

SELF-EFFICACY AND SELF-ESTEEM AS PREDICTORS OF STUDENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS EXAMINATION MISCONDUCTS IN ANAMBRA STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The study investigated self-efficacy and self-esteem as predictors of students' attitude towards examination misconduct in Anambra State secondary schools. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted correlational research design. The population for the study consisted of 20,214 SSI students from 262 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample size for the study was 378 SS1 students selected using Australian sample size calculator. Three instruments were used for data collection: General Perceived Self efficacy Scales (GPSES), Self Esteem Scales (SES) and Questionnaire on Examination Misconduct (QEM). The instruments were subjected to face validation. The reliability of the instruments were established using Cronbach Alpha and with coefficient values of 0.85, 0.78 and 0.69 for GPSES, SES and QEM respectively. The data were collected by the researcher with the help of three research assistance who were briefed on how to administer and retrieve copies of the instrument. The completed copies of the questionnaire were collected on the spot. Data collected were analyzed using Simple Regression. The study found 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 male and female students in Anambra State. Based on the findings, some recommendations are made.

Keywords: Self efficacy, Self-esteem, Students Attitude, Examination misconduct.

Introduction

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 quantity of knowledge a student has acquired within a specific period of time. Examination is an instrument used for the assessment of individual skills and knowledge content, both in general and specific area of study (Adekale, 2013). Teaching and learning have become more effective when the students' are subjected to an examination process to determine the extent to which students' have assimilated the content of the instruction given and the teacher can also assess himself/herself

from the performance of the students (Adeyemi, 2010). Unfortunately, this all important means of assessing students seem to have become ineffective as all forms of misconducts have been introduced into the system. There is hardly any issue in education that has generated a more serious discussion and raised more concern in Nigeria today than the issue of examination misconduct in our schools. Examination misconduct is any unauthorized action, activity, behaviour or practice that is associated with the preparation, conduct and processing of examination (Joshua, 2011). In other words, examination misconduct is an illegal act committed by students, teachers, invigilators, supervisors, school administrators, parents or any public office or examination bodies in order to obtain underserved scores or grades. Imagie (2010) pointed out that examination misconduct is any wrong doing before, during, or after any examination.

Furo (2015) viewed examination misconduct as a dishonest use of position of trust for personal gains. Examination misconducts are deliberate acts of indiscipline adopted by students or their privileged accomplices to secure success and advantages before, during or after the administration of a test or examination (Nwaorgu, 2012). Animasahun, (2011), referred examination misconducts as practical demonstration of lack of emotional intelligence, trust, dignity and worth, and unquestionable expression of moral laxity and incompetence, whereby the perpetrators fraudulently, cunningly and forcefully steal a grade, a position or class of honour which was not merited. Such actions lead to the devaluation of educational standard and downgrading of standards. Thus, the researcher sees examination misconduct as a destroyer of student future if not checked.

Examination misconduct has been a reoccurring decimal in Anambra State education system. Report released by Exam Ethics Marshal International (2013) that Anambra State ranked 3rd state in the south-east zone and 13th state in Nigeria with the highest rate of examination misconduct. These days, the situation seems to be that majority of the students in Anambra State irrespective of age, gender, family background and school environment indulge in one form of examination misconduct or the other. This could imply that they seem to lack the virtue and value of hard work in terms of study. It is no longer news that students skip lessons at will, lack effective study habits, goal setting and time management skills and consequently they violate examination rules and regulations at unprecedented rates in order to make academic ends meet. Some of them vandalize principals' offices to mutilate results for higher grade. Informal discussions with some secondary school students in Anambra State by the researcher

revealed that most of them have engaged in one form of examination misconduct or the other. Some of them excuse such indulgence with reasons such as poor teaching and learning environments; the need to improve grades in order to maintain or improve competitiveness and the need to succeed in especially adjudged difficult examinations. Some students in the State also create the impression that examination misconduct is not really bad since majority of them indulge in it to succeed and be promoted along with other classmates. With these various reasons, it is obvious that examination misconduct is high among secondary school students in Anambra State, and as observed from the discussion by the researcher with those students, most of them will still cheat as the opportunity presents itself.

