

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS AS ATTRIBUTES FOR EXAMINATION
MALPRACTICE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS OF CROSS RIVER
STATE-NIGERIA: IMPLICATION FOR UNEMPLOYMENT**

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Abstract

The study investigated socio-economic factors as attributes for examination malpractice among secondary school students in Cross River State-Nigeria. The survey research design was adopted for the study. The multistage sampling technique was used in selecting total of 1038 students for the study. The instrument employed for data collection was a four point scale developed, validated and administered by the researchers. Data collected was analyzed with the use of percentages and regression analysis. Among others it was found that, students' attribute examination malpractice more to societal factors, followed by school factor, and finally by personal factors. It was found that, there was a significant relationship between societal factors and attribution to examination malpractice. Base on these findings it was recommended among others that government should device a means of enforcing the law on examination malpractice and the process of employment into public offices should entail both written and oral examinations.

Keywords: Socio-Economic, Examination, Malpractice, Attribution

1.1 Introduction

In Nigeria today, there is a pressing need for job creation with an increasing rate of unemployment, yet there are various sectors of the economy that lack manpower. In an attempt to bridge this gap, some students force themselves into reading courses that they do not have adequate background knowledge to enable them function in the area of study. This may be because contemporary Nigerian society places great emphasis on success goals without equivalent emphasis on institutional means of attaining these goals. Examination remains an instrument used for the assessment of individual skills and cognitive-content, in most academic exercises. The teaching and learning process is more effective when the learners are subjected to a form of testing to determine the extent to which the learners grasp the content of the instruction given and the teacher can also do a kind of self-evaluation on his tasks from the performance of the students. The Nigeria society is characterized by heavy emphasis on success and wealth without a corresponding legitimate

means and avenues to be used in achieving success (Paul 2012). It is seemingly a custom that everything in Nigeria today is driven by the desire for success, irrespective of the means used in achieving it |Oje-Ikere (2004). The society as it is constituted today is founded on faulty fragile educational, political, economic and social environment that may not produce a better future, for the present and younger generation.

A society that places very strong emphasis on goal achievement without corresponding emphasis on institutionalized means of achieving these goals is bound to exert pressure as the sector of the society that may eventually resort to the use of any technically expedient means in achieving the set goals irrespective of the means employed for that purpose. Omemu (2015) gave a brief history of examination malpractice in Nigeria; quoting Adesina (2000) who traced the history to 1914. When there was a leakage of the Cambridge examination. He added that cheating became widespread in schools, hence in 1967, the Alexander Commission was set up as a special commission of inquiry to investigate the incidences of malpractice in Nigeria. Other literature also reported that in 1977, there was a widespread leakage of the West Africa School Certificate Examination questions which prompted the government to take it as a challenge to address the issues. The social vices bedeviling the society may permit the entire segment of the educational sector to break down. The resultant consequences are: loss of family values, cultism, moral decadence and above all examination malpractice that has become evident in the education sector of the nation.

The societal emphasis on success goals, irrespective of the means of achieving the goals has pressurized some irresistible participants in the education industry to devise an unacceptable means of achieving results in connivance with the appropriate authorities. This has not only revealed the reasons for some actions, but has revealed why participants have resorted to the use of illegitimate means to achieve academic success. However, Itedjere (2006) perceived societal factors from the moral disposition of the society, he said “that it is a statement of truth that the school, like any other social institution, does not exist in a vacuum, rather it exists within a geopolitical and socio-milieu”. This attitude has created an environment predisposing some students, teachers, parents, guidance and some others to examination malpractice. Students may be involved because they want to achieve success and graduate, even though unprepared for a yielding employment, parent may get involved because they wish to wipe the shame from their faces and seek good placement of their children from the teachers, this might be a source of income to compliment the experiences of poor and inconsistent salaries, that may eventually result to compromise by representing bodies like the Nigerian Union of teachers, ASSU, NASSU etc.

Examination malpractice, takes many forms; impersonations, writing from outside the examination hall, writing on envelopes, on money and more recently, the use of mobile phones. (Denga 2003). Ashibi (2009);Anagbogu (2009) The mobile phones and other communication gadgets in a way have not only facilitated malpractice, but has revolutionized examination malpractice in the school system. Many problems have come up because of the failure in our examination bodies. The West African examinations council (WAEC) weakness brought about the National Examination council (NECO). Again the weakness of the joint admissions and Matriculation Examination Board brought about the post university matriculation Examination (UME) to further authenticate the abilities of the new intakes into the Nigerian University. But unfortunately, the examination forms might not be the problem but the people in the society who administer, score and collate these examinations.

According to Omemu (2015), in a bid to substantiate his claim on the issues of societal involvement in examination malpractice, he accused the society and students in particular as being quiescent on issues of examination malpractice. He stated thus;

“The level of knowledge and skill acquisition of students determines their involvement in examination malpractice. Majority of Nigerian students no longer consider knowledge and skills acquisition as necessary any more. The orientation they have received from their predecessors, parents and adult members of society is that of “success” without hard work. Thus, the students generally have a poor attitude toward their studies. They engage themselves in all sorts of crime, riots, secret cults and other forms of social activities and anti-social activities with little or no time devoted to serious academic pursuit. In the process, the students end up losing confidence in them as being unable to succeed through the legitimate means and hence regard examination malpractice as much easier and faster means of achieving academic success”.

