

Schooling Attitude and Peer-Pressure as Predictors of Examination Malpractice Tendencies in Federal Unity Colleges

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated schooling attitude and peer pressure as predictors of examination malpractice tendencies in Federal Unity College. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. No sampling was done as the entire population was used. The instruments used for the study are Schooling Attitude on Examination Malpractice Scale (SAEMS), Peer Pressure on Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (PPEMQ) and Examination Malpractice Tendency Inventory (EMTI). The instruments were face-validated using three experts and construct validated using factor analysis. The reliability indices of the instruments were ascertained to be 0.87, 0.87 and 0.90 using Cronbach alpha method for SAEMS, PPEMQ and EMTI, respectively. Linear and Multiple regression were used to answer the research questions using coefficient of determination (R^2) value while the hypotheses were tested using ANOVA (regression output) at 0.05 level of significance. The result shows that schooling attitude and peer pressure are significant predictors of students' examination malpractice tendencies. The result equally shows that schooling attitude and peer pressure have a significant joint predictive power (80%, $F= 918.020$, $p<0.05$) on students' examination malpractice tendencies. The study recommends among others that workshops, seminars, conferences and sensitization trainings on the danger of examination malpractice tendencies should be organized for parents, teachers, students and the general public by the government in collaboration with examination bodies and educational stakeholders in order to create awareness on the menaces and dangers of examination malpractice tendencies. This could help reduce examination malpractice.

Keywords: Schooling attitude, peer-pressure, examination malpractice tendencies, stakeholders

INTRODUCTION

A major instrument used in the evaluation of learners' achievement in schools since the advent of western education in Nigeria is examination. Examination is a structured test that is used to measure peoples' knowledge in a particular content area which are normally presented in the form of questions (Aslam et al., 2021). It is always generated from a subject of a given field of study that an individual has learned. Examination is a means of assessing the quantity and quality of performance of an individual at the end of teaching and learning process. The application of examination or test helps the teacher to adjust or change instructional processes during the course of instruction. Thus, when a student achieves well during an examination, it indicates that the teacher's method of teaching was appropriate, efficient and effective (Bassey & Iruoje, 2016). This implies that the success of students in examination may reflect instructional effectiveness. This success could serve as a good motivator for students, teachers, schools administrators, employers of labour and all stakeholders in education. On the other hand, when students fail to perform well during examinations, they tend to become worried and demoralized. This failure could make students or examination candidates feel worthless, depressed, unintelligent and embarrassed. In attempts to overcome the shame and disappointment from failing an examination, students crave to succeed at all cost. As a result, they engage in cheating during an examination. This threatens the very foundation of the educational system and mar the phrase "found worthy both in character and in learning" (Bassey & Iruoje, 2016). This attempt to engage in cheating by students is what is considered as examination malpractice tendency.

Examination malpractice tendency or the act of cheating during an examination has become very prevalent in the Nigerian educational sector. This malpractice activity which is also referred to examination malpractice or academic cheating has been given diverse definitions by different scholars. Anyamene et al. (2015) defined examination malpractice tendency as any act undertaken by an examinee, examiner, a teacher, parent or any person that is against the standard and ethics of examinations. More so, Oguzie et al. (2019) defined examination malpractice tendency as any act of dishonesty encouraged or practiced by a person or group of persons during an examination. Oguzie and Nwokolo (2021) further referred to examination malpractice tendencies as behaviours or actions carried out by an individual or group of persons before, during or after an examination with the intention of positively influencing the result of such an examination. Based on these definitions, examination malpractice tendencies may be operationally defined as misconducts practiced by examination stakeholders before, during or after an examination to favour the students/learner. Examination stakeholders here includes students, teachers, supervisors, mercenaries, parents, security agencies, examination boards, among others.

