

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AMONG UNIVERSITY LECTURERS AS VIEWED BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITIES IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study examined views of undergraduates in universities in Rivers State concerning lecturer's involvement in academic dishonesty. Three objectives and three research questions guided the study. The design for the study was a survey design. The target population for the study involved undergraduate students in Rivers State. To this end, multi-stage stratified sampling method was adopted in the selection of undergraduate students from the three universities. The sample size for the study was 4, 818 undergraduate students. The instrument for data collection was Academic Dishonesty Questionnaire (ADQ) and was validated by three experts in Educational Measurement and Evaluation. To make sure the reliability of the questionnaire, the draft instruments were subjected to pilot testing on 90 undergraduate students of the three universities with each one contributing 30 undergraduate students randomly selected. Furthermore, the scores obtained were exposed to Cronbach Alpha technique for an estimation of the internal consistency of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.86 was gotten which was considered high enough to warrant the use of the questionnaire for field work. Data collected and collated were analyzed and presented with simple descriptive statistics of frequency count (percentage) in tables and bar chart. The study shows that a larger proportion of the undergraduates see their lecturers as being tangled in dishonest practices academically. The study also shows that inflation of continuous assessment/examination scores as a maximum on the lists in the view of the students' as ways that lecturers contribute to academic dishonesty. The next on the list is conspiracy of lecturers with both students and examination officials in the course of examinations, exchange of answers for monetary/substantial gains (including sex) and

impersonation in that order. Thus, it was recommended among others that, lecturers should spend more time in course content coverage with practical (real life) examples and students preparation for semester examinations. If they do it, it is likely that lecturers would not be intimidated or influenced by immoral minds to do what they would not naturally want to do.

KEYWORDS: *Academic Dishonesty, Lecturers, Universities, Undergraduate Students*

INTRODUCTION

The Ivory tower (University) is a place of learning and research meant to enhance academic growth of lecturers and students with a view of proffering solutions to mans' identified problems. The results of these researches are to be made public for the benefit of the society. These results must be in line with scientific skills and attitudes. The result must be reported with truthfulness, value judgment, objectivity, open mindedness and rationality (Dienye & Gbamanja, 1990) [1]. Sariasih and Tisnawijaya (2018) [2] affirmed that the aim of carrying out academic process in honesty is outlined in tertiary institution curriculum which is known as character formation. Hence, the onus lies on the lecturer to reform this character and that of the students. Saidin and Isa (2013) [3] opined that the reason for honesty in research results is to ascertain what ethical issues mean to a practicing teacher. Amzalay et al. (2021) [4] agree that learning system and university education have the goal of obtaining academic knowledge, cultivating ethical and moral values. The reportage of academic result in honesty is known as academic integrity. Keohane, (1999) [5] defined academic integrity as dedication to basic ethical issues such as morality, trust, objectivity, uprightness, regard and commitment. Any academic exercise that falls below these standards is termed academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty is seen as immoral behaviour in school setting (Muhammad et al., 2020) [6]. Similarly Faucher and Caves (2009) [7] defines academic dishonesty as behaviours aim at getting and collecting data from others through illegal resources and disobeying laid down assessment processes in an academic setting. This is an unethical behaviour where lecturers get information and results without permission and adhering to the right standards. It can be behaviour where undergraduate get an unfair academic favour for themselves or for their colleagues in the academic environment. Academic dishonesty hinders the growth of positive value such as honesty, curiosity ingenuity, value judgment and openness. Academic dishonesty weakens one of the vital roles of tertiary institutions which is to make an atmosphere favourable to learning that will produce graduates that not only highly skilled and technically proficient, but, also demonstrating high morals of honesty, decent responsibility and commitment to helping their related profession and humanity fine (Brimble & Stevenson-Clarke, 2005) [8]. Thus, it is a common image of most tertiary institutions to aim for academic distinction and to improve characters of individuals so as to develop their professionalism. Nevertheless, outcomes of researches in the area of honesty among lecturers reveals, dissimilar circumstances are being witnessed (Resurreccion, 2012) [9].

