

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND EXAMINATION
MALPRACTICES AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN PUBLIC
COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA**

PATIENCE UKAMAKA ANOZIE (Ph.D)

Department of Business Education

Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe

Phone Number: 08036263739

Email: amakapatienceanozie@gmail.com

PROF. ANTHONIA NGOZI UMEZULIKE

Department of Vocational Education

Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam

Phone Number: 07067650365/08076762629

Email:toniaumezulike@yahoo.com

CHINWE SUSSAN OGUEJIOFOR (Ph.D)

Department of Vocational Education

Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam

Phone Number: 08064345316

Email:chysussyogu@gmail.com

&

PIUS CHUKWUEMEKA UFOAROH

Department of Business Education.

Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe.

Phone Number: 08039256151

Email:piusufoaroh@gmail.com

Abstract

The common belief on certificates and the yardstick to measure one's qualification, has led many Nigerian students into buying educational certificates to prove their academic worth. Examination malpractice in Nigeria is as old as the country herself. The study determines the relationship between Self-Esteem and Examination Malpractices among business education students in Public Colleges of Education in South-East Nigeria. One research question and one null hypotheses tested at 0.05 significant level guided the study. The study adopted a correlational research design with a population of 684 students from the seven

(7) Colleges of Education in the South-East offering business education. Two sets of instrument titled “Questionnaire on Self-Esteem (QSE), and Questionnaire on Examination Malpractice (QEM)” were used for data collection. The instruments were validated by two experts from Vocational Education Department and one expert from Guidance and Counselling unit both in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbaram Campus. Trial testing was used to establish the reliability of the instrument and data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha which yielded a coefficient value of 0.85. Three hundred and forty (340) dully completed questionnaire were retrieved and used for data analysis. Simple regression statistical method was used to answer the research question and also test the null hypotheses. Findings revealed that self-esteem predicts examination malpractice at a moderate level of 34.0%. Based on the findings, it was recommended that: Institutions should introduce courses aimed at improving students’ self-concept. This could be done through introducing those courses within the existing Business education courses that will improve students’ self-concept or as part of general courses for example entrepreneurship related courses. 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 those students in meaningful activities which they cannot avoid so that the problem of procrastination can be overcome. Institutions should institute better security for their examinations so that the integrity of examination is not compromised. Culprits should be punished appropriately to serve as deterrence to others who might be contemplating similar act

Keywords: Self-Esteem, Examination, Malpractice, Business education

Introduction

Education forms the bedrock for all round development of any nation. It is a sensitive sector that needs to be handled with care because its role in the advancement and development of other sectors cannot be over-emphasized (Ogbonnaya, 2018). It has been described as an instrument per excellence for the development in a nation: indeed it is a tool used to speed up socio-economic development. Education is acquired through formal and informal means in conventional and non-conventional schools (Ajuluchukwu, 2015). In the observations of Imogie (2019), the ultimate aim of education is to bring out the best in an individual for the individual’s benefit and consequently that of the society. He continued that education by its nature is one of the foremost and most important instrument for change and development or modernization in the world today.

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 is an aspect of vocational education that equips its recipients with technical, vocational, business and entrepreneurial skills needed for the world of work. In the opinion of Emeasoba (2018), business education is a specialized phase of vocational education that prepares students to enter teaching and office occupation as capable and intelligent members of the labour force. Similarly, Njoku 2008 as cited in Obete, et al (2015), opined that the goals of business education at the tertiary level of education includes to empower students with desirable skills, knowledge and value to perform specific functions so as to become self-reliant, to help students appreciate the world around them and contribute maximally to the social and economic development of the nation, to empower students in such a way that the students will develop intellectual capability that would help them make informed decisions in all spheres of life. to help students become judicious spenders and develop proper values for the achievement of healthy living and growth of a nation, to understand the political framework of a nation so that students can contribute to the national and economic development of the nation through adequate and proper examination conduct.

Examination has been generally accepted as the best means of assessment. It is a formal test of knowledge or ability. In fact, in a school setting, examination is a means of evaluating the quality of knowledge a student has acquired within a specific period of time. Keter (2021) stated that examination is an instrument used for the assessment of individual skills and knowledge content, both in general and specific area of study. Teaching and learning of business education will become more effective when the students are subjected to an examination process to determine the extent to which they have assimilated the content of the instruction given and as well the teacher can also assess herself/himself from the performance of the students (Oguniyi,2020).

