

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLEDGE

## Influence of Anxiety and Inferiority Complex on Examination Malpractice among Secondary School Students in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria

**Dr. Yakubu Meremu**

Designation: School Counsellor, UBE Girls' Junior Secondary School Makurdi, Nigeria

**Dr. Idoko Boniface Idoko**

Principal, Emmanuel Secondary School Ugbokolo Benue State Nigeria

### **Abstract:**

*This study was carried out to investigate the influence of examination malpractice on anxiety and inferiority complex among secondary school students in Ankpa and Olamaboro local government areas of Kogi state. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The survey design was adopted for the study. A sample of 322 respondents from a total population of 3,218 students was selected for the study using Nworgu (1991) 16% representative sample size formula. A structured 10-items four point rating type scale questionnaire titled "Anxiety and Inferiority Complex on Examination Malpractice among students questionnaire (AIEMSQ) was constructed by the researcher and used to collect data for the study. Data obtained for the study were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) was used to test the hypotheses. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that students do significantly perceive the influence of anxiety and inferiority complex on examination malpractice. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations are made such as setting up counseling units to assist in giving regular talks individually or in groups on expected behavior before and during examinations to help sensitize the students to reduce phobia, anxiety and tension usually associated with examination.*

**Keywords:** Influence, anxiety, inferiority complex, examination malpractices, Ankpa LGA

### **1. Introduction**

Nigerian society has in recent times been plagued by many social ills but the most worrisome one which is ravaging our educational system is examination malpractice. It constitutes one of the evils of the land because it threatens to uproot the very foundation of our education system which has been the avenue for inculcating moral and ethical values to our youths (Omu, 2007). It is a phenomenon that appears to have graduated from the petty favour that schools offer to their students by merely giving them questions that resembles the live West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) questions in preparation for their actual examinations. It has developed and matured into organized syndicates. This has become a national problem, so much that stakeholders in education like governments, school administrators, parents, students, examination bodies and so on have publicly lamented over its effects on the socio-economic development of the nation.

Odongo (2002) defined examination malpractice as an act of wrong doing carried out by a candidate or group of candidates or any person with the intention to cheat or gain an unfair advantage in an examination. Joe, (2004) regarded examination malpractice as non compliance to established rules and regulation that govern the conduct of examination. Examination malpractice can also be seen as using illegal means to secure undue advantage at an examination in order to be successful.

Examination malpractice is not necessarily peculiar or restricted to Nigerian educational system. In Australia, 19% of tertiary students were reported to have copied from one another during an examination. Similarly, 12% of the students were reported to have taken unauthorized material into a testing room (Brimble and Stevenson – Clarke, 2005). In United States, 26% of the students were reported cheating on an examination during university careers. (Diekhoff, Labeff, Shinohara, and Yasukawa 1999).

However, high prevalence of examination malpractice among senior secondary school students calls for concern and attention. Expo, 1977 was so popular in Nigeria. It was as a result of the unprecedented leakages of the West African Examination Council's May/June examination question papers that year. Among other conspicuous years recorded was 2003 in which examination malpractice index was high (58.3%) in 13 states of the federation. The states include Abia, Benue, Borno, Cross River, Ebony, Enugu, Imo, Kaduna, Kogi, Kwara, Rivers, Zamfara. The federal capital territory Abuja came least with 0. 9% (Vanguard Newspaper 2004).

Similarly in Kogi State, two thousand, five hundred and sixty candidates out of forty thousand nine hundred and fifty (40,950) candidates that sat for the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) were involved in examination malpractice (West African Examination Council, 2009). Some students in Ankpa and Olamaboro Local Government Areas run from their original schools in towns to remote villages to register and sit for their Senior School Certification Examination. Some of these students lose their sense of moral value and mission in life as they drift from one vice to another in order to meet the demands of the miracle centre. Some steal or lie to their parents/guardians some of the students may develop examination phobia, lose confidence in their abilities to pass examinations without cheating, make beautiful grades which they cannot defend leading to the development of low self-concept that is inferiority complex and so on.

Examination malpractice reduces the national image of the country, creates an enabling environment for the embarrassment of innocent citizens, engenders frustration when the culprits are identified, caught and their results cancelled, engenders indiscipline and moral decadence in the society, brings lack of confidence and laziness in the youths, deprives the assessor the opportunity of identifying learners difficulties, weakness and efficiencies.

