



## **FRUSTRATION TRIGGERS AS CORRELATES OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE PRONENESS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*The study investigated frustration triggers as correlate of examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu state. Correlation design was adopted for the study. It was guided by five research questions and hypotheses respectively selected from some frustration triggers such as complicated curriculum, in sufficient use of instructional materials, incorrect teaching methods, and emphasis on certificate as well as societal value system on examination. The population for the study consisted of all 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. Stratified sampling technique was used to draw the sample. The instruments for data collection were researcher constructed scale for examination malpractice proneness and frustration trigger scale. The instruments were validated by three research experts (two from educational psychology) and (one from measurement and evaluation) from Enugu State University of Science and Technology. Reliability coefficients of 0.79 and 0.78 were obtained respectively using Cronbach Alpha. Pearson product moment correlation was used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to analyze hypotheses. Major findings of the study indicated that frustration triggers have positive correlation on examination malpractice proneness. There was no significant differences in relationship between frustration triggers and examination malpractice proneness among rural and urban secondary school students in Enugu State. It was recommended among other things that frustration triggers should be modulated in order to reduce examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu State.*

**Keywords:** Frustration, 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 (Bisiriyu and Osinusi, 2016). This means that people engage in educational experiences in order to satisfy their curiosity, interest, skill and personal development (Onyibe, Uma and Ibina, 2015). 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. Educational system involves periodic assessment and evaluation in the form of test, project, practical or examinations in order to ascertain the level of achievement of knowledge and students competence. 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 such as examination malpractice.

Examination malpractice is a dishonest practice by a student in order to gain undue advantage in any form of assessment be it test, classwork and examination (Okunloye, Balogun and Oladele, 2019). Examination malpractice proneness is the susceptibility and inclination of educational stakeholders to gain undue advantage before, during and after examination (Animba, 2024). Examination malpractice proneness in Nigeria is not only worrisome but frightening to teachers and the society in general. Its practice is becoming more sophisticated and institutionalized hence a big threat to the Nigeria's educational system. 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. This is because despite the many efforts being put forward by different governments in Nigeria, researchers, school authorities and examination body, examination malpractice proneness is becoming more prevalent and alarming (Okunloye, Balogun and Oladele, 2019). 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 centers of excellence (miracle center) where students can register especially for external examinations such as; WAEC and subsequently determine the number of alphas and credit they want with assurances that their expectations are met at the end of the examination.

As a cancer of the society, examination malpractice proneness portends doom for future generation and society. This is because examinations infested with malpractice 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 (Erenke, 2020).

Enugu State like other states in South-East Nigeria, has its fair share of examination malpractice offences such as impersonation, bribery of examination officials and leaking of examination papers. Previous studies on examination malpractice proneness have identified many social, cultural and economic factors associated with



students or in predicting student's tendency to engage in examination malpractice. According to Onyibe, Uma and Ibini, (2015), this could be partly because serious students may be discouraged and frustrated from studying hard as evident in cumbersome curriculum, over certification by institutions and national work force, lack of instructional materials in teaching some subject especially practical subjects, incorrect teaching method and societal. This could be also be attributed to the fact that most student who cheat in examination get rewarded with good grade and even when caught wriggle their way out while students with great brains are denied admission to higher institutions of learning because of low grade and regarded as never do well. (Olateju, 2014). Frustrated students may also resort to examination malpractice when their academic expectations are not fulfilled.

Frustration can be defined as negative emotion rooted in disappointment because of limitation, failure, exclusion and insecurity when a wish collides with an underlying reality (Yakubu and Idoko, 2019). Literally, frustration simply means an irritable distress in response to unresolved situations. Student's awareness of the high rate of failure recorded from WAEC, NECO and NABTEB and the problem it creates for those who want to further their education, employment value, social branding by parents and relatives as failures, and loss of confidence may serve as frustration triggers. Thus, students' resorts to examination malpractice because of societal standards, pressure from parents as well as getting admitted into higher schools (Atanda and Adeleye, 2020). Therefore, frustration triggers in examination are the most often factors causing strong emotional reaction of fear or worry in a student resulting in a student using under handed means during and after examination (Ampofo, 2020). The frustration triggers to be considered in this research work include: cumbersome curriculum, inadequate use of instructional; material, societal value, incorrect teaching method and over certification.

