



ACCLIMATIZATION TO PROFESSIONAL ETHICAL STANDARDS BY ACADEMIC STAFF IN NIGERIA'S TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING

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Abstract:

This article investigated the extent to which academic staff completes their course outlines before examinations; the state of harassment of students by academic staff; the rate at which examination questions are leaked to students by academic staff; the rate at which academic staff is involved in issues of plagiarism and the level of fair evaluation and non-discrimination of students by academic staff. The study used the descriptive (survey) research design. A total of 171 academic staff selected through convenience sampling participated in the study. The instrument used in this study was constructed by current researchers, which was content validated and it also yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.81. Findings revealed that the majority of the lecturers in Nigerian tertiary institutions ensured that they complete their course outlines before final examinations, and are not found wanting in terms of harassing their students in any form. The study further revealed that the rate at which examination questions are leaked to students by academic staff remains very low. Based on the findings, it is therefore recommended that workshops on ethics be organized for academic staff that will be geared towards helping to bring to zero level incidence of unethical activities in tertiary institutions of learning in Nigeria.

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1. Introduction

In order to understand what is morally right or wrong, just or unjust, ethics explores the intellectual justifications for our moral judgments. The idea can also be understood as the system or code of morals of a specific person, church, group, profession, etc. It is often referred to as the study of standards of conduct and moral judgment; moral philosophy. Standard definitions of ethics have often included such terms as "*the science of the ideal human character*" or "*the science of moral duty*" (Noah, 2021). The term 'ethics' is "*often used interchangeably with 'morality,' and sometimes it is used more strictly to signify the moral principles of a specific tradition, community, or individual*" (Audi, 2015)

On the other hand, ethical standards are a set of rules developed by an organization's founders to convey its core moral beliefs, these rules offer a framework that can serve as a guide for making decisions (My Accounting Course, 2022). They set the standards of conduct that owners and top executives anticipate from staff members as well as suppliers, at least insofar as their connection with the company is concerned (My Accounting Course, 2022). A corporate governance system will work very hard to spread and uphold these ideals otherwise known as ethical standards and the majority of this is accomplished through behavior modeling, which calls on senior executives to act as role models for lower-level staff (My Accounting Course, 2022). Responsibility, honesty, transparency, and fairness are a few examples of these standards. Although they may be understood differently by each individual, organizations typically state the founder's opinion of each value to prevent misunderstandings. As various ethical dilemmas arise during routine organizational operations, these principles should also serve as guidance for decision-making procedures to assist employees in aligning their personal standards with the institution's viewpoints (My Accounting Course, 2022). This moral "compass" is essential to keep unethical activities, mainly in administrative roles, to a minimum.

The moral standards that members of that profession are supposed to uphold are known as professional ethics. These standards can be referred to as ethics in any organization or group. Similarly to this, people in a particular profession are expected to uphold professional ethics if they can be justified by the obligations they must fulfill, their abilities, and their specialized knowledge. Everyone must adhere to the precise behaviors required by each job whether it be engineering, the health or medical sector, law, or any other career. In accordance with what your professional ethics state, you should conduct yourself in a way that is expected of a person (Hitesh, 2020). It demonstrates your depth of knowledge and enthusiasm for your profession as well. Doctors' actions might serve as the best illustration of professional ethics as the Hippocratic Oath is one that physicians take before receiving their medical degrees. One of the ethical rules that must be followed before practicing medicine is this oath. Additionally, every ethical code is unique to the

type of occupation a person has and lawyers, librarians, instructors, and, most crucially, lecturers at postsecondary institutions are other examples of professions with widely accepted standards of ethics.

The organizational vision of tertiary institutions of learning for instance is founded on and congruent with such ideals. Values are the things that individuals regard to be right and appropriate. These character traits are moral, ethical, and professional and they serve as essential principles for the teaching profession or social work environment ethics for lecturers at tertiary institutions. This is so because academic careers, in contrast to other public ones, come with unique duties that are open to public scrutiny and evaluation. The main responsibility of lecturers is to search out the truth, declare it, and display self-control while imparting knowledge. While citing the Canadian Teachers' Federation, Iroegbu, and Uyanga (2019) observed that professional accountability is one of the notions of ethics and it has multiple interpretations. It is frequently used synonymously with answerability, accountability, responsibility, and blameworthiness. Accountability implies a duty to look for ways to increase the capability and performance of people held accountable rather than just measuring accomplishments or results. In addition to being an expert in the subject being taught, a professional lecturer is required to comprehend the student's learning needs. The accountability of lecturers includes a variety of factors, including being accessible to students for consultation, being consistent in their classroom instruction, supervising and doing research, and participating in other academic activities including conferences, workshops, and seminars. The degree of accountability on the side of the lecturer involved has to do with true professionalism. Lecturers who choose to pursue a career in teaching are required to uphold a high standard of accountability toward their charges as well as for society, the profession, and lifelong teaching and learning.