Institutions of higher education are facing the problems related to academic honesty even in traditional learning. These problems are rising speedily in E-learning as a result of integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching and learning. Many academics have realized that there is need for proper research before publication of journal articles, course

design, a dedicated and supervised learning environment, and the creation and execution of rules and guidelines to address honest and ethical matters in e-Learning. Despite being based on indirect proof, these undeniably portray a bad light on the image of lecturers also placing a nation's institutions of higher learning in disregard. Worthy of note is the lack of formal records relating to this matter, which is attributable to under-reporting by institutions, as these matters tend to remain closeted under the disguise of saving the image of the school.

Academic dishonesty is not widely researched on even though a common observation in the academic community shows that it is a common practice. The worth and standard of any educational programme is an unwavering responsibility of the academic staff. In fact, it can be confidently indicated that an academic staff is a key defender of values in any academic institution. This affirmation begins from the authority to judge academic accomplishment that is bestowed on the academic staff. The academic staff is in charge of awarding grades to students based on their performance. On the day of graduation students are said to have been found worthy in character and learning. This cannot be conceivable if the lecturer that have unswerving interface with the students during their study did not function as role models, or is involved in any form of academic dishonesty that frustrates the goal of the academic enterprise. Academic dishonesty occupying our institution is producing unwanted fruits in our institutions of higher learning both advanced and developing nations of the world.

Olasehinde (2000) [10] noted that it is no longer news that academic dishonesty is one of the main threats of the Nigerian learning system. Bello (2011) [11] states that there is no disagreement with the fact that college system in Nigeria primarily confronted with the danger of immoral features. Our interest in accepting and remediating academic dishonesty comes from our pledge to defend the rights of our honest lecturers and students. "Cheaters do hurt themselves, but they do not only hurt themselves. They also degrade the education and affront the integrity of their honest peers" (Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002) [12]. In some many cases when cheating is not detected perpetrators scores higher than their peers, the frustration is profound. The resolution to support and respect honest learners is for academics and teachers to take a position and be involved in sustaining a climate of integrity in the classroom and in the entire campus.

Categories of Academic Dishonesty among students

There are many categories of academic dishonesty; some of them as outlined by St Peterbury College are as follows: Cheating, Bribery, Misrepresentation, Conspiracy, Fabrication, Collusion, Academic Misconduct, Improper Computer/Calculator Use, Improper Online, Tele Web, and Blended Course Use, Disruptive Behaviour as well as plagiarism.

Cheating: - Cheating is taking or giving any material which will be used to determine academic performance. Examples of cheating include:

- Duplication from other student's test or assignment.
- Permitting another student to reproduce from your test or homework.
- Using materials such as textbooks, notes, or formula lists during a test without the lecturer's permission.
- Cooperating in an in-class or take-home quiz devoid of lecturer permission.

- Impersonation.

Bribery: - Bribery takes on two forms:

1. Bribing someone for academic advantage, or accepting such a bribe (i.e. a student offers a lecturer money, goods, or services in exchange for a passing grade, or a professor accepts this bribe).
2. Using an academic advantage as a bribe (i.e. a lecturer offers a student a passing grade in exchange for money, goods, or services or a student accepts this bribe).

Misrepresentation: - Misrepresentation is any act or omission that is intended to mislead a lecturer for academic advantage. Misrepresentation includes laying to a lecturer to increase your grade, or lying to a lecturer when caught in academic dishonesty.

Conspiracy: - Conspiracy entails working collectively with one or other people to oblige or try to oblige academic dishonesty.

Fabrication: - Fabrication is the use of generated or misrepresentative material. Fabrication happens in the sciences, when students generate or adjust experimental data. Citing or referencing a source in your research that you did not truly use in your investigation is termed fabrication.

Collusion: - Collusion is the act of two or more students collaborating together on an individual task without the knowledge of the lecturer

Duplicate Submission: - Duplicate submission is when a student submits the same paper for two dissimilar classes. When an undergraduate surrenders the same paper for two different classes within the same semester, the student needs to have agreement of two lecturers. An example is submission of two answer papers in an examination.

Academic Misconduct: - Academic misconduct is the abuse of university rules by altering scores or by attaining and/or allocating any part of a quiz or project. For example:

1. Gaining a photocopy of a test earlier than the time test is administered.
2. Giving out, either for cash or for free, a test before it is administered.
3. Inspiring others to get a copy of a test in advance.
4. Altering scores in score sheet, or in computer spreadsheet.
5. Remaining to work on a test when time is up.

