



Peer Influence and Self-Concept Correlate of Examination Malpractice Proneness Among Senior Secondary School Students in Oyo East Local Government

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Abstract

Development of any society is tantamount to issues that extend to educational inequality prevalent in society. It is therefore believed that most students that engage in examination malpractice do this as a result of poor self-concept and some as a result of peer pressure. Hence, this study examined self-concept and peer pressure as correlates of examination malpractices proneness among senior secondary school students in Oyo East Local Government. The study adopted a survey research design or correlational type was used in carrying out the study. The population for this study, comprised all senior secondary school students in Oyo East Local Government of Oyo State, Nigeria wherein, two hundred (200) senior secondary school students were randomly selected for the study. The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive statistic. Pearson product-moment correlation statistic was used to analyze the research questions. The results of the research showed that there was a positive significant relationship between the rate of examination malpractices and peer influence ($r=.803^{**}$, $N=100$, $p<.01$), there was a positive significant relationship between the rate of examination malpractices and self-concept ($r=.820^{**}$, $N=100$, $P<.01$), and was positive significant relationship between examination malpractice and peer influence and self-concept ($r=.558^{**}$, $N=100$, $P<.01$). It was therefore concluded that decadence experienced among students today can be associated to the rise in examination malpractices globally and as such, examination malpractices among secondary school teachers were as a result of the poor self-concept of students and negative peer influence. It was recommended among others that Counselling services should be organized frequently.

Keyword: Peer influence, Self-concept and Examination malpractices

Introduction

The extent of development in any country depends on the level of education of citizenry. A country that provides for her citizens by means of standard education tends to reap buoyancy in production and development in every sphere. The provision of adequate materials, information, personnel and environment will promote the level at which students achieve academically. It is important however to note that the more academically stable citizens are, the more likely such nation develop. It is unarguably still to state that education is the only avenue for which sustainable development can be achieved. In essence, providing for the needs of students in every level of education tends to reduce the waste rate among such students. In Nigeria, the level of education standards seems deteriorating daily. The outcome of which brings about low standard among other countries of the world, poor perception about such standards among citizens and above all, low turnout in school works. That is, the rate of repetition of classes by

students, failure and eventual dropout begin to rise (Oredein, 2016).

The development of a society can be judged by measuring the issues that extend educational inequality prevalent in society. The prevalence of unequal distribution of education in male and female students hinders the development at every stage of a nation. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2012) reported that the dropout rate is higher for girls in 49 countries compared to boys. Thus, when dropout rate varies by gender and if girls tend to drop out earlier compared to boys, it manifests that there are some unique factors contributing to the increase in the dropout rate, particularly for girls. In other words, there are some factors which extensively contribute to an increase in girls' dropout though those factors also impact dropout rate for boys. The reasons why students dropout in schools can be attributed to four clusters which includes the school related, job-related, family-related, and community-related.



The western knowledge acquisition system or formal education is measured on certificates. Yet, certificate is not a full proof of knowledge retention. Before certificate is awarded, the students have to be assessed or examined in the field they have been trained. Nnam and Inah (2015) notes that the examination is a yardstick against which students or candidates' competence and progress are formally measured and appraised in the education sector. According to Emaikwu (2012), examination as part of evaluation in education is aimed at determining a learner's 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 forms feedback. George and Ukpong (2013) opines that examination is the most common tool around which the entire system of education revolves, it is the instrument used to decide who is permitted to move to the next academic level. Malik and Shah (1998) cited in Akaranga and Ongong (2013) observed that examination is not only a process of assessing the progress of students but, it also motivates and helps them to know their academic strengths and weaknesses apart from providing teachers with opportunities to try new methods of teaching. But when examination is not properly conducted, the expected feedback may not result. Hence, the result of such evaluation leads to wrong decision and judgement which affect the teacher, the learner, the entire education industry, as well as the society (Ojonemi & Mathar 2013). Whenever there is examination irregularity or malpractice, the validity and resulting outcome is questionable.

