

**VALUES ORIENTATION AND
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS'
ATTITUDE TO EXAMINATION
MALPRACTICE IN CROSS RIVER
STATE, NIGERIA**



Humanities

Keywords: formal test, examination malpractice, individual's behaviour, learning disability, lecturers, secondary school students, urban students and their rural counterparts, ex-post facto research, etc.

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Abstract

The study investigated values orientation and secondary school students' attitude to examination malpractice in Cross River State, Nigeria. One (1) null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance with 998 degrees of freedom using Pearson product moment correlation statistics. Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. A sample of one thousand (1000) students were randomly selected and used for the study. The selection was done through the stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Values Orientation and Students' Attitude to Examination Malpractices Questionnaire (VOSAEMQ)". This was validated by experts in psychology and measurement and evaluation all from the Faculty of Education, University of Calabar. The reliability estimate of the instrument was established through the split-half reliability method which ranged from 0.90 to 0.94. The results of the analysis revealed that, values orientation significantly relates to students' attitude towards examination malpractice in Cross River State. Based on the findings, it was recommended that seminars, workshops and symposia be organized to educate students against examination malpractices.

Introduction

Nigeria is plagued by the 'monster' called examination malpractice. The phenomenon of examination malpractice has posed great threat to the survival, and sustainability of good quality education in Nigeria. Examination malpractice has become a cankerworm which has eaten deep into the fabrics of our educational system from the primary to the tertiary level of our educational system. The menace of examination malpractice has made the conduct of secondary school education examination in Nigeria, and Cross River State in particular to be a huge mockery, as cheating, fraud and cutting corners have continued unabated in our school systems.

In Cross River State today, examinations are becoming ends in themselves rather than means to an end. Examinations have become the sole determinants of the student's academic progress and promotion to higher educational levels. Maduka (2001) sees undue emphasis placed on certificate as one of the causes of examination malpractice in Nigeria. According to him, paper qualification and certificates serve as means of getting well paid jobs and achievement of social status. Tolofari (2006) asserts that the certificate mentality is one of the root causes of examination malpractice and fraud in Nigeria. Concerned about the ugly situation of examination malpractice in schools, Nwadiani (2005) indicated that examination malpractice in Nigeria manifests in a variety of forms which include: leakage, impersonation, external assistance, smuggling of "foreign materials", copying, collusion, intimidation, substitution of scripts and improper assignment.

Despite stringent legislations, and other measures like cancellation of examination results, outright expulsion of students from schools and institutions, aimed at being a panacea for the recurring examination malpractice more and more sophisticated forms of these endemic practices continue with impunity. Hence, Obo (2008) observed that in spite of the genuine efforts by the state government, and perhaps some education stakeholders (teachers, school administrators, school proprietors, parents and employers of labour) in the eradication of examination malpractice in the state, there seems to be no significant improvement in the eradication of examination malpractice in the State Secondary School System. Thus, the researchers seek to investigate values orientation and secondary school students' attitude to examination malpractice in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Examination malpractice is an illegal or unacceptable behaviour by a candidate in a formal test of his/her knowledge or ability in a particular subject. Alutu and Alutu (2003) see examination malpractice as a socially undesirable behaviour exhibited by students. Kibler (2003) defines examination malpractice as a form of cheating and plagiarism that involves students giving or receiving unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise or receiving credit for work that is not their own.

Roa (2003) defines values orientation as “the process of directing the interest and passion of individuals to the desired socio – cultural values that promote societal development and good relations. Value orientation is a right and wrong that are accepted by an individual or a social group, ethnic or moral principle. (<http://www.powerthesaurus.org> retrieve today 2020).

Theoretical Background

Self-concept theory by Rogers

This theory believes in favourable conditions to a healthy growth of personality. This includes a threat free, congruent; empathic concrete and genuine atmosphere. According to Rogers (1951) a person is basically good, socialized, constructive and full of potential to self-actualize or regulate the self-provided a psycho-therapeutic climate is conducive. Rogers (1951) theory believes that if these significant others (parents, brothers, sisters, relatives, teachers), can provide a psychologically conducive climate, the individual can take advantage of this and move towards self-actualization.

Self-concept refers to the picture or image a person has of himself or herself. It means the sum of what a person believes to be true about him or her, together with the importance he/she attaches to those beliefs. The ‘self’ is not rigid but flexible so that it can change as it assimilates experiences. Self is developed out of the organic interaction with the environment. Applying the self-concept theory to the issue of examination malpractice, it can be noted that the environment in which a student operates can influence the self-image the student develops. A student who lives and interacts with other students, who engage in examination malpractice, may become vulnerable to examination malpractice.

