
Original Paper

Examination Malpractices and Student Nurses' Readiness to Learn for Sustainable Health Care in Nigeria

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Abstract

The cry for sustainable development in any field of life cannot be achievable without best practices in that enclave. This study examines the relationship between examination mal-practices and student nurses' readiness to learn for sustainable health care in Nigeria. Akwa Ibom State is the study area, The population of the study consisted of all the nursing students in the three senatorial districts (School of Nursing, Ikot Ekpene, School of Nursing, Uyo, School of Nursing, Eket). A sample of 100 students were selected from the population of 550 nursing students using a proportionate sampling technique, which represents 18.18% ($100/550 \times 100\%$). The main instrument used for the study is a researchers-developed questionnaire titled "Examination Malpractices and Students Readiness to Learn Questionnaire (EMSRLQ)". The data collected from the field was processed, coded and analyzed using Regression Analysis for research questions and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to test the hypotheses. In the end, the study found out that there is no significant relationship between students' familiarity with lecturers and readiness to learn in nursing schools in Akwa Ibom State. The study also found out that there is no significant relationship between gratification to lecturers and readiness to learn in nursing schools in Akwa Ibom State. Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that examination malpractice has a negative relationship with students' readiness to learn. The outcome of the study is that gratification of teachers and familiarity with lecturers have a negative relationship with students' readiness to learn. Teacher-students' relationships while been encouraged to be formal and informal, should always be motivational, inspiring and professional. Where these tenets are not upheld, such relationships are always abused by the students, who may leverage the relationship to solicit for favours instead of inspiration.

Introduction

An examination is a formal test that is taken to show knowledge or ability in a specific subject, or to attain a qualification. Examination is also defined as the process through which students are evaluated or tested to find out the quality of knowledge they have acquired within a stated period (Balogun, 2014). Examinations could be internal or external. It could be oral or written, essay or objective type, theory or practical constitutes an integral part of the education process. Examples of internal examinations are continuous assessment tests, terminal, semester and annual or promotional examinations. Examples of external (public) examinations common in schools are Common Entrance Examination for admission into secondary school/ nursing schools. School certificates examination is conducted by the NECO, WAEC/GCE Board and competitive entrance examinations into tertiary institutions.

According to Umoh and Egwuasi (2012) examination gets the students into fierce competition in a bid to achieve good results; this is essential for their success in today's world as success is measured in terms of good score, which helps in getting admitted to college/ any institution of learning or gaining a good job. The outcome of the examination is used as a basis for decision-making on the examinee's ability. The examinee is consequently awarded a certificate which could qualified students for

admission into a school, promotion into higher level of an institution and employment opportunities (Nganchi and Charlotte, 2020).

However, the growing number of applicants/students with few institutions/ employment opportunities comes with serious negative factors with resulting decline of interest by students/applicants in studying and preparation for examination. Such negative factors lead to tendency for students to rely on self-aid resources (SEAR) as a means of passing examinations with un-merited high grades. SEAR is any unauthorized and unwanted material(s) - print and non- print that dishonestly facilitates immoral behaviour/misconduct during examination - examinationmalpractices (Umoh and Egwuasi, 2012).

Examination malpractice according to Olushola (2009) is that unlawful behavior or activityengaged by students to have personal advantage in an examination over their colleagues or mateswho are taking the same examination. Malpractice could be committed before, during or after theexamination by either the students taking the examination or by officials assigned with the administration of the examination.

Dike (2015) from the psychological point of view saw examination malpractice as all forms of cheating which directly or indirectly misrepresent the ability of the students. It refers to counter practice that is against the ethics of examination. It is also an act of disrespect to all rules and regulations guiding the good conduct of any examination or any evaluation process.

According to Udim, Abubakar and Essien (2015) examination malpractices could be encouraged as a result of: Students being sometimes left without any direction or are pushed too hard and too far by parents to achieve the desires of such parents. This problem often makes the candidates to do courses that they cannot cope with, are not interested in, or may not be beneficial to them. Also, with truancy and absenteeism; where students were ill-prepared for examination because they do not know what others have been taught.

