

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE INDICATORS AS CORRELATES OF EXAMINATION CHEATING TENDENCIES AMONG STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN AKWA IBOM STATE

*Essien, J.B¹, Inuaeyen, I.N² and Chukwueze, M.E³

¹Department of Psychological Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Uyo. Akwa
Ibom State.

²Department of Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Uyo. Akwa
Ibom State Email:

³Williams memorial secondary School Afugiri Umuahia, Abia State

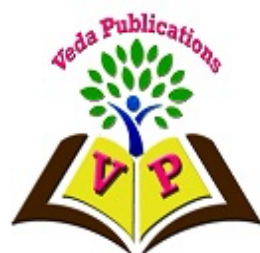
Emails : [*essienjbassey@uniuyo.edu.ng](mailto:essienjbassey@uniuyo.edu.ng) ; isaacinuaeyen@uniuyo.edu.ng ; marthaebere4@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.54513/IJREP.2024.11011>

Abstract

This study was carried out to investigate emotional intelligence indicators as correlate of examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom state. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The correlational research design was used for the study. The population of the study compounded all the 9,809 first year students in the University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State in 2022/2023 academic session. A sample of 384 students determined using Taro Yamene formula was used for the study. Simple random technique was adopted for sample selection. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researchers titled Emotional Intelligence Indicators and Examination Cheating Tendencies Questionnaire (EIIECTQ). Three experts in Measurement and Evaluation University of Uyo Akwa Ibom State validated the instrument. The reliability coefficient of the instrument determined using Cronbach alpha statistics was of 0.87. Data collected was analyzed using Pearson product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistic at 0.05 level of significance. All the null hypotheses were rejected. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between self-regulation, self-awareness and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. Recommendations were made among others that School management should organize workshop for students on self-regulation development since it could help reduces their examination cheating tendencies.

Keywords: *Emotional intelligence, Self-awareness, Self-regulation and examination cheating tendencies.*



Article Info:


Article Received: 07-01-2025

Accepted on: 18-02-2025

Published online: 28-03-2025

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Examinations in Nigerian schools dated back to the advent of formal education in the country in the 1800s and it was patterned after the British system. As such, the 1987 Ordinance made provision for examinations in schools that have attained the requisite percentage of proficiency. (Anayamene & Amuabulasi, 2021). Examination could also be seen as one of the most objective techniques used in the measurement of learning outcomes at all levels of education in Nigeria and the world over. This is why Anayamene & Amuabulasi defined examination as the measurement of proficiency in knowledge and skills, either in oral or written forms and evaluating the adequacy of these properties possessed by candidate. Operationally, examination is an assessment intended to measure knowledge, skill, attitude, physical fitness or classification in many other topics such as beliefs. In Nigeria, examinations are either internal or public. Internal examinations are the examinations set by teachers in the form of class tests and end of term examinations. Public examinations on the other hand, are examinations that are conducted in the public interest by recognized examining bodies that were not involved in organizing instruction or preparing students for the examinations. Notwithstanding the importance of examinations in the educational system of the country, the instances of malpractices during examinations have been identified. Examination malpractice is a global phenomenon occurring in both developed and developing countries. It can be viewed as a wider concept encompassing a set of deliberate but unacceptable behaviors that are against academic rules and regulations of a university or a particular course policy stated in the course outline (Sebek, 2012).

In the opinion of Oguzie and Nwokolo (2021), it is any illegal act committed by a student singlehandedly or in collaboration with others; like fellow students, parents, teachers, supervisors, invigilators, printers and anybody or group of people before, during or after examination in order to obtain undeserved marks or grades. Oguzie and Nwokolo (2021) viewed examination malpractice as any act or behaviour by any person or group of persons before, during or after an examination targeted to influence positively the outcome of such examination. These malpractices include misrepresentation of identity or impersonation, cheating, theft of other students' work, tampering with the works of others, bringing prepared answers to examination halls, unethical use of academic resources, fabrication of results and showing disregard to academic regulation. The services have been regarded as academic

misbehavior capable of truncating an educational system and as such the tendency is increasing on yearly basis.