2. Extent to which academic staff complete their course outlines before examinations

A course outline is a document that is useful for both teachers and students. It is a crucial component of any course design. By creating a syllabus or course outline, teachers can specify the objectives of the course, the learning goals of the students, the creation and alignment of the assessment plans, and the timetable for the course. Students can also use a course overview or syllabus as a reference. You are letting students know about the readings they will be doing by establishing course objectives and learning objectives. The timetable also explains to pupils what is expected of them and gives a timeline for these requirements. According to Velma and Vijay (2018), a course overview is also useful for coworkers, supervisors, and accreditation organizations as a reference and it enables others to see your instructional practices and your expectations for your students. In some circumstances, people may consult your course outline to assess the competencies that students ought to possess after taking your course. The results outlined in your current course outline will probably be expanded upon in related courses that use your course as a prerequisite or co-requisite.

Any organization's or institution's success depends greatly on employee devotion and this dedication of the staff is what allows the institution to successfully accomplish its aims and objectives. However, many times workers don't feel like they belong to the organization and complete their tasks merely out of obligation. They don't have a true passion for their work, which prevents them from feeling both personally and professionally satisfied. This is sometimes quite similar to academics who work in universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education, among other postsecondary institutions. The fundamental goal of tertiary institutions will be to create students who have a comprehensive development. Therefore, when instructors don't work or perform as expected by management and the curriculum, students suffer as a result. We are all left with serious doubts about the caliber of the students coming from such teachers in terms of competency and knowledge (Velma & Vijay, 2018). However, there have been reports in certain sectors that given the lecturers' varied workloads, it could be challenging for them to finish their course outlines prior to the exams being held.

Targetjobs (2021) lists a few of these responsibilities as planning instruction, which includes lectures, seminars, tutorials, and learning materials, meeting with students one-on-one to discuss progress, reviewing and grading students' work, conducting research, interviewing prospective students, and carrying out administration, which includes attending faculty meetings and writing reports. Other responsibilities include writing research proposals, papers, and other publications, supervising PhD students, and conducting research. According to Mutegi (2014), who conducted a study titled "Factors affecting coverage of the syllabus in secondary schools in Kenya: a case study of Langata district schools in Nairobi County," lecturers have found it challenging to finish their course outlines in time for exams because of things like strikes, poor time management, inadequate planning, and a lack of school resources. Others believe it could simply be as a result of laziness, administrative work commitments, family obligations, family issues, student counseling, and other factors. Overall, there are still some very dedicated instructors who make sure to finish their course outlines before the start of planned exams.

3. State of harassment of students by academic staff

According to Gillander and Stein (2017), harassment in tertiary institutions has increased to the point where it is commonplace and accepted behavior. The authors argued that in order to stop the recurrence and continuation of this issue, it is crucial to investigate the factors that contribute to it and make known the necessary recommendations. Harassment is defined as any inappropriate physical, verbal, or implied act that would reasonably cause someone to feel uncomfortable, humiliated, or upset. The illegal act of harassing a person that results in mental or emotional pain, as defined by the Cambridge Dictionary, involves repeated unwanted encounters without a justifiable reason, insults, threats, touching, or unpleasant words. Inappropriate or insulting jokes, racial or ethnic slurs, demands for dates or sexual favors, unwanted remarks regarding a person's faith

or religious attire, and unpleasant graffiti, cartoons, or images are a few examples of harassment. Bullying has also been described as a form of severe harassment with grave consequences.

According to Brandee (2019), bullying has even been classified as an adverse childhood experience (ACE) on stopbullying.gov, a government website that holds data from the U.S. Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The ACE study showed that there is a clear connection between early trauma and long-term chronic health issues. The ACE research focuses primarily on a child's family of origin, including whether there was food insecurity, drug use, domestic abuse, or incarceration. But what about bullying at school? According to research from stopbullying.gov, bullying and other forms of violence "*are an ACE from any perspective.*" Bullying at school frequently results in anxiety and depression diagnoses, and some victims simply give in to the abuse by committing themselves. Since it has the potential to create thieves, criminals, and hooligans in our already fragile communities in the future, harassment of any kind should be discouraged.

