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Parental Influence on Examination Malpractice among Students of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State

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ABSTRACT
This study examined the parental influence on examination malpractice among students of public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Four objectives, four research questions and four null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of this study consisted of 6,162 teachers (comprising of 3023 male teachers and 3139 female teachers from the 253 public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The sample size of 708 teachers was obtained by applying the Taro-Yamen formula seperately on the population of male and female teachers. Multistage sampling technique was adopted in selecting the sample size from the three Senatorial Districts. A self-structured questionnaire titled "Parental Influence on Examination Malpractice (PIEM)" was used for data collection. The Cronbach Alpha was used to establish the reliability of the instrument and a reliability index of 0.75 was obtained. Mean and standard deviation were employed to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that over emphasis on certificate, financial inducement, parents' expectations and "miracle" examination centers influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State to a high extent. It was recommended among others that expression of knowledge and skills should be emphasized and certificates de-emphasized for admission, job placement and political position; examination bodies should collaborate with relevant law enforcement agencies to monitor and implement disciplinary actions on any defaulter or culprit, so as to serve as deterrent to others; and except for the physically challenged, on no account should an examination center be tagged a special center.
Keywords: Certificate, examination, examination center, malpractice, financial inducement, parental influence.

INTRODUCTION

The significance and efficiency of any educational system are determined by its ability to achieve educational goals. Sulaiman (2014) opined that one of the objectives of education in Nigeria is to prepare the young ones to face future challenges and develop them to meet the nation's man power requirements. Education is the basic mechanism for enhancing the population quality of a nation. However, education that is of poor quality endangers the individual, the family, and the nation as a whole.

One of the goals of education, from primary to tertiary, is to produce quality graduates who will maintain quality control in all aspects of government and private establishments for the advancement of the nation. Quality education has generally been accepted as one of the leading instruments for

achieving economic growth for any country (Nason, 2015). To maintain quality and standard, examination has been a method used for the past years in education to test the ability or evaluate students by teachers to confirm if learning has taken place. According to Emelogu et al., (2021), in education, one of the assessment tools to ascertain if the individuals who have acquired formal education have been equipped with the necessary skills that will bring about national development and social changes is examination. It is a means of assessing the level of achievement or quality of knowledge which students have acquired after teaching and learning process.

Examination is one of the techniques used to assess learning outcomes at all levels of education in Nigeria and around the world. It can be given orally, on paper, on computer, or in a confined space in which an examinee must physically perform a set of skills. Thus, examination serves as a crucial aspect of education that is compulsory for all candidates at all levels. At a point, it completes a stage of education process and ushers in the commencement of the next level from the elementary school to the highest level of formal education. At another point, examination plays a germane role in determining students' class of degree (Omonijo, 2011). This in turn influences candidates' chances for job placement in different organizations across the globe. Examination plays vital roles not only in educational system but also in the society as a whole. According to Oredein (2006), examination could be internal or external, which constitutes an integral part of education. Examples of internal examinations are continuous assessment tests, terminal, semester and annual or promotional examinations. For external (public) examinations in Nigerian schools, examples include National Common Entrance Examination for admission into secondary schools conducted by National Examination Council (NECO); Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination conducted by West African Examination Council(WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO); Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination for prospective undergraduates into Nigerian Universities, Polytechnics conducted by Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) and examination for Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE), Bachelors' Degree Programmes, Postgraduate Diploma in Education conducted by Colleges of Education, National Teachers' Institute (NTI) and others; while the A-level examinations: Advanced National Business Certificate (ANBC) and Advanced National Technical Certificate (ANTC) are conducted by National Business and Technical Examination Board (NABTEB). The outcome of the examination is used as a basis for decision-making on the examinee's ability. The examinees are consequently awarded certificates which could qualify them for admission into schools, promotion to higher positions and employment opportunities.

Examination is a formal test of somebody's knowledge or ability in a particular subject or skill; especially by means of answering questions or practical exercises (Sulaiman, 2014). It has some ethics formally designed by examination bodies for successful conduct of examinations in Nigeria. The examination process is crucial in educational systems all over the world. If examination ethics are not encouraged and implemented, the goals of national educational systems, and indeed national development, will become a mirage (Nwadiani, 2005).

