

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT  
MOTIVATION AND THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS EXAMINATION  
MALPRACTICE**

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**Abstract**

This study sets out to ascertain the relationship between students' academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice among secondary school students in Anambra State. Five research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The design for the study was correlational survey. The study has a population of 18299 senior secondary school two (SSII) students in 257 public secondary schools in Anambra State. A sample of 1200 students was selected through multi stage sampling procedure involving; simple random sampling and disproportionate stratified random sampling techniques. Two sets of instruments, namely; Academic Achievement Motivation Scale (AAMS) and Attitude to Examination Malpractice Inventory (AEMI), were used for collection of data. The data collected was analysed using aggregate scores and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient as the case may be. The major findings of the study indicated that there is good academic achievement motivation among secondary school students in Anambra State, there is negative attitude towards examination malpractice; and there is low positive relationship existing between students' academic achievement motivation and attitude towards examination malpractice among secondary school students in Anambra State. Based on the findings and their implications, it was recommended, among others, that guidance counsellors and public enlightenment agencies should organize regular workshops and seminars to sensitize the students on the relationship existing between academic achievement motivation and attitude towards examination malpractice and the need to back up academic achievement motivation with hard work and diligent study efforts instead of relying on examination malpractice as a means of obtaining good grades.

**Key Words:** *Relationship, Academic achievement motivation, Attitude and Examination Malpractice*

**Introduction**

The importance attached to higher education has made a lot of people to be enthusiastic to pursue it and has consequently brought an upsurge in the total number of both admitted students and intending students in educational institutions of various levels in Nigeria, compared to the past when only but a few individuals were interested in education. Population upsurge is always associated

with competition as a result of few spaces and facilities available to a large number of users. For instance 1.8 million candidates registered for Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination in 2019 whereas not up to 600,000 candidates were admitted (Thisdaylive 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019). This kind of situation may not be void of tempting desperate students to do anything possible to ensure that they succeed in their academic pursuits and would likely make them indulge in examination malpractice. It is appalling that many students of nowadays, especially the youths see education as nothing more than a game played for passing examination, getting good grades or certificates. A good number of people strive to go to school not to acquire knowledge, but to obtain a certificate. Such students are not intrinsically motivated to study but are in school because they see it as current fashion. Students in this category, see academic success as nothing more than writing and passing examinations, and with this notion they are neither serious in attending classes nor making efforts to study, believing that they are successful once they earn good scores in their examinations even without having any learning experience.

A problem is therefore posed when students who are not interested in learning but are afraid to fail or make low grades in examination, are tempted to engage in other alternative means to pass an examination, rather than through the lawful means of academic achievement through hard work and diligent studying. Such students often resort to employing treacherous means as alternative to actualize their desire which is examination malpractice. Examination malpractice may be defined as any action done, before, during or after the examination which is intended to make students pass without relying absolutely on their abilities. Odongbo (2002) also defined examination malpractice as an act of wrongdoing carried out by a candidate or groups of candidates or any other person with the intention to cheat and gain unfair advantage in an examination. The fact that examination is the most used yardstick for predicting students' academic performance has gradually become fallacious as a result of the increased level of examination malpractice which has crept into the Nigerian education system. Many factors has been attributed to the reasons why students engage in examination malpractice, among those contributory factors is lack of academic achievement motivation.

Achievement motivation may be defined as the want or desire to be successful in competitive circumstances or situations or to perform in terms of standard of excellence. It is the drive for performance, which leads an individual to the attainment of a stipulated goal. Academic achievement motivation is essentially the desire or urge to be successful in academic pursuit which drives a student to put his deliberate effort and interest to learn and master the what he is expected to learn. Ziegler, Schuckle, Egloff, & Buhner (2010) defined achievement motivation as the tendency to set and work hard to meet personal standards and to attain goals within one's social environment. Some of the factors that spur students wanting to pass examination at all cost includes; parental and peer pressure, limited available spaces for admission into tertiary institutions and pride in being a graduate. Some of these factors to the best of the researchers' knowledge move people to go to

school; however, if it is not accompanied with intrinsic motivation for academic achievement may likely propel them into examination malpractice. In other words, students who are desperate to graduate as a result of external forces such as pressure from parents, peers and not by self-determination, may resort to engaging in examination malpractice. This is mostly likely to occur when such students do not believe in themselves and “success through hard work.

