

Original Research Article

TEST ANXIETY AS CORRELATE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

Abstract

This study investigated test anxiety as correlate of secondary school students' attitude towards examination malpractice in Imo State, Nigeria. 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 method. The instruments used for the study were Test Anxiety Inventory (TAI) and Examination Malpractice Attitude Scale (EMAS). Descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Regression analysis were used for data analysis. Results obtained from the study indicated that majority of students in Imo state have high level of test anxiety. The result also showed that most of the students in Imo state have negative attitude towards examination malpractice. Moreover, the result revealed high positive significant relationship between secondary school students' test anxiety and their attitude towards examination malpractice. It was concluded among others that secondary school students' test anxiety significantly correlated with their attitude towards examination malpractice. The study recommended, among others that Counsellors, teachers and researchers should strengthen their efforts in creating programmes that will help in reducing students' test anxiety, so that students would feel less apprehensive and more prepared to face tests and examinations without any need to indulge in any form of malpractice.

Keywords: Relationship; Students; Test anxiety; Attitude; Examination malpractice.

Introduction

Virtually, in all countries of the world, education has been identified as a strong pillar upon which the social, economic and technological advancement of the society depend (Oguzie & Nwokolo, 2019). Hence, many countries including Nigeria have acknowledged and adopted education as a vital medium for empowering their citizens morally and intellectually so as to produce individuals of worthwhile personality with relevant skills, aptitudes and competences needed for optimum national growth and sustainable development. In order to ensure that the objectives of any educational curricular are achieved, the need to examine students' mastery of the subject-matter becomes a necessity.

Consequent upon the above, examination becomes a yardstick against which students' competence and progress are formally measured. On this note, Emaikwu (2012) observed that examination is aimed at determining a student's level of skill acquisition or intellectual competence and understanding after a given training. George and Ukpong (2013) emphasized 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. Examination does not only function as a process of assessing the progress of students, but also motivates and helps students to know their academic strengths and weaknesses. It may also serve as a medium for providing feedback for teachers to try new methods of teaching.

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. Unfortunately, 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 major (Ajaja, 2012).

According to Oguzie and Nwokolo (2021), 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. Muhney, Gutmann and Schniedeman(2008) described examination malpractice as an academic dishonesty involving any act of omission or commission which compromises the reliability of any assessment or evaluation system. Examination malpractice has to do with any form of dishonesty perpetrated by a person or group of persons in an examination (Oguzie, Oguzie, Nnadi, Mokwelu & Obi, 2019). For the purpose of this study, examination malpractice is viewed as an illegal or unethical behaviour by somebody in the process of testing the ability or knowledge of a candidate.

Undoubtedly, examination malpractice mars the validity and resulting outcome and makes its credibility questionable. Oguzie and Nwokolo (2021) observed that the fact that examination is the major yardstick for measuring students' knowledge, achievement and performance seem to have appeared fallacious since examination malpractice has increasingly become endemic in the Nigerian education system. Oguzie and Nwokolo further stated that 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. Consequently, many students see examinations as wars of survival and examination malpractice as an effective means of winning the war because it remains the only means of obtaining certificates and the sole indices of educational growth (Ofodile, Odiato, Adenugba & Edun, 2019).

The problem of examination malpractice in Nigeria seems to have turned into a monster which is gradually destroying the education system. Examination malpractice could have serious consequences on the individuals, institutions of learning and the entire country. Examination malpractice may lead to great loss of credibility. A country that becomes notorious in examination malpractice could lose international credibility (Egobiambu, 2019). Probably, the prevalent rate of building collapse, economic sabotage, vandalism, kidnapping, drug trafficking, fake drug manufacturing, among others, may be practical effects of moral decadence emanating from examination malpractice. Hence, the negative impacts of examination malpractice are being felt in virtually all sectors of Nigerian economy such as the education, economic, religious and health sectors.