In the words of Forkuor and Amarteifio (2017), it is natural that when a student does not attend lecture(s), there is no miracle that will make him or her pass, except if he or she indulges in examination malpractice, lack of proper teaching of students before examination can also encourage examination malpractice. Some school teachers are either lazy or indulge in their private practices when they are supposed to be teaching their students and thus, put in grossly inadequate time in teaching/coaching their students. When the time for examination comes, in order for them to preserve their jobs and also uphold the name of their schools, such teachers tend to resort to examination malpractices. Poor state of infrastructure in schools is another cause of examination malpractice. Where a school lacks such basic facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries and other vital equipment and facilities, teaching and learning cannot be carried out effectively.

Long periods in which schools are closed due to strikes by teachers could also result in examination malpractice. When schools are closed, students are compelled to go back to their various homes and either roam the streets, stay idle or engage in nefarious activities. During examination, such students may not be able to recall what they had learnt and the best bet for them is to participate in examination malpractices. Poor admission and promotion policy by schools can also enhance examination malpractice (Forkuor and Amarteifio, 2017).

When admissions are not given to candidates based on merit but based on sentiment, the said students may not be able to withstand the academic stress; the last option for such students will be to embark on examination malpractice. In the same vein, when students are promoted from one class to another without recourse to whether they have passed or not, they tend to be ill equipped at the end of their study and thus depend on examination malpractice. Inadequate staffing of schools is another major reason why students cheat in examinations. For a student to learn and understand any subject matter, he or she ought to be taught adequately.

In a situation where students are not taught adequately due to lack of sufficient teachers, such students or schools tend to indulge in examination malpractice to pass examinations. Poor attitude of students towards their studies resulting in non-preparation for examination can also cause examination malpractice. A student, who failed to study hard when he or she has examination to write, will always get involved in examination malpractice in order to pass such examination(s) (Olushola, 2006).

The learner is a negotiator in the learning development and the objective of learning. Richard & Rogers (2018) argue that learners have the responsibility to partake in classroom activities that are based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning. Students have to be comfortable with listening in the group. This stand point signifies that relationship is a need that students ought to strive for in order to achieve their goals. They need to be in relationship with their teachers to enable them experience the school in a positive way that can result in academic achievement. However, over familiarity with the teacher can lead to laziness to learning. A student can depend on the teacher and forget about his homework and assignment because he knows that the teacher will input marks for him.

Richard & and Rodgers (2011) noted that the teacher can also be assumed to be a counsellor, group process manager and effective communicator in the classroom. In such ways, teachers need to reflect on how they can assist their students toward success. This is an important component that maintains higher expectations for each student. They also have a big role in facilitating the communication process between students to act as an independent contributor within the learning environment and they inspire students to re-imagine their future. Macpherson (2007) notes that 'cooperative learning is part of a group of teaching and learning techniques where students interact with each other to acquire and practice the elements of a subject matter to meet common learning goals'

Many learners still seem to depend completely on the teacher to impart knowledge. Teachers carry the whole duty for education; while learners or students are supposed to listen and often do not even have any idea at first of what occurs in the classroom. However, this practice is changing owing to educational and social reforms that need to be developed. Nugent (2009) suggests that to create a strong familiarity between the teacher and student can lead to a student not being serious in his/her studies. It is not all the time that the student relates with the teacher. Frequent interaction can lead to slothfulness and lackadaisical attitude of the students.

According to Petters and Okon (2013), students' relationship with the teachers has become a common thing in school. It has positive and negative effects to the students. However, students' readiness too depends on certain factors such as school environment and circumstances. A student with a low readiness to learn may be encumbered by difficult personal circumstances in his or her life, or a lower emotional or physical maturity. Also, a student who gets closer to the teachers may find opportunity to learn through the teacher while another time may affect the students' performance academically.

Students who spent more time with the same teacher scored higher on end-of-year tests (on average 0.123 of a standard deviation) than those who were not matched. These benefits were greatest for minority students and lower-performing teachers (as measured by value-added). Teachers impact student outcomes far beyond test scores: they provide them with life skills and foster positive attitudes. A 2016 study found that varying teaching practices and content knowledge can impact self-efficacy in specific subjects, happiness in class, and behavior in class (Blazar and Kraft, 2016).

