LEVERAGING UTME ASSESSMENT DATA FOR DECISION-MAKING AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN NIGERIA'S HIGHER EDUCATION

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SUB-THEME: LEVERAGING EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT DATA FOR DECISION-MAKING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

☐ INTRODUCTION

- **The UTME assesses candidates' readiness for tertiary education in Nigeria.**

- **It generates huge volumes of data that provides valuable insights on candidates.**

- **The UTME caters for over 2 million candidates yearly providing useful data (e.g., ability, gender, state, course choice, biometrics, educational disparities, and the overall effectiveness of Nigeria's secondary education system, among others).**

- **The exam ensures fairness, transparency, and system trust via its numerous accountability measures.**

- **The UTME provides a uniform benchmark for all candidates using 4 subjects including mandatory Use of English as metric indices.**

- **JAMB thus redefines higher education using its assessment practices and data to inform policy and ultimately drive accountability.**

❏ PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

- To examine how **UTME data** supports effective decision-making and accountability in higher education.

- To assess the quality and usefulness of UTME assessment data.

- To identify challenges and suggest ways to enhance data integrity and exam efficiency

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❑ **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

While the UTME influences policy, admissions, and accountability, some concerns have been raised by some stakeholders. They include:

✓ Data reliability and effectiveness;

✓ How well the UTME data is analysed and applied to improve education policy and admission practices; and

✓ Gaps in using the UTME data to guide reforms, teaching methods, and curriculum development.

☐CONTEXTUAL ISSUES

➢ The UTME as an Educational Assessment Tool

➢ The UTME does not only measure candidates' knowledge, identify learning gaps, and evaluate the effectiveness of instructional method but also provide educational assessment data which helps stakeholders to make informed decisions.

➢ Thus, the UTME measures learning outcomes.

➢ It gauges the effectiveness of Nigeria's secondary school education curriculum and the UTME learning objectives by analysing candidates' performances over time.

➢ Trends in scores provide insights into subjects and subject-specific areas where candidates excel or struggle, guiding curriculum developers and policy makers in making right choices/decisions.

➢ The UTME provides equity and access to higher education in the country.

➢ Its educational data reveals performances across gender, disciplines, state/regions, institution type, (whether public or private, specialised or conventional).

□CONTEXTUAL ISSUES cont.

> ➢ THE UTME AS EDUCATIONAL DATA

The UTME serves as a rich source of assessment data that informs educational planning and policy formulation in the following ways:

- ✓ Performance Data Analytics;
- ✓ Data-Driven Admissions Policies;
- ✓ Central Admissions Processing System (CAPS);
- ✓ Monitoring Admission Standards;
- ✓ Predictive Analytics;
- ✓ Accountability in the UTME;
- ✓ Fair and transparent examination process;
- ✓ Compliance with Examination and Admission Guidelines and protocols;
- ✓ Use of Technology for Enhanced Monitoring;
- ✓ UTME Reports Forensics (Please see Tables 3 and 4);
- ✓ Result Integrity Checks; and
- ✓ JAMB E-Ticketing System.

❑ DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

✓ This study, being a qualitative and/or a position paper deploys the simple descriptive analysis to advance its claims.

✓ The application and admission statistics of candidates for the period of five years (2019 – 2023) and the examination forensic reporting overview of the conduct of the UTME for 2024 and 2025 formed the data for the analysis.

✓ Three research questions guided the study. These are listed below.

1. How does the UTME contribute to providing quality educational data in the provision of tertiary education in Nigeria?

2. How does the UTME leverage technology to improve accountability?

3. What are the common forms of examination malpractice in the UTME and the strategic interventions of the Board?

1. Research Questions

How does the UTME contribute to providing quality educational data in the provision of tertiary education in Nigeria?

