

# **The Role of Joint Admission and Matriculation Examinations Board in Candidates Selection into Nigeria Tertiary Institutions 2010-2020**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper examines the roles of Joint Admission and Matriculation Examination Board in Candidates Selection into Nigeria Tertiary Institutions 2010-2020. Critically, issues surrounding yearly tertiary institution admission of candidates in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized as it is seeing as a norm whereby secondary school leavers and A' level candidates used to enroll in order to further their education to advance level. The expected role of JAMB in the selection of candidates into hundreds of tertiary institutions across the country has been a tortuous one. This is because the body has transcended the analogue registration and examination system to the technologically driven process popularly called the CBT. The objective of the study is to find out how JAMB as been able to maintain standards in the selection of candidates into Nigerian Tertiary Institutions. The study employed the used of both qualitative and quantitative data collection and content analysis as its methodology. And System Theory application in education was used in the study as its theoretical framework. The study reveals the predisposition of the JAMB management to ensure good quality in the conduct of its examinations and selection of candidates' admitted into tertiary institutions as the key towards enthronement of quality standard in JAMB. However, the study discovers that the board is confronted with both human and system challenges towards achieving quality selections of candidates. As part of it recommendations, the paper suggest for a proactive utilization of ICT, and collaboration with respective tertiary institutions as well as other stakeholders so as to enhance quality selection of candidates into Nigeria tertiary institutions.*

**Keywords: JAMB, Selection, Tertiary, Institution, Examination, Candidate**

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## **I. Introduction**

The role of examination bodies across the world are specifically outlined for obvious reasons. For instance, Terseer (2012) noted that the general societal expectations from examination bodies' focus on the ensuring right individual passed required examination as expected. In this wise, examination bodies like Joint Admission and Matriculation Examination Board (JAMB), West African Examination Council (WEAC), National Examination Council (NECO) and National Board for Technical Education Board (NABTEB) are all having different roles to play in Nigerian education sector particularly, in tertiary institutions' candidates selection into their choice courses and schools. This captured the view of Sikiru (2014), as he opine that candidates placement into tertiary institution is intended with the development of higher education sector, teaching and use of university research publications are the most important factors of any developing/developed societies. He added further, that this is evidence in developed society and could be found in thoughts of the founding philosophy and how this can be further enhanced. The tertiary educational institutions are achieving the goals guiding the establishment of those institutions. He sums this up by saying the goals is to pursue the knowledge of the citizenry in the interest of the overall development of the nation (Sikiru, 2014).

Further, the need to focus on ensuring quality selection of candidates into tertiary institutions across Nigeria as stated in our National Policy on Education (NPE) cannot be overemphasized. Examination that are conducted in candidates selection into tertiary institutions are avenues but not limited to ways of achieving some of the goals of the nation manpower development (FRN, 2004). One of the important goals of tertiary institution

shall be to contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower (FRN, 2004). Amoo and Onuka, (2011), argue that the recent developments in tertiary institution especially in candidate's selection and that of JAMB conducting its entry examinations are related policy processes in context of how tertiary institutions across Nigeria fulfill the goal of national development. Thus, how much of what happens all around the intake of tertiary institutions from candidates that write JAMB examination is tailored toward their availability to national development.

However, Jubril, (2013) posit that the attempt to have or conduct quality examinations in the selection of candidates for tertiary institution is partly toward development of human resources to facilitate the development of the nation. He pointed out the fact that the tertiary institution remains the bedrock with social benefits. This according to World Bank (2002;, 2009) represent the place for incubation of knowledge economy that entails a society where a strong system for research and generation of knowledge dissemination are attained. Ironically, as the demand for tertiary education now is higher than ever before the quality of students admitted, and graduates produced in Nigerian tertiary institutions cannot be undermined (Terseer, 2012). Reason is that tertiary institution has a role shaping the selected candidates and the fundamental knowledge impacted on them.

