RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION AND THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE IN IMO STATE

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Abstract
This study investigated the relationship between secondary school students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice in Imo State. Three research questions were answered, and one null hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study. Correlation research design was adopted for this study. The population for this study consisted of 33,922 senior secondary school (SS2) students. Research sample consisted of 3,520 students selected through multi-stage sampling technique. The instruments used for the study were The Academic Achievement Motivation Scale (AAMS) and Examination Malpractice Attitude Scale (EMAS). Descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation were used for data analysis. Results obtained from the study showed that majority of the students in Imo state have high academic achievement motivation. The result also indicated that most of the students in Imo state have negative attitude towards examination malpractice. Finally, the result revealed that there is no significant relationship between the students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice. The study recommended, among others that Governmental should provide motivation packages in form of scholarships, gifts and awards, among others to students so as to help encourage them to work more hard and encourage the sense of dignity in labour among students.

Keywords: School, Academic achievement, Motivation, Attitude, Examination malpractice.
Introduction

Scholars and researchers from various fields of human endeavour believe that no society or nation can develop more than the level and standard of education available for her citizens (Okafor, Obi & Oguzie, 2018). Currently, the Nigeria system of education makes use of certificates to indicate the level of knowledge acquisition. However, before certificates are awarded, students have to be assessed or examined in the field they have been trained. Thus, examination becomes a yardstick against which students’ competence and progress are formally measured and appraised in the Nigerian education sector (Ozuome, Oguzie, Mokwelu & Anyamene, 2020).

Therefore, Emaikwu (2012) described examination as major part of evaluation in education is aimed at determining a student’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 a feedback. In line with this, George and Ukpong (2013) observed that examination is the most common tool around which the entire system of education revolves. George and Ukpong further noted that examination is the instrument used to decide who is permitted to move to the next academic level.

Moreover, examination does not only function as a process of assessing the progress of students, rather it could also motivate and help students to know their academic strengths and weaknesses. It may also serve as a medium for providing teachers with opportunities to try new methods of teaching. Conversely, when examination is not properly conducted, the expected feedback may not be accurately achieved. As a result of this, the outcome of such examination may lead to wrong decisions and judgement which could negatively affect the students, teachers, entire education community, as well as the society in general. However, the success of the Nigerian education system in achieving its noble goals as the bedrock of national development has been greatly marred by various maladaptive behaviours, among which examination malpractice is included (Ajaja, 2012).

Examination malpractice may be defined as any form of dishonesty perpetrated by a person or group of persons in an examination (Oguzie, Oguzie, Nnadi, Mokwelu & Obi, 2019). It is an academic dishonesty involving any act of omission or commission which compromises the reliability of any assessment or evaluation system (Muhney, Gutmann & Schniedeman, 2008). According to Anyamene, Nwokolo and Maduegbuna (2015), examination malpractice is defined as anything done by an examination candidate, examination administrator, teacher, parent or any person, that goes against stipulated examination ethics and laws. Examination malpractice may be seen as an illegal or unethical behaviour by somebody in the process of testing the ability or knowledge of a candidate. In the context of this study, examination malpractice is defined as any act or behaviour by any person or group of persons before, during or after an examination targeted to influence positively the outcome of such examination.

Whenever there is examination malpractice, the validity and resulting outcome becomes questionable. Relatively, examination malpractice tends to confer undue advantage or undeserved grade to the perpetrators of the act. The fact that examination is the major yardstick for measuring students’ knowledge, achievement and performance has appeared
fallacious since examination malpractice has increasingly become endemic in the Nigerian education system (Okorodudu, 2013). Consequently, overdependence on certificates as the major yardstick to measure students’ knowledge and competence may lead to overzealousness on the part of students and their parents to acquire certificates through corrupt means, thereby making them more predisposed to examination malpractice. Perhaps, this may have led some Nigerians into certificate forgery and racketeering to prove their academic worth.