The problem

The introduction of the western education and its associated benefits in the various communities in Nigeria has not only changed the Nigerian society which was driven by culture and tradition and now progressively failing with the introduction of the western Education. This is because the falling standard is linked to the fact that most other aspects of the western culture may not have been properly copied. There is seemingly a total breakdown in law and order, a situation where the teachers are confused on whether to or not indulge in punishment for fear of the unknown cannot exert physical punishment on students, as it is said Proverbs 13:24 “spear the rod and spoil the child” this may be so because of the cultural background of the western is different from the African context.

Unfortunately, today in Nigeria many students cannot read and write, not because they do not have the ability or natural intelligence to perform task but because parents, teachers and the society is saturated with belief of passing examinations without actually having the ability to do so. This may result to scenario where graduates from some universities and other institutions of higher learning in the system may not be able to comfortably raise memos for official use. Many have died as a result of involvement in examination malpractice, this occurs when students go to suburbs, seen to be difficult areas, that seem difficult for examination monitoring and supervisors to register for examinations . This ugly situation has led to a restless state that solutions to these problems are being sought for; therefore the need for more dependable approach for search of a lasting solution is an imperative.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which socio-economic factors contribute to students claim to examination malpractice among post primary school students in Cross River State, specifically the study is design to relate the proposed determinants or attributes to examination malpractice, In terms of school location, paper qualification syndrome, entry requirement into higher institutions, class size, examination supervision, students commitment, school type, cult activities, parental expectation, and home chores. To further determine the proportion of students who attribute examination malpractice to societal factors, school factors and personal factors as a basis for search of appropriate strategies to curb this ugly situation.

1.3 Research questions

1. What is the proportion of students who attribute examination practice to societal factors, school factors and personal factors?
2. To what extent do school location, paper qualification syndrome, entry requirement into higher institutions, class size, examination supervision, student’s commitment, school type,

parental expectation, and home chores affect student attribution to examination malpractice among secondary school students in Cross River State?

1.4 Statement of Hypothesis

In its null form hypothesis one states that there is no joint effect of all the predictor variables (school location, paper qualification syndrome, entry requirement into higher institutions, class size, examination supervision, students' commitment, school type, cultural activities, parental expectation, and home chores) on the criterion variable (attribution to examination malpractice) among secondary school students in Cross River State.

2.1 Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey design. The study was carried out in Cross River State, Nigeria. The strategies adopted for sampling were the stratified and accidental sampling techniques. The stratified sampling procedure was adopted in selection of the schools that participated in the study, Cross River State schools were stratified into two strata; urban and rural and equal numbers of schools were considered for each stratum. The accidental procedure was adopted in selecting participants for the study, out of the 129 secondary schools in the State; students were selected from 13 secondary schools which sum up to 10 per cent of the entire schools in the state. All students in each arm of the selected schools were randomly picked for the study, 7 of the schools were located in the urban areas while 6 schools in the rural areas. The researchers developed a 47-item scale on societal factors as a measure of student attribution to examination malpractice; the scale was divided into two sections. "Section A" sought for respondents' demography while "Section B" sought for students' attribution to examination malpractice on a 7 subscales made up of; paper qualification syndrome, entry requirement, examination supervision, students' commitment, home chores and attribution to examination malpractice on a four-point Likert-type scale. The instrument was trial tested on a sample of 100 students in Akwa Ibom state which is a neighboring State to Cross River state and its students have similar characteristics, thereafter Cronbach alpha procedure was used to determine its reliability, the r -values range from 0.72 to 0.87, measurement experts assert that instruments with reliability values that fall within this range can be used for the study. Data was collected with the aid of research assistance from each of the schools. Data was collected and inputted into the statistical package for social sciences SPSS version 18.00. The percentages analysis was used to test the research questions raised and the statement of hypothesis was addressed with Regression statistical technique. The results of the analysis is presented in tables 1-2

3.1 Data analysis and discussion

The data collected for this study was analyzed using the percentages for the research question, and regression analysis for statement of hypothesis respectively. The result of the analysis is presented according to research question and hypothesis.

First, the research question was answered by using percentages, the result of the analysis is presented in table 1

TABLE 1

Proportion of students who attribute their examination malpractice to societal factors

Examination attributes	Frequency	Percentage
Societal factors	506	48.70
School factors	331	31.90
Personal factors	201	19.40
Total	1038	100.00

Response to instrument concerning the research question show that many students believe that societal factors had greater influence in attribution to examination malpractice with 506 (48.70%) students, followed by school factors with 331(31.90%) of students and finally personal factors with 201(19.40%) respectively. This implies that the societal expectation is a very serious factor in attribution to examination malpractice in the country. In the same way, school factors contribute second to societal expectation of the attribution to examination malpractice as reported by the students and finally personally factors contribute the least attribution to examination malpractice.