In light of these implications, Brandee (2019) stated that bullying in schools—whether it comes from peers or teachers—is a public health issue. Many harassed fellows who are not stopped and who are not treated as they get older become more aggressive. Teen dating violence, sexual harassment, homophobia, and for some, outright criminality are all examples of this continuum of perpetration. When a student reaches a certain age or graduates from high school, harassing behaviors don't just stop; they extend into adulthood, where they can be harmful to people and expensive for a community. According to the definition of sexual harassment on the other hand, it is "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature... when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's studentship, unreasonably interferes with an individual's academic performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive student/lecturer relationship. In light of the fact that tertiary institutions are citadels of reform and strong moral standards, the researchers believe that if any group in society is to be found wanting on the subject of harassment, it should most surely not be academics.

Therefore, Binder et al. (2019) proposed that culture change is needed at tertiary institutions to reduce harassment of students, which might start with statements of zero tolerance. These kinds of claims will probably aid in the ongoing decline in harassment incidents. Mandatory sexual harassment training programs that outline the definitions of harassment, legal restrictions, reporting requirements, and penalties for both the victim and the offender are also likely to contribute to further declines.

4. Rate at which examination questions are leaked to students by academic staff

Examination misconduct, which is undoubtedly social cancer whose scourge is destroying Nigeria's educational system, has apparently evolved in recent years. According to Akaranga and Ongong (2013), exam malpractice, such as leaking exam

questions, may involve a prior arrangement where a staff member handling the exam materials distributes the materials to the intended students, if not, they may charge the test takers or their parents for the actual exam paper. The author claims that in Kenya, sporadic media stories regarding exam leaking by some Examination Council employees and allegations of sex grading at higher education institutions may support such illicit agreements between students and examination staff.

In our institutions in Nigeria, for example, the leakage of test questions has become a concern as Manjunath (2019), who highlighted that this breach is simply one illustration of what we may refer to as an endless spree of heists in the education sector, supported this. It has gotten so bad that newspapers routinely publish special sections about "exam leaks." We hear news of such terrible stories every morning and authorities are really worried. There are many things at risk, including the future of the students, the brand, and possibly the entire nation and the question is, can we really afford to let loose unworthy, underprepared graduates to the workforce when we have such an obvious skill gap to deal with? Are we not failing those who deserve it? Isn't the growth of our country dependent on a robust and safe education ecosystem? According to experts in the literature, examiners may leak exam questions because of questionable mentors' activities, IT business centers, outside help, financial problems, sex for grades, and unprofessional behavior.

According to Ali Al-Kraitit and Mohamed (2020), the leaking of exam questions, which happens every year, especially in tertiary institutions' exams, is getting worse every day. However, precautionary measures have been taken to stop this from happening by disconnecting the Internet for a significant amount of time, especially during the examination period and it is also a criminal offense for which the perpetrator is held criminally liable. But because this situation keeps becoming worse, more extreme action is needed.

5. Rate at which academic staff are involved in issues of plagiarism

An essential component of higher education is ethics in academic writing, which includes the proper identification of borrowed intellectual property through author acknowledgment (Owunwanne, Rustagi & Dada, 2010; Ting, Musa & Mah, 2014). In academic circles, citing sources is seen as a moral obligation because doing so encourages the authors of the works to continue producing new works. Any use that is considered unethical or a breach of the legal rights of the creator or owner of the intellectual property is one that violates these terms. Universities and other research institutions in Nigeria have recently risen to the occasion. In response to the rise in academic plagiarism in Nigerian universities, the Committee of Vice Chancellors (CVC) of Nigerian universities decided to implement Turnitin plagiarism detection software in Nigerian universities in collaboration with a United Kingdom information technology firm (Enekano, 2013, as cited by Adekannbi & Megwaonye, 2020).