Based on the foregoing, Jubril (2013), assert that examination bodies' jobs are well cut out from them. He raised alarm why all developed and developing countries make considerable efforts to ensure standard in examination. In his word, the very obvious reason that entails quality output, bodies responsible for exams conduct are majorly interested in the quality of candidate's performance. Put differently, examination bodies sole task is to guarantee quality selection of candidate from the examination. This is because the role of the examination body is a vital element in sustenance of quality selection of candidates that would end up contributing to the goal of national development. Whereas, as Danjuma and Abdulazeez (2017), contend that the task of sanitizing the system of admission especially into tertiary institutions and put an end to the problem of selecting failed and wrong candidates has become imperative so as to promote discipline, hard work and competition. Therefore, this is the herculean undertaking before the Federal Government of Nigeria establishing examination bodies like JAMB.

Instructively, a lot of condemnation has trail JAMB as the only body that controls and regulates admission to all institutions of higher learning in the country. In an insightful work, Onyechere (2010) noted JAMB has been responsible for the absolute control of selection of candidate's admissions into all tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Collaborating this is with what Umo and Ezeudu (2010) observed that JAMB selection of candidates is bedeviled with problems due to inability to organize credible entrance examinations that have integrity. Imasuen and Stanley (2020), acknowledge these problems in calling for better selection of candidates with mode determining the credibility of each of the admission criteria. To him this is very important to effectively checkmate poor selection of candidates into tertiary institution. Succinctly, this study is a modest attempt to examine the roles of Joint Admission and Matriculation Examination Board in Candidates Selection into Nigeria Tertiary Institutions 2010-2020 in Nigeria, with the objective of interrogating how JAMB as been able to maintain standards in the selection of candidates.

## **II. Conceptual Review**

### **a. What does the acronym JAMB stands for?**

The acronym JAMB stand for Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board founded by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The board as it is fondly called but popularly known as JAMB.

Nwadiani and Igineweka, (2005) posit that JAMB was established in 1978 with the responsibility of ensuring a uniform standard for the conduct of Matriculation Examination and placement of suitable candidates into the nation's Universities. Interestingly, the Nigerian state set up this examination body in order to be the central coordinating body for tertiary institution admission seeking candidates.

### **b. Conceptualizing Tertiary Institutions**

Scholars and theorists have given different definitions of tertiary institution. While some of these definitions are closely related, others are not so related though contain common elements and this still makes the subject technically difficult. In some countries, Odeyemi (2004) cited in (Sikiru 2014) noted that tertiary institutions may include all research institutes, experimental campuses and schools operating under the direct control of, or administered by, or associated with, the higher education. Amoo and Onuka (2011) opined that tertiary institutions of learning that accept candidates after attainment of primary and secondary education with sole purpose of progressing towards increased and sustained economic and social development. On the other hand, Jubril (2013) was of the view that tertiary institutions has to do with the composition is composed of all universities; colleges of education and technology and other institutes of post-secondary education. Hence, we can agree with the above submission of scholars that tertiary institution embrace post basic education of primary and secondary schools.

However, the World Bank Report (2010) see it differently, as they defined tertiary institutions to all formal post-secondary education, including public and private universities, colleges, technical training institutes, and vocational schools. They added that, tertiary institution is instrumental in fostering growth, reducing poverty, and boosting shared prosperity. In addition, the World Bank Report see the possibility of tertiary institution offering a highly skilled workforce, with lifelong access to a solid post-secondary education, with prerequisite knowledge for innovation and growth: as well-educated people are more employable and productive, earn higher wages, and cope with economic shocks better (World Bank Report,2010).

Furthermore, the Federal Ministry of Education (2009) said in a more concise manner, that tertiary institutions are any of the various types of education given in postsecondary institutions of learning and usually affording, at the end of a course of study, a named degree, diploma, or certificate of higher studies. In similar vein, the National Policy on Education (2004) cited in (Sikiru 2014) classified tertiary institutions to include not only universities and colleges, but also various professional schools that provide preparation in such fields as law, theology, medicine, business, music, and art. It added that tertiary institutions also include teachers-training schools, junior colleges, and institutes of technology (FRN, 2004 cited in Sikiru, 2014). The document went further to highlight the basic requirement of entry into tertiary institutions after completion of secondary education, and the usual entrance age is about 18 years. Higher education in Nigeria according to FRN is synonymous with tertiary education. Whereas, Sikiru, (2014) citing FRN (2004) assert that tertiary education is given to Nigerian citizen after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics including those institutions offering correspondence courses (FRN, 2004).