Indeed, the instances of examination malpractice may appear in different forms. Examination malpractice may sometimes be perpetuated in form of impersonation, cheating, copying from one another, theft of other students’ work, smuggling of answer scripts in examinations halls, fabrication of results and disregard to examination regulations. Also, examination malpractice may come up in other forms such as bringing of un-authorized materials into the examination hall, collusion, swapping of answer booklets, examination score trading or assault on examination administrators. Although examination malpractice has become widespread in all levels of education in Nigeria, students’ attitude towards examination malpractice may greatly determine their likelihood to indulge in the crime or not (Anierobi, Madike, Unachukwu & Ebenebe, 2016). Hence, students’ attitude may influence their views, feelings and opinions about examination malpractice.

Attitude may be defined as the predisposition or tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person, or situation. According Ezunu, Oguzie, Aigbokhaode and Ezunu (2020), is defined as a person’s posture, mood, feelings, disposition or position about an issue, event, idea, or something. Attitude influences an individuals’ choice of action and response to stimuli. Fanseca (2010) opined that attitude is the key to success. Fanseca further observed that students’ attitude towards examination is a factor that indicates whether or not students will participate in the crime. Attitude towards examination malpractice is therefore referred to as a student’s feelings, mood, disposition or position towards examination malpractice.

Practically, an individual’s attitude could be either positive or negative. Students who exhibit negative attitude towards examination malpractice may see it as a crime, and perhaps may not indulge in examination malpractice. In contrary, students who exhibit positive attitude towards examination malpractice may see it as something worthwhile, and this possibly could make such category of students prone to examination malpractice. However, for the purpose of this study, attitude towards examination malpractice is referred to as students’ inclinations and feelings, preconceived notions, opinions and convictions about examination malpractice.

Many factors may be correlated to students’ attitude towards examination malpractice. According to Egereonu (2014), correlation is defined as the relationship between two or more paired scores or variables. Correlates refer to either of two things so related that one directly implies or is complementary to the other (Merriam-Webster, 2019). If two or more facts, numbers, variables, and so on are correlated, it means there is a relationship between them. Thus, if two things correlate, a change in one thing results in a similar or opposition change in the other thing. Among the factors that may correlate with students’ attitude towards examination malpractice is academic achievement motivation.
Academic achievement motivation may be defined as a psychological phenomenon inclined to arouse and direct students’ behaviour towards attaining their desired academic goals. It may be seen as an activator or energizer of academic goal-oriented behaviours. Awan, Noureen and Naz (2011) defined academic achievement motivation as an internal condition that stimulates, directs and maintains students’ behaviours. According to Okoiye (2011), academic achievement motivation is an interactive construct representing the direction a student is going, the emotional energy and affective experience supporting or inhibiting movement in that direction, and expectances that students have about reaching their destination or achieving their academic goals. Academic achievement motivation may be described as the desire or urge to achieve academic success, which may invariably encourage students to put more effort in academic activities. However, for the purpose of this study, academic achievement motivation is defined as a psychological drive that compels students to strive for academic success by choosing and actively undertaking goal-oriented academic activities.

In general, studies have shown that academic achievement motivation contributes greatly to students’ participation and performance in academic activities (Okoiye, Anokam & Nwoga, 2016). Students who have high academic achievement motivation are likely to show more interest in teaching and learning processes. Thus, they may be enthusiastic in participation in academic activities such as studying very hard, attending carefully to assignment and home works, participating actively in classroom group activities, and asking for clarifications about learning contents they do not understand. In contrast, students with low academic achievement motivation may show lack of interest in the teaching and learning process. For example, they may be inattentive during classroom lesions and not reflect on or revise the subject content been taught. They may not study hard or ask for help in areas they find difficult to understand.