Thus, despite the several attempts made by school authorities, government agencies, parents and church leaders in trying to curb the evils of examination misconduct, this menace is still on the increase in various schools. It has now become such a vicious cycle that culprits of examination misconduct easily become addicted and tend to use the means to pass through secondary and tertiary levels. This has been a cause of great concern to stakeholders in education to the extent that there had to be an enactment of the Examination Misconducts Act 33 of 1999 to deal with this societal menace.

Notwithstanding the law and monitoring systems put in place to check the menace, students and their accomplices persist in the practice through various means. Students manifest various means of misconduct using a variety of sophisticated methods such as, preparing the answers and copying them on pieces of paper with the hope of transcribing the material into the answer sheets. Some write examination information on different parts of their bodies and clothes and recopy same during examinations. Some students code teacher points into micro-computers like Casio calculators and recall them in the hall during examination (Onyechere, 2010).

The persistent involvement of students in examination misconducts may be related to self-esteem and self-efficacy. Studies have shown that relationship exist between high self esteem and self-efficacy and academic success. Self esteem is an important factor in students at the secondary school level and is easily affected by peer influence and/or peer acceptance (Uslu, 2013). The way students evaluate their self-efficacy and self esteem could determine their attitude towards examination misconduct. 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 examinations and consequently, might lead one to develop test anxiety. Accordingly,

students' belief in their inability to carry out tasks required for high performance could be closely linked to cheating in examinations. The researcher understood self efficacy as the determination one has in achieving a particular task. Self-esteem refers to a person's overall evaluation of his or her own worth. It is a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds towards himself (Kristen, 2010). Explaining further, Kristen, asserted that self esteem is a subjective experience which the individual conveys to others by verbal reports or other overt expressive behaviour. Self esteem is an important factor in students at the secondary school level and is easily affected by peer influence and/or peer acceptance (Uslu, 2013). The way students in Anambra State evaluate their self-concept could determine their attitude towards examination misconduct. 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 examinations and consequently, might lead one to develop test anxiety. Accordingly, students' belief in their 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 gender was perceived to affect academic self-efficacy and self esteem levels. The differences between boys and girls in personal factors, behavior and environment will predict student attitude, self esteem and self efficacy in predicting examination misconduct. Self-efficacy is perceived to have four sources: Mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and physiological conditions. All these contribute to the level of academic self-efficacy of the students. The level of academic self-efficacy may determines the performance of the students. Attitude is an attribute that is influenced by ones character or innate nature of an individual. All the girls and boys are unique in character thus they have different levels of attitude towards examination. Similarly, the environment in which one is exposed to as well as past experience in examination would influence the attitude towards examination. It is therefore, expected that boys and girls have different past experiences in examination and therefore different attitude towards examination. These sentiments are supported by the view of Bandura (2012) who noted that an individual's perception of his or her abilities in accomplishing certain activities are the outcome of a dynamic interaction of three important factors: person's behavior; Personal factors and environmental conditions.

Therefore, since self efficacy is what one is capable of doing arising from various sources which include accomplishments, failures, successes, and verbal persuasion. It plays a major role in self-regulated behaviours and often affects student functioning by influencing activities, efforts and persistence. Those who have low self-efficacy are more likely to engage in examination misconduct and perform low in academics. Furthermore, students with low self-efficacy are likely to attribute their failures to external factors other than themselves. They perceive themselves as ineffective and therefore are prone to cheating in examination in order to measure up with those who have high self efficacy.

Akanni, and Odofin. (2015) in a study involving 285 Urban middle school students' found that cheating students' tend to engage in self-handicapping behaviours' such as making excuses or attributing failure to circumstances as opposed to ability. This implies that students who attribute failure to other factors other than ability have low perceived self-efficacy and are more likely to cheat and perform low in academics. Therefore, the need to examine link between self efficacy and students' involvement in examination misconduct as it concerns Anambra State secondary schools.

Bandura (2012) maintained that once false beliefs are established, they become self-perpetuating because those holding these false beliefs seek out individuals or groups who share the same false beliefs. In connection with this thought, most students who cheat in examinations also sat close to each other. Some secondary school students have gradually internalized a false belief that cheating is a normal way of writing examination thereby engaging in the act without really knowing the implications and consequences.

