



## CONSTRUCTION, VALIDATION AND STANDARDIZATION OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARD EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE SCALE

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### Abstract

The study examined the construction, validation and standardization of students' attitude toward examination malpractice scale with the main purpose to construct, validate and standardize students' attitude toward examination malpractice questionnaire. The research design adopted for this study is the scale development and validation design. The population of the study consisted of all SS3 students in Public and Private secondary schools who enrolled for 2023/24 WAEC and NECO Examination, in Benin Metropolis. The sample size for the study consisted of two thousand four hundred (2400) SSS III students from twenty (20) public and 20 private secondary schools in Benin Metropolis. The sampling techniques adopted for selecting the sample for the study was Multi-stage Disproportionate Stratified Random Sampling. The instrument used for data collection was the Students' Attitude toward Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (SATEMQ). The findings of the reliability and the validity of an instrument were used to determine item analysis. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine internal consistency reliability. The findings revealed that the students' attitude towards examination malpractice questionnaire demonstrated satisfactory validity and reliability indices. It was therefore recommended that the instrument be adopted by researchers and educational practitioners for assessing students' attitudes toward examination malpractice in secondary school contexts in Nigeria.'

**Keywords:** Attitude, Construction, Examination, Malpractice, Standardization, Validation

### Introduction

The value and functionality of any educational system lie in its ability to actualize the goals of education. In educational systems world over, the examination process, teaching method, quality of teachers among others makes the difference. The goals of national education and development become like an illusion if examination ethics is not encouraged, and instituted. Till date, examinations remain one of the most widely used tools for an objective assessment and evaluation of what learners have achieved after a period of schooling. Hence, any action that undermines examinations poses a great threat to the validity and reliability of examination results and certification. Unfortunately, the process of examination in Nigeria secondary schools has become a "contemporary shame" (Nwadiani, 2005). This is because of the phenomenon of examination malpractice that has become prevalent in the educational system. Alutu and Aluede (2006) remarked that examination malpractice is any irregular behaviour exhibited by a candidate or anybody charged with the conduct of examination before, during or after the examination that contravenes the rules and regulations governing the conduct of such examination(s).

The educational system in Nigeria in general, and Edo state in particular, has many challenges, but examination malpractice constitutes one of the greatest, because it threatens the very foundation of the system. This malaise is harmful for the moral and intellectual development of the Nigerian youths. It is afflicting the ethical and social fabric of the Nigerian society (Okafor, 2013). Omorogiuwa (2010) defines construct validity as the extent to which a test measures an intended hypothetical construct. When we endeavour to validate a scale, we try to reveal that our theoretical interpretation of the responses to the scale is correct or not. Validity therefore measures the match between a variable



representing a true measure of the construct and the scale responses. However, the quality of a scale is determined by its adherence to basic construction principle, validity and reliability properties as well as standardization. An instrument is considered to be of good quality if it satisfies the psychometric properties of test. The property of reliability is quite crucial as the consistency of an instrument to measure what it is supposed to measure cannot be overemphasized. Reliability is not a fixed property of a test rather reliability estimates change with different populations (samples) and as a function of the error involved. According to Popham (1999), standardised test is a test that is administered and scored in a consistent or standard manner. Standardized tests are designed in such a way that the questions and interpretations are consistent and are administered and scored in a predetermined, standard manner. It includes administration procedure, scoring procedure, norms and interpretation framework. As a result of the above, scales must be standardized, valid and reliable to make it more effective, meaningful and consistent, thus the need to construct, validate and standardise students' attitude toward examination malpractice scale in this study.

### **Problem of the Study**

The persistent occurrence of examination malpractice has been a major concern to educationists, and other education stakeholders despite the high premium placed on examination by the National Policy on Education. Reports from examination bodies such as WAEC and NECO, as well as findings from researchers, reveal worrisome statistics, for instance, in 2018, the approximate percentages of examination malpractice cases resulting in withheld results were 6.5% for WAEC and approximately 20.2% for the NECO GCE (private) examination (Agwu, Orjiakor, Odi, Onalu, Nzeadibe & Okoye, 2020). In 2019, it was approximately 11.33% for the WAEC WASSCE (internal) and 3.53% for the NECO SSCE (internal) (Ajayi, 2024). In 2020, it was approximately 13.98% for the WAEC and roughly 2.74% for the NECO, based on the number of results withheld or candidates involved (Oginni et al., 2024). For 2021, NECO was 1.63% of the total candidates who sat for the internal Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE). WAEC was 10.9% of the total number of candidates who sat for the 2021 WASSCE (internal). Although, the Minister of Education, Dr. Tunji Alausa, has disclosed a consistent decline in malpractice rates on the West African Examinations Council examination over the past three years, from 16.29 per cent in 2023 to 11.92 per cent in 2024 and 9.70 per cent in 2025 (Mefor-Nwachukwu, 2025). This trend in examination malpractice is destructive and poses great threat to the survival and sustainability of good quality education and needs to be drastically addressed especially in the current fourth industrial revolution (AI revolution). With the attitude of students, parents, teachers, and school administrators so actively involved in this unwanted examination malpractice, the nation faces the prospect of breeding a generation of dishonest youth, poorly prepared graduates and invariably unreliable labour force for the future.