In Nigeria's academic institutions, it is quite evident that there is no scarcity of professors; however, the key question that begs a response is whether these universities are home to scholars deserving of respect. According to Odigwe, Bassey, and Owan (2020), it is regrettable and demoralizing to note that there appears to be a discrepancy between actual practices and anticipated practices in educational research. Given the widespread research misconduct committed by some academics, many studies in the subject of education do not appear to be productive. For example, in ideal circumstances, a person can only qualify to be an author in a research article if they make a significant contribution to the data collection and manuscript preparation (Bassey & Owan, 2019). It has been noted that many lecturers battle to lead in papers at higher institutions in South-South Nigeria even if they have not contributed anything noteworthy to even be considered authors (Owan & Bassey, 2019). As many dishonest instructors utilize other researchers' works or data without providing acknowledgment to the original authors, there appears to be a high rate of plagiarism (Borghini, et al., 2018).

6. Level of fair evaluation and non-discrimination of students by academic staff

According to UNESCO (2021), a fair evaluation takes into account the needs and characteristics of the learner as well as any reasonable modifications that must be made to account for them. Ensuring the learner is aware of, comprehends, and capable of participating in the evaluation process, as well as agreeing that the process is suitable, is crucial. The ability to contest the assessment's findings and, if necessary, to undergo another evaluation is also vital. The only basis for student discrimination during an evaluation should be the skill being measured. When examining the justification for fair evaluation critically, one can only conclude that it contains a reference to the idea of equality; the Australian Government (2020) states that equality affirms that all students are born free and equal.

All students must be treated equally and with respect in order for there to be equality as students at postsecondary institutions have the right to receive equal treatment with other people. This implies that laws, policies, and programs shouldn't be biased and that tertiary institutions shouldn't arbitrarily or biasedly implement or enforce laws, policies, or programs. On the other side, the equality concept is inextricably linked to non-discrimination, it makes sure that no student's rights are denied on the basis of their race, color, sex, language, religion, political opinion, nationality, socioeconomic background, possessions, or date of birth. Discrimination on a few additional grounds, in addition to the above, may also be illegal. Age, nationality, marital status, handicap, location of residence within a country, and sexual orientation are some of these criteria (Australian Government, 2020).

Lecturers in higher institutions are expected to act ethically and professionally, which includes being fair to students and non-discriminatory to their wards/students. In order to accomplish the necessary and essential goals of teaching and learning, they must maintain a positive lecturer/student relationship. The obvious truth is that outcomes and

success are likely to be hampered if, hypothetically, a professor aims to discriminate among his students as according to researchers, a lecturer in the twenty-first century should make an effort to have clearly stated learning outcomes, share learning outcomes with all students, teach using various approaches, engage, and encourage all students. In addition to employing a uniform technique for assessment and informing all students of the assessment criteria, lecturers are expected to be objective and non-discriminatory as they are also obliged to link their assessments to what they teach, evaluate and publish the results of their assessments.

7. Rationale for the Study

According to Maduabuchi (2017), Nigeria is in desperate need of a high-quality education that is distinct from the status quo and is characterized by duty, moral obligation, and moral commitment. This conclusion is drawn from all interviews conducted during symposiums, lectures, workshops, conferences, policy makers' submissions, and independent opinions of parents and parent-teacher associations.

An integrated and comprehensive approach to the development of the individual and society can be described as formal learning in schools, colleges of education, polytechnics, and universities that are directly tied to student well-being, competence, rights, duties, and obligations. Lack of high-quality education renders illogical the ideals of people and the advancement of society, frequently resulting in corruption, graft, violence, poverty, unemployment, and political instability. At this point, therefore, the role of the lecturer is vital, especially when such a lecturer is morally upright and ethical in all his dealings. This article is therefore targeted at acclimatization to professional ethical standards by academic staff in Nigeria's tertiary institutions of learning. Specifically, this effort seeks to accomplish the following objectives: investigate the extent to which academic staff completes their course outlines before examinations; explore the state of harassment of students by academic staff; determine the rate at which examination questions are leaked to students by academic staff; examine the rate at which academic staff is involved in issues of plagiarism, and explore the level of fair evaluation and non-discrimination of students by academic staff.

