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EXAMINATION ETHICS VALUE ORIENTATION AND TEST ANXIETY AS PREDICTORS OF STUDENTS' TENDENCY TO ENGAGE IN EXAMINATION MISCONDUCT IN UNIVERSITIES IN AWKA

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Abstract

This study explored examination ethics value orientation and test anxiety as predictors of students' tendency to engage in examination misconduct in universities in Awka. Three purposes research questions, with their corresponding null hypotheses, guided the study. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The study population comprised all the undergraduate students in universities in Awka. The sample size for this study was 534, comprising 118 male and 416 female undergraduate students determined through the multi-stage sampling procedure. Data were collected using three sets of instruments titled: Value for Examination Ethics Questionnaire (VEEQ), the Test Anxiety Questionnaire (TAQ), and the Examination Misconduct Questionnaire (EMQ). The instruments were validated by experts in the field of education in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The instruments' reliability was ensured through Cronbach Alpha which yielded alpha coefficients of .87, .84 and .89 for the VEEQ, TAQ, and EMQ respectively. Data analysis was conducted in SPSS version 21, using the simple regression analysis to answer the research questions and multiple regression analysis to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of

significance. The findings revealed that students' value for examination ethics positively and significantly predicts their tendency to engage in examination misconduct. The findings also revealed that test anxiety was a significant positive predictor of examination misconduct tendency. Moreover, both predictors (Examination ethics value and Test anxiety) significantly and jointly predict examination misconduct tendency among the students. Based on the study's findings, it was recommended, among others, that schools should strengthen the teaching and promotion of examination ethics among students.

Keywords: examination ethics value orientation, test anxiety, students' tendency to engage in examination misconduct, public university

Introduction

Examination misconduct has become a serious threat to the education system in Nigeria. It contextually, covers all unethical acts before, during or after examinations that render such examinations unworthy of judging students' actual performance and proficiency. Some scholars (Adekula et al, 2025; Owan, Owan & Ogabor, 2023; Amadi & Anierobi, Nwikpo, Okeke & Unachukwu, 2018) attested that examination misconduct is prevalent in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This calls for serious attention from education stakeholders due to the debilitating impact of the canker on the education system which has affected the quality of graduates produced through the despicable act (Eneji, Petters, Esuabana, Onnoghen, Udumo, Ambe, Essien, Unimna, Alawa & Ikutal, 2022). In fact, examination misconduct negatively affects the future of students involved (Nganchi & Charlotte, 2020) and damages the academic and scholastic standing of any nation (Amadi & Opuiyo, 2018). It is worrisome that examination malpractice in the Nigerian education system, especially at the tertiary level, appears to be resistant to any known catholicon, given its redefinition by culprits that beats the imagination of concerned stakeholders (Nwosu et al., 2018). Previous studies revealed that examination misconduct in many tertiary institutions in Nigeria takes many forms such as collaboration, impersonation, possession of unauthorised materials, exchange of scripts, giraffing, tampering with results, and sorting (Onyibe, Uma & Ibina, 2015) and goes in disguised names such as CNN, swapping, lateral connection, dubbing, body aids, contract, rank Xeroxing, missile catch, token, computo, tabletop, time out, direct access, stroke, mercenary services, e-cheating and tattoo (Alhassan & Anya, 2017). Unfortunately, perpetrators of examination misconduct are not limited to students alone but have metamorphosed into organised crime syndicates with high-level connections to concerned ministries and boards, as well as examination invigilators, course lecturers, and, in some cases, parents (Ntui, Ekeng & Undiyaundeye, 2022). In some instances, some students are subtly encouraged or coerced into this ugly trend of examination misconduct through sex-for-mark or cash-for-grade syndrome

(Adekeye, Ajayi & Emmanuel, 2020), and this beats the purpose of the tertiary level of education in any nation, especially in Nigeria.

