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IMPERSONATION AND COLLUSION DURING EXAMINATION AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated impersonation and collusion during examination and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. It adopted a correlation research design. The population consisted of 6,893 teachers of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample size was 2,067 teachers drawn with the use of stratified simple random sampling technique. The instruments for the study were self-structured and were titled Impersonation and Collusion during Examination Questionnaire (ICEQ) and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (SAPQ). These instruments were validated by three experts from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The reliability of the instruments analysis was done with the use of Cronbach Alpha statistical tool yielded .800. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while PPMC was used to test the hypotheses. The result of the study revealed that relationship exists between impersonation and collusion which negatively influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Based on the findings, the study concluded among others that impersonation and collusion have negative influences on students' academic performance. The study therefore recommended among others that educational administrators in River State should ensure that students do not indulge in any form of examination malpractices to ensure that students perform well academically.

Keywords: Examination Malpractice, Impersonation Collusion, Students, Academic Performance, Public, Senior Secondary, Schools, Rivers State.

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INTRODUCTION

Examination practices all over the world plays pivotal role in the education sector because they serve as determinants of students assessment and performances for future opportunities. The integrity of these practices measures the quality of education and the value of the certification given. However, these examinations practices are often marred by malpractices such as impersonation and collusion, which jeopardize the authenticity of the results and credibility of an educational system (Olagunju, 2018).

The phenomenon of examination malpractice seems to be aggravated by the large scale and shameful involvement of dishonest and greedy teachers, school heads, parents and all those who take part in examination administration (Ijaiya, 2008 cited in Jimoh, 2009a). The prominence assumed by this malady in the school system has become a source of concern to stakeholders in the education sector. Every examination season witnesses new and ingenious methods of cheating (Turner, 2018). The examination process has become endangered to the extent that certification has almost lost its credibility in the country. Certificates no longer seem to reflect skill and competence. Accusing fingers have been pointed at teachers, school heads, parents, students, examination officials and even security agents as those responsible for examination malpractice in the school system (Jimoh, 2009b).

Teachers have been variously accused of abating examination malpractice. Bernedette and Rita (2012) citing Denga and Denga (2008) affirmed that teachers read answers to the students in examination halls and even work sums for them to copy quickly before they are cleaned off. Based on this statement, teachers may feel that if the students fail to perform excellently, it will be a slap on their faces hence the students will know that they did not carry out their teaching effectively. As such, they resort to reading answers to students in a bid to assist them excel in the said examination.

Teachers get involved in examination malpractice to boast their school's to have the highest number of credit and distinction passes, thereby making students believe that it is the fastest way to achieve success. Some teachers who are assigned to supervise examination collude with students to cheat due to the level of poverty. Ezezogor (2002) in Bernedette and Rita (2012) stated that students' involvement in examination malpractice is due to teachers' encouragement.

The incidence of examination malpractice via impersonation and collusion has become wide spread to the extent that virtually no examination anywhere at all levels and outside the formal school system is free from sharp practices during the processes (Jimoh, 2009a; Emaiku, 2012).

Academic performance is vital indication of students' academic achievement and progress in their educational journey. Secondary schools play crucial role in shaping students' academic outcomes, providing them with platforms to acquire knowledge and skills necessary for their future endeavors. However, the growing concern on dishonest practices such as impersonation and collusion during examinations can impact students' performance. Thus, this study seeks to explore the issues of impersonation and collusion during examinations and its implications on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

The increase in impersonation and collusion as forms of examination malpractices has been a major concern to educationists. In spite of the importance placed on examinations in Nigeria, it

seems the issue surrounding examination malpractices have not been addressed particularly in Rivers State. It has been observed that there is mass cheating in the form of impersonation and collusion in public examination in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Students nowadays no longer believe in hard work and dedication towards their academic endeavor. They are characterized by a desire for success and wealth without a corresponding emphasis on legitimate means and avenues to be used positively in achieving success. The desire to pass at all cost is responsible for impersonation and collusion during examination.

