
PSYCHO-SOCIAL VARIABLES OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE TENDENCIES AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CALABAR EDUCATION ZONE, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *This study examined psycho-social variables of examination malpractice tendencies among secondary students in Calabar education zone of Cross River State. Relevant literature was reviewed to enhance the work and for better understanding. A sample of 520 students was used for the study. Two research questions were posed and 2 hypotheses formulated to guide the study. Ex-post facto design was adopted. Psycho-social variables of Examination Malpractice Tendencies Questionnaire (PVEMTQ) was used to gather data for the study. With stratified random sampling technique, 520 students were selected from 23 secondary schools, using proportionate selection technique. Data gathered were analyzed with one-way Analysis of variance (ANOVA). All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance from the analysis it was revealed that students attitude to school, student test anxiety do not significantly influence students examination malpractice tendencies. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that, principal should explore other means of assessment of the students for development of better attitude to school, by giving them open test, assignment. Principal should organize educational programmes on examination stress management, to assist students in coping with test anxiety. Principal should build self-confidence on examinees prior to the period of examination, to help reduced malpractice tendencies.*

KEYWORDS: psycho-social variables, examination malpractice, senior secondary school students, Calabar education zone, Cross River State, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

One of the means to determine the success of teaching and learning process is through test or examination. It is a formal test of knowledge acquired during the teaching-learning interaction. In our contemporary society, children no longer devote time to study, this has led to various irregularities adopted by them, before, during and after test or examination. Joshua (2012) defines test as an instrument for systematic measure of a sample of behavior. He further defines it as a useful tool for determining who qualifies for a particular job during recruitment or furtherance of study. He identifies the purpose for testing to include; selection, placement, prediction, proficiency and ranking no wonder the desperation to pass at all cost.

Thus, the desperate attempt to pass a test or examination through illegitimate means among learners has paved way to different cases of examination malpractice tendencies within the

educational system. Examination Malpractice (EM) is a major challenge confronting the Nigerian education system in this twenty first century. Examination malpractice (EM) is any act by students, invigilators, examiners, lecturers etc that contravenes the ethics of examination and results in a dearth of credibility of any assessment. The federal Ministry of Education (2007) define examination malpractice as any act of omission or commission which compromises the reliability and integrity of any assessment or evaluation system. The consequences of examination malpractice are grave. In the first instance, EM has the potential of destroying the future of Nigeria as a deadly education cancer and a nation with as useless deflated certificated of excellence. Again, it makes it impossible to use the result of test and examination to determine the level of skills and competences of candidates, and of course education without character and learning. Issue of examination malpractice tendencies cannot be without underlying causes. Thus, reasons for learners' examination malpractice tendencies may either be positive or negative. Some of such determining factors may include, test anxiety, students attitude to learning, inadequate preparation. Examination malpractice tendencies may be defined as unpleasant method used or adopted by a learner to succeed in an examination, either copying from text or note books, using internet, giraffing, exchanging answer booklets or throwing cribs to one another, sorting after examination etc. Sulayman (2008), defines examination malpractice tendency as a situation in which candidates from examination are given unfair advantage, before, during or after the examination for cheap success.

It is very unfortunate that these malpractice tendencies have no restriction. Even at the secondary school level, examination malpractice tendencies have been taking place (Olufu, 2010). Thus, this study seeks to ascertain the extent to which factors, such as attitude to learning and test anxiety influence the tendency to engage in examination malpractice among secondary school students. This study is anchored on Bandura's social learning theory, propounded in 1965. This theory states that children learn by merely observing the behavior of their social models even though they have never attempted the responses or have witnessed or received any reinforcement for whatever stimulated the situation or behavior. The implication of this theory to this study is that, pupils are products of the society they live in. they observe their peer, parents, siblings and particularly teachers who teach them and consider them as models and as such initiate their behaviour or responses to situations, such as elections, examination etc.

The concern of this study was to examine the psycho-social variables of secondary school students' attitude to learning, test anxiety and examination malpractice tendencies in Calabar education zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study was prompted by the current trend where secondary school graduans are unable to prove that learning ever took place in them, especially, when exposed to post-secondary school cognitive assignments. Certificates at this level have become questionable. What has gone wrong? The attempt to provide answer to the above question has given rise to this research.