Nevertheless, despite the importance of examination in teaching and learning situations, a number of factors influence the credibility of examination results. One of the factors that may have an impact on the credibility of examination results is examination malpractice. Examination malpractice is any dishonest or unauthorized action or deed committed by a student on his own or in collaboration with others, like, fellow students, guardians, parents, teachers, head teachers, examination officials, supervisors, invigilators, printers, security officers and anybody or group of people before, during or/and after examination in order to obtain underserved mark or grade (Amadioha, 2017). It is a dangerous act against educational quality and standards. The Examination Malpractice Act (1999) explains "examination malpractice as any act or omission or commission by any person who in anticipation of, before, during or after any examination, fraudulently secure any unfair advantages for himself or any other person in such a manner that contravenes the rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity, reliability, authenticity of the examination and ultimately the integrity of the certificates issued.

According to Omoluabi and Uzoka, as cited in Atutu and Aluede (2006), Nigeria's value system has completely broken down, and both adults and youths act without moral qualms: this is precisely why examination malpractice persists, despite the serious consequences for the nation's social, political, and economic structures. To curb malpractices in examination, the Examination Malpractice Act No.

33 of 1999 stipulates a minimum penalty of ₦50,000.00 (Fifty Thousand Naira Only) and a minimum of five years imprisonment, without the option of fine, for violators of the Act. Cheating in examinations, stealing question papers, impersonation, disrupting examinations, obstructing supervision, forgery of result slips, breach of duty, conspiracy and aiding, and other offenses are listed also as forms of examination malpractice. The government, examination bodies, and other concerned citizens have made significant efforts to prevent examination malpractice and problems associated with examination administration in Nigeria without much success.

Despite the fact that the efforts appear to be yielding some positive results, the incidence of examination malpractice remains prevalent in the school system. A variety of factors influence the phenomenon of examination malpractice. One major education stakeholder, the family, which is the most important unit of social organization, is being considered as one of the major contributory factors to examination malpractice. In the family set-up, the parents are the closest to their children in terms of feeding, clothing, accommodation, provision of moral, social, cultural, financial, and academic training. The close relationship between the parents and their children gives room for parents to influence their children positively or negatively.

Parental influence in education refers to the amount of control or manipulation a parent exact when it comes to schooling and the life of their children. Influence is the ability to affect or change how someone or something develops, behaves or thinks. It is the power to have an effect on people or things, or someone or something. Parents are the most influential personality for their children. They play a vital role in the development of the sense of ambition about the social status for the children (UKEssays, 2018). Okeke (2009) noted that the initial experience that would mould the child's values, aspiration, emotions, interest and attitudes are offered by the parents/family. Unfortunately, most parents have neglected their duties on the children and influenced their children negatively in attempt to make them successful in life without making legitimate efforts.

Stakeholders in the education sector have blamed parents for the rising incidence of examination malpractice in primary and secondary schools in the country: One of them, the Managing Director, Early Years Education Foundation at The West Prime Model School, Prof. Bola Dada, blamed the trend on the excessive value, which parents place on the acquisition of certificates and qualifications (Punch, 2018). Cornenius, Ukpepi and Ndifon (2012) revealed that lack of seriousness on the part of the students and undue emphasis on certificates make some parents to bribe their ways through examinations. There is over emphasis placed on certificates in Nigeria (Akanni & Odofin, 2015). This certificate mentality has made individuals to perceive education as being synonymous with obtaining certificate and the only means of getting a job. As a result of this trend and pressure, some parents take even illegal steps to ensure success of their wards in such examinations. Edukugho (2006) observed that parents rejoice when their children or wards come home with unmerited results or certificates.

Bandele and Adewale (2005) confirmed that the Nigerian education sector is being wrecked by the craze for obtaining certificates which are at the detriment of acquisition of knowledge hence, putting a question mark on the reliability and validity of certificates obtained by secondary school students. According to Ajayi and Ekundayo (2010), parents are prepared to spend any amount of money to influence the children's way in order to pass examinations at all cost. Ojo (2011) noted that parents, because of familiarity between them and children can provide money for mercenaries, purchase question papers and pay fees for special centers.

