



A Meta-Analysis on Perceived Factors Influencing Examination Malpractices

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Abstract: The study sought to examine how the research methods and their respective findings of prior studies on perceived factors influencing examination malpractices from 2012 to 2019. Initially, we access 15 studies electronically for review purpose but nine were opted for the meta-analysis. They include seven quantitative method studies and two mixed method studies. The study revealed that, there is prevalence of examination malpractices particularly in some parts of Asian and African continents but cautions should be adhere to by researchers and elites in their attempts to generalize this finding. Moreover, study revealed key players, forms/methods, causes and effects or factors that influence examination malpractices, measures to check the malpractices as well as the association between examination malpractices and learners' academic work and corruption and suggested that a generalization could be made in connection to them. Based on the identified findings, we recommended that examination bodies, schools, colleges etc should adhere to the measures and solutions put forward by various researchers that are presented in this study and also address the causes identified to foster the act of combating examination malpractices. Lastly, we propose to future researchers to boost their skills and knowledge on research methods in order to halt the existence of the shortfalls identified in this meta-analysis.

Key words: meta-analysis, examination malpractices, academic achievement, education system, learning objectives

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The achievement of an education system depends on effective and efficient examination system because an examination is essential element in teaching and learning practices. As we all know, examinations are arranged to evaluate the academic achievement of students and to discern whether students have achieved a standard of academic learning; knowledge and comprehension. Examinations are also considered as a foundation for advancement to subsequent level in our quest for education; a source of inspiration for students to boost their performances; a basis for forecasting students' imminent edification and career propensities. In the light of this, Shahid (2007) posit that, examination serves as a basis for the assessment of students' achievement level and supports the teachers to appraise the effectiveness of their teaching and learning procedures for prospect enhancement. Examination has been the utmost concrete and useful way to define the degree to which the teacher achieves the instructional objectives; the student achieves the behavioural objectives in specific course of study as planned, aiding in future attainment of learning objectives which is a core drive for societal growth and development. Henceforth, examination should be valid, reliable and free from malpractices that will foster the academic achievement of students in a superb and effective way. According to Adams & Esther (2013), it is deplorable that in most nations of the world, the examination structure is infested with examination delinquencies or illicit acts. Conducting examinations has become one of the key difficulties the education division is facing. Despite the robust measures established to guarantee the safety of examination papers such as: ensuring that papers are distributed by the examination bodies like West African Examination Council (WAEC) to all the districts under police chaperon; that every school has a strong room and lockable metal boxes, examination papers still find their way out to cause the dire act "examination malpractices"(Hang'andu, 2005) which in our opinion is due to the fact that, examination serves as a tool for decision-making and it always generates hesitation, discomfort and concern in the temperament of students and some other stakeholders in education.

Onuka & Amusan (2008) describes examination malpractice as every deceitful, illicit or unauthorized action executed by candidates on their own or in collaboration with others stakeholders like corresponding students, guardians, parents, teachers, head teachers, examination administrators, superintendents, invigilators, printers, security escort officers and any person or group of people before, during or after examination in order to get unwarranted and imbalanced results or grades. Odonbo (2014) also describes examination malpractice as an act of wrong doing made by a student or group of students or any other person with the intention to cheat and get undue gain in an examination. In fact, examination malpractices create the most severe delinquent nation's education system is facing. There is therefore the need to clean the nations' education system by exterminating examination malpractices and execute an established multidimensional method of resolution. We therefore suggest that, the dire can be alleviated through collective exertions of all the stakeholders which include education ministries, school authorities, teachers and examination authorities in a quest to adhering to examination honesty. It is sad that in our today's society

pedants value excellent examination result acquire through examination malpractices to valid examination results and attainment of learning objectives. Simply, our society respects those who pass examination not resenting the means through which they pass the examinations. In support of our assertions, Bimufe (2008) posited that, only those who are successful are cherished in the society and most of the successful one involved in one form of impropriety or the other to augment their triumphant.

