

# Innovations

## Academic Dishonesty in Nigerian Higher Institutions of Learning

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### Abstract

*Academic integrity, also known as academic honesty, is crucial for having a high-quality practical education as well as for pursuing academic knowledge in Nigerian educational institutions. This paper, therefore, investigates academic dishonesty in Nigerian higher institutions. A descriptive survey research design was employed for the study. All academic staff members in three different universities from two different states in Nigeria constitute the population for this study. A sample of 225 respondents drawn from the three universities (private, state and federal) were selected using random and purposive sampling techniques. An open-ended Google form questionnaire, Academic Dishonesty Questionnaire (ADQ) was designed by the researchers and used as the research instrument. The research findings identifies some the causes of academic dishonesty and how they affect education and nation-building, and the challenges of curbing academic dishonesty in Nigeria's higher institutions. Recommendations were made, such as increasing awareness of the need for*

*academic integrity throughout the nation's educational system (primary, secondary, and higher institutions), among others.*

**Keywords:** *academic integrity, dishonesty, sex-for-grade, higher institutions, plagiarism*

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### Introduction

Higher institutions play important roles in shaping the future of any nation. In a developing country like Nigeria, knowledge is seen as a key factor in development as well as a means of solving the multidimensional problems plaguing society. Nigeria and other countries in the world are investing heavily in functional, quantitative, and qualitative education for their citizens because of their perception of education. Higher education, particularly university education, is viewed as a process of teaching and as a way to build the knowledge economy through research, knowledge development, and dissemination. It is a way to use knowledge through interaction with knowledge users (Ajadi, 2014). In Section 5 of the Revised National Policy on Education, written by the Federal Republic

of Nigeria (2014) listed the following goals for higher education: a). development of proper values for society and individual survival; b). an individual's capacity for understanding and appreciating their immediate and wider environments; c). and acquiring the physical and mental abilities needed to make people independent and valuable to society. d). the cultivation and advancement of scholarship, and the aforementioned objectives. The aforementioned objectives are expected to be pursued and achieved by tertiary institutions through research and development programs, and knowledge creation. The significance of these objectives is that Nigerian higher educational institutions are mandated by law to produce high-level manpower development. (Ekundayo&Akinsuroju, 2022; Ajogbeje, 2022). The reputation of many academic staff members within the system, however, has come under scrutiny due to the common occurrence of professional misconduct among academic staff. Academic staff frequently approaches students with advances that are motivated by the fact that they are underperforming or failing their courses. In Nigerian higher education institutions, some female students consciously use sex as a tool for academic and financial survival. Sex-for-marks, plagiarism, cheating, and other vices that are currently rampant in our educational institutions have major effects on the expansion and development of tertiary education in Nigeria.

## Literature Review

### Academic Staff and Knowledge Disseminations in Higher Educational Institutions

One of the key objectives of creating postsecondary schools in Nigeria is to provide highly trained manpower for the

nation. The development of students with the intellectual, social, and mental skills necessary to perform admirably and successfully on the job is one of the key goals of tertiary education. As a result, students will become resourceful, independent, and labor-intensive employers. These lofty ideals or ideas, however, are quickly becoming a mirage due to academic dishonesty, which jeopardizes the standard and quality of education. This must be of considerable concern to all academic institutions in Nigeria. Academic accomplishment metrics like tests, exams, and assignments are typically used to gauge the quality of education because they can be measured through standardized examinations (Ajogbeje, 2012; SIDA, 2000). In contrast, other outcomes could be more complex and less quantitative. The academic staff, who are the primary stewards of standards in any educational institution, are directly responsible for the quality and standard of any academic program. They have the authority to evaluate students' academic progress and provide pass or fail grades depending on their performance following their interactions with the students over the course of their studies. Therefore, the willingness and capacity of the key players to successfully carry out their designated roles are crucial for the accomplishment of the objectives of any organization, including educational institutions.