The purpose of tertiary education, as specified in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014), includes providing physical and intellectual skills which enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of society. This is because tertiary education is acknowledged and respected as the engine house for research and innovations, which are fundamental to social and economic transformation. University education is marked by high expectations for earning a good degree to pursue one's dream career. There are expectations from oneself, family, and most times from fellow students. These expectations demand maximum effort and student participation in academic activities, such as attending classes regularly, completing assignments on time, and adopting various study strategies to achieve the best results. Sometimes, the expectations and demands of academic responsibilities, along with the pressure to compete favourably with classmates, mount on students. The pressure to achieve maximally and meet the expectations of both family and self could force a student to engage in examination malpractice, without minding that the conduct of every examination is guided by ethics (Denga, 2018).

Ideally, every examination is guided by ethics that serve to detect misconduct. Examination ethics are simply codes of conduct or principles guiding examinations. Oladunni (2010) posited that it is the set of moral principles and rules guiding the conduct of an examination. Anierobi, Unachukwu and Nwogbo (2015) simply defined it as the ideal behaviour expected of students during an examination. Every student is bound to respect the principles, rules, and ethics governing any examination they sit for. Examinations conducted without the observance and implementation of the ethical stipulations would end up as a disaster. As a matter of fact, most universities take examination ethics with the seriousness they deserve as a means of deterring students from academic dishonesty. Be that as it may, it is not enough to have laid down rules for examinations without ensuring that students have adequate knowledge of them. Nevertheless, a study by Ruwah (2025) reported that students have general knowledge about rules and regulations governing examinations. Despite this knowledge, students still engage in examination misconduct. One possible factor that could lead students to respect or otherwise examination ethics is their value orientation toward it.

Contextually, examination ethics value orientation is the worth students place on the examination ethics that guide the conduct of examinations in their school. This is to say that the level of value and regard they place on the examination ethics of their institution could determine the extent to

which they would adhere to the rules. Studies have shown that students' moral values determine their attitudes toward examination malpractice in secondary schools (Ntui, Ekeng, & Undiyaundeye, 2022; Ntui and Egodi, 2021). This implies that the level of value students attach to examination ethics largely predicts whether they will engage in examination malpractice. For instance, while Oladunni (2010) showed that students have a wrong perception towards examinations and examination ethics, Adeosun et al (2023) observed that students perceive examination malpractice as the bane of educational system. Nevertheless, wrong perception of examinations as critical for the test of knowledge students have acquired, as well as a misapprehension of the importance of exam ethics in detecting exam malpractice, could lead students to engage in examination misconduct. Scholars such as Anierobi, Unachukwu, and Nwogbo (2015) showed that, owing to a misperception of examination malpractice and ethics, students are inclined to engage in examination misconduct. Nwosu, Nwasor, Onyebuchi, and Nwanguma (2020) found that many students have a poor moral stance toward examination malpractice; therefore, they are ready to cheat in examinations without blinking. Students' readiness to engage in examination misconduct could stem from factors such as examination anxiety.

Examination anxiety could be perceived as a physiological condition in which examinees experience discomfort, uneasiness, worry or feelings of uncertainty during and/or before taking an examination (Njoku, Nwachukwu & Isama, 2018). Examination anxiety is seemingly common among examinees, whether they are prepared or not. In fact, any examinee could feel some level of anxiousness or tension before sitting for an examination, and as long as the student's performance is not negatively affected, anxiety could not be seen as a problem (Kultur & Ozcan, 2022). Anxiety becomes a problem when it troubles a student's psychological field and negatively affects their academic behaviour, such that despite studying, the student performs poorly (Genc & Sanli, 2023). Although Dada (2014) aver that some level of anxiety could propel a student towards achieving success in an examination, Huberty (2012) had a different perspective and asserted that anxiety is among the common causes of poor academic performance among students globally. Students with high examination anxiety over a long period of time may have their physical and mental health negatively affected (Chen, Liu, Wu, Wang, Chen, Zhang, Wang, & Chen, 2023). Fear of failure, inadequate preparation, and excessive workload can cause examination anxiety among students (Al-Sahman, Al-Sahman, Joseph, & Javali, 2019).