Fundamentally, The Nigerian National Policy on Education stated the relevance of tertiary institutions function practically in 'teaching and research that are central and important role towards national development particularly in the development of high level manpower' (FRN, 2004 cited in Sikiru, 2014).

Additionally, tertiary institutions are one of the best means for developing national consciousness. In Nigeria, tertiary institution higher education aims at:

- the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and society;
- the development of the intellectual capabilities of individuals to understand and appreciate their environments;
- the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community; and
- the acquisition of an objective view of the local and external environments (FRN, 2004 cited in Sikiru, 2014).

Collaborating the forgoing, World Bank Report (2010) posit that tertiary institution education benefits not just the individual, but society as a whole. Addingly, that graduates of tertiary institutions are more environmentally conscious, have healthier habits, and have a higher level of civic participation. Moreso, this set of individuals, increased tax revenues from higher earnings, healthier children, and reduced family size all build stronger nations. The Report concludes that, tertiary education institutions prepare individuals not only by providing them with adequate and relevant job skills, but also by preparing them to be active members of their communities and societies (World Bank Report, 2010).

#### **c. Entry Requirements**

According to Anka, (2021), entry requirement entails the prerequisite knowledge, skill and attitude expected of a learner to possess before he or she can understand a new lesson. He went further to expose the concept as the means to understand candidates' previous knowledge. In other word, entry requirement deal with candidates possession of knowledge on what would distinguish him or her amongst peers to qualify for a higher academic position or levels.

#### **d. Candidates Selection**

This section of the study takes a look at candidate selection for clearer understanding. Given the tendency for concepts to elicit varying interpretations in discourses like this, matters of conceptual clarification are apposite not peripheral. For that reason, we will clarify the two terms "Candidates " and "Selection " in this paper. For instance, the Oxford Advance Dictionary define candidate as a person or group that is suitable for a position. It also said a candidate is person who is trying to be elected or is applying for a job. Additionally, it explains that a candidate is a person taking an exam (Advanced Oxford Dictionary, 2010). Thus, candidate can be understand to be an individual or group of person seeking for job, position of authority or writing academic examinations or others.

On the hand Selection might be defined as careful screening of recruited candidates (i.e. prospective candidates) through testing and interviewing them; with a view to discovering 'best-fits' from among them for assignment to various jobs in the organization (Wikipedia, 2021). Nevertheless, a breakdown of what selection

entails includes: (i) The process of selection is primarily and basically based on 'job analyses analyzed into two components; job description and job-specification. In fact, it is the job specification which guides the selectors, in making suitable selections from among a group of recruited candidates (ii) The process of selection is a process of elimination of unsuitable candidates at various stages, comprised in the selection procedure. The selection procedure might be compared to a hurdle-race; and those who clear through all the hurdles and emerge victorious are the ones, who get finally selected. From the above, we can define candidate's selection as the process of discovering individual and group with most excellent attribute to qualify them for admission into tertiary institutions. The next section describes what was obtainable in terms of selection of candidates into tertiary institution before the establishment of the present day JAMB.

### **III. Theoretical Framework**

In a few words, we can understand theory from a point of view, of providing a conceptual ground to understand how phenomenon and things work. In this study the theoretical framework to help in grasping the roles of JAMB in selection of candidates into Nigeria tertiary institutions is hinged upon System Theory. This theory does not only elucidates the play of intersection between different part of whole of a thing, stresses the (i) comprehensiveness, that is all the interactions found in the system are accounted for (ii) boundaries of subsystems or parts are points where the function of other sub-systems end and there are points where the functions of other subsystems begin that is where the functions of others stops and (iii) there is interdependence of parts for the effective performance of the whole system. That is, where there is a change in one subset of interactions it produces change in all other subsets due to the mutual coexistence among the different units. Therefore, system theory application in explaining JAMB roles in selecting candidates into tertiary institutions is to understand the board as one part amongst system of education sector in Nigeria. JAMB relevance in conducting examinations toward gaining admission in the various tertiary institutions in Nigeria is paramount and contributes to national development.

