

ATTITUDE TOWARD EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE AND  
ACHIVEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL CHEMISTRY  
STUDENTS IN ITU LGA OF AKWA IBOM STATE

BY

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study aimed at determining the attitude of SS II Chemistry students toward examination malpractice and its effect on their achievement. Survey research design was employed in carrying out the study. Four research questions were raised and examined using 100 randomly selected SS II chemistry students. Data were obtained through questionnaire and chemistry promotion examination results were analyzed using percentage, independent t-test and regression. The findings showed that 64% of the students had positive attitude toward examination malpractice and that attitude toward examination malpractice has significant effect on chemistry students' achievement. The need for attitudinal re-orientation was emphasized and several suggestions made.

## BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Nigeria as a nation is currently undergoing rebirth in various sectors hence education cannot be an exception. The cornerstone for rebirth in education sector hinges on the eradication of examination malpractice in our educational Institutions. Examination malpractice can be viewed as illegal acts done for one's own benefit in the process of testing the broad knowledge or ability in students' educational development (Okpala et al, 1993 and Devis 1972)

The evils of examination malpractice are numerous but prominent among them include providing invalid data for evaluation hence making the decision taken based on such data misleading, promoting laziness and indiscipline among others. We have to eradicate the vice if Nigeria has to be in tune with many societies including United State of America, which envisage entrepreneurial education age in this millennium. The entrepreneurial education age emphasizes ambition to solve problems confronting the society and hard work these cannot be accomplished in examination malpractice era. Furthermore, assessment will be more meaningful since examination will provide valid data for

evaluation and mastery learning will be given prominent attention.

Despite these merits, there have been widespread cases of examination malpractice across the country (Obong, 1991 and Udoh, 1998). These cases of examination malpractice pose serious danger to the authenticity of the certificates issued in Nigerian institution of learning vis-à-vis Examination Bodies. In view of the evils of examination malpractice, the Nigeria government issued decrees in 1973, 1977, 1983, 1986 and 1992 stipulating various punishments for offenders of examination malpractice. These decrees notwithstanding, Ndem (1998) and Udoh (1998) still reported that incidence of examination malpractice in our secondary school are on the increase.

This increase in the incidence of examination malpractice might be as a result of attitude of students towards examination malpractice. Alvarez (1989) viewed attitude as behaviour that is regulated that is regulated, filled with emotion, Varying in intensity, and generality according to the specific situation in which they apply. He opined that attitudes are learned to form a component of the

characteristic trait of interest, appreciation, like, dislike, opinion values and idea of an individual.

Ato (1986) and Alvarez (1989) reported that attitude of students vary between junior and senior, male and female as well as urban and rural students. It is believed that if examination malpractice becomes a component of characteristic of our students, our educational system will be in jeopardy.

Eventhough the incidents of examination malpractice are increasing, student, student achievement is in the decline, Omole (2002) opined that a nation where over 70% of our candidates adjudge to have interest in science and technology oriented careers cannot proceed beyond secondary education spell doom for our national development. He maintained that only 30% of WAEC candidates pass Science, Mathematics and Technology subjects at credit level.

#### **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

The problem of this study was to find out the attitude of chemistry students toward examination malpractice and its effect on their achievement.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTION**

The understated research questions were raised to guide the investigation.

1. What is the attitude of students toward examination malpractice?
2. How do the attitude of students toward examination malpractice vary with gender?
3. How do the attitudes of students toward examination malpractice vary with schools location?
4. What is the effect of students' attitude toward examination malpractice on their achievement?

#### METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was adopted in carrying out the investigation. The target population was all senior secondary two chemistry students in Itu Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. There were about 850 SS II Chemistry students in public secondary schools in the area. Simple random techniques were utilized in selecting 10 (5 urban and 5 rural) out of 17 public secondary schools in the local government area. In each school, 10 SS II chemistry students comprising of 5 males and 5 females were randomly selected for the study. The students Attitude Toward Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (SATEMQ) were constructed using Likert format by the investigator.

