

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

Igwe Sylvester Agbo¹ and Chukwu Jeremiah²

¹Computer science Department, Ebonyi State University, P.M.B 053, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State

²Computer Science Department, Ebonyi State University, P.M.B 053, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State.

Email: igwe.sylvester@ebsu.edu.ng (S. A. Igwe), chukwu.jeremiah@ebsu.edu.ng (J. chukwu)

Correspondence: igwesylvesteragbo@gmail.com

Abstract:

This research work investigated the level of reduction of examination malpractice in General Study's examinations in Ebonyi State University through computer-based test (CBT) mode of examination. The population of the study consists of 2020/2021 year 1 and year 2 students of Ebonyi state university, Abakaliki. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. A sample of 300 students were selected for the study through stratified random sampling technique. A 15 item likert 4-points of questionnaire were used in data collection. It had reliability Coefficient of 0.70 determined using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The data generated was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions while the hypotheses were analyzed using chi-square and t-test statistical tools tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study showed that CBT effectively reduced examination malpractice in General studies examination in Ebonyi state university, Abakaliki. In-view of the result, the researcher has to recommend that both the government at all level and non-governmental agencies should join hands in encouraging computer based examination system.

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

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I. Introduction:

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

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

CBT Examination can also be referred, as computer-based test, which has become the optimal choice for most industries because of its varied benefits. For instance, reputed companies use CBT as a way of screening candidates when there are a huge number of applicants. Ultimately, this assessment enables the

employers to shortlist those candidates who meet their criteria for the job and who have the right talent and skill.

What Is A Computer Based Test (CBT)

Computer-based test, also known as CBT test, refers to delivering assessments or examinations with computers as an alternative to using the pen-paper method. Such a test can be conducted online using the internet or a computer-aided facility. Usually, this test or examination is carried out by organizations to evaluate or analyze a candidate's performance, skill, or capability.

With the integration of features like multiple-choice questions, descriptive answers, analytics-based questionnaires, etc, the CBT online test simplifies the evaluation task of teachers. The faculty can be assured of the knowledge-level of students based on the tests mapping and results. The availability of additional features such as auto-grading and section-wise feedback makes it favorable to educational institutes. It is noteworthy to mention the fact that ever since the worldwide pandemic situation, many companies across different sectors have opted for the computer-based test. Owing to the multiple advantages of computer-based tests, the selection and assessment process of the job seeker has become easier. On the other hand, the schools and colleges were able to progress towards conducting the **CBT test online**, as per the new guidelines by the educational boards.

Statement of the Problem:

Examination malpractice is the greatest academic ill disturbing the Nigerian tertiary education system. Studies have shown that a lot of failures and anomalies happen in the careers of individuals because of the impact of the scourge of examination malpractice (Zakka 2014). Many attempts have been made by government agencies, school authorities, examination bodies to redirect the Nigerian students from the menace of examination malpractice, but to no avail. Therefore, this study was carried out to determine whether the Computer Based Testing (CBT) technique will reduce malpractices in general study examination in Ebonyi State University.

II. Discussion:

Examination is the process of assessing understanding, knowledge and academic ability of an individual within a given period. Examinations are arranged to evaluate the academic achievement of students and to know whether they have achieved a standard of academic learning and knowledge (Suleman, Gul, Ambrin & Kamran (2015). Nnam and Inah (2015) opined that examination is a yardstick against which students or candidates' competence and progress are formally measured and appraised in the education sector. According to Kpangban, Ajaja and Umedhe (2008), examination is an assessment intended to measure knowledge, skills, attitude, physical fitness or classification in many other topics such as beliefs. Omemu (2015) noted that teaching and learning become more effective when the students are subjected to an examination process to determine the extent to which the students have assimilated the content of the instruction given and lecturers can also access themselves from the performance of the students. The outcome of examinations goes a long way to determine whether the objectives of the academic process are being met or not. Irrespective of the huge relevance of examination in academic process, a lot of factors have be-deviled its reliability, one of such factors is examination malpractice. Examination malpractice is an illegal behaviour by a candidate before, during or after the examination in order to achieve undue success easily. Adedojun (2003) defined examination malpractice to include misconduct or any other act not in consonance with the rules and regulations guiding the examination with a view to obtaining good result by fraudulent means. Wilayat (2009) noted that examination malpractice is any illegal act committed by a student single handedly or in collaboration with others; like fellow students, parents, teachers, supervisors, invigilators, printers and anybody or group of people before, during or after examination in order to obtain underserved marks or grades. Nwana (2000) defined examination malpractice as behaviour contrary to a set of expected code of conduct or contrary to a set of ethics and norms exhibited in the cause of examination by person or group of persons. Examination malpractice has become a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the academic fabrics of students in Nigerian schools. This has created doubts on academic certificates issued to graduates from Nigerian schools. Examination malpractice comes in different forms which includes, coping, sorting, bringing foreign materials into examination halls, impersonation, exchange of scripts, use of electronic devices such as phones, calculators collusion with invigilators, and exam officers smuggling scripts written outside into exam halls. Innovative approaches in education has also given rise to innovations in examination malpractice as students can now send questions and answers to their colleagues in any part of the country through electronic means which negates the conduct of examination. Uwandia (1997), Bolarine (2002), Anwanbor (2011) and JAMB (2003) in Akanni and Odofin (2015) opined that the great emphasis on certificate as a means of employment or progress from one point to the other makes students more desperate to acquire certificates by all means thus culminating in examination malpractices. Aina (1991) and Aliyu (1991) in Zakka (2014) noted that the desire to pass at all cost is

