

**STUDY SKILL DEFICIT AND PROCRASTINATION AS PREDICTORS OF
BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS EXAMINATION
MALPRACTICE
IN SOUTH EAST PUBLIC TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS.**

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Abstract

This paper investigated study skill deficit and procrastination as predictors of business education student's attitude towards examination malpractice in South East public tertiary institutions. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. Correlational research design was employed in the study. The population of the study was 1337 business education students from public tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria. A sample of six hundred and sixty-eight (668) respondents were selected from the population using stratified random sampling. Three sets of instruments titled "Questionnaire on Study Skill Deficit (QSSD), "Questionnaire on Procrastination (QP) and Questionnaire on Examination Misconduct (QEM)" were constructed by the researcher, validated by the experts and used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability co-efficient which yielded an overall coefficient of 0.83. A total of 668 questionnaires were administered to respondents through personal contact with the

help of five research assistants. At the end of the exercise, a total of 648 copies of questionnaire were successfully retrieved. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using Simple Regression Statistical method at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that study skill deficit and procrastination predict examination malpractice among business education students at moderate level of 67.6% and 68.1% respectively. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the students should learn to keep study time table so that they can put their time to better use, Lecturers/Teachers should assist the students by engaging them in meaningful activities they cannot avoid so that the problem of procrastination can be avoided, institutions should reinforce their guidance and counseling department in order to assist students with study skill deficit problem to adjust properly as programme of guidance is an integral component of the curriculum

Keywords: Study skill deficit, Procrastination, Examination misconduct and Business Education.

Introduction:

Education is regarded as a powerful instrument for social progress and a tool that maximizes creative potentials of an individual for self-realization and general development. It is a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills, and habits are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training or research. Being a major investment in human development, it plays a critical role in long term productivity and growth.

The world is currently undergoing socio-economic transformations and the strategic role of education in this regard cannot be over emphasized. Education is the only means through which the elimination of illiteracy, ignorance, unemployment, poverty and diseases can be facilitated among people (Ajuluchukwu, 2015). That is to say that education is the instrument that facilitates growth and development of any nation. Zite and Deebom (2017) maintained that education is a tool that helps the recipients to meaningfully help themselves and positively contribute to the growth and welfare of their immediate community. Obiete, et al (2015) stressed that education is the key for positive change in the society because of its far reaching effects on growth and development in all sectors of the economy. In support to this statement, Okoro (2018) stated that education is the positive teaching and learning in a school system which ensures the development of the human mind and their ability to function effectively in their society. In Nigeria, formal education is carried out at three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education.

The tertiary level of education is the highest level of education in Nigeria. The tertiary level of education is the engine room of human capital development. The world depends on her graduates from tertiary institutions to form a core part of the human capital that will stimulate sustainable economic development. In this light, the goals of tertiary education which stated that the nation's tertiary institutions shall be the cradle of national development by producing graduates who are well equipped with the prerequisite knowledge and skills to function effectively in the real world will be achieved (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, 2016). Okoro (2018) opined that tertiary education is the training received by students at colleges of education, polytechnics and universities. Business education is inclusive as part of the training. Business education programme is

an academic programme offered at the tertiary level of education in Nigeria that is geared towards empowering its recipients with teaching and business skills.

Business education courses involve more of practical and need much skill, therefore, when a student accomplishes a task, the lecturer can create opportunity for more success by encouraging the student to applaud himself or herself rather than complimenting him or her. By so doing, such student can rely on himself or herself to perform better especially in examinations rather than involving in examination misconducts.

Examination as seen by Benard (2018), is a formal test of one's knowledge or ability in a particular subject especially by means of answering questions or practical exercises. It is through examination that students are evaluated or tested to find out the quality of knowledge they have acquired within a specific period. Thus, examination could be internal, external, semester, oral, written or both. Continuous assessment scores, terminal, semester, annual or promotion examination are examples of internal examination.

The totality of purpose of examination is to evaluate the learner's aptitude. Therefore, examination is synonymous to evaluation. One of the reasons that have often caused students (business education students inclusive) to engage on the illicit behaviour of examination misconduct is the misunderstood nature of examination. Often times, persons being examined or evaluated see examination from a preconceived point of view without knowing that examination has multiple benefits. Some people have varied reasons for writing examination; some of them are for pride, to show off, to get certificate, in preparation for future employment, for fun, to punish oneself, to find out whether one is the best, to pass and be happy, among others.