Teacher – Student's relationships or familiarity play a very important role in developing a mental picture of an individual. Ewnetu and Fisseha (2018) postulate that teachers have the basic needs for relatedness among the students in their class which can play an important role in students' self-concepts, the expectation towards scholastic achievements as well as how to make a meaningful life after school. Hence, a student's self-esteem development is the overall sense of support a student feels from the important people around them. Myers and Pianta (2008) confirm that teacher – students' relationship is fundamental to healthy development of students in school especially with regard to the student's self-esteem. Lee (2007) notes that the trust developed in teacher - student relationships can contribute to students' academic performance. Student – teacher relationship can influence students' future paths towards academic excellence (Lee, 2007). Hence, as noted by Lee (2007), a good and professional relationship between teachers and students is essential in creating a safe context and gives confidence to learners to work without pressure and become motivated to learning.

This form of malpractice may be used to enhance teacher-student collusion to cheat. It brings in the economic perspectives in examination malpractices. A student may pay the teacher or an examination official some money not necessarily to buy the question paper, but to be allowed to use illegal materials smuggled into the examination halls or to extend the examination scheduled period. Male students offer money or other valuables while female students use money or sex to bargain for "upgrading" of their

examination scores. Bribery is common in both secondary and tertiary levels of education examination. Sometimes, question papers are stolen by the paid lecturers who may be or may not be part of the invigilation of the examination, they solve the questions and get it across to the particular student(s) in the examination hall using their influence as lecturers to stage manage and cover up their acts from other unsuspecting colleagues. Some greedy /wicked lecturers go to any length intimidating students into sorting/ paying for books besides giving them money and material gifts or they fail the examination. (Nwaka,2012).

Some students take their parents to meet with their subject/course teachers/lecturers in order to bribe their way for high grades; some parent present gifts to these teachers in turn for high grades for their children, such parents also go as far as paying other students willing to write examinations for their ward with serious collaborations with those in authority. Such parents view certificates as evidence of knowledge rather than exhibition of skills, hence eager to see their children with high grades that are not merited and such students are pushed in the same way through to the height of academic ladder and they in turn reproduce their likes into the system (Akpama, 2012). Also noted, are proprietors or proprietresses of private schools who task parents/students to pay extra money for examination tagged as examination fee or examiners' comfort. The external invigilators who are meant to work in the examination halls are invited or distracted to their office for some refreshment while examination is ongoing to give room for atrocities to take place during the absence of the invigilator. Teachers/ schools owners' desire to love some students and favour their parents, earn money and gift from them has gradually lure teachers/ school owners to participate in series of unprofessional behaviors as identified by Afuruobi and Okoro (2012). Their involvement not only enriches their pockets but seems to get their schools high grades and popularity.

Chidi (2013) conducted a study in Ghana to examine the techniques used by students to cheat during examinations. Descriptive statistics was used in data analysis. Data were gathered on three variables: the use of innovative techniques, use of technology and entry of foreign materials from students of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology using survey questionnaires. Data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that the innovative techniques used by students were sitting arrangements, use of body parts, entry of foreign materials, and the use of technology. Students devised these techniques due to their perception of cheating and also poor institutional mechanism, which provided a favourable ground for cheating. We, therefore, argue that, to curtail

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Oladunjoye (2012) agreed on the fact that students nowadays desire to pass at all cost yet not ready to work hard or stay dedicated to their academic endeavors as being responsible for their pushing to gratify or bribe the lecturers and giving in to any enticements by any wave of fraudulent acts. Iseife (2012) asserted that, poor funding/ remuneration of education/staff, greed/materialism/get rich quick syndrome induced by poverty are at the fore front for some teachers engagement and accepting/requesting gratification. Corruption in the entire society is so high and educational institutions as part of the Nigeria society is likewise so badly affected. With what is prevailing and perpetuated by the leaders in the society, examination malpractice is seen as a way of survival, it is so difficult to convince the youths/students that vices do not pay. The Nigeria traditional value system has since been bastardized, our core values almost completely replaced by money worship, cheating in various ramifications,

brigand conduct, forgery, bribery and disregard for rules and regulations. Examination malpractice according to Chukwunke (2012) is clearly a reflection of the larger society; moral decadence in the society is manifested by situations where acts of gross misconduct by leaders are glorified by the grace of their ill-gotten wealth. Hence, examination fraud is a product of a society that nurtures cheats and mediocre and turns them to celebrities. This is the premises that triggered the present study.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a correlational design. This was suitable for the study according to Chinweuba, Iheanacho and Agbapuonuw, (2013) because it enables the researchers to examine the characteristics and relationship between two or more variables, which is useful in this study.