Nevertheless, JAMB as part of the system that selects candidate into tertiary institution cannot be insulated from the other parts which affect its operation. In this regards, the various challenges that affect the education sector in Nigeria such poor funding, examination malpractices, political interferences, candidates poor preparation and many more that could undermines JAMB roles in the selection processes were carefully analyzed in the paper.

### **IV. Brief History of Candidates Selection into Nigeria Tertiary Institution Before JAMB**

Before independence of Nigeria in 1960, there were two major institutions of higher education in the country. Yaba Higher College, established in 1932, and the University College of Ibadan (UCI) established in 1948. The University College Ibadan was created following the recommendation of the Elliot Commission after the Second World War. However, by 1970s there were over 20 tertiary institutions across the country admitting student on their terms and requirement (Osakuade 2011). According to Omodara, (2010), before the establishment of JAMB for the admission of students into various tertiary institutions, majorly the universities were conducting individual admission exercises. Terseer (2012) citing Ezeudu, Agwaga and Agbaegbu (1997) assert that the period before the establishment of JAMB witness a decentralized candidate's selection into tertiary institution across Nigeria. For instance, they observed that the selection of candidates entails multiple admissions through a decentralized admission and selection policy. Although, this scholars noted that this decentralized selection of candidates was not without its own challenges such as denying others opportunity as a result poor standards in the minimum entry requirement (Terseer 2012 citing Ezeudu, Agwaga and Agbaegbu 1997).

Similarly, Omodara, (2010), noted that tertiary institutions in the aftermath of independence towards early 1970s were solely selecting candidates that best meet the set criteria. Tertiary institutions set their own roles on what is best in selecting candidates and give admission on the self-regulated rules. For example majority of these tertiary institutions and universities were conducting individual admission exercises before the establishment of JAMB for the coordination of admitting students into various Universities. In the same vein, Osakuade (2011), contends that before the advent of JAMB and the introduction of centralized selection of candidates into Nigerian own tertiary institutions, tertiary institutions available at that time have cause to give admission to candidates for choice study courses. He however, alludes that majority of this tertiary institutions focus on conducting screen exams for prospective candidates.

Nevertheless, selecting candidates into tertiary institutions during the period under review was embroil with its own peculiar challenges. Omodara, (2010), argue that tertiary institutions' decentralized selection of candidates suffer from comparability of standards problem across universities based on minimum standards requirement. Coroborating the above, Osakuade (2011), said that there were series of complaints that marred how the individual tertiary institutions were conducting their screening and selection of candidates. Thus, this type of selection processes were faced with a lot of challenges among which were the issue of multiple

applications and admissions, uncoordinated system of university admissions, and high cost implication for the candidates (Terseer 2012 citing Ezeudu, Agwaga and Agbaegbu 1997, Osakuade 2011, Omodara, 2010).

Hence, in the wisdom of the Federal Government of Nigeria, leading to the establishment Joint Admission and Matriculation Examination Board in 1976 with the sole responsibility and task to streamline and co-ordinate selection of candidates into tertiary institution across the length and breadth in Nigeria. The board conducted its first selection candidate's examination on May 1978 without hitches. Nonetheless, things have quite change over the years since the foundation JAMB, as selection of candidates into tertiary institutions have remained the most turbulent in Nigeria (Nwana 1978 cited in Terseer 2012).

#### **i. Establishment Of JAMB And its Role in Candidates Selection into Tertiary Institutions**

The importance of education in the words of Adeleke and Ogunwale (2009) cited in Terseer (2014) point to the fact that education relates more to national and socio-economic growth and this comes in an immeasurable benefits with functional education existing alongside credible standards would help to sustain the development of the society. Ubani (2010) opines that since the inception of tertiary institution education in post-independence, efforts of the Federal Government of Nigeria to ensure quality academic standard in the selection of candidates cannot be overemphasized. He maintains further that, ensuring the level of better tertiary institution, with University system and others remains government priority. Consequently, the challenges of selecting candidates into tertiary institutions in post independent and middle of the 1970s compelled the government to review the processes.