Persuasion to behave in a prescribed way has been described as power to sway, persuade or affect (Mc Elhaney et al., 2010). Thus, the power to persuade children to indulge in examination misconduct can be linked to warm and supportive relationships between them and their parents. Mothers, for instance, can easily influence their children based on a solid relationship between them. More often than not, this power may not be divorced from economic supply. The power to supply the money for mercenaries, purchase leaked papers and pay fees or special centres, where leakage of papers are expected can make children to agree with their parents to indulge in examination misconduct. Some of the officials who are responsible for conducting examinations as well as teachers, invigilators and supervisors have low income to meet their ever-growing human needs and wants, and so they often see examination malpractice as a quick way of getting money to meet these

needs (Joshua, 2008). Financial inducement is a monetary gift intended to persuade someone to do something.

Salami (2008) acknowledged that parents are failing in their duties on children. He blamed parents for setting unreasonable standards for their children. It is as if they have already plotted out their career path, whether their children like it or not, is irrelevant. Often times, these students make wrong choices in school subjects due to parental pressure leading to ill preparation for examinations and subsequently resort to cheating to pass their examination. According to Obilor (2021), some parents who want their children to take up their profession because of its prestige, go to the extent of buying examination question papers and lavishing invigilators and supervisors with gifts. In some instances, these irrational parents would go to the extent of hiring bright students to write examination for their lazy children.

Problems arise when students feel unduely pressured to meet expectations. Although parental aspiration can help improve children's academic performance, excessive parental aspiration can be poisonous (Murayama et al., 2015). Smith (2020) pointed out that for the student, it can be hard to perceive that certain expectations are next to impossible to reach. He said that, placing this weight on a pair of relatively young shoulders is detrimental. This pressure influences their decision to indulge in examination malpractice to avoid mockery and disappointing their parents.

Given the premium placed on the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE), acquiring good grades has become a key objective for most parents in Nigeria, even if this entails compromising examination processes and ethics (Adeshina et al., 2014; Odidi, 2014). One way of acquiring excellent but unmerited grades in West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO) exams is through 'Miracle Examination Centres' (MECs), which have become well known as centres for examination fraud that offer candidates the promise of excellent grades through illegal means (Aworinde, 2015; Onyedinefu, 2019). Their practices may be characterized as institutionalized or organised academic corruption in Nigeria's educational system. Parents, in a bid to secure desired future career for their wards, or to avoid repeated payments for the examinations, or even to shield themselves from the taunts of neighbours as parents of children who cannot pass the SSCE, register their wards in MECs (Agwu et al.,, 2020). It has become an almost accepted aspect of school life in Nigeria's institutions that most students now believe that it is not possible to write an examination without cheating. Miracle Examination Centres (MECs) are rogue/corrupt business outfits that position as regular schools/examination centres, but in reality deploy deviant means to secure unmerited SSCE results /certificates, and hence undermine academic integrity and country-wide development.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria's education system has been greatly hampered by examination malpractice. Today, there is probably no examination that can be totally confirmed malpractice-free because the act of examination malpractice is no longer given a sour look by the government, parents and even school teachers (Oyeniyi, 2021). This has apparently contributed greatly to the decline of Nigeria's standard of education.

Government authorities and examination regulatory bodies have responded in various ways to the problem of endemic examination malpractices. The West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) have embarked on public campaign on the effects of examination malpractices and the punishments attached to each offence using handbills, posters, jingles, seminars and workshops; Exam Ethics Project (a non-governmental organization) has worked tirelessly on examination malpractices without success (Uchendu, 2021).