Area of the Study

Akwa Ibom State is a state in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria, bordered on the east by Cross River State, on the west by Rivers State and Abia State, and on the south by the Atlantic Ocean. The state takes its name from the Kwa Ibo River which bisects the state before flowing into the Bight of Bonny. Akwa Ibom was split from Cross River State in 1987 with its capital as Uyo and with 31 local government areas.

Of the 36 states, Akwa Ibom is the 30th largest in area and fifteenth most populous with an estimated population of nearly 5.5 million as of 2016. Geographically, the state is divided between the Central African mangroves in the coastal far south and the Cross-Niger transition forests in the rest of the state. Other important geographical features are the Imo and Cross rivers which flow along Akwa Ibom's eastern and western borders, respectively while the Kwa Ibo River bisects the state before flowing into the Bight of Bonny.

In the southeast corner of the state is the Stubb's Creek Forest Reserve, a heavily threatened wildlife reserve that contains declining crocodile, putty-nosed monkey, red-capped mangabey, and sclater's guenon populations along with potentially extirpated populations of African leopard and Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzee. Offshore, the state is also biodiverse as there are large fish populations along with various cetacean species including bottlenose dolphins, pantropical spotted dolphins, humpback whales, and killer whales. There are three (3) functional schools of nursing in Akwa Ibom State. These are:

- School of Nursing (SON), Ikot Ekpene.
- School of Nursing (SON), Eket.
- School of Nursing (SON), Anua-Uyo.

The area is suited for the study because it provided the needed information for the study.

The population of the study consisted of all the nursing students in the three senatorial districts (School of Nursing, Ikot Ekpene, School of Nursing, Uyo, School of Nursing, Eket). According to 2021 records of nursing students enrolled in the studied schools, the total number of students 550 were at the 2021/2022 academic session (School database, 2022).

A sample of 100 students were selected from the population of 550 nursing students using a proportionate sampling technique, which represents 18.18% ($100/550 \times 100\%$). Proportionately, 35 ($195/550 \times 100$) were selected from Ikot Ekpene, 30 ($165/550 \times 100$) selected from Uyo, and 35 ($190/550 \times 100$) selected from Eket. This sampling technique enables the researchers to select a fraction or percentage of the entire population as the sample size for the study. In order to draw the 100 respondents, a simple random sampling technique was used. In this method, hat-and-draw method was adopted, where pieces of paper are numbered and wrapped and the students are allowed to pick at random. Each element of the frame thus has an equal probability of selection.

The frame is not subdivided or partitioned. This allows all students to have equal chance of being selected without bias. The main instrument to be used for the study is a research questionnaire titled "Examination Malpractices and Students Readiness to Learn Questionnaire (EMSRLQ)". EMSRLQ is a 42-item questionnaire designed by the researcher with a four Likert options. The instrument is

constructed by the researcher under the guidance of the supervisor in the department of education. The instrument consisted of three sections, (Section A, B and C). Section 'A' contained the demographic data of respondents, while section 'B' elicited information from the main variables of the study, while section C sought to establish the relation between the independent and dependent variables. The options are: (SA) Strongly Agree - 4 points, (A) Agree - 3 points, (D) Disagree - 2 points, (SD) Strongly Disagree -1 points.

The data collected from the field was processed, coded and analyzed using Regression Analysis for Research Questions and Pearson Product moment Correlation (PPMC) for hypotheses, tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis and Results

The results of the study are presented as follows

Research Question 1: What is the extent of relationship between students' familiarity with lecturers and readiness to learn in nursing school for sustainable healthcare in Akwa Ibom State?

Table 1. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Test for Relationship between students' familiarity with lecturers and readiness to learn in nursing school

Variables	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	r
Students' familiarity with lecturers	3150	158032	178197	0.043
readiness to learn in nursing school	4340	252584		

Table 1 shows the summary of the PPMC test for relationship. The result shows that the calculated r-value is 0.043, indicating a weak positive relationship between students' familiarity with lecturers and readiness to learn in nursing school. This shows that students' familiarity with lecturers has a weak positive relationship with students' readiness to learn in Nursing Schools for sustainable healthcare in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Question 2: What is the extent of relationship between gratification to lecturers and readiness to learn in nursing school for sustainable healthcare in Akwa Ibom State?