Examination malpractice has become a persistent and troubling issue in Nigeria. This is evidenced by some reports from the studies by researchers. Ndege (2012) opined that the frequency at which irregularities on examinations has continued to linger, and on an increase. This view was not different from the report by Desalegn and Berhan (2014) that malpractice among students is of a great prevalence. In another study, Diego (2017) reported that the mindset of malpractice with, and for friends is a common thing among students during examinations. In line with the view of Diego et al. (2017) revealed that the rate of malpractice among students has gain prominent attention in the educational sector. The persistent and continuous rise in malpractice tendency among students during examination or a test could constitute a lot of danger to the Nigerian educational sector.

Examination malpractice tendencies among students are of many forms and dimensions in recent times. Some of these forms include impersonation, collusion, sex for grade/question papers, bribing, spying/giraffing, submission of multiple script, examination leakage, writing on currency notes, smuggling of textbooks and key points into the examination hall, among others. Tyokyer and Ozioko (2016) identified other forms of examination malpractice to include electronically assisted malpractices (programmed calculators, smartphones and smartwatches, among others), mass cheating, inscription on the body, personality connection (influence of politicians, parents, people in authority, among others), assaulting examination personnel, and so on.

The foregoing shows that there are various forms of examination malpractice tendencies by individuals during examinations. These forms of examination malpractices have been traced to a number of causes according to scholars. For example, Tyokyer and Ozioko (2016) highlighted some of the major causes of examination malpractice among students to include poor intelligent quotient on the part of students, social and psychological factors. Other causes as noted by Opiyo et al. (2018) include high preference for paper qualification by employees and the society, lack of positive self-concept, poor study habits, inadequate preparation and laziness on the part of students among others. As a way of addressing the issues of examination malpractices in the educational sector in Nigeria using the factors and causes above, efforts are required from educational stakeholders.

These efforts are measures and strategies required to ensure that examination malpractice is minimized or eradicated completely. According to Ifijeh et al. (2015), such measures as using of security personnel to monitor the conduct of public examinations, providing different forms or paper types of examination, preventing students from carrying technological devices into the hall, among others. Edeh et al (2019) also pointed out that computer-based testing, use of biometric capturing/encryption, closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras, and so on, are measures adopted to curtail malpractice tendencies during examinations. The Federal Government of Nigeria in a bid to address the issue of examination malpractice tendencies, reviewed the decree 20 of 1984 on the Examination Malpractice Act 33 of 1999 by placing a fine ranging between ₦50,000 to ₦100,000 or imprisonment for 3-4 years on offenders or anyone who demonstrates malpractice tendencies or behaviours on examinations. All these efforts were aimed at reducing or eliminating examination malpractice tendencies in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the rate of examination malpractice tendencies among students and stakeholders in River State of Nigeria has continued to surge higher.

The implication of this increasing rate of examination malpractice is that the standard, ethics, credibility and outcomes of examinations in Nigeria will continue to lose credence and decline in value if nothing is done to address this menace. Thus, there is need to investigate further on examination malpractice tendencies among students. An extensive review of literature shows that previous studies by scholars (Owenga, 2020) investigated the relationship between each of the identified variables and examination malpractice tendencies independently, however, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study has been carried out to determine whether or not such factors as psychosocial variables are responsible for increased rate of examination malpractice tendencies. It is in line with the above that this study examined the relationship between examination malpractice tendencies and psycho-social variables.

Psychological variables are combination of psychological and social variables that impacts on a student's life. Asuquo and Kalu (2015) noted that psychosocial variables are factors which influence how students perform in any educational setting or environment. According to Kolo et al. (2017), psychosocial variables are positive and negative factors such as attitude, self-efficacy and social interactions of students. The authors further noted that psychosocial variables which also include student-teacher's interaction and attitude also affects students' academic performance. Based on the given definitions, psychosocial variables in this study may be regarded as psychological and social factors that determines the social functioning and interactions of students. These factors which this study will examine include schooling attitude of students, students peer influence, parental influence, and teachers' involvement in students academic.