Despite these measures, reports of examination malpractices are replete in the Nigerian media (Anzene, 2014). There is need for a systematic approach to address examination malpractices before, during and after examinations especially in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. This study seeks to examine the effects of parental influence on examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate parental influence on examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Ascertain the extent to which over emphasis on certificates influences examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
2. Examine the influence of financial inducement by parents on examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
3. Ascertain the extent to which parents' expectations influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
4. Investigate the influence of miracle examination centres on examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

Based on the purpose of this research, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. To what extent does over emphasis on certificates influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?
2. To what extent does financial inducement by parent's influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?
3. To what extent do parents' expectations influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?
4. To what extent do miracle examination centres influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of sinificance:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean response of male and female teachers on the extent to which over emphasis on certificates influences examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean response of male and female teachers on the extent to which financial inducement by parents influences examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
3. There is no significant difference between the mean response of male and female teachers on the extent to which parents expectations influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
4. There is no significant difference between the mean response of male and female teachers on the extent to which miracle examination centres influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive survey research design with a population of 6162 teachers from 253 public senior secondary schools throughout the 25 Local Education Committee in the three Senatorial Districts of Akwa Ibom State. A sample size of 708 teachers (comprising of 353 male and 355 female teachers) in public senior secondary schools in the State was determined by applying the Taro-Yamane Formula separately on male and female teachers. The sample was selected with the use of multistage sampling technique . The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Parental Influence on Examination Malpractice (PIEM)" with a reliability index of 0.75 obtained using the Cronbach Alpha analysis. The null hypotheses were tested using the t-test at the 0.05 level of significance, while the research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation with mean decision rule of Very Low Extent (0.50 – 1.49), Low Extent (1.50 – 2.49), High Extent (2.50 – 3.49), and Very High Extent (3.50 – 4.00).

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *To what extent does over emphasis on certificates influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?*

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Teachers' Responses on the Influence of Over Emphasis on Certificates on Examination Malpractice among Students of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State

	Statement	Male ($S_1 = 353$)		Female ($S_2 = 355$)		Aggregate		Rmk
		$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	
1	Certificate is seen as an indication for proficiency in academic qualification and achievement, hence it must be obtained by all means.	2.87	1.01	2.87	1.07	2.92	1.04	HE
2	Acquisition of certificate is the only means of getting a job.	2.91	1.04	2.89	1.08	2.90	1.06	HE
3	Education is synonymous with the acquisition of certificate.	2.89	1.05	2.91	1.06	2.90	1.06	HE
4	Parents rejoice when their children return with impressive results and certificate irrespective of how they are obtained.	2.94	1.03	2.88	1.08	2.91	1.06	HE
5	Paper qualification and certificate determine acquisition of knowledge.	2.92	1.04	2.87	1.08	2.90	1.06	HE
6	Certificate should be produced first pending the ability to defend it.	2.97	1.07	2.92	1.07	2.90	1.07	HE
7	It is worthwhile to appreciate the help given to children in exam halls to enable them get their certificate	2.92	1.05	2.90	1.08	2.91	1.07	HE
	Grand mean	**2.92**	**1.01**	**2.89**	**1.07**	**2.91**	**1.06**	**HE**

Source: *Field study 2022*

Table 1 shows item by item analyses of mean and standard deviation of male and female teachers' responses on the extent to which over emphasis on certificates influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. From the result it can be observed that the mean scores and standard deviations of the male and female teachers on each item are within the decision mean range of 2.50 – 3.49. The grand mean of 2.92 for male teachers and 2.89 for female teachers, are lying within the mean score of 2.50 – 3.49. Since the mean scores of the respondents are within mean range of 2.50 and 3.49 for high extent, it can therefore be concluded that over emphasis on certificates influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, to a high extent.

Research Question 2: *To what extent does financial inducement by parents influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?*

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Teachers Responses on the Influence of Financial Inducement by Parents on Examination Malpractice among Students of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State.

	Statement	Male ($S_1 = 353$)		Female ($S_2 = 355$)		Aggregate		Rmk
		$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	
8	Parent consider worthwhile to pay for special centres for children to write exams	2.88	1.08	2.87	1.07	2.89	1.07	HE
9	Candidates raise money to reimburse transport fare of examiners after examination	2.99	0.98	2.87	1.06	2.93	1.02	HE
10	Students contribute financially to assist themselves during examination	2.90	1.05	2.89	1.05	2.90	1.05	HE
11	Buying live examination papers will helps students to obtain better grades	2.89	1.04	2.88	1.05	2.89	1.05	HE
12	To candidates; hiring machineries for examination is not too expensive to venture	2.94	1.03	2.86	1.07	2.90	1.05	HE
	Grand mean	**2.91**	**1.04**	**2.87**	**1.06**	**2.89**	**1.05**	**HE**