8. Methodology

8.1 Design of the study

The research design adopted for this effort was the descriptive (survey research) design. The descriptive (survey research) design is a type of design that systematically described the participants of the study with a view to generalizing the results on the population. This design was considered most appropriate for this study because current researchers only attempted to appreciate how academic staff in tertiary institutions of learning in Nigeria acclimatize to professional ethics

8.2 Participants

A total of 171 academic staff in tertiary institutions in Nigeria participated in the study. The respondents were obtained through a convenience sampling technique which was achieved by having the instrument transformed into an online survey using Google Form and uploaded on various lecturers' online portals and platforms, where members were asked to respond. The characteristic of the lecturers in the sample is as follows: university lecturers (82.5%), polytechnic lecturers (7%) and college of education lecturers (10.5%)

8.3 Measures

The current researchers developed an instrument for collecting the data used. Specifically, a self-report questionnaire "Acclimatizing to Professional Ethics Scale" The questionnaire was a thirty-one-item instrument that was divided into five sections.

Section A sought data on the extent to which academic staff completes their course outlines. This section was made up of six items and rated on a four-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 'very high extent' to 'very low extent'.

Section B sought information on the state of harassment of students by academic staff. This section has six items rated on a four-point Likert-type scale of 'always' to 'never'.

Section C was on the rate at which examination questions are leaked to students by academic staff. This section had five items and was rated on a four-point Likert-type scale of 'constantly' to 'never'.

Section D was on the rate at which academic staff are involved in plagiarism. This section had six items and was rated on a four-point Likert-type scale of 'always' to 'never'.

The last section of the questionnaire, Section E, was on the level of fair evaluation and non-discrimination of students by academic staff. The section had eight items and was rated on a four-point Likert-type scale of most likely to unlikely.

The instrument was content validated by four experts in library and information science, measurement, and educational psychology. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through the test- re-test method and yielded test- re-test reliability method and yielded a co-efficient of 0.81, which is high and an indication of its appropriateness for use in this study.

8.4 Procedures

Current researchers transformed the instrument for this study into an online survey using Google Form and uploaded it on various lecturers' online portals and platforms, where members were asked to respond. The participants were pleaded with to kindly respond by filling out the online instrument. The respondents were assured of strict compliance with the principle of confidentiality with the information that they are likely to supply. Data generated from the survey were analysed with descriptive statistics.

9. Results

The results of this study were presented in the following five categories:

9.1 Extent to which academic staff complete their course outlines before examinations

The result is shown in Table 1, below:

Table 1: The extent to which academic staff complete their course outlines before examinations

S/N	Completion of course outline	Very high extent		High extent		Low extent		Very low extent		Mean
1	Administrative work takes up most of my time	32	18.71%	66	38.60%	23	13.45%	50	29.23%	2.45
2	I have a side business that takes much of my time	9	5.26%	22	12.87%	74	43.27%	66	38.59%	1.85
3	Family engagement takes so much of my time	11	6.43%	25	14.62%	52	30.41%	83	48.54%	1.49
4	I barely finish my course outline before the examinations	19	11.11%	28	16.37%	62	36.26%	62	36.26%	2.02
5	Counseling students and other paperwork steal so much time from me	19	11.11%	29	16.96%	61	35.67%	62	36.26%	2.03
6	I don't finish my course outline before the examinations	10	5.85%	23	13.45%	74	43.27%	64	37.43%	1.88

Table 1 revealed that apart from a majority of tertiary institution lecturers [32(18.71%) and 66(38.60%)], who agreed that administrative work takes most of their time, other indices deliberately used by the researchers to measure whether lecturers really complete their course outlines before examinations fall low. For instance, 74 (43.27%) and 66 (38.59%) agreed to a low extent and very low extent respectively that have a side business that takes much of my time, also 52 (30.41%) and 83 (48.54%) ticked low extent and very low extent that family engagement takes so much of my time. It is also noteworthy in Table 2 above that very few respondents have a very high extent and high extent that they don't finish their course outlines before examinations with the following figures: 10 (5.85%) and 23 (13.45%). This finding therefore simply implies that lecturers in Nigerian tertiary institutions ensure that they complete their course outlines before final examinations.