The common belief on certificates as the only yardstick to measure ones qualification has led many Nigerians into buying educational certificates to prove their academic worth. Examination malpractice in Nigeria is as old as the country herself. According to Anzene, (2014), examination malpractice was first reported in Nigeria in the year 1914, when the question papers of the Senior Cambridge Local Examinations were reportedly seen by candidates before the scheduled date of the examination. The Examination Malpractice Act (1999) of Nigeria according to Eremie and Ibifari (2018), was of the opinion that examination malpractice is any act of omission or commission by a person who in anticipation of, before, during or after any examination fraudulently secure any unfair advantage for himself or any other person in such a manner that contravenes the rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the

validity, reliability, authenticity of the examination and ultimately the integrity of the certificates issued. There is no doubt therefore that examination malpractice is commonly seen as a means of wrong doing which is not in conformity with the set standard by authority or such actions that negate generally accepted rules (Akaranga & Ongong, 2013). This might have been the reason why Jimoh (2019) remarked that examination malpractice is the irregularities committed by students, parents, school authorities or the examiners. Onuka & Durowoju (2013) observed therefore that examination malpractice is dishonest or unauthorized action or deeds committed by student, guardians, parents, teachers, school authorities, the examiners supervisors, invigilators, security officers and/or anybody or group of people before, during or after examination in order to obtain undeserved marks or grades.

The mission for examination malpractice is to receive unmerited grades which could place the students above others who might have acted according to the set rules by examiners or authorities. Again, it may be committed by not only the candidates but also by other bodies charged with the responsibilities of examination management. Undoubtedly, examination malpractice could be seen as social problem. The rate and manner at which it is been perpetrated nowadays therefore calls for drastic actions. The rate of this crime has become so widespread that there is virtually no examination anywhere at all levels and outside the formal school system that there is no one form of illegal practice or another, (Nnam & Inah, 2015). Examination malpractices are common everywhere and every examination season witnesses the emergence of new and ingenious ways of cheating, (Nnam & Inah, 2015; Anzene, 2014; Ojonemi et al., 2013; Jimoh, 2009). There is no doubt that many factors are responsible for examination malpractices among students among which are self-concept, self-esteem, absenteeism, peer influence among others.

Self-concept can be perceived as the mental and conceptual understanding related to a persistent regard that sentient being hold for own existence. Self-concept and self-consciousness most times used simultaneously however, with clear difference. Self-consciousness is awareness or pre-occupation with one's self whereas, self-concept is the vehicle of our symbolic behavior about what we think, understand, reason and judge up to which great extent, that is ., it is controlled by our own concepts. It is therefore, regarded as the most vital tool of our thoughts and



expressions. For example: the child's mental and social development is very much influenced and controlled by the adequacy or non-adequacy of his concepts about things, persons, events and phenomena. His or her concepts bring economy to his thinking, reasoning and problem-solving behavior and help him much in acquiring knowledge and skill with ease (Jai Mala, 2005). Hence, self-concept has become an important subject in Psychology because of its influence on behavior. The self-concept of male and female may differ considerably and has direct relation with their behavior. Similarly, the self-concept of fresh and final-year students of secondary may influence their disposition towards examination malpractices.

Apart from the self-concept of students which could influence their disposition towards examination malpractice is peer influence. It is believed that children's experience with peers constitute an important developmental context for children and adolescents (Ryan, 2000 as cited by Sitompul, 2018). There is no doubt therefore that friends play a significant role in influencing students' school adjustment, attitudes, and behaviors. Peer influence in schools has been around for as long as anyone can remember: various studies indicate that peer groups are formed in order to provide support, information and guidance to one another. In boarding schools, peers spend a significant amount of time together, socializing and learning from each other (Eremie & Ibifari, 2018); these interactions provide opportunities for peer pressure to take place. Mugove (2017) asserted that when adolescents are left in boarding schools, it is the hope of parents that the school authorities take over the roles of parents as active parents to ensure that all peer interactions are done in the spirit of collegiality. Carlisle and Rofes (2007) therefore observed that immediately any adolescent leaves his or her environment to another environment, the level of complexity changes and as such, adapt to the new environment at the expense of training received earlier.