SATEMQ was to elicit information on students' attitude toward examination malpractice. Some of the points in which the questionnaire was to elicit information include enjoyment of participating and sustaining of examination malpractice among others. A total of 21 items were developed and validated using three lecturers who are experts in educational evaluation. Their feedback caused two items to be eliminated and one item amended. The remaining 19 items were administered on 30 randomly selected secondary two students twice within two week and test-retest reliability computed. Reliability coefficient of 81 was obtained.

All the questionnaires were administered personally on the subjects in-group per school after due consultation was made with school authorities and sampling completed. Strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed and undecided were scored 4,3,2,1 and 0 respectively for positive items and reversed for negative items.

2000/2001 promotion examination in Chemistry of the students were used as indices of achievement SATEMQ was administered during this promotion examination. Data were analysed using percentage, independent t-test and regression. The square of regression coefficient ( $R^2$ )

was computed using the formulae by Klingner and Pedhazur (1973: 11); in which the square of regression coefficient ( $R^2$ ) is given by

$$R^2 = \frac{SS_{reg}}{SS_t}$$

Where  $SS_{reg}$  = the sum of squares regression

$SS_t$  = the sum of squares total

The significant of  $R^2$  was tested by F-ratio given by

$$F = \frac{\frac{R^2}{K}}{\frac{1 - R^2}{N - K - 1}}$$

Where  $K$  = the number of groups or variables

$N$  = number of scores.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Answers to the four research questions earlier stated were provided in the order in which they were stated. Research Question One: What is the attitude of students toward examination malpractice?

In order to explain students attitude towards examination malpractice, the number of students who



4.	I do not like a school system in which cheating is not allowed	80	80	2
5.	I will like to take my WAEC or NECO examination in a school where cheating is allowed	91	91	1
6.	I appreciate people who cheat for high scores	45	45	19
7.	I will not like to attend a symposium which aim at discouraging cheating in the examination	53	53	17

8.	To cheat in examination enable one to help himself academically	60	60	12
9.	I will like to vote for a prefect who encourages cheating in examination	65	65	8
10.	I will not like to report any person who cheat in an examination to the school authorities	46	46	18
11.	I will encourage people to cheat in examination	56	56	16

12.	There is nothing wrong in cheating in examination	71	70	5
13.	I have sympathy for people got cheating in examination	61	61	11
14.	There is nothing wrong supporting people who cheat to succeed	68	68	7
15.	I will like to make friends with people who engage in examination malpractices	59	59	13
16	I will not like to see examination malpractices stopped in our school	62	62	10

17	I hate teachers who do not allow cheating in their examinations	73	73	4
18	I hate authorities who are against examination malpractices	57	57	15
19	I hate my peers who are against examination malpractices	63	63	9

N=100

The results showed that more than a half of the students had positive attitude toward examination malpractices except in items 6 and 10.

From the ranked column, item 5 is ranked first with 91% of the student having positive attitude to the item (I will like to take my WAEC or NECO examinations in a school where cheating is allowed). This is followed by item 4 (I do not like a school system where cheating is not allowed) with 80% of the students having positive attitude. Only 45% of the students had positive attitude toward item 6 (I appreciate people who cheat for high score). This is closely followed by item 10 (I will not like to report any person who cheat in an examination to the school authorities). Item 6 ranked last. In the average ( $\frac{total\ %}{19}$ ) 64% of the students had positive attitude toward examination malpractice.

**RESEARCH QUESTION TWO:** How do the attitudes of students toward examination malpractice vary with gender?

In order to provide solution to this research question, a null hypothesis was stated thus: Male and female students do not differ significantly in their attitude toward examination malpractice. To test the hypothesis, independent t-test was used and summary data shown in table 2.

Table 2: Data for computing independent t-test for difference in attitude of male and female SS II chemistry student towards examination malpractice

Gender	N	X	S <sup>2</sup>	T
Male (X <sub>1</sub> )	50	31.8	25.1	1.25
Female (X <sub>2</sub> )	50	30.3	48.1	

Not significant P>.05

Since the computed t(1.25) was less than the critical value (1.980) at df of 98 and .05 level of significant, the null hypothesis was retained hence male and female SS II chemistry students do not differ significantly on their attitude toward examination malpractice.