Society has long considered academic staff to be the key drivers of change in the tertiary education system and in student academic performance. Since they are sources of knowledge and change agents, they are the main resources and the driving force behind students' academic advancement. As they interpret the material and use theory in their interactions with students, they serve as learning facilitators. In addition to imparting knowledge, ethics, attitudes, and skills, lecturers are also supposed to help their students recognize and maximize

their potential. In tertiary institutions, academic personnel have a significant impact on students' academic progress. In conclusion, society invests a great deal of trust in academic staff members to educate, conduct research, provide community services, and knowledge transmission. Knowledge supplied by a nation's higher educational institutions significantly affects its success in terms of educational, social, economic, and technological development. We must therefore make concerted efforts to sustain the culture of integrity that our higher institutions are known for. Academic staff must be people of unquestioned character who are self-disciplined and have extremely high moral standards. Academic personnel must avoid engaging in any unethical behaviors that could undermine an educational enterprise, such as plagiarism and cheating, failing to set an example for students, or participating in any other academic dishonesty.

### **Concept of Academic Dishonesty**

Guthrie (2009) defines academic dishonesty as any academic behavior that does not adhere to the explicit assessment standards and other institutional norms; this includes when students act in ways that are designed to give them an unfair advantage in terms of their assessments. Institutions are required to instruct and prepare students for the various needs of society and future problems. According to Prenshaw, Straughan, & Albers-Miller (2001) and Kyei&Nduro (2014), academic dishonesty is a common occurrence that has spread throughout higher institutions and is producing unfavorable results. Academic dishonesty has increased at an unparalleled rate in Nigerian educational institutions, especially during the last three decades, and it continues to be one of the country's biggest difficulties for the sector (Olaschinde, 2000; Brown, 2002; Olatunbosun, 2009). Bello (2011) provided additional support for this position by stating that the Nigerian

university system is being threatened by unethical attributes. Academic dishonesty is common at the college and university levels, according to research papers like Pino and Smith (2003) and Omoregie&Osa-Edoh (2005).

Some researchers, academics, and educationists, including Nwadiani (2005), Alutu and Aluede (2006), and Olatunbosun (2009), have noted some of the causes of academic dishonesty, including overpopulation, a high lecturer-to-student ratio, students' reliance on gossip lectures as a result of their inability to understand teachers' lectures, and the fear of failing. Second, the value of education has decreased in Nigeria. It is now done for what it can provide rather than for itself. Academic credentials are now the most reliable and valid key to a wide range of rights and benefits in modern Nigeria. The majority of Nigerians believe that paper certifications are the only way to guarantee their ability to support themselves (Kakwagh, 2013). Many students are attempting to cut corners by cheating in their coursework as a result of this credential consciousness. Students who are under pressure to graduate with honors or who have a strong desire to do so engage in academic dishonesty. This academic community's interest demonstrates how serious an issue academic dishonesty has become in Nigeria.

### **Types of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty can take place on an individual or institutional level. In order to ensure that its students succeed, an educational institution may try to inflate. "panel beat," or jack up students' scores. This is considered academic dishonesty. Institutional academic dishonesty happens when higher institutions have supervisory bodies such as the NUC, NBTE and NCCE come for resource verification of new academic programs and accreditation of old programs. In order to scale through

resource visitation and accreditation of academic programs, accreditors are typically compensated or coerced to overlook the deficiencies or inadequacies of educational institutions in the areas of staffing, carrying capacity, equipment, infrastructure, and other amenities.

Academic misbehavior is prevalent in Nigeria in the forms of plagiarism, sex-for-grade schemes, money-grubbing, and exam cheating. Examination malpractice and plagiarism are examples of academic dishonesty. Exam cheating includes a variety of academic infractions, such as storing notes, formulas, or other information on programmable calculators or other electronic devices without any permission from the teachers (Etter et al., 2006; Ajogbeje, 2012; Boris, 2012). According to Higbee & Thomas (2002), plagiarism happens when someone passes off another person's ideas as their own. When doing that, the author must give full, accurate, and precise credit to the original author. If a statement is used verbatim, it must be recognized with quotation marks; otherwise, one has committed academic dishonesty (Mitchell, 2008; Brimble & Stevenson, 2005). Other forms of exam cheating include giving or receiving assistance or materials that are not one's research-based work or writing assignments meant to be submitted as individual work. Also, giving a student submitting a large portion of the same academic material or work for credit in more than one course without consulting the teacher, etc. This trend is slowly shifting in Nigerian educational institutions because many of them are now putting the work of lecturers, students, and projects through plagiarism checks using Quibolt, Turnitin, and other tools.