There are difference forms of examination malpractice, such as sometimes be perpetuated in form of impersonation, cheating, collaborative copying, theft of other students' work, smuggling of answer scripts in examinations halls, fabrication of results and disregard to examination regulations. Furthermore, forms of examination malpractice include bringing of un-authorized materials into the examination hall, collusion, swapping of answer booklets, examination score trading or assault on examination invigilators. Although examination malpractice has become widespread at all levels of education in Nigeria, students' attitude towards it may greatly determine their likelihood to indulge in the crime or not (Anierobi, Madike, Unachukwu & Ebenebe, 2016). Thus, students' attitude may influence their views, feelings and opinions about examination malpractice.

Conceptualizing the term attitude, Nwokolo and Oguzie (2021) asserted that people's posture, mood, feelings, disposition or position about an issue, event, idea, or something tends to constitute their attitude. Attitude is the key to success (Fanseca, 2010). It influences a person's choice of action and response to stimuli. Therefore, students' attitude towards examination could be a factor that indicates whether or not they will participate in the crime.

An individual's attitude could be either positive or negative. Consequently, people who have negative attitude towards examination malpractice may view it as a crime, and possibly refrain from the act. In the other hand, people who show positive attitude towards

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examination malpractice may view it as a worthwhile behaviour, and this could make them susceptible to the maladaptive act. In the context of this study, attitude towards examination malpractice is defined as an individual's opinion, feeling, convictions or preconceived notion about examination malpractice which could make them susceptible or not to the act.

Research has shown that students' attitude towards examination malpractice can be influenced by various factors. Oguzie and Nwokolo (2021) defined correlation as either of two things so related that one directly implies or is complementary to the other. Therefore, two or more variables are correlated when there is a relationship between them. Consequently, two variables are said to be correlated when a change in one of the variables results in a similar or opposition change in the other, vice-versa. One possible factor that may correlate with students' attitude towards examination malpractice is test anxiety.

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Anxiety may be described as a general feeling of fear and apprehension over anticipated danger. It is a psychological condition created by expectations or thoughts about what is likely going to happen, and is characterised by feeling of uncertainty. Anagbogu and Nwokolo (2012) simply defined anxiety as worry or disturbance of the mind. Anxiety is a familiar emotion because it is part of everyone's experience. Anxiety is a natural human state and may be a vital part of human life (Obi & Oguzie, 2019). Its natural function is to alert people of potential threats, allowing them to evaluate and respond to them in appropriate ways. This heightened state of readiness can stimulate creative impulses and help people perform better in difficult situations. Perhaps, anxiety helps human beings to identify and respond to danger, and motivates people to deal with life challenges. However, when anxiety becomes persistent, it becomes a problem. Persistent anxiety may cause emotional distress and impact negatively on an individual's daily functioning.

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Test anxiety is referred to as a state of uneasiness, worry or feeling of uncertainty about impending or ongoing evaluation programme such as test or examination (Okorodudu & Ossai, 2014). It is a type of performance anxiety that makes students feel terrified about tests. Eremie and Ikpa (2020), defined test anxiety as a kind of self-preoccupation which is manifested with self-minimization and uncertainty about abilities of oneself and results in negative cognitive evaluation, lack of concentration, unfavourable physiological reactions and academic failure. Otu (2009) revealed that test anxiety significantly predicts students' attitude towards examination malpractice. Students who possess high test anxiety may be more predisposed to positive attitude towards examination malpractice than those with low level of test anxiety. For the purpose of this study, test anxiety is defined as an emotional condition in which students experience extreme stress, worry and discomfort before or during

tests. It may be normal for students to feel a slight sense of nervousness when taking tests, but when such feeling becomes excess, it may be detrimental. Lowe and Ang (2012) observed that test anxiety is prevalent among secondary school students.