Previous studies have been inconsistent about the role of examination anxiety in students' involvement in examination misconduct. Obineli and Anekwe (2021) posited that examination

anxiety is not a strong predictor of students' attitudes towards examination malpractice. By implication, exam anxiety is not the primary reason for students' tendency to engage in examination malpractice. Peer influence, self-esteem, parental exam anxiety are flagged as contributory factors to students' involvement in examination malpractice (Anierobi, Nwikpo, Okeke & Unachukwu, 2018; Oguzie, Obi, Nnadi, Mokwelu, Etele & Okpala, 2022; Atsehe, Kwaghgbah, Lorlumun & Agbecha, 2022; Seyi, 2022; Genc & Sanli, 2023). Atsehe, Kwaghgbah, Lorlumun & Agbecha (2022); Eremie & Ikpa (2020); Njoku, Nwachukwu & Isama (2018) asserted that students' anxiety is a significant factor in students' engagement in examination malpractices as well as in their physical and emotional behaviour during examinations.

Every institution, especially in Anambra State, seeks to conduct examinations free of malpractice for its students. This dream aligns with the vision to produce graduates who can compete with their counterparts globally. This vision can be marred if universities fail to adopt a zero-tolerance policy for examination malpractice. Examination malpractice, no doubt, kills character and competence and produces half-baked graduates. Scholars have studied the causes, forms, consequences, and possible remedies for examination malpractice, yet the ugly incidence persists, even taking on new trends. The role of students' value orientation of the existing examination ethics and examination anxiety should not be ruled out as possible critical factors in students' involvement in examination malpractice. This study is therefore guided by the following research questions and hypotheses.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does students' value for examination ethics predict their tendency to engage in Examination misconduct?
2. To what extent does students' test anxiety predict their tendency to engage in Examination misconduct?
3. What is the joint prediction of students' value for examination ethics and test anxiety on their tendency to engage in Examination misconduct?

Hypotheses

Ho_1 Students' value for examination ethics does not significantly predict their tendency to engage in examination misconduct

Ho_2 Students' test anxiety does not significantly predict their tendency to engage in examination misconduct

Ho_3: There is no significant joint prediction of students' value for examination ethics and test anxiety on their tendency to engage in Examination misconduct

Methods

The researchers adopted a correlational research design for the study. The target population of this study comprises all undergraduate students in Awka. Awka has 2 universities, a federal university and a religion-based university. The sample size was 534 undergraduates drawn using a multi-stage sampling procedure. Firstly, purposive sampling technique was used to select the federal university, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, for the study due to higher chances of examination malpractice and the higher number of students in a federal university. Secondly, the university was stratified into 2 campuses, namely Awka and Nnewi Campuses. Simple random sampling was adopted to pick Awka campus out of the 2 campuses. Again, a simple random sampling was used to draw 3 faculties in Awka campus, and 2 departments from each of the faculties. Convenient sampling technique was finally adopted to draw 534 students from the departments which formed the sample size for the study. The instruments for data collection are the Value for Examination Ethics Questionnaire (VEEQ), the Test Anxiety Questionnaire (TAQ), and the Examination Misconduct Questionnaire (EMQ). Student Moral Stance on Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (SMSEMQ) developed by Nwosu *et al*. (2018) was adapted to assess students' tendencies to engage in examination malpractice. The original instrument consisted of 25 items, of which 19 items (Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25) were selected, as they were considered most relevant for measuring students' ethical viewpoints regarding academic dishonesty. The items were measured on a four-point response scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Test anxiety was measured using the Test Anxiety Inventory (TAI) (Spielberger and Gonzalez,1980; as adapted by Omoluabi, 1993): This self-report inventory was adopted to evaluate students' test anxiety levels. It consisted of 20 items structured on a four-point response scale ranging from 'Almost Never (1) to Almost Always (4),' assessing anxiety before, during, and after examinations. Examination Misconduct Questionnaire was adapted from the Examination Cheating Behaviour (ECB) Scale developed by Onakoya and Alarape (2004). The questionnaire consisted of 18 items structured on a four-point response scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree (1)" to "Strongly Agree (4)", designed to capture the frequency and likelihood of engaging in various forms of examination malpractice. The items covered behaviours such as copying during examinations, collusion with peers, use of unauthorized materials, and other related unethical examination practices. The instrument provided a comprehensive measure of students' involvement in examination misconduct within the academic environment.