The study was carried out to;

- i. Determine the extent to which secondary school student's attitude to learning influence examination malpractice tendencies.
- ii. Ascertain how secondary school students test anxiety influences examination malpractice tendencies.

The following research questions were posed to direct the study

- i. To what extent does secondary school students attitude to learning influence their examination malpractice tendencies.
- ii. To what extent does test anxiety influence secondary school students examination malpractice tendencies. To provide a guide for this study, two hypotheses were formulated based on the research questions posed. These are:
 - i. Secondary school students attitude to learning does not significantly influence their examination malpractice tendencies.
 - ii. Test anxiety does not significantly influence secondary school students examination malpractice tendencies

METHODOLOGY

The ex-post-facto design was adopted for the study and the study, area – Calabar education Zone of Cross River State Nigeria. The population of this study comprised all SS III students of public secondary school in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. In selecting the subjects for the study, the stratified and proportionate random sampling techniques were adopted. The research or stratified the schools on the basis of Local Government Areas within the education zone. There are 345 public secondary schools in Calabar education Zone and using proportionate and stratified sampling procedures 23 schools, from 345 public secondary schools in the zone were selected and a sample size of 520 students of SS III from a population of 3,041 students (17.1%) was obtained. See table 2

Table 2:
Sample distribution by area/stratum, schools and percentages
Frequency table

Variable schools/LGA	Respondents	M	F	Total	Percentage
1.00	5	2	3		1.0
2.00	3	2	1		0.6
3.00	3	1	2	11	0.6
4.00	104	66	38		20.0
5.00	20	5	15		3.8
6.00	18	10	8		3.5
7.00	18	10	8		3.5
8.00	32	17	15		6.0
9.00	17	9	8	209	3.3
10.00	2	1	1		0.4
11.00	8	3	5	10	1.5
12.00	5	3	2		1.0
13.00	3	1	2		0.6
14.00	3	1	2		0.6
15.00	2	1	1	13	0.4
16.00	16	6	10		3.1
17.00	85	47	38		16.3
18.00	14	8	6		2.7
19.00	78	35	43		15.0
20.00	64	24	40	257	12.5
21.00	9	4	5		1.7
22.00	6	4	2		1.2
23.00	5	2	3	20	1.0
Total	520	262	258		100.0

Source: (Field Survey, 2019)

A researcher self-made instrument (questionnaire) was used in generating data for the study. It was titled Psycho-social variables s of Examination Malpractice Tendencies Questionnaire (DEMTQ). To establish the internal consistency of the research instrument, Cronbach reliability technique alongside the Split half coefficient estimate using SPSS computer windows 20 were used. The co efficient alpha ranged between 0.599 to 0.833. These were all higher than the asserted 0.49 estimate as provided by Nunally.

Table 3**Cronbach reliability estimate of the study instrument (N=20)**

Variables	No of Items			X	Sd	$\sum s^2$
Cronbach alpha attitude to learning	5	1 st	15.167	1.572	1.1209	0.682
		2 nd	15.233	3.130	4.2714	0.705
Test Anxiety	5	1 st	15.033	0.598	0.711	0.599
		2 nd	15.500	3.011	3.147	0.816
Exam. Malp tendencies	10	1 st	26.267	1.973	2.559	0.833
		2 nd	28.800	10.803	33.097	0.796

RESULTS

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: Students attitude to school does not significantly influence their examination malpractice tendencies. See table 4.

Table 4:

One-way Analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the influence of attitude to school on pupil's examination malpractice tendencies N=520

	N	\bar{X}	SD		St.Error
Low Attitude	83	28.7349	9.82913		1.07889
Average	367	28.9891	9.88872		0.51619
High Attitude	70	20.4143	8.97257		1.07243
Total	520	28.8712	9.74515		0.42735
Sources of variability	SS	Df	MS	F-cal	Sig.
Between groups	21.257	2	10.628		
				0.112	0.894
Within Groups	49267.111	517	95.294		
Total	49288.367	519			

Result not significance at alpha level. 05; df = 2 and 517, critical F = 3.002

From Table 4, the calculated F-value of 0.112 was found to be lower than the critical F-value of 3.002 needed for significance at 0.05 alpha level with 2 and 517 degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis was upheld. This means that secondary school students attitude to bearing does not significantly influence their examination malpractice tendencies. The profile plot of sub-group means was presented in figure 1.