Thus, can belief in examination misconduct as normal way of writing examination be addressed through development of students' attitude, self efficacy and self esteem? Thus, despite several researches, government efforts and studies on causes, forms, and possible solutions to examination misconduct to curb or at least reduce examination misconduct in Nigerian and indeed Anambra State education system to the barest minimum, the ugly act still persists in secondary school level, even taking on new trends that are more sophisticated and dogged. This study is therefore necessary to examine self efficacy and self esteem as predictors of students' attitude towards examination misconduct in Anambra state.

Statement of the Problem

The alarming increase and persistence of examination misconducts 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 engagement in the menace appear to manifest in many forms. Some students have become addicted and unfortunately tend to carry the process through secondary to tertiary levels. Hence the effect of this negative attitude is that such students continue to lose faith/confidence in their capability and by extension develop low self esteem and self efficacy. These days, the situation seems to be that majority of the students in Anambra State irrespective of age, gender, family background and school environment indulge in one form of examination misconduct or the other. This could imply that they seem to lack the virtue and value of hard work in terms of study. It is no longer news that students skip lessons at will, lack effective study habits, goal setting and time management skills and consequently violate examination rules and regulations at unprecedented rates in order to make academic ends meet. Informal discussions with some secondary school students in Anambra State by the researcher revealed that most of them have engaged in one form of examination misconduct or the other. Some of them excuse such indulgence with reasons such as poor teaching and learning environments; the need to improve grades in order to maintain or improve competitiveness and the need to succeed in especially adjudged difficult examinations. Some students in the State also create the impression that examination misconduct is not really bad since majority of them indulge in it to succeed and be promoted along with other classmates. With these various reasons, it is obvious that examination misconduct is high among secondary school students in Anambra State, and as observed from the discussion by the researcher with those students, most of them will still cheat as the opportunity presents itself. Regrettably, the incidence and degree of secondary school students' involvement in examination misconduct has become so alarming, problematic, and threatening that the well-being of Nigeria's educational system is threatened. This study therefore was concerned with investigating students self efficacy and self esteem in predicting their attitudes towards examination misconduct

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine Self efficacy and Self-esteem as predictors of students' attitude towards examination misconducts in Anambra State public secondary schools Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine Self-efficacy as predictor of students' attitude towards examination misconduct among secondary school students in Anambra State
2. Examine Self-esteem as predictor of students' attitude towards examination misconduct among secondary school students in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To which extent does Self-efficacy predict student's attitude towards examination misconduct among secondary school students in Anambra state?
2. To which extent does Self esteem predict student's attitude towards examination misconduct among secondary school students in Anambra State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance

1. Self-efficacy would not significantly predict student's attitude towards examination misconduct among secondary school students in Anambra State.
2. Self esteem would not significantly predict student's attitude towards examination misconduct among secondary school students in Anambra State.

Method

Correlational design was adopted for the study. A correlational design seeks to establish the relationship between two or more variables. According to Elendu (2010), correlational research is a type of research that tries to establish whether there is a relationship between two or more variables and the nature or extent of the relationship. This study adopted the correlational design because it sought to establish the direction and magnitude of relationship of self-efficacy, self-esteem and attitude of students towards examination misconduct.

The study was carried out in Anambra state, Nigeria. There are 262 public secondary schools in Anambra State as at 2020. The researcher used Anambra State because the State has been rated high among the most vulnerable as regards examination misconduct among Secondary School students in Nigeria.

The population of the study consisted of 20,214 S.S. 1 students from 261 public secondary schools in Anambra State. (Source Post Primary School Service Commission, Awka, department of Planning Research and Statistics 2020).

The sample for the study comprised 378 SS1 students drawn from the population of the study. Australian sample size calculator was used to draw the sample. Australian

sample size calculator allows the researcher to calculate the required responding sample size in a given population. Simple random sampling technique was used to select three out of six education zones in Anambra State. The three sample zones are Nnewi, Ogidi and Onitsha. In each of the three zones, random sampling technique was used to select three public Secondary schools. This gave nine secondary schools in all. In each of the selected schools, stratified random sampling technique was used. The gender composition of the sample was 159 males and 219 females. And thus, a total number of 378 respondents participated in the study.