Several researchers and scholars have affirmed that, many reasons have been adduced to be the cause of the prevalence of examination malpractice in the education system (Suleman, Gul, Ambrin, & Kamran, 2015; Oko & Adie, 2016). Petters & Okon (2013) ascertains the causes to include anxiety of failure, enthusiasm for certificate, craving of parents to have their progenies in choice professions and colleges/universities; pressure on students to pursue courses which they have weak propensity; pressure on teachers who want to gain favour of students, parents and other stakeholders. In addition, George & Ukpong (2013) relates the aggregate rate of examination malpractices to poor teaching, futile preparation by students, ill-equipped library facilities, and suspicious admission procedures. Akaranga & Ongong (2013) also associates the cause of examination malpractice to parental upbringing which creates dishonest among students. They pronounced that because of social prestige and economic aptitude, most parents are simply swayed to bribe their way through for the sole triumph of their progenies and self-indulgence. Similarly, Ejimogu (2001) who posits that, general ethical depravity and the high premium placed on achievement and certificates by Nigerians has in recent times reproduced examination malpractices. This implies that, the overdependence on educational certificates as a measure of one's acquaintance and aptitude has led to an irate haste by most individuals for these educational credentials through unprincipled means. The incoherence between traditionally applauded goals and the institutionalized means of achieving these goals coupled with the social setting of excessive accent on success-goals deprived of comparable emphasis upon institutional means of achieving these goals have created a setting that inclines some students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders to engage in examination malpractices (Jimoh, 2009). Humanity today is characterized by a hefty highlighting on triumphant and affluence without considering the corresponding emphasis on genuine means and avenues to be used in achieving the triumphant. Countries have become a profitable scheme and no longer a place for generous package. Similarly, Makaula (2018) avows that, students' performance in examinations creates the basis of imperative resolutions about their educational and occupational prospects. With this we conversely, concede that the use of examination in choosing students for advance education or occupation places a hefty burden on the education system hence needs to enhance. In the light of this, students can be measured depending on their grade, nevertheless, because of the significance attached to examination; issues concerning examinations should be given a cautious thought to make the consequences more valid, reliable and acceptable within the broader society. This might have compelled Phiri & Nakamba (2015) to argue that, there is the need to put in place measures to guarantee examinations to be conducted in a manner that endures self-confidence and credibility. It is generally believed and can be inferred from the former assertions that, education has a constructive effect on students, and examination outcome is an applicable measure of the extent to which students have acquired gen to be better citizens in society yet examination malpractices remain an impediment.

Furthermore, the former researchers in their studies also established that, in societies that examination malpractice is predominant; its effects are discernably seen in the type of human resources their education system produced. Educational system strives to instruct high level of discipline, assiduousness and ethical love for others; to the beneficiaries where the examination is oppressed with malpractices, all the imperative reaction mechanism becomes evaded and the educational system becomes inaccurate (The CWO Voice, 2010). Moreover, Examination malpractices lead to permanent loss of credibility; a nation that becomes infamous in examination malpractices loses universal integrity. The implication is that, documents or credentials deriving from such nation would be treated with mistrust. To affirm this, Jimoh (2009) revealed in a study that, nations who are notorious in examination malpractices have their educational institutions are as good as dead as far as international cooperation in education is concerned. In conclusion, it is not surprising that several researchers have conducted studies to investigate the cause, effects and solutions to curb the horrible act. It has therefore become urgent to critique the methodologies, objectives and findings; evaluate them in order to come out with collective and more efficient causes, effects and solutions in our quest of compacting examination malpractices.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a meta-analysis design to examine how the research methods adopted by researchers in previous studies (2012 – 2019) on perceived factors influencing examination malpractices among students at various levels in education were consistent with their respective general objectives and findings or results. Greenland & Rourke (2008) defines meta-analysis as a statistical analysis that combines the results of multiple scientific studies. They asserted that, meta-analysis can be performed when there are multiple scientific studies addressing the same question; with each individual study reporting measurements that are expected to have some degree of error. The aim is to use approaches from statistics to derive a pooled estimate closest to the unknown common truth based on how this error is perceived. Existing methods for meta-analysis yield a weighted average from the results of the individual studies, and what differs is the manner in which these weights are allocated and also the manner in which the uncertainty is computed around the point estimate thus generated. In addition to providing an estimate of the unknown common truth, meta-analysis has the capacity to contrast results from different studies and identify patterns among study results, sources of divergence among those results, or other interesting relationships that may come to light in the context of multiple studies (Greenland & Rourke, 2008). Initially, we reviewed 15 related literatures taken from journal articles, abstracts and thesis which were accessed through electronic means for reading purposes. The journal articles were from journals like Journal of Education and Learning; International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development; European Journal of Education Studies; etc. The study settings were Ghana; Kenya; Nigeria; Pakistan; and Zambia. However, we opted for nine studies for the meta-analysis which were made up of seven quantitative method studies and two mixed method studies. The study was conducted following three steps. First, literatures were access electronically via google, google scholar, education resources information centre (ERIC), Microsoft academic, research gate, and

ask.com. Second, the downloaded and complete version of the articles were printed out to aid thorough reading to foster concise and precise understanding relating to abstracts, general and specific objectives, research methods and studies' findings/results of the nine studies. Finally, the concept of examination malpractices, causes and effects of examination malpractices and ways to curb the horrible act were identified and affiliated with their respective methodologies.