Unauthorized Computer/Calculator Usage: - Improper computer/calculator use includes:

1. Unapproved usage of computer or calculator in an assessment or examination.
2. Peddling or giving away material kept on a computer or calculator which will be given in for a mark.
3. Distribution of quiz or homework answers on a calculator or computer.

Inappropriate Online, TeleWeb, and Blended Course Usage: - Inappropriate online, Teleweb, and blended course usage consist of:

1. Taking or giving out that outside help on online tasks or examinations.
2. Attaining test sources or questions in advance.

Disrupting Behaviour: - Disrupting behaviour is any behaviour that interferes with the teaching/learning process. Disruptive behavior consists of:

- Insulting a lecturer or fellow student in class or online.
- Chatting, texting, or watching material unconnected to the course in the course of a lecture.
- Failure to silence your cell phone in class.
- Placement of unsuitable material or material unrelated to the course on dialogue boards.

Academic Dishonesty among Lecturers

On the part of lecturers, some of the common academic dishonesty includes the following: Changing of assessment mark after collecting a bribe, meddling with academic appraisal surveys, academic piracy, and publication fraud. Others are unethical authorship exchange, truancy from work, giving of publication authorship to non-contributors, covering up of student examination malpractice act, falsification of research data/finding, adjunct lectureship without permission from the university, leaking of examination questions, forcing students to buy books or other learning materials, falsifying examination records, writing student assignments for money, accepting bribes to change student scores and sexual harassment of students. The list is actually endless. The aforementioned ones are the overt academic dishonesty common among university lecturers. The questions now one is tempted to ask is are university lecturers in Rivers state truly involved in these unwholesome behaviours? If yes how often do lecturers get involved in academic dishonesty, what percentage of learners sees lecturers as dishonest as examination supervisors and in what means do lecturers participate in academic dishonesty? Questions we are hoping the students they teach will answer in this study.

Nonetheless, literature is replete with information on academic dishonesty, for instance, Naghdipour and Emeagwali (2013) [13] uphold that seeing students' reasons and excuses for cheating or getting involved in academic dishonesty will certainly aid raise our responsiveness as to suitable strategies and approaches required by faculty to avert it from becoming a standard on university campuses, no matter how strong individual issues or students' enticement might appear to be.

Sariasih and Tisnawijaya (2018) [2] carried out research on academic dishonesty with a view of ascertain how students carry out learning assessment and project. The study was carried out in Pamulany University. The study adopted the survey design. The sample size was 446 students and 45 lecturers of universities Pamulany. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire; three research questions were posed. The data collected was analyzed using percentages. The outcome of the study shows that replication answers from another students in the course of quizzes, copying the homework and project from follow students as well as lifting information or sentences from books, magazine or other sources without citing the source and using article from website, book, journal or other sources were the major academic dishonesty.

The result further shows that academic dishonesty was found mainly in online assessment or in e-learning. The study also reveal that the reason for academic dishonesty consist of inadequate time, need for high score, difficulty of subject matter and no adequate information about academic dishonesty and the types of it. The study therefore recommends that student need to be aware and judge their academic activity themselves.

Abel et al. (2020) [14] studied the intensity of academic dishonesty among postgraduate students in higher learning institutions in Tanzania and how to curb the situation. The study adopted the qualitative approach. The instruments for data collection were group discussion and interview. Eighty postgraduate students from four universities, eight heads of department and eight quality assurance officers constituted the sample size via purposive sampling technique. The data generated was analyzed with the thematic approach. The result of the study reveals that academic dishonesty can be curb through the following means introduction of course on ethics, mutual discussion between lectures and students on academic honesty, accurate application of plagiarism test software, modification of assessment method, higher scores should be given to seminar presentation and oral examination and the use external examiner score as the final score in assessment of projects. The findings also show that the university quality assurance system should be empowered, discussion on the supervisory roles to lecturers and academic readiness among postgraduate students. The study recommends that curbing of academic dishonesty in universities should be a cooperate effort of education stakeholders.