More so, Affum-Osei, Eric, Barnie and Forkuoh (2014) observed that students with low academic achievement motivation tend to have low self-esteem, poor confidence, less creativity and are less motivated to achieve academically. Consequent to the above, students with low academic achievement motivation may drop out of school or rear up positive attitude towards examination malpractice due to their quest for easier ways of obtaining academic success. Most importantly, when students evaluate themselves as worthless people and lack the motivation for carrying out success oriented academic tasks, they may develop feelings of anxiousness during examination situations (Oguzie, Ani, Obi & Onyegirim, 2018; Obi & Oguzie, 2019).

Anzene (2014) lamented that examination malpractice is common and many examinations witness the emergence of new and ingenious ways of malpractice. Oguzie, Oguzie, Nnadi, Mokwelu and Obi (2019) in their study observed that examination malpractice has been one of the problems facing the Nigerian education system for decades, but the rate and manner at which this crime has been perpetrated recently has raised a serious concern to teachers, parents, counsellors, government, researchers, and other stakeholders. While some of the existing studies on examination malpractice have either concentrated on the prevalence, forms, trends, causes, effects or possible solutions to the crime (Akinrefon, Ikpah & Bamigbala, 2016; Oguzie,
Oguzie, Nnadi, Mokwelu and Obi, 2019), others dwelt on the external variables such as students’ family background, teacher’s effectiveness, among others (Bette, 2014), and very few looked at the students’ personal factors that can lead to examination malpractice (Nwamuo & Ihekwaba, 2014).

The rampant occurrence of examination malpractice has become an issue of growing importance and concern in the Nigeria education system. Okon and Petters (2014) observed that most examinations in Nigeria are usually marked by complaints of various forms of malpractice. In as much as education is the bedrock of development of any nation, and examination is the key to which the success of all educational programmes in Nigeria are measured, the need to explore strong variables that predispose secondary school students to actions and behaviours which could mar the validity of examination results. Currently, it appears that no single empirical study documented the impact of students’ academic achievement motivation and their relationship to attitude towards examination malpractice in Imo State. Hence, the relationship between academic achievement motivation and attitude towards examination malpractice among secondary school students in Imo state has not been empirically ascertained. In the light of this background, the researchers were motivated to examine the relationship between secondary school students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice in Imo State.

Research Questions
The study was guided by the following research questions:
1. What are the academic achievement motivation scores of secondary school students?
2. What are the attitude towards examination malpractice scores of secondary school students?
3. What is the relationship between secondary school students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice?

Hypothesis
The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:
1. There is no significant relationship between secondary school students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice.

Method
This study adopted the correlation research design. According to Nworgu (2015), this type of study seeks to establish the relationship that exists between two or more variables. Usually correlation studies indicate the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables. The result of a correlation study is expressed in correlation coefficients, that is, the degree of relationship is expressed in numerical forms, between -1.00 to +1.00 (Okafor, Obi & Oguzie, 2018). Agu (2014) observed that researchers use correlation when they wish to discover if any relationship exists between two or more variables, how strong the relationships appear to be and whether one variable of primary interest can be effectively predicted from information on the values of the other variables. The population of the study comprised 33,922 students, while the sample size consisted of 3,520 SS2 students drawn through multi-stage sampling procedure.
Two instruments were used for collecting data for this study. First, the Academic Achievement Motivation Scale (AAMS) was used to measure the students’ academic achievement motivation in this study. AAMS was developed in Nigeria by Ogundokum and Odofin in 2017. AAMS instrument is a sixteen-item scale with a maximum total of 64 points. It has two sections: A and B. Section A is an introductory part that solicited the bio-data of the respondents and section B was directed towards measuring students’ level of academic achievement motivation. The internal consistency of the instrument ranges from 0.70 to 0.84, with an overall reliability coefficient alpha of 0.74. Secondly, the Examination Malpractice Attitude Scale (EMAS) developed by Muyiwa, Idoko and Akindele in 2017 was used to measure secondary school students’ attitude towards examination malpractice. The instrument contains thirty items on a four point scales, ranging from strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. EMAS has two sections: A and B. Section A is an introductory part that solicited the bio-data of the respondents and section B is directed towards measuring attitude towards examination malpractice. The reliability of the scale was established at 0.77 coefficient cronbach alpha. Using the spearman brown, EMAS yielded a reliability coefficient value of -0.51. Thus, the instruments were considered reliable enough to be used for this study.

