

## **Aggression as a Correlate of Examination Malpractice Proneness Among Secondary School Students in Enugu State, Nigeria**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The purpose of this study was to investigate aggression as correlate to examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu state. Correlation design was adopted for the study. It was guided by two research questions and hypotheses respectively selected from some aggression triggers like use of physical threat and weapon. The population for the study consisted of all the 15,150 senior secondary school three (SS3) in the 289 public secondary schools in both urban and rural locations of Enugu state. The sample for the study was 600 senior secondary school three (SS3) students. Purposive and simple random sampling technique was used to draw the sample. The instruments for data collection were researcher constructed scale for examination malpractice and aggression scale. The instruments were validated by three research experts. A reliability coefficient of 0.79 and 0.78 were obtained respectively using Cronbach Alpha. Pearson product moment correlation was used to answer the research questions while test of hypotheses was analyzed using T-test at 0.05 level of significance. Major findings of the study indicated that aggression have both strong and weak correlation on examination malpractice proneness. There was no significant difference in relationship between aggression and examination malpractice proneness among rural and urban secondary school's students in Enugu State. It was recommended among other things that aggression triggers should be modulated in order to bring about decrease in examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu state.*

**KEYWORDS:** aggression, examination malpractice proneness, secondary school students

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a process through which individuals develop according to their talent, discover their potentials, solve personal needs with creativity and capability as well as create value for themselves and the society at large. This means that people can engage in educational experiences in order to satisfy their curiosity, interest, skill and personal development (Onyibe, Uma and Ibina, 2015). Hence education is a process of living grounded in a desire that all may flourish and share in life and not necessarily a preparation for future living (Animba, 2020). However as a veritable tool for national development, education lacks meaning without examination. This is because examination are important tool for determining mastery, level of knowledge, academic achievement and standard of education. Therefore, in order to have a valid assessment and evaluation of academic achievement of educational goals and objectives, there is need to have a reliable educational system dependent on an effective examination system as a fundamental component of teaching and learning. This training in school demands periodic assessment and evaluation in the form of test, project, practical or examinations in order to ascertain the level of achievement of knowledge and competence of the students (Taminu, 2015). The aforementioned examination is expected to cover all aspect of curriculum, provide the teacher with information about what a student knows, can do, misunderstand, and needs. At the end of every examination, marks are awarded to participating student with the aim of helping them understand their level of knowledge, skill, mastery over subject, strength and weakness for future improvement and learning. However, due to the importance of examination in academic activities, some student may resort to the path of least expectancy in order to achieve academic success and progress hence examination malpractice.

Examination malpractice is any action carried out by stakeholders such as educational administrators, teachers, parents and students that is likely to render examination ineffective or useless (Bruno and Obidigbo, 2012). It is a dishonest practice by a student in order to gain undue advantage in any form of assessment be it in test, classwork and examination. Examination proneness is the susceptibility and inclination of educational stakeholders to gain undue advantage before, during and after examination (Animba, 2023). Examination malpractice proneness in Nigeria is not only worrisome but frightening to teachers and school administrators as well as various interest groups like parents, government and the society in general with its practice becoming more sophisticated and institutionalized hence a big threat to the foundation of the country's educational system. This is because students have abandoned the rigors of study and depend instead on fraudulent means of passing examination thereby resorting to the use of shortcut and dubious ways in achievement of examination success (Yakubu and Idoko, 2019). The situation is so ugly that one hardly read newspapers, watch televisions, attend conferences or read through the internet without coming across issues bordering on examination malpractice (Taminu and Laceulle, 2017). This menace is beyond having qualified teachers, teachers being able to cover

their curriculum and scheme of work, internal and external supervision/inspection, teachers' welfare, lack of instructional materials and lack of teachers among others. This is because despite the many efforts being put forward by different governments in Nigeria, researchers, school authorities and examination body in order to eradicate this malady, examination malpractice proneness is becoming more prevalent, alarming and bold. With different innovation from technology, examination malpractice proneness in Enugu state is also fanned indicating a serious breakdown in the cultural structure of the society. Furthermore, investigation by the researcher on some of the secondary schools under study, revealed that most secondary schools in the Enugu State have alternatively become center of excellence (miracle center) where students can register especially for external examinations like NECO, WAEC, and NABTEB and subsequently determine the number of alphas and credit they want with assurances that their expectations are met at the end of the examination. This is evident in the rush to rural secondary schools in the state for external examinations where students practice different form of examination malpractice with different aggressive means in order to achieve success.