These unethical practices do not only undermine the reliability of the examination system, but also, affects students' academic performances adversely. The prevalence impersonation and collusion during examination raises questions about the quality of education offered in public secondary schools and the value of the certificates awarded.

In a country where greed and dishonesty is the order of the day, what do we expect? Students have learnt to steal with latitude; as such, impersonation and collusion during examination has become rampant amongst at all level of the educational system. Therefore, this study wants to verify if actually impersonation and collusion during examinations are common amongst students' in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Aim and Objective of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the effect of impersonation and collusion examination on student's academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The specific objectives include the following to:

- Investigate the effect of impersonation on students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Determine the extent collusion influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions were raised:

- To what extent does impersonation during examination influence on students' academic performance in public senior secondary school in Rivers State?
- To what extent does collusion influence students' academic performance in public senior Secondary school in Rivers State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- There is no significant relationship between impersonation and students' academic performance in public senior secondary school in Rivers State.
- There is no significant relationship between collusion and students' academic performance in public senior secondary school in Rivers State.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

Impersonation

Impersonation means asking someone who did not register as a candidate in an examination to take the place of the person who registered. Thus, it is a situation an individual who is not registered as a candidate for a particular examination takes the place of one that is registered. Usually this involves collusion between the chief examiner and the examination supervisor. It frequently involves tertiary institutions students taking the test for monetary reward or a favor for a girl friend or boy-friend (Nwikana, 2021). Impersonation is an act of pretending to be another person for the purpose of entertainment or fraud.

When we hear and talk of “impersonation,” we are referring to the act of deceiving examiners by pretending to be the real person that registered for the examination. Impersonation has evolved into a dangerous form of examination malpractices. Students have been using it to gain access to unmerited scores and to commit fraud and identity theft. Students use the art of impersonation in many ways, thereby playing the role of a trusted individual to deceive examiners and gain access to examination hall to write examinations which they did not register for. The practice is presenting oneself as someone else to manipulate the examination process (Ololube, 2012, 2017).

This is a case where another candidate or hired mercenary sits for examination on behalf of the genuine candidate. Male candidates sitting in for girls or vice versa, and twins writing examinations for each other (Eze, 2012).

Collusion

The collusion between two or more of these agents makes it more difficult to combat examination malpractice. Even the penalties stipulated in Act 33 of 1999 Nigeria’s constitution ranging from cancellation of results to 21 years’ jail-term has failed to achieve any significant shift from the cheating culture due to the effect of collusion (Ijaiya, 2004; Oduwaiye, 2014). The university system evaluates the achievement of students learning by administering two major types of examinations. Each course is evaluated by continuous assessment test (C.A., Test) and semester examination to prevent examination malpractices. These two types of examination are not spared of malpractices or irregularities of one type or the other (Onyechere, 2004; Olanipekun, 2013; Adewale, 2014; Acolagbe, 2015).

In addition, collusion means an unauthorized passing of information between candidates usually by exchanging notes or scripts. This is usually facilitated by inadequate spacing between desks and laced supervision.

Collusion also means where students work together to complete assessment that could have be taken independently. Talking to fellow students and peers during examination is invariably ways of examination malpractice. However, there is a thin line between working collaboratively, or in cooperation, and collusion in examination halls. Furthermore, collusion encompasses the unpermitted or illegitimate cooperation between students during examination. Students are encouraged to engage in discussion and debate of subject content, but not during examinations.

METHODS

This study adopted a correlation design. This was appropriate because the study investigated the relationship between the independent variables i.e. (impersonation and collusion) and dependent variables (Students' academic performance). The population for this study consist 6,893 teachers in 286 public secondary school in Rivers State.

