in fool-proof strong rooms with restricted access prior to dispatch to examination centres.

The data in Item 8 in Table 8.1 shows that 374 respondents representing 38% strongly agreed that question papers are counted and packed by the printers based on the number of entries for each centre to prevent over or under supply of question papers. 492 respondents representing 50% agreed that question papers are counted and packed by the printers based on the number of entries for each

centre to prevent over or under supply of question papers. 118 respondents, that is, 12% were undecided on this statement. No respondent disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, majority of the respondents agreed that question papers are counted and packed by the printers based on the number of entries for each centre to prevent over or under supply of question papers.

The data in Item 9 in Table 8.1 shows that 610 respondents representing 62% strongly agreed that packaged question papers are dispatched to designated Examination centre strong rooms using police escort. 197 respondents representing 20% agreed that packaged question papers are dispatched to designated Examination centre strong rooms using police escort. No respondent was undecided on this statement and none disagreed. However, 177 respondents, that is, 18% strongly disagreed with this statement. Thus, majority of the respondents agreed that packaged question papers are dispatched to designated Examination centre strong rooms using police escort.

In line with the average weighted mean of 4.38, however, it can be generally concluded that the pre-examination processes are effective to curb examination malpractice and ensure the integrity of the WASSCE examination. In the course of these processes, setting examination questions which the examination officers take for granted that candidates have covered every part of the syllabus appears to be most effective factor with the mean value of 4.9.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent are the examination administrative processes employed by WAEC during the conduct of WASSCE effective in putting examination malpractice in check?

**Table 8.2:** The extent to which the examination administrative processes employed by WAEC during the conduct of WASSCE are effective in putting examination malpractice in check.

| S/N                          | Statement   | SA        | AG        | UD      | DG      | SD     | Mean        | SD          |
|------------------------------|---|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|--------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.                           | Examinations are held only in WAEC accredited centres nationwide.   | 295(30.0) | 689(70.0) | 0(0.0)  | 0(0.0)  | 0(0.0) | 4.08        | 1.35        |
| 2.                           | Only tested and experienced invigilators are engaged to supervise the conduct of the examinations.  | 394(40.0) | 531(54.0) | 39(4.0) | 20(2.0) | 0(0.0) | 4.28        | 1.34        |
| 3.                           | Accreditation and bodily search of candidates are done thoroughly to prevent impersonation and the importation of foreign materials into the examination halls.               | 335(34.0) | 610(62.0) | 39(4.0) | 0(0.0)  | 0(0.0) | 4.37        | 1.42        |
| 4.                           | Sitting arrangements in the examination halls are done to avoid over-crowding with a view to preventing “giraffing” by candidates and ensure maximum ventilation and comfort. | 374(38.0) | 610(62.0) | 0(0.0)  | 0(0.0)  | 0(0.0) | 4.01        | 1.03        |
| 5.                           | Invigilation regulations including time-keeping are strictly enforced during the conduct of the examinations.   | 394(40.0) | 590(60.0) | 0(0.0)  | 0(0.0)  | 0(0.0) | 3.76        | 1.30        |
| 6.                           | The collection, collation and dispatch of scripts to designated zonal offices are carried out by the examination officers with utmost care to ensure tamper-proof exercise.   | 590(60.0) | 394(40.0) | 0(0.0)  | 0(0.0)  | 0(0.0) | 4.08        | 1.03        |
| <b>Average Weighted Mean</b> |   |           |           |         |         |        | <b>4.03</b> | <b>1.38</b> |

Source: Field Survey, 2021/2022

Key: [SA] = Strongly Agree, [A] = Agree, [UN] = Undecided, [D] = Disagree, [SD] Strongly Disagree

\*\*\* Decision Rule: If mean is less or equal to 1.49 = Undecided, 1.5 to 2.49 = Disagree, 2.5 to 3.49 = Strongly Disagree, 3.5 to 4.49 = Agree, 4.5 to 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 8.2 shows the extent to which the examination administrative processes employed by WAEC during the conduct of WASSCE are effective in putting examination malpractice in check and ensuring the integrity of the WASSCE examination.

The data in Item 1 in Table 8.2 shows that 295 respondents representing 30% strongly agreed that examinations are held only in WAEC accredited centres nationwide. 689 respondents representing 70% agreed that examinations are held only in WAEC accredited centres nationwide. None of the respondents was undecided on this statement. No one disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, a good majority of the respondents agreed that examinations are held only in WAEC accredited centres nationwide.