Source: *Field study 2022*

Table 2 shows item by item analyses of mean response scores and standard deviation of teachers' responses on the extent to which financial inducement by parents influence examination malpractice among students of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State. From the result it can be observed that each mean score male and female teachers is within the set benchmark decision mean range of 2.50 – 3.49 for high extent; and the small values of standard deviation is an indication of how homogeneous the responses are. On the whole the respective grand means of 2.91 and 2.87 for male and female teachers respectively, indicate high extent influence of financial inducement. Hence, it is concluded that, to a high extent, financial inducement by parents influences examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Question 3: *To what extent do parents' expectations influence examination malpractice among students of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State?*

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis of Teachers Responses on the Influence of Parents' Expectation on Examination Malpractice among Students of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State.

	Statement	Male ($S_1 = 353$)		Female ($S_2 = 355$)		Aggregate		Rmk
		$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	
13	Most parent expect their wards to make A's in all their papers in senior school certificate exams	2.89	1.05	2.88	1.09	2.89	1.07	HE
14	Candidate could go extra miles to make results if their parents set standard of examination results for them.	2.92	1.04	2.90	1.08	2.91	1.06	HE
15	Parents insisting on their children to take up after their parents profession could result to exam malpractice	2.92	1.02	2.89	1.06	2.91	1.04	HE
16	Students become nervous when they are unusually pressured to meet examination expectations	2.96	1.02	2.89	1.06	2.93	1.04	HE
17	Expectations of parents from their children influence the children's decision to make good results at all cost.	2.90	1.06	2.89	1.06	2.90	1.06	HE
18	While parental expectations can help improve children academic performance, excessive parental aspiration can be poisonous	2.90	1.02	2.89	1.08	2.90	1.05	HE
	Grand mean	**2.91**	**1.04**	**2.89**	**1.07**	**2.90**	**1.06**	HE

Source: *Field study 2022*

Table 3 is on extent to which parents' expectations influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The analyses indicate that male and female teachers agree that most parents expect their words to make A's in all their papers in Senior School Certificate Examinations with respective mean responses of 2.89 (SD =1.05) and 2.88 (SD =1.09). Similarly, on item 18, the mean responses of 2.90 and 2.89 for male and female teachers both of which lie between 2.50-3.49 show that expectations of parents from their children influence the children decision to make result at all cost. On the aggregate, it can be observed that the mean scores of male and female teachers are within the boundary limits of 2.50 and 3.49 for high extent, which implies that respondents agree that parents' expectations influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State to a high extent.

Research Question 4: *To what extent does miracle examination centres influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?*

Table 4: Descriptive Analysis of Teachers Responses on the Influence of Miracle Examination Centres on Examination Malpractice among Students of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State.

	Statement	Male (S_1 = 353)		Female (S_2 = 355)		Aggregate		Rmk
		$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	
19	Miracle exam centres influence candidates results at exams	2.91	1.04	2.94	1.05	2.93	1.5	HE
20	Comparing exam processes and ethics is common in miracle examination centres	2.89	1.05	2.90	1.06	2.90	1.06	HE
21	A way of acquiring excellence through unmerited grades in WAEC and NECO is through miracle exam centres	2.92	1.04	2.87	1.08	2.90	1.06	HE
22	Parents register their wards in MECS to avoid repeated payments	2.97	1.01	2.90	1.06	2.94	1.04	HE
23	Miracle exam centres enjoy very high patronage	2.93	1.02	2.89	1.08	2.91	1.05	HE
24	Miracle exam centres undermine academic integrity and country wide development	2.93	1.02	2.89	1.07	2.91	1.05	HE
25	Candidates of regular centres feel cheated by those writing in miracle exam centres	2.93	1.03	2.91	1.07	2.92	1.05	HE
	Grand mean	**2.93**	**1.03**	**2.90**	**1.07**	**2.91**	**1.05**	HE