Examination remains the best tool for an objective assessment and evaluation of what learners have achieved after a period of schooling and as such any action that undermines examinations poses a great threat to the validity and reliability of examination results and certificate (Furo, 2015). Examination is the measurement of proficiency in knowledge and skills either in oral or written forms, and evaluating the adequacy of these skills possessed by candidates. On this note, Ikediashi (2017) opined that students see examination as war of survival and cheating as an effective means of winning the war because it remains the only means of obtaining certificates and the sole indices of educational growth. This implies that one can use examination to categorize students into high and low abilities. Those with high abilities are given preference above those with low abilities which of course, the low abilities would also desire. As such in a bid to demonstrate high abilities, the low ability students may be tempted to go into various kinds of vices, and one of such vices is examination malpractice.

In the Nigerian educational system, the issue of examination malpractice has become endemic. It has now become a contemporary shame because it has greatly ridiculed the products and certificate churned out (Nwadiani, 2015). In the observation of Ogunyemi and Obiorah (2020), Nigeria is now graded with reliability of half-baked graduates, low productivity and poor job performance, certificate racketeering and qualification inflation.

Although examination malpractice attracts ugly penalties in the country such as rustication, it nevertheless fails to increase in strength and sophistication (Isangedighi, 2017). The incidence of examination misconduct in Nigeria has become so widespread that there is almost no examination anywhere at all levels of the formal school system, without one form of sharp misconduct or the other. Through examination malpractices, students perpetuate corruption in the higher institutions. Many of them would not want to work hard. They would play away their time, then when it is time for examinations, they resort to cheating which comes in different ways ranging from copying from other students' answer scripts, copying from textbooks, copying from pre-written papers, seeing the question papers in advance, handing in answer sheets written in part or full by someone else outside the examination room.

Examination malpractices have threatened and of course destroyed both the educational system in Nigeria and the society at large. Once the habit of cheating is learnt from the secondary school level, it continues to the higher institutions and even when those involved have left schools. In the Nigerian educational system, the case of examination malpractice became alarming, thus the Registrar and Chief Executive Officer of National Examination Council (NECO), Dantali (2021), reported that over 20,000 students were involved in examination malpractice in the 2021 NECO examination.

Most examinations are usually marked by complaints of various forms of malpractices. In most of these examinations, cheating is a recurrent event. Ikediashi (2017), stressed that in Nigerian educational system, certificates are regarded as the sole indices of educational growth, students seeing examinations as the only means of obtaining certificate, may engage in cheating in order to pass the examination to obtain these certificates. Most of business education students are no longer serious with their studies because they believe solely in indulging in examination malpractice which to them, is short cut to success. Nowadays, students (business education students inclusive) refer to examination malpractice as "brain support" which implies that it is an act to aid one's memory in examination.

Examination malpractice include any of the following: impersonation, leakage, swapping of scripts, smuggling of answer scripts into examination halls, dubbing (direct copying of answers to questions and taking into examination rooms), results/certificates forgery and verbal or physical assault on examination administrators. It may also include mass cheating of students or a form of malpractice called "sorting" which involves alteration of examination grades with the use of money (Janet & Maureen, 2019). Ayanniyi and Anya (2017), in their own part identified forms of examination malpractice to include impersonation, question paper leaking, aiding of students by lecturers, collusion among students, use of unauthorized materials in the examination hall, giraffe, expo, among others.

Self-Esteem as one of the components of self-concept is the value one places upon oneself. It is the value one places upon oneself. An individual's level of self-esteem is dependent on the way one evaluates oneself. Those evaluations incorporate personal comparisons to others as well as others' responses to one another. When one compares oneself to others and finds that one is better at something than others and/or that people respond favourably to what one does, one's self esteem in that area grows. On the other hand, when one compares oneself to others and finds out that one is not as successful in a given area and/or people respond negatively to what one does, one's self esteem decreases.

One can have high self-esteem in some areas (“I am a good student”) while simultaneously having negative self-esteem in others (“I am not well liked”).