In the words of Maduka (2016), he defined examination as "a way to ascertain how much of subject matter in a particular field of study, the candidate has mastered". In the same way, Balogun (2019) opined that examination is the process through which students are evaluated or tested to find out the quality of knowledge they have acquired within a specified period. It may also be seen as a formal test of somebody's knowledge or ability in a particular subject, especially by means of written questions or practical exercises. He went ahead to say that it is the action of inspecting somebody in details. Crowther (2015) also pointed out that the conduct of examination whether internal, external, oral or written is governed by various rules and regulations which are usually determined by the various bodies that conduct the examination.

Examinations forms part of evaluation in the school setting and is aimed at determining the learners' level of skill acquisition or intellectual competence and understanding after a given training. Evaluation usually enables the teacher to be effectively ready for further teaching as this form of evaluation is often regarded as a feedback. But when examination is not properly conducted, the expected feedback may give a negative result. Consequently, the result of such evaluation leads to wrong decision and judgement which affects the teacher, the learner, the entire education industry as well as the society (Duze, 2020).

A reality that cannot be ignored is that no matter how relevant education goals and school curriculum are, if no provision is made for accurate evaluation of learning progress, all these efforts will be a wasteful venture. Malpractice as defined by Hornby (2020) is a wrong or illegal behaviour exhibited by a person while discharging professional responsibilities. In the light of this, illegally obtaining of an answer to an examination question from any other source other than the brain of the examiner, is malpractice.

Malpractice is also a failure of a professional person, as a physician or a lawyer, to render proper services through reprehensible (guilty) ignorance or negligence or through criminal intent, especially when injury or loss follows. Imogie (2018) viewed malpractice as an improper or illegal examination behaviour. Malpractice is an instance of incompetence on the part of a student or professional. It is a dereliction of examination rules and conduct or a failure to exercise an ordinary degree of knowledge and skill or learning by a student which results in violation of examination regulations. It is therefore, the performance of a student that falls below the professional academic standard of school regulation.

Examination malpractice is the act of indulging in cheating in an examination through fraudulent practices to gain undue advantage over others (Igboabuchi et al 2016). This includes copying on parts of the body, desks, pieces of papers, taking textbooks and other related materials to the examination hall, bribing the examiner to expose the questions before the examination and use of mercenary (hired person). Other forms include impersonation, smuggling of answer script, mass cheating, electronically assisted misconducts, among others. Students, teachers, and parents who are desperate play various roles in examination misconducts. Lazy students (business education students inclusive) see it as an easy route to success. Consequently, they do not take their studies seriously. Teachers on their part engage and encourage it in order to obtain one form of gratification or the other. Parents on their part sponsor their children to ‘special’ examination centres where large amount of money is paid for students to cheat without inhibition.

Examination malpractice is a serious social problem which is the act of omission or commission by a person who, in anticipation of, before, during or after any examination, fraudulently secures any unfair advantage for himself or any other persons in such a manner that contravenes the rules and regulations guiding the conduct of the examination to the extent that the validity, reliability, authenticity of the examination and ultimately the integrity of the certificate issued are questioned (Olatunbosun, 2019). Examination malpractice of various forms affects the Nigerian educational system. It has eaten deep into the system and affects all levels of education with its maximum height in higher institution.

Study skill deficit can be seen as a situation when students often have difficulty with low homework completion, poor test performance and inappropriate organization and time management skills. It exists when a student has not learned how to perform a given behaviour. For example, a student who has not learned to do long division could be said to have a long division skill deficit. Study skills are an array of skills which tackle the process of organising and taking in new information, retaining information, or dealing with assessments. Study skills are discrete techniques that can be learned, usually in a short time and applied to all or most fields of study. Some examples of study skill deficits include not knowing how to make friends, being unable to carry on a conversation, or having no idea how to join an ongoing peer group. Study skill training, examination-taking skill training, other skill deficit treatments, and a combination of cognitive behavioural and skill-focused treatment approaches are all utilized to tackle the issue of examination anxiety. They are also discrete techniques that may be taught and used to all or most fields of study in a short period of time. To Ossai (2015), study skill is seen as the process through which each learner begins to concentrate, absorb and recall challenging knowledge. A student might study in a variety of methods to improve his capacity to retain information

and think critically. Effective note taking, effective time management, summarizing, and the usage of key words are some of the categories.