Saidin and Isa (2013) [3] investigated academic dishonesty among language teacher trainee: the way and how of cheating. The study was conducted at university Teknologi Malaysia. The sample size consists of seventy-one trainee teacher. The study adopted the online survey. The instrument for data collection was an online questionnaire. Three research questions were posed, the data collected was analyzed using simple percentage. The result shows that 80% of the trainee teacher cheated in their examination, 80% of them know the penalties for cheating and the reason for cheating was absence of preparation, heavy work load, and pressure to get good grades among others. The result further reveals that 50% have a feeling of guilt after cheating and 62% of trainee teacher are bent on cheating again and 54% of the trainee teacher feels that cheating has no negative influence of their career. They recommend among other that there should be deterrent measures such as displaying photograph of students caught in the act of cheating.

Baran and Johnson (2020) [15] studied academic dishonesty among university students: the roles of psychopathy, motivation and self-efficacy. The study was carried out in Poland. The sample size was 390 Polish university students. The design for the study was an online questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using Spearman correlation, Z-test and multiple regressions. The result of the study reveals that students with upper levels of callousness and disinhibition are not bold had recurrent academic dishonesty during their universities study. The result reveals that psychopathy facts such as meanness and disinhibition lead to low level of student's mastery goal orientation which leads to academic dishonesty. The result of the study further reveals that self-efficacy reduces the rate of academic dishonesty among students. The study recommends that lecturers can reduce the rate of dishonesty using oral examination and enhancing students' self-efficacy in academic context.

Ikiroma and Anyanwu (2017) [16] investigated students' perception of teachers' involvement in academic dishonesty. The study adopted the survey design. The population of the research is all senior secondary school students in twenty-three local government area of Rivers State. The sample size of study was 1000 senior secondary school students via multi stage sampling method. The tool for data gathering was a researcher made questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.87 via the Cronbach alpha. Three research questions guided the study. The data collected were analyzed using frequency, percentage, and pie chart. The result of the study shows that most of the students see their teachers to be involved in academic dishonesty. The result also reveal that tutors were dishonest while helping as supervisor or examiners as they conspire with students, external supervisor, security agents during examination and also inflate continuous assessment/examination scores. The study recommends that Teachers Registration Council (TRC) of Nigeria should teach teachers the ethics of their profession.

Tiong et al. (2018) [17] investigated academic dishonesty among academics in Malaysia: a comparison between healthcare and non-health care academics. The study adopted the cross-sectional study design. The instrument for data gathering was a self-administered questionnaire. The sample size is 141 academic from six universities in Malaysia. The instrument was reliable with a reliability coefficient of 0.679 via Cohen's kappa coefficient. The data gathered were scrutinized using frequency, percentages, mean, percentile, range standard deviation, t-test, ANOVA followed by post hoc analyses using least statistical difference (LSD). The result of the study revealed that half of the respondents have personally encounter at least one case of academic misconduct in their career such as absenteeism, from work, giving of publication authorship to non-contributor, academic plagiarism among others. The finding also shows that healthcare academics have high prevalence in falsification of research data/finding, leaking of exam question writing assignment for money and accepting bribe to change student grade while the non-health care academics have high prevalence in forcing students to buy books or other teaching materials for monetary gain. The result shows that academic dishonest affect the university adversely.

In view of the above background, this study was designed to investigate into:

1. How often do lecturers get involved in academic dishonesty in Rivers state as perceived by their undergraduate students?
2. What proportion of undergraduate students in Rivers state perceives lecturers as being dishonest academically as examination invigilators and supervisors?
3. In what ways do lecturers involve themselves in academic dishonesty in Rivers state as viewed by their undergraduate students?

Methodology

The design for this study is the survey design. The population this study was undergraduate students in Rivers State. Hence, the present assessment was carried out as a sample survey covering all the three universities and consequently a good proportion of the undergraduate students in the various faculties of the different universities participated in the study. To this end, multi-stage stratified sampling method was adopted in the selection of undergraduate students from the three universities. The sample size used for the study was 4, 818 undergraduate students.

