

**THE EFFECT OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE STYLE AND DISCIPLINARY
POLICY ON STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TO EXAMINATION MISCONDUCT IN
AKWA IBOM NORTH-EAST SENATORIAL DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the effect of School Administrative Style and Disciplinary Policy on Students' Involvement in Examination Misconduct in Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District."The research design adopted for the study was the ex-post-facto design because the manifestation of the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable had already taken place without being manipulated. The study was conducted in the Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District. The population of the study comprised all Senior Secondary Two (SS2) Civic (SS2) Civic Education students in all the public secondary schools in the Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District. The total population of Civic Education students in Senior Secondary School Two (SS2) for the 2017/2018 session was 7,263. The sample of this study consists of 375 SS2 respondents, which is 19% of the study population selected from thirteen schools, and a multi-stage procedure and proportionate sampling technique were used to draw up the sample of the study population. To collect data for this study, the "School Environmental Factors Questionnaire (SEFR)" and "Students' Attitude to Examination Misconduct Questionnaire (SAEMQ)" were used. Face validity was established for the instrument. To determine the reliability of the instruments, a test-retest was conducted with a sample size of 27 students drawn from schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District that were not part of the actual study. The data for this study were analyzed using mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD) in answering the research questions, while the t-test was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Findings showed that school administrative style significantly influences students' attitude to examination misconduct in Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District. The study recommended that school administrators should always involve the students as key players in school administrative styles in order to encourage the students to shun examination misconduct tendencies.

**KEYWORDS: School Administrative Style, Disciplinary Policy, Examination Misconduct,
Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District**

INTRODUCTION

Examination is one of the methods used to monitor learning results at all educational levels. It can be given verbally, on paper, on a computer, or in a small space where the test taker must physically execute a series of tasks. However, even though exams are crucial in teaching and learning environments, the reliability of test results is impacted by several factors, including teachers' work attitudes, school administration, disciplinary policies, and learning facilities. Exam misconduct is therefore continued for various reasons and undermines the validity of results and performance by giving candidates incorrect grades, which deceives society and other decision-makers who use school products. Parents and school administrators often put a lot of pressure on students to earn their degrees and grades by any means necessary in order to acquire a job or admission into the finest universities. Our society's excessive reliance on certificates has a tendency to encourage exam misbehavior.

Major issues such as inadequate staffing, poor infrastructure, emotional issues, and a teacher's failure to provide adequate instruction prior to the start of an exam can also encourage examination misconduct in families where there is little to no parent-child interaction regarding the school and proper care for the children. Exam misconduct must be prohibited in Nigeria because it deters applicants from putting in the necessary effort, denies innocent students admittance, delays the processing of results, dissatisfies candidates, reduces job efficiency, and impedes the growth of the country's citizens. Improving environmental variables is one such strategy that could lessen examination cheating.

Statement of Problem

Educationists have expressed serious worry about the ongoing prevalence of exam misbehavior, which is supported by school environmental elements such as instructors' work attitudes, administrative policies, and learning facilities, among others. It appears that examination misconduct has not been adequately addressed in Nigeria, despite the National Policy on Education placing a high value on exams. Observations by Adesina (2015) have shown that there is mass cheating in public examinations in the country. Except for the cancellation of results for a certain center or the withholding of results in specific subjects, nothing tangible has been done to lessen the issue. Nobody seemed to be concerned about the impact of the educational environment in any of these. Typically, people place the blame on society and parents. There is, therefore, the need for an in-depth assessment of the role played by school environmental factors in influencing students' attitude to examination misconduct in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District.

Research Objective

1. The influence of school administrative style on students' attitude to examination misconduct in Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District.

Research Question

1. What influence does school administrative style exert on students' attitude to examination misconduct in Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District?