Parents who support their children to cheat, and school principals who arrange corporate cheating in their schools, contribute immensely in developing a negative self-concept of the students towards life in general.

Aina (1996) opines that ethics and integrity hold the promise of a panacea for all besetting examination ills, yet implies greater promise far beyond examinations, which when realized may leap the nation into a meritocratic society where honesty hard work and virtues are rewarded while indolence and social vices are punished.

A student who does not have confidence in his or herself who does not take her school work serious will definitely not do well in school because of the negative self-concept he or she has. Conversely, a student who works hard and sees any challenge in his or her academic pursuit as an opportunity to excel will surely perform well in his studies because of his or her positive self-concept, and thus will not be involved in examination malpractice. This theory is very significant to this study because it recognizes genuine acceptance and individual self-worth of the learner. The expression of warm, empathic understanding, and positive regard of the student irrespective of his maladaptive behaviour, is when the student perceives the genuineness, acceptance and empathy towards him or her that he can develop a change of behaviour.

Social learning theory by Bandura (1971) is based on the assumption that habits, attitudes, behaviours, and values which make up personality are learned. According to the social learning theory, behaviour is caused by an interaction between inner processes and environmental influences. He posits that internal processes that influence behaviour are based principally on previous experiences of the individual and can be manipulated and also measured as covert events. Emphasis is on the role of the cognitive determinants of behaviour.

Bandura (1971) believes in human cognitive ability to determine action and to perform “both insightful and foresight behaviour”. He stresses that social learning experiences play a crucial role in the development and modification of an individual’s behaviour. Imitation of other people’s behaviours tends to influence, and at times enrich an individual’s personality.

Rewarded behaviour tends to repeat itself, while punished behaviour tends to die away. Since socially approved behaviour is rewarded, individuals model after those whose behaviours have been praised or rewarded. The behaviour of unsuccessful people tends to be avoided.

This theory could be applied to Senior Secondary School students’ attitude to examination malpractice. The theory shed more light on the ways in which man acquires, modifies his behaviour through emulations of models. The effective use of the principle of modeling can increase a student’s achievement. Man is a social being, learning variables can help us to treat learning disability that has roots in social development, poor study habits, academic anxieties, poor parenting, poor preparation for examination, poverty, and examination malpractice have social roots, and learning how to treat or at least cope with these issues will improve personality development and learning of our senior secondary school students.

Parents and other stakeholders in education must live by example in translating good values in the child; bearing in mind that man learns through the influence of example. Man by nature watches what others do and then repeat their actions.

The use of Bandura's (1971) principle of modeling and vicarious learning will help students reduce phobia of examination. Students who are motivated to work hard in school are usually more interested in school work than those not motivated. Students who are not motivated hardly do well and consequently fail to derive satisfaction from their school work. It is this lack of satisfaction that leads students to engage in examination malpractice.

Literature Review

Inyon (2002) investigated the influence of value orientation and secondary school students' attitude towards examination malpractice among in Akwalbom State, Nigeria, adopted the Ex-post Facto design, with a sample size of 800 respondents and a four-point Likert Scale type instrument. He analyzed statistically the data obtained using population t-test, independent t-test and one way ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance. The findings indicated that: The value-related attitudes of secondary school students towards examination malpractice were significantly positive, the value-related – attitude of male students towards examination malpractice was significantly different from those of their female counterparts, with female students showing a higher attitude than the male students, Students' value-related attitudes towards examination malpractice in schools with full time guidance counselors (intervention strategies) were significantly different from those without guidance counselors, Students' value-related attitudes towards examination malpractice were significantly influenced by the location of their schools, with urban students having higher attitudes than their rural counterparts, Students' value-related attitudes towards examination malpractice in mixed, boys and girls schools were significantly different with students from mixed schools having significantly higher attitudes than those in single sexed schools. Again, the value-related attitudes of students in boys' schools were significantly higher than those of students in girls' schools.

Inyon (2002) has asserted that children nowadays brazenly reject the authority of their elders and the good values of the society. The way the elders and the society handle this confrontation determines the nature and sophistication of future occurrences. Parents and teachers need to know when to punish, how to set limits, and what behaviour to inhibit.

Egbue and Mathias (2013) used a sample of one hundred and fifty one (151) randomly selected from three institutions. They found out that many factors were identified as the course of examination malpractice. That the lecturers are the cause of examination malpractice. According to them, most lecturers do not teach, they only come to class when examination timetable comes out. Other causes of examination malpractice include poor reading habit, examination tension, and inadequate number of invigilators during examination. Also, parents offer gifts to lecturers to enable them pass their ward during examination, and sometimes gender also plays a significant

role in examination malpractice. Most female students find it difficult to concentrate during examination period. They see the higher institutions as a place they attract the men that will marry them. Hence, they spend more time making effort to look attractive than concentrating on their studies. As a result of this, the only alternative is to engage in all forms of examination malpractice.