Studies in available literature have shown that test anxiety can influence students' attitude towards examination malpractice (Nyamwange, Ondima & Onderi, 2013; Bette, 2014; Bassey & Iruoje, 2016). More so, a study by Nwamuo and Ihekwaba (2014) found that test anxiety and attitude towards examination malpractice are highly correlated. Unfortunately, the rate and manner at which examination malpractice is being perpetrated recently has raised a serious concern to teachers, counsellors, government, examination bodies and other stakeholders whose efforts at curbing the problem through punitive measures have not yielded the much desired result. Anzene (2014) observed that examination malpractice is common and many examinations witness the emergence of new and ingenious ways of malpractice.

Moreover, there is an unprecedented increase in the incidences of examination malpractice in many ~~external and~~ external examinations in Imo state (Oguzie, Oguzie, Nnadi, Mokwelu & Obi, 2019). It is so **heartbreaking** that examination malpractice is fast eroding the culture of hard work, diligence and honesty among students in the present society. Perhaps, this is because, when students see themselves as incapable people for carrying out success oriented academic tasks, they may develop feelings of anxiousness during examination situations. As a result, such students may view malpractice as a cheap escape route for examination. Hence, establishing the influence of test anxiety as per its relationship to attitude towards examination malpractice will provide counsellors and educators with good knowledge of a possible factor that can predispose secondary school students to examination malpractice in Imo state.

Statement of the Problem

In recent times, the rate of students' involvement in examination malpractice has assumed a serious problem in Nigeria generally and Imo State in particular. This is evident as reports from the various examination bodies such as the West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO), Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) indicated rampant cases of examination malpractice nationwide. The case of the 2019 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) result which was released much later than usual due to widespread of malpractices at many of the examination centres is a typical example. The JAMB spokesman when finally declaring the release of the 2019 UTME

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Comment [j5]: Authors should summarise and clarify the connection between test anxiety and attitude towards examination malpractice. This and previous chapter have a good elements, but they are scattered and blurred.

result noted that the results of 44,265 candidates were withheld as a result of varying forms of malpractices (Egobiambu, 2019).

In the time past, students in Imo State studied very hard and wrote their examinations with little or no malpractice. Those days, any action that will mar the credibility of examinations was jettisoned. However, the increasing rate of examination malpractice has become a major source of worry to students, parents, teachers, counsellors, researchers, examination bodies, government and the general society. Different measures are put in place by schools, examination bodies and the government to curb the problem of examination malpractice in Nigeria. Such measures include the 1999 examination malpractice act (as amended), which stipulated stringent punishments for any individual involved in any form of examination malpractice. The punishments included the suspension or total expulsion of students caught in examination malpractice, loss of position or termination of appointment for teachers and examination administrators involved in the crime, withholding or total cancelation of results, among others. Again, the introduction of multiple paper options in the UTME by JAMB seemed to be another good fit in reducing incidences of malpractice in examinations nationwide.

Unfortunately, these efforts of schools, examination bodies and the government seem to have met with limited success when compared with the rate of examination malpractice witnessed in the Nigerian education system. The researchers' observation shows that there are some incidences whereby candidates appear at examination centres armed with dangerous weapons such as cutlasses, knives and even guns. Recently, there has been a great uproar for the wind of change and the fight against crime and corruption in Nigeria. However, the fight against corruption in Nigeria may remain unsuccessful if examination malpractice continues to ravage the education system.

Ideally, as a well known religious country, the citizens of Nigeria are expected to jettison examination malpractice, but it is unfortunate that many youths view the crime in a positive light perhaps due to anxiety. The problem of this study is that despite all efforts put in place to curb examination malpractice in Nigeria generally and Imo state in particular, the menace is getting more sophisticated year after year. This could be due to failure by relevant stakeholders to address the relationship that exists between test anxiety and students' attitude towards examination malpractice. This makes the study imperative as it will provide empirical evidence that will further strengthen the efforts towards eradicating examination malpractice from the education system in Imo State, and Nigeria in general.