In order to study and obtain dependable data from an instrument for measuring students' attitude toward examination malpractice, there is need to construct, determine validity, reliability and standardization of the instruments, hence the urgency of this study due to the value placed on instrument quality, reliability in measurement and standardization of an instrument.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to construct, validate and standardize students' attitude toward examination malpractice questionnaire and considered the sex and school ownership factors.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the reliability and validity indices of students' attitude toward examination malpractice scale?
2. What is the norm of the students 'attitude toward examination malpractice scale by sex?
3. What is the norm of the students 'attitude toward examination malpractice scale by school ownership?



### Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the scale development and validation design. The population of this study consists of all the eighty-three (83) public and six hundred and forty five (645) private secondary schools in Benin metropolis with total number of 12,910 students who enrolled for the 2023/24 WAEC and NECO Examinations, in Benin Metropolis (Ministry of Education, Benin City (2025). Benin Metropolis comprises Oredo, Ikpoba-Okha, Egor and Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. The distribution of the schools is shown in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Distribution of Public and Private Secondary Schools in Benin Metropolis**

S/N	Local Government Area	Nos. of Public Schools	Nos. of students in Public schools	Nos. of Private Schools	Nos. of students in Private schools	Total no. of students in Public and Private schools
1	Oredo	16	1,284	163	1780	3064
2	Egor	14	1,512	152	1624	3136
3	Ikpoba- Okha	24	1,400	256	1800	3400
4	Ovia N.East	29	875	74	2435	3310
	Total	83	5,071	645	7,639	12,910

Source: Ministry of Education, Edo State, 2025.

The sample size for the study consisted of two thousand four hundred (2400) SSS III students from twenty (20) public and 20 private secondary schools in Benin Metropolis (Oredo, Egor, Ikpoba Okha and Ovia North East). The sampling techniques adopted for selecting the sample for the study is Multi-stage Disproportionate. The multi-stage disproportionate was used in order oversample specific populations to ensure equitable numeric representation

**Stage I:** The Disproportionate Stratified Random Sampling technique was used to select five (5) public secondary schools and five (5) private secondary schools from each of the local government in Benin metropolis (Oredo, Egor, Ikpoba Okha and Ovia North East) making a total of twenty (20) public schools and twenty (20) private schools which gives a total of forty (40) secondary schools for the study.

**Stage II:** The Disproportionate Stratified Random Sampling technique was used to select sixty (60) students from each of the forty (40) selected public and private secondary schools which gives a total of 2400 students.

The breakdown of the composition is presented in the table below

**Table 2: The Sample Distribution of Public and Private Secondary School in Benin Metropolis for The Study Is Shown Below**

Sampling stages	Local Government Areas				Total
	Oredo LGA	Egor LGA	Ikpoba-Okha LGA	Ovia-NE LGA	
No. of sampled public schools	5	5	5	5	20
No. of sample private schools	5	5	5	5	20
Total no. of sampled schools					40
No. of students sampled in public schools	(5x60)300	(5x60)300	(5x60)300	(5x60)300	1,200
No. of students sampled in private schools	(5x60)300	(5x60)300	(5x60)300	(5x60)300	1,200
<b>Total no. of students sampled</b>					<b>2,400</b>

### Researcher compilation 2025

The research instrument for data collection was a questionnaire. Section 'A' had items dealing with biodata of the students such as sex and school type, Section 'B' deals with items relating to attitude towards examination malpractice, which were in a four (4) point likert format of: very much like me, like me, unlike me, very much unlike me. The items are grouped into three (3) components of attitude such as:



- a) Cognitive component-This comprises items that refer to beliefs, thought that one would associate with examination malpractice. It is based on information or knowledge.
- b) Behavioural component- This reflects the intention of a person in the short run or long run. It consists of a person's tendencies to behave in a particular way towards examination malpractice.
- c) Affective component- It relates to the statement which affects another person. It deals with feelings or emotions that are brought to the surface about something (example, fear or hate).