Other ways of learning which help the students including business education students to avoid involving themselves in examination misconduct include memorization, communication skills, flashcard training, condensing material, summarising, using keywords, acronyms and so on. Study skill deficits has predicted examination misconducts among business education students in many ways in the sense that, fear of concentration on questions in the areas not treated in class or not fully covered leads students into engaging in examination misconduct. Again, students' poor reading habits, inability to develop reading time tables and unable to discover and join an ongoing peer group discussion before and during examination periods can make a student to involve in examination misconduct during examination or test.

Procrastination can be seen as the act of unnecessarily postponing decisions or actions, to be late or slow about doing something that should be done. It is a common problem which can cause various issues like missed opportunities and increased stress. A classical example of procrastination is a student who postpones studying for an examination until the night before, despite waiting to start earlier and feeling bad about the delay. Another example is someone who has months to submit an important application, but delays until the day before the deadline despite repeatedly promising themselves that they will start earlier.

Some of the characteristics of procrastination is that it involves unnecessary delay, the delay generally leads to predictable negative outcomes. The dangers associated with procrastination includes missed opportunities, worse academic performance, worse employment and financial status, increased interpersonal conflicts, worse emotional wellbeing, worse mental health, worse physical health and a tendency to postpone getting treatment for one's problem.

Procrastination has predicted examination misconduct among business education students in tertiary institutions in different ways which include students feeling that the institution is likely to change or postpone examination date already fixed, many students put things of examination off so long that when it comes, it throws them off balance and then they resort to any means of passing the examinations. Some business education students still believes in "I will read it later, there is still time" and this cankerworm has eaten deep into the fabrics of many of them thereby making them to be confused when examination finally comes. Some other ways which procrastination predicts examination misconduct is in the way students pile up a lot of things to study altogether which affects their concentration and finally, students having poor concept and time management problems.

Statement of the Problem

Generally, education system of any nation is expected to be a wheel that spins the social, political, economic and technological development of that nation. Under normal educational system, examination remains the best test of true knowledge and experience. However, this assertion is not entirely true in the Nigerian system of education as students, parents and teachers are all involved in indulging in examination malpractice.

Despite efforts which include laws and monitoring systems put in place to curb the situation, students (business education inclusive) engagement in the menace appears to

manifest in many forms. Many business education graduates are no longer found worthy in both character and learning to possess the certificates they have because they “acquired the certificates by all means syndrome” (examination malpractice).

Records from the Registrar’s Office of Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe in Anambra State, show that between 2020 – 2022, a total number of 85 students, business education students inclusive, have engaged in examination malpractice of different forms ranging from impersonation, smuggling of foreign materials into the examination halls, sneaking out the examination scripts or question paper outside the hall and the likes.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to find out the extent study skills deficit and procrastination as predicts examination malpractice among business education students in public tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria.

Research Question I:

To what extent does study skills deficit predict examination malpractice among business education students in public tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria?

Research Question 2:

To what extent does procrastination predict examination malpractice among business education students in public tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria?

Ho 1: There is no significance relationship between study skills deficit and examination malpractice among business education students in public tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria.

Ho2: There is no significance relationship between procrastination and examination malpractice among business education students in public tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria.

Research Method

The study adopted a correlational research design because of its nature. The design was chosen because of the researcher’s interest in establishing the relationships between variables –Study skills deficit and procrastination as predicts examination misconduct among business education students in public tertiary institutions in South- East Nigeria. The study was conducted in Nigeria precisely in the five (5) states that made up the the South-East zones of Nigeria . The population of this study was 1337 which are the final year 2022/2023 Public tertiary institutions offering business education in the South East, which was obtained from the offices of Heads of Department from the thirteen (13) public tertiary institutions in the South East zone. Stratified random sampling was used to select 668 students out of the whole population of 1,337 students.