### **Sex-for-Marks Menace**

Tertiary institutions are seen as social organizations that do not exist in a vacuum, and in such organizations, we are bound to

have both positive and negative interpersonal relationships among the people that make up the organization. Sex-for-marks syndrome is a widespread phenomenon that has seeped into higher education systems all over the world and needs to be stopped or restrained with the proper consequences (Okebukola, 2018; Onoyase, 2019). In Nigeria and the majority of West African colleges, sexual harassment has persisted unchecked for decades. Professors are often prohibited from having sexual relationships with students when they have the power to affect their education or career, according to university policies. According to Onoyase (2019), sex-for-marks may be a by-product of unfavorable interactions, which may have significant ramifications for students, faculty, and the general public. Flirting behavior is regarded as improper. This does not, however, stop lecturers from intimidating and coercing female students into inappropriate circumstances. Ekundayo and Akinsuroju (2022) further stated that professional misconduct, such as the pervasive sex-for-marks issue in Nigerian educational institutions, was brought about by the poor interaction among those who comprised the tertiary institution.

Sex-for-marks, also known as 'sexually transmitted grades' (Arogundade, 2019; News Agency of Nigeria, 2018; Olakunle & Agboola, 2020; Channels Television, 2021), is not a new concept in Nigerian higher institutions. The situation has always been one of lecturers taking sexual advantage of their students with the promise to positively influence their scores in an examination. Stories about sexual harassment of female students by male lecturers in Nigerian higher institutions have been trending on social media and a topic of public discussion in recent times. All of Nigeria's higher institutions, including universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education, have lecturers and professors who engage themselves in sex

for marks. Some students freely sleep or offer themselves as sexual objects to their lecturers in order to score higher marks or boost their scores. Ogunmokun (2019) and Ncube (2019) identified two forms of sex-for-marks: 1. A sexually transmitted degree (STD) is a situation where female students offer themselves sexually to male lecturers in order to get higher scores in their individual courses. 2. Here, male lecturers sexually harass and exploit female students struggling academically by offering them better grades in exchange for sexual relationships. Sexual harassment, sexual coercion, and sex for grades were extremely uncommon in the past. It was quite disrespectful to learn about such a thing, whether from a male lecturer or a female student.

It is generally believed that cases of sex-for-marks are commonly found among male lecturers in tertiary institutions. However, both developed and developing countries have reported instances of female lecturers seeking sex from male students (Akinsuroju, 2022). Therefore, sex for grades is considered professional misconduct that affects both male and female academic staff members, especially in poor nations (Imonikhe, Aluede, & Idogh, 2012). According to Adedokun (2005), Gariba & Budu (2007), Bakari & Leach (2008), Lussier (2009), Olakunle & Agboola (2020), and Channels Television (2021), male academic staff members are the primary offenders of this conduct. They said that the male non-academic staff members in charge of students' disciplinary panels, registration, record-keeping, and exams also partake in sex-for-grade misconduct. Studies have shown that oftentimes, female students are the initiators or the first to make the move of luring male lecturers into this act purposely for academic rewards (Imran & Ayobami, 2011; Kakwagh, 2013; Ibrahim, Sogbanma, Omoju, and Ukwaja, 2020). People will undoubtedly wonder why it has become so common and why

male lecturers are drawn to their female students. The BBC (2019) reveals that some students had a habit of hanging around at their student centers while lectures were still going on. These students who pay little to no attention to lectures and other in-class activities (Ajogbeje, 2012, 2015; Boris, 2012) are more likely to ask for extra help or offer themselves for sex than their counterparts who actively participate in all lectures and class activities. The way that female students dress on campus contributes to this sexual harassment. Some of these contemporary outfits worn by our girls may be too alluring for a man who already finds it difficult to control himself. It is well known that females find it simpler to reject sexual advances than do males. So, who is pestering whom? A student who consistently attends class, completes assignments quickly, works hard to pass tests, and always dresses appropriately will be much less likely to experience sexual harassment.

Ibrahim et al. (2020) reported that some female students do not see anything bad, and it is not a criminal offense for female students to befriend their male lecturers provided there is an agreement between them. They further claimed that to become a "super girl" on campus, where they find immense pleasure and are ecstatic, some female students willfully engage in sexual relationships with lecturers. On the other hand, some students, either directly or indirectly, initiate romantic and sexual liaisons with professors in an effort to conceal their academic laziness and extreme weakness by using the sexual relationship to obtain unjustified marks. Some students, particularly female ones, have been observed to assume that sex is the only way to achieve academic success and enhance their cumulative grade point average (CGPA), while other students may become prey to predators who pass themselves off as professors.