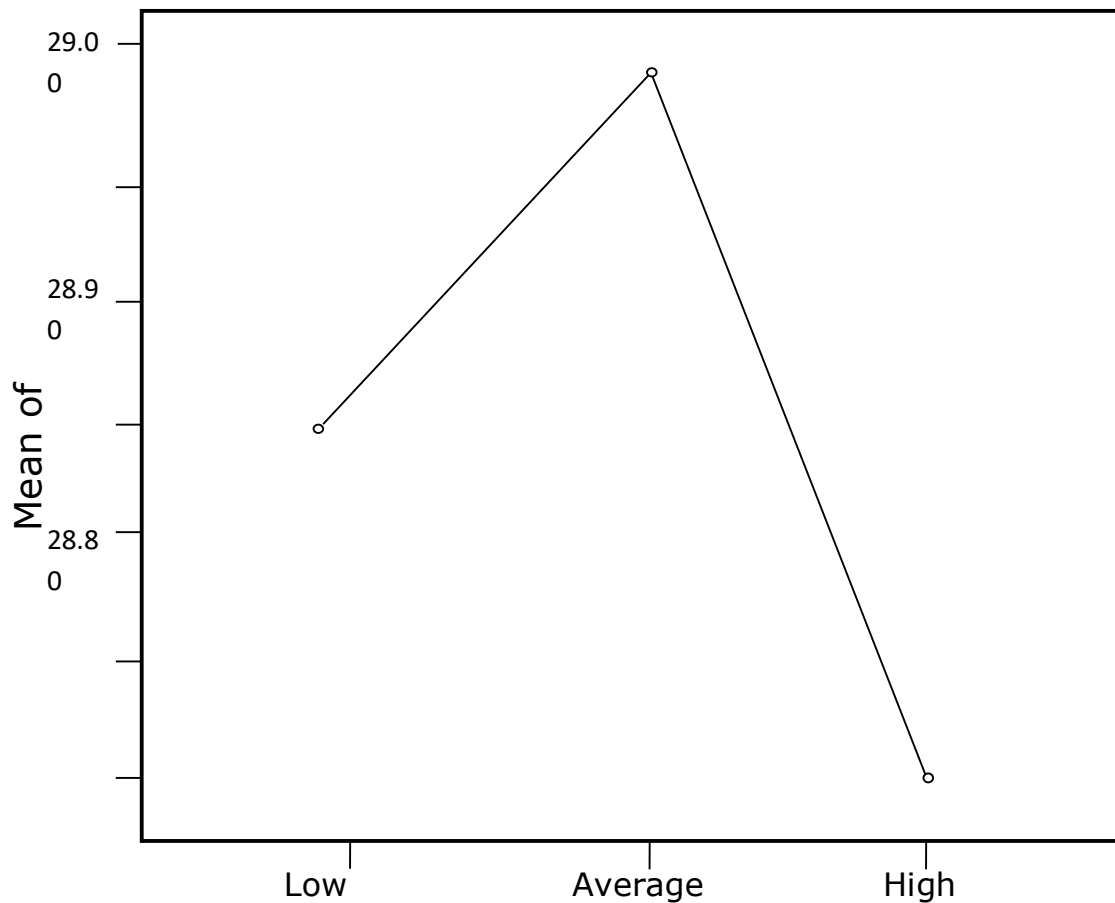


Figure 1: Profile Plot of examination malpractice tendencies by categorized attitude to learning

The means plots above of the study showed that the mean of low attitude to learning was (28.70), average (29.00) and high (28.40). This means that students attitude to learning does not significantly influence their examination malpractice tendencies.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant influence of test anxiety on secondary school students malpractice tendencies. The result of this analysis was presented in table 5.