The researchers administered copies of the instruments through direct delivery method. In each school, a letter of introduction was presented to the principal for approval. Then the researchers with the help of five research assistants who were duly briefed about the study served copies of the instruments to the students and also retrieved the completed copies of the instruments for scoring and analysis. The instruments completed for this study were scored following the scoring instructions. All data collected for this study were organised in tables and analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Results

Table 1: Range of scores on students’ academic achievement motivation (AAM)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of scores</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 – 39</td>
<td>972</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>Low academic achievement motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 64</td>
<td>2548</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>High academic achievement motivation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that 2548(72.4%) of the students with the scores ranging from 40 to 64 have high academic achievement motivation, while 972(27.6%) of the students who scored between 16 and 39 have low academic achievement motivation.

Table 2: Range of scores on students’ attitude towards examination malpractice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of scores</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 – 74</td>
<td>2103</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>Negative attitude towards examination malpractice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 – 120</td>
<td>1417</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>Positive attitude towards examination malpractice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 revealed that 2103(59.7%) of the students with the scores ranging from 30 to 74 have negative attitude towards examination malpractice, while 1417(40.3%) students who scored between 75 and 120 have positive attitude towards examination malpractice.
Table 3: Pearson r on students’ academic achievement motivation (AAM) and their attitude towards examination malpractice scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>AAM r</th>
<th>Attitude r</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAM</td>
<td>3520</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>No Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>3520</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 indicates that there is no relationship of 0.00 between the secondary school students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice.

Table 4: Significant of Pearson r on the students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice using probability table of r

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>cal. r</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>pvalue</th>
<th>Cal.pvalue</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3520</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3519</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NS = No Significant

In table 4, it was observed that at 0.05 level of significance and 3519df, the calculated r0.00 has pvalue 0.88 which is greater than the critical pvalue 0.05. Therefore, the second null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant relationship between secondary school students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice.

Discussion
The results of this study revealed that majority of the secondary school students (72.4%) in Imo state have high level of academic achievement motivation. This finding indicates that despite the various distractions such as the present economic situation of the country, fallen standard of education, the seemingly high competitiveness in the education sector, the high rate of unemployment among graduates and the available treacherous means of passing examinations without hard work, many students still have high academic achievement motivation. This finding is in line with previous report by (Affum-Osei, Eric, Barnie & Forkuoh, 2014; Anakwe, Suleiman & Momoh, 2014; Nwankwo, 2017) who observed that many secondary school students show high academic achievement motivation. One possible reason for this concordance in findings of this study with the findings of previous studies may be because of the high emphasis placed on academic qualifications and the generally held philosophy that “education is the key to success”. This particular finding of this study perhaps shows that education has gained high credence in Imo state.

However, this finding contradicts the finding by (Gang, Gregory, Yoon & Alan, 2018) who found that many students have low academic achievement motivation. It also contradicts the views of previous researchers who asserted that many students are in schools not necessarily to acquire knowledge but just to obtain certificates (Nwankwo, 2011; Odubela, 2013; Sofola, 2014). The possible reason for the finding of this study contradicting the report of Gang and other previous researchers may be as a result of difference in location. Perhaps, the philosophy
of people in those areas does not lay much emphasis on academic qualifications. This may discourage academic achievement motivation among students in such locations.