As a result Danjuma and Abdulazeez (2017), submit that outcry over individual tertiary institutions selection model of candidates into courses of studies necessitated the need to harmonize candidate selection processes into higher institution in the country. Imasuen and Stanley (2020, argued that, tertiary institutions procedure of selecting candidates was found to be inadequate. Subsequently, this led to the establishment of Joint Admission and Matriculation Board under decree No.2 of 1978 which conducted its first university matriculation examination in May 1978. JAMB's mandate is to conduct entrance examination and place suitably qualified candidates into tertiary educational institutions (Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education & related/similar institutions). Put differently, the responsibility of centralizing and coordinating entrance examination is vested in a body called Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB). The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board were established by the Decree Act No.2 of 1978 of Federal Military Government on 13th February, 1978. However, the Military Regime of General Ibrahim Babangida further strengthens the Board with the amendment of Decree Act No.2 of 1978 with that of Decree No. 33 of 1989. Making the Board more centralized selection of candidates into tertiary institutions across Nigeria.

The functions of JAMB are encapsulated in the following section of the enabling law; Section 5 (1) (a) – (c) thereof: (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of any other enactment, the Board shall be responsible for – (a) the general control of the conduct of matriculation examinations for admissions into all Universities, Polytechnics (by whatever name called and Colleges of Education (by whatever name called) in Nigeria; (c) the placement of suitably qualified candidates in collaboration with the tertiary institutions. On the other hand section 5, sub-section (2) state the following power of the board to include: (i) the vacancies available in each tertiary institution; (ii) the guidelines approved for each tertiary institution by its proprietor or other competent authority;

(iii) the preferences expressed or otherwise indicated by candidates for certain tertiary institutions and course; and (iv) such other matters as the Board may be directed by the Minister to consider, or the Board itself may consider appropriate in the circumstances. In addition, the act expressly aligned to the power of the board to in section (2) “For the avoidance of doubt, the Board shall be responsible for determining matriculation requirements and conducting examinations leading to undergraduate admissions and also for admissions to National Diploma and Nigerian Certificate in Education courses, but shall not be responsible for examinations or any other selective processes for postgraduate courses and any other courses offered by the tertiary institutions.

Fundamentally, the laws that govern the selection of candidate into tertiary institutions in Nigeria mandate JAMB to conduct entrance examination into the Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education & related/similar institutions. Thus, every year, JAMB conducts Unified Tertiary Matriculations Examination (UTME) and forwards the results to the candidates' institutions of choice for further screening as the case may be subject to individual mode of selection and admission.

Conversely, these functions and powers of JAMB in recent times have been a subject of national debate. With problems relating to poor standards of the exams conducted by JAMB, exam malpractices, quality of the selected candidate and the result of poor performance of students in their respective tertiary institutions of learning. For that reason, the hope to sanitize the system of selecting candidates into tertiary institutions in

Nigeria put an end to the problem of admitting low quality students was not totally solved (Imasuen and Stanley 2020).

From the inception of JAMB in the early 1970s, the board has been conducting its the UTME on paper and pencil test (PPT) form, that has received a lots of criticism due to lot of fraudulent practices ranging from leakage of examination papers, use of maceneries of all sorts by candidates, bribe-taking by examination officials. Nevertheless, in the year 2010, JAMB revamped the examination practice and joined both exams together to form Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) (Imasuen and Stanley 2020).

Also, by the year 2013 the board introduce technology innovations such as the popular, Computer Based Test (CBT) alongside the paper and pencil test. However, toward the end of 2015, the board rules out the pencil and paper and stake with the Computer Based Test (CBT) thereby make room for establishment of Computer Based Enrolment and Data capturing Centre across the country. Meanwhile, JAMB introduction of this various technology innovation and pioneering fits on yearly basis is with goal of selecting and placing suitably qualified candidates into Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Instructively, even with all the new strategies and modernization JAMB has introduce into the selection and placing qualified candidate before the various tertiary institutions across the country, the Board and its methods of operandi are not free from constructive criticism, especially on sole power of the board to determine, controls and regulates selection of candidate's admission to all institutions of tertiary education in the country. For example, Onyechere (2010) accused the board of too much power that deny tertiary institutions in Nigeria to have control over the quality of candidates. In his word, it is only Nigeria in the whole world; one body called JAMB has absolute control of admissions into all universities, polytechnics, monotechs, and colleges of education. He added that not like what is obtainable in other climes where tertiary institution has full autonomy to select their candidates. Regrettably, Nigerian tertiary institutions don't enjoy such powers because of the act that empower JAMB in controlling and monitoring selected candidate's admissions.