Attitude according to Udechukwu (2011) refers to one’s disposition, feeling, and position towards a person or something. It is a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person or situation. Attitude influences one’s choice of action and responses to challenges, incentives or rewards. It is a tendency or orientation, especially of the mind. An attitude is somewhere between a belief, a stance, a mood and a pose. If one have an attitude about something, it may not be easy to change because the person thinks he or she is right. Attitude influences one’s choice of action and responses. Attitude towards examination malpractice is therefore one’s disposition, feelings, stance or position towards examination malpractice. Such position could be either positive or negative. Individuals that have positive attitude towards examination malpractice will see it as something worthwhile, whereas people who see it as a crime will likely abhor it.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study is to ascertain the relationship existing between students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitudes towards examination malpractice. Specifically the study aims to determine:

- the academic achievement motivation scores of students in Secondary schools.
- the attitude scores of secondary school students towards examination malpractice.
- the relationship existing between students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitudes towards examination malpractice.
- the relationship existing between academic achievement motivation and attitudes towards examination malpractice of male students.
- the relationship existing between academic achievement motivation and attitudes towards examination malpractice of female students malpractice.

### **Research Questions**

- The following research questions guided the study:
- What is the academic achievement motivation means scores of students?
- What are the students’ attitudes towards examination malpractice mean scores?
- What is the relationship existing between students' academic achievement motivation and
- their attitudes towards examination malpractice?

- What is the relationship existing between academic achievement motivation and attitudes
- towards examination malpractice of male students
- What is the relationship existing between academic achievement motivation and attitudes towards examination malpractice of female students.

### **Hypotheses**

- The following hypotheses were tested at 0.5 level of significance:
- There is no significant relationship existing between students' academic achievement motivation and their attitudes towards examination malpractice.
- There is no significant relationship existing between academic achievement motivation and attitudes towards examination malpractice of male students.
- There is no significant relationship existing between academic achievement motivation and attitudes towards examination malpractice of female students.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a correlational survey design. A correlational survey design is considered appropriate for this study because it seeks to find the relationship existing between two variables namely; Academic Achievement Motivation and Students Attitude Towards Examination Malpractice.

### **Area of the study**

The study was carried out in Anambra State which is situated in the South Eastern part of Nigeria with its' capital at Awka. It shares boundaries with Delta, Imo, Rivers, Enugu and Kogi States. The indigenes as well as the inhabitants of the state are mostly Ibos. Anambra state has many commercial cities known for trading such as Onitsha, Awka and Nnewi, which are notable for commercial activities in Nigeria, and as a result, trading has become the major occupation of the inhabitants of the state. This may have affected negatively, the notion of many of its inhabitants towards academic pursuit and invariably, their academic achievement motivation. There are six Education Zones in Anambra state namely, Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Onitsha and Otuocha.

### **Population of the Study**

The population for the study comprises 18,299 Senior Secondary School Two Students (SS2) in 257 public secondary schools in Anambra State (P.P.S.SC. Awka, 2019)

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sample for the study consists of 1200 SS2 students. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used in selecting the sample size which involved: Simple random sampling was used to select four education zones out of the six education zones in Anambra State. Then disproportionate stratified random sampling was further employed to select 300 students each from the four education zones already chosen. This yielded a total of 1200 students which formed the sample of the study.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The instruments for the study consist of two questionnaires, namely Academic Achievement Motivation Scale (AAMS) and Attitude to Examination Malpractice Inventory (AEMI) both developed by the researchers. Academic Achievement Motivation Scale (AAMS) consists of 20 items based on a 4-point Scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The 20 items covered all characteristics and attributes of achievement-motivated individuals in relation to academics. While Attitude to Examination Malpractice Inventory (AEMI) has 23 items and a 4-points scale, ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Each of the questionnaires has two segments respectively; The first segment provided for the gender of the respondents and instructions on how to respond to the items while the second segment comprises the items to be responded to.