The sample of this study was made up of 2,067 teachers, about 30% of the total population drawn through stratified simple random sampling technique. Two instruments titled managing impersonation and collusion during examination questionnaire (ICEQ) and Students Academic Performance questionnaire (SAPQ) were used for the study, the instruments were in two sections A and B. Section 'A' sought information on demographic data, section B sought information on the variables use for the study. The items were scaled in line with Likert modified scale of VHE – 4 points, HE – 3 points, LE – 2 points and VLE – 1 point. The instruments were validated by three experts in the Department of Education Psychology Guidance and counseling of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria.

The reliability of the research instrument was determined. The Test- retest reliability was used to determine the reliability of the instrument using Cronbach Alpha. A co-efficient value of .800 indicated that the research instrument was relatively reliable. Two methods of data collection which are primary source and secondary source were used to collect data. The primary source was the use of questionnaires, while the secondary sources include textbooks, internet, journals, published and unpublished articles and government publications.

The responses will be analyzed using tables, which provided answers to the research questions. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, while the hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical tool statistical tool.

RESULTS

Research Question One: To what extent does impersonation influence academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State?

Table 1: showing mean and standard deviation on the extent impersonation influence academic performance of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

s/n	Items	Mean	SD	Decisions
1	Some students often hire machineries to write exams for them	2.78	.41	High Extent
2	Some students write exams for their mates even when their friends are absent.	3.04	.74	High Extent
3	Some boys write exams for their girlfriends.	2.68	.52	High Extent
4	Some girls students write exams for their boy friends	2.59	.49	High Extent
5	Some parents sit for external examination for their children.	3.07	.66	High Extent
Grand mean		2.83	0.56	High Extent

The first research question was to determine the extent impersonation influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The purpose of this research question was to determine the extent impersonation influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. To answer this question, the

responses on item 1-5 of section “B” of the questionnaire were computed using mean and standard deviation in table 1. The result of the analysis reveals a cumulative mean of 2.83 and a cumulative standard deviation of 0.56. The descriptive statistics of responses to these items agreed that impersonation to a high extent influence students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State since the cumulative mean of 2.83 is above the criterion mean of 2.50. This means that majority of the respondents agreed that impersonation influence students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State (See Table. 1).

Research Question Two: To what extent does collusion influence academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State?

Table 2: Showing mean and standard deviation on the extent collusion influence academic performance of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

s/n	Items	Mean	SD	Decisions
6	Some students often arrange with some teachers’ in other to rewrite examinations after the exams have been written.	2.61	.49	High Extent
7	Many students often copy from one another during exams.	3.26	.85	High Extent
8	Many students exchange examination answers in exam halls.	3.31	.63	High Extent
9	Many students encourage cheating in exams by allowing their mates to copy from their answer scripts.	3.36	.69	High Extent
10	Some teachers over look students who copy during examinations they are invigilating.	3.19	.67	High Extent
Grand mean		2.63	0.67	High Extent

The second research question was to determine the extent collusion influence students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The purpose of this research question was to determine the extent collusion influence students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. To answer this question, the responses on item 6-10 of section “B” of the questionnaire were computed using mean and standard deviation in table 2. The result of the analysis reveals a cumulative mean of 2.63 and a cumulative standard deviation of 0.67. The descriptive statistics of responses to these items agreed that collusion to a high extent influence students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State since the cumulative mean of 2.63 is above the criterion mean of 2.50. This means that majority of the respondents agreed that collusion influence students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State (See Table 2).

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between impersonation students’ academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 3: Showing PPMC analysis between impersonation and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Variables		Impersonation	Students' Academic performance
Impersonation	Pearson Correlation	1	-.203**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	2067	2067
Students' Academic performance	Pearson Correlation	.203**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	2067	2067

The first research hypothesis is there is no significant relationship between impersonation and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The purpose of this research hypothesis is to investigate the extent impersonation influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The result of the analysis reveals a correlation coefficient of $-.203^{**}$ at the significant level of $.000 > 0.05$. The correlation responses to these items agree to a high extent that impersonation influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This means that majority of the respondents agree to a high extent that impersonation influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. In other words impersonation negatively influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Based on this, the null hypothesis is rejected thereby upholding the alternative hypothesis that holds that there is a significant relationship between impersonation and students' academic performance (See table 3).