Attitude generally is seen as one's disposition towards a particular thing. According to Moe et al. (2009), attitude to schooling refers to the way a person perceives attending school. It basically revolves around how students feel when they are in school, their willingness in going to school, their relationship with teachers and peers and what they decide to learn and how it relates to their future. Equally, Veresova and Mala (2016) described schooling attitude as beliefs, thoughts and opinions about school and learning. In essence, the authors noted that it is the emotions and relationship towards school and learning which is determined by feelings, tendency to behave in accordance with favourable and unfavourable experiences with school and learning. Subsequently, Ibrahim (2019) defined attitude to school as the way students respond towards their school and learning generally. The author further noted that it is the positive or negative disposition of students toward schooling and learning activities. Based on these definitions, one could define schooling attitude as students' toward school related activities such as learning, socializing and other related academic activities.

Perhaps, one may say that the schooling attitude of a learner could determine their learning experiences of such a learner. Veresova and Mala (2016) noted that the academic achievement of a student is greatly linked to the schooling attitude of such a student. The author noted that when the attitude is positive, students are likely to achieve high but when negative, they could achieve poor. This could be interpreted to mean that without the development of the right schooling attitude, students may not be well prepared for learning and examinations, this could make students engage in malpractice during examinations. The study of Eyarefe and Adedjei (2010) as well as Bassey and Iruoje (2016) showed that attitude to schooling is significantly related to examination malpractice tendencies among students. However, Oguzie and Nwokolo (2021) reported a contrary finding of no significant relationship. This could translate to inconsistencies in findings of scholars; thus, this present study is paramount to address these inconsistencies. Again, for the fact that students attitude has not been clearly carried out in Rivers state of Nigeria, there is need to examine the variable students attitude in this study. Consequently, Diego (2017) noted that individuals now attempt to cheat with their friends or for their friends on examinations. The author noted that adolescents are significantly influenced by what their peers do and always form peer groups for similar interest. This means that when students engage in examination malpractice tendencies, it could be as a result of peer pressure.

Peer pressure has long been a major and determining variable in students learning environment. According to Manzoni et al. (2011), peer pressure refers to the expectations imposed by peer group on an individual which makes the individual behave in a particular way regardless of the person's inclinations and desires. Additionally, Ryan as cited in Gikonyo and Kageni (2016) defined peer pressure as the process through which people of similar age range encourage and implore an individual to do something or keep from doing something else whether it is against the will of such an individual or not. In another definition, Dhull and Beniwal (2017) referred to peer

pressure as the influence by others which makes an individual to act in a certain way. These definitions mean that peer pressure is usually as a result of influence from friends which makes an individual behave like their peers in order to be accepted or belong fully. Peer pressure could then be defined as the process by which individuals who are of the same age range and who move in group (peer group) are made to engage in activities as a result of encouragement or compulsion from their colleagues whether they are happy doing it or not.

The foregoing it shows that people learn from their peers and behave in a certain way as a result of influence from the peers. This means that an individual's social behaviours, thinking patterns, among others, could also be influenced by the behaviours of others of same age range or orientations. Thus, one could argue tentatively that in a situation where the rate of examination malpractice tendency is high among students, peer pressure could be a factor contributing to that. Although it appears that peer pressure could determine examination malpractice tendencies (Julapong et al., 2019), but studies that explored this relationship especially in Federal Unity Colleges of River State appears not to exist to the best of the researcher's knowledge. Hence, there is need to examine the prediction of peer pressure on examination malpractice tendency in among students of Federal Unity Colleges in Rivers State alongside other variables such as parental influence.

Examination malpractice tendencies has become a major source of worry to may stakeholders in the education sector. This is because, the credibility of examination bodies such as West African Examination Council WAEC and National Examination Council NECO, among others has continued to decline as a result of incessant malpractice tendencies among students. This situation has become increasingly worrisome across secondary schools in Nigeria, especially among schools in Rivers State and particularly in Federal Unity Colleges. This is even worst in Federal Unity Colleges in Rivers State where it has been severally observed that students go the extent of purchasing live examination question papers in order to attain a reasonable level of success. In the process, some of the results were withheld while others were canceled. As a result, factors such as high preference for paper qualifications, lack of positive self-concept, poor study skills, poor intelligent quotient, among others have been identified as causes of examination malpractice tendencies. As a way of addressing the issue of examination malpractice, the government, education and examination stakeholders have taken proactive measures such as placing sanctions on examination malpractices, using security personnel for supervisions and using different paper types, among others. Yet, the incidence of examination malpractice tendencies has continued to rise. Thus, the research thought that psychosocial variables such as students' schooling attitude, peer pressure, parental involvement, and teachers' involvement could be the leading causes of examination malpractice tendencies among students. Therefore, the problem of this study stated interrogatively is; what is the prediction of psychosocial variables on students' on examinations malpractice tendencies in Federal Unity colleges of Rivers state, Nigeria?