The three sets of instruments were validated by experts in the field of Education. The reliability of the instruments was determined using the Cronbach Alpha method and the instruments yielded alpha coefficients of .87, .84. and .89 for the VEEQ, TAQ and EMQ, respectively. The questionnaire was administered via an online Google Form. The link to the forms was made available to the target students across all levels of the various Faculties in the university via their respective WhatsApp groups, through their course representatives. The questionnaire included a provision for Informed consent and assured respondents' anonymity on the first displayed page. A total of 534 undergraduate students filled out the questionnaire formed the sample size and were used for the analysis.

Data analysis was conducted in SPSS version 21, using the simple regression analysis to answer the research questions and multiple regression analysis to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was accepted if the p-value was greater than 0.05; otherwise, it was rejected.

Results

Demographic Data

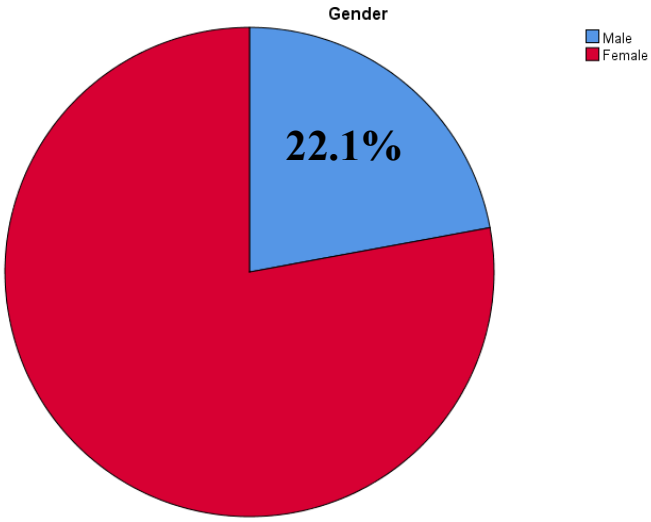


Fig 1: Gender

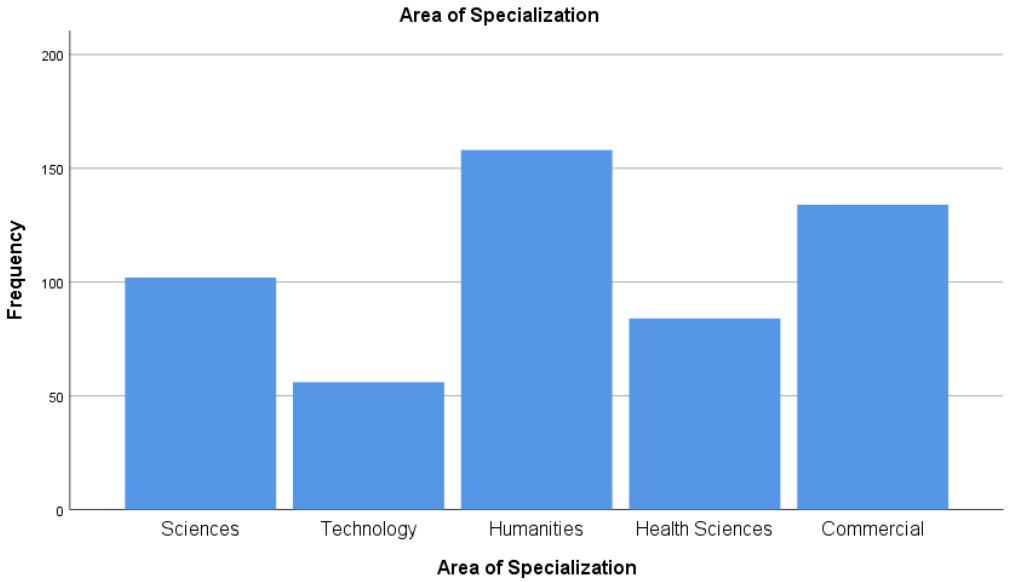


Fig 2: Area of Specialization

The results showed in Figure 1 and 2 revealed the sociodemographic information of the respondents. The gender constitutes 22.1% male (118) and 77.9% female (416) as shown in Fig 1. Also, the frequency of the Area of Specialization as shown in Fig 2 revealed that most of the respondents specialized in humanities which recorded the highest frequency value of 158, whereas respondents specializing in technology recorded the lowest frequency value of 56.

Research Question One: To what extent does students' value for examination ethics predict their tendency to engage in Examination misconduct?

Table 1: Model Summary

Model Summary[b]

					Change Statistics				
Model	**R**	**R^2**	**Adjusted R^2**	**Std. Error**	**F Change**	**df1**	**df2**	**Sig. F Change**	**Durbin-Watson**
1	.097[a]	.009	.008	.61124	5.040	1	532	.025	2.009

a. Predictors: (Constant), Examination_Ethics_Value
b. Dependent Variable: Examination_Malpractice_Involvement