The data in Item 2 in Table 8.2 shows that 394 respondents representing 40% strongly agreed that only tested and experienced invigilators are engaged to supervise the conduct of the examinations. 631 respondents representing 54% agreed with this statement. 39 of the respondents, that is, 4% were undecided on this statement. 20 of them (2%) disagreed with this statement while none of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, majority of the respondents agreed that only tested and experienced invigilators are engaged to supervise the conduct of the examinations.

The data in Item 3 in Table 8.2 shows that 335 respondents representing 34% strongly agreed that accreditation and bodily search of candidates are done thoroughly to prevent impersonation and the importation of foreign materials into the examination halls. 610 respondents representing 62% agreed that accreditation and bodily search of candidates are done thoroughly to prevent impersonation and the importation of foreign materials into the examination halls. 39 respondents, that is, 4% were undecided on this statement. No respondent disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, majority of the respondents agreed that accreditation and bodily search of candidates are done thoroughly to prevent impersonation and the importation of foreign materials into the examination halls.

The data in Item 4 in Table 8.2 shows that 374 respondents representing 38% strongly agreed that sitting arrangements in the examination halls are done to avoid over-crowding with a view to preventing “giraffing” by candidates and ensure maximum ventilation and comfort. 610 respondents representing 62% agreed that sitting arrangements in

the examination halls are done to avoid over-crowding with a view to preventing “giraffing” by candidates and ensure maximum ventilation and comfort. None of the respondents was undecided on this statement. No one disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, majority of the respondents agreed that sitting arrangements in the examination halls are done to avoid over-crowding with a view to preventing “giraffing” by candidates and ensure maximum ventilation and comfort.

The data in Item 5 in Table 8.2 shows that 394 respondents representing 40% strongly agreed that invigilation regulations including time-keeping are strictly enforced during the conduct of the examinations. 590 respondents representing 60% agreed that invigilation regulations including time-keeping are strictly enforced during the conduct of the examinations. None of the respondents was undecided on this statement. No one disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, majority of the respondents agreed that invigilation regulations including time-keeping are strictly enforced during the conduct of the examinations.

The data in Item 6 in Table 8.2 shows that 590 respondents representing 60% strongly agreed that the collection, collation and dispatch of scripts to designated zonal offices are carried out by the Examination Officers with utmost care to ensure tamper-proof exercise. 394 respondents representing 40% agreed that the collection, collation and dispatch of scripts to designated zonal offices are carried out by the Examination Officers with utmost care to ensure tamper-proof exercise. None of the respondents was undecided on this statement. No one disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the collection, collation and dispatch of scripts to designated zonal offices are carried out by the Examination Officers with utmost care to ensure tamper-proof exercise.

Meanwhile, going by the average mean of 4.03, there is a high extent of examination administrative processes in putting examination malpractice in check and ensuring the integrity of the WASSCE examination. Accreditation and bodily search of candidates ( $X=4.37$ ) which were done thoroughly to prevent impersonation and the importation of foreign materials into the examination halls is the most effective measure put in place to check malpractice and ensure the integrity of the examination.

**Research Question 3:** How effective are the post-examination administrative processes in guaranteeing the integrity of the WASSCE examination?

**Table 8.3:** The effectiveness of the post-examination administrative processes in guaranteeing the integrity of the WASSCE examination.

| S/N                   | Statement   | SA            | AG            | UD            | DG         | SD         | Mean | SD  |
|-----------------------|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|------------|------|-----|
| 1.                    | Examiners are appointed to mark the scripts based on their experience and subject specialty.  | 689(70.0)     | 295(30.0)     | 0(0.0)        | 0(0.0)     | 0(0.0)     | 4.5  | 0.8 |
| 2.                    | Scripts are not marked in the particular zone where the examination is conducted; they are always shuffled to avoid complicity.   | 512(52.0)     | 354(36.0)     | 59(6.0)       | 20(2.0)    | 39(4.0)    | 4.3  | 0.7 |
| 3.                    | There is a coordination exercise for Examiners prior to the marking exercise during which dummy scripts are used to test the marking schemes.   | 394(40.0)     | 590(60.0)     | 0(0.0)        | 0(0.0)     | 0(0.0)     | 4.3  | 0.8 |
| 4.                    | Conference marking allows for proper supervision of examiners by the chief examiners and interaction among the examiners in case of problems encountered during the marking exercise. | 590(60.0)     | 237(24.0)     | 157(16.0)     | 0(0.0)     | 0(0.0)     | 4.4  | 0.8 |
| 5.                    | The use of checkers ensures that examiners are up and doing in their work and errors of additions are prevented.  | 236(24.0)     | 689(70.0)     | 59(6.0)       | 0(0.0)     | 0(0.0)     | 4.2  | 0.9 |
| 6.                    | Results are collated with the aid of computers to avoid errors and mix-ups.   | 295(30.0)     | 630(64.0)     | 59(6.0)       | 0(0.0)     | 0(0.0)     | 3.9  | 1.0 |
| 7.                    | The decision of WAEC to release WASSCE results online within 60 days of conducting the examination is a welcome development as it prevents any form of manipulation of results.       | 276<br>(28.0) | 590<br>(60.0) | 118<br>(12.0) | 0<br>(0.0) | 0<br>(0.0) | 4.1  | 0.8 |
| 8.                    | WASSCE certificates are now issued with the passport photograph of the candidate embossed thereon to prevent impersonation.   | 866<br>(88.0) | 98<br>(10.0)  | 20<br>(2.0)   | 0<br>(0.0) | 0<br>(0.0) | 4.4  | 1.0 |
| Average Weighted Mean |   |               |               |               |            |            | 4.2  | 0.8 |