Similarly, examination bodies contribute to malpractice proneness by rewarding cheating during examination through non failure to penalize cheaters (Osuji, 2020). It is factual that examination malpractice proneness is gradually becoming norm of Nigeria's educational system with evidences of malpractice proneness in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. As a cancer of the society, examination malpractice proneness portends doom for future generation and society. This is because examinations infested with malpractices surely generates wrong data which will equally lead to poor decisions that will negatively affect learners, teachers, educational system and the society in general (Osuji, 2020). Statistics revealed that in 2018, out of 1,572,396 candidates that sat for WAEC, 102,058 results were withheld over exam malpractices, while in 2019, out of 1,590,173 candidates, 180, 205 results were seized as well as 215,149 results out of 1,538,445 candidates that sat for 2020 examination (Vanguard 2020). In Enugu State like other states in South-East Nigeria, it has its fair share of examination malpractice proneness with different aggressive behaviours such as forceful entrance, violence, threat and smuggling of acid, machete and gun into the examination halls during examination (Joseph Erunke, 2020).

Aggression is a behavior that is intended to harm another individual who does not wish to be harmed. According to APA (2016), it is a behavior aimed at harming others physically or psychologically. It is different from anger as anger is oriented at overcoming the target but not necessarily through harm or destruction while aggression is purposively performed with the primary goal of intentional injury. Aggressive behaviours have become so threatening to the academic progress and physical well-being of students, teachers, and other educational stakeholders society in general due to the negative consequences it exerts on the teaching-learning process as well as the quality of social interaction in the educational setting. It involves actions carried out principally in order to achieve a goal or as a response to a targeted source of distress. According to Yakubu and Idoko (2019), some student come to various examination center with

weapons like knives, bottles of acid, guns and other weapons which they secretly show the supervisors and invigilators as a way of intimidating them and the students. This behavior they exhibit in order to scare and intimidate everyone so that even when they are seen indulging in malpractice acts, no one will have the courage to report them or raise alarm. According to WAEC registrar Dr, Iyi Uwadie, some of these students also resorts to the drugging of invigilators using chemicals (Vanguard, 2020). He further opined that advancement of technology has also made the malaise assume dangerous and criminal dimensions through the use of smartphones, social media among others leading to exponential increase in cases of aggressive behaviours towards examination.

Moreover, aggression is not only life-threatening to students (victims) but can leave them so vulnerable, helpless, depressed and traumatic. Among deviant behaviours in the society, aggression appears to be the most prevalent and perturbing. This is because aggressive behaviour is displayed everywhere in the society. It starts from the family as a corrective behavior towards children, between neighbors as a form of misunderstanding, various meeting places as well as schools. Hence aggressive behaviour appear repulsive in our secondary schools as well as a major concern among stakeholders in education because school is an institution designed for teaching and learning. Unarguably, teaching, learning and examination can only successfully take place in a conducive environment devoid of intimidation, harassment, insecurity, and fear. In a national survey of crime and safety in Nigerian schools by Clean Foundation in 2012, it was discovered that aggressive behavior was on the increase in Nigeria with physical aggression at 19%, social bullying 11% and domestic violence 17% (Joseph Erunke, 2020). These trends are also seen during examination where student engage in different aggressive actions imitated in the society in order to pass examination. These actions include but not limited to bullying of fellow students in giving them correct answer or copying from the brighter students, blackmail of students, teachers and external examiners into cooperating with them in order to carry out these act, bringing of weapons like knives, axe and even guns to the examination hall and threats to students, teachers and examiners. When students are exposed to violence, their behavioural response in other situations may have a higher possibility of resulting in an aggressive reaction.

Aggressive behaviours like use of physical threat is evident when students threaten fellow students and invigilators in order to engage in examination malpractice. It has been observed that some students due to frustration from cumbersome curriculum, incorrect teaching method and other frustrating factors resort to aggressive behaviours like the use of threat in order to scare away invigilators before and during examination. Furthermore, aggression as being modeled in the society has the ability of making students susceptible to examination malpractice proneness. This is evident in the level of physical threat and weapons used by students in intimidating fellow students, teachers and invigilators into helping them gain undue advantage during examination.

Use of weapons during and after examination is the bringing in of weapons like axe, knives, guns and acidic substances into the examination hall (Uwadia, 2017). Students use this method in order

to frighten invigilators as well as subdue fellow student into helping them engage in examination malpractice. This they resort to since their academic expectations and gratifications could not be attained by reading their books or studying very hard only due to frustration. Also, aggression is being modelled as a valid means of achieving one's purpose in the society. Use of weaponry as a means of academic success also raises questions on the credibility and validity of different certificates awarded by Nigerian examination bodies and institutions of learning. This being the case, it promotes mediocrity, fosters laziness and lack of critical thinking, impair efficiency and endanger the intellectual abilities of the younger generation. However despite the association between exposure to aggression and examination malpractice proneness, not all student exposed to aggression will display aggressive examination behavior thus examination malpractice proneness is one possible outcome of exposure to aggression among secondary school students. Moreover, students at this educational level are also at a point where the hormones are heightened and unmanageable. Therefore, aggression should be seen as a serious issue.