It is clear from the British Broadcasting Corporation's 2019 survey documentary that students are leaving themselves open to sexual advances. In order to see how lecturers behave around students, undercover journalists posing as students were used in the documentary, along with first-person reports from students and personal stories about various teachers. The video documentary implicated two universities: one in Ghana and one in Lagos. The undercover agent claimed to be a student who had been rejected from one of the Southeast universities medical schools after complaining of sexual harassment by a particular lecturer. In an interview, she stated, "I'm a 28-year-old who was never able to complete my education due to various circumstances. It wasn't because I wasn't smart or anything; as a child, I was a high flyer. I didn't even complete it, though, due to sexual harassment." The polytechnics and institutions of education, where sex is exchanged for grades, are the worst affected. The majority of our alumni have struggled to manage or defend their degrees in their fields of study as a result of the inappropriate behavior of male professors.

In the documentary, male professors who harass female students or even demand sex from them in order for them to complete their courses are severely condemned by society. The most popular headlines in Nigerian daily newspapers include "Sex for Marks in Nigerian Universities" (Vanguard, 2018) and "Sex for Marks Scandal in OAU" (Punch, 2018). "LASU Lecturer Allegedly Caught in Another Sex Scandal" (Pulse, 2018), "UNILAG Prof in Sex for Marks (Sun, 2018), "The Madness in Ife" (The Nation, 2022), Adekunle et al. (2020), among others. Male professors must uphold the standards set by their profession. When under pressure, whether directly or indirectly, from a female student, they shouldn't be afraid to scream out in due time. The issue of setting up

university professors should not be promoted because it is evident that when you set someone up, you're trying to lure them into a trap without their knowledge, and the bait is typically their area of vulnerability. In order to encourage our children to uphold traditional academic methods and not be diverted by parties, social media, or lewd fashion, parents, journalists, and human rights advocates must look holistically, not at one side of the story but both sides.

### **Challenges Associated with Academic Integrity in Higher Educational Institutions**

Oyebamiji (2011), reported that parents contributes to their children's academic difficulties. He clarified that some parents are ineffective parents who do not care or have time for their kids. Incessant and prolong strikes, inadequate funding for education, insufficient academic staff with a poor staff mix, and unfavorable teaching and learning environments have negatively impacted the quality of education delivery and output in Nigeria. Some lecturers exhibit ineptitude, intellectual laziness, corruption, favoritism toward the students and their parents, and they are not interested in pursuing a career in education. The government is a stakeholder in this because it affects how institutions are managed. Examples include inadequate funding, poor oversight, lax admissions standards, automatic promotion, and the hiring of teachers for political reasons (Oyebamiji, (2011). The students' lack of in-depth knowledge of academic honesty presents another difficulty.

The deterioration in the caliber of graduate output as well as the delivery of education has been significantly impacted by all of these difficulties. Academic honesty, which is the essence of Nigerian higher institutions of learning, is on the decline, despite efforts that have been made and are currently being made to raise financing and staff development. What can be blamed for the lack of honesty displayed

by academic staff? Therefore, the purpose of carrying out this study includes: i). to identify some of the academic misconducts being exhibited, ii). to identify the causes of academic dishonesty among academic staff. iii). to suggest workable solutions for reducing academic dishonesty in Nigerian institutions.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised in order to guide the investigation:

1. What forms of academic dishonesty do academic staff members engage in?
2. What are the causes that make academic dishonesty so common among academic staff?
3. What are some effective tactics that can be used to stop academic dishonesty among academic personnel from increasing?

### **Methods and Materials**

#### **Research Design**

A descriptive survey research design was employed for the study, a process that requires gathering data and analyzing information on the current situation of the topic under investigation.

#### **Participants**

All academic staff members in three different universities from two different states constitute the population for this study. The survey included academic members from all fields of studies available in the universities. A sample of 225 respondents drawn from the three types of universities (private, state and federal) were selected using simple random sampling and purposive sampling technique was adopted. Simple random sampling in sense that all participants who were from Ekiti and Ondo States were given chance of been selected, Purposive sampling technique in that only responses from academic staff from Ekiti and Ondo States were considered for analysis from the cluster.