3.0 ANALYSIS OF STUDIES ON EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES

First, Achio, Ameko, Kutsanedzie, Alhassan, & Ganaa, (2012) conducted a study to look into the forms, the factors and the key players in examination malpractices, as well as the consequences and measures to combat the menace. In the study which was a descriptive design, they administered questionnaires using random sampling among 96 sampled staff of Accra Polytechnic in Ghana of which 90 responded which represent 93.75% of the total sample size. The data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. Their results revealed that most of the leakages that cause examination malpractices come from candidate's peers (66.7 %). Also, the common forms of examination malpractices included writings on items (100%) and on candidates' bodies (83.3 %). The study again asserted that, between 2000 and 2011, various forms of examination malpractices have increased from 5 to 12 different forms indicating 140% upswing. Moreover, it was revealed that, about 37% of the respondents had ever been involved in a malpractice; and 94.5 % admitted that examination malpractice is unscrupulous. On a lighter part, there was no correlation between ages or gender and involvement in examination malpractices; meaning person's age or gender does not influence the act. Achio, *et al.* recommended base on the findings that, there should be an adequate orientation to all stakeholders and on-time implementation of approved sanctions to culprits, as well as the adaptation of the Competency Based Teaching and Learning (CBTL) to help candidates to prepare effectively and efficiently with the sole aim of desisting from examination malpractices. In our analyses, we concluded that sample setting and sample respondents were limited to inform generalization hence it was prudent to impel meta-analysis to accept the findings and the recommendation.

In the same year, Cornelius-Ukpepi & Ndifon (2012) in a study investigated factors that influence examination malpractices and academic performance in Primary Science among primary six pupils in Cross River State, Nigeria. They formulated and tested two hypotheses. The study adopted the Expost-facto research design. Data were collected through two instruments: examination malpractice questionnaire (EMQ) and a 50-item primary science achievement test. These instruments were administered to 1,818 pupils out of 68,201 pupils coming from 70 schools. Their sample represented 26.7% of the total population which is good for generalization purpose. Amedahe (2013) asserted that, sample size should be determined by 5% to 20% of population for generalization. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was adopted for the sampling process. The data obtained were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) statistical tool at a 0.05 level of significance. It was found out in the study that, there was a significant relationship between both teachers' and parental involvement in examination malpractices and pupil's academic performance in primary science. It was therefore recommended that teachers and parents should show good model to pupils, avoid putting pressure on pupils and encourage the pupils to study satisfactorily to help them perform well in science and minimize examination malpractice. Although, the sample was good for generalization, the study delimitation to only one subject out of about nine subjects studied at the primary level in Nigeria prompted urgency meta-analysis.

Akaranga & Ongong (2013) in a study focused on examination malpractices in educational institutions with a particular reference to two public universities in Kenya. To facilitate their discussion, they formulated the following research questions: *What is an examination malpractice? What is its cause? Does examination malpractice contribute to educational goals or development? Are students aware of the repercussions of examination irregularity? And finally, what are institutions of higher learning doing to curb this reprehensible behaviour?* To answer these questions, they adopted the mixed method design of which they administered questionnaires and conducted interviews on staff and students from the two public universities. They administered a total of 375 questionnaires in the two universities. It was revealed in the study that, some of the prevalent forms of examination irregularities include: candidates colluding with invigilators and examiners; impersonation, writing synoptic notes. Because of ethical questions, they based their investigation on Thomas Hobbes' theory of State of Nature and noted that these forms of examination malpractices were also common phenomena in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in other parts of the world. Based on their findings, they recommended that there is the need for institutions and governments to enforce remedies against the menace in learning institutions. Our questions are: "why did they do generalization using the theory?" and "were they right?"