9.2 The state of harassment of students by academic staff

The result is presented in Table 2:

Table 2: The state of harassment of students by academic staff

S/N	Harassment of students	Always		Periodically		Seldomly		Never		Mean
1	I physically threaten my students in order to instill fear and discipline	13	7.60%	25	14.62%	30	17.54%	103	60.23%	1.70
2	I humiliate some of my students that are academically poor/deficient	11	6.43%	19	11.11%	22	12.86%	119	69.59%	1.54
3	Out of provocation, I use abusive words against my students	10	5.85%	18	10.53%	33	19.29%	110	64.33%	1.58
4	I have mistakenly or deliberately made advances to my students	10	5.85%	20	11.70%	22	12.87%	119	69.59%	1.54
5	I threaten to fail my students before they take my tests/ examinations	10	5.85%	17	9.94%	24	14.04%	120	70.18%	1.51
6	I can fail my students for unacceptable character	11	6.43%	18	10.53%	27	15.79%	115	67.25%	1.56

Table 2 revealed that 60.23% of the participants indicated that they have never physically threatened students in order to instill fear and discipline, 69.59% have never humiliated some of their students that are academically poor/deficient, 64.33% have never out of provocation, used abusive words against their students, 69.59% have never mistakenly or deliberately made advances to their students. This finding, therefore, implies that lecturers in Nigeria are not found wanting in terms of harassing their students in any form.

9.3 The rate at which examination questions are leaked to students by academic staff

The result is shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: The rate at which examination questions are leaked to students by academic staff

S/N	Examination leakages	Constantly		Periodically		Seldomly		Never		Mean
1	I have mentees that assist me in setting my exam questions	10	5.85%	16	9.36%	28	16.37%	117	68.42%	1.53
2	I print my exam questions in IT business centers	11	6.43%	20	11.69%	29	16.96%	111	64.91%	1.60
3	I am not conversant with the computer, therefore, external hands assist me	11	6.43%	17	9.94%	23	13.45%	120	70.18%	1.53
4	I tempted to leak exam questions because of economic hardship	10	5.85%	12	7.02%	19	11.11%	130	76.02%	1.43
5	I give exam questions to students in advance	9	5.26%	16	9.36%	23	13.45%	123	71.93%	1.48

Table 4 revealed that 68.42% of respondents hinted that they never had mentees that assist them in setting exam questions, 64.91% totally disagreed that they print their exam questions in IT business centers, 70.18% never agreed that they are not conversant with the computer therefore, external hands assist them, 76.02% disagreed that they tempted to leak exam questions because of economic hardship. With these responses from lecturers, this finding implies therefore that the rate at which examination questions are leaked to students by academic staff remains very low.

9.4 The rate at which academic staff are involved in issues of plagiarism

The result is presented below:

Table 4: The rate at which academic staff are involved in issues of plagiarism

S/N	Issue of plagiarism	Always		Periodically		Seldomly		Never		Mean
1	I re-write another author's opinion using my own words without citing him	13	7.60%	21	12.28%	37	21.63%	100	58.48%	1.69
2	I pay someone to write an academic article/paper on my behalf	10	5.88%	18	10.52%	14	8.19%	129	75.43%	1.47
3	I use submissions in my previous articles without necessarily citing myself	15	8.77%	22	12.87%	33	19.29%	101	59.06%	1.71
4	I re-write already published articles in my own language for submission/publication	13	7.60%	17	9.94%	15	8.77%	126	73.68%	1.51
5	I do not necessarily cite every document I consult in the cause of my research	13	7.60%	19	11.11%	36	21.05%	103	60.23%	1.66
6	Because it is difficult to access a particular author's details, I use a different citation for a given information	12	7.02%	22	12.87%	24	14.04%	113	66.08%	1.61

Table 4 indicated that 58.48% of the respondents disagreed that they re-write another author's opinion using their own words without citing him/ her; 75.43% noted that they have never paid someone to write an academic article/paper on their behalf, 59.06% disagreed that they use submissions in my previous articles without necessarily citing themselves, 73.68% indicated that they never re-write already published article in their own language for submission/publication and a few others. The finding of this particular objective shows that the plagiarism rate is quite low among Nigerian lecturers.

9.5 Level of fair evaluation and non-discrimination of students among academic staff

The result is presented in Table 5, below:

Table 5: Level of fair evaluation and non-discrimination of students among academic staff

S/N	Which of the following have you practiced	Most likely		More likely		Likely		Unlikely		Mean
1	Having a clearly stated learning outcome	75	43.85%	61	35.67%	22	12.87%	13	7.60%	3.16
2	Sharing learning outcomes with all students	80	46.78%	51	29.82%	29	16.96%	11	6.43%	3.17
3	Teaching using different methods	91	53.22%	54	31.58%	19	11.11%	7	4.09%	3.34
4	Engaging and encouraging all students	110	64.33%	41	23.98%	12	7.02%	8	4.67%	3.48
5	Matching assessment to what I teach	100	58.48%	49	28.65%	15	8.77%	7	4.09%	3.42
6	Evaluating and reporting the outcomes of my assessment	84	49.12%	57	33.33%	23	13.45%	7	4.09%	3.27
7	Uniform method for assessment	87	50.88%	52	30.41%	22	12.86%	10	5.85%	3.39
8	Informing all students about the assessment criteria	85	49.71%	56	32.75%	20	11.69%	10	5.85%	3.26