Table 1: Application Statistics by Gender from 2019 – 2023

Year	Female	Male	Total
2019	863994	1021576	1885570
2020	886719	1062343	1949062
2021	655862	694529	1350391
2022	851891	909371	1761262
2023	791665	801823	1593488

Figure 2: Applicaion Statistics by Gender from 2019 - 2023
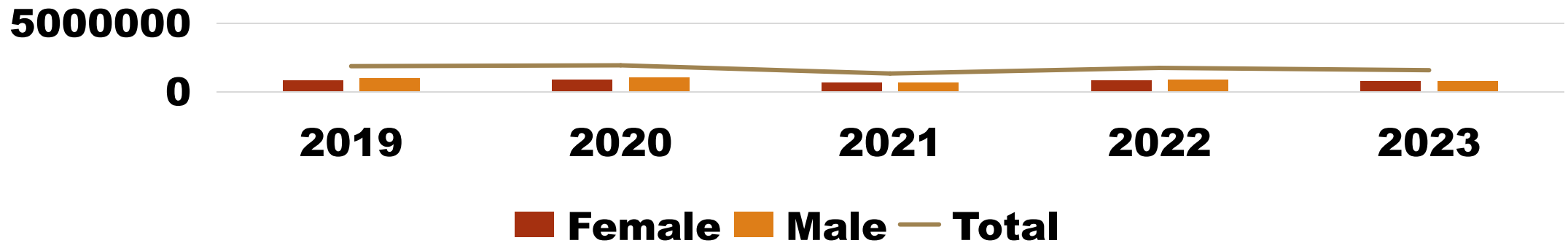

- ✓ Table 1 and Figure 2 above show the application statistics for a period of five years of UTME candidates.

- ✓ The trend showed that the Board received more applications in 2020 with male applicants dominating.

- ✓ The curve decreased in 2021, but shot up in 2022 with a total of one million, seven hundred and sixty-one thousand, two hundred and sixty-two (1,761,262) applicants.

Table 2: Admission Statistics by Gender from 2019 - 2023

Year	Female	Male	Total
2019	292153	338372	630525
2020	284969	320632	605601
2021	238869	247266	486135
2022	269012	288613	557625
2023	236316	237615	473931

Figure 3: Admission Statistics by Gender from 2019 - 2023
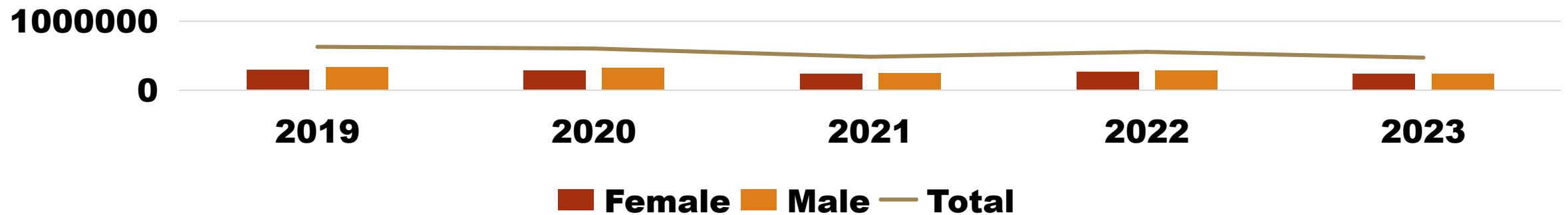
❑ DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS cont.

- ✓ **Table** 2 and Figure 3 on admission statistics by gender for the period of 2019 to 2023 show that 33% of the total number of candidates got admitted into tertiary institutions in the country.

- ✓ Whereas there was a decline in 2021, the curve shot up in 2022 with 31% of the candidates being admitted.

- ✓ Only the best and or suitably qualified are selected and placed into the available spaces in the tertiary institutions

- ✓ The UTME generates and provides quality educational data essential for decision-making, policy formulation, and improving tertiary education.

- ✓ The key ways the UTME contributes to quality educational data in the provision of tertiary education in Nigeria include **data-driven admission process.**

- ✓ The scores obtained help institutions make data-informed admission decisions, ensuring that only qualified candidates are admitted based on merit.

❏ DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS cont.

- ✓ Another key way the UTME contribute to quality educational data is through enrolment trends as can be seen from table 2 and figure 3.

- ✓ JAMB collects and analyses UTME registration and performance data, providing insights into enrolment trends across different disciplines, states, and demographic groups.

- ✓ The UTME provides Performance metrics for educational quality assessment.

- ✓ The UTME data ensures equity and inclusivity in higher education in Nigeria as it helps in assessing gender, socio-economic, and regional disparities in tertiary education access. Policymakers can use this information to develop initiatives that promote inclusivity, such as scholarship programmes and special admission policies for disadvantaged groups.