In a general term, examination malpractice tendency is a comprehensive term that includes a collection of intentional but unacceptable behaviors that are against the rules and regulations of an academic institution. According to Oguzie, Oguzie, Nnadi, Mokwelu and Obi (2019), examination malpractice tendency is simply defined as the predisposition to indulge in examination malpractice. Therefore, in the context of this study, examination malpractice tendency among students can be defined when students portray academic behaviours that do not comply with stated assessment requirements and other institutional policies; when students can behave in ways intended to gain undue benefit in relation to their assessment.

The Nigerian educational institution has witnessed unprecedented upsurge in the rate of examination malpractice tendency particularly in the last three decades (Nwokolo & Oguzie, 2021). For instance, a study conducted in two Nigerian institutions showed that 54.2% of undergraduate pharmacy students had been involved in examination malpractice the preparation of their academic exercises. The sudden surge could be linked to over-population of higher institutions. Anayanene & Amuabulosi (2021) explained that one of major reasons for high tendencies in examination malpractice is that most students perceive some courses to be unnecessary; therefore they chose an easy way to pass the course. They further highlighted three different factors responsible for examination malpractice tendencies; psychological factors, environmental factors and intelligence. Psychological factors have to do with all the stress that is often induced by parents, peer pressure groups and students because of an examination. In the same vein, psychological trauma of failure or scoring low grades promotes candidates involvement in examination malpractice. Environmental factors refer to the crowded nature of classrooms and examination halls with few invigilators during examination. Obsolete, obscure and inadequate instructional materials can lure candidates to perpetrate examination malpractice. This could be as a result of poor intelligent quotient.

It is likely that when students experience pressure, they easily develop dishonesty in examinations, for example, in an atmosphere where learners see their peers cheat without being caught, they also, may create a feeling of don't care since all others are doing the same (Naliaka, Chumbe, Muthamia & Liambila (2015). In Nigeria, exam cheating swelled in the 1970s, when youths who were in the schools and campuses before the onset of the Nigerian civil war in

1967 were engaged in the army during the war. These came back after the war in 1970 and returned to learning to further their education (Saana, Ablodeppy & Mensah, 2016). Observations and reports shown that success in academic performance has become a herculean task to accomplish by students in recent eras. If examination is valid, trustworthy and free of Examination Cheating Behaviour (ECB), which involves illegal process of overcoming failure in examination, it will achieve the goal of producing sound and reliable students. Examination cheating behavior is the behaviour that does not comply with stated assessment, requirements and other institutional policies that students involved to gain undue benefit in their assessment (Guthrie 2019). Okey and Ewa (2019), Examination cheating behaviour (ECB) is inextricably connected to corruption as it involves any fraudulent act that gives learners the benefit to get unmerited grades before, during and after examination. Thus, according to Okey & Ewa, (ECB) is posing a big challenge to our present contemporary society. This is because most of our students in both secondary and tertiary institutions are no longer serious with their studies. The reason had been that they believe that humoring in ECB is a way to their success. They no longer have faith in hard work with the saying education is scam. They feel ECB is a sort of brain support. This indicates that ECB is a method that helps their memory in examinations.

Examination cheating behaviour remained a perennial problem in our educational system. In fact, Suleman (2015) described examination-cheating behaviour as a national cancer that can only be treated via cooperation among all parties involved in the education system. Participation in this act makes the students to develop knowledge and skills illicitly, motivated by the quest to also prove his or her ability to acquire knowledge, paper qualification and to excel in academics at all cost. Cheating in the context of testing is obtaining something valuable by use of deceit or fraud and violating the rules of examination dishonestly. Rusdi, Hussein, Rahman, Noordin, & Aziz, 2019). Cheating in academic activities is a dishonest act. Students cheat to avoid failing a subject or receiving a bad grade. Ede (2021) explained ECB as an improper or illegal conduct by a candidate during examination with the aim of passing the examination. Tinibu (2017) noted that examination cheating behaviour is academic dishonesty or academic fraud which involves any type of cheating on the part of either students or staff during examination. Oko and Adie (2016) assert that examination cheating behaviour is any thoughtful act of wrong doing, contrary to the rules of examinations intended to give a

candidate an undue advantage. They further noted that illegal actions students take during examinations aimed at making good grades through cutting corners is termed cheating

On the other hand, Emotional intelligence refers to a better understanding of emotions, an effective management of emotions, understanding of others and improving personal image. Emotions are a useful source of information that helps us handle the social environment. Emotional intelligence includes four types of abilities: perception of emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions and managing emotions. The current definition of emotional intelligence as defined by Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2016), includes the capacity to perceive, understand stand and manage emotions. Emotional intelligence has been theoretically related to several important human values including life satisfaction and the quality of interpersonal relationships that involve considerable reasoning with emotional information.