responsible for examination malpractices. School management and parents tend to push on wards to get their certificates and good grades by all means in order to secure employment or admission into the best higher institution. Ukpabi (2015) indicated that the major causes of examination malpractices include, laziness of students, large population of students in many schools, desperation among students to pass exams, wide and difficult syllabus in many subjects, inadequate preparation for exams, corrupt invigilators and supervisors. The adverse effect of examination malpractice in the standard of education in Nigeria cannot be overstretched. Students no longer take their studies serious, creativity and resourcefulness among the students is thrown to air. Teachers are not respected anymore, employees are not competent on jobs they are employed for as a result of their certificate. This worrisome trend has warranted Ebonyi state university management to source for remedies to examination malpractice in general study examination, because it could lead to a total collapse in the education system if allowed to continuously prevail. Hence the introduction of computer Based Test (CBT) mode of examination. Computer Based Testing (CBT) mode has emerged as one of the recent innovative approaches to assessments by examination bodies against the Pencil and Paper Testing (PPT) mode. Computerbased test(CBT) is the taking of an examination/ test on computer instead of using Paper and Pencil. Computer-based examination/test can also be defined as test or assessments that are administered by computer in either stand-alone or networked configuration or by other technology devices linked to the internet or the World Wide Web (Olsen 2000). Ojirinde (2015) noted that the introduction of computer based test (CBT) has led to reduction in exam malpractice in the country. It was noted that the introduction of the CBT was for the development of the Nigerian child and the betterment of all Nigerians desirous of improvement in the educational standard. Ojirinde further expressed that with CBT our schools will be forced to follow our school curriculum as it affects Information Technology and above all, the Board opted for CBT so as to ensure global best practice.

Advantages of Computer Based Test (CBT)

There are multitude of advantages offered by computer-based tests. Some of the key advantages of CBT test are as follows.

1: Large-scale delivery of tests

Suppose there is a vacancy in an organization, and several job aspirants have come for an interview, a part of which is to give a written assessment, how long would it take for the entire procedure to conclude? It is reasonable to assume that it will take an entire day, but the **CBT test** hosts a large-scale assessment without having to wait individually. In effect not only saving time but also conducting quality general study examination in the institution.

2: Adjustable and personalized tests

Lecturers ,Instructors or educators have the liberty to adjust the difficulty levels of the questions based on the groups of students. After reviewing the responses given by the learners the pattern of the questions can be further altered; by using video applications, the lecturer(s) or instructors can connect to particular students for oral assessments as well. If the students have any questions or queries to resolve they can easily do so by using other such assorted apps, along with sharing their personal views and opinions.

3: Grading System

A student waits for his/her result or the score of certain tests taken for a considerable amount of time, likewise, the teacher needs time to go through answers minutely to give appropriate marks. But the instant grading of the CBT system allows for faster evaluation of the performance and based on the data that is collected the approach towards the learning process can also be altered. This also gives the instructors or lecturers some idea about where the students are lacking and the areas where they need further improvement.

4: Well-organized and smooth process

Usually, a traditional examination entails quietly lengthy and multiple tasks, starting with preliminary preparations which begin months before the starting of the tests. Be it the securing of the facilities, the invigilators who are hired for the examination halls or rooms, creating the question papers followed by careful storage and keeping it secured. The post-examination process such as retrieval and marking of the answer sheets is equally time-consuming and tedious as well, but all of these processes are automated and thereby streamlined efficiently under the system.

5: Taking care of candidates with special needs

For students or candidates who are differently-abled, computer tests help them by providing helpful features such as braille keyboard, voice to texts, texts to voice applications, screen reader, magnification, and other such tools.

6: Exams conducted with integrity

There is an underlying concern in respect to the integrity of the exams taken or given online, but the availability of various security and proctoring features make sure that the test is conducted with full integrity and without cheating.

7: Remote test feature

With the **CBT test online**, students do not need to travel far distances to appear for examinations, they can select an exam slot according to their convenience and timing and take the particular test.

8.Help Students with Disabilities:

Computer-based tests can be modified easily for physically disabled candidates. Screen reader applications can read the questions to the students if needed. Magnification tools can magnify the problems for visually impaired students. Braille keyboards can help visually disabled candidates type their answers on the screen.

9.Increases Security:

In a computer-based examination, multiple sets of question papers are created within similar questions and difficulty. And these question papers are given to the candidates randomly; it lowers the risk of cheating in examination

III. Recommendations:

Based on the result of the study the following recommendations are made;

The government, NGOs and private organizations should join hands with the school management to build more CBT centers in every faculties to enhance the carrying capacities during examinations and adopt computer-based examination in other course examinations to reduce the academic crime rate and all forms of examination malpractice.

The school management should employ and train more hands to enhance the smooth running of CBT mode of examinations.