Source: *Field study 2022*

Table 4 is on how miracle examination centres influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The analyses revealed that male and female teachers accepted that miracle exam centres influence candidates results at exams with mean ratings of 2.91 (SD = 1.04) and 2.94 (SD =1.05) respectively. They also agree on item 25 that candidates of regular centres feel cheated by those writing in miracle exam centres, with respective mean ratings of 2.93 and 2.91 for male and female respondents respectively. On the aggregate, the mean response is 2.91, lying within the range of high extent, which suggests that respondents agree that miracle examination centres influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, to a high extent.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on the extent to which over emphasis on certificate influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 5: t-test Analysis of Male and Female Teachers' Responses on the Extent to which Over Emphasis on Certificate Influence Examination Malpractice among Students of Public Senior Secondary School in Akwa Ibom State.

Variables	N	$\overline{x}$	SD	t-cal	Df	A	t-crit	Decision
Male Teachers	353	2.92	1.04	0.38	706	0.05	1.96	Ho Accepted
Female Teachers	355	2.89	1.07					

Table 5 reveals a calculated t-value of 0.38 which is far below the critical t-value of 1.96. This computed t-value is not significant at 0.05 level as t-cal = 0.38 < t-crit = 1.96; α = 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean response of male and female teachers on the extent to which over emphasis on certificate influences examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State is retained. In other words, male and female teachers agree that over emphasis on certificate influences, to a high extent, examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on the extent to which financial inducement by parents influences examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 6: t-test Analysis of Male and Female Teachers' Responses on the Extent to which Financial Inducement by Parents influence examination Malpractice among Students of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-cal	df	A	t-crit	Decision
Male Teachers	353	2.91	1.04					
				0.50	706	0.05	1.96	Ho Accepted
Female Teachers	355	2.87	1.06					

From Table 6, it could be observed that the computed value of t = 0.50 is less than the critical value of t = 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Since t-cal = 0.50 < t-crit = 1.96; α = 0.05, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on the extent to which financial inducement by parents influences examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State is retained at the 0.05 level of significance. The implication is that the difference between the mean resonses of male and female teachers is not significant. Thus, it could be inferred that male and female teachers accept that financial inducement by parents' influences, to a high extent, examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on the extent to which parents' expectations influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 7: t-test Analysis of Male and Female Teacher's Responses on the Extent to which Parents' Expectations Influence Examination Malpractice among Students of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-cal	df	A	t-crit	Decision
Male Teachers	353	2.91	1.04					
				0.25	706	0.05	1.96	Ho Accepted
Female Teachers	355	2.89	1.07					

The result of the t-test analysis on Table 7 shows that the calculated value of t = 0.25 is less than the critical value of t = 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance, that is t-cal = 0.25 < t-crit = 1.96; α = 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female teachers on the extent to which parents' expectations influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, is retained. The implication is that there is no significant difference in male and female teachers' mean ratings and this suggests that the two groups do agree that parents' expectationns influence examination malpractice, to a high extent, among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on the extent to which miracle examination centres influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 8: t-test Analysis of Male and Female Teacher's Responses on the Extent to which Miracle Examinations Centres Influence Examination Malpractice among Students of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-calc	df	α	t-crit	Decision
Male Teachers	353	2.93	1.03					
				0.38	706	0.05	1.96	Ho Accepted
Female Teachers	355	2.90	1.07					

The t-test analysis on Table 8 reveals a calculated t-value of 0.38 and critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Since t-cal = 0.38 < t-crit = 1.96; α = 0.05, it means that the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers regarding the influence of miracle examinations centres on examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State is accepted and the alternative rejected. In other words, male and female teachers in Akwa Ibom State, agree that miracle examination centres influence examamination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, to a high extent.

Summary of Findings

The following are the findings in this study

1. To a high extent, over emphasis on certificate influences examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
2. Financial inducement by parents' influences, to a high extent, examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
3. Parents' expectations influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State to a high extent.
4. To a high extent, miracle examination centres influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study found that over emphasis on certificate, financial inducement by parents, parents' expectations, and miracle examination centres influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State to a high extent. Each of the findings is discussed in turns.