Self-esteem has positive correlation with students’ attitude towards examination malpractice. It is important to note that poor self-evaluation could lead one to having wrong belief that one will not be able to perform well in perceived or adjudged difficult tasks such as examination and consequently, might lead one to develop test anxiety. Accordingly, a student’s belief in his or her inability to carry out tasks required for high performance could be closely linked to cheating in examinations. Thus, the researcher defines the self-esteem as the ability of an individual to deal with different challenges in life. The way students evaluate their self-efficacy and self-esteem could determine their attitude towards examination misconduct. Self-esteem relates to examination malpractices among business education students in the tertiary institutions in South-East in different ways: it makes students lack confidence in themselves, it gives students the feeling of belonging with other mates in the class because it is an important factor to students at the tertiary level and is easily affected by peer influence and or peer acceptance (Uslu, 2013).

Statement of the Problem:

The undue quest for possession of certificates has made examination malpractice the order of the day in South-East tertiary institutions and Nigeria in general. The alarming increase and persistence of this cankerworm in internal and external examinations in Nigeria remains worrisome to all stakeholders in the system of education. 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). It is a cankerworm that poses a great threat to authenticity of educational qualifications. It is a major challenge to stakeholders such as examination bodies, the government, school administrators, parents as well as the students themselves.

Some business education students have become addicted to examination malpractice. Hence, the effect of this negative attitude is that such students continue to lose faith and confidence in their capability and by extension develop low esteem and self-efficacy. These days, the situation seems to be that majority of the students in the tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria (business education students inclusive), irrespective of age, gender, family background and school location indulge in one form of examination misconduct or the other. This could imply that the business education students seem to lack the virtue and value of hard work in terms of study. In this paper therefore, the researcher intends to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and examination malpractices among business education students in Colleges of Education in South-East Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study:

The main purpose of this study was to find out extent to which self-esteem relates with examination malpractices among business education students in Public Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria.

Research Question:

To what extent does self-esteem relate with examination malpractices among business education students in Public Colleges of Education in South-East, Nigeria?

Null Hypotheses

Ho1: there is no significant relationship between self-esteem and examination malpractices among business education students in public Colleges of Education 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 – self-esteem and examination malpractices among business education students in public Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria.

The study was conducted in Nigeria precisely in the five (5) states that made up the geo-political zones in the South-East namely: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo State. The population of this study was 684 which comprises of final year 2022/2023 in all the Public Colleges of Education offering business education in the South East, which was obtained from the offices of Heads of Department from the seven (7) public Colleges of Education in the South East zone. Stratified random sampling was used to select 340 students out of the whole population of 684 students.

13-item questionnaire titled: Questionnaire on Self-Esteem (QSE) and 10-item Questionnaire on Examination Malpractice (QEM) were 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 consisted 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 Counselling. These experts offered useful suggestions which helped to modify some items.

To answer the reliability of the instrument; the researcher 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 was 0.85 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 four research assistants to the respondents. Three hundred and forty five (345) copies of questionnaires were distributed and three hundred and forty (340) were retrieved

while five (5) 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.

Table 1: Extent Self-Esteem Predicts Examination Malpractices among Business Education students in Public Colleges of Education South-East Nigeria.

Variables	N	Self Esteem Independent Predictor	Examination Malpractices	Remark
Self Esteem	345	1.00	340	Moderate
Examination Malpractice	345	340	1.00	

Table I showed the regression analysis of extent to which Self-Esteem Predicts Examination Malpractices among Business Education students in Public Colleges of Education South-East Nigeria. The Adjusted R. Square of 345 which is 34.08. indicated that 34.0% of the variation in examination malpractices among students is due to self-esteem. The remaining 5.0% of the variation is due to other predictors that are not included in the model for other uncontrolled factors. In other words, self-esteem can predict examination malpractice among business education students by 34.0% at moderate level.

Table 2: There is no significant relationship between self esteem and examination malpractice among business education students in college of education in south-East Nigeria based on age

Predictor	R	R²	F	P-Value	Remark
self esteem relationship	799	.391	610.143	-.141	significant

Table 2 showed the relationship between self esteem and examination malpractice among business education students in Colleges of Education in South-East Nigeria based on age. The coorelation coefficient of 0.80 which is positive and within the range of “moderate” based on Creswell’s scale indicated that there is moderate relationship between self-esteem and examination malpractice among business education students in public Colleges of Education in South-East Nigeria based on age. The P-Value of 0.00 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 sought to determine whether self-esteem would predict examination malpractice among business education students in public colleges of education in South East Nigeria. The result showed that self-esteem can predict examination malpractice among business education students at moderate level. Students resort to cheating in examination because they want to graduate with their mates. Most of them believe that only people who cheat have high scores in internal and external examination and saw cheating as being alright for difficult courses with large failure rate.