Complicated curriculum refers to a curriculum burdened with subjects and topics that are unrelated to some vocation and career choice. Because these subjects must be passed for qualification into higher learning; they are taught and subsequently written by students. However, if school subjects and topics are strictly planned by curriculum planners according to their relativity to students chosen career, examination malpractice proneness may be greatly reduced (Ekpo, 2014).

Insufficient instructional materials according to Basiruyu (2020), is like going to the farm without farm implement. This is evident in the number of instructional materials in public secondary school where learning occurs with little or no instructional material to aid retention and recall. Therefore, if there are adequate instructional material in public secondary school for learning, frustration from examination malpractice proneness may be greatly reduced.

A teaching method comprise of all the principle and method used by teachers in order to bring about effective learning. Every subject has an appropriate teaching method



suitable for its presentation in order to make the learning material effective as well as foster learner's interest (Uda, 2013). Therefore, inappropriate teaching method is the opposite of the aforementioned above and capable of causing frustration, loss of interest and anxiety amongst students. Hence in order to reduce examination malpractice proneness, inappropriate teaching method must be worked on.

Emphasis on certificate simply means that certificate is majorly one of the ways of measuring success. This occurs when certificate serves as the only means of assessment and academic success (Njoku, 2018). This results to the negating of practical and vocational learning. When a particular society is fixated on certificate, it takes away its core value on education while placing students on pressure to present a good certificate. Therefore, if high premium on certificate is decentralized, frustration to get certificate by all means will be greatly reduced as well as examination malpractice proneness.

The values of a society have a correlation with the behaviour evident in that society (Ayanniyi and Anya, 2017). Success in exam overtime has become a do or die affair because failure is always discouraged while success is celebrated irrespective of its means. This encourages frustration amongst students whose behaviour are modeled according to the dictates of the society. Therefore, if the value system of a society changes towards examination and certificate, it will definitely affect examination malpractice proneness.

Impact of examination malpractice is so enormous on students, parents, society, educational system and examination bodies such that it 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. Although strategies and studies have been explored and adopted for addressing examination malpractice proneness, no strategy to the knowledge of the researcher is targeted towards addressing frustration in secondary schools in Enugu State. This calls for serious concern as the gap created by this is long overdue. The need to explore various strategies for addressing frustration indices hindering effective examination practice in secondary school becomes imperative.

## **Method**

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 stratified and purposive sampling was used for the study. Data were collected



with researcher structured instrument on examination malpractice proneness and frustration scale. Instruments were validated by three experts (two from Educational Psychology and one in Measurement and Evaluation) from Enugu State University of Science and Technology whose inputs were incorporated before the final copies were administered. Reliability test showed significant relationship between examination malpractice proneness and frustration 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.

**Research Question 1: What is the relationship between complicated curriculum and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu State?**

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

Variable	N	x y	x <sup>2</sup> y <sup>2</sup>	Xy	r-value	r-crit	Decision
<b>Complicated Curriculum</b>	600	23.30	58.77	70.42	0.0975	0.1045	low
<b>Examination Malpractice Proneness</b>	600	30.07	91.15				

The result in Table 1 indicate the calculated r-value of 0.09 at 0.05 level of significance. This result therefore shows that complicated curriculum has a low correlation with examination malpractice proneness. Simply put, there is a low correlation between complicated curriculum and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu state.



**Research Question 2: What is the relationship between insufficient instructional materials and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu State?**

**Table 2:** correlation analysis for the relationship between insufficient instructional materials and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu state.

Variables	n	X y	x <sup>2</sup> y <sup>2</sup>	Xy	r-value	r-crit	Decision
Insufficient instructional materials	600	20.99	47.47	63.80	0.4336	0.1045	High
Examination malpractice proneness	600	30.07	91.15				

The result in Table 2 indicate the calculated r-value of 0.43 at 0.05 level of significance. This result therefore shows that insufficient instructional material has high correlation with examination malpractice proneness. Simply put, there is a high correlation between insufficient instructional materials and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu state.

**Research Question 3: What is the relationship between emphasis on certificate and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu State?**

**Table 3:** correlation analysis for the relationship between emphasis on certificate and examination malpractice among secondary school students in Enugu state.