- ✓ The UTME contributes in providing quality educational data in the area of institutional Benchmarking and Ranking For example, the institution of the National Tertiary Admissions Performance Merit (NATAP-M) Award.

Research question 2. How does the UTME leverage technology to improve accountability?

✓ As a digital assessment, the UTME has increased access through its transition from the old traditional approach of PPT to CBT. This, no doubt, has made the UTME more accessible.

✓ The test administration process has been streamlined and logistics issues have been reduced to enable a seamless test administration of the UTME making the Board to leverage technology to ensure examination security

✓ The enhanced security of the UTME has reduced to the barest minimum, the incidences of examination malpractice as can be attested to from Tables 3 and 4 below.

✓ The provision of digital assessment through the UTME as the first of its kind in Nigeria has gone a long way in ensuring the integrity and sanctity of the Board's assessment processes.

✓ The use of remote proctoring where the Board utilises technology to ensure all goes well at the examination centres across Nigeria is also one-way JAMB utilises modern approaches to promote transparency and accountability.

✓ Others are, the deployment of innovative test items which candidates can relate with, especially with practical subjects like Biology, Physics, Chemistry, among others.

- ✓ **Also, data from the UTME as a digital assessment which can be analysed and used for decision making is another laudable way the UTME leverages technology to promote accountability.**

- ✓ **For instance, data collected from the UTME administration can give insight into candidates' performance trends and learning outcomes. This can help the Board and its regulatory agency, the Federal Ministry of Education (FMoE) in decision-making.**

- ✓ **The higher institutions also leverage on this available technology to request from the Board candidates' details to be used for purposes of admission such as their biometrics and test scores for further quality check before they are allowed to register.**

- ✓ **This impacts on the integrity of the admission process greatly.**

Table 3: OVERVIEW OF THE 2024 UTME REPORTS' FORENSIC ACROSS STATES

S/N	STATES	UNVERIFIED	RESCHEDULED	MALPRACTICE	UNCONSIDERED	PASSPORT MISMATCH	POWER OUTAGE	NETWORK ISSUES	CENTRES WITH NO ISSUES
1	ABIA	28	1	3	0	0	1	5	3
2	ADAMAWA	64	2	0	0	6	0	1	1
3	AKWA IBOM	11	26	0	2	0	1	1	2
4	ANAMBRA	42	1	11	0	0	7	3	3
5	BAUCHI	111	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
6	BAYELSA	4	0	2	0	0	7	0	1
7	BENUE	67	0	3	0	0	4	0	10
8	BORNO	138	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
9	CROSS RIVER	16	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
10	DELTA	52	3	3	0	0	10	8	5
11	EBONYI	13	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
12	EDO	26	0	13	0	0	1	1	3
13	EKITI	22	4	0	2	0	0	1	2
14	ENUGU	22	12	6	0	0	2	0	0
15	FCT	234	15	1	0	0	0	2	0
16	GOMBE	72	0	0	10	0	2	1	1
17	IMO	17	3	4	0	0	8	4	2
18	JIGAWA	91	0	2	0	1	4	0	2
19	KADUNA	350	18	8	1	0	2	8	0
20	KANO	301	2	11	1	0	2	2	1
21	KATSINA	88	0	0	0	1	2	2	1
22	KEBBI	73	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
23	KOGI	21	0	0	0	0	1	0	5
24	KWARA	135	26	0	20	0	5	0	2
25	LAGOS	119	17	4	3	0	15	9	14
26	NASARAWA	172	0	0	2	0	7	1	11
27	NIGER	123	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	OGUN	45	0	2	0	0	1	2	12
29	ONDO	54	0	1	0	0	2	3	6
30	OSUN	65	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
31	OYO	115	0	3	0	0	1	0	1
32	PLATEAU	103	0	0	0	0	7	2	8
33	RIVERS	24	2	3	11	0	11	8	5
34	SOKOTO	101	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
35	TARABA	68	0	1	0	0	6	0	0
36	YOBE	63	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
37	ZAMFARA	42	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