### **Research Instrument**

An open-ended Google form questionnaire, Academic Dishonesty Questionnaire (ADQ) was designed by the researchers and used as the research instrument. The research instrument developed by the researchers has two sections. Section A only asked for demographic data related to gender and status, but Section B included three (3) open-ended questions. Instructions were given to respondents requesting for voluntary participation and they are not to include their names and other personal details to ensure confidentiality. The research instrument was posted on all the popular WhatsApp groups in the respective universities where all the academic staff are members. Questionnaires were sent to individual academic staff by email and WhatsApp numbers and the researchers equally interviewed some academic staff personally. The instrument was adjudged to have face and content validity by tests and measurement experts and the reliability of the instrument was also ensured. Only 225 of the academic staff members in the three universities completed the questionnaire or participated in the survey. Some academic staff members declined to participate or respond to the questionnaire's items, Responses were submitted and received electronically.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Part I: Academic Misconducts Exhibited by Academic Staff Members**

Academic integrity can be compromised by a variety of academic staff misbehaviors. Table I lists some of the improper actions that threaten academic integrity that respondents noted in relation to the various forms of academic dishonesty commonly exhibited by academic staff members.

**Table 1: Various Forms of Academic Dishonesty Identified by Respondents**

1.	<b>Compulsory sale of monographs, handouts, and textbooks to students</b>
2.	Collection of money from students for textbooks without giving out the textbooks
3.	Extortion of money from students while submitting their assignments
4.	Enforcing the compulsory purchase of textbooks or monograph by students before they are allowed to submit class assignments
5.	Collection of money from students before approving the project topic and each chapter of the project
6.	Writing project for students for monetary gain
7.	Collection of money from students to help them search for old projects, remove the back, rebind it and submit same as a new project
8.	Plagiarism and the use of students ideas or projects without acknowledging them
9.	Name-changing in publications to claim credit for a certain provision
10.	Publishing an article that bears one's name without contributing to the writing of such article
11.	Falsification of data/research findings
12.	Taking up multiple adjunct lectureships in different universities
13.	Failure to turn up for lectures regularly
14.	Giving examinations to students without teaching them/not covering of course content.
15.	Allowing students to bring in prepared answers, textbooks, and other extraneous materials into the examination hall without proper supervision
16.	Giving undue advantages, aiding, or exchanging sitting positions for their favorites in the examination hall.
17.	Covering up examination misconduct cases.
18.	Collection of money from students in order to falsify marks or manipulate their test scores.
19.	Giving students' marks on ongoing assessments that are arbitrary or unworthy
20.	Falsifying examination records
21.	Delay in preparing students results.
22.	Contracting the marking of examination scripts to students.
23.	Having amorous relationship with students/exchange of scores or grades for sex.



24.	Victimization of students who do not cooperate with them.
25.	Failing their students by proxy or through their colleagues.
26.	Gifting or inducing accreditors during accreditation and resource verification of programs by NUC, NCCE, and NBTE
27.	Display of borrowed equipment by higher institutions to scale through accreditation exercises

A cursory look at Table I reveals that the respondents' concerns regarding the forced selling of handouts, monographs, and textbooks as well as the extortion of money from the students are addressed in replies I through 7. In order to further their illicit goals, certain conscientious academic personnel usually enforce the compulsory purchase of course materials, textbooks or monograph by students before they are allowed to submit class assignments. The management of every university in Nigeria has outlawed the sale of handouts and books. Academic staff members must be required to bring their published books to the tertiary institution bookshop for sale after having them evaluated by the central books committee. The four interconnected problems highlighted by respondents appear to be caused by the common saying in academic palace "You either publish or perish". Some academic staff members have resorted to using student work, particularly that of the students they oversaw without giving the students proper credit. Falsifying study data and findings can be added to this list of unethical behaviour patterns, Academic employees that are fully employed at a university may maintain many adjunct positions due to a lack of discipline and a thirst for money. This causes absenteeism and makes it impossible to teach the course material in a given semester. Exam questions are given to students on topics they weren't taught, which has an adverse effect on the quality of instruction and students' performance.

The respondents also accused academic staff of supporting and participating in examination malpractice through poor student supervision during exams, exchanging seats in the exam room for their preferred candidates, failing to report students who were caught cheating, and other exam misconduct. Copeland (2005) commented on this matter and questioned, "What type of ethical conduct expectation is communicated when academics disregard cheating? According to Abdulkareem and Alabi (2004), many techniques used to stop examination malpractice in the university system typically fail. According to them, this situation may not be unrelated to the fact that these techniques typically target student offenders, ignoring the supportive roles played by other university staff or members in the final act.