Consequently emotional Self-regulation can be defined as the whole system of standards, thoughts, processes, and actions that guide people's behaviour toward desired end states (Carver and Scheier, 2012). It is an ability to increase the degree of flexibility of human behaviour in order to adjust to societal or situational demands that one encounter on daily basis. Self-regulatory training involves teaching clients on how to control, direct their thoughts, feelings, attitude, behaviours and urges, in order to reduce the self-discrepancies that are haunting them towards reaching a goal. Self-regulation exposes learners to self-help skills and volitional strategies aimed at avoiding external and internal distractions (like cheating) in order to maintain their concentration, effort and motivation while performing academic task. There is the assumption that low Self-Control can result in undesirable behaviours, addiction, poor academic performance, deviant sexual behaviour, obesity, and criminal activity are a few of the well-documented areas where low self-control is evident. Low self-control leads to actions that put people at risk (Miller, 2020). Therefore if learners are well exposed to self-regulatory training, they would imbibe the qualities and characteristics of self-regulation which in summary, consist of seeing themselves as agents of their own behaviour, believing in learning as a proactive process, being self-motivated and using strategies that enable them to achieve desired academic result without any fraudulent means

Self-awareness being part one to make good changes in their life and adopt a fresh perspective on their own choices, interests, and actions. Self-awareness is an important skill

because it not only promotes optimism and responsible decision-making, but also serves as a basis for forming and maintaining good relationships with others.

A study in Portugal by Cristovao, Valentine and Rebelo (2020) reported emotional intelligence and of emotional intelligence is the capability to distinguish and identify individual's own limitations, strengths, feelings and emotions, as well as the ability to comprehend how these factors may influence one's performance. It is a cognitive ability that denotes a certain stage in an individual's self-development. Students who are aware of their abilities and emotions are more likely to be introspective, recognizing their current state of being and the causes for their emotional reactions (Dishon, Julian, Critchley & Kaufman, 2017). Moreover, improving one's self-awareness may help one to better recognize their unique strengths and limitations in a variety of areas, which can help students make better decisions and manage themselves. In addition, recognizing how one's ideas and emotions influence their behavior, may motivate self-awareness as two of the most fundamental students' characteristics needed to create positive effects on learning. The investigation was conducted on the backdrop of the emphasis on the need to equip students with critical thinking, creativity, and social-emotional management skills. The authors had observed that because self awareness and emotional processes influence how and what students learn, emotions may either promote or hinder student's academic engagement, dedication, and eventual school achievement. The findings indicated that learning that focuses on self-awareness has a significant beneficial effect on both teachers and students. In the study, teachers observed significant changes in student motivation, interpersonal connections, and classroom atmosphere.

Woche and Wawire (2020) investigate the relationship between self-control and examination malpractice in Garissa County in Kenya. The study was conducted in eight selected public secondary schools in Garissa County, Kenya. The target population consisted of 301 respondents. The sample included 16 class teachers, and 285 students from form four. The data was analyzed descriptively and organized in tables, frequencies, pie charts and percentages. The study revealed that there was no significant relationship between the examination malpractice and self-control with a correlation coefficient of .199 and at a significance levels of 0.001 which is less than 0.05 ($r=.199$, p value $<.05$). The study recommends that Guidance and counseling should be emphasized in schools and taught as

subject to help the learners successfully go through several stages in life and make them develop a holistic view about the world

Kimanzi, Muiru and Thinguri (2023) conducted a study on Influence of Students' Self-awareness on Academic Dishonesty in Public Secondary Schools in Makueni County, Kenya. The sample size was 802 which consisted of 750 students sampled randomly, 25 principals and 25 teachers sampled purposively. The study utilized 1 SCDE and 1 CDE purposively sampled. The instruments employed were questionnaires for principals, teachers and students, and interviews for the education officers. Descriptive data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages and presented through tables and figures. Inferential statistics was analyzed through linear regression and presented through tables while qualitative data was analyzed thematically and presented through narration and verbatim citations. The study findings were that self-awareness meaningfully influenced academic dishonesty. The research found out that there was necessity to enhance the students' self-awareness. It was suggested that integrating involvements like introducing capable, knowledgeable and qualified counselors in schools was essential to eradicate academic dishonesty.