The instrument used was titled Academic Dishonesty Questionnaire (ADQ). The questionnaire was intended to generate data for analysis on circumstantial variables including students, school and home linked issues that impact on academic dishonesty. The questionnaire consists of items on background information like gender; university type; frequency and various ways of lecturers' taking part in academic dishonesty in Rivers state. To ensure reliability of the questionnaires, the draft instruments were subjected to pilot testing on 90 undergraduate students of the three universities with each one contributing 30 undergraduate students randomly selected. Furthermore, the scores obtained were subjected to Cronbach Alpha technique for estimating internal consistency of a research instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained which was considered high enough to warrant the use of the questionnaire for field work. However, centered on the results from the pilot study, the questionnaires were revised for improved validity. With the help of research assistants, the questionnaires were administered in October through December 2021, after the end of their examinations. Freshmen were however excluded in the study. Data collected and collated were analysed and presented with simple descriptive statistics of frequency count (percentage) in tables and bar chart.

Results

Research Question 1: How often do lecturers get involved in academic dishonesty in Rivers state as perceived by their undergraduate students?

The responses of the undergraduate students from the three universities used in this study are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: FREQUENCY OF LECTURERS PARTICIPATION IN ACADEMIC DISHONESTY IN RIVERS STATE

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Often	1542	32
Often	1142	24
Occasionally	1575	33
Never	559	11
Total	4818	100

Table 1 show that 32% and 24% of undergraduate students respectively see their lecturers as being very often and often take part in academic dishonesty. A moderately small proportion (33%) sees them involving sometimes. While a small proportion (11%) does not see lecturers involving themselves in academic dishonesty. When subjected to bar chart we have a picture as presented in figure 1.

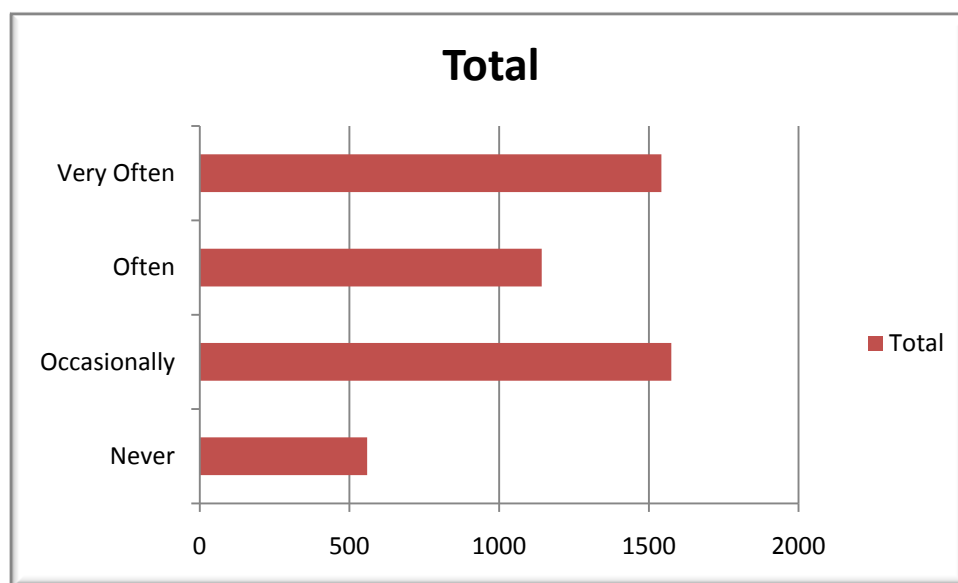


Figure 1: Bar chart showing the frequency of lecturers' involvement in academic dishonesty

Research Question 2: What proportion of undergraduate students in Rivers state perceives lecturers as being dishonest academically as examination invigilators and supervisors?

In reaction to this question, majority (63%) of the undergraduate students were of the view that their lecturers were always dishonest, while serving as invigilators or supervisors. The likelihood is that some lecturers always request for monetary or material gains (e.g. recharge cards, compromising relationship, drinks etc.) from students before, during and after examinations.

Research Question 3: In what ways do lecturers involve themselves in academic dishonesty in Rivers state as viewed by their undergraduate students?

The answers to research question three is as presented in table 2.

TABLE 2: PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS OF THE VARIOUS WAYS LECTURERS INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

SN	Lecturers' Roles	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Collaborating with students during examinations	3021	63
2	Colluding with other invigilators/supervisors to aid and abet students during and after examinations	3021	63
3	Inflation of examination scores/continuous assessment in answer booklets for students	3612	75
4	Exchange of answers for money (including material gains)	1241	26
5	Allowing impersonation of students by another person (student)	903	19

In Table 2, inflation of examination score/continuous assessment in answer booklets for students (75%) tops the lists of undergraduate students' opinion about the ways that lecturers add to academic dishonesty. This is followed by collaborating with students during examinations and colluding with other invigilators/supervisors to aid and abide students during and after examinations (63%). The table also reveal that 26% of the undergraduates see exchange of answers for money (including material gains) as another way in which are themselves take part in academic dishonesty. While, only 19% of the students opined that lecturers allow impersonation of students by another person (undergraduate).