Purpose of the Study

Comment [j6]: For such a statement there should be reliable source included in the text

Comment [j7]: Religion is a completely new variable or argument, and if author is willing to include it, it should be properly introduced and connected with the research problem. However, it is used just to mean to stress expected jettisoning, which should be avoided.

The main purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between secondary school students' test anxiety and their attitude towards examination malpractice. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. The test anxiety scores of secondary school students.
2. The attitude towards examination malpractice scores of secondary school students.
3. The relationship between secondary school students' test anxiety and their attitude towards examination malpractice.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the test anxiety 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' test anxiety and their attitude towards examination malpractice?

Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between the secondary school students' test anxiety and their attitude towards examination malpractice.

Comment [j8]: The whole argumentation as well as mentioned previous findings suggest just the opposite

Theoretical Framework

In this section, a major theory related to this study was reviewed as follows:

Rational Emotive Behaviour Theory (REBT)

Rational Emotive Behaviour Theory (REBT) was propounded by Albert Ellis in the year 1955 as Rational Therapy. The theory was later renamed Rational Emotive Therapy, and then changed to Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy in 1956. REBT states that, the way people think, believe, feel and behave is determined by the way they perceive and structure their experience. It further states that distorted or dysfunctional thinking underlies all psychological disturbances. Ellis believes that man is born with a potential to be uniquely rational and irrational, sensible and crazy (Ellis, 2007). According to the theory, when man is rational, he thinks straight and has the tendency to help himself achieve desired goals. Since man is also born with irrational tendency, he can think crookedly and defeat desired goals by needlessly making himself extremely anxious, depressed, self-downing, hostile and self-

Comment [j9]: Theoretical framework could not possibly be REBT, as it is a form of psychotherapy, while the paper, from introduction, to method, results, discussion and conclusion is not oriented in this branch, but educational studies. Therefore, authors should not include it in theoretical framework. Theoretical explanations form introduction on educational malpractice and test anxiety, could be used for this chapter, if necessary.

pitying. Ellis also contended that thought, emotion and action are not separable. Since feelings are usually brought about by how one perceives a specific situation, one hardly emotes without thinking. In his words, Ellis stated that “when human beings emote, they also think and act; when they act, they also think and emote; and when they think, they also emote and act. This implies that emotional disturbances and maladaptive behaviours such as test anxiety and low self-esteem emanate from illogical and irrational thought patterns.

Ellis’s A-B-C principle of personality holds that it is an individual’s belief about an issue or event, not the event itself that causes irrational actions and resultant consequences. The theory is based on the belief that most problems such test anxiety originate from irrational thought. For instance, a student who took illegal materials into the examination hall did that as a result of his irrational belief about the examination and not the just the examination itself. In the hypothetical example above, one could tell oneself that passing the examination through self-effort pays better, whereas indulging in examination malpractice could lead one into trouble. Disputing the irrational belief could lead one to study very hard so as to obtain good grades than to indulge in examination malpractice.

According to Ellis, rational emotive behaviour theory holds that psychopathology sets in as a result of irrational and illogical interpretations people give to issues, situations and events in their lives. Rational emotive behaviour theory emphasises on changing people’s irrational thoughts and beliefs by helping them to examine such thoughts and beliefs logically. By so doing, people suffering from test anxiety could gain deep insight into the sources of their disturbances. Therefore, the goal of the theory is to help clients eliminate their maladaptive thought pattern and adopt adaptive thinking. Ellis noted that people’s self-esteem is depended on their thinking pattern and belief system about issues, events and situations that surround their lives.

Rational emotive behaviour theory is related to this study because it explains how irrational thoughts and beliefs lead to emotional disturbances such as test anxiety, and maladaptive behaviours such as examination malpractice. REBT pointed out that what causes emotional disturbance and maladaptive behaviours among students is not the specific situation, but their perception and belief about the situation. The theory therefore shows that examination per [say-se](#) does not cause test anxiety or lead students into malpractice, rather it is their beliefs about examination that causes anxiety and predisposes them to examination malpractice. Some students may feel not worthy or able of successfully scaling through examinations by their honest personal efforts. Hence, they may feel so worried, tensed,

anxious and worthless, which consequently may make them more susceptible to examination malpractice.