The result in Table 1 showed a simple linear regression analysis conducted to determine the extent to which students' value for examination ethics predicts their tendency to engage in examination misconduct. The result revealed a weak positive prediction (R = .097), and the coefficient of determination (R^2 = .009) indicates that students' value for examination ethics accounted for only 0.9% of the variance in examination misconduct tendency. The adjusted R2 value of .008 suggests that the predictive power of the model remains very weak even after adjustments for sample characteristics. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.009 indicates that the assumption of independence of errors was met.

Hypothesis One: Students' value for examination ethics does not significantly predict their tendency to engage in examination misconduct

Table 2: Simple Linear Regression

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.883	1	1.883	5.040	.025[b]
	Residual	198.763	532	.374		
	Total	200.646	533			

a. Dependent Variable: Examination_Malpractice_Involvement
b. Predictors: (Constant), Examination_Ethics_Value

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.581	.217		11.899	.000		
	Examination_Ethics_Value	-.151	.067	-.097	-2.245	.025	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Examination_Malpractice_Involvement

Collinearity Diagnostics[a]

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions (Constant)	Variance Proportions Examination_Ethics_Value
1	1	1.993	1.000	.00	.00
	2	.007	16.341	1.00	1.00

a. Dependent Variable: Examination_Malpractice_Involvement

The result in Table 2 revealed that the regression model was statistically significant F(1, 532) = 5.040, p = .025. Students' value for examination ethics significantly predicts their tendency to engage in examination misconduct (B = -0.151, β = - 0.097, t = -2.245, p = 0.025). The negative beta coefficient indicates that students with higher examination ethics values tend to exhibit lower tendencies toward examination misconduct. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Furthermore, collinearity statistics showed that the tolerance value (1.000), the VIF (1.000), the eigen values of 1.993 and 0.007, and the condition indices of 1.000 and 16.341, are all within the acceptable limits. Thus, the assumption of no multicollinearity was satisfied.

Research Question Two: To what extent does students' test anxiety predict their tendency to engage in Examination misconduct?