Variables	n	X y	x <sup>2</sup> y <sup>2</sup>	Xy	r-value	r-crit	Decision
Emphasis on certificate	600	32.09	104.22	96.54	0.9923	0.1045	High
Examination malpractice proneness	600	30.07	91.15				

The result in Table 3 indicate the calculated r-value of 0.99 at 0.05 level of significance. This result therefore shows that emphasis on certificate has a high correlation with examination malpractice proneness. Simply put, there is high correlation between emphasis on certificate and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu State.



**Research Question 4: What is the relationship between teaching method and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu State?**

**Table 4:** correlation analysis for the relationship between teaching method and examination malpractice proneness among secondary schools in Enugu State.

Variable	N	x y	x <sup>2</sup> y <sup>2</sup>	xy	r-value	r-crit	Decision
Teaching method	600	20.53	46.20	62.93	0.6957	0.1045	High
Examination malpractice proneness	600	30.07	91.15				

The result in Table 4 indicate the calculated r-value of 0.69 at 0.05 level of significance. This result therefore shows that teaching method has a high correlation with examination malpractice proneness. Simply put, there is a high correlation between teaching method and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu state.

**Research Question 5: What is the relationship between value system and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu State?**

**Table 5:** correlation analysis for the relationship between value system and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu State.

Variables	N	X y	x <sup>2</sup> y <sup>2</sup>	Xy	r-value	r-crit	Decision
Societal value system	600	21.79	50.42	65.92	0.2711	0.1045	High
Examination malpractice proneness	600	30.07	91.15				

The result in table 5 indicated the calculated r-value of 0.69 at 0.05 level of significance. This result therefore shows that teaching method has a high correlation with examination malpractice proneness. Simply put, there is a high correlation between value system and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu state.





**Hypothesis 1: The correlation between complicated curriculum and examination malpractice proneness among urban and rural secondary school students in Enugu State is not significantly different.**

**Table 6:**t-test analysis on hypothesis 1.

Groups	N	X	SD	t-calculated	t-critical	Remark
urban	300	1.82	0.25	0.55	1.96	null hypothesis accepted
rural	300	1.77	0.34			

From Table 6, t-calculated (0.55) was less than t-critical (1.96). Hence, at .05 level of significance, the relationship between the groups (urban and rural) did not differ significantly. Consequently, hypothesis one is not rejected as stated, implying that the correlation between complicated curriculum and examination malpractice proneness among urban and rural secondary school students in Enugu State is not significantly different.

**Hypothesis 2: The correlation between insufficient instructional material and examination malpractice proneness among urban and rural secondary school students in Enugu State is not significantly different.**

**Table 7:**t-test analyses for hypothesis 2.

Groups	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-calculated	t-critical	Remark
urban	300	3.81	0.26	0.23	1.96	null hypothesis accepted
rural	300	3.82	0.34			

From Table 7, t-calculated (0.23) was less than t-critical (1.96). Hence, at .05 significant level, the relationship between the groups (urban and rural) do not differ significantly. Thus, hypothesis two was not rejected. This implies that, the correlation between insufficient instructional material and examination malpractice proneness among urban and rural secondary school students in Enugu State is not significantly different.





**Hypothesis 3: The correlation between emphasis on certificate and examination malpractice proneness among urban and rural secondary school students in Enugu State is not significantly different.**

**Table 8: t-test analyses for hypothesis 3.**

Groups	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-calculated	t-critical	Remark
urban	300	3.63	0.23	0.30	1.96	null hypothesis accepted
rural	300	3.62	0.20			

From Table 8, t-cal (0.30) was less than t-crit (1.96). Hence, at .05 level of significance, the correlation between the two groups (urban and rural) did not differ significantly. Therefore, null hypothesis three was accepted, implying that the correlation between emphasis on certificate and examination malpractice proneness among urban and rural secondary school students in Enugu State is not significantly different.