DISCUSSION

With the issue of how often lecturers get involved in academic dishonesty in Rivers state as perceived by their undergraduate students, 56% of the students agreed that lecturers often take part in one form of academic dishonesty or the other. A situation that shows that academic dishonesty among lecturers in Rivers state is real and calls for concern from all stakeholders. In addition, the issue of lecturers and indeed teachers' academic dishonesty, earlier study had indicated that some lecturers are corrupt. In the study of Makoju et al. (2014) [18] they concluded that one of the social nuisances the present management is fighting is the problem of dishonesty. Some persons who have one item or the other with examination are dishonest. They take inducement from undergraduates or harass female undergraduates sexually afore they can permit them pass. Moreover, the outcome that invigilators collude with both students and other officials during examinations to continue cheating incline to substantiate results of earlier studies (Onuka & Obialo, 2004) [19].

The research results also shown that some lecturers have a tendency to inflate continuous assessment and examination marks. This is in agreement with the findings of Makoju et al. (2014) [18], who reported that lecturers (and other school workers involved with examination score) unjustifiably pump up examination scores. The outcomes connecting to impersonation also incline the report of previous research (e.g. Adewale, 2014) [20]. For example, a student registers with his/her name but submits the photograph of another person, with whom agreement has been prepared to take the examination on his/her behalf. In this process, the students may enter another agreement with the invigilator to substitute the mercenary's pictures with his/her own or the mercenary give an off-color taken photograph, which will disappear within a limited months of production. When they disappear and replacement is required, those of the original candidate are now submitted. These findings do not seem to augur well with the school system, particularly when viewed from the point of view of the fact that lecturers are likely to be character molders.

Parents are not helping in promoting lecturers' integrity, even when some lecturers are not willing to compromise their stand; some parents tempt them to do what they do not want to do. For instance, there is a case in which due to the quest for paper qualification, a parent bought (name withheld) result for his son to read medicine, nevertheless, he bought aincorrect combination. He went with his son to show the result to a professor in one of the foremost universities in Nigeria and the Professor said, "Your child won't be able to read medicine because of wrong combination in his subjects". The son interrupted by saying "but I told you that you shouldn't buy result for Economics but Physics" (Makoju et al., 2014). Till less importance is placed on paper qualification and people come to place stress on the skills acquired in order to

function well in the society, the matter of academic dishonesty will linger. The enthusiasm for paper qualification is the off-shoot of policy application when importance is slowly been detached from appropriate attainment of demonstrable expertise and academic brilliance, to ownership of paper qualification, which is not supported up with sought-after skill to show for it (Nwahunanya, 2014) [21].

CONCLUSION

This study had been on academic dishonesty in which lecturers are accused. Meanwhile the study did not collect information on lecturer uprightness, it will be incorrect to conclude that lecturers do not have integrity. In addition, it is not all the shareholders in education who are participated in this study; it is possible to have some varying amount of views on the facts previously gathered. Conversely, in order to decrease involvement of lecturers in academic dishonesty, the following suggestions are recommended.

Recommendations

1. Lecturers should spend more time in course content coverage with practical (real life) examples and students ground work for semester examinations. If they do it, is likely that lecturers would not be intimidated or influenced by corrupt minds to do what they would not naturally want to do.
2. Lecturers should be contented with what they have because if you are not contented with what you have, you may not possible be satisfied with whatsoever you want. If they are satisfied they would not partake in assisting, abetting and colluding with students to cheat because of a transient material gains they may receive from the students or their guardian (parents).
3. Lecturers should be proud of their profession and status in society. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) should make effort to periodically draw the attention of lecturers to the ethics of their profession. It is wished that when and if this is done, most lecturers will know what to do when confronted with such trials as being bribed by students or parents or even fellow lecturers in order to have their way by engaging in academic dishonesty.

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