The instruments Students Attitude towards Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (SATEMQ), The construct validity and reliability were determined and formed part of the findings of the study, since the aim of the study is the construction and validation of a scale.

### Procedure for Scale Construction

The following steps as recommended by Omorogiuwa (2010) were adapted by the researcher in the construction of the scale.

- i. **Identification of the components of the scale:** The area of interest of this study is on attitude toward examination malpractice, attitude components are:
  - a) Cognitive Component-This comprises of items that refer to beliefs, thought that one would associate with examination malpractice. It is based on information.
  - Behavioural Component- This reflects the intention of a person in the short run or long run. It consists of a person's tendencies to behave in a particular way towards examination malpractice.
  - Affective Component- It relates to the statement which affects another person. It deals with feelings or emotion.
- ii. **Generation of Items:** Based on the issue of this study, the researcher generated 30 items for this study that is 10 items were generated for each component of attitude.
- iii. **Initial Validation of Items:** The establishment of validity and reliability of the research instrument is known as the validation of the instrument.
- iv. **Field Trip/Administration of Instruments:** The scales were administered to two thousand four hundred (2400) students, of this study and their responses were scored and used to establish the reliability of the scales.
- v. **Item Selection:** The items were scored using 4, 3, 2, and 1 for positive items and the reversed scores for negative items after the field trip and scores gotten from the responses of the students were analysed with the help of principal component analysis to determine the items that will be retained. Out of the retained items, five items were selected from each of the components-cognitive, behaviour and affective. Therefore, the total items selected were 15 items. The selections were based on the items that have highest factor loadings (at the first factor), the negative items were also considered in the selection so as to balance the positive and negative items. There are nine positive items and six negative items in each of the four scales (students' attitude towards examination malpractice questionnaire).
- vi. **Establishment of Norms (Standardization):** The relevant norms that guided the users of the questionnaire that were established for students were provided.
- vii. **Production of Final Scale:** The items that were retained in this study would form the final developed questionnaire and would carry the relevant norms to guide the potential users of the questionnaire.

The instruments were administered to the students, by the researcher with the assistance of their class teachers, and were collected immediately. The researcher's assistants (teachers) helped in the administering, monitoring and retrieving of the instruments from the students. The findings of the reliability and the validity of an instrument were used to determine item analysis. The items are scored in such a manner that if the answer to a positive item is 'very much like me', a score of 4 is given; for 'much like me' option, a score of 3 for 'unlike me' option, a score of 2, for 'very much unlike me' option, a score of 1 is awarded. On the other hand, in case of negative items, the above scoring procedure is completely reversed. Preliminary analysis to check out the fitness of the data for factor analysis was done so as to ensure unidimensionality. To ensure the unidimensionality of the Attitude scales, a method



of factor extraction known as principal component analysis was used. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index of sampling adequacy was used to check for sampling adequacy) for the students', parents', teachers', and principals' attitude towards examination malpractice scales respectively. . Bartlett's test of sphericity was used to prove that correlations between items were large enough for conducting a principal components analysis (PCA) at 0.05 sig, level for the four scales. Research question 1 were answered with the values of item-total correlation to establish the construct validity with factor loading 0.3-0.75 (Kolawole & Kojigili, 2005) Cronbach's alpha was used to estimate the reliability, while research questions 2 and 3 were answered using percentile norms.

## Results

**Research Question One:** Does the students' attitude toward examination malpractice questionnaire satisfy validity and reliability?

**Table 3: Validity and Reliability of students' attitude towards examination malpractice questionnaire.**

Component	Item Number	Factor loading	Item-Total Correlation	Nature of Item	Reliability
Cognitive	1	0.465	0.419	Positive	0.79
	2	0.529	0.478	Negative	
	3	0.508	0.459	Positive	
	4	0.484	0.438	Negative	
	5	<b>0.555</b>	<b>0.500</b>	<b>Negative</b>	
	6	<b>0.511</b>	<b>0.464</b>	<b>Negative</b>	
	7	<b>0.542</b>	<b>0.489</b>	<b>Positive</b>	
	8	<b>0.582</b>	<b>0.527</b>	<b>Positive</b>	
	9	0.523	0.472	Positive	
	10	<b>0.547</b>	<b>0.492</b>	<b>Positive</b>	
Behaviour	11	0.423	0.390	Positive	0.63
	12	0.470	0.432	Positive	
	13	0.409	0.371	Positive	
	14	0.426	0.388	Negative	
	15	<b>0.441</b>	<b>0.398</b>	<b>Negative</b>	
	16	0.543	0.489	Positive	
	17	<b>0.572</b>	<b>0.520</b>	<b>Positive</b>	
	18	<b>0.580</b>	<b>0.529</b>	<b>Positive</b>	
	19	<b>0.584</b>	<b>0.528</b>	<b>Positive</b>	
	20	<b>0.542</b>	<b>0.490</b>	<b>Negative</b>	
Affective	21	0.423	0.383	Positive	0.70
	22	0.544	0.499	Positive	
	23	<b>0.560</b>	<b>0.512</b>	<b>Positive</b>	
	24	<b>0.549</b>	<b>0.500</b>	<b>Negative</b>	
	25	<b>0.554</b>	<b>0.503</b>	<b>Positive</b>	
	26	<b>0.543</b>	<b>0.491</b>	<b>Negative</b>	
	27	<b>0.577</b>	<b>0.527</b>	<b>Positive</b>	
	28	0.534	0.481	Positive	
	29	0.536	0.483	Positive	
	30	0.521	0.470	Positive	