Thus, the result shows that in order of magnitude, societal expectation exert the greatest pressure on the students to go into examination malpractice because they want societal approval to belong to a kind of social class like calling themselves class of graduate and the likes. However, becoming a graduate may not automatically translate into acquiring the requisite graduate skills needed for employment and hence the ever growing incidences of unemployment in the country. This maybe because we are in a country where hard work or skills is not recognized but ethnicity or tribal sentiments are the order of the day. This finding was in full agreement of the view of Itedjere (2006) who perceived societal factors from the moral disposition of the society, he stated “that it is a statement of truth that the school, like any other social institution, does not exist in a vacuum, rather it exists within a geopolitical and socio-milieu”. Also The Nigeria society is characterized by heavy emphasis on success and wealth without a corresponding legitimate means and avenues to be used in achieving success was the feeling of (Paul 2012) which agrees totally with this finding. Finally on this subject matter, Oje-Ikere (2004) concluded also that, it is seemingly a custom that everything in Nigeria today is driven by the desire for success, irrespective of the means used in achieving it.

3.2 Hypothesis testing

This hypothesis states that to what extent do school location, paper qualification syndrome, entry requirement into higher institutions, class size, examination supervision, student’s commitment, school type, parental expectation, peer influence and home chores affect student attribution to examination malpractice among secondary school students in Cross River State? The regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis at .05 level of significance. At this point students from public and private schools were used for the exercise; the result of the analysis is present in table 2.

TABLE 2A

Regression analysis of school location, paper qualification, entry requirement, class size, examination supervision, students commitment, school type, parental expectation, home chores and attribution to examination malpractice.

Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	Std. Error		
1(Constant)	13.78				19.918	.000
School location	-.040	.692	-.053	.241	-.766	.444
Paper qualification	.381	.050	.350	.565	3.173	.002
Entry requirement	-.219	.120	.283	.297	-3.276	.001
Class size	-.085	.067	.079	.707	-.521	.003
Examination supervision	.131	.049	.146	.232	2.681	.007
Student commitment	.049	.117	.045	.456	.423	.672
School type	-.775	.101	-.233	.063	-7.647	.000
Parental expectation	-.464	.060	-.225	.039	-7.697	.000
Home chores	-.109	.032	.103	.156	-3.368	.001
Attribution	.046	.032	.044	.140	1.452	.147

TABLE 2B
The ANOVA TABLE

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	437.696	10	43.770	19.644	.000 ^a
	Residual	2288.300	1027	2.128		
	Total	2725.996	1037			

a. Predictors: (Constant), School location, Paper qualification, Entry requirement, Class size, Examination supervision, Student commitment, School type, Parental expectation, Home chores

b. Dependent Variable: Attribution

The result in table—revealed that the R^2 value, the coefficient of multiple determinants of 0.401. This implies that about 40.1 percent of the variation in attribution to examination malpractice is jointly explained by school paper qualification syndrome, entry requirement, class size, examination supervision, student commitment, school type, parental expectation and home chores. This further implies that the remaining 59.9 percent of examination malpractice are caused by the factors not included in the study and represented by the error component. These factors to an extent have differently predicted examination malpractice.

The F-ratio of 19.64 which was greater than critical value of 3.14 needed for significance at .05 levels, implies that there exert a significant effect of the predictor variables and the dependent variable.

This finding corroborates with other findings on Examination malpractice, which takes many forms; impersonations, writing from outside the examination hall, writing on envelopes, on money and more recently, the use of mobile phones (Denga 2005). Ashibi (2009);Anagbogu (2009) also asserted that mobile phones and other communication gadgets in a way have not only facilitated malpractice, but has revolutionized examination malpractice in the school system.

The estimated coefficient for cause identification is positive. This means that six variables had a significant effect on attribution to examination malpractice while there was no significant effect of students' commitment. In line with this, Omemu (2015) noted that the level of knowledge and skill acquisition of students determine their involvement in examination malpractice. More importantly he added, is the feeling of inferiority complex to which any student that fails exam is subjected in school, at home and in the society at large would make the student go to any length to pass examination.

4.0 Conclusion

The concern about the menace of examination malpractice has reached a level where all educational should form a common front to compact the evil headlong. The societal orientation that places more premiums on paper qualification must put address and a new change mantra of skill acquisition during the students' schooling years must begin now to safe the country from this seeming precarious mind set. People should be judged by their skills for employment and not certificate so that students will return to the virtue of hard work which forms the tenant of skill acquisition. Educational/examination bodies must stand up to their responsibilities and make examination truly serve it purpose of assessing the process of instruction and the level of skill acquisition rather than certification of anyone who have the opportunity to attend school, as this will remove the parents from this quagmire of "do it to get your child certified or he/she will be unemployed"

5.0 Recommendations

From the results of the findings on the research question and hypothesis, the following is recommended:

1. That the societal emphasis on paper qualification instead of skill acquisition should be addressed by basing employment opportunities on skills not paper qualification.
2. Assessment of students should be handled with all level of sanctity to redeem the image of public examination in Nigeria such that only students ability would be the explanation for the performance.

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