The purpose of this study is to investigate the psycho-social variables as predictors of examination malpractice tendencies among students in Federal Unity Colleges in Rivers state. The following research questions posed guided the conduct of this study

1. What is the amount of variation in students' examination malpractice tendencies that can be predicted by schooling attitude?
2. What is the amount of variation in students' examination malpractice tendencies that can be predicted by peer pressure?

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

This study adopted a correlation research design. Correlation design tries to examine or establishes the relationship between two or more variables. This design is considered appropriate for this study because the researcher is interested in determining the relationship between schooling attitude, peer pressure, parental influence, teachers' involvement and students' examination malpractice tendencies. More so, the design enabled the researcher to determine the amount of variation in cheating tendencies that is attributed to psychosocial variables.

The population for this study comprised of 899 senior secondary school two (SSS II) students for 2022/2023 academic session in the three Federal Unity Colleges in three LGAs in the state. This comprised 274 SS II students in Federal Government Girls' College (FGGC), Abuloma; 248 SS II students in Federal Science Technical College (FSTC), Ahoada and 377 SS II students in Federal Government college (FGC), Port Harcourt (Federal Ministry of Education, Abuja, 2023) (see appendix A: page 85). The entire population of the study which comprised 899 students in the three Federal Unity Colleges in Rivers state was used for this study. Hence, no sampling will be carried out. This is because the population is not extremely large and can be managed by the researcher.

Three instruments were used for data collection in this study. They are; Schooling Attitude on Examination Malpractice Scale (SAEMS), Peer Pressure on Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (PPEMQ), and Examination Malpractice Tendency Inventory (EMTI). The schooling attitude on examination malpractice scale (SAEMS) was designed by the researcher and it consists of 13 items on students' schooling attitude in relation to examination malpractice tendencies. The SAEMS instrument is structured into two sections, A and B; section A contain demographic details such as identification number while section B contained item statements on schooling attitudes on examination malpractice tendencies of students. The SAEMS instrument is structured based on a 4-point scale of strongly agree (SA) to strongly disagree (SD) with numerical values ranging from one (1) to four (4). The highest obtainable score on the SAS instrument is 52 while 13 is the lowest obtainable score.

The Peer Pressure on Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (PPEMQ) which contains 13 items measuring peer pressure on examination malpractice was developed by the research. PPEMQ is in two sections- A and B. Section A obtained personal information (identification number) of students, while section B obtained information regarding peer pressure in relation to examination malpractice tendencies. The items on the PPQ instruments were structured to have response options of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree labelled as SA=4, A=3, D=2 and SD=1. The lowest possible score on the PPEMQ for a student is 13 while 52 is the highest possible score that can be obtained by a student.

Examination Malpractice Tendency Inventory (EMTI) which was used in this study was developed by the researcher to measure students' examination malpractice tendencies. The instrument has two sections-A and B and contains 13 items. Section A obtains personal details (identification number) of students while section B contains item statement measuring students' examination malpractice tendencies. The response options on the EMTI instrument were structured on a scale of 4, 3, 2 and 1 representing the options of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) respectively. The highest score on the EMTI instrument was 52 while the lowest possible score was 13.

The instruments; SAEMS, and PPEMQ were all subjected to face and construct validation. To establish the face validity of the instruments, one expert from Education Psychology Unit in the department of education foundation and two experts from Research, Measurement and Evaluation unit, Department of Science Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka were given the instruments. The researcher presented to the experts, copies of the instruments together with the research topic, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses for the study. The experts were made to scrutinize the instruments in terms of appropriateness of items, clarity of expressions, proper numbering, and to ensure that items were not double-barreled, ambiguous and are in line with the purposes of the study. Suggestions, inputs and comments of the experts were integrated into the final drafts of the instruments.