37-item questionnaire titled: Questionnaire on Study skill deficit “(QSSD)” , “Questionnaire on Procrastination (QP) and Questionnaire on Examination misconduct (QEM). was used in collecting data relevant for answering the research question. The questionnaire has two sections. Section A contains the respondents Bio-data while section B consist of items. The instruments were structured on a 4-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), and very low Extent (VLE). The scores

assigned to the scales were 4, 3, 2, and 1. The instruments were validated by three experts to determine the content and face validity; two from business education department and one expert from the department of Guidance and Counseling. These experts offered useful suggestions which helped to modify some items.

To answer the reliability of the instrument; the researchers administered the instrument on twenty (20) students in College of Education, Agbor who were not part of the target population but were considered to have similar characteristics with the colleges of education in the area of study. The data obtained from the 20 students were used to establish the internal consistency reliability using Cronbach Alpha method. The reliability co-efficient obtained from the two variables were 0.85 and 0.83 which indicated a high correlation between the responses obtained during the two periods of administration. Thus, the instrument was considered reliable for the study.

The face-to-face method was adopted in the administration of the instrument with the help of research assistants to the respondents. Six hundred and sixty-eight (668) copies of questionnaires were distributed and six hundred and forty-eight (648) were retrieved while five (20) copies were withheld. The data collected were analyzed using simple regression statistical method for the research question and the testing of null hypotheses at 0.05 significant level.

**Research Question I:
Extent Study Skills Deficits Predict Examination Malpractice among Business Education Students
Model Summary**

Variables	N	Study Skills Deficit Independent Predictor	Exam Malpractice	Remark
Study Skills Deficit	648	1.00	.676	Moderate
Exam malpractice	648	.676	1.00	

a. Predictors: (Constant), StudySkills

Table 1 showed the regression analysis of extent to which study skills deficits predict examination malpractice among business education students in tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria. The Adjusted R Square of .676 which means 67.6% indicated that 67.6% of the variation in examination malpractice among students is due to study skills deficits. The remaining 32.4% of the variation is due to other predictors that are not included in the model or other uncontrolled factors. In other words, study skills deficits can predict examination malpractice among business education students by 67.6% at a moderate level.

**Research Question 2:
Extent Procrastination Predict Examination Malpractice among Business Education Students.**

Model Summary

Variables	N	Procrastination Independent Predictor	Exam Malpractice	Remark
Procrastination	648	1.00	.681	Moderate
Exam malpractice	648	.681	1.00	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Procrastination

Table 2 showed the regression analysis of extent to which procrastination predict examination malpractice among business education students in tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria. The Adjusted R Square of .681 which means 68.1% indicated that 68.1% of the variation in examination malpractice among students is due to procrastination. The remaining 31.9% of the variation is due to other predictors that are not included in the model or other uncontrolled factors. In other words, procrastination can predict examination malpractice among business education students by 68.1% at a moderate level.

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between study skills deficits and examination malpractice among business education students in the South-East Nigeria based on institution.

Table 3
Relationship between Study Skill Deficits and Examination Malpractice Based on Institution

Predictor	R	R ²	F	P-value	Remark
Study Skills Deficit Relationship	.413	.731	529.213	-.052	*Significant

*Significant

Table 3 showed the relationship between study skills deficits and examination malpractice among business education students in the tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria based on institution. The correlation coefficient of .83 which is positive and within the range of ‘strong’ based on Creswell’s scale indicated that there is strong positive relationship between study skills deficits and examination malpractice among business education students in tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria based on institution. The p-value of .00 which is less than the alpha value of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) indicated that the relationship is significant even at 0.01 level.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between procrastination and examination malpractice among business education students in the South-East Nigeria based on age.

Table 4
Relationship between Procrastination and Examination Malpractice Based on Age

Predictor	R	R ²	F	P-value	Remark
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procrastination Relationship	.830	.391	413.630	-.041	*Significant
*Significant					

Table 4 showed the relationship between procrastination and examination malpractice among business education students in the tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria based on age. The correlation coefficient of .83 which is positive and within the range of ‘strong’ based on Creswell’s scale indicated that there is strong positive relationship between procrastination and examination malpractice among business education students in tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria based on age. The p-value of .00 which is less than the alpha value of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) indicated that the relationship is significant even at 0.01 level.