Suleman, Gul, Ambrin, & Kamran, (2015) also explored the factors that contribute to examination malpractices at secondary school level. The target population of the study was all the heads, teachers and students at secondary school level in Kohat Division, Pakistan. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The study was delimited to 60 male secondary schools. The sample for the study was made up of 840 respondents which were selected through simple random sampling technique. A self-developed semi-structured questionnaire was used as research instrument for data collection. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, simple percentages, means, and standard deviations) and inferential statistic (Analysis of Variance, ANOVA) were applied for the statistical analysis of data. The findings of the study discovered that, there are various factors that contribute to examination malpractices and they include corruption; poor implementation of examinations rules; students and parental threats; no fear of punishment; inadequate preparation for examination; poor invigilation; collusion; disloyalty of examination bodies; fear of failure; poor morale and economic depression of supervisory staff etc.

Again, the findings of the study revealed that, the act of bringing of unauthorized materials to examination hall; sending of prepared answers to students by teachers and parents; impersonation; questions and papers leakage; cheating; and scripts changing are the various forms of examination malpractices. Based on these findings, it was recommended that examination rules should be implemented effectively and those who were found guilty should be given severe exemplary punishment according to the examination's rules. In fact, the researchers did a good quantitative study however; we would like to prompt future researchers who would read Suleman's *et al.* (2015) work not to repeat these things. First, we deem it irrelevant to present the frequencies and simple percentages since they were not used in the discussion. Second, delimiting the study to only male school was not helpful since it could be inferred but not proven that, females are not associated with examination malpractices which would then contradict Achio *et al.* (2012) who posited that there was no correlation between ages or gender and involvement in examination malpractices. We therefore suggest to future researchers to ensure gender representativeness in their sample size. These identified weaknesses were enough to warrant meta-analysis study to include their study.

Phiri & Nakamba (2015) in an article investigate the effect of examination malpractices (leakages) on pupils' academic performance in Geography in selected secondary schools in Kitwe District, Zambia. The purpose of the study was to find out the effect that examination malpractices (leakages) have on pupils' academic performance in Geography considering the persistence of examination leakages in the national examinations not only in Zambia but across the globe. Data for the study was collected from ten secondary schools in Kitwe District including the District Education Board Secretary's Office (BEDS) and the Provincial Resource Centre. The total sample size was 50. A mixed method design was used and data were collected through questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion schedules. Collected data were coded and keyed on the Microsoft excel sheet on STATA for analyses and interpreted into tables and graphs on the quantitative part while the qualitative data were analyzed using content thematic following the emerging themes and sub-themes. The findings of their study revealed that examination malpractices (leakages) had a negative influence on pupils' academic performance because they influence pupils to lose self-confidence, the desire to learn, to study hard and acquire knowledge and skill. It was also discovered that most pupils who have interest in examination malpractices devote less time to academic exercise even during the time of examinations; they waste much of the time to engage in malpractices. Furthermore, the major effects of examination malpractices on pupils' academic performance were reported by respondents in their study and they include poor academic performance, less concentration during lessons, indiscipline and lack of respect for the teachers, panic during examinations to mention but a few. Based on the above findings, they recommended that the government of Zambia should integrate examination malpractices in the school curriculum as one of the cross cutting issues to be taught in order to enhance awareness; Examination Council of Zambia (ECZ) should also increase awareness through outdoor advertising in addition to the current posters; and finally Examination Council of Zambia should extend examination malpractices' penalties to all those found wanting including those photocopying, parents and all suspecting persons. In our view, the sample size of was very small to facilitate generalization of results as proposed in their purpose as well as it delimitation in subject. These factors were enough to push for meta-analysis.

Oko & Adie (2016) conducted a study which critically examined the various forms of examination malpractices and the causes of examination malpractice in Nigerian universities, using Cross River University of Technology as a case study and recommended possible ways of curbing the dreadful trend. The population of the study covers students and other stakeholders of Cross River University of Technology however; the study sample was made of 250 respondents which included 150 undergraduates, 50 graduates of Cross River University of Technology and 50 parents/guardians who were randomly selected to answer questionnaires on causes, types, and possible ways of curbing examination malpractice. A descriptive design was used and questionnaires with average reliability co-efficient of .90 were used to collect data. The study revealed that, the moral issues in the society and the quest for certificate in the face of poor academic performance are major causes of examination malpractices in Nigeria. The study also revealed that, an array of factors were responsible for examination malpractices in Nigeria and they included what most respondents called "wrong value system which leads to serious quest for certification instead of knowledge and skills", Laziness, lack of preparation or in-adequate preparation for examination, lack of self-confidence, poor school facilities (Lack of or in-adequate examination hall), poor sitting arrangement, socio-economic factors, political-undertone, privatization and commercialization of education, poor invigilation, weak parental function etc. The researchers advocated and recommended the following measures to curtail examination malpractices: attitudinal or value change from certificate acquisition to knowledge acquisition; reduction in student population per invigilator; building of examination halls to accommodate sizeable number of students with wire net windows to forestall free flow of materials to and fro the examination halls; and a general change in societal value system and attitude in the educational system. Amazingly, concise tables were not presented to show the analysis of the study which defaces its quantitative nature.