Table 5: One-way Analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the influence of test anxiety on student examination malpractice tendencies N=520

	N	\bar{X}	SD		St.Error
Low Test Anxiety	90	27.2111	10.56201		1.11333
Average Test	367	28.9292	9.38551		0.48992
Anxiety	63	30.1905	10.54003		1.32792
High test Anxiety	520	28.8712	9.74515		0.42735
Total					
Sources of variability	SS	Df	MS	F-cal	Sign
Between groups	232.006	2	11.6.003		
				1.223	0.295
Within Groups	49056.361	517	94.887		
Total	49288.367	519			

Result not significant at alpha level. 05; df = 2 and 517, critical F = 3.002

From table 5, the calculated F-value of 1.223 was found to be lower than the critical F-value of 3.002 needed for significance at 0.05 alpha level with 2 and 517 degrees of freedom. With this results, the null hypothesis was upheld. This means that test anxiety does not significantly influence secondary school students examination malpractice tendencies in schools. The profile plot of sub-group means was presented in figure 2.

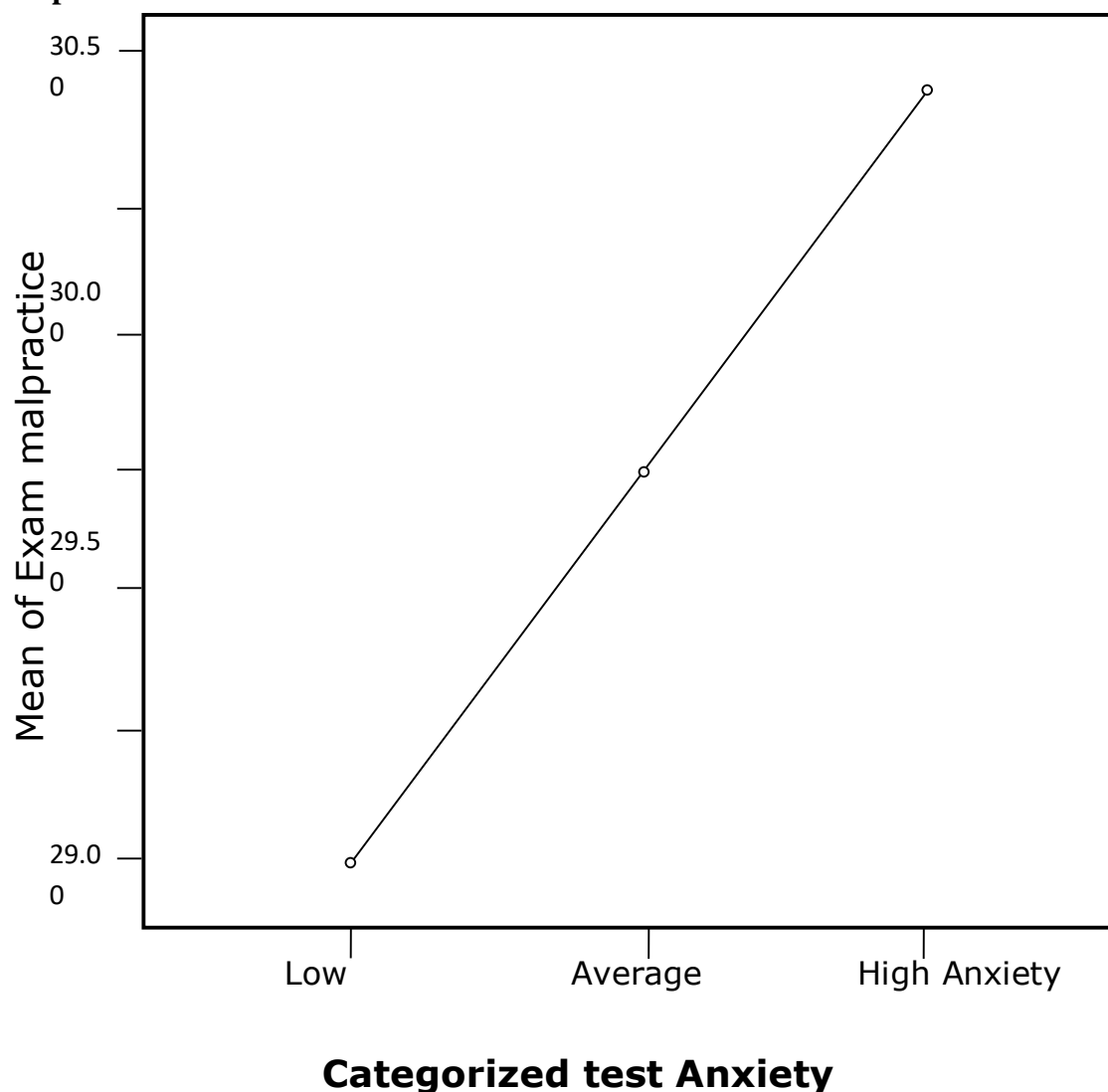
Means plots

Figure 2: profile plot of examination malpractice tendencies by categorized test anxiety

The means plots of the study revealed that low anxiety was (27.50), average anxiety (29.00) and high (30.50). this means that test anxiety does not significantly influence secondary school students examination malpractice tendencies.

From the data analyzed the following findings emerged.

- i. Secondary school students attitude to does not significantly influenced their examination malpractice tendencies in schools.
- ii. Test anxiety does not significantly influence secondary school students examination malpractice tendencies in schools.

The result or analysis of hypothesis one of this study revealed that students attitude to learning (categorized into low-83, average-367 and high -70), does not significantly influence their

examination malpractice tendencies. The result of ANOVA confirmed this assertion through it F-value of 0.112 which was far lower the critical F-value of 3.002. This findings agrees with Angrey (2004) and Bature (2005). And also in line with Udom's (2000), study on the factors that affect students tendencies to cheat in examination, which revealed that students actual level of cheating in examination is significantly dependent on the level of their attitude toward learning.

This findings states clearly that the average student gets involve more in examination malpractice tendencies followed by students with low attitude to school and finally, the high attitude to learning in line with this view, examination malpractice tendencies among students depended on the attitude of the students toward learning. In our educational system today students no longer devote time to read because they believe that the only way to succeed in any examination is to cheat. Furthermore, Agbor (2003) study on the forces behind examination malpractice found out that, lack of adequate preparation for examination, non-seriousness on the part of students and too much stress on certificate acquisition make students to bribe their way through during examination. Poor attitude to learning result in malpractice tendencies by secondary schools students.