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between collusion students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4: Showing PPMC analysis between collusion and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

		Collusion	Students' academic performance
Collusion	Pearson Correlation	1	-.138**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	2067	2067
Students' academic performance	Pearson Correlation	-.138**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	2067	2067

The second research hypothesis is there is no significant relationship between collusion and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The purpose of this research hypothesis is to investigate the extent collusion influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The result of the analysis reveals a correlation coefficient of $-.138^{**}$ at the significant level of $.000 > 0.05$. The correlation responses to these items agree to a high extent that collusion influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This means that majority of the respondents agree to a high extent that collusion influence students' academic performance in

public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. In other words collusion negatively influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Based on this, the null hypothesis is rejected thereby upholding the alternative hypothesis that holds that there is a significant relationship between collusion and students' academic performance (See table 4).

DISCUSSION

Impersonation Students' Academic Performance in Public Junior Secondary Schools

Hypothesis one which states, that "there is no significant relationship between impersonation and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State" was rejected because impersonation had negative significant relationship with students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This is evidenced in the significant level of .000 and the study's coefficient of $-.203^{**}$. This finding is in line with the view of Nwikana (2021) who opined that students who are not registered as candidates for a particular examination takes the place of students that registered. Usually this involves collusion between the chief examiner and the examination supervisor. It frequently involves tertiary institutions students taking the test for monetary reward or a favor for a girl friend or boy-friend (Ololube, 2012).

Collusion Students' Academic Performance in Public Junior Secondary Schools

Hypothesis two which states, that "there is no significant relationship between collusion and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State" was rejected because collusion had negative significant relationship with students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This is evidenced in the significant level of .000 and the study's coefficient of $-.138^{**}$. This finding is in line with the view of Ojerinde (2004) cited in Anzene (2014) that a typical pre-examination malpractice in Nigeria is in the process of registering SSCE candidates for examinations reported that one of the commonest forms of pre examination malpractice is the registration of non-school candidates for school examination by principals in spite of clear regulations against such practice. This is collusion. This explains why secondary schools located in rural areas with no access road or difficult terrains that hinder external monitoring or supervision witness influx of candidates during SSCE examinations. Okpan (2006) affirmed that parents believed that their children cannot do well in both internal and external examination so they are ready to go extra miles including hiring people to write examination for their children as well as bribing teachers and examinees to assist their children to succeed in examination. This is quite true when parents and guardians are seen, hovering round examination premises looking for who will assist their children.

Whiley (2012) asserted that children are most likely to cheat when their parents press them to succeed. The authors maintained that such parental pressure goes with children's rate of aspiration which invariably triggers them to cheat to achieve the desired goal particularly when previous examination result are poor. Esu (2004) posited that one of the causes of examination malpractices is non-chalet attitude and permissiveness of many parents. Failure to provide children with the necessary guidance and negative role modeling by parents are factors that cause

children to cheat in examinations. The involvement of parents in examination malpractice is a reflection of the general collapse of virtues in the large society. Okpan (2006) maintained that parents have abdicated their traditional responsibilities of developing their children character, instilling hard work and enforcing their integrity. Emmanuel (2013) in Ololube (2017) opined that examination malpractice is traceable to parents. They pay for mercenaries to write examination on behalf of their children. Some go to bribe teachers or buy live examination papers for their children. This of course has contributed in no small way to the menace of this terrible monster.

CONCLUSION

Impersonation has a negative relationship with students' performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Collusion has a negative relationship with students' performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended as follows:

- School principals should ensure that adequate teaching materials are provided for teachers to enable students to learn well and perform well academically.
- School administrators in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State should ensure that students who indulge in exam malpractice are panelized to serve as deterrent for others.

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