Due to the negative effects of examination malpractice, several efforts have been made to check and eliminate it. Some of these efforts include the Decree of 1984, which stipulated 21 years imprisonment for perpetrators of examination malpractice, the involvement of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (NSDC), to tighten up security in all examination towns and centres in the country. Other efforts include cancelling and withholding of candidates result by various examinations bodies, de-recognition of schools as examinations centres, punishment of examination officials, launching of campaigns against examination malpractice, radio and television jingles among others.

Examination malpractice is becoming a serious social and psychological problem and source of concern to stakeholders in education. The effects of examination malpractice on anxiety and inferiority complex refer to the fear of failure, feeling of inadequacy among students. Anxiety is one of the serious challenges students experience when writing examinations. Anxiety makes students to engage in examination malpractice. Most students who doubt their abilities to pass examination resort to cheating as a way of escaping from failure. They make it a do or die affairs to get good certificate in order to secure the love and affection of their beloved ones especially parents. Anxiety could make students experience difficulties with attention, concentration, memory, energy level, fear of impending doom, fear of making mistakes and the like. Anxiety if not minimized could affect teaching and learning. It may create negative self image in anxious students. It could be observed that most students demonstrate high level of anxiety probably as a result of examination malpractice.

Inferiority complex is the feeling of worthlessness. A feeling which makes some students feels inferior to others and as well doubts their own capabilities. Students who experience inferiority complex feel unhappy, miserable and can easily give up when confronted with a challenging task. When students lack confidence in themselves, they may resort to cheating during examination. Some of the students may totally give up the hope of passing examination through their own efforts. This may lead to the feeling of inferiority complex on such students as they might not be able to raise their shoulders high among their contemporaries who got their certificates through hard work and determination.

Despite efforts by federal, states and examination bodies to change or modify the modes of different examinations, to create enabling environment for students during examinations, high level of anxiety and inferiority complex are still very transparent among students in Nigerian schools. Could the upsurge of students from urban to rural areas (schools) to sit for their examinations be attributed to anxiety in students as they have not worked harder? Can feeling of inferiority be one of the reasons why students involve themselves in examination malpractice?

This hydra-headed monster must be fought with all available weapons to restore the dignity of our educational system and certificates. It is only when this battle is fought and won that our education can be for enlightenment, self reliance and restoration of dignity of man.

This study therefore, was conducted to examine the perceived effects of examination malpractice on anxiety and inferiority complex among secondary school students in the study areas. The variables considered in this work are anxiety and inferiority complex. The choice of these variables was because they were the most commonly observed been manifested by students in the study area.

### *1.1. Statement of the Problem*

The researcher observed that a lot of students in their senior secondary school final classes in Ankpa and Olamaboro Local Government Areas run away from their original schools in towns to remote villages called 'miracle or magic centers' to register for their senior school certificates examination. (SSCE). It was also noticed that most of these students are exposed to a lot of corrupt practices such as stealing, lying, carrying of live questions, hiring people to write for them. Most of these students, who patronize miracle centres practice truancy, shy away from hard work, absent themselves from school, develop anxiety for examination, and drop out from their original schools due to the existence of miracle centres. Most of them lack self expression because they are half baked resulting to negative self concept (inferiority complex).

Although, several studies have been carried out on examination malpractice and its attendant negative effects on the educational system in different parts of the world, Nigeria, including Kogi state but little, attention has been made by researchers on the variables under investigation (effects of examination malpractice on anxiety and inferiority complex among secondary school students in study area).

This worrisome scenario moved the researcher into investigating the effects of examination malpractice on anxiety and inferiority complex among secondary schools students in Ankpa and Olamaboro Local Government Areas of Kogi State. The statement of the problem for this study therefore, is to determine the effects of examination malpractice on anxiety and inferiority complex among secondary school students in Ankpa and Olamaboro Local Government Areas of Kogi state using the indices of anxiety and inferiority complex.

### 1.2. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of anxiety and inferiority complex on examination malpractice among secondary school students in Ankpa and Olamaboro Local Government Areas of Kogi State. To achieve this purpose, the following specific objectives were raised:

- Determine the effects of anxiety on examination malpractice among secondary school students in Ankpa and Olamaboro Local Government Areas of Kogi state.
- Investigate the effects of inferiority complex on examination malpractice among secondary school students in Ankpa and Olamaboro Local Government Areas of Kogi state.