In the study carried out by Anayamene, & Amuabulosi (2021) on relationship between emotional intelligence and examination malpractice tendency among university undergraduates in Anambra State. A correlational design was used in this study. The study was guided by three research questions and one null hypothesis. The population of this study comprises 300 level undergraduates from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and 300 level undergraduates from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam. The sample was 851 respondents sample from two universities, Nnamdi Azikiwe University and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam. Data for the study was collected using two instruments titled "Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire" and "Questionnaire on Examination Malpractice tendency. The findings indicated that majority of the university undergraduate students have low emotional intelligence. The findings showed that only few of the university undergraduate students have high examination malpractice tendency. The findings also revealed that there is a low negative significant relationship between the emotional intelligence of university undergraduate students in Anambra State and their examination malpractice tendency.

Makinde, Ogunlade & Akeredolu (2021) conducted a study on Self-regulatory training: A Tool for Curbing Students Attitude towards Participation in Examination Malpractice in South West, Nigeria. One hundred and eighty respondents were drawn from the targeted sample using multi stage and stratified sampling technique. The result revealed that self-regulatory training is effective in assisting students to develop negative attitude towards examination malpractice.

However, examination malpractice at all levels of educational stratum poses the greatest threat to the validity and reliability of test scores and consequently to the authentication and recognition of the certificate issued. It has been a heavy- burden that has been corrupting the Nigerian education sector, thereby lowering one's self esteem and confidence. Due to exam malpractice, it becomes difficult for some of our graduates of today to defend the certificate they hold. However, the education stakeholders have put in some measures to reduce this inherent behavior such as; expulsion of offenders from school regardless of one's year level, sanctioning, withdrawal, awareness campaign, ensuring proper spacing during examination but all seen abortive. In addition, various school authorities' academic board, university senates have enacted laws to fight this menace, yet the monster keep thriving and looming in the school system. It is against this backdrop, the researcher seeks to investigate the emotional intelligent indicators correlates with examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom state.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate how emotional intelligence indicators correlate with examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom state. Specifically the study aims to find:

1. The relationship between self-regulation and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom state.
2. The relationship between self-awareness and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom state.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for this study.

1. What is the relationship between self-regulation and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State?
2. What is the relationship between self-awareness and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for this study and tested at .05 alpha level of significant.

1. There is no significant relationship between self-regulation and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom state.
2. There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom state.

Methodology

The study adopted correlational research design to determine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence Indicators and examination cheating tendencies in Tertiary Institutions in Akwa Ibom State. The population of the study compounded all the 9,809 first year students in the University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State in 2022/2023 academic session. A sample of 384 students determined using Taro Yamene formula was used for the study. Simple random technique was adopted for sample selection. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researchers titled Emotional Intelligence Indicators and Examination Cheating Tendencies Questionnaire (EIIECTQ). The questionnaire contain 20 items which was divided into three sections A,B and C. Section A had 5 items on self-regulation of students, Section B had 5 items on Emotional Awareness of students while section C had 10 items on Examination cheating tendency among students. The questionnaire was modeled on a four (4) point-likert rating scale with response options of Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly disagree (SD) respectively. Three experts in Measurement and Evaluation University of Uyo Akwa Ibom State validated the instrument, the instrument was

trial tested on 25 first year students in another university in order to measure the internal consistency of the items using Cronbach alpha statistics. Reliability coefficient of 0.86, 0.80 and 0.79 were obtained respectively for each subsections of the instrument and the overall reliability of 0.87 was obtained for the instrument. Data collected was analyzed using Pearson product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistic at 0.05 level of significant.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between self-regulation and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State?

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between self-regulation and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between self-regulation and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions

| Variables | n | r | p-cal. | p-crit. | Decision at .05 alpha |
|---------------------------------|-----|-------|--------|---------|----------------------------|
| Self-regulation | 384 | -.943 | .000 | .05 | Significant. Ho1 rejected. |
| Examination cheating tendencies | 384 | | | | |

Source: Researchers' survey (2024).

From the result in Table 1, it is revealed that r-value is -.943. This implied that there is a very strong negative relationship between self-regulation and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. This means that as self-regulation increase, examination cheating tendencies among students also decrease very strongly. Therefore, self-regulation could affects examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions.