Table 3: Model Summary

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	.395[a]	.156	.155	.56413	98.480	1	532	.000	2.022

a. Predictors: (Constant), Test_Anxiety
b. Dependent Variable: Examination_Malpractice_Involvement

The findings in Table 3 reveled the extent to which students' test anxiety predicts their tendency to engage in examination misconduct. The model yielded a correlation coefficient of R = .395, suggesting a moderate positive relationship between test anxiety and examination misconduct tendency. The coefficient of determination (R^2 = .156) indicated that test anxiety accounted for 15.6% of the variance in examination misconduct tendency, while the adjusted coefficient of determination (Adjusted R^2 = .155) showed minimum adjustment, indicating the stability of the model. The assumptions of the regression were assessed and the Durbin-Watson (DW) statistics of 2.022 indicted that the residuals were independent.

Hypothesis Two: Students' test anxiety does not significantly predict their tendency to engage in examination misconduct

Table 4: Regression Analysis

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	31.341	1	31.341	98.480	.000[b]
	Residual	169.305	532	.318		
	Total	200.646	533			

a. Dependent Variable: Examination_Malpractice_Involvement
b. Predictors: (Constant), Test_Anxiety

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.188	.095		12.511	.000		
	Test_Anxiety	.344	.035	.395	9.924	.000	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Examination_Malpractice_Involvement

Collinearity Diagnostics[a]

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions (Constant)	Variance Proportions Test_Anxiety
1	1	1.966	1.000	.02	.02
	2	.034	7.646	.98	.98

a. Dependent Variable: Examination_Malpractice_Involvement

The regression coefficient reveled that test anxiety was a significant positive predictor of examination misconduct tendency (B = .344, β = .345, t = 9.924, F = 98.480 p = .00). Hence, the findings implies that an increase in students' test anxiety is associated with an increase in their tendency to engage in examination misconduct. Also, the collinearity statistics showed a tolerance value of 1.000 and a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of 1.000, suggesting the absence of multicollinearity. The collinearity diagnostics also revealed eigenvalues of 1.966 and 0.034 with corresponding condition indices of 1.00 and 7.646, respectively, indicating that multicollinearity was not a concern in the model.

Research Question Three: What is the joint prediction of students' value for examination ethics and test anxiety on their tendency to engage in Examination misconduct?

Table 5: Multiple Regression Model Summary

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics: R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	.413[a]	.171	.168	.55975	.171	54.690	2	531	.000	1.995

a. Predictors: (Constant), Test_Anxiety, Examination_Ethics_Value
b. Dependent Variable: Examination_Malpractice_Involvement

Table 5 showed the model of a multiple regression analysis conducted to examine the extent to which the predictor variables jointly explain students' tendency to engage in examination misconduct. The model revealed a multiple correlation coefficient of R = .413, indicating a moderate relationship between the predictors and examination misconduct tendency. The coefficient of determination (R2 = .171) showed that the predictors collectively explained meaningful proportion of 17.1% of the variance in students' tendency to engage in examination misconduct. The standard error of the estimates was 0.559 suggesting a moderate level of prediction error in the model. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.995 indicated that the assumption of independence of residuals was satisfied, as the value is approximately equal to 2.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant joint prediction of students' value for examination ethics and test anxiety on their tendency to engage in Examination misconduct

Table 6: Multiple Linear Regression

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	34.271	2	17.136	54.690	.000[b]
	Residual	166.375	531	.313		
	Total	200.646	533			

a. Dependent Variable: Examination_Malpractice_Involvement
b. Predictors: (Constant), Test_Anxiety, Examination_Ethics_Value

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients SE	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics: Tolerance	Collinearity Statistics: VIF
1	(Constant)	1.775	.214		8.298	.000		
	Examination_Ethics_Value	-.188	.062	-.121	-3.058	.002	.996	1.004
	Test_Anxiety	.350	.034	.402	10.167	.000	.996	1.004

a. Dependent Variable: Examination_Malpractice_Involvement

Collinearity Diagnostics[a]