### **Theoretical Frame work**

The essence of theoretical framework in a study of this nature was to establish scientific justifications why certain phenomenon occur as it were with possibility of empirical verification hence the theoretical framework of this study was based on the following theories: Frustration-Aggression and Social Learning theory. Frustration- Aggression theory as proposed by Miller Bolard (1939) posits that aggression is always the consequences of frustration. Hence a person engages in aggressive behavior when a trigger to injure/destroy has set in thereby making him overwhelmed, frustrated and helpless on how to come out of aforementioned situation. Therefore, he/she resorts to aggression in order to reduce the frustration. According to Ajayi and Nwogwugwu (2014), people are motivated to act aggressively through a drive induced by frustration hence frustration arises when goal attainment is blocked while aggression is an action aimed at removing the perceived stumbling blocks. Social Learning Theory as theorized by Bandura (1965) posited that aggression is a response to painful events as reinforced by imitation and modelling. According to this theory, the likelihood that a given behavior will occur in a specific social situation depends on the learning and imitation ability of the individual in a social situation, the expectancies concerning the outcome of the behavior and the reinforcement value the individual attach to such outcomes. Therefore, the two theories was able to explain the reason students are prone to examination malpractice and subsequent solution through aggression in order to achieve academic success. This they do because they want to remove the frustration they feel through frustration such as overloaded curriculum and over certification amongst others. Secondly in order to gain back the self-esteem and importance taken away from by frustration students become prone to examination malpractice thus resorts to how the society resolves its' frustrating issue using aggression.



### **Statement of the problem**

Examination malpractice proneness is a pre-requisite for other aggressive behavioural problems for a student hence should not be treated with kid's glove because of its tendency to destroy the physiological and psychological development of the student leading to loss of interest in academics and psychopathy. Examination is the foundation of teaching and learning therefore, when it becomes a threat to students, has the capacity to destroy every aspect of their lives. Therefore, the high premium on certificate, overloaded curriculum and other frustration triggers makes learning less fun and interesting leading to various degrees of depression, and the level of aggression evident in during examination. Hence the purpose of this study was to investigate aggression as a correlate to examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu State.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the relationship between physical threat and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu State as indicated by the correlational index?
2. What is the relationship between use of violence and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu State as indicated by the correlational index?

### **Hypothesis**

H0<sub>1</sub>: The correlation between physical threat and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu State does not significantly depend on the location of schools at 0.05 level.

H0<sub>2</sub>: The correlation between use of violence and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu State does not significantly depend on the location of schools at 0.05 level.

### **METHOD OF RESEARCH**

The study design was correlation survey. Nworgu (2015) noted that this type of study seeks to establish what relationship exists between two or more variables. The area of the study was Enugu State made up of six educational zones of Awgu, Enugu, Obollo, Udi, Agbani and Nsukka respectively. The population for the study consists of 15,150 senior secondary III (SS 3) students in the 289 public secondary schools in Enugu State. A sample of 600 senior secondary school three (SS 3) students selected using simple random and purposive sampling was used for the study. Data were collected with researcher structured instrument on examination malpractice proneness and aggression scale. Instrument was validated by three experts (Educational Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation whose inputs were incorporated before the final copies were administered. Reliability test showed significant relationship between examination malpractice proneness and aggression at overall reliability of 0.78. Method of data collection was face-to-face administration and collection by the researcher and two research assistants (teachers) after every

rating was completed by the respondent. Research question was answered with Pearson product moment correlation while t-test was used to test the hypothesis.

## RESULTS

### Research Question 1

**What is the relationship between physical threat and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu State?**

**Table 1:** correlation analysis for the relationship between physical threat and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu state

Variables	N	$\frac{\sum x}{\sum y}$	$\frac{\sum x^2}{\sum y^2}$	$\sum xy$	r-value	r-crit	Decision
Physical threat	600	22.62	52.77	55.42	0.0635	0.1045	Low correlation
Examination malpractice proneness	600	28.07	63.15				

The result in Table 1 indicate the calculated r-value of 0.0635 at 0.05 level of significance. This result therefore shows that physical threat has a low correlation with examination malpractice proneness. Simply put, there is a low correlation between physical threat and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu state.