Table 2. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Test for Relationship between use of extraneous materials and readiness to learn in nursing school

Variables	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	R
Gratification to lecturers	3047	137399	171286	-0.03922
Readiness to learn in nursing school	4340	252584		

Table 2 shows the summary of the PPMC test for relationship. The result shows that the calculated r-value is -0.039. This indicates that there is a negative relationship between gratification to lecturers and readiness to learn in nursing school. This shows an inverse relationship, thus, as gratification to lecturers rises, students' readiness to learn in nursing school reduces and vice versa.

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are tested at .05 level of significance

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between students' familiarity with lecturers and readiness to

learn in nursing school in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 3. PPMC Significant Relationship Test between students' familiarity with lecturers and readiness to learn in nursing school

Variables	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	rcal	df	rcrit	Decision
	$\sum Y$	$\sum Y^2$					
students' familiarity with lecturers	3150	158032	178197	0.043	75	0.073	*
readiness to learn in nursing school	4340	252584					

* not significant @.05 alpha level and 233 degree of freedom

Table 3 shows the summary of the PPMC test for significant relationship. The result shows that the calculated r-value is 0.043. The critical r-value at .05 level of significance is and 75 degree of freedom is .073. Since the rcal is less than the rcrit, the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is no significant relationship between students' familiarity with lecturers and readiness to learn in nursing school for sustainable healthcare in Akwa Ibom State.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between gratification to lecturers and readiness to learn in nursing school for sustainable healthcare in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4. PPMC Significant Relationship Test between students' familiarity with lecturers and readiness to learn in nursing school for sustainable healthcare in Akwa Ibom State

Variables	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	r	df	Rcrit	Decision
	$\sum Y$	$\sum Y^2$					
Gratification to lecturers	3047	137399	171286	- 0.03922	75	0.073	*
Readiness to learn in nursing school	4340	252584					

* not significant @.05 alpha level and 233 degree of freedom

Table 4 shows the summary of the PPMC test for significant relationship. The result shows that the calculated r-value is -0.03922. The critical r-value at .05 level of significance is and 75 degree of freedom is .073. Since the rcal is less than the rcrit, the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is no significant relationship between gratification to lecturers and readiness to learn in nursing school in Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study are hereby discussed under relevant sub headings

Relationship Between Students' Familiarity with Lecturers and Readiness to Learn for sustainable healthcare

The result shows that the calculated r-value is 0.043, indicating a weak positive relationship between students' familiarity with lecturers and readiness to learn in nursing schools. The corresponding hypothesis test however, shows that there is no significant relationship between students' familiarity with lecturers and readiness to learn in nursing school for sustainable healthcare in Akwa Ibom State.

Teacher-student relationship has a positive effect on student self confidence and performance if clearly managed and maintained professionally. This finding is in agreement with Mahona (2012) who examined teacher-student familiarity and performance. It was found that teacher-student familiarity helps students to feel cared for and appreciated and in turn, the students may not want to disappoint the

teacher. Hence, they work hard.

Relationship Between Gratification to Lecturers and Readiness to Learn for Sustainable Healthcare

The result shows that the calculated r-value is -0.039, indicating that there is a negative relationship between gratification to lecturers and readiness to learn in nursing school. This shows an inverse relationship, thus, as gratification to lecturers rises, students' readiness to learn in nursing school reduces and vice versa. The corresponding hypothesis test reveals that there is no significant relationship between gratification to lecturers and readiness to learn in nursing school for sustainable healthcare in Akwa Ibom State. This finding is supported by Onyibe et al. (2015), who found that students are engaging in gratifying their teachers with the aim of influencing their scores. Widespread practice of lecturer gratification reduces students' readiness to read, knowing that, at the end, they will sort themselves out with the teacher.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that examination malpractice has a negative relationship with students' readiness to learn for sustainable healthcare. Familiarity with lecturers has a negative relationship with students' readiness to learn for sustainable healthcare.

Recommendations

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

1. Students should be screened thoroughly before they enter the examination venue.
2. As a matter of school policy, the use of all kinds of watches and other gadgets during examinations should be banned by the school. This will help to check the use of technological gadgets for examination malpractice.
3. Teacher-students relationships while encouraged to be formal and informal, should always be motivational, inspiring and professional. Where these tenets are not upheld, such relationships are always abused by the students, who may leverage the relationship to solicit for favours instead of inspiration.
4. As much as possible, all students entering examination halls should be made to have means of identification that either shows they registered for the said course and belong to the department and programme offering the course.
5. Teacher should uphold the ethics of the profession and examination testing principles

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