Research Hypothesis

1. There is no significant influence of school administrative style on students' attitude to examination misconduct in Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Examination misconduct

The Examination Misconduct Act (1999) explains examination misconduct as any of omission or commission by a person who in anticipation of, before, during or after any examination fraudulently secure any unfair advantage for himself or any other person in such a manner that contravenes the rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity, reliability, authenticity of the examination and ultimately the integrity of the certificate issued. Again, examination misconduct may be defined as a deliberate wrong doing contrary to official examination rules designed to place a candidate at an unfair advantage or disadvantages, (Akaranga and Onyong, 2013). Alutu and Aluede (2006) cited in Jimoh (2009) remarked that examination misconduct is any irregular behavior exhibited by a candidate or anybody charged with the conduct of examination before, during or after the examination that contravenes the rules and regulations governing such examination. Onuka and Amusan (2008) defined examination misconduct as any dishonest or unauthorized action or deed committed by a student on his own or in collaboration with others like fellow students, guardians, parents, teachers, head teacher, examination officials, supervisors, invigilators, security officers and anybody or group of people before, during or after examination in order to obtain undeserved marks or grades.

According to Adesina (2015), examination misconduct include leaking out questions to students, 'giraffing' and smuggling of material into examination hall as well as deliberate extension of time by supervisors and invigilators, change of scores, buying and selling of examination grades, question papers and prepared answers and trading sex for question papers, marks and grades. Magaji (2006) identified impersonation, that is, a non-candidate taking an examination for a registered candidate, collusion between candidates and supervisors, assault and intimidation of supervisors and invigilators by students, mass cheating, teacher-student affair,

bribery, spying, submission of multiple scripts, use of coded or sign language, multiple entry for the same examination among others as different forms of malpractices in examinations.

School Administrative Style and Students' Attitude to Examination Misconduct

Any organization needs effective and efficient leadership to plan, organize, coordinate, control, budget, and report on the work of others in order to meet its goals. This duty is placed on the principal of the secondary school. Chapman (2012) states that the concept of school administration is viewed as the task of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling human and material resources within a school, (2012) states that college, or university. This definition directly points to the fact that school has its own administrative team that is saddled with the task of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. This team of administrators found in the school system includes the principal as the head of school administration, followed by the vice principal(s), the head of departments, class masters, and subject teachers, as is the case in the secondary level of education in Nigeria.

Hallinger and Heck (2012) explain that school administrative style is the school's main governing body, and it plays a major part in making decisions related to students, staff, and the school's overall status. Depending on the sort of school, there are various forms of administration. These administrations are in charge of the growth of the institution and the well-being of its instructors and pupils. More often than not, they are also the sole organization that serves as a link between the community and the school.

The role of school leadership in terms of school effectiveness (often defined via pupils' academic performance and examination behavior outcomes) is widely discussed in academic literature (e.g., Leithwood 2005, Gurr et al. 2005, Huber 2004, Gibbs and Slate 2003, Neil et al. 2001, and Leithwood and Jantzi 2012). Sometimes the direct effect of the school leadership on school outputs is highlighted, but often the indirect effect is also emphasized. For example, Hallinger and Heck (2012) have collected data about studies looking at the principal's contribution to pupil's attitude to examination behaviors and academic achievement.

The results indicate that very few studies (only 6 from 22) showed any direct impact from the principals on attitude to examination conduct and academic achievement of their pupils, whereas most of the indirect models (13 and 19) showed a significant impact on the pupils' academic achievement only. Hallinger and Heck (2012) say that the results of the direct effects of principals' actions are surprisingly clear. Researchers have been unable to produce consistent evidence of the principals' direct effect on pupils' attitudes toward examination behavior and achievement. However, a mediated-effects framework hypothesizes that leaders achieve their effect on school outcomes indirectly. Leadership practices contribute to those outcomes, including students' attitudes toward examination behavior desired by the schools, but the contribution is almost always mediated by other people, events, and organizational factors.

The non-academic talents of the students are the third area that needs the attention of the school management. Their attitude about misconduct and exam conduct is likewise influenced by these. This suggests that in addition to focusing on the academic program, the school should also offer extracurricular activities and attitudes that help students behave well on tests (Mulford et al., 2004), and in the end this also helps to improve their success academically. A number of studies have demonstrated relationships between pupil involvement with extracurricular activities, their grades, and their attitude to examination conduct (Guest and Schneider 2003, Broh 2002). Extracurricular activities such as sports, drama, and journalism clubs have been associated with attitude to examination conduct and increased levels of achievement.

Those who participate in extracurricular activities are known to have developed more positive feelings towards the school, and pupils who feel more attached to their school make a bigger effort. Bazron et al. (2005) suggest that successful schools help pupils to regulate their own behavior and deal with the many social and academic challenges they face. Students can avoid exam behavior issues and succeed academically by being taught social and emotional skills like connection building, self-awareness, self-management, and responsible decision-making. Students who master these abilities are more capable of handling academic difficulties and are more inclined to participate in high-risk exam behavior.