In the meantime, many have suggested a review of JAMB power over selection of candidates. According to Umo and Ezeudu (2010) noted that there should be a re-examination of the modes of selecting candidates for admission into the various tertiary institutions. This in their view would ensure quality selection and placement across board. Thus, the role of JAMB since its inception Forty –Five years remains that of controlling and monitoring the selection process of candidates into tertiary institutions in Nigeria. While this role is not without its own challenges such as poor quality of candidates and overriding power of JAMB that tends to erode tertiary institution autonomy. These and many other issues remain debatable considering our federal posture. The next section of the paper help us to dissect one the biggest challenge of JAMB since inception.

## **ii. Examination Malpractices**

According to Imasuen and Stanley (2020) the challenges of examination malpractice and other fraudulent attitudes in JAMB examinations are not something strange in Nigeria. They observed that many cases of examination malpractices have been reported almost every year. This is because examination malpractices being a phenomenon that could not be curbed requires the genuine commitments by critical stake holders to restore decency in examination conduct in Nigeria particularly by bodies such as JAMB. The incidence has to a greater extent eroded the quality of selected candidates and placing of same in our tertiary institutions (Imasuen and Stanley, 2020).

Several factors are reported to have contributed to exam malpractices in JAMB. In some cases, Owoade, (2010), noted that invigilators and supervisors contribute immensely in examination malpractice during JAMB examinations which makes it easier for the candidates to score high marks. In the same vein, Omoeihe, (2013) opined that students these days go into the examination halls full of confidence not because they have prepared for the examination but they know the evil invigilators will take token amount to give them the answers to the questions. On his part Terseer, (2010) noted that in some examination centres during JAMB examination unauthorized materials are allowed into the examination halls through collaboration with some examiners. Sometimes some examiners worked out problems for the candidates.

International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR) (2022) detail findings on examination in JAMB identified the following issues. Beginning from in 2007, JAMB introduces body scanner that every candidate was subjected to before entering into the examination hall with a phone or any digital device that could be used to transmit answers. However, candidates outsmarted the security check by wrapping their devices in thick layers of carbon paper to make the phones undetectable to the scanners deployed by JAMB. The report added that JAMB worked with telecommunication service providers to distort mobile connectivity during the examination. Sadly, JAMB private's tutorial centre advised their candidates to get new sim cards of a particular provider that did not join in on JAMB's proposal. The new SIM was used to send in solved answers to the candidates in the examination halls. In addition, the report point out as part of measures to address these

cheating methods of candidates, JAMB promotes the introduction of “Multiple Paper Types”. This however, never deters exam malpractices in JAMB. Even though, there could be three different types of questions. The questions were essentially the same but reshuffled such that question 1 in ‘type A’ could be question 20 in ‘type C’. Cheating in JAMB organized examination continues with tutorial centres advising candidates to disregard the ‘type’ on the question booklet and simply shade on their computerized answer slip whatever solution was sent via their phone (International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR, 2022).

Unfortunately, the introduction of Computer-Based Test (CBT) in place of Paper Pencil Test (PPT) in the year 2013 was believe would curd incidence of exam malpractices, going by it technology innovations and personal computer usage. Auspiciously, the goal of JAMB was total eradication of exam malpractice; it only recorded minimal success as there were still gaps. However, at the Computer Base Test Centre, incidence and failure to checkmate impersonation occurred, at the same time and most centres got the questions the night before the examination day proper. Therefore, examination malpractices in JAMB constitute one of the dangerous trends that denies the body quality candidates for placement tertiary institution across the country. A situation that turned majority of the centres market square of exam malpractices where the biggest buyer and deep pocket candidates, parent and guardians opportunity to afford a bargain for grades. Experiences has shown that some candidates that got higher score and secure admission could not cope in their first year in the university and had to do a change of course.