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions: (Constant)	Examination_Ethics_Value	Test_Anxiety
1	1	2.947	1.000	.00	.00	.01
	2	.046	7.995	.03	.07	.95
	3	.007	20.211	.96	.93	.04

a. Dependent Variable: Examination_Malpractice_Involvement

The hypotheses tested using multiple regression analysis as shown in Table 6 revealed that both predictors (Examination ethics value and Test anxiety) significantly predict examination

misconduct tendency. Examination ethics value negatively predicts examination misconduct (B = -.188, β = -.121, t = -3.058, p = 0.002), while test anxiety positively predicts examination misconduct tendency (B = .350, β = .402, t = 10.167, p = 0.000). The overall model was significant (F = 54.690, p = 0.000), resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. Also, multicollinearity diagnostics further confirmed the adequacy of the model as; tolerance values were high (0.996), Variance Inflation Factors values were low (VIF = 1.004), and the condition indices ranging from 1.000 to 20.211 which is below the critical threshold of 30, indicate no multicollinearity problem.

Discussion of Findings

The sociodemographic information of the respondents showed that gender constitutes 22.1% male (118) and 77.9% female (416). Again, the frequency of the area of specialization revealed that most of the respondents specialized in humanities which recorded the highest frequency value of 158, whereas respondents specializing in technology recorded the lowest frequency value of 56.

The findings of the study disclosed a weak positive prediction (R = .097), and the coefficient of determination (R^2 = .009) indicates that students' value for examination ethics accounted for only 0.9% of the variance in examination misconduct tendency. The adjusted R2 value of .008 suggests that the predictive power of the model remains very weak even after adjustments for sample characteristics. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.009 indicates that the assumption of independence of errors was met. When subjected to statistical analysis, students' value for examination ethics significantly predicts their tendency to engage in examination misconduct (B = -0.151, β = - 0.097, t = -2.245, p = 0.025). The negative beta coefficient observed indicates that students with higher examination ethics values tend to exhibit lower tendencies toward examination misconduct. Furthermore, collinearity statistics showed that the tolerance value (1.000), the VIF (1.000), the eigen values of 1.993 and 0.007, and the condition indices of 1.000 and 16.341, are all within the acceptable limits. Thus, the assumption of no multicollinearity was satisfied. This finding aligns with Ntui, Ekeng, and Undiyaundeye (2022), and Ntui and Egodi (2021) who asserted that students' moral values determine their attitudes toward examination malpractice in secondary schools. This implies that the level of value students attach to examination ethics largely predicts whether they will engage in examination malpractice. It also agrees with Nwosu, Nwasor, Onyebuchi, and Nwanguma (2020) who found that many students have a poor moral stance toward examination malpractice; therefore, they are ready to cheat in examinations without blinking. Sharing in this perspective, Ruwah (2025) asserted that examination misconduct in Nigeria is a moral issue that has grown increasingly difficult to address.

It further validates scholars such as Anierobi, Unachukwu, and Nwogbo (2015) who showed that, owing to a misperception of examination malpractice and ethics, students are inclined to engage in examination misconduct.