### **Validity and Reliability of the Instruments**

The two questionnaires, namely Academic Achievement Motivation Scale (AAMS) and Attitude to Examination Malpractice Inventory (AEMI) were subjected to face validity. To that effect copies of the purposes, research question and hypotheses and the instruments were given to three experts, two in Guidance and counselling and one in educational measurement and evaluation. Their observations and corrections were incorporated in the final draft of the instruments.

Again copies of AAMS and AEMI were distributed to 30 students in a secondary school in Oji River local government area of Enugu state. Cronbach Alpha method of reliability was employed. They AAMS and AEMI yielded alpha of 0.91 and 0.84 respectively. Which show that they are reliable and good for the study.

### **Method of Data Collection**

The administration of the instruments was done through direct delivery approach by this method; copies of the questionnaires will be distributed personally to the respondents with the help of four trained research assistants. The researchers intimated the research assistants thoroughly on the purpose of the research, the content of the questionnaires, how to administer and how to collect the instruments. The researchers with the research assistants went round the

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 designated schools, distributed copies of the instruments to the respondents and collected them back after their completion.

### Method of Data Analysis

Data was analyzed with the use of aggregate scores, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient; Probability table value of Pearson  $r$  and calculated Pearson  $r$ . Research questions 1 and 2 was answered using aggregate scores while Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient (Pearson  $r$ ) was used to answer research questions 3, 4 and 5. The hypotheses were tested with Probability table value of Pearson  $r$ .

For the interpretation of correlation coefficient, Onunkwo (2002:216) has it that;  
 0.8 to 1.0 (negative or positive) = Very high relationship  
 0.6 to 0.8 (negative or positive) = High relationship  
 0.4 to 0.6 = (negative or positive) = Average relationship  
 0.2 to 0.4 (negative or positive) = Low relationship  
 0.0 to 0.2 (negative or positive) = Very low or no relationship

## RESULTS

### Research Question 1

What are the academic achievement motivation scores of secondary school students in Anambra state?

**Table 1: Range of scores on students' academic achievement motivation**

Range of scores	N	%	Remarks
20 - 49.80	31	2.6	Poor academic achievement motivation
50 - 80	1169	97.4	Good academic achievement motivation

Table 1 reveals that 1169(97.4%) of the students with the scores ranging from 50 to 80 have good academic achievement motivation, while 31(2.6%) others who scored between 20 and 49.80 have poor academic achievement motivation.

### Research Question 2

What are the scores of secondary school students on their attitudes towards examination malpractice?

**Table 2: Range of scores on secondary school students on their attitudes towards examination malpractice**

Range of scores	N	%	Remarks
23 - 57.27	0.00	0.00	Positive attitudes to examination malpractice
58 - 92	1200	100	Negative attitudes to examination malpractice

Table 2 indicates that 1200(100%) of the students with the scores ranging from 58 to 92 have negative attitude towards examination malpractice.

**Research Question 3**

What relationship exists between the students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice in secondary schools?

**Table 3: Pearson r on students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice**

Source of Variation	N	Aca.Achiev.Mot.r	Attitude r	Remark
Aca.Achiev Mot.	1200	1.00	0.39	Low Positive
Relationship				
Attitude	1200	0.39	1.00	

In table 3 it was observed that there is low positive relationship of 0.39 existing between the students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice in secondary schools.

**Research Question 4**

What relationship exists between the male students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice in secondary schools?

**Table 4: Pearson r on male students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice**

Source of Variation	N	Aca.Achiev.Mot.r	Attitude r	Remark
Aca.Achiev Mot.	597	1.00	0.39	Low Positive
Relationship				
Attitude	597	0.39	1.00	

Table 4 reveals that there is low positive relationship of 0.39 existing between the male students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice in secondary schools.

**Research Question 5**

What relationship exists between the female students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice in secondary schools?

**Table 5: Pearson r on female students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice**

Source of Variation	N	Aca.Achiev.Mot.r	Attitude r	Remark
Aca.Achiev Mot.	603	1.00	0.39	Low Positive
Relationship				
Attitude	603	0.39	1.00	

In table 5 it was observed that there is low positive relationship of 0.39 existing between the female students' academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice in secondary schools.