Table 5 indicated that 43.85% of the respondents were most likely going to have clearly stated learning outcomes, 46.78%, are most likely sharing learning outcomes with all students, 53.22% are most likely going to teach using different methods, 64.33% are engaging and encouraging all students, 58.48% are Matching assessment to what they teach and a few others. This finding implies that the level of fair evaluation and non-discrimination of students among academic staff is encouraging and should be sustained.

10. Discussion of findings

This finding to objective one on the extent to which academic staff completes their course outlines before examinations have revealed that lecturers in Nigerian tertiary institutions ensure that they complete their course outlines before final examinations. This finding contradicts that of Mutegi (2014), who conducted a study titled "Factors affecting coverage of the syllabus in secondary schools in Kenya: a case study of Langata district schools in Nairobi County," lecturers have found it challenging to finish their course outlines in time for exams because of things like strikes, poor time management, inadequate planning, and a lack of school resources. Others believe it could simply be as a result of laziness, administrative work commitments, family obligations, family issues, student counseling, and other factors.

Finding objective two on the state of harassment of students by academic staff has shown that lecturers in Nigeria are not found wanting in terms of harassing their students in any form. The outcome of this finding does not correspond with that of Gillander and Stein (2017) who noted that harassment in tertiary institutions has increased to the point where it is commonplace and accepted behavior. The authors argued that in order to stop

the recurrence and continuation of this issue, it is crucial to investigate the factors that contribute to it and make known the necessary recommendations.

For objective three on the rate at which examination questions are leaked to students by academic staff, the finding indicates that the rate at which examination questions are leaked to students by academic staff remains very low. There may be a few cases, but our finding here shows a low rate. This study, therefore, disagrees with a former study which states: In our institutions in Nigeria, for example, the leakage of test questions has become a concern as Manjunath (2019), who highlighted that this breach is simply one illustration of what we may refer to as an endless spree of heists in the education sector, supported this. The author further stated that it has gotten so bad that newspapers routinely publish special sections about "exam leaks." We hear news of such terrible stories every morning and authorities are really worried.

Finding to objective four which is to determine the rate at which academic staff are involved in issues of plagiarism has revealed that the plagiarism rate is quite low among Nigerian lecturers. Again, this particular finding disagreed with the following authors: according to Odigwe, Basse, and Owan (2020), it is regrettable and demoralizing to note that there appears to be a discrepancy between actual practices and anticipated practices in educational research. Given the widespread research misconduct committed by some academics, many studies on the subject of education do not appear to be productive. For example, in ideal circumstances, a person can only qualify to be an author in a research article if they make a significant contribution to the data collection and manuscript preparation (Basse & Owan, 2019).

For objective five which is on the level of fair evaluation and non-discrimination of students among academic staff, the finding revealed that the level of fair evaluation and non-discrimination of students among academic staff is encouraging and should be sustained. This finding is somewhat connected to the position of the Australian Government (2020) when it stated that equality affirms that all students are born free and equal. All students must be treated equally and with respect in order for there to be equality as students at postsecondary institutions have the right to receive equal treatment with other people. This implies that laws, policies, and programs shouldn't be biased and that tertiary institutions shouldn't arbitrarily or biasedly implement or enforce laws, policies, or programs.

11. Conclusion

Ethics depicts the appropriate, acceptable, and expected social, religious and professional behaviour among individuals and academic staff are expected to instill moral beliefs and behaviours in students and serve as role models by demonstrating good characteristics in the classroom and in society. Thus, they must be diligent, professional, and most importantly, ethical in carrying out these jobs.

11.1 Recommendations

It is therefore recommended as follows:

- 1) there should be a periodic check on lecturers by management to ensure that early completion of course outlines is sustained.
- 2) workshops on ethics be regularly organized for academic staff that will be geared towards helping to bring to zero level incidence unethical activities in tertiary institutions of learning in Nigeria.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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