### Research Question 2

**What is the relationship between use of weapon and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu State?**

**Table 2:** correlation analysis for the relationship between use of weapon and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu state

Variables	N	$\frac{\sum x}{\sum y}$	$\frac{\sum x^2}{\sum y^2}$	$\sum xy$	r-value	r-crit	Decision
Use of weapon	600	23.79	53.42	68.92	0.3111	0.1045	High correlation
Examination malpractice proneness	600	37.07	96.18				

The result in Table 2 indicate the calculated r-value of 0.3111 at 0.05 level of significance. This result therefore shows that use of weapon has a high correlation with examination malpractice

proneness. Simply put, there is a high relationship between use of weapons and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu state.

### Hypothesis

**The relationship between physical threat and examination malpractice proneness among urban and rural secondary school students in Enugu State is not significant.**

**Table 3: t-test analyses for hypothesis 1**

Group	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-calculated	t-critical	Remark
Urban	300	1.92	0.22	0.54	1.96	Not significant (Do not reject hypothesis)
Rural	300	1.77	0.17			

From Table 3, t-calculated (0.54) is less than t-critical (1.96). Hence, at .05 significant level, the mean ratings of the two groups (urban and rural) do not differ significantly. Therefore, hypothesis one was not rejected as stated, indicating that location of school does have significant relationship between physical threat and examination malpractice among secondary school students in Enugu State.

### Hypothesis 2

**The relationship between use of weapon and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu State is not significant**

**Table 4: t-test analyses for hypothesis 2**

Group	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-calculated	t-critical	Remark
Urban	300	3.07	0.32	0.42	1.96	Not significant (Do not reject hypothesis)
Rural	300	3.11	0.19			

From Table 4, t-calculated (0.42) is less than t-critical (1.96). Hence, at .05 significant level, the mean rating of the two group (urban and rural) do not differ significantly. Therefore, hypothesis two was not rejected as stated, indicating that location of school does have significant relationship between use of weapon and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu State.



## **DISCUSSIONS**

The findings of this study revealed low correlation between physical threat and examination malpractice proneness. Simply put, physical threat has low relationship with examination malpractice proneness. This finding agrees with the findings of Sugut & Mugasia (2014) who reported in their studies that physical threat relates to examination malpractice. It was also found in this study that location of schools (urban and rural) did not have significant difference on the relationship between aggression of physical threat and examination malpractice proneness. The finding of this study disagrees with those of Adiaha & Ocheje (2018) who reported that that other variables like teacher factor relates to examination malpractice proneness.

Similarly, there was a high correlation between use of weapon and examination malpractice proneness. Simply put, use of weapon has high relationship with examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students. This finding agrees with the findings of Udim, Abubakar & Essien (2019) and Danguruwa (2015) who reported in their separate studies that violence have huge impact on examination malpractice. Furthermore, both studies agreed that there is no significant difference between rural and urban schools on the use of weapon and examination malpractice.

## **CONCLUSION**

Aggressive behaviour such as physical threat and use of weapon as manipulative tool has disastrous consequences on the physical, social and psychological fabric of the educational system thereby renders the credibility of Nigerian certificate useless. Examination malpractice proneness evidently fanned through corrupt practices, immoral societal value system and high premium on certification amongst others evidently renders the spirit of perseverance, resilient and hard work void. Hence every student wants to succeed irrespective of the means of achievement. Therefore, it is imperative that an emergency is declared in the state educational act especially in the face of technological innovations in order to reduce examination malpractice proneness. Students reacts to frustration in different ways hence more vulnerable to the damaging effect of aggression which makes them prone to examination malpractice. This is evident in the level of aggression during examination.

## **Recommendation**

1. Aggression should be taken seriously among secondary schools if indeed the state is ready to reduce examination malpractice proneness in schools.
2. Government and churches should organize programs aimed at sensitizing parents and caregivers on the importance of hard work, perseverance and demerit of path of least expectancy. For example, during mother's annual August meeting, qualified, experienced and proven

psychologist should be invited to educate church members on the need for good and proper parenting, good value system and cognitive restructuring of children's mindset.

3. Educational psychologist and school counsellors should give adequate attention to school counselling. This will create awareness among students on the dangers of examination malpractice on them and the society at large. This will help students adjust to a more proactive form of studying, hard work and perseverance.

4. School counsellors should identify at risk students from the parents and guardians susceptible of violence and negative influence and offer appropriate therapy.

5. Parents in collaboration with the church should engage in conscious effort to offer quality discipleship training for children, teenagers and youth to help them grow into responsible adult and future parents.

6. Violence is a crime no matter who committed it and should be treated as such with appropriate punishment for offenders. Therefore, examination malpractice should not be treated with kid's gloves so that it would serve as deterrent to others.

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