The respondents also brought up the subject of students receiving unfair grades as a related problem. Academic integrity should be highly valued by our educational institutions, and any exhibition of academic dishonesty or misconduct in form inappropriate or unlawful adjustment of an assignment or a course grade should not be tolerated. The integrity and reputation of the ivory tower have been severely damaged by these dishonest actions. Although additional instances of plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of dishonesty could emerge, researchers are aware of this possibility. As a result, all staff members and students are expected to

make academic honesty and integrity their watchword.

The possible causes of academic dishonesty among academic staff members as suggested by the respondents are listed in Table 2 below.

**Part II: Causes of Academic Dishonesty Commonly Exhibited by Staff Members**

**Table 2: Contributing Variables to the Incidence of Academic Dishonesty**

1.	Money-driven greed
2.	Incurring expenses or debts beyond one's earning income
3.	Get-rich-quick mentality coupled with societal corruption
4.	Career instability or stagnation
5.	Desperation for promotion and the use of publication as the basis for promotion
6.	Lacking the needed skills for research writing and publication
7.	Parents', guardians', and students' pressure as well as the desire to gain student favour
8.	Fear of intimidation or aggression by a student "cult"
9.	Lack of integrity, moral rectitude, and self-discipline
10.	Student inducement through gift, monetary offer, or sexual favours
11.	Lack of dedication and commitment to the teaching profession
12.	Inadequate oversight or supervision of academic staff
13.	Extra workloads for academic staff due to overpopulation and high staff-student ratio
14.	Lack of provision for student feedback
15.	Lack of appropriate repercussions or punishments for "culprit" lecturers
16.	Type of employment offered to academic staff: part-time or adjunct
17.	Incorrect recruitment practices for academic staff
18.	Recruiting ineffective and incompetent lecturers

The pursuit of wealth, excessive consumption, and the desire to become rich quickly, as well as societal corruption, have gravely hampered efforts to provide a high-quality education. According to Ikhariale (2003), misfits are currently being housed in Nigerian institutions.

There are also teachers who should not be connected with the ivory tower because of their intellectual and moral frailties. University pressures from parents and students and social corruption are undoubtedly producing unfavorable results. Some students now use money, gifts, or

even their bodies to bribe professors in their desperation to pass, or people in cults use threats to get what they want (Orok, 2023). Respondents similarly pointed to inadequate supervision of academic staff by their HODs, management's unwillingness to punish culprit lecturers, flawed hiring practices for academic staff, and the recruitment of inexperienced lecturers as causes of the rise in academic dishonesty among academic staff.

The propensity for academic dishonesty among academic staff members has been connected to both career stagnation and a desire to advance professionally. This promotion-related matter has two sides. First, since they were unable to meet the requirements for promotion, which included earning higher degrees and, in particular, publishing high-impact publications, some academic staff members have been in the same post or rank for an extended length of time. The second component relates to people who will use any means necessary to manipulate the system and advance in their careers. Given this situation and certain academics poor research abilities, it is not surprising that respondents believed that academic staff dishonesty was partly caused by the focus placed on publication as a criterion for promotion. In Nigeria's public universities, the teaching profession is made up of people who have varied levels of passion for their work. These suggested administrative causal causes appear to be an indictment of the university administration. The university system has some practices that support respondents' claims that academic staff supervision is a problem, including academic staff absenteeism from work, delays in preparing and releasing students' results, and informal methods of getting student feedback on teaching quality.

The Nigerian society's "man knows man" (network of friends or relatives) and sacred cow mentality, which usually protects offenders, as well as the delay in enforcing just punishment against system violators, offer other academics with weak morals the assurance to engage in academic dishonesty. If a written sanction is not immediately implemented when necessary, some of its severity is lost, and the system is weakened. Again, due to students' reluctance to testify against them because they either profit from the corruption or are afraid of the consequences, university administration frequently finds it challenging to rid the system of academic personnel who have morally compromised themselves. The procedures for determining a candidate's suitability for an academic position should be followed when employing academic staff, but this is not always the case because university administrations are usually under pressure to employ people based on other criteria. The staff that is brought in as a result of such actions is frequently tough for department heads to handle because they are untouchables with high connections. In their observations on the employment of lecturers in Nigerian universities, Abedugana (2009) and Emiloju&Adeyoju (2012) note that some academics are engaged based on merit, proper procedure, the man-knows-man factor, and some based on the quota system. He attributes a portion of the alarming decline in educational quality to the fact that qualifications such as merit and quality are not the primary determinants of who is employed as a lecturer in Nigerian universities. The respondents also cited an excessive workload as a factor in the emergence of dishonest behavior among academic staff.