**Hypothesis 4: The correlation between teaching method and examination malpractice proneness among urban and rural secondary school students in Enugu State is not significantly different.**

**Table 9: t-test analyses for hypothesis 4.**

Groups	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-calculated	t-critical	Remark
Urban	300	3.70	0.32	0.49	1.96	null hypothesis accepted
Rural	300	3.65	0.32			

From Table 9, t-cal (0.49) was less than t-crit (1.96). Hence, at .05 level of significance, the correlation of the groups (urban and rural) did not differ significantly. Thus, hypothesis four was accepted, implying that the location of schools was not significantly different on correlation between teaching method and examination malpractice among urban and rural secondary school students in Enugu State.



**Hypothesis 5: The correlation between value system and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students in Enugu State is not significantly different.**

**Table 10: t-test analyses for hypothesis 5.**

<b>Groups</b>	<b>N</b>	<b><math>\bar{x}</math></b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t-calculated</b>	<b>t-critical</b>	<b>Remark</b>
<b>urban</b>	300	2.93	0.22	0.44	1.96	null hypothesis accepted
<b>rural</b>	300	2.87	0.27			

From Table 10, t-cal (0.44) was less than t-crit (1.96). Hence, at .05 significant level, the correlation between two groups (urban and rural) do not differ significantly. Therefore, hypothesis five was accepted, indicating that the correlation between value system and examination malpractice proneness among rural and urban secondary school students in Enugu State is not significantly dependent on the location of school.

### **Discussions of Findings**

The findings of this study revealed high correlation between complicated curriculum and examination malpractice proneness among secondary school students. The findings also indicated no significant difference in correlation between the variables in urban and rural schools. Simply put, complicated curriculum has high correlation with examination malpractice proneness among urban and rural secondary school students in Enugu State. This finding agreed with Ezemba, Ogbuanya, Anyakoro and Obioma (2021), who reported in their studies that overloaded curriculum and syllabus contributes to examination malpractice proneness in their various states. Meanwhile, the findings of this study contradicts Udoh (2013), who posited that curriculum has never been the issue with examination malpractice rather teachers attitude to curriculum implementation. On the correlation between insufficient instructional material and examination malpractice proneness, findings of this study revealed a high correlation. Simply put, insufficient instructional material has high correlation with examination malpractice proneness among urban and rural secondary school students. This finding agreed with Okafor (2021), who opined that insufficient instructional material during teaching and learning encourages examination proneness in secondary schools. However, the finding of this study contradict Oche (2012), who posited that insufficient instructional material did not encourage examination malpractice proneness, rather fear of failure and laziness by students.

On correlation existing between emphasis on certificate and examination malpractice proneness, the findings of this study revealed a high correlation. Simply put, high premium on certificate has high correlation with examination malpractice proneness among urban and rural secondary school students. This finding agreed with Njoku



(2018), who posited that emphasis on certificate promoted examination malpractice proneness. On the other hand, the finding of this study disagreed with Danladi, Yakubu and Sani (2021), who argued that there was significant differences between urban and rural schools on how emphasis in certificate correlates examination malpractice proneness. On correlation between teaching method and examination malpractice proneness; the findings of this study revealed high correlation. Simply put, teaching method has high correlation with examination malpractice proneness among urban and rural secondary school students. This finding agreed with Ampofo (2020), who opined that teaching method contributes to examination malpractice proneness. Moreover; the finding of this study contradicted Makaula (2018), who posited that student's laziness and inadequate coverage of syllabus are triggers of examination malpractice proneness not teaching method. On correlation between value system and examination malpractice proneness, the findings of this study revealed high correlation. Simply put, value system has high correlation on examination malpractice proneness among urban and rural secondary school students. The findings agreed with Ayanniyi and Anya (2017) who opined that value system of a society contributes to examination malpractice proneness. However; the findings of this study contradicted Anierobi, Nwipko, Okeke and Unachukwu (2018), who posited that peer influence and self-esteem correlates more to examination malpractice proneness than value system.

### **Conclusion**

Frustration triggers such as complicated curriculum, insufficient instructional materials during teaching and learning, teaching method, emphasis on certificate and value system of Nigeria on examination may have disastrous consequences on the physical, social and psychological fabric of her educational system if not addressed properly. This is because, it can render the credibility of Nigerian certificate negatively. Examination malpractice proneness evidently fanned through the aforementioned triggers 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 system especially in the face of technological innovations in order to reduce examination malpractice proneness.

### **Recommendations**

1. 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.
2. 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.

3. 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.

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