In order to ascertain construct validation of SAS and PPQ, the instruments with a total of 20 and 16 items respectively, were each administered to 20 students in Federal Science Technical College in Benue State which is not part of the schools for this study but share similar characteristics with the sample of the study. These characteristics include the fact that the school is a Federal Unity College, the students equally participate in external examinations (WAEC and NECO) and are taught by qualified teachers hired by the Federal Government, among others. In order to determine if the sample size was adequate for a factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) test for sample adequacy was conducted and it shows that the sample size was adequate for a factor analysis. The data collected after the administration of the instrument were subjected to

factor analysis. The Principal Axis Factoring with Varimax Rotation was used in order to make sure that only items not correlated are loaded. Items which have factor loading values of 0.40 and loaded in only one component were considered factorially pure and selected. However, items with factor loading value of 0.40 in more than a component as well as items with factor loading value below 0.40 in all components were considered factorially complex and impure respectively, as such, were discarded.

In order to establish the reliability of the instruments, the researcher conducted a trial testing on a group of students who share similar characteristics with the intended sample but are not part of the sampled students for this study. Basically, the characteristics are that the school used is a Federal Unity College, the students are taught by qualified teachers hired by the Federal Government, and the same curriculum is being used for the schools, among others. Essentially, the SAEMS, and PPEMQ instruments were administered to 20 SS II students in Federal Science Technical College, Otobi. The internal consistency reliability estimates of the instruments were estimated using Cronbach alpha method. Reliability indices of 0.87, and 0.87 instruments respectively. The choice of Cronbach alpha method was because the instruments are on a continuous rating.

Regression analysis was employed in answering the research questions. While, correlation coefficient (R) was used to express the relationship between the variables, coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to ascertain the amount of variation in students' cheating tendencies on examination that is attributable to schooling attitude, peer pressure, parental influence, and teacher involvement. Correlation coefficients between .00-.30 will be interpreted as low relationship while coefficients from .31-.70 will be reported as moderate and .71-1.00 as high relationship. Hypotheses were tested using ANOVA (Regression output) at 0.05 level of significance. In situations where the exact probability value obtained is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected, otherwise, not rejected.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the regression result on the amount of variation in students' examination malpractice tendencies that is predicted by schooling attitude. The result shows that the correlation coefficient (R) between schooling attitude and students' examination malpractice tendencies is 0.86, implying that there is a high relationship between schooling attitude and students' examination malpractice tendencies. The result equally shows a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.75, indicating that schooling attitude has a predictive power of 75% on students' examination malpractice tendencies.

Table 1: Regression analysis on the amount of variations in students' examination malpractice tendencies that is predicted by schooling attitude

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2
1	.863 ^a	.746	.745
a. Predictors: (Constant), Schooling Attitude			

The result in Table 2 on the significance of the prediction of schooling attitude on students' examination malpractice tendencies shows that the F-ratio of 2628.762 obtained is associated to an exact probability value of 0.000. This associated p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance set for decision making. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. The study therefore concludes that the amount of variation in students' examination malpractice tendencies that can be predicted by schooling attitude is significant.

Table 2: ANOVA result on the significance of the prediction of schooling attitude on students' examination malpractice tendencies

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	64531.491	1	64531.491	2628.762	.000 ^b
	Residual	22019.777	897	24.548		
	Total	86551.268	898			

a. Dependent Variable: Examination Malpractice Tendencies
b. Predictors: (Constant), Schooling Attitude

The result in Table 3 shows the regression analysis on the amount of variation in students' examination malpractice tendencies that can be attributed to peer pressure. Based on the result, a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.70 which implies high relationship was obtained for peer pressure and students' examination malpractice tendencies. The result equally shows that a coefficient to determination (R^2) of 0.49 was obtained. This indicates that 49% of students' examination malpractice tendencies is attributable to peer pressure. This means that 51% is attributable to variables other than peer pressure.