Discussion

The research question one sought to find out the extent to which Study Skills Deficits could predict examination malpractice among business education students in tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria. The result showed that Study Skills Deficits can predict examination malpractice among business education students in tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria at moderate level. The findings indicate that students have problem of concentration on questions in areas not treated in class. It found also that students’ reading habit has declined drastically while poor study habit leads students to academic failure. Due to poor preparation for examination, students have fear of examination failure. Other indicators of students’ poor study skills include non-development of reading timetables during examination periods, feeling that there is no time for them to read for examinations, difficulty in joining peer group’s discussion during examination period and frequent struggle with examination and text because of limited practice or inadequate feedback. Also during examinations, students do have domestic or family issues interference. They are also confronted with chaotic environment and surroundings during examination and test. Poor study skills have been found to be one of the impediments to academic achievement.

The corresponding hypotheses which sought to find out whether there is significant relationship between Study Skills Deficit and examination malpractice among business education students in tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria by institution, found that there is significantly strong positive relationship between Study Skills Deficit and examination malpractice among business education students in tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria based on institution. This implies that the type of institution (University/college of education) can moderate the relationship between study skills deficit and examination malpractice. This may mean that the level of study skills deficit displayed by students of business education differ by type of institution. According to Ossai (2015), study skill is seen as the process through which each learner begins to concentrate, absorb and recall challenging knowledge. Where there is deficit in students’ study skill, they resort to examination malpractice.

The research question two sought to find out the extent to which Procrastination could predict examination malpractice among business education students in tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria. The result showed that Procrastination can predict examination malpractice among business education students in tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria at a moderate level. Procrastination involves the act of unnecessarily postponing decisions or actions, to be late or slow about doing something that should be

done. Many students think that there is still time for examination which affects their study habit. It takes students long time to complete assignments that require little time. At times they feel that the institution is likely to postpone examination and they feel so bored whenever the signal for examination and test comes my way. When it comes to examination, students are unwilling to exert necessary effort. They postpone responsibility and yet are afraid of failure when it comes to examination and test. Students see themselves pile up a lot of things to study altogether which affects their concentration. They feel that sometimes, delaying a deadline may render a positive result in examination and test. Generally, students have a poor concept of time management.

The corresponding hypotheses which sought to find out whether there is significant relationship between Procrastination and examination malpractice among business education students in tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria by age, found that there is significantly strong positive relationship between Procrastination and examination malpractice among business education students in tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria based on age. There are divergent findings on the place of age in examination malpractice. For instance, Okorodudu (2018), observed that maturation of the learner and exposure to different situations is a determining factor whether the student will involve himself or herself in examination malpractice. However, it still remains open to question whether a particular age group is more prone to examination malpractice. Similarly, Olawonirejuaro and Akande (2015), observed that age counts in involvement of students in examination malpractice. Onyechere (2018),believed that older students get involved not because they do not prepare well or afraid of failure, but simply because they seem odd in a system where everyone is a potential cheater. Also Adebayo (2016) in his study found out that the older students cheat because they believe that everyone does it, and they also see it as a means of helping others.

Conclusion

Findings from the study suggest that study skills deficits and procrastination can predict examination malpractice among business education students in tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria. Among other proxies of academic anxiety, it may be concluded from the findings of the study that psychological constructs like Study skill deficit and procrastination may have negative effect on students pursuit as they are likely to motivate students to engage in all forms of examination malpractice that undermines academic standard.

Recommendation

- ❖ Students should strive to develop self-confidence in themselves through observation, modelling of behaviour appropriate to develop such skill in order to improve their self-concept
- ❖ Lecturers should assist students by engaging them in meaningful activities which they cannot avoid so that the problem of procrastination can be overcome.

- ❖ Students should learn to keep study time table individually and in group so that they can put their time to better use.
- ❖ Institutions should institute better security for their examinations so that the integrity of examination is not compromised.
- ❖ Perpetrators of examination misconduct should be made to serve punishment meted for such offense which will serve as deterrence to other who might be contemplating similar act.

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