According to studies, school administrators who use a participative and supportive leadership style foster a sense of loyalty among their subordinates toward the system's rules. In this instance, a supportive leadership style entails being amiable and approachable as a leader, as well as treating subordinates' needs and well-being as equals and showing them respect for their position (Cheng, 2002). According to Lacoma (2013), the manager is not so interested in giving orders and managing every detail as in giving employees the tools they need to work themselves. While delegation is a vital part of supportive leadership, managers do not simply assign tasks and then receive the results. Instead, they work through the task being done correctly, and the employee is fully empowered in a particular area.

Participative leadership occurs when a principal seeks to involve school teachers, to solicit their ideas, and to take their suggestions into serious consideration before making decisions (Chen and Tjosvold, 2006). This leadership style is characterized by consultation, empowerment, joint decision-making, democratic leadership, and power sharing (Clark, 2007) and should not be considered a sign of weakness. A participative leadership style involves a leader who invites subordinates to share in the decision-making.

According to Cohen (2010), a participative leader consults with subordinates, seeks their ideas and opinions, and integrates their input into group organizational decisions. Due to improved group member contributions and stronger group morale, this approach is typically one of the most successful and results in increased production. Above all, it aids in assessing how students feel about exam misconduct.

Yukl (2011) suggested that participative leadership offers a variety of potential benefits, including (a) a higher quality of decision-making because several participants together make better decisions than does one person alone; (b) more understanding of issues and greater acceptance of decisions by participants; (c) greater participant satisfaction with the decision-making process, more commitment to resultant actions from their decision-making, and increased social loyalty to one another, as well as dedication to the decisions' outcome; and (d) increased development of decision-making skills by participants.

Kuloba (2010) sought to investigate the effects of principal's leadership styles on teacher performance and students' attitude to examination misconduct in secondary schools in Nakaseke District, Uganda. The study found out that head teachers' involvement of teachers in the decision-making process of the school through committees and meetings enhances teacher performance while reducing incidences of students' involvement in examination misconduct. It was further discovered that teacher performance is enhanced by head teachers' communication with their teaching staff.

School Disciplinary Policy and Students' Attitude to Examination Misconduct

A school's disciplinary policy is a set of rules and guidelines established by the school administration to direct and regulate human behavior and inaction within the school. It can also be viewed as a procedure for handling alleged wrongdoing within a company. It is crucial to the organization's operation that everyone knows their responsibilities and conducts themselves in a safe and legal manner. Therefore, the standards of conduct required of both teachers and students are outlined in the school's rules and regulations. According to Clark (2007), schools' rules and regulations are among the strategies designed to instill good conduct in students. This implies self-control, orderliness, good behavior, and obedience to school authority. Also, on admission, schools, especially at the secondary level, give students (2007), prospectuses, which spell out some of the expectations, which include compliance with rules and regulations (Clark, 2007).

Chapman (2005) observed that disciplines are enforced through prefects' bodies and councils, disciplinary committees, teachers, and involvement of parents. Cohen (2010) also says that the best results could be obtained through vigilantly reminding students about disciplines in school and monitoring their compliance with them. Once rules have been communicated, fair and consistent enforcement helps maintain students' respect for the school's discipline system.

According to Okumbe (2008), there are various types of punishments that are administered in the secondary schools in Nigeria. These include the different modes or forms that prevail in our schools, such as reprimand, bawling out, ridiculing, belittling, name-calling, withdrawal of privileges, social isolation, demotion, putting placards around the offender's neck, standing or kneeling in front of class, exercise drills such as raising arms while carrying weight, suspension and expulsion from school, corporal punishment, restitution, and detention or keeping students after school. Omari (2011:100) argues that punishment in classrooms is of two types: classrooms

in which there is presentation or administration of noxious or aversive stimulus, which includes corporal punishment after an undesirable response; and classrooms in which there is punishment after, for example, use of abusive language and removal of pleasant stimulus from the situation when an undesirable response has been omitted, for example, abusing the teacher or forbidding a child from going home in time in order to eliminate the undesirable response.