Note: The bolded items were the retained items.

Cronbach Alpha coefficient for 30 items= 0.859

Table 3 showed that the item validity (Item-total correlation) coefficient ranges from 0.371 to 0.529. The value clearly indicates that the items of the scale were meaningfully related and contributed to the construct being measured. Hence the students' attitude towards examination malpractice scale' is valid.



Table 3 shows that the factor loadings of the 30 items falls between the range of 0.3 and 0.75, therefore, all the 30 items were retained. The best five (5) items were selected from each of the components. Table 3 also shows that in the Cognitive component, the selected five items are 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 while the reliability coefficient of the five (5) items is 0.789. In the Behaviour component, the selected five items are 15, 17, 18, 19 and 20 while the reliability coefficient of the five (5) items is 0.631. In the Affective component, the selected five items are 23, 24, 25, 26 and 27 while the reliability coefficient of the five (5) items is 0.701. The overall reliability coefficient of selected 15 items is 0.859, this shows a high level of internal consistency of the scale which means that the students' scale on attitude towards examination malpractice is reliable.

**Research Question Two:** What is the norm by sex in the students' attitude toward examination malpractice questionnaire?

**Table 4: Percentile Norms of Students by Sex**

Percentile	Raw score (Male)	Raw score (Female)	Interpretation
81-100	35-60	37-60	Highly favourable
61-80	30-34	30-36	Favourable
41-60	24-29	25-29	Moderate
21-40	20-23	20-24	Unfavourable
0-20	19 and below	19 and below	Highly unfavourable

Male students= 1,139; Female students=1,261

Table 4 shows the percentile norms of the male and female students. The male raw score of 35-60, which was obtained by 1,139 males and female raw scores of 37-60, which was obtained by 1,126 female students belong to the 81-100 percentile. Also, male and female raw score of 19 and below which were obtained by 1,139 males and 1,126 females belong to the 0-20 percentile. Moreover, higher raw score reflects positive and favourable students' attitude towards examination malpractice while lower score reflects negative and unfavourable students' attitude towards examination malpractice.

**Research Question Three:** What is the norm by school ownership in the students' attitude toward examination malpractice questionnaire?

**Table 5: Percentile Norms of Students by School Ownership**

Percentile	Raw score (Private)	Raw score (Public)	Interpretation
81-100	36-60	36-60	Highly favourable
61-80	30-35	29-35	Favourable
41-60	25-29	24-28	Moderate
21-40	20-24	20-23	Unfavourable
0-20	19 and below	19 and below	Highly unfavourable

Private= 1,200; Public= 1,200

Table 5 shows the percentile norms of the private and public students. The private school students' raw score of 36-60, which was obtained by 1,200 private school students and public-school students' raw scores of 36-60, which was obtained by 1,200 public school students belong to the 81-100 percentile. Also, private and public students' raw scores of 19 and below which were obtained by 1,200 private and 1,200 public school students belong to the 0-20 percentile. Moreover, higher raw score reflects positive and favourable students' attitude towards examination malpractice while lower score reflects negative and unfavourable students' attitude towards examination malpractice.