Three instruments were used for data collection. These include General Perceived Self-efficacy Scales (GPSS) developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995), Self esteem Scale (SES) developed by Hudson (1982), and the researcher developed instrument titled Questionnaire on Examination Misconduct (QEM). They were made up of four sections A, B, C and D. Section A elicited personal data of the respondents. Section B with 10 items sought information on self-efficacy of the respondents. This is rated on 4-points rating scale of Exactly True-4points, moderate True-3points, Hardly True-2points, and Not at all True-1point. Section C with 25 items sought information on self-esteem of the respondents. It is rated on 5-point scale: Most or all of the time-5points, A good part of the time-4points, some of the time-3points, little of the time-2points, rarely or none of the time- 1point. Section D which contained 15items sought information on examination misconduct. The items were placed on 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree-4points, Agree-3points, Disagree-2points, Strongly Disagree-1point.

The face and content validity of the instruments were determined. The instruments were trial-tested on a representative sample of 30 SS1 students, 12 males and 18 females from Enugu State. Enugu State was chosen for reliability test because it has similar characteristics with the area of the study. The responses of the respondents were scored and analyzed using Cronbach Alpha method. The values of .85, .78, .69 for section B, C, and D were obtained. The high coefficient values indicated that the instrument were reliable for the study.

The instruments were administered to 378 students with the help of three research assistants. The research assistants were briefed on how to administer and retrieve copies of the questionnaires after completion. The 378 questionnaires were administered and collected on the spot.

The data collected were analyzed using single regression analysis. Mujis' in Cohen, Menion and Morrison(2007) suggestion for assessing the goodness of fit of regression model using squared regression coefficient (R^2) and Beta weight (β) was adopted in this study.

To determine how each predictor variable predicts the outcome variable beta weighting (β) was used as follows:

- 0 - 0.1 = weak effect
- 0.1 - 0.3 = modest effect
- 0.3 - 0.5 = moderate effect
- >0.5 = strong effect (Muij, 2004 cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007, p. 523). However, negative beta weighting (β) indicates negative effect/relationship

Research Question 1: To what extent does self-efficacy predict students' attitude towards examination misconduct among secondary school students in Anambra State?

Table 1: Summary of Simple Regression Analysis with Self-efficacy as Predictor of Students' Attitude towards Examination Misconduct

	B	S	E	B	B
C o n s t a n t	4 8 . 2 1	2	.	0	7
S e l f - e f f i c a c y	- . 5 4 3	.	0	6	9 - . 3 7 8
R.	.378				
R^2 .	.142				
Adj. R^2 .	.140				

Data in Table 1 shows that the simple regression coefficient (R) is .378 while the coefficient of determination (R^2) is .142. This is an indication that self-efficacy explained 14.2% of the variance in examination misconduct among secondary school students in Anambra State. The beta weight ($\beta = -.378$) shows that self-efficacy is a moderate negative predictor of examination misconduct among secondary school students, such that a unit increase in self-efficacy leads to .378 decrease in level of examination misconduct.

Research Question 2: To what extent does self-esteem predict students' attitude towards examination misconduct among secondary school students in Anambra State?

Table 2: Summary of Simple Regression Analysis with Self-esteem as Predictor of Students' Attitude towards Examination Misconduct

	B	S	E	B	B
C o n s t a n t	4 3 . 9 7 4	2 . 9 0 5			
S e l f - e s t e e m	- . 1 6 1	. 0 3 9	- . 2 0 9		
R	.209				
R ²	.044				

Analysis in Table 2 shows the simple regression coefficient (R) to be .209 while the coefficient of determination (R²) is .044. This indicates that self-esteem explained 4.4% of the variance in examination misconduct among secondary school students in Anambra State. The beta weight ($\beta = -.209$) shows that self-esteem is a modest negative predictor of examination misconduct among secondary school students, such that a unit increase in self-esteem leads to .209 decrease in level of examination misconduct among students.

Hypothesis 1: Self-efficacy would not significantly predict students' attitude towards examination misconduct among secondary school students in Anambra State.