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Key: [SA] = Strongly Agree, [A] = Agree, [UN] = Undecided, [D] = Disagree, [SD] Strongly Disagree

\*\*\* Decision Rule: If mean is less or equal to 1.49 = Undecided, 1.5 to 2.49 = Disagree, 2.5 to 3.49 = Strongly Disagree, 3.5 to 4.49 = Agree, 4.5 to 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 8.3 shows the effectiveness of the post-examination administrative processes in guaranteeing the integrity of the WASSCE examination.

The data in Item 1 in Table 8.3 shows that 689 respondents representing 70% strongly agreed that Examiners are appointed to mark the scripts based on their experience and subject specialty. 295 respondents representing 30% agreed that Examiners are appointed to mark the scripts based on their experience and subject specialty. None of the respondents was undecided on this statement. No one disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, a good majority of the respondents strongly agreed that Examiners are appointed to mark the scripts based on their experience and subject specialty.

The data in Item 2 in Table 8.3 shows that 512 respondents representing 52% strongly agreed that scripts are not marked in the particular zone where the examination is conducted; they are always shuffled to avoid complicity. 354 respondents

representing 36% agreed that scripts are not marked in the particular zone where the examination is conducted; they are always shuffled to avoid complicity. 59 respondents, that is, 6% were undecided on this statement. 20 respondents representing 2% disagreed while another 39 respondents representing 4% strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, majority of the respondents strongly agreed that scripts are not marked in the particular zone where the examination is conducted; they are always shuffled to avoid complicity.

The data in Item 3 in Table 8.3 shows that 394 respondents representing 40% strongly agreed that there is a coordination exercise for Examiners prior to the marking exercise during which dummy scripts are used to test the marking schemes. 590 respondents representing 60% agreed that there is a coordination exercise for Examiners prior to the marking exercise during which dummy scripts are used to test the marking schemes. None of the respondents was undecided on this statement. No one disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the

statement. Thus, majority of the respondents strongly agreed that there is a coordination exercise for Examiners prior to the marking exercise during which dummy scripts are used to test the marking schemes.

The data in Item 4 in Table 8.3 shows that 590 respondents representing 60% strongly agreed that conference marking allows for proper supervision of examiners by the chief examiners and interaction among the examiners in case of problems encountered during the marking exercise. 237 respondents representing 24% agreed that conference marking allows for proper supervision of examiners by the chief examiners and interaction among the examiners in case of problems encountered during the marking exercise. 157 respondents, that is, 16% were undecided on this statement. No respondent disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, majority of the respondents agreed that conference marking allows for proper supervision of examiners by the chief examiners and interaction among the examiners in case of problems encountered during the marking exercise.

The data in Item 5 in Table 8.3 shows that 236 respondents representing 24% strongly agreed that the use of checkers ensures that examiners are up and doing in their work and errors of additions are prevented. 689 respondents representing 70% agreed that the use of checkers ensures that examiners are up and doing in their work and errors of additions are prevented. 59 respondents, that is, 6% were undecided on this statement. No respondent disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, a good majority of the respondents agreed that the use of checkers ensures that examiners are up and doing in their work and errors of additions are prevented.