Students often associated with peer with related behaviours. This is to say that a negative attitude or behaviour can be influenced by a negative behaviour otherwise referred to as peer pressure. According to Wesarat, Sharif and Majid (2016), peer pressure is the influence exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change their attitudes and values in order to conform to group norms. Ryan (2000) in Sitompul (2018) described peer pressure as a situation where people of one's own age encourage or urge the person

to do something or to keep from doing something with less of their consent. According to Burns and Darling (2002) as cited in Srivastava (2019), the more subtle form of peer pressure is known as peer influence as it involves changing one's behaviour to meet the perceived expectations of others. Other studies argued that participating in peer group activities is a primary stage of development because adolescents' identities are often closely associated with that of their peers. Many factors have been considered to influence the dispositions of secondary school students towards examination malpractices. However, the study tends to examine the influence of self-concept and peer influence on the examination malpractices proneness among secondary school students.

Statement of the Problem

Numerous factors are associated to student-behaviour which includes the social behavior and outcomes which can be felt on the academic achievement in secondary schools. Therefore, there is need to look into peer group relationships and individual approaches to learning, membership of peer group affiliations and self-concept. Peer group influences and self-concept are a distinct class of influences arising from social interactions, which encompasses different types of behaviours that involve interdependency with the behaviour or characteristics of others. The estimation of peer influence and self-concept in school on a continental perspective has received intense attention in recent years and literature reflects the difficulty it has in defining the disposition of students towards examination malpractices. Therefore, given the nature of peer group influences that have been observed in recent time, this study seeks to evaluate the extent to which self-concept and peers influence examination malpractices among secondary school students in Oyo metropolis.

Objectives of the Study

Generally, the objective of the study is to examine self-concept and peers influence as determinants of examination malpractices proneness among secondary school students in Oyo East Local Government.

However, specifically, the study will

- i. Investigate the category of gender involving in examination malpractices in secondary schools
- ii. Determine relationship between peer influence and examination malpractices among school students



- iii. Determine the relationship between self-concept and examination malpractices among school students.
- iv. Investigate the joint relationship between self-concept, peer influence and examination malpractices proneness among secondary school students

Research Questions

The following questions will be used to guide the course of the study

1. Are there discrepancies in the male and female involve in examination malpractices in secondary schools?
2. What are the results of peer influence on the disposition of secondary school students towards examination malpractices?
3. What is the level of malpractices among genders?
4. Are there correlations between self-concept and peer influences on the disposition of secondary school students towards examination malpractices?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses will be tested as 0.05 level of significance

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between peer influence and examination malpractices proneness among secondary school students in Oyo East

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between self-concept and examination malpractices proneness among secondary school students in Oyo East

Ho3: There is no significant joint relationship between influence of peer influence and self-concept on examination malpractices proneness among secondary school students in Oyo East

Methods

Survey research of correlational type design was used in carrying out the study. This design was used in order to find out the contribution of the variable of

interest to the dependent variables in this study. The population for this study comprised all secondary school students in Oyo metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria. The sample for this study comprised two hundred (200) Senior Secondary Schools students Oyo East Local Government area of Oyo metropolis. Random sampling technique was used to select the participants. The instruments used in this study were the academic records of students and school register. However, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) was used to collect data from the respondents. The instrument was designed by Rosenberg to examine the level of self-esteem of individuals; it is a ten-item scale of Likert. The instrument was validated and has alpha coefficient of 0.87. The peer influence of students against examination malpractices was collected using the Peer Pressure Questionnaire-Revised (PPQ-R) by SunilSaini and Sandeep Singh. The original instrument was used to examine the peer pressure of individuals especially students in high schools, on the social maladjustments. However, the instrument was adopted for the present study to to examine peer pressure on academic malpractices, hence, the test-retest alpha coefficient was 0.77. The researcher personally visited the schools used in the study. With permission from Principals in all the schools, the researcher approached the class teachers in order to collect their students' academic records. Furthermore, the researcher later proceeded to the school registrar for the attendance of students. The instruments were administered on the respondents when it has been explained in detail. However, the researcher allowed the respondents to carefully and dutifully give responses to the research instrument. At completion, the researcher retrieved the instruments from the respondents. The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive statistics such as frequency count and simple percentage and inferential statistics. Pearson product-moment correlation statistic was used to analyze the research questions.