TABLE 4: OVERVIEW OF THE 2025 UTME REPORTS' FORENSIC ACROSS STATES

S/N	STATES	UNVERIFIED CANDIDATES	RESCHEDULED	INFRACTIONS	PASSPORT MISMATCH
1	ABIA	7	0	1	0
2	ADAMAWA	36	0	0	1
3	AKWA IBOM	14	23	1	1
4	ANAMBRA	6	0	16	0
5	BAUCHI	84	0	0	0
6	BAYELSA	1	0	2	1
7	BENUE	48	0	0	0
8	BORNO	129	0	1	0
9	CROSS RIVER	9	0	1	0
10	DELTA	14	0	8	2
11	EBONYI	1	0	2	1
12	EDO	12	0	1	0
13	EKITI	5	0	0	0
14	ENUGU	7	0	4	0
15	FCT	62	0	0	0
16	GOMBE	51	0	0	0
17	IMO	4	0	4	0
18	JIGAWA	92	1	1	0
19	KADUNA	233	0	6	0
20	KANO	232	0	8	0
21	KATSINA	128	0	1	0
22	KEBBI	44	0	0	0
23	KOGI	9	0	1	0
24	KWARA	45	0	0	0
25	LAGOS	339	0	9	0
26	NASARAWA	64	0	2	1
27	NIGER	43	0	0	0
28	OGUN	19	14	0	0
29	ONDO	18	0	3	0
30	OSUN	24	0	2	0
31	OYO	37	0	0	0
32	PLATEAU	66	1	3	0
33	RIVERS	20	1	5	2
34	SOKOTO	79	0	1	0
35	TARABA	27	0	0	0
36	YOBE	37	0	0	0

- ✓ **Transparency and accountability of the Board's assessment processes can also be deduced from Tables 3 and 4 as they give overviews of the general conduct of the 2024 and 2025 UTME.**

- ✓ **The 2024 UTME had about 1.94 million candidates while the 2025 had a total number of two million, thirty thousand and eight hundred and sixty-two candidates (2,030,862).**

- ✓ **Whereas, Table 3 shows that three thousand and ninety-two (3092) candidates were unable to be verified due to thumbprint issues, Table 4 shows that two thousand and ninety-five (2095) were unverified.**

- ✓ **While One Hundred and Sixteen (116) were rescheduled to take the UTME for 2024 from Table 3, Forty (40) were rescheduled in 2025.**

- ✓ **This was as a result of computer systems malfunctioning as can be seen on Table 5.**

Table 5: Comparative Analysis between 2025 UTME and 2024 UTME

YEAR	UNVERIFIED	RESCHEDULED	INFRACTIONS	PASSPORT MISMATCH	POWER CHALLENGES	NETWORK ISSUES	CENTRES WITH NO ISSUES
2025	2095	40	83	9	33	27	311
2024	3092	132	88	8	112	65	110

FIGURE 4: Comparison between 2025 and 2024 UTME

Legend: 2025 (dark red), 2024 (red)