Osadebe & Bini (2018) carried out a study to verify secondary school teachers' assessment of the various factors affecting examination malpractices in Delta State. In the study, eight research questions and four hypotheses were generated. This indicates how eager the researchers were in conducting a thorough study on examination malpractices. Data were collected using questionnaires; the statistics of mean with a bench mark of 2.5 was used because a four-likert scale was used for the questionnaires. Other statistics used include Pearson Product Moment Coefficient, t-test, and MANOVA in order to enable the researchers meticulously analyze and interpret the collected data. The descriptive survey method was used with the population of the study as 12,883 teachers from 453 public secondary schools in Delta

State however the sample size was 1,000 and the sample procedure used was the cluster sampling technique. The findings of their study revealed that, teachers' role, supervisors' role, societal value and learning environment are major players in influencing examination malpractices. It was also shown that gender; qualification and rank of teachers shape their opinion about these factors of examination malpractices. Based on the findings, they made recommendations such as teacher ensuring the completion of examination syllabus, placing of monitoring cameras in examination halls, employing only trusted person for supervision among others would help to reduce or eradicate examination malpractice. In our view, they did a thorough study and their analyses were better and concise than that of Suleman, *et al* (2015). However, they should have included student respondents.

In present studies, Okey & Ewa (2019) investigated the correlation between examination malpractice and corruption among students at CRUTECH. They predominantly examined the relationship between: cheating in examination and corruption among students at CRUTECH; gratification in examination and corruption among students at CRUTECH; and bribery in examination and corruption among students at CRUTECH. Based on the Bandura's social cognitive learning theory, they conducted an ex-post facto research design to inquire about the correlation between examination malpractices and corruption among students in Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH), Calabar, Nigeria. Three research questions and null hypotheses were developed for the study with 800 participants randomly sampled from the population within the study setting. The collected data were analyzed via Pearson product moment correlation coefficient statistic. Their findings indicated that cheating, gratification and bribery have significant relationships with corruption among students at CRUTECH. Simply put, these are among the practices students employed to commit examination fraud. They henceforth recommended that, key stakeholders and inter alia need to develop holistic and workable methods to curb the hazard in the interest of national development.

Thompson, Ansoglenang, & Laar (2019) also investigated the reasons why students engage in examination malpractice during examinations at the University for Development Studies (UDS). They adopted a cross-sectional survey design for the study and targeted undergraduate students of the Tamale Campus of the UDS. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 278 out of a total student population of 6,729 for the study. The study used a questionnaire mainly with close-ended items and a few open-ended items. The findings suggest that smuggling of prepared notes on pieces of papers (foreign material) into the examination hall; writing of examination answers on palms; thighs and other body parts; and communication by seeking for answers from colleagues are the three primary forms/methods students engage to cheat during examinations. Also, the study revealed that, some students' desire to obtain good grades just as the more intelligent students pushes to cheat during examinations. The researchers recommended that, the introduction of scanners and e-search software, the spacing of sitting arrangements, installation of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras in large examination halls may aid in curbing cheating during examination. The sample size was 4.1% of the study's population hence would not make the results appropriate for generalization since it contradicts Amedahe (2013) who asserted that, sample size should be determined by 5% to 20% of population for generalization. Moreover, the sample size was far below what Krejcie & Morgan (1970) suggest in their sample size determination table that, based on the study population of 6729 the appropriate sample size is between 361 and 364.

In conclusion, these studies have relevant purposes, appropriate methods, good analysis and discussion and urgent findings and recommendations however the identified limitations in this meta-analysis were enough and prudent for the call of meta-analysis. It is also obvious from the studies that, there is prevalence of examination malpractices and that, key players; forms; causes; effects and ways to curb the dire "examination malpractices" were identified and discussed in these nine studies from 2012 to 2019 in Asia and Africa settings.

