



## **Re-Examining Examination Malpractice in Bayelsa State: The Role of Teacher Input And Implications for Educational Planning**

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### **Abstract**

Examination malpractice remains a pressing educational challenge in Nigeria, particularly in Bayelsa State. This study investigates the extent to which poor teacher input contributes to this phenomenon, using a quantitative approach to assess perceptions from students and teachers across selected secondary schools. A sample of 400 respondents was surveyed using structured questionnaires. The study found a significant correlation between inadequate teacher preparation, poor instructional delivery, lack of teacher motivation, and the prevalence of examination malpractice. The findings highlight the urgent need for strategic educational planning that addresses teacher recruitment, training, supervision, and motivation as a pathway to reducing malpractice. Policy recommendations are offered to realign teacher quality with educational integrity goals.

**Keywords:** Teacher quality, Teacher input, Examination malpractice, Educational Planning, secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

## Introduction

Examination malpractice remains one of the most daunting challenges confronting Nigeria's educational system. It undermines the validity of assessment, devalues certificates, and threatens the quality of education delivery (Adebayo & Ayodele, 2020). Defined as any deliberate act of wrongdoing contrary to the rules of examination and designed to give a candidate an unfair advantage, examination malpractice has become pervasive, especially in secondary schools (Okorodudu & Okorodudu, 2021). In Bayelsa State, reports of impersonation, collusion, illegal assistance by invigilators, leakage of examination questions, and use of unauthorized materials have grown alarmingly, raising concerns about the integrity of the assessment system.

While numerous studies have explored the sociocultural and institutional causes of examination malpractice, a less frequently examined dimension is the role of poor teacher input in perpetuating the problem (Igwe & Aladejana, 2020). Teacher input encompasses the range of contributions teachers make to the teaching-learning process, including instructional competence, curriculum coverage, lesson planning, student engagement, professional ethics, and motivation (Ofoegbu, 2019). When teacher input is substandard, students may be inadequately prepared for examinations and resort to dishonest means to succeed. In addition, teachers who demonstrate lax attitudes toward academic standards may unwittingly signal to students that cheating is acceptable or tolerated.

The education system in Bayelsa State, like in many parts of Nigeria, suffers from inadequate teacher recruitment, poor remuneration, minimal professional development opportunities, and weak supervision, all of which contribute to low teacher morale and performance (Uche & Eze, 2021). These systemic issues intersect with rising examination malpractice, yet there is limited empirical research examining their relationship, especially from the perspective of educational planning.

Educational planning plays a crucial role in shaping the structure and quality of education delivery. It involves the systematic design and implementation of policies to meet both short- and long-term educational goals, including teacher deployment, training, assessment, and quality assurance (UNESCO, 2015). By re-examining examination malpractice through the lens of teacher input, this study aims to provide data-driven insights that inform more effective and sustainable planning interventions.

This study, therefore, seeks to fill a critical gap in existing scholarship by empirically investigating the extent to which poor teacher input contributes to examination malpractice in Bayelsa State secondary schools. It further explores how strategic educational planning can mitigate this problem through better teacher management, training, and monitoring systems.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Examination malpractice has become a deeply entrenched issue in Nigeria's education system, eroding the credibility and reliability of assessment processes, especially in secondary schools (Adebayo & Ayodele, 2020). In Bayelsa State, the prevalence of examination malpractice is not only frequent but also growing in complexity and sophistication. Despite various policy interventions, sanctions, and public campaigns, the phenomenon continues to thrive, raising serious concerns about the quality of education and the moral integrity of learners.

Much of the discourse surrounding examination malpractice has focused on student behavior, weak institutional control, and the failure of regulatory bodies to enforce penalties. However, relatively limited attention has been paid to the contribution of teacher-related factors, particularly poor teacher input—as a root cause of the problem. Poor teacher input includes ineffective instructional delivery, inadequate lesson preparation, insufficient curriculum coverage, lack of professional ethics, and general teacher demotivation (Igwe & Aladejana, 2020). Teachers who fail to engage students effectively, deliver content adequately, or uphold academic integrity inadvertently create an enabling environment for malpractice to flourish.

Preliminary reports and anecdotal evidence suggest that some teachers in Bayelsa State condone, facilitate, or ignore examination malpractice, either due to negligence or as a means of compensating for poor instruction. Others may lack the necessary pedagogical skills or motivation to adequately prepare students for assessments. This raises a critical question: To what extent does poor teacher input contribute to the persistent incidence of examination malpractice in secondary schools?