Research Question Three: how do the attitudes of students toward examination malpractice vary with school location?

In order to provide solution to this question a null hypothesis was stated that urban and rural students do not differ significantly in their attitude toward examination malpractice. Independent t-test was utilized in testing this hypothesis and summary data shown in table 3.

Table 3: Data for computing Independent t-test of Attitude of Urban and Rural SS II Students toward Examination Malpractice.

Gender	N	X	S <sup>2</sup>	T
Urban (X <sub>1</sub> )	50	32.1	36.7	1.95
Rural (X <sub>2</sub> )	50	29.8	32.6	

Not significant P>.05



The null hypothesis is retained because the computed  $t(1.95)$  is less than the critical  $t(1.98)$  at  $df$  of 98 and 05 level of significant. Therefore urban and rural students do not differ significantly in their attitudes toward examination malpractice.

Research Question Four: What is the effect of students attitude toward examination malpractice on their achievement?

Regression analysis was employed in the provision of answer to this research question. The summary data for computing square of regression coefficient and F-ratio are shown in table 4

Table 4 Summary data for computing  $R^2$  and F-ratio of regression of achievement on attitude

Source	SSreg	SSi	df	$R^2$	F
Regression of achievement on attitude	241	373	1.97	.6461	88.67*

\*Significant  $P < 0.05$

The computed  $F(88.67)$  is greater than the critical value (3.92) at  $df$  of 1.97 and 05 level of significant.



Therefore the regression of achievement on attitude of students toward examination malpractice was significant.

Hence attitude of students toward examination malpractice have significant effect on their achievement. The value of square of regression coefficient ( $R^2$ ) indicated that the contribution of the independent variable (attitude) to the dependent variable (achievement). The value of  $R^2$  (.6861) indicated that 68.61% of variation on achievement is as a result of examination malpractice.

## DISCUSSION

The results that the students have positive attitude toward examination malpractice is very sad especially when results of analysis has shown that it has significant effect on their performance.

The attitude of students toward examination malpractice needs to be re-oriented so that they can appreciate the evils of examination malpractice. The family should be encouraged by government to start this crusade. When the society de-emphasized success through examination malpractice, students attitude could change for the better. When students are out to pass examination even when they do not work hard, cheating is eminent.

Hardwork according to Afrifa (1991) is the secret of success in the SSC examination but unfortunately many

students in our secondary schools are not hardworking instead, a great deal of time is used to prepare to cheat. Adeyemo (1974) is of the opinion that in a school system where everybody is hardworking, most members of the school would be disciplined. The implication is that discipline produces self-control, orderliness, obedience and power of cooperation in the students. These can promote positive attitude towards examination malpractice.

One of the ways of solving examination malpractice is through attitudinal reorientation by teaching using Mastery Learning Approach propose that a teacher can teach so that all his students to master the objective of each lesson. When most students learn well most of what had been taught, they are likely to acquire some positive attitude towards learning and become more prepared to learn. In such approach, hardwork would be emphasized. The students would be better prepared to tackle examination problem. The students will approach the examination with confidence.

## CONCLUSION

Since all legal efforts to combat examination malpractice by Federal Government seem not to yield the anticipated results, it appears there is a great need for attitudinal re-orientation through mastery learning approach.

## SUGGESTIONS

The understated suggestions were made in the light of the findings of this study.

1. There should be vigorous and sustained enlightenment campaigns in the churches, mosques, in schools, at various community, ward and group meetings at National, State and Local government levels on the evil of examination malpractice.
2. Occasionally, intensive seminar and workshop on evil of examination malpractice should be organized for students.
3. There is need for our religious leaders traditional rulers community leaders chairmen of PTA, ANCOPS, NUT and other related bodies to be involved in fighting the problem of examination malpractice.
4. Teachers should be adequately motivated to work hard and imbibe mastery learning approach.

5. Federal Government should establish a national commission for ethics in education to provide ways and means of promoting moral and ethical values right from the family.
6. Hard working students should be given incentive.

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