### **iii. Curbing Examination Malpractices**

For Hussaini and Audu (2019) examination is a process of assessing the amount of education/learning an individual has achieved over a period of time. Imasuen and Stanley (2020), however said examinations in totality is the authentic means utilized to ascertain the degree to which learning targets have been imbibed by students so that they can be offered some assistance in their further studies, certification or job placement. They added that examination involved different procedure and in many forms, as well as take place; through test, observation, interviews in laboratory/workshop practical among others. On the other hand, Oluwature (2008) consider examination to be one of the important activities of the academic community which falls within the scope of the concept of curriculum practices. Similarly, Ajayi, Lawani and Muraina (2011), noted that examination has to do with the assessment of someone’s ability and performance in order to ascertain the amount of knowledge he or she has been acquired, the extent in which it can be utilized and the quality of skills developed during training. Over the years, JAMB has devised various measures to eliminate or minimize the incidence of the vices through the introduction of body scanner that every candidate was subjected to before entering into the examination hall.

In another giant step, JAMB in 2013 introduced the computer-based testing (CBT) form of UTME that had a strong component of Information and communication Technology (ICT) at the core of its operation. With all other features that includes, increased delivery of test items that have been calibrated and delineated according to their pertinent item characteristics: instructional level objectives, difficulty level, discrimination level and functionality of distracters, efficient administration of examination and scoring of tests, reduced costs for many elements of the testing lifestyle and logistics, improved test security resulting from electronic transmission and encryption for total eradication of breaches of examination security, unbiased test administration, reduction in the spate of examination security breaches, and improvement in the quality and standard of education in the long run (International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR 2022; Imasuen and Stanley, 2020; Hussaini and Audu, 2019).

Again, JAMB used of CBT have adjudge to have achieve the objectives of ensuring 100 per cent elimination of all forms of examination malpractice that had been a major challenge in the conduct of public examinations in the country (Vanguard Newspaper Report, 2012). This latest introduction was a big departures from previous challenges that envelop Pen and Paper with all its challenges as recorded before the introduction of the CBT. In summary, JAMB on its part have been innovative against exam malpractices of which the move from namely the traditional Paper and Pencil Test (PPT), to Dual-Based Test (DBT), finally to Computer-Based Test (CBT), really, brought succor/sanity to the conduct of its examinations. The combination of the CBT and the biometric system is a good way to check examination malpractice and increase efficiency. Another method of fighting examination malpractice that has been fully adopted by JAMB is the prosecution of officials and parents found guilty of the act. Nonetheless, to completely eliminate fraud in the system, JAMB database be consolidated against the national identity database. This we believe will require stakeholders input for long lasting means to curb exam malpractices. Also, the task of curtailing examination malpractice cannot be achieved without the cooperation of the other critical stakeholders (private sectors). JAMB should from time to time assess/educate owners of the CBT centres to upgrade their facilities and put the necessary mechanism in place to discourage malpractices.

**iv. Prospect and Challenges**

The Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) is the body created by the federal government with the sole responsibility to coordinate entry examinations into tertiary institutions in Nigeria thereby contributing to the overall national development. Since its inception, it has strike a chord of nostalgia of academic life experience of generation after generation from the midst 1970s to the present time. In the view of Kolapo, (2018) prospects of JAMB cannot be over-emphasizes. One of the reasons is because the board transmission from the pen and papers regime shows it has a lot to offer in the education sector. He maintained also that the agency's ability to administered and conduct its examination with information and communication technology is huge success that should be sustained. This alone gives hope credence to the board stringent measures to curb exam malpractices and ensure quality selection of candidates into tertiary institutions.

Okoronkwo, (2015), assert that JAMB in its forty-five years in existence has excelled in transformation particularly in the selection of candidates with development and embracement of standard facilities; ranging from functional computers, power generating sets, and internet connectivity among other things, This act single-handedly change the narrative about examination conducts and quality of selected candidates into our tertiary institution in Nigeria. This gives much assurance on the prospects of JAMB. Another prospect of JAMB is that it created synergy with many of the tertiary institutions, collaboration with corporate organization through PPP and government agency like TETFUND, NASENI amongst others. Meanwhile, all this over years are yielding a positive result. Instructively, we are seeing this positive result from JAMB and tertiary institution in Nigeria with partnership in CBT centres with functional ICT serving as the backbone to the JAMB's UTME resources (Hussaini and Audu 2019, Okoronkwo, 2015).