The first finding of this study is that, to a high extent, over emphasis on certificate influences examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. This finding is supported by that of Onyechere (2006), who held that one of the major reasons given for examination malpractice is the great premium or emphasis on certificates or paper qualifications to be able to fit into any system. Ihejirika (2005) in like manner noted that the position assumed by paper qualification is superfluous, and so examinees are deceived to think that indulging in cheating practices is the best and quickest choice to achieve results. The results corroborates the findings of Animasahun and Ogunniran (2014) who investigated the correlates of examination malpractice among secondary school students in Oyo State and found out that there was a positive and significant relationship between some independent variables among which is parental, societal and government factors and examination malpractice. The study singled out societal preference for paper qualification as a major factor of examination malpractice.

The second finding of this study is that financial inducement by parents influences, to a high extent, examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. A similar result was found by Anyin and Otu (2021) after investigating parental socio-economic background, parental occupation and attitude to examination malpractice among senior secondary school students in Calabar Educational Zone of Cross River State. Their results revealed that, parental socio-economic status and parental occupation significantly influenced students' attitude towards examination malpractice in southern educational zone of Cross River State. The result of the study revealed that bribery is one form of malpractice used to enhance teacher-student collusion to cheat.

Parents, according to them, may pay an examination official some money not necessarily to buy the question paper, but to allow their wards to use illegal materials smuggled into the examination halls or to extend the examination scheduled period. Further to that, Alutu and Aluede (2006) elaborated on financial inducement by parents when thy averred that in Nigeria, bribery often referred to as sorting is rampant. Male and female students offer money or other valuables to bargain for "upgrading" of their examination scores while parents go to the extent of bribing their way through to ensure that their wards get unearned grades. Further, Ajayi and Ekundayo (2010) asserted that parents are prepared to spend any amount of money to ensure their children pass examinations at all cost.

This study also revealed that parents' expectations influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State to a high extent. This agrees with the findings of Ama-abasi and Denga (2015) who examined the influence of parents' educational status on students' tendency to cheat in examination in secondary schools in Calabar South Local Government, with the objective of determining whether parents' educational qualification and current enrolment in higher institutions influence students' tendency to cheat in examinations. Their result revealed a significant influence of mother's educational qualification on students' tendency to cheat in examination. Most parents use themselves to challenge their children with unprecedented high expectations in exam performance and this pushes the children to go beyond bounds during examinations.

Finally, this study found that miracle examination centres influence, to a high extent, examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. This finding agrees with the declarations of Aworinde (2015), Onyedinefu (2019) and Agwu, et.al. (2022) that in some schools, cheating has become institutionalised, such that these schools have grown so notorious for examination malpractice that they have a reputation in the public as a "one-stop" solution for success in SSCEs; and these schools that facilitate cheating are commonly known as "miracle examination centres" (MECs) or special centres, since they could even deliver excellent results to candidates who have very poor literacy skills. In the same vein, the result of this study is supported by Unini (2019) who stated that our schools have become market places where results are sold and bought. All these negative vices are the results of one canker called "Miracle Examination Centre" where certificates are awarded like birthday gifts (Unini, 2019). Prospects of these centres are now determined by the number of successes they record in SSCEs. With these centres, student can now pass their SSCE at credit levels without sighting the exams centre even for once, let alone sitting for any exams (Unini, 2019).

CONCLUSION

It has been found from this study that over emphasis on certificate, financial inducement by parents, parents' expectations, and miracle examination centres influence examination malpractice among students of public senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State to a high extent. This implies that parents, in the bid to ensure their wards obtain good grades in public examinations (and perhaps in other examinations too), trully influence examination malpractice through money, gifts, and other rewards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Certificates, rather than expression of knowledge and skills, should be de-emphasized for admission, for jobs placement and for political position.
2. Teachers, supervisors, invigilators, and parents should be severely punished when caught engaging in financial crimes to enamel candidates and their wards obtain good grades in examinations.
3. While parents must encourage their children to work hard towards obtaining good grades, parents' overbearing expectations from their children should be curbed.
4. Except for the physically challenged, on no account should an exam centre be tagged a special centre. All known miracle examination centres should be blacklisted by the relevant examination bodies, such that no examination should ever be held their.

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