### Testing the Null Hypotheses

#### Null Hypothesis 1

The relationship existing between the students' academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice in secondary schools is not significant.

**Table 6: significant of Pearson r on the students' academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice using probability table of r.**

N	cal. r	df	crit. r	Remark
1200	0.39	1198	0.19	S

S = Significant

Table 6 indicates that at 0.05 level of significance and 1198df, the calculated  $r_{0.39}$  is greater than the critical  $r_{0.19}$ . Therefore the first null hypothesis is rejected. The type of relationship existing between the students' academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice is significant.

#### Null Hypothesis 2

The relationship existing between the male students' academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice in secondary schools is not significant.

**Table 7: significant of Pearson r on the male students' academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice using probability table of r.**

N	cal. r	df	crit. r	Remark
597	0.39	595	0.19	S

S = Significant

Table 7 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 595df, the calculated  $r_{0.39}$  is greater than the critical  $r_{0.19}$ . Therefore the second null hypothesis is rejected. The type of relationship existing between the male students' academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice is significant.

#### Null Hypothesis 3

The relationship existing between the female students' academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice in secondary schools is not significant.



**Table 8: significant of Pearson r on the female students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice using probability table of r.**

N	cal. r	df	crit. r	Remark
603	0.39	601	0.19	S

S =Significant

Table 8 reveals that at 0.05 level of significance and 601df, the calculated r0.39 is greater than the critical r0.19. Therefore the third null hypothesis is rejected. The type of relationship existing between the female students’ academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice is significant.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The discussion of the findings of the study is organized under the following sub-headings.

- Students attitude towards examination malpractice in Anambra state
- Students academic achievement motivation in Anambra State
- Relationship between students’ academic motivation and attitude towards examination malpractice in Anambra State

#### **Students’ Academic Achievement motivation in Anambra State**

The findings revealed that a good number of secondary school students (97.4%) in Anambra State have good level of academic achievement motivation. The finding therefore shows that in spite of various distractions and available treacherous means of passing examination, many students still have good academic achievement motivation and are interested in acquiring knowledge through deliberate efforts and not just to earn good grades or certificates. This finding therefore contradicts the opinion of Sofola (2004) who posited that many students are in school to in pursuance of certificates and lacks academic achievement motivation due to recent overdependence on certificate (paper qualification) as a yard stick for measuring academic achievement. It also contradicts the opinions of Odubela (2013) and that of Nwankwo (2011) who both that opined that students of nowadays are in school just to obtain certificate and not the knowledge.

#### **Students Attitude towards Examination Malpractice in Anambra State**

The results revealed that 100% of the students in Anambra State has negative attitude towards examination malpractice. This finding was quite unexpected, considering the high rate of examination malpractice prevalent in the country, it however implies that many students has naturally, negative inclination towards examination malpractice and that examination malpractice is rather an incited or situational behaviour caused by external factors such as pressure from parents, peer influence, and competitive nature of some entrance examinations.

This aligned with the opinion of Osagie (2013) which noted that students concern for grades, fear of failure and the level of importance attached to certificate and pressure to succeed academically mounted by parents are significantly related to students tendency to engage in examination malpractice.

Apparently Ejiogu (2009) stated that general moral decadence and high premium placed on certificate by Nigerians has in recent times spawned examination fraud. Likewise Nuraini(2015) reported that that the desire to satisfy the prerequisites for entry into higher institution and motive to avoid failure were the basic factors responsible for examination malpractice among students. This finding has revealed many people who engage in examination has negative attitude towards it, meaning that they do not actually like the act but found themselves in the act probably due to pressure and frustration.