**Part III: Suggested Solutions for Reducing the Upsurge Academic Dishonesty**

Table 3 below provides a list of the respondents' recommended solutions for reducing academic dishonesty among academic staff members.

**Table 3: Respondents' Proposed Solutions to Academic Dishonesty in Nigerian Institutions**

1.	Organization of seminars on ethical reorientation for academic employees
2.	Staff orientation on work ethics and values
3.	Mentorship of junior lecturers by experienced and senior lecturers is required.
4.	Establishing and improving facilities for teaching and learning
5.	Imposing the proper sanctions on lecturers who violate exam rules and engage in sex-for-grades
6.	Adhering strictly to the appropriate and laid-down procedures for recruiting qualified academic staff
7.	Proper department head oversight of the academic staff
8.	Organizing training and retraining of academics through seminars and workshops
9.	Setting up a team to monitor regular lecture delivery in each faculty, school, or college
10.	A thorough and comprehensive review of the promotion criteria is needed.
11.	Students should be allowed to report erring lecturers or instructors through feedback mechanisms.
12.	Recruitment of additional qualified lecturers to lighten the existing lecturers workload

Given that educational institutions unquestionably need to uphold high ethical standards given the significant role they play in the development of young people and society as a whole (Al Jazeera, 2021; Bisong, 2011; Trumpet News, 2021, Orok, 2023), the suggestion made by respondents to ethically reorient academic employees is pertinent. The educational institutions' administrations should also pay attention to how new academic staff members are trained for their jobs. It is impossible to overstate the benefits of orientation exercises and mentoring programs, especially since mentoring ensures a staff member's overall growth while orientation gives newly recruited employees a chance

to learn the rules governing behavior in the organization. All other suggested techniques, whether at the departmental, faculty, or management levels, call for action from the university's various administrative cadres. The respondents made the suggestion that the Head of Department should appropriately manage the academic staff and keep an eye on lectures at the various faculties. Once again, respondents have pointed out problems that must be solved to reduce the incidence of academic dishonesty in educational institutions. These include the reduction of the academic staff workload through the employment of more qualified personnel, training and retraining

academics, upgrading teaching and learning facilities, and administering appropriate punishment on guilty lecturers.

### Conclusion

One of the biggest issues affecting educational systems in both developed and developing nations is academic dishonesty, particularly in Nigeria, where the problem is experiencing an unprecedented rise. The findings of this study have successfully shed some light on the ways in which academic dishonesty among academic personnel manifests itself as well as on some of the contributing variables. Therefore, it is recommended that: 1. Academic integrity policies must be put in place by Nigerian educational institutions, outlining the professional standards or moral principles that all academic staff must uphold. 2. All stakeholders in the educational sector should cooperate and make sure that both academic staff and students have access to institutional policies on academic integrity. 3. Academic staff should be reminded of the repercussions of academic dishonesty and moral education or re-orientation programs on fundamental moral values (Bisong, 2011) must be conducted periodically. 4. Academic staff members who engage in academic dishonesty and sex-for-marks must face harsh punishments. 5. The government should prevent people from rushing to obtain academic certificates at all costs and make sure they earn the certificates they do. Our culture should not be motivated by results and a "good certificate" without giving any thought to how the outcome was obtained. 6. The government should make an effort to safeguard academic integrity in our educational institutions because students' perceptions of what constitutes academic honesty have been altered. Students are more aware of the negative effects of exam fraud than of academic integrity. 7. Academic integrity appears to be more

frequently related to students in Nigerian educational institutions than to professors or lecturers. Therefore, academicians, like professors, engage in unethical behavior such as corruption and bribery must not be shield from getting appropriate punishment. Last but not least, we must create an environment that values academic honesty and make people aware of what it means. Until all of these recommendations are fully implemented, the Nigerian public will not have any trust or confidence in the ability, caliber and integrity of our graduates.

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