However, even with all the above prospects of JAMB, the board is still face with challenges. For instance, Fagbola et al. (2013), was of the view that JAMB transition to ICT in conducting it exams, is burden by lack of standardized/unified CBT development model alone undermines the success of the e-examination platform for real-time adoption in practice. Similarly, Obioma et al. (2013) noted that their poor infrastructures to support for automated examinations, like broad band network penetration and fast racking is a challenge to JAMB. Corroborating, the above, Oye et al., (2011) lament that irregular and frequent interrupted power supply in Nigeria is a perennial problem affecting every aspect of the Nigerian society of which JAMB is not excluded. Kolapo, (2018) highlighted the following as the challenges face by JAMB in the conducting of its examination: accessing JAMB's website for registration, manual enrolment of candidates, overcrowding at registration and examination centers, candidates are not familiar with computer-based tests, JAMB website hacking. Poignantly, other challenge of JAMB this paper discovers includes:

1. Political interferences on the selection of candidate and the board examination conduct
2. Lack of stakeholders input on how quality candidates can be selected
3. Poor communication between JAMB and tertiary institutions in Nigeria
4. Inadequate manpower in terms of JAMB staff strength
5. Inadequate monitoring and evaluation of JAMB examination exercise
6. Poor feedback between JAMB and tertiary institutions on candidate quality control

**v. The Way Forward**

No doubt, the role of JAMB role in candidate's selection into tertiary institution in Nigeria can be further enhanced. JAMB role is significant, but it also raised concern over how individual respective tertiary institutions play their parts in candidates selections. Meanwhile, the prospects of JAMB are unique being the government agency on the first line to selecting candidate into tertiary institution. Regrettably, the board discharging it duties is not without challenges that over the years constitutes set back to its operations. This study put forward the following as way forwards.

First, the board should work in synergy with all tertiary institution across the country in order to for rancor free candidates selection processes. Second, the board must see tertiary institutions as partners in progress that help JAMB achieves all of it legally stipulated mandate. Third, it is equally of important also of important that JAMB need to establish collaboration with the universities in the development of software's that would enhance quality selection of candidates. In other words, the Nigerian universities scientist and technologies could help JAMB to develop indigenous platform that will aid quality selection process that will enthrone discipline and hard work among prospective student. For example, JAMB establishing a joint "Professorial Research Funding" in quality examination control and online examination software's development. Lastly, JAMB and tertiary institutions in the country must stop politicization of candidate's selection processes. This would help reduce the dispute between the board and all critical stakeholders in the educational sector.



## V. Conclusion

This paper discussed the role of JAMB in the selection of candidates into tertiary institutions in Nigeria by critically looking the intrigues, dynamics as well as the prospects of having a world class establishment that will guarantee the selection of competent students for admission into higher institution of learning. Before the advent of JAMB tertiary institution in Nigeria were at liberty to conduct their individual selection of candidates on a decentralized model. However, the challenges that followed this individual tertiary institutions selection of candidate give room for the establishment of JAMB as a centralize admission medium. Interestingly, JAMB in its forty-five years of existence as a board having all the legal backing to select candidates is not without its challenges. Even as the board has transmitted from pen and paper to CBT, the problems associated with its examination conduct is not far from over. Nevertheless, JAMB prospects in our education sector are not in doubt and with its recent innovations to make candidates selection quality wise. This paper made a modest concludes by way of making far reaching recommendations for JAMB and other critical stakeholders.

## VI. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended:

- i. There should be increased collaboration and teamwork between JAMB and tertiary institution in Nigeria in candidates selection processes that would ensure quality and standards.
- ii. Another is to step up the usage of ICT in JAMB examination conduct that would minimize human interference as well as engender quality result output.
- iii. Government must reduce its influence on both JAMB and tertiary institutions roles in selection of candidates into tertiary institutions.
- iv. There is need to review the act that established JAMB so as to make the board work in synergies with tertiary institutions on a partnership, network and cooperation in the higher education sector.
- v. JAMB must put in place manpower that are competent and that would ensure standard due to lack of integrity.

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