### 1.3. Research Questions

The following research questions were raised;

- What is the effect of anxiety on examination malpractice among secondary school students in Ankpa and Olamaboro local government areas of Kogi State?
- What effect has inferiority complex on examination malpractice among secondary school students in Ankpa and Olamaboro local government areas of Kogi State?

### 1.4. Research Hypotheses

For the purpose of this investigation, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

- Anxiety does not have significantly effect on examination malpractice among secondary school students in Ankpa and Olamaboro Local Government Areas of Kogi State.
- Inferiority complex does not have significant effect on examination malpractice among secondary school students in Ankpa and Olamaboro Local Government Areas of Kogi State.

### 1.5. Scope of the Study

This study was limited to the effects of anxiety and inferiority complex on examination malpractice among secondary school students in Local Government Areas of Kogi State. All final year Senior Secondary School Students (SSS) of the study Area constitute the population. The major areas considered in this work are anxiety and inferiority complex among secondary school students.

### 1.6. Research Design

The design that was used in carrying out this work was the survey. Survey design is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be a representative of the entire group. This design was therefore relevant to this study since the representative of students were sampled from larger population to answer questions relating to effects of anxiety and inferiority on examination malpractice among secondary school students of Ankpa Local Government Areas of Kogi State.

### 1.7. Population and Sample

The total population of this study was 3,218 senior secondary school students from Ankpa and Olamaboro Local Government areas of Kogi State. The sample for the study comprised 322 senior secondary school students representing 10% of the population from the study area. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was adopted to select the senior secondary school students for this study.

### 1.8. Instrumentation

Questionnaire was the main instrument that was used for this study. A self-structured questionnaire titled "Effects of Anxiety and Inferiority Complex on Examination Malpractice among Secondary Students Questionnaire (EAIEMQ) was used to for data collection. The questionnaire was made up of 2 sections, A and B. Section A contains information on Bio-data which include bio-data of respondents. Section B consists of two sub sections containing questions aimed at deriving information in respect of the effects anxiety and inferiority complex on examination malpractice among secondary school students. A total number of 10 items were presented as statements to which respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on a four point likert type scale as follows:

SA	-	Strongly Agreed	4
A	-	Agree	3
D	-	Disagree	2
SD	-	Strongly Disagree	1

The scoring of the research questions was based on the four point likert type scale of 4,3,2,1 for strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree respectively. Each of the ten items in section B was assigned a maximum score of four while the minimum score was one. Any item that scores more than 2.50 was considered accepted and any with less than 2.50 was considered rejected.

The researcher personally administered and collected data with the assistance of three trained research assistances. The retrieval of the filled questionnaires was done through the research assistants the following day so as to allow respondents understand the items as they apply to them and made appropriate responses. A total of 514 questionnaires were administered, however, 500 questionnaires representing 97.27% were returned for data analysis.

## 2. Data Analysis and Results

The data collected were analyzed using frequency count, percentages and mean for the research questions. The mean of 2.50 was taken as criterion for determination of influence. The cutoff point of 2.50 and above represents positive responses. While anything less than 2.50 were regarded as negative responses. The inferential statistics of chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha levels.

- Research Question One: What is the effect of anxiety on examination malpractice among secondary school students in Ankpa and Olamaboro Local government areas of Kogi State?

S/N	Questionnaire items	SA	A	D	SD	X	ST.D	Decision
1	Students who involve themselves in examination malpractice always live in fear of failure.	180	100	30	12	3.39	0.81	Agreed
2	Examination malpractice creates an atmosphere of uncertainty in students.	200	110	5	7	3.56	0.64	Agreed
3	Examination malpractice makes students to be restless and lack concentration.	223	87	12	-	3.06	0.55	Agreed
4	Examination cheats always look troubled.	110	150	32	30	3.45	0.90	Agreed
5	Students involved in examination malpractice frequently urinate during examination.	150	170	2	-	3.65	0.53	Agreed
Cluster mean						3.42	0.69	Agreed

*Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Students on Effects of Anxiety on Examination Malpractice among Secondary Schools Students*

Table 1 showed that anxiety has negative effects on examination malpractice among secondary school students in the study Area. This was revealed by the high cluster mean score on the items of 3.42 and standard deviation 0.69 which implied that secondary school students perceived the negative effects of anxiety on examination malpractice in the study area.