Self-esteem makes them to feel that they can be of equal position with others. It also makes them to feel that they are inclined to failure and subsequently engage in examination malpractice. The finding of the study agreed with Nnorom, et al(2020) who carried out a study on causes of examination malpractice among secondary school students in Okigwe zone in Imo State and found low self-esteem as major cause. Similarly, Udebuana, et al (2021) investigated self-efficacy and self-esteem as predictors of students' attitude towards examination misconduct in Anambra state secondary schools and revealed that self-efficacy and self-esteem are moderate negative predictor of examination misconduct among secondary school students such that a unit increase in self efficacy and self-esteem will lead to decrease in examination misconduct. Also that self-efficacy and self-esteem predict examination misconduct among the secondary school students.

The corresponding hypotheses found that there is strong positive relationship between self-esteem and examination malpractice based on age. It appears therefore that age may moderate the relationship between self-esteem and examination malpractice although the direction is not known.

Conclusion

Business education is a skill-based programme and therefore needs to be effectively implemented in order to meet its slated goals. Examination remains the best tool for an objective assessment and evaluation of what learners have achieved after a period of schooling and as such any action that undermines examinations poses a great threat to the validity and reliability of examination results and certificate. The findings from the study suggested that among other proxies of self-concept, self-esteem could best predict examination malpractice among the College of Education students

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions made from the study, the following recommendations were made:

- Institutions should introduce courses aimed at improving students' self-concept. This could be done through introducing them within the existing Business education courses that will improve students' self-concept or as part of general courses for example entrepreneurship related courses.
- 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.
- Teachers should assist students by engaging them in meaningful activities which they cannot avoid so that the problem of procrastination can be overcome.
- Institutions should institute better security for their examinations so that the integrity of examination is not compromised. Culprits should be punished appropriately to serve as deterrence to others who might be contemplating similar act

References

- Ajuluchukwu,E.N,(2015). *Business Education; A missing link in the primary level of Education in Nigeria*. Education summit at University of Calabar,from 2nd-5th September,2015.
- Eneasoba, N.C. (2018). Improving Business Education programmes through effective school-Industry partnership for students' capacity building in Rivers State. *Nigerian Journal of Business Education*, 4(1),292-298.
- Dantali,F.B.(2021) .Examination Malpractice; A cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of education system. *Daily Times Newspaper, October 2021,pp 25-35*.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN (2016). Education for sustainable development. *Daily Times Newspaper*.
- Janet, S. P. &Maureen,O.O. (2019). Students' Perception of the Causes and Effects of Examination Malpractice in the Nigerian Educational System: the way forward for Quality education, *Procedia- Social and Behaviourial Sciences*,114(201),125-129.
- Isangedighi, M. E. (2017). Children achievement related expectancies and sex. *Journal of Education Psychology*, 72(6), 81-86.
- Nnorom, S.U., Anyanwu,J.A and Ezenwagu,S.(2020). The effects of examination anxiety on academic performance of secondary school students in Okigwe zone in Imo State. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, 9(5).DOI:10.24940/WIRD/2020.
- Ogunyemi, P.O. & Obiora,G.C.(2020). Predictors of Cheating among early adolescents: Academic and Social Motivations. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*. 2(10),10-24.
- Ikediashi, A. (2017). Self-concept and academic achievement of delinquent and non-delinquent students in Imo state, Nigeria, *An International Multi-Disciplinary Journal, Ethiopia*, 4(3a), 156-170.
- Imogie, D. (2018). Examination Malpractice rocks Zamfara State. *The Punch Newspaper*, 17(19), 166-189.
- Furo, P.T. (2015). Students' perception of examination in Rivers State University of Education Port Harcourt, *American Journal of Scientific and Industrial Research*, 6(1),5-11.
- Keter,C.S.(2021). *Phenomenal self-concept, anxiety and academic performance*. Dissertation Abstract,University of Ibadan
- Udebuana,M.C. and Onwugbufor,E.E.(2021).Self efficacy and Self-esteem as predictors of students attitude towards examination misconducts in Anambra State secondary schools. *Journal of Educational Research and Development(Educational Foundations Department,COOU)*, 4(2),21-32.