The result analysis of hypothesis two revealed the facts that test anxiety does not significantly influence students examination malpractice tendencies. In the result analysis of variance (ANOVA) confirmed this view through F-value of 1.223 which was lower than critical F-value of 3.002. The findings agrees with Asia (2001), on a related research study. On the influence of test anxiety on examination malpractice of senior secondary school student in Calabar South education authority. However, Udom (2000) study on test anxiety and cheating in examination revealed that the result was not significant at ($p>.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted and concluded that students with different level of cheating do not differ significantly on test anxiety.

This study categorized test anxiety into low-90, average – 367 and high – 63. The study speculated that students with average anxiety engage more in examination malpractice tendencies. This was followed by low anxiety students and high anxiety. Anxiety tends to create tension, fear and worries among ill prepared students during examination or test. In examination, anxiety may hinder the ability to recall what was read and may create fear of failure.

CONCLUSION

Given on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made: students attitude to school and test anxiety has no significant influence on students examination malpractice tendencies in Calabar education zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Examination malpractice (EM) is a monster in our educational system and should completely eradicated through the combined effort of government, school managers /administrators, parents, teachers and students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study these recommendations were made:

1. First and foremost, governments attitude to finding education should change. The education sector requires much more recognition of the government to eradicate or at least improve

the education decadence being experience in schools. Education should be made the top most priority of our governments at all levels as obtained in developed countries like US, UK, Japan, China etc. if this is done there will be adequate. Fund to establish and develop learning resource centres which in turn will attract learners to learn.

2. Principal should explore other means in assessing the student attitude to learning by giving them open test, assignment to reduce malpractice tendencies among the pupils. Contentious assessment policy of government in schools need to be strengthened.

3. Principal should organize periodic education programmes on study time management, to assist students in coping with anxiety due to academic tests execution.

4. Principals should build self-confidence on examinees prior to the period of examination or test.

5. Cultivation of good reading culture and hand work among secondary school students should be encouraged through prizes awards given to successtal genuine hard working students.

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