- Research Question Two: What effect has inferiority complex on examination malpractice among secondary school students in the study area?

S/N	Questionnaire items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean (X)	ST.D	Decision
6	Examination cheats feel shy among their mates and so may find it difficult to express themselves.	210	112	-	-	3.65	0.48	Agreed
7	Students who engage themselves in examination malpractice always feel inadequate.	160	140	18	4	3.41	0.66	Agreed
8	Cheating in examinations make students to feel insecure inwardly.	175	100	30	17	3.31	0.90	Agreed
9	Examination cheats quickly give up when confronted with academically challenging task.	150	147	15	10	3.35	0.71	Agreed
10	Examination cheats consider themselves as not being worthy among others and keep away from peer groups.	163	111	26	22	3.29	0.88	Agreed
Cluster mean						3.40	0.73	Agreed

*Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Responses of Students on the Effects of Inferiority Complex on Examination Malpractice among Secondary School Students*

Table 2 showed that inferiority complex has negative effects on examination malpractice among secondary school students in Ankpa and Olamaboro Local Government Areas of KogiState. The cluster mean was 3.40 and standard deviation 0.73 implied that secondary school students perceived the negative effects of inferiority complex on examination malpractice in the study area.

- Hypothesis One: Anxiety does not have significantly effect on examination malpractice among secondary school students in the study Areas.

Responses	Observed freq	Expected freq	Df	Level of sig.	Cal. X <sup>2</sup>	Crit. X <sup>2</sup>	Decision
Strongly Disagree	21	322	3	0.05	1158.42	7.81	Rejected
Disagree	47	322					
Agree	467	322					
Strongly Agree	753	322					

Table 3: Chi-Square on the Effects of Anxiety on Examination Malpractice among Secondary School Students

Value in parentheses are percentages ( $X^2 = 1158.42$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = 0.05 > 0.000$ )

Table 3 showed that chi-square value of 1158.42 at df 3 with  $P=0.05 > 0.000$  was significant. This implied that anxiety was significantly perceived to have effects on examination malpractice among secondary school students in the study Area. The hypothesis which stated that anxiety does not have significantly effect on examination malpractice among secondary school students in Ankpa and Olamaboro Local Government Areas of Kogi State was therefore rejected.

- **Hypothesis Two:** Inferiority complex does not have significant effect on examination malpractice among secondary school students in Ankpa and Olamaboro Local Government Areas of Kogi State.

Responses	Observed freq	Expected freq	Df	Level of sig.	Cal. X <sup>2</sup>	Crit. X <sup>2</sup>	Decision
Strongly Disagree	36	322	3	0.05	986.30	7.81	Rejected
Disagree	63	322					
Agree	494	322					
Strongly Agree	695	322					

Table 4: Chi-Square on the Effects of Inferiority Complex on Examination Malpractice among Secondary School Students

Value in parentheses are percentages ( $X^2 = 986.30$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = 0.05 > 0.000$ )

Table 7, showed a chi-square value of 986.30, df 3 and  $P=0.05 > 0.000$  which was statistically significant. The null hypothesis which stated that inferiority complex does not have significant effect on examination malpractice among secondary school students in Ankpa and Olamaboro Local Government Areas of Kogi State was therefore rejected. This implied that secondary school students did significantly perceive the negative effects of inferiority complex on examination malpractice in study area.

### 3. Discussion of Findings

The discussion of the major findings of the research is organized according to the research questions and hypotheses for ease of reading and comprehension. Out of the four null hypotheses that were postulated and tested, all were rejected

The findings from the research question one and hypothesis one revealed that anxiety was significantly perceived to have negative effects on examination malpractice among secondary school students in the study area. The findings are in line with Elsie, (2001) who stated that anxious students and complex subjected matter combine to create a difficult environment in which to teach successfully becomes a major challenge. The results are also in line with Ugodulunwa, (2008) who said that Anxiety has been identified as one of the serious problems students experience when taking tests or examinations. Some experienced increased tension when examination is announced which leads them to panic and cheating during examinations. The results are also in consonance with Ogoji (2008) who stated that it is important that anxiety be minimized while the development of positive self concept is maximized for the attainment of educational goals. Anxiety therefore interferes with learning and create negative self concept in an anxious students. The above create the tendency to cheat in examinations by anxious students become eminent.