In the light of the above, this study was anchored on the assumptions of the rational emotive behaviour theory. This is because the researchers expected that students who have irrational thoughts and beliefs about given academic tasks or evaluation situations may develop emotional disturbance and maladaptive behaviours such as test anxiety and positive 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.

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Two instruments were used for collecting data for this study. First, the Test Anxiety Inventory (TAI) was used to measure the students' level of test anxiety in this study. TAI was developed by Spielberger (1980), and has been adapted to Nigeria setting and have been used extensively in Nigeria (Anyamene, Igboanugo & Ezunu, 2020; Obi & Oguzie, 2019). TAI instrument is a twenty-item scale with a maximum total of 80 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 test anxiety. The internal consistency for the Test Anxiety Inventory (TAI) was reported as Coefficient alpha of 0.92 (Spielberger, 1980). Additionally, the test score stability over 2-4 weeks test-retest interval for TAI ranged from 0.80 to 0.81 for TAI for (Spielberger, 1980). 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 -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 well 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' test anxiety

Range of scores	N	%	Remarks
20 – 34.85	1385	39.3	Low test anxiety
34.86 – 80	2135	60.7	High test anxiety

In table 1, it was observed that 2135(60.7%) ~~of the~~ students (with the scores ranging from 34.86 to 80) have high test anxiety, while 1385(39.3%) ~~of the~~ students ~~who~~ (scored between 20 and 34.85) have low test anxiety.

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

Range of scores	N	%	Remarks
30 – 74	2103	59.7	Negative attitude towards examination malpractice
75 – 120	1417	40.3	Positive attitude towards examination malpractice

Table 2 indicates 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.

Comment [j11]: the same as in the previous paragraph.

Table 3: Pearson r on students' test anxiety and their attitude towards examination malpractice scores

Source of Variation	N	Test anxiety r	Attitude r	Remark
Test anxiety	3520	1.00	0.82	Very High Positive Relationship

Attitude 3520 0.821.00

In table 3, it was observed that there is very high positive relationship of 0.82 between the secondary school students' test anxiety and their attitude towards examination malpractice.

Table 4: Significant of Pearson r on the students' test anxiety and their attitude towards examination malpractice using probability table of r

N	cal. r	df	pvalue	Cal.pvalue	Remark
3520	0.82	3519	0.05	0.00	S

S = Significant

In table 4, it was observed that at 0.05 level of significance and 3519df, the calculated $r=0.82$ has pvalue 0.00 which is less than the critical pvalue 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant relationship between secondary school students' test anxiety and their attitude towards examination malpractice.

Discussion of Findings

The results of this study revealed that majority of secondary school students (60.7%) in Imo state have high level of test anxiety (Table 1). This finding shows that although many of the students believe that they are unique, capable and worthy, they still feel tensed up and anxious during tests and examinations. This finding is consistent with the findings by previous researchers (Okoiye, Anokam and Nwoga, 2016; Agunbiade & Ajayi, 2018; Obi & Oguzie, 2019) who reported that many students have high level of test anxiety. The possible reason for the high level of test anxiety observed among the students in this study may be as a result of various academic challenges confronting students such as completing academic tasks, sustaining good academic results and managing time to study. Wilayat (2013) blamed parents for setting perfectionist standard for their wards, and pointed out that only few children can withstand the pressure of parents. Ofodile, Odiato, Adenugba and Edun (2019) observed that students see examinations as wars of survival and examination cheating as an effective means of winning the war because it remains the only means of obtaining certificates and the sole indices of educational growth. Beside academic challenges, students are also confronted with other social problems such as school violence, bullying, vandalism, and family problems, which can cause stress and anxiety among students (Gang, Gregory, Yoon & Alan, 2018). When students feel excessively anxious about examinations, they may be forced to view examination malpractice as a cheap and worthwhile means of scaling through examinations.