Results

Result showing the significant influence of peer influence on examination malpractices proneness among secondary school students in Oyo Metropolis

Variable	Mean	SD	N	R	P	Remark
Rate of malpractices	12.1000	7.5338				
Peer influence	26.4000	14.1114	100	.803**	.000	Sig.

**Sig. at .01 level, *Sig. at .05 level

It is shown in the table that there was a positive significant relationship between the rate of examination malpractices and peer influence ($r(100) = .803^{**}$, $p < .01$). It is noted that peer influence had

negative relationship with the rate at which such students indulged in examination malpractices. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not accepted

Result showing the significant influence of self-concept on examination malpractices proneness among secondary school students in Oyo Metropolis

Variable	Mean	SD.	N	R	P	Remark
Rate of malpractices	12.1000	7.5338	100	.820**	.000	Sig.
Self-concept	16.3800	8.9508				

**Sig. at .01 level, *Sig. at .05 level

It is shown in the table that there was a positive significant relationship between the rate of examination malpractices and self-concept ($r(100) = .820^{**}$, $p < .01$). It is noted that the self-concept had a

negative influence on the rate of examination malpractices in the study. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not accepted

Result showing the significant combine influence of peer influence and self-concept on examination malpractices proneness among secondary school

Variable	Mean	SD	N	R	P	Remark
Malpractice	12.1000	7.5338	100	.558**	.000	Sig.
Combine influence	16.2100	5.8694				

**Sig. at .01 level, *Sig. at .05 level

It is shown in the table that there was positive significant relationship between examination malpractice and peer influence and self-concept ($r = .558^{**}$, $N = 100$, $p < .01$). Hence, it can be deduced that the combination of peer influence and self-concept negatively have impact on the rate of examination malpractices among students in secondary schools. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not accepted

because the analysis shown a negative significant relationship between peer influence and self-concept on level of examination malpractices among students. This negates the findings Pefersen (2013) that stated that stress affects the level of examination malpractices rather than internal factors. The result is also at variance with the submission of Fergusson and Woodward (2012) that depression and stress are associated with poorer educational outcomes; hence, the resultant of examination malpractices.

Discussion

The results in the study show that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variables was significant. This is in support of Ohannersian (2019) that submitted that examination malpractice is as a result of different personal and interpersonal factors such as the self-concept and peer influence. This implies that peer influence is one of the cogent factor that determines the level of malpractices among secondary school students..

There is also relative contribution of independent variable to the dependent variable as shown in the study. This however negates the study Serligmen and Wuyek (2017) who found out that determinations of students contribute to the rise of examination malpractices in school rather that the external influence. Hypothesis one and two were not accepted

Conclusion

This study was carried out to investigate self-concept and peer influence as determinants of examination malpractices proneness among secondary school students in Oyo East Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria. The economic cycle has its influence on school dropout. At risk students are more likely to drop out of school in times of an economic revival in response to the increased availability of (temporary) job market opportunities which can be traceable to the rise in level of examination malpractices among students. There is no doubt, the decadence experienced among students today can be associated with the rise in examination malpractices globally. In conclusion therefore, examination malpractices among secondary



school teachers were as a result of the poor self-concept of students and negative peer influence.

Recommendations

From the foregoing, the following recommendations are important of mentions.

1. Counselling services should be organized frequently in order to redirect the poor self-concept of students against social vices such as examination malpractices.
2. The laydown punishment for examination malpractices should be followed to the latter as this will go a long way to curb the incidence in the rise of examination malpractices
3. Regular supplies of the educational material should be made in order to motivate students towards studying rather than indulging in examination malpractices.
4. School counselors must be up and doing in discharging their duties with possibility of organizing group counselling services for school students.

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