Findings from research question two and hypothesis two showed that inferiority complex was significantly perceived as a negative effect of examination malpractice among secondary school students in the study area. The results are in line with the views of Murdock (2006) who said that examination mal-practitioners consider themselves inferior to others due to their involvement in cheating. He stated further that, examination malpractice affect students self concept, that is evaluating oneself either positively or negatively, thereby leading to low or high self concept. The views were also supported by Iyaji (2009) who said students who involved themselves in examination malpractice hardly identify their true talents and achieve their destinies. Students suffering from inferiority complex exhibit the following behaviours. Social withdrawal, that is, they may consider themselves as not worthy of being with others, blaming the universe, they

attribute any failure to external factors such as poor luck, bad company and the like, sour grapes, that is they may not have been able to perform a certain task at work properly, and if a colleague did it successfully, they would attribute the success to external factors. Kolo, (2010) also supported the findings that the development of the sense of failure by students who feel inadequate could be responsible for their involvement in cheating during examination to cover their emptiness.

#### 4. Conclusion

Examination malpractice negatively affects secondary school students in the study area psychologically and socially based on the variables studied. Based on the findings of this work anxiety and inferiority complex were perceived to have negative effects on examination malpractice among senior secondary school students in the study area.

As a result of the findings, counselling has been identified as a viable tool in curbing this scourge. This can be done by assisting students to make profitable use of time, build and develop sound moral values of honesty, positive self-concept, and self-confidence and so on to write examinations and achieve success without indulging in any illicit act. Such counselling sessions will assist students to overcome fear of failure, feeling of inadequacy, loss of hope associated with examination malpractice.

#### 5. Counseling Implications

The findings of this study has guidance and counselling implication

- Setting up Guidance and counseling units in all secondary schools to assist in giving talks to students individually or in groups on expected behaviours before, during and after examinations. This might to help sensitize students, reduce phobia, anxiety and tension associated with examinations.
- Assisting students to make profitable use of time build and develop sound moral values of honesty, positive self-concept, and self-confidence and so on to write examinations and achieve success without indulging in any illicit act. Such counselling sessions could assist students to overcome fear of failure, feeling of inadequacy, loss of hope associated with examination malpractice.
- Identify and help students with personality problems to identify their self-worth. That is, seeing themselves as superior and not inferior to others.

#### 6. Recommendations

- Students should have confidence on themselves. That is, they should assure themselves that if other students can pass examination genuinely, so can they.
- Students should develop positive image about themselves. This could help in alleviating their indulgence in examination malpractice.

#### 7. References

- i. Diekhoff, G.M., Labeff, E.E., Shinohara, K, & Yasukawa, H. (1999). College Cheating in Japan and the United State Research in Higher Education 40, 343-353.
- ii. Elsie, C. (2001). Designing a learning environment that alleviate Anxiety, Retrieved <http://www.cdti.nus.edu.sg/linkmar2002/itm2.htm>.
- iii. Iyaji, J.O. (2009). Examination Malpractice Types and Trends in Benue State. A Workshop organized for Principals, Vice Principals (Academics) and Proprietors of Post Primary Schools in Benue State.
- iv. Joe, A.I. (2004). Moral and ethical renaissance in the crusade against examination malpractices in education in Nigerian the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Joe, A.I. and Whawo, D.O. (Eds) Ibadan, Kraft Books Ltd.
- v. Joint Admission and Matriculation Board News page 1(2), 13 July-September 2010.
- vi. Kolo, F.D. (2010). Parenting and child guidance. Zaria Stevano Printing Press.
- vii. Murdock, T.B. (2006) Motivational perspectives on student cheating. Toward an integrated model of academic dishonesty. Educational Psychologist 41, 129 – 145.
- viii. Odongo, D.N. (2002). Controlling examination and irregularities Ugandan national examination board's experience. Proceedings of the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Association of Education Assessment in African. Tanzania, 7<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> Oct.
- ix. Ogoji, B. A. (2008). Motivational strategies for quality assurance in learning junior secondary cultural and creative arts (CCA) Nigerian Journal of Curriculum Studies 15(92): 50-59
- x. Omu, M. O. (2007). Examination malpractice: its virulent effect in school and society in Nigeria. Benue State University Journal of Education (BSUJE) Vol 8 (PP 102-107).
- xi. Ugodulunwa, C.A. (2008). Fundamentals of educational measurement and evaluation. Jos: Fab. Educational Books.