

# COMPUTER -EFFICACY, EXAMINATION ANXIETY AND ACADEMIC PROCASTINATION AS CORRELATES OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AMONG OPEN DISTANCE LEARNERS OF TWO UNIVERSITIES IN OYO STATE

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## **Abstract**

*This study examined the predictive influence of computer efficacy, examination anxiety and academic procrastination on examination dishonesty among open distance learners in University of Ibadan and National Open University of Nigeria. The descriptive research design of ex-post-facto type was used in the study. Three hundred and seventy two distance learners participated in the study. The participants responded to relevant adopted standardized instruments and the data obtained were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Multiple Regression statistical analysis. The results showed that examination dishonesty is significantly correlated with: examination anxiety ( $r = .794$ ;  $p < .05$ ); academic procrastination ( $r = .783$ ;  $p < .05$ ); and computer efficacy ( $r = .754$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Suggestions and recommendations were made that all hands must be on deck by all stakeholders. Teachers/Lecturers/Facilitators and Counselling Psychologists should identify strategies of reducing test anxiety among the learners as it will help in reducing cheating tendencies during examination. Appropriate and timely sanction should also be meted out to errant learners as this would serve as deterrent to other students who have the tendencies to be involved in the acts of academic dishonesty. It is also recommended that computer efficacy trainings should be a prerequisite for admission of learners as this would enhance their computer-efficacy which will reduce academic dishonesty and lastly, training on time management skills should be packaged for the open distance learners as this would reduce procrastination tendencies which enhance academic dishonesty among the learners.*

**Key words:** Examination anxiety, academic procrastination, computer-efficacy, examination dishonesty, Open distance learners.

## **Introduction**

Examinations have become a critical and significant tool of assessment and evaluation as far as the concept of learners' mastery of content is concerned. Learning which has been defined as relative changes in permanent behaviour can be said to have taken place when an individual student has been subjected to examination within a particular context and has proved to have mastered the content. According to Onger

(2009), examinations are also used for placing students in various institutions and jobs and providing feedback in the teaching and learning processes and curriculum delivery in general. Examinations are conducted from nursery schools, through primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary institutions. Students are expected to be honest when taking examinations but research has shown that some students are engrossed in dishonesty behaviour.

Cheating in examinations has become a global phenomenon. According to Anderman & Midgley (2000), about 80% of high achieving high school students and 75% of college students admit having cheated at one time or the other. Nearly 21% of students who said cheating is bad still engage in the behaviour (Kiogotho, 2009). The development of any society cannot be greater than her educational system. This is because the advancement of any society directly depends on the quality of its manpower which is a product of education system via school examinations. Thus, the integrity of any country's examinations should be passionately and jealously guarded in order to effectively, efficiently and accurately measure the standard of training produced by its education system.

Examination dishonesty is 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 teachers, examination officials, supervisors, invigilators, printers, security officers and anybody or group of people before, during or after examination in order to obtain undeserved marks or grades (Onuka & Amusan, 2008). Examination dishonesty has become a cancerous problem in the educational system and it comes in diverse forms or nature. Onuka and Durowoju (2011) stated that the nature of examination malpractice includes lateness of invigilators and supervisors to exam halls, undue favouritism from invigilators to students, leakage of question papers in the process of setting, printing, packaging, storing and distribution, impersonation, disclosing candidate's identity on answer books, and bribing/influencing examination staff, invigilators or examiners.

Other forms of examination malpractices are allotment of choice examination centres termed "unique"/"miracle" centres, appointment of supervisors demanding for particular centres, leaking information about question papers, identification of invigilating staff and paper, using mobile phone during examination, smuggling answer books in or outside the examination centre, tearing of examination questions, tearing of examination answer sheets, writing of answers on the chalkboard during examination, and dictating answers during examination. In addition, inflation or reduction of candidates' original score by those who mark/grade the scripts and buying of questions from corrupt officials and bank officials, external assistance, copying another candidate's work, and inadequate spacing of candidates. Other methods of perpetrating examination malpractice include desktop publishing (writing on the desk), laptop publishing (writing on the lap), microchips (writing on sheets of paper), cell phone publishing (writing on the mobile phone) and cooperative cheating by students and staff. Fasasi (2006) stated that other forms of examination misconduct include *girraffing*, deliberate extension of time by supervisors and invigilators, change of scores, buying and selling examination grades, buying prepared answers, trading sex for question papers, marks and grades, collusion between candidates, collusion between candidates and officials, assault and intimidation, spying, submission of multiple scripts, use of coded or sign language, and multiple entry for the same examination among others.

From the study conducted by Onuka and Durowoju (2011), which investigated the perception of teachers and students on causes of examination malpractice, it was discovered that examination malpractice

rather than been abated is on the increase in the African education system, especially, in Nigeria. The nature of examination malpractices is becoming sophisticated by the day and the nature is perceived by the teachers and students in diverse ways to include undue favouritism from invigilators to students, bribing examination staff, invigilators and examiners, illegal special choice examination centres among others. More so, the methods of examination fraud include