### **Relationship between Students' Academic Achievement Motivation and Students' Attitude towards Examination Malpractice in Anambra State**

The findings showed that students' academic achievement motivation has positive significant relationship with their attitudes towards examination malpractice. This implies that students who are academic achievement motivated will likely have greater propensity to engage in examination malpractice than those who are not. This finding agrees with the study carried out by Udo (2013) which found that achievement motivation has a direct relationship with examination malpractice. This confirms the opinions of Shelton and Hill (1999) which states that achievement has a direct relationship with examination malpractice and that children with high achievement motivation and considerable fear of failure are likely to cheat if they believe that they are not doing well as the rest of their peers. This aligns with Ugwuegbu (2006) who argued that motivation to avoid failure is directly related to examination malpractice and that students would likely cheat when the motivation is to achieve even if the chances of punishment would be high when caught and that students' fear of failure may be as a result of past personal experience of failure or that of others.

It equally agrees with the findings of Newstead et al (2006) in their speculation that individuals who are high in achievement motivation would likely have higher propensity to cheat than those with lower level. Their speculation was based on the findings of Pery, Kane, Bernesser and Spiker (2006) which reported significant positive relationship between type 'A' behaviour, observed, and reported cheating. Type A behaviour is said to be involved in striving for achievement. Moreso, this finding agrees with the opinion of Olarenwaju (2010) which stated that one personality trait that may likely explain cheating behaviour among students is achievement motivation. Montoya, Berneth and Dorban in Chiemeka (2013) also reported that the desire to satisfy the prerequisites for entry into higher institution and the motive to avoid failure were the basic factors responsible for examination malpractice among students.

The findings of the study, however contradicts the findings of Olarunwaju (2010) which reported a significant negative relationship between academic

achievement motivation and cheating behaviour among 200 and 300 levels students in Ekiti State and of Nyenti (2001) which showed significant inverse relationship between achievement motivation and students' tendency to cheat in examination.

An interesting and noteworthy part of the findings of this study is that, even though there is a positive relationship between students' academic achievement motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice, the relationship, is low. This could imply that despite the fact that achievement motivation could lead to positive attitude towards examination malpractice it occurs only among a few fraction of students who do not believe in themselves to achieve academic excellence through their own deliberate efforts. This is in line Udechukwu (2012) who stated that when desperation for academic achievement is not matched with diligent studying, examination malpractice become the only means of survival for the students. It could also mean that there are some other factors that are responsible for examination malpractice that needed to be unveiled.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study the following conclusions were made: A good number of students in Anambra State have good level of Academic achievement motivation. A good number of Students in Anambra state have negative attitude towards examination malpractice. There is a low positive relationship existing between students' academic motivation and their attitude towards examination malpractice. This relationship is significant showing that students who have academic achievement motivation will likely have more tendencies to engage in examination malpractice. This finding is consistent with other research works that supports the association between academic achievement motivation and examination malpractice.

### **Implication of the Findings**

The findings of the study have a number of implications for counselling. The fact that the students have negative attitude towards examination malpractices simply imply that they do not like examination malpractices. The study has shown that there is low positive relationship between academic achievement motivation and attitude towards examination malpractice. This means that students with good academic achievement motivation but do not dilligently prepare themselves for an examination may find themselves indulging in examination malpractice. This calls for both individual and group counselling of students to sensitize them on the need to believe in academic success through hard work instead of depending on examination malpractice as a means of obtaining good grades.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study and their implications, the following recommendations are made:

1. Counsellors should organize workshops and seminars regularly to sensitize students on the importance of diligent studying and hard work academic as a prerequisite for academic success.
2. Counsellors should hold group guidance for students identified to be indulging in examination malpractice and through that enlighten them to have confidence in themselves rather than relying on examination malpractice.
3. Counsellors should organize career day for secondary school students in which they can enlighten them on the necessary criteria for making career choices, to enable them choose vocations that suits their personal strength and not just based on mere desire.
4. The school management and teachers should create conducive learning environment for students to help them get enough preparations before the examination.
5. Counsellors and teachers should guide the students to shun examination malpractice and instead prepare properly for examination by reading their books ahead of time and by using proper study methods.
6. The ministry of information, ministry of education, other public enlightenment agencies as well as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) should work with counsellors to create awareness on the relationship between academic achievement motivation and examination malpractice. Thus making the students to have academic achievement motivation backed up with deliberate study effort.

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