The data in Item 6 in Table 8.3 shows that 295 respondents representing 30% strongly agreed that results are collated with the aid of computers to avoid errors and mix-up. 630 respondents representing 64% agreed that results are collated with the aid of computers to avoid errors and mix-up. 59 respondents, that is, 6% were undecided on this statement. No respondent disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, majority of the respondents agreed that results are collated with the aid of computers to avoid errors and mix-up.

The data in Item 7 in Table 8.3 shows that 276 respondents representing 28% strongly agreed that the decision of WAEC to release WASSCE results online within 60 days of conducting the examination is a welcome development as it prevents any form of

manipulation of results. 590 respondents representing 60% agreed that the decision of WAEC to release WASSCE results online within 60 days of conducting the examination is a welcome development as it prevents any form of manipulation of results. 118 respondents, that is, 12% were undecided on this statement. No respondent disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, majority of the respondents agreed that the decision of WAEC to release WASSCE results online within 60 days of conducting the examination is a welcome development as it prevents any form of manipulation of results.

The data in Item 8 in Table 8.3 shows that 866 respondents representing 88% strongly agreed that WASSCE certificates are now issued with the passport photograph of the candidate embossed thereon to prevent impersonation. 98 respondents representing 10% agreed that WASSCE certificates are now issued with the passport photograph of the candidate embossed thereon to prevent impersonation. 20 respondents, that is, 2% were undecided on this statement. No respondent disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, a good majority of the respondents strongly agreed that WASSCE certificates are now issued with the passport photograph of the candidate embossed thereon to prevent impersonation.

Going by the average weighted mean of 4.2 it can be generally concluded that the post-examination administrative processes put in place by WAEC are effective in guaranteeing the integrity of the WASSCE examination. Furthermore, with the highest mean score of 4.5, appointing examiners to mark the scripts based on their experience and subject specialty happens to be the most effective means than other variables in the table.

## 7. Findings

**Objective One:** Investigate how effective the pre-examination processes are in curbing examination malpractice and ensuring the integrity of the WASSCE examination.

Correlation analysis of the tested hypothesis revealed a significant relationship ( $r = -0.684$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) between the two variables such that an effective pre-examination process will reduce the level of examination malpractice. The study revealed that though the pre-examination administrative process appears to be fool-proof, the situation on ground points to the contrary. There are cases where examination officials are involved in leaking

questions by memorizing same and coming out of the press room to write out the memorized questions for eventual sale to these desperate candidates or their collaborators.

**Objective Two:** Find out to what extent the examination administrative processes employed by WAEC during the conduct of WASSCE are effective in putting examination malpractice in check.

Using regression analysis, it was found that there was a significant relationship ( $R^2 = 0.73$ ;  $F = 117.64$ ;  $t = 7.560$ ) between the effectiveness of the examination administrative processes employed by WAEC during the conduct of the WASSCE and malpractices in the examination. The study found that some of these WAEC officials do not live up to expectation as there were cases of Supervisors who, with the intent to make money illegally, would lobby to be posted to “juicy” examination centres where the authorities of these centres give them “logistic fee” for them to turn the blind eye to malpractices being perpetrated at such centres.

**Objective Three:** Investigate the effectiveness of the post-examination administrative processes in operation in guaranteeing the integrity of the WASSCE examination.

Correlation analysis also revealed a significant relationship ( $r = -0.652$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) showing that an effective post-examination administrative process will reduce the level of examination malpractice recorded in the WASSCE. However, the study identified some unethical practices on the part of the Examiners. There were some of them who, in order to beat the deadline set for the completion of the marking exercise, would contract the marking of scripts allocated to them to some unaccredited touts. Furthermore, some of the Assistant Examiners vetted their scripts by themselves due to the lackadaisical attitude of some of the team leaders. This ugly situation might not be unconnected with the alleged rather poor remuneration paid to these Examiners.

## 8. Conclusions

The study concluded that though the pre and post-examination administrative processes adopted by WAEC were ethical enough and should have been effective in curbing examination malpractice, this has not really succeeded due to human factors. In the course of these processes, the integrity of the officials have been called into question and there had been instances of gross display of lack of integrity on the part of some examination officials.

## 9. Recommendations

- The Head of TDD should work with selected people appointed by the HNO to compile and select questions stage by stage so that none of those who compiled and selected questions initially would be privy to the questions that were finally selected.
- The recruitment policy of examination officials in WAEC should be reviewed to give room for integrity vetting before engagement. Training and retraining of staff in the area of moral character building is also recommended.
- WAEC should build the moral character of those it engages to implement its examination administrative processes so as not to lose the battle as a result of human factors.

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