The study observed a moderate positive relationship between test anxiety and examination misconduct tendency. The coefficient of determination (R^2 = .156) indicated that test anxiety accounted for 15.6% of the variance in examination misconduct tendency, while the adjusted coefficient of determination (Adjusted R^2 = .155) showed minimum adjustment, indicating the stability of the model. The assumptions of the regression were assessed and the Durbin-Watson (DW) statistics of 2.022 indicted that the residuals were independent. When statistically tested, the finding revealed that test anxiety was a significant positive predictor of examination misconduct tendency (B = .344, β = .345, t = 9.924, F = 98.480 p = .00). Hence, the findings implies that an increase in students' test anxiety is associated with an increase in their tendency to engage in examination misconduct. Also, the collinearity statistics showed a tolerance value of 1.000 and a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of 1.000, suggesting the absence of multicollinearity. The collinearity diagnostics also revealed eigenvalues of 1.966 and 0.034 with corresponding condition indices of 1.00 and 7.646, respectively, indicating that multicollinearity was not a concern in the model. The study findings corroborate with Atsehe, Kwaghgbah, Lorlumun and Agbecha (2022); Eremie and Ikpa (2020); Njoku, Nwachukwu and Isama (2018) who showed that students' anxiety is a significant factor in students' engagement in examination malpractices as well as in their physical and emotional behaviour during examinations. By implication, a student who becomes tensed in the face of examination, will be vulnerable to cheating. However, the findings of this study disagree with Obineli and Anekwe (2021) who observed that examination anxiety is not a strong predictor of students' attitudes towards examination malpractice. By implication, exam anxiety is not the primary reason for students' tendency to engage in examination malpractice. Scholars pointed at peer influence, self-esteem, parental exam anxiety as contributory factors to students' involvement in examination malpractice (Anierobi, Nwikpo, Okeke & Unachukwu, 2018; Oguzie, Obi, Nnadi, Mokwelu, Etele & Okpala, 2022; Atsehe, Kwaghgbah, Lorlumun & Agbecha, 2022; Seyi, 2022; Genc & Sanli, 2023).

Furthermore, the study's finding revealed a multiple correlation coefficient of R = .413, indicating a moderate relationship between the predictors and examination misconduct tendency. The coefficient of determination (R2 = .171) showed that the predictors collectively explained meaningful proportion of 17.1% of the variance in students' tendency to engage in examination misconduct. The standard error of the estimates was 0.559 suggesting a moderate level of

prediction error in the model. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.995 indicated that the assumption of independence of residuals was satisfied, as the value is approximately equal to 2. Statistical analysis showed that both predictors (Examination ethics value and Test anxiety) significantly predict examination misconduct tendency. This shows that the presence of low moral stance or regard for examination ethics coupled with examination anxiety predispose students to cheat in examinations. This finding aligns with Nwosu, Nwasor, Onyebuchi, and Nwanguma (2020) and Atsehe, Kwaghgbah, Lorlumun and Agbecha (2022) who found that poor moral stance toward examination malpractice and students' anxiety are significant factors in students' tendency to cheat in examinations.

Conclusion/Implications/Limitations of the Study

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that poor value orientation to examination ethics, and examination anxiety are separate and significant joint factors that make students vulnerable to cheat in examinations. By implication, students should be provided with opportunities that would help them to both imbibe positive value for the examination ethics and overcome examination-induced anxieties. When this is achieved, students' likelihood to cheat in examinations will greatly reduce. The study has some limitations which includes the limited sample size in comparison with the population of the entire students in the university, the online method of data collection and relying on questionnaire method only for data collection which did not check responder bias to the items. These limitations call for caution in generalizing the findings of the study to the position of the entire students in the university. Again, it calls for further study which could consider adopting a mixed method.

Recommendations

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

1. Educational institutions should strengthen the teaching and promotion of examination ethics among students. School counsellors, teachers, and administrators should regularly organize seminars, workshops, and orientation programmes that emphasize honesty, integrity, and the consequences of examination misconduct. This will help students develop stronger ethical values and reduce their tendency to engage in examination malpractice.
2. Schools should implement effective test-anxiety management programmes for students. Counselling units should provide psychological support services such as stress management training, relaxation techniques, study-skills workshops, and cognitive-behavioural interventions to help students cope with examination-related anxiety and reduce their vulnerability to examination misconduct.

3. Counsellors and educators should identify and provide targeted interventions for students exhibiting high levels of test anxiety. Regular screening and assessment of students' anxiety levels can help institutions offer timely counselling services and support mechanisms before examinations, thereby reducing the likelihood of anxiety-driven examination malpractice.
4. Schools should adopt a comprehensive approach that combines moral education with psychological support services. Since examination ethics value and test anxiety jointly predict examination misconduct, schools should simultaneously promote ethical behaviour and address students' emotional and psychological challenges through guidance and counselling programmes, mentorship initiatives, and character-development activities.

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