Table 3: Regression analysis on the predictive power of peer pressure on students' examination malpractice tendencies

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2
1	.703 ^a	.494	.493
a. Predictors: (Constant), Peer Pressure			

The ANOVA result in Table 4 shows the significance of the amount of variation in students' examination malpractice tendencies that can be predicted by peer pressure. Based on the result, the F-ratio (1, 897) = 875.805, $p < 0.05$ was obtained. This result shows that the associated exact probability value of 0.000 obtained is less than the level of significance of 0.05 set for decision. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, there is a significant amount of variation in students' examination malpractice tendencies that can be predicted by peer pressure.

Table 4: ANOVA result on the significance of the prediction of peer pressure on students' examination malpractice tendencies

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	42758.248	1	42758.248	875.805	.000 ^b
	Residual	43793.020	897	48.822		
	Total	86551.268	898			
a. Dependent Variable: Examination Malpractice Tendencies						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Peer Pressure						

DISCUSSION

Students' examination malpractice tendencies and schooling attitude

The result presented in chapter four shows that there is a high relationship between schooling attitude and students' examination malpractice tendencies. Based on the result, schooling attitude significantly predicts students' examination malpractice tendencies. This result implies that when students' schooling attitude is high, it could determine their examination malpractice tendencies to a high extent. This result is not surprising because students' disposition, perceptions, beliefs, feelings as well as emotions towards their school can make them engage in examination malpractice or not. More so, since schooling attitude also deals with students conscious and unconscious reactions towards situations; thus, it could have also influenced the result of this study. The finding of this study is consistent with the result of Eyarefe and Adedeji (2010) as well as the study of Bassey and Iruoje (2016) that schooling attitude is a significant predictor of students' examination malpractice

tendencies. These results by scholars are indication of the fact that students' schooling attitude is a significant predictor of examination malpractice tendencies.

Students' examination malpractice tendencies and peer pressure

The findings of this study shows that there is a high relationship between peer pressure and students' examination malpractice tendencies. The result further revealed that the amount of variation in students' examination malpractice tendencies that can be attributed to peer pressure is significant. This result means that examination malpractice tendencies is determined by peer pressure. The significant of this result may be due to the fact that students' are usually encouraged by their peers, to participate and engage in activities just to feel accepted by their groups. This could have accounted the significance of this result. More so, peer pressure could make students skip classes, engage in inappropriate activities and participate in behaviours that are unacceptable. Thus, peer pressure could also make students' engage in examination malpractice tendencies. This report is in agreement with the findings of Nora and Zhang (2010) that peer pressure is a significant predictor of examination malpractice. Similarly, the result aligns with the findings of Owenga et al. (2018) that peer pressure is a significant determinant of examination malpractice tendencies. This finding also agrees with the report of Julapong et al. (2019) that peer pressure accounts for examination malpractice tendencies. The similarities in the findings of scholars means that peer pressure determines students' examination malpractice tendencies.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study shows that schooling attitude and peer pressure significantly predicts students' examination malpractice tendencies. This means that students' with negative feelings, perceptions, behaviours and emotions among others towards school as well as those who are easily negatively influenced by their peers engages in examination malpractice tendencies. This could mean that when students' develop the right schooling attitude and are positively influenced by their friends, examination malpractice tendencies may decline. The study further concludes that the amount of variations in students' examination malpractice tendencies that is jointly predicted by the variables is significant.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Workshops, seminars, conferences and sensitization trainings on the danger of examination malpractice tendencies should be organized for parents, teachers, students and the general public by the government in collaboration with examination bodies and educational stakeholders in order to create awareness on the menaces and dangers of examination malpractice tendencies. This could help reduce examination malpractice.
2. Students should ensure that they develop the right mindset, perception and behaviour as well as feelings and belief towards school. This could help improve their schooling attitude positively, thereby, leading to reduction in examination malpractice.
3. Government and school management should make sure that punishment against examination malpractice is taken seriously.

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