4.0 COMPARATIVE VIEW OF STUDIES ON EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES

Various studies conducted on examination malpractices from 2012 to 2019 had diverse purposes or general objectives. Although, Achio, Ameko, Kutsanedzie, Alhassan, & Ganaa, (2012) and Oko & Adie (2016) sought to critically examine the forms, the factors and key players in examination malpractices, as well as the consequences and measures to combat this menace, Cornelius-Ukpepi & Ndifon (2012) and Phiri & Nakamba (2015) were similarly investigating the factors that influence examination malpractice and academic performance. Again, three distinct studies conducted by Suleman, Gul, Ambrin, & Kamran, (2015); Osadebe & Bini (2018); and Thompson, Ansoglenang, & Laar (2019) explored similar purpose thus assess the factors that contribute to examination malpractices. However, each of the study was carried out in a different geographical setting with some having specific subject area like mathematics, science and geography but most were general. Finally, Akaranga & Ongong (2013) focused on examination malpractices in educational institutions while Okey & Ewa (2019) investigated the correlation between examination malpractice and corruption among students. It can clearly be noticed that two studies: Akaranga & Ongong (2013) and Okey & Ewa (2019) had their own unique objective while the rest of seven studies had three similar purposes in pairs and triple. Achio, Ameko, Kutsanedzie, Alhassan, & Ganaa, (2012) with Oko & Adie (2016) and Cornelius-Ukpepi & Ndifon (2012) with Phiri & Nakamba (2015) representing the pairs, had similar purposes while Suleman, Gul, Ambrin, & Kamran, (2015); with Osadebe & Bini (2018); and Thompson, Ansoglenang, & Laar (2019) representing triple, had similar purpose.

The next feature that was compared in the meta-analysis was the various research methods adopted by the researchers. Although, Achio, Ameko, Kutsanedzie, Alhassan, & Ganaa, (2012) and Oko & Adie (2016) had similar objective as well as Suleman, Gul, Ambrin, & Kamran, (2015) and Osadebe & Bini (2018), all of them together with Thompson, Ansoglenang, & Laar (2019) deployed descriptive survey

design with questionnaires as their main instrument. However, Achio, *et al.* (2012), Suleman, *et al.* (2015), and Thompson, *et al.* (2019) were having limitations in validating instrument, appropriate and enough sample size and setting to justify valid and reliable results or findings for the purpose of generalization and substantive evidence for knowledge. Osadebe & Bini (2018) and Oko & Adie (2016) were considered to have appreciable rate of quality methodologies, it was recommended to have been excellent if both have included student respondents and shown evidence of analysis in tables and graphs respectively. Moreover, Cornelius-Ukpepi & Ndifon (2012) and Okey & Ewa (2019) adopted Expost-facto research design with questionnaires and tests as their main instruments although both had diverse objective with the later placing much desire on relationship between examination malpractices and corruption among students. Both were also considered to be appropriate for generalization but it seems findings from Cornelius-Ukpepi & Ndifon (2012) would be restricted since the study was conducted in primary science. Finally, Akaranga & Ongong (2013) and Phiri & Nakamba (2015) used mixed-method design to serve their unique purposes with questionnaire, interview and secondary data as their main instruments. Their findings were considered credible and commendable; Phiri & Nakamba (2015) was limited in its sample size which would hinder the agenda of generalization and evidence for subsequent studies. On a whole, it can be observed that, the findings or results are appropriate and credible because of their frequent existence in all the studies.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, all the studies presented in the meta-analysis establish that, there is prevalence of examination malpractices especially in some parts of Asian and African continents but cautions should be adhere to by researchers and elites in their attempts to generalize this finding. Moreover, the meta-analysis presents various findings which revealed key players, forms/methods, causes and effects or factors that influence examination malpractices, measures to check the malpractices as well as the association between examination malpractices and learners' academic work and corruption. In fact, the empirical evidence from this study guarantees a generalization in relation to these aforementioned findings. Finally, it can be resolved on an average that, the research methods deployed in nine studies used in this meta-analysis were dependable because they could serve the purposes of the respective studies though slight limitations were identified. We therefore recommended that examination bodies, schools, colleges and educational institutions should adhere to the measures and solutions put forward by various researchers that are presented in this study to foster the act of combating examination malpractices. Also the aforesaid agencies should address the causes identified in order to abate the occurrence of examination malpractices. Lastly, we prompt future researchers to boost their skills and knowledge on research methods in order to halt the existence of the shortfalls identified in this meta-analysis.

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