### Discussion of Findings

The findings in research question one revealed that the students' attitude towards examination malpractice questionnaire was found to be valid and reliable. The item validity coefficient ranges from



0.398 to 0.529. The value clearly indicates that the items of the questionnaire were meaningfully related and contributed to the construct being measured. Hence the students' attitude towards examination malpractice questionnaire is valid. Moreover, the results of the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) which is 0.880 and Bartlett's tests were found to be appropriate and statistically significant at 0.001 level. The construct validity of this study is in agreement with the construct validity of Kolawole and Kojigili (2015) who in their study developed and validated a scale for measuring self-concept and attitude of secondary school students in Nigeria. The validity result from research question one is also in line with the findings of Sholarin, Onyebuchukwu and Oluwafemi (2017) that developed a scale for measuring the perception of undergraduates towards cheating in an examination

The findings in the research question one also revealed that the students' attitudes towards examination malpractice questionnaire is reliable. There were three components in the scale, such as cognitive, behavior and affective components. The reliability coefficients of these three components using Cronbach Alpha technique were 0.789, 0.631, and 0.701 respectively. The overall reliability coefficient of the students' attitude to examination malpractice questionnaire was 0.859. The reliability coefficient is high and this shows that the scale is reliable and possesses internal consistency. From the results of the reliability coefficients of this study, there is evidence that the scale (students' attitude towards examination questionnaire) is reliable as it yielded a high coefficient of 0.859. The finding of this study is in consonance with the findings of Kolawole & Kojigili (2015) [Cronbach Alpha= 0.937]; and Sholarin, Onyebuchukwu and Oluwafemi (2017) (Cronbach Alpha= 0.77) where they found high reliability coefficients in their various scales. Also, it conforms to the statement of Kolawole (in Ajayi, 2013) that a standardized test is said to have high reliability coefficient when it is within 0.80 and 0.90 and coefficients ranging from 0.50 to 0.70 are also considered reliable. Since the result of this study's finding is in consonance with this standardized test conditions, the scales (students' attitude towards examination questionnaire) therefore have a strong degree of internal consistency.

In answering the research questions two, percentile norm was used as frame of reference for the interpretation of the raw scores of students with respect to sex. The percentile norm of male students with raw score of 35-60 and female raw scores of 37-60 belong to 81-100 percentile while male and female raw score of 19 and below belong to the 0-20 percentile This means that higher raw score reflects positive and favourable students' attitude towards examination malpractice while lower score reflects negative and unfavourable students' attitude towards examination malpractice. The percentile norm which was used in this study is in line with that of Anbari and Nellaiyappen (2014) who constructed and standardized an attitude scale on the topic "A Tool Constructed and Standardization of Attitude towards E-learning for Higher Secondary School Students" to measure the attitude of students towards E-learning. The percentile of 90 has a raw score of 217.2, while the percentile of 10 has a raw score of 137.4, which means that higher raw scores reflect positive and favourable attitude towards E-learning for Higher Secondary School students' while lower score reflects negative and unfavourable students' attitude towards E-learning for Higher Secondary School. The percentile norm which was used in this study is also in line with that of Patchaivaziamman and Krishnamurthy (in Jeevanantham & Muthuchamy, 2022) developed and standardized a scale measuring Attitude towards Teaching. To establish norms for these scales, percentile norm was used to establish the norms for the study. The percentile of 10 has a raw score of 52, while the percentile of 90 has a raw score of 84.8, which means that lower raw score indicates presence unfavourable attitude towards teaching and above the mid-value indicates the presence of favourable attitude towards teaching.

In answering the research questions three, percentile norm was used as frame of reference for the interpretation of the raw scores of students with respect to school ownership. The percentile norm of private school students with raw score of 36-60 and public school students' raw scores of 36-60 belong to 81-100 percentile while private school students and public school students' raw score of 19 and below belong to the 0-20 percentile This means that higher raw score reflects positive and favourable students' attitude towards examination malpractice while lower score reflects negative and unfavourable students' attitude towards examination malpractice. The percentile norm which was used in this study is in agreement with that of Lyngdoh and Sungoh (2017) constructed and standardized an attitude scale



to measure the attitude of teachers towards constructivist approach in teaching. The percentile norm of teachers with raw score of 116 and above belong to 81-100 percentile and teachers raw score of 98 and below belong to the 0-20 percentile. This means that higher raw score reflects positive and favourable teachers attitude toward constructivist approach in teachings while lower score reflects negative and unfavourable teachers attitude toward constructivist approach in teaching.

### Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to construct, validate and standardize an instrument for assessing the students. The findings of this study revealed that Students' attitude towards examination questionnaire is valid, reliable and standardized. Based on the scales developed and the findings of this study, it was therefore concluded that the scales are valid, reliable, workable and suitable for use among large samples and capable of determining students' attitude towards examination malpractice in Nigeria.

### Recommendations

On the basis of the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. The students', scales should be fully incorporated into the pool of research instruments in Nigeria.
2. Continuous assessment procedure should be given to students to ignite the zeal to study and develop self-confidence with less emphasis on certification.

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