Category	2025	2024
UNVERIFIED	2095	3092
RESCHEDULED	40	132
INFRACTIONS	83	88
PASSPORT MISMATCH	9	8
POWER CHALLENGES	33	112
NETWORK ISSUES	27	65
CENTRES WITH NO ISSUES	311	110
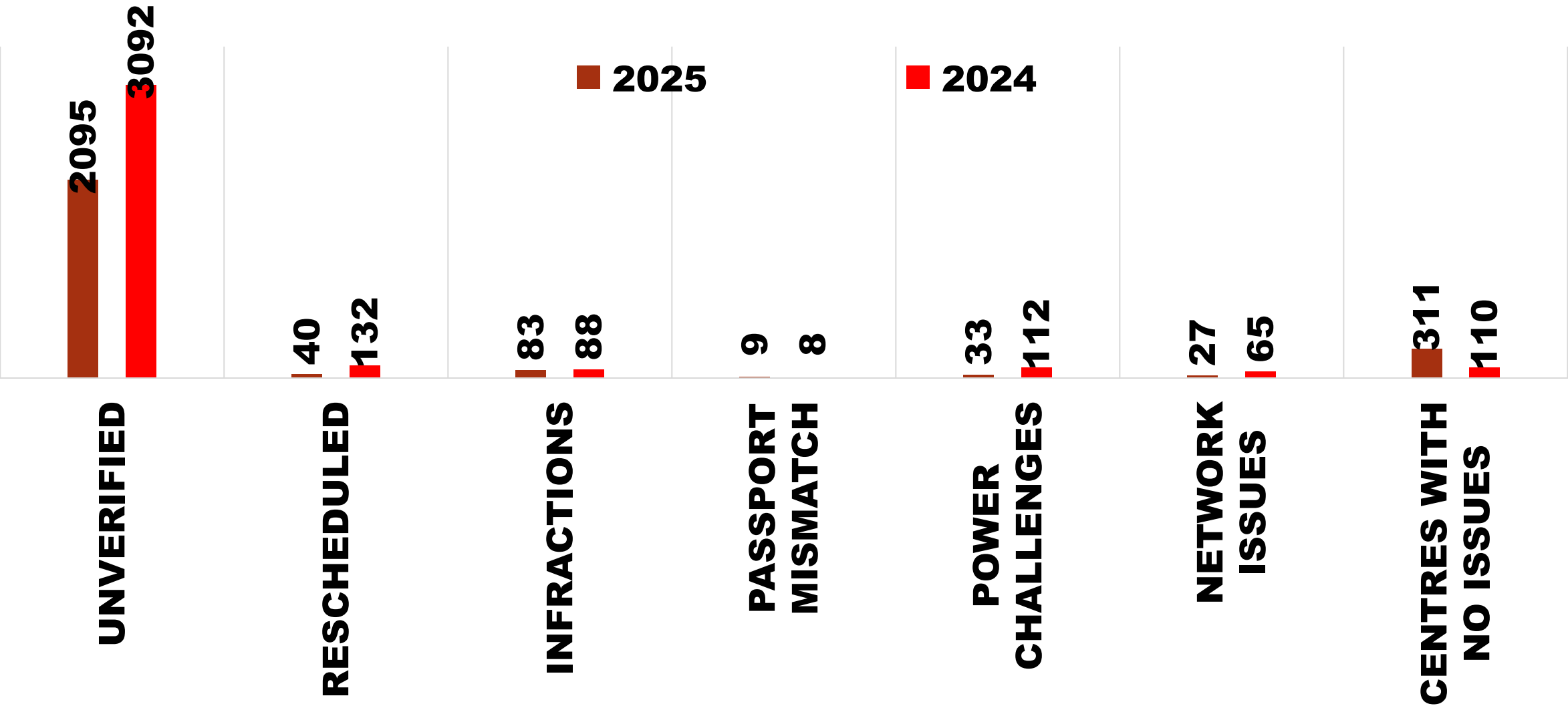
Research question 3: What are the common forms of examination malpractice in the UTME and the strategic interventions of the Board?

Examination malpractice remains a challenge that undermines the credibility of any assessment process. The Board of JAMB has continued to make giant strides in curbing malpractice through technology and strict monitoring. Some of the Board's strategic interventions that have upheld the sanctity and integrity of the UTME are listed below.

i. Impersonation

ii. Collusion and aided Malpractice

iii. Use of Electronic Devices

❑ Findings

- ▪ **Enrolment trends:** the UTME registration and performance data provide insights across disciplines, states, and demographics.

- • **Admission integrity:** Institutions use candidates' biometrics and test scores from JAMB for quality checks before final admission.

- • **Tech-driven accountability:** the Use of the CBT, biometric verification, data protection, and remote proctoring has improved decision-making and accountability.

- • **Standards and fairness:** the UTME ensures only qualified candidates are admitted, promoting transparency and raising educational standards.

- • **Institutional benchmarking:** the UTME data supports benchmarking and ranking of institutions; the NATAP-M Award encourages compliance and excellence.
- • **Real-time monitoring:** JAMB reports real-time exam experiences from all centres, enhancing transparency.

- • **Exam security:** JAMB Strategic interventions have curbed malpractice, boosting credibility and trust in the exam system.

❑ CONCLUSION

- ✓ The UTME is a reliable, data-rich, and accountable assessment tool since 1978.

- ✓ JAMB's data supports policy-making, curriculum development, and educational equity.

- ✓ Its assessment practices serve as a model for other African countries.

- ✓ Ongoing innovations and partnerships in the Board of JAMB helps to improve assessment quality as a driver of national development.

❑ RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ **Strengthening of the UTME and data security.**

- ✓ **Continuous improvement of data analytics for informed decisions.**

- ✓ **Establishment of a sustained effective feedback mechanisms for stakeholders.**

- ✓ **Implementing and maintaining of robust monitoring to curb malpractice.**

- ✓ **Investing continuously in technological infrastructure.**

- ✓ **Fostering continuous stakeholder engagement.**