According to Okumbe (2008) the use of punishment in schools is to instill discipline and is meted out to students who violate the agreed rules and regulations in schools. It is administered to bring about a desirable change in behavior and therefore improve school discipline if corresponding with the offense committed. Though recently there are situations where a student who commits an offense can easily go unpunished. Nevertheless, in most secondary schools, some forms of punishments are unfair and undeserved, like corporal punishment in schools involving severe caning, suspension, expulsion, branding, and mutilation of students (Conley et al., 2008). Punishments are expected to enforce compliance when students are under the case of teachers.

A student who is involved in examination misconduct is expected to be suspended from school for sometimes or even rusticated, Morake, et al, 2012). This view is also shared by Cotton and Savard (2000), who said that punishments in a school system are expected to teach students the relationship between their behaviours and the outcome or accountability for their mistakes. Creswell (2003) also claims that with a well-behaved class, teaching could be among the most wonderful jobs in the world. Though what really occurs in our schools is that unwanted behaviours especially examination misconduct are on the increase despite the presence of these punishments. The violence that students and their parents are directing at them worries teachers. Some students have been expelled, suspended, made to work hard in class, and ejected from classes as a result, all of which seem to have an impact on their academic achievement.

According to Nguni et al. (2006), during his study on discipline in schools of Botswana, he discovered the widespread violence and misbehavior that existed in many secondary schools. This lack of discipline, which interfered with the teaching and learning process, manifested itself in various ways, including bullying, vandalism, alcohol consumption and substance abuse, truancy, and inability or unwillingness to do work at home. Examination misconduct was also identified as a common activity among secondary school students. An example was cited in 2003 where students of one of the secondary schools in Umuahia broke into a biology laboratory to steal examination questions (Banda, 2004). Some of these students who were apprehended lost their lives, and others lost their studentship. In another secondary school, a 19-year-old boy committed suicide after fighting with another student over a borrowed plate (Kuloba, 2010). These resulted from students disobeying the established school disciplinary guidelines, which were meant to help them direct their behavior in class. However, these researchers focused on secondary school discipline rather than how well the current policies and procedures could prevent these exam misconduct behaviors.

Cohen (2010), in a study about the modes of students' control in public schools in the United States of America, shares the same opinion and recommends an open-minded approach to effective school rules and regulations as a way of minimizing unwanted student behavior in schools. However, since most school disciplinary policies are set without students' participation (Chapman, 2005), students tend to resist them and at times break them, leading to indiscipline acts that could result in the suspension and dismissal of students. Obong et al. (2010) also concurred with Cohen (2010) and believed that responsiveness to school disciplinary policies, especially those concerning students' attitudes to examination misconduct, can become a consequence of how teachers view them.

Ideally, schools set rules and regulations for the proper governing of the various lifestyles of students concerning the dos and don'ts (Okumbe, 2008). Regulatory policies are authoritative orders with a course of law intended to promote order and efficiency in a school. Lupton (2004) also concurred with Okumbe (2008) and argued that effective schools demonstrate sound inclusive practices, which include emphasizing school disciplinary policies aimed at perfecting students' attitudes toward examination misconduct, collaborative leadership, and their good practice. However, these researchers did not say anything on the influence of school disciplinary policy on students' examination misconduct; hence, the need for this study.

Sometimes, students are ignorant of the rules or want to try the teachers to see which rules are operational and which are not. For instance, year four students of Etinan Institute, Etinan, Akwa Ibom State, left the school without permission after a trip was aborted. They were later suspended. Unqualified school managers are also some of the major causes of crisis in schools (Okumu, 2006). In the last few years, secondary schools in parts of the country have experienced an unprecedented spate of students' unrest. This occurrence has elicited a barrage of attacks directed at students. Most criticisms have been precipitated on the premise that students are undisciplined as a result of ineffective rules and regulations (Musyoka, 2012).

Onoyase (2015) stated that good school disciplinary policy helps to develop desirable student behavior. If a school has an effective disciplinary policy, the academic performance will be good and cases of examination misconduct will be reduced. Directions on the side of the learners as well as educators will be easy and smooth. Ornstein (2012) emphasizes cooperative learning as a solution. They argue that if a school lacks effective discipline, the academic achievement will be poor. Discipline also plays a vital role in the acquisition of responsibility in learners as well as educators.