To determine whether the relationship was significant, the table also revealed that the p-cal of .000 is less than the .05 alpha level of significant at the 382 degrees of freedom. This showed that the formulated null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between self-regulation and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between self-regulation

and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between self-awareness and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State?

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between self-awareness and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions

| Variables | n | r | p-cal. | p-crit. | Decision at .05 alpha |
|---------------------------------|-----|-------|--------|---------|----------------------------|
| Self-awareness | 384 | | | | |
| Examination cheating tendencies | 384 | -.902 | .000 | .05 | Significant. Ho2 rejected. |

Source: Researchers' survey (2024).

From the result in Table 2, it is revealed that r-value is -.902. This implied that there is a very strong negative relationship between self-awareness and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. This means that as self-awareness increase, examination cheating tendencies among students also decrease very strongly. Therefore, self-awareness could affects examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions.

To determine whether the relationship was significant, the table also revealed that the p-cal of .000 is less than the .05 alpha level of significant at the 382 degrees of freedom. This showed that the formulated null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between self-awareness and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between self-awareness and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State.

Summary of the Findings

The findings of the study revealed the following:

1. There is a significant relationship between self-regulation and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State.
2. There is a significant relationship between self-awareness and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State.

Discussions of the Findings

The result of hypothesis one revealed that, there is a significant relationship between self-regulation and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. The result also revealed that there is very strong negative relationship between self-regulation and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. This finding indicated that examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions. This finding could be attributed to the fact that when students possess strong self-regulation skills, they are more likely to engage in effective study habits, plan their time efficiently, and maintain focus on their long-term academic goals. This reduces the temptation to engage in dishonest practices such as cheating. By understanding the importance of personal effort and the consequences of their actions, self-regulated students are more inclined to adhere to academic integrity principles.

Moreover, self-regulation involves self-awareness and self-reflection, allowing students to recognize the underlying causes of their stress or anxiety related to examinations. Instead of resorting to cheating as a quick fix, they can implement coping strategies such as time management, seeking help from instructors or peers, and practicing relaxation techniques. This proactive approach helps mitigate the pressures that often lead to cheating. Lastly, self-regulated students typically have higher levels of self-efficacy, meaning they believe in their ability to succeed through their own efforts. The result of this finding agrees with the finding by Makinde, Ogunlade & Akeredolu (2021) who reported that that self-regulatory training is effective in assisting students to develop negative attitude towards examination malpractice.

The result of hypothesis two revealed that, there is a significant relationship between self-awareness and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. The result also revealed that there is very strong negative relationship between self-regulation and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. This finding indicated that examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions. This finding could be attributed to the fact that self-aware students are more likely to recognize and reflect on their ethical standards. This awareness makes them more mindful of the moral implications of cheating and the long-term consequences it can have on their character and academic integrity. Understanding that cheating undermines their true capabilities and potential encourages them to uphold honest practices even under pressure.

Secondly, self-awareness helps students identify the underlying reasons behind their urge to cheat. They can pinpoint sources of stress, fear of failure, or lack of preparation. This recognition allows them to address these issues proactively rather than resorting to dishonest methods. For instance, a self-aware student might realize they need to improve their study habits or seek academic support, reducing the likelihood of feeling desperate enough to cheat. Furthermore, self-awareness fosters a sense of personal accountability. Lastly, Self-aware students understand that their academic achievements are a reflection of their efforts and integrity. They take pride in their accomplishments and are motivated to succeed through their hard work rather than through deceitful means. This accountability also means they are more likely to experience guilt or shame if they consider cheating, which acts as a deterrent. The result of this finding agrees with the finding by Anayamene & Amuabulosi (2021) who reported that there is a negative significant relationship between the emotional intelligence of university undergraduate students in Anambra State and their examination malpractice tendency.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is hereby concluded that there is a significant relationship between self-regulation, self-awareness and examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. Thus, examination cheating tendencies among students in tertiary institutions depends on emotional intelligence.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the conclusions reached, the following recommendations are made:

1. School management should organize workshop for students on self-regulation development since it could help reduce examination cheating tendencies.
2. Students should be aware of themselves since it could help reduces their examination cheating tendencies.
3. Guidance counselors and school management should organize forum for students to improve on their self-awareness and competence in order to condense their involvement in examination cheating behavior, thereby enabling self understanding on the risk of academic dishonesty.

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