Another finding of this study equally showed that most of the secondary school students (59.7%) in Imo state have negative attitude towards examination malpractice. This shows that majority of the students would not like to indulge in examination malpractice. This finding to some extent is unexpected, considering the high rate of examination malpractice prevalent in Imo state and Nigeria in general. Perhaps, students’ involvement in examination malpractice may not be an indication that they have positive attitude towards the crime. Possibly, what causes students to indulge into examination malpractice may come from external factors such as peer influence, pressure from parents and ever-emphasis on certificates in the Nigerian society or inability to comprehend contents taught by the teachers. Based on the researcher’s personal interaction with some of the students, the students revealed that if they had the ability to comprehend what their teachers taught them, they would have no reason to indulge in examination malpractice. This finding is in accordance with the findings of previous researchers (Nwankwo, 2017; Onyekuru & Barituka, 2017; Oguzie, Oguzie, Nnadi, Mokwelu & Obi, 2019) who reported that many students have negative attitude towards examination malpractice. This particular finding of the study shows that many secondary school students who engage in examination malpractice actually do not view the act as something worthwhile but found themselves in the act probably as a result of pressure and frustration. Perhaps, peer influence, pressure from parents, the desire to satisfy the prerequisites for entry into higher institutions and quest to avoid failure were basically responsible for increasing rate of examination malpractice among secondary school students.

However, the above finding contradicts the findings of previous researchers (Ajaja, 2012; Anierobi, Madike, Unachukwu & Ebenebe, 2016) who in their respective researches found that many students have positive attitude towards examination malpractice. It also contradicts the assertion by Joshua, Ekpoh, Edet, Joshua and Obo (2011) that for every 100 candidates in examinations, 65 of them show positive attitude towards examination malpractice while 16 to 17 of them were caught cheating, most of which are not even recorded and reported. Moreover, Ofodile, Odiato, Adenugba and Edun (2019) pointed out that the large number of students with positive attitude towards examination malpractice and the high rate of incidence of the crime have become a source of worry for all stakeholders as well as adherents of moral and ethical uprightness in the Nigerian society. The possible reason for the contradiction between the findings of the above researchers and that of this study may as a result of location or human error at the course their research. People’s philosophy and moral value in a particular location may influence their attitude towards something.

The findings of this study revealed that there is no significant relationship between the students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice. Apparently, this finding is quite surprising because ordinarily one would have expected a contrary result. The researcher initially expected that students with high academic achievement motivation may have negative attitude towards examination malpractice because they are highly motivated to work hard to achieve academic excellence with clean hands, while students with low academic achievement motivation may have positive attitude towards examination malpractice as they may not be willing to study hard because of their less motivated to face academic challenges. However, this finding of the study implies that
whether students have high or low academic achievement motivation, it has nothing to do with their attitude towards examination malpractice. This finding contradicts the findings of previous researchers (Adebayo, 2010; Olorunfemi-Olabisi & Abiola, 2014; Okoro & Udoh, 2014; Nwankwo, 2017) who reported that students’ academic achievement motivation is significantly correlated with their attitude towards examination malpractice. The finding also contradicts the opinion of McCabe, Trevino and Butterfly (2011) who posited that when students perceive that the ultimate goal of learning is to get good grades, they are more likely to see examination malpractice as acceptable and justifiable behaviour. Furthermore, the finding disagrees with the findings of Olarunwaju (2010) which reported a significant relationship between academic achievement motivation and cheating behaviour.

Conclusion
Based on the findings of this study and the discussion that followed, the researchers concluded that majority of the students in Imo state have high academic achievement motivation. Also, it was concluded that most of the students in Imo state have negative attitude towards examination malpractice. Finally, it was concluded that there is no significant relationship between the students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice.

Recommendations
In-line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Governmental should provide motivation packages in form of scholarships, gifts and awards, among others to students so as to help encourage them to work more hard and encourage the sense of dignity in labour among students.
2. Counsellors, teachers and researchers should strengthen their efforts in creating programmes that will help in academic achievement motivation, so that students will be more motivated to achieve better in their academic pursuits.
3. Counsellors, teachers and other staff should create programmes that will help discourage positive attitude towards examination malpractice among students.

References