Comment [j12]: This has not been a part of this research, authors should keep to the exact findings

Another findings of this study showed that most of the secondary school students (59.7%) in Imo state have negative attitude towards examination malpractice (Table 2). 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 & Nwankwo, 2020; Oguzie & Nwokolo, 2021; Onyekuru & Barituka, 2017) 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.

Comment [j13]: This is not a valid research finding

However, the above finding contradicts the findings of previous researchers (Ajaja, 2012; Anierobi, Madike, Unachukwu & Ebenebe, 2016; Oguzie, Oguzie, Nnadi, Mkwelue & Obi, 2019) who in their studies 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 be 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.

Comment [j14]: Authors should follow the author guidelines: In the text, citations should be indicated by the reference number in brackets [3].

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Furthermore, the result from the study revealed that a significant positive relationship exists between the students' test anxiety and their attitude towards examination malpractice. This finding is in accordance with the report of previous researchers (Nyamwange, Ondima & Onderi, 2013; Bette, 2014; Bassey & Iruoje, 2016) who found that there is significant relationship between test anxiety and attitude towards examination malpractice. The result also supports the finding of Nwamuo and Ihekwaba (2014) who concluded that test anxiety and attitude towards examination malpractice are highly correlated. Moreso, Oko and Adie (2016) found that there exists a very high positive significant relationship between test anxiety and students' attitude towards examination malpractice. Oko and Adie further noted that this is because students see examinations as wars of survival and examination cheating as an effective means of winning the war because it remains the only means of obtaining certificates and the sole indices of educational growth. Onuoha and Nwafor (2015) in their study observed that anxiety experienced by students is among the factors responsible for their attitude towards examination malpractice. Based on this report, Onuoha and Nwafor recommended a deformatization of both internal and external examinations for purpose of reducing anxiety among students. Bette (2014) emphasized that the high stake and competitive nature of academic activities arouse anxiety which is responsible for academic dishonesty among students. Bette further pointed out that the pressure students face in school is likened to the competition in the business community which is not just to excel but much more a struggle to economic uncertainties and instabilities.

However, this finding contradicts the finding of Ofodile, Odiato, Adenugba and Edun (2019) who reported that there is no significant relationship between students' test anxiety and their attitude towards examination malpractice. The reason for the disagreement in the findings of this study and that of Ofodile and her group may be due to the difference in methodological approach and location. Ofodile and her group used a small sample size, focusing their research only on one local government area, while the present study had a large sample size which covered many local government areas. Also, Ofodile introduced Independent Sample t-test in her data analysis, while the present study used only aggregate scores, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and regression analysis in analyzing its data. Finally, difference in location may also be a determinant factor for the discrepancy in the findings.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that majority of the students in Imo state have high level of test anxiety. It was also concluded that most of the students in Imo state have negative attitude towards examination malpractice. Moreover, it was concluded that there is a very high significant positive relationship between secondary school students' test anxiety and their attitude towards examination malpractice.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Counsellors, teachers and researchers should strengthen their efforts in creating programmes that will help in reducing students' test anxiety, so that students would feel less apprehensive and more prepared to face test and examination without any need to indulge in any form of malpractice.
2. Secondary school teachers should try to use suitable teaching/instructional methods that will help to encourage easy comprehension and understanding of the contents being taught so that they will be able to face academic challenges without fear and anxiety.
3. Parents and care-givers should try their best possible to instil good moral values among their children and wards and avoid any action or behaviour capable of encouraging positive attitude towards examination malpractice among them.
4. Counsellors, teachers and other staff should create programmes that will help discourage positive attitude towards examination malpractice among students.

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