Table 3: Test of Significance of Simple Regression Analysis with self-efficacy as predictor of Students' Attitude towards Examination Misconduct

	B	S	E	B	B	p	-	v	a	l	u	e
C o n s t a n t	4 8 . 2 1 2	. 0 7				.	0	0	0			
Self-efficacy	- . 5 4 3	. 0 6 9	- . 3 7 7			.	0	0	0			
R	.377											
R ²	.142											
F	61.479					0	.	0	0			

As shown in Table 3, the simple regression coefficient (R) is .377 while the R² is .142. The F-ratio associated with these is 61.479 and the *P-value* = .000, since the obtained *P-value* is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, it was decided that self-

efficacy significantly predict examination misconduct among secondary school students in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 2: Self-esteem would not significantly predict students' attitude towards examination misconduct among secondary school students in Anambra State.

Table 4: Test of Significance of Simple Regression Analysis with Self-esteem as Predictor of Students' Attitude towards Examination Misconduct

	B	S	E	B	B	p	-	v	a	l	u	e
C o n s t a n t	43.974	2	.9	0	5	.	0	0	0	0	0	0
S e l f - e s t e e m	-.161	.	0	3	9	-.209	.	0	0	0	0	0
R.209												
R ² .044												
F16.923							.	0	0	0	0	0

Table 4 shows the simple regression coefficient (R) is .209 while the R² is .044. The F-ratio associated with these is 16.923 and the *P-value* = .000, since the obtained *P-value* is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, it was decided that self-esteem significantly predicts examination misconduct among secondary school students in Anambra State.

Discussion of the findings

The study determined self-efficacy as predictor of student's attitude towards examination misconduct among secondary school students in Anambra state. The objective of the study was to examine self-efficacy as predictor of student's attitude towards examination misconduct among secondary school students. The results gave regression coefficient (r) of 0.378 and coefficient of determination of 0.142 indicating that self-efficacy is a moderate negative predictor of examination misconduct among secondary school students. This finding is in agreement with the thought of Agbajor (2011) who posited that students self-efficacy have significant role to play in students decision to cheat in examinations and test, students with low academic self-efficacy may find it difficult to resist cheating when faced with difficult tasks such as examination. The result of the null hypothesis revealed that self-efficacy significantly predicts examination misconduct among secondary school students in Anambra State. This shows that a little increase in student self-efficacy will boost confident in the life of the students. The findings are encouraging because it will help the students to build positive self-efficacy.

The study was on self-esteem as predictor of students' attitude towards examination misconduct among secondary school students in Anambra State. The aim of the study was to examine self-esteem as predictor of student's attitude towards examination misconduct among secondary school students. The result gave simple regression coefficient (r) 0.209 and coefficient of determination of 0.044 which revealed that self-esteem is a moderate negative predictor of examination misconduct among secondary school students. This finding is in agreement with the opinion of Crowl (2010) that positive self-esteem is not only important but also likely to be more motivated to learning. In line with the result of null hypothesis tested, it was revealed that self-esteem significantly predicts examination misconduct among secondary school students in Anambra State. This result shows that the students must make effort to improve their self esteem

Conclusion

Students' attitude, self-efficacy and self-esteem have significant roles to play in student's decision to cheat in examinations. It was discovered that an increase in students' self-efficacy and self-esteem will lead to decrease in level of examination misconduct. Based on these findings, it was concluded that there was a correlation between self-efficacy, self-esteem and students' attitude towards examination misconduct in Anambra State secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Parents or guardian are encouraged by the researcher to assist their ward in building up of high self efficacy and self esteem. They should always evaluate the performance of their children at all times more especially during examination period so as to boost their self-efficacy and self esteem
2. The study had revealed that students can develop low self-efficacy or self-esteem by not having confident in them. Sequel to this, teachers must ensure the completeness of the syllabus so as build the confidence of the students. Thus the teachers must make effort to carry their students along in their teaching. It is the responsibilities of the teachers to see that the greater percentages of the students are in line with them as they teach and guide the students; entrusted to their care.
3. From the finding also, we see that self-esteem was revealed to be weak negative predictor. There should be an improvement in student-teacher relationship so as

to enable students learn faster. This act is very important in the formative age of the students. The way by which the teachers relate with the students' will help to build up the students' attitude, self efficacy and self-esteem.

4. From the study, it was also observed that self-efficacy and self-esteem were moderate negative predictors of examination misconduct. It is therefore reasoned that the school environment should be made conducive for students to study. The enabling environment will help the students' to build up their attitude, self efficacy and self esteem.

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