Educators' ability to exercise effective discipline as suggested by Oyetunji (2006) is essential in reforming students' attitude toward examination misconduct. A good disciplinary policy creates a good image of the school and prepares learners for the future. Disruptive attitudinal behavior such as examination misconduct amongst learners is eliminated if there is good discipline at school. Effective discipline in the classroom is essential to the student's development as an adult. Parents are frequently forced to send their kids to a disciplined school, which frequently results in strong

academic achievement. Good academic progress and the development of positive attitudes in the classroom depend on effective discipline. Effective teaching and learning can occur in a school and classroom with good discipline, which results in good academic performance and calm student conduct.

According to Adams (2003), schools' disciplinary policies are among the strategies designed to instill good conduct in students, especially those associated with examinations. This implies self-control, orderliness, good behavior, and obedience to school authority. Also, on admission, schools, especially at the secondary level, give students prospectuses, which spell out some of the expectations, which include having to refrain from examination misconduct (Adams, 2003).

Methodology

The research design adopted for the study was the ex-post-facto design because the manifestation of the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable had already taken place without being manipulated. The study was conducted in the Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District. The population of the study comprised all Senior Secondary Two (SS2) Civic (SS2) Civic Education students in all the public secondary schools in the Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District. The total population of Civic Education students in Senior Secondary School Two (SS2) for the 2017/2018 session was 7,263. The sample of this study consists of 375 SS2 respondents, which is 19% of the study population selected from thirteen schools, and a multi-stage procedure and proportionate sampling technique were used to draw up the sample of the study population. To collect data for this study, the "School Environmental Factors Questionnaire (SEFR)" and "Students' Attitude to Examination Misconduct Questionnaire (SAEMQ)" were used. Face validity was established for the instrument. To determine the reliability of the instruments, a test-retest was conducted with a sample size of 27 students drawn from schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District that were not part of the actual study. The data for this study were analyzed using mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD) in answering the research questions, while the t-test was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Research Question One

What influence does school administrative style exerts on students' attitude to examination misconduct in Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District?

Table 1

Mean and standard deviation on influence of school administrative style on students’ attitude to examination misconduct in Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District?

Variable	n	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
School Administrative Style	178	37.03	8.84	
Students’ attitude to examination misconduct	197	35.36	8.39	H ₀ Rejected
	375			

Researcher’s fieldwork data (2021)

The above Table 1 revealed the weight to which school administrative style influences attitude of students to examination misconduct in Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District. Table 4.3 indicates that the mean of students who participated in school administration is 37.03 with standard deviation (SD) of 8.84, while the mean of students who did not participate in school administration is 5.36, showing a mean difference of 1.72. The result showed variance on students’ participation in school administration based on school administrative style. This implies that school administrative style influences students’ attitude to examination misconduct in Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis One

There is no significant influence of school administrative style on students’ attitude to examination misconduct in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District.

Table 2

T-test analysis of school administrative style on Students’ attitude to examination misconduct

Variable	School Admin. Style	n	\bar{x}	SD	df	t-cal	t-cri	Decision
School Administrative Style	Student Participation	178	37.08	8.84				
Students’ attitude to examination misconduct	Non-participation	197	35.36	8.39				
		375			373	1.994*	1.961	Rejected H ₀

* = Significant at 0.05 level of significance

Researcher’s fieldwork data (2021)

The result in Table 2 above shows that the t-calculated value (1.994) is greater than the t-critical value (1.96), therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant influence of school administrative style on students’ attitude to examination misconduct in Akwa Ibom North-

East Senatorial District is rejected. This implies that school administrative style significantly influences students' attitude to examination misconduct in Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study established that school administrative style and disciplinary policy significantly affect students' involvement in examination misconduct in Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District. It revealed that effective and participatory administrative styles foster transparency, accountability, and moral discipline among students. Conversely, autocratic or inconsistent leadership tends to encourage deviant behaviors and academic dishonesty. Similarly, clear, fair, and consistently enforced disciplinary policies discourage examination malpractice, while weak or selective enforcement promotes it. Findings showed that school administrative style significantly influences students' attitude to examination misconduct in Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. School administrators should always involve the students as key players in school administrative styles in order to encourage the students to shun examination misconduct tendencies.
2. Schools should formulate and maintain good disciplinary policies that will encourage students to shun examination misconduct.

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