Aina (1996) succinctly stated that ethics and integrity are the solution to all the examination ills. Hence, the social, political and economic structures of this nation is dependent on the promotion of examination ethics; and that hard work is a virtue which once cultivated takes one through life and forms the foundation for an enduring success. Alutu (2003) in a seminar to secondary school students in Benin City on academic excellence drew students' attention to the 3p's – praying, planning and persistent hard work to academic excellence. The students who were mainly from a Christian community were made to know that praying to God for success without matching it with good study plans and use of time and persistent hard work will not lead them to achieve the goal of academic excellence.

Materials and Methods

The research design adopted for this study is the ex-post facto design.

Subject: A total sample of 1000 students was used for the study (400 Male and 600 Female). Stratified and simple random sample techniques were used in drawing samples of schools and subjects. Southern Cross River State was stratified into 7 zones, based on the seven local government areas that make up Southern Cross River State namely: Akpabuyo, Akamkpa, Bakassi, Biase, Calabar Municipality, Calabar South and Odukpani Local Government Area respectively. Two schools were randomly selected from each zone which yielded a total of fourteen secondary schools.

Data collection: An instrument captioned Values Orientation and Students' Attitude to Examination Malpractices Questionnaire (VOESAMQ) was constructed by the researchers and used for data collection. The instrument had 3 sections. Section A elicited from the respondents' demographic information such gender, age, parental occupation, among others. Section B was designed to measure values orientation of students. While Section C was designed to measure Examination Malpractices. This section consisted of twenty (20) items Likert-type scale with 4 alternative responses.

Results

The data generated were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1: there is no significant relationship between values orientation and secondary school students' attitude to examination malpractices.

The independent variable involved in this hypothesis is values orientation; the dependent variable is students' attitude to examination malpractice. To test this hypothesis students' attitude to examination malpractice was correlated with their values orientation using Pearson product moment correlation analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 1 reveals that the calculated r-value of 0.746 is higher than the critical r-value of .062 at .05 level of significance with 998 degree of freedom. With the result of this analysis, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant relationship between students' values orientation and students' attitude to examination malpractice was rejected. This result implies that, students' values orientation has a significant relationship with their attitude to examination malpractice.

Table 1

Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between values orientation and secondary school students' attitude to examination malpractice (N=1000)

Variable	\bar{X}	SD	r-value
Values orientation	29.38	3.86	0.746*
Examination malpractice	61.94	6.32	

* Significant at .05, critical r = .062, df = 998

Discussion

The result of the hypothesis indicates that there is a significant relationship between values orientation and secondary school students' attitude to examination malpractice. The finding of this hypothesis is in line with the view of Inyon (2002) found that the value-related attitudes of secondary school students towards examination malpractice were significantly positive. The value-related – attitude of male students towards examination malpractice was significantly different from those of their female counterparts, with female students showing a higher attitude than the male students. Students' value-related attitudes towards examination malpractice in schools with full time guidance counselors (intervention strategies) were significantly different from those without guidance counselors. Students' value-related attitudes towards examination malpractice were significantly influenced by the location of their schools, with urban students having higher attitudes than their rural counterparts. Students' value-related attitudes towards examination malpractice in mixed, boys and girls schools were significantly different with students from mixed schools having significantly higher attitudes than those in single sexed schools. Again, the value-related attitudes of students in boys' schools were significantly higher than those of students in girls' schools.

The disciplinary activities of the parents and society must occur within the frame work of love and affection, which, according to Dobson (1970) “is often difficult for parents who view these roles as contradictory”. The duty of the society therefore should be addressed to the vital aspects or raising healthy, respectful and value prone children in the society.

Aina (1996) also observed stated that ethics and integrity are the solutions to all the examination ills. Hence, the social, political and economic structures of this nation is dependent on the promotion of examination ethics; and that hard work is a virtue which once cultivated takes one through life and forms the foundation for an enduring success.

Conclusion

Based on the results and findings of the study, the following conclusions were reached. Values orientation significantly relates to students’ attitude to examination malpractice.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Examination ethics code of conduct should be produced and distributed in schools and education offices. This should spell out duties and responsibilities as well as penalties needed for the conduct of examination in our secondary schools. Examination ethics clubs should also be formed in our secondary schools.
2. Seminars, workshops and symposia be organized for all stakeholders educate them against the effect of examination malpractices.

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