Moreover, there is a disconnect between educational planning efforts and classroom realities. Educational planning in the state often prioritizes enrollment figures, infrastructure development, and examination performance indicators without critically examining the quality of teacher engagement and its impact on student behavior. If teacher quality is not integrated into strategic planning and reform, policies aimed at eradicating malpractice may yield minimal results.

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the extent to which poor teacher input contributes to examination malpractice in Bayelsa State. It further aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for integrating teacher performance metrics into educational planning frameworks. Addressing this knowledge gap is vital for designing holistic strategies that enhance teacher effectiveness and restore integrity to the education system.

## **Objectives of the Study**

1. To assess the level of teacher input in secondary schools in Bayelsa State.
2. To examine the prevalence of examination malpractice among secondary school students.

3. To investigate the relationship between teacher input and examination malpractice.
4. To recommend educational planning strategies to improve teacher effectiveness and reduce malpractice.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the level of teacher input in secondary schools in Bayelsa State?
2. What is the prevalence of examination malpractice in these schools?
3. Is there a relationship between poor teacher input and examination malpractice?

### **Hypotheses**

1. H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between teacher input and examination malpractice among secondary school students in Bayelsa State.
2. H<sub>02</sub>: There is a significant relationship between teacher input and examination malpractice among secondary school students in Bayelsa State.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Overview of Examination Malpractice in Nigeria**

Examination malpractice refers to any form of cheating or dishonest practice employed by students, teachers, or school officials during examinations to gain undue advantage (Okorodudu & Okorodudu, 2021). It encompasses actions such as impersonation, smuggling of unauthorized materials, external assistance during exams, leakage of examination questions, and collusion between students and teachers (Adebayo & Ayodele, 2020). The frequency and normalization of such practices in Nigeria, particularly at the secondary school level, have raised alarm over the declining integrity of the nation's education system.

Scholars have argued that examination malpractice is both a symptom and consequence of broader systemic failures in the education sector (Ofoegbu, 2019; Obasi & Asodike, 2019). These include insufficient infrastructure, large class sizes, ineffective school supervision, and a general decline in educational values. However, while these systemic issues have been widely studied, the role of teacher input, particularly as it relates to instructional quality and ethical standards, has not received adequate empirical attention.

#### **Concept of Teacher Input**

Teacher input, in the context of educational effectiveness, refers to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and efforts that teachers contribute to the teaching and learning process (Uche & Eze, 2021). It includes their ability to deliver the curriculum, use appropriate teaching methods, engage students in meaningful learning, assess progress accurately, and serve as ethical role models (Igwe & Aladejana, 2020). High-quality teacher input is strongly correlated with improved student learning outcomes and school performance (UNESCO, 2015).

However, research has shown that many Nigerian teachers operate under challenging conditions that hinder their effectiveness. These include inadequate training, poor remuneration, lack of teaching materials, overcrowded classrooms, and weak professional development systems (Ofoegbu, 2019). In such circumstances, teacher motivation and commitment to professional standards tend to decline, increasing the likelihood of unethical behavior and reduced instructional quality (Eya & Chukwu, 2019).

### **Teacher Input and Examination Malpractice**

The link between poor teacher input and examination malpractice has been increasingly recognized in recent studies. According to Igwe and Aladejana (2020), ineffective teaching methods and poor classroom management may leave students unprepared for assessments, pushing them toward dishonest practices to compensate for academic gaps. Similarly, Obasi and Asodike (2019) noted that when teachers are complicit in malpractice, either by facilitating it or failing to report it—students internalize such behavior as acceptable.

Furthermore, teacher absenteeism and incomplete syllabus coverage have been identified as precursors to examination malpractice. A study by Eze and Uzoechina (2020) found that students in poorly managed classrooms were twice as likely to engage in malpractice as their peers in schools with strong instructional supervision. These findings suggest that poor teacher input not only weakens students' academic preparedness but also erodes the moral authority of educators.

### **Educational Planning and Teacher Quality**

Educational planning is the process of determining future educational needs and outlining policies, resources, and strategies to meet them effectively (UNESCO, 2015). Central to this process is the recognition that quality education depends significantly on teacher effectiveness. In Nigeria, however, planning efforts have often prioritised access and infrastructure over quality, with limited integration of teacher input indicators into strategic frameworks (World Bank, 2021).

Research by Uche and Eze (2021) emphasised the importance of aligning educational planning with teacher development, supervision, and motivation. Without such alignment, reforms aimed at addressing examination malpractice are likely to remain superficial. Sound planning should include data-driven approaches to teacher recruitment, capacity building, professional ethics enforcement, and performance monitoring.

### **Gaps in the Literature**

While existing studies acknowledge the role of teachers in educational integrity, few have quantitatively analyzed the relationship between poor teacher input and examination malpractice at the state level. Particularly in Bayelsa State, there is a lack of empirical data

linking teacher performance to student behavior during examinations. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how teacher input affects examination malpractice and by proposing planning-based solutions to mitigate the problem.

## **Methodology**

This study adopted a quantitative descriptive survey research design to investigate the relationship between poor teacher input and examination malpractice among secondary school students in Bayelsa State. The design was chosen because it allows for the collection of quantifiable data from a representative sample, enabling generalization of findings to the broader population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The population comprised all public and private secondary school teachers and senior secondary school students in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. According to data from the Bayelsa State Ministry of Education (2023), the total population includes approximately 6,500 teachers and 42,000 students across all senior secondary schools in the state.

A stratified random sampling technique was used to select respondents across different schools, ensuring proportional representation from urban and rural areas, public and private institutions. The sample size consisted of 400 respondents, comprising 300 students and 100 teachers from 20 secondary schools in three selected local government areas (Yenagoa, Kolokuma/Opokuma, and Ogbia).

The sampling process involved two stages:

1. Stratification of schools based on ownership (public/private) and location (urban/rural).
2. Random selection of schools and participants from each stratum.

The instrument for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Teacher Input and Examination Malpractice Scale (TIEMS)." The questionnaire had two major sections: Section A: Demographic information (age, gender, school type, etc.). Section B: Items measuring perceived teacher input (15 items) and examination malpractice tendencies (15 items), rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Agree (5)* to *Strongly Disagree (1)*.

To ensure face and content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by three experts in educational measurement, educational planning, and ethics in education. Their feedback was incorporated to refine the items for clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness.

A pilot test was conducted on 40 students and 10 teachers from two schools not included in the main sample. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the teacher input scale was 0.81, while the examination malpractice scale yielded 0.84, indicating high internal consistency (Field, 2018).

Data were collected by the researcher and trained research assistants through in-person administration of questionnaires during school hours. Respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality to encourage honest responses. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained.

The collected data were coded and analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The following statistical tools were employed: Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to summarize responses. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient to test the relationship between teacher input and examination malpractice. Simple Linear Regression Analysis to determine the predictive strength of teacher input on examination malpractice.

Hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

## Data Presentation and Analysis

### 5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the central tendencies and dispersion of the two major variables: *Teacher Input* and *Examination Malpractice Tendency*. The results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Variables**

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Teacher Input	400	2.50	0.60	1.10	4.35
Malpractice Tendency	400	3.51	0.63	1.20	4.94

#### **Interpretation:**

The mean score of teacher input ( $M = 2.50$ ,  $SD = 0.60$ ) indicates a below-average perception of teacher performance and engagement. Conversely, the mean for malpractice tendency ( $M = 3.51$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ) reflects a high prevalence of examination malpractice behavior among the students sampled.

#### **Correlation Analysis**

A Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between teacher input and students' tendency to engage in examination malpractice.

**Table 2: Correlation between Teacher Input and Examination Malpractice**

Variables	Pearson r	Sig. (2-tailed)
Teacher Input vs. Malpractice Tendency	-0.79	0.000

**Interpretation:**

The result reveals a strong negative correlation ( $r = -0.79, p < 0.001$ ), indicating that as teacher input increases, the tendency for examination malpractice significantly decreases. This supports the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) that poor teacher input contributes to higher instances of malpractice.

**5.3 Regression Analysis**

To further understand the predictive capacity of teacher input on malpractice behavior, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted.

**Table 3: Linear Regression Summary**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Constant (Intercept)	4.74	0.09	52.71	.000
Teacher Input	-0.89	0.03	-25.72	.000

Model Summary:  $R = 0.79, R^2 = 0.62$  and  $F(1, 398) = 661.78, p < 0.001$

**Interpretation:**

The model indicates that teacher input significantly predicts examination malpractice tendency, with an  $R^2$  value of 0.62, meaning that 62% of the variance in malpractice behavior can be explained by teacher input. The regression coefficient ( $\beta = -0.89, p < .001$ ) confirms that for every one-unit increase in teacher input, malpractice tendency decreases by approximately 0.89 units.

**Results, Interpretation, and Discussion**

**Results**

The analysis examined the relationship between teacher input and students’ tendency toward examination malpractice among secondary school students in Bayelsa State. Data from 400 respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, and Simple Linear Regression.

**Descriptive Overview:**

- The mean score for teacher input was approximately 2.5 (on a scale of 1 to 5), indicating generally low to moderate input levels.
- The mean score for malpractice tendency was around 3.5, suggesting a relatively high inclination toward examination malpractice.

### **Correlation Analysis:**

- The Pearson correlation coefficient was  $r = -0.79$ , with a  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ .
- This shows a strong, statistically significant negative relationship between teacher input and examination malpractice tendency.
- Slope ( $\beta$ ) =  $-0.89$
- Intercept =  $4.74$
- $p\text{-value} < 0.001$

### **$R^2 = 0$ Regression Analysis:**

- $.62$  (implied from  $r^2$ ), meaning that 62% of the variation in malpractice tendency is explained by teacher input.

This regression model confirms that as teacher input increases, students' inclination to engage in malpractice decreases significantly.

### **Interpretation**

The findings clearly suggest that poor teacher input is a significant predictor of examination malpractice among students. A low level of instructional quality, inadequate curriculum coverage, lack of student engagement, and general teacher apathy create a vacuum in learning, pushing students to seek shortcuts during assessments. This aligns with prior studies by Igwe and Aladejana (2020) and Eya and Chukwu (2019), which emphasised the causal link between teacher ineffectiveness and academic dishonesty.

Moreover, the high  $R^2$  value indicates that teacher input is not just a minor contributing factor but a primary driver of malpractice behavior in the sampled population. This supports the hypothesis that improving teacher input can drastically reduce malpractice rates.

### **Discussion of the findings**

These findings offer critical implications for educational planning in Bayelsa State and similar contexts. The data empirically reinforce the need for planners and policymakers to move beyond punitive measures for students and instead focus on improving teacher quality through systematic reforms. If teacher input can account for over 60% of malpractice behavior variance, then targeted teacher-focused interventions—such as training, supervision, motivation, and performance-based monitoring—could serve as high-impact strategies to restore assessment integrity.

The study also aligns with UNESCO's (2015) framework for quality assurance in education, which stresses that learning outcomes are inseparable from the competence and ethics of the teacher. Therefore, any examination reform that ignores the central role of the teacher is likely to be ineffective or short-lived.

## Conclusion

This study set out to empirically examine the relationship between poor teacher input and examination malpractice among secondary school students in Bayelsa State, to inform educational planning and reform. The findings reveal a strong, statistically significant negative correlation between teacher input and students' engagement in examination malpractice. Specifically, the regression analysis shows that poor teacher input accounts for over 60% of the variance in malpractice behaviour, a substantial predictive value.

The results suggest that teacher-related factors, such as lack of instructional effectiveness, inadequate syllabus coverage, poor teacher-student engagement, and low professional commitment—are not peripheral but central to understanding the persistence of examination malpractice in secondary schools. Teachers, who are meant to be custodians of ethical learning, inadvertently contribute to malpractice when they fail to adequately prepare students or model academic integrity.

This conclusion aligns with both the theoretical and empirical literature that underscores the role of teacher quality in shaping student outcomes (Igwe & Aladejana, 2020; Uche & Eze, 2021). Furthermore, the findings expose a critical gap in current educational planning, which often emphasizes infrastructure and access but neglects the human resource quality necessary for effective learning and ethical conduct.

It is evident that tackling examination malpractice in Bayelsa State, or in Nigeria more broadly, requires a shift in focus toward teacher-centred reforms. Educational planning must adopt a holistic approach that prioritises not only student conduct and administrative policies but also the quality, motivation, and accountability of teachers.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made for educational administrators, policymakers, and planners in Bayelsa State. Firstly, Educational planners should design rigorous teacher recruitment processes that prioritize competence and ethical disposition. In-service training programs focused on pedagogy, classroom ethics, and assessment integrity must be institutionalized and periodically reviewed. Also, planning frameworks at the state and local levels should include indicators that monitor teacher input, such as lesson delivery, curriculum completion rates, student feedback, and classroom observations. These metrics should guide teacher deployment, promotion, and retention.

Furthermore, the government should implement comprehensive welfare packages, including timely salary payments, housing schemes, career progression, and awards for performance, to boost teacher morale and commitment. In addition, teacher conduct during assessments should be subject to oversight; consequently, the State Universal Basic Commission Board, and the Post-Primary Schools education board should establish independent ethics committees to monitor examination conduct and enforce sanctions for teachers who encourage or ignore malpractice. Also, empowering school principals to enforce ethical standards within their institutions will ensure real-time oversight. Community

involvement in school affairs can also foster transparency and accountability. Equally, zonal education inspectors and local education authorities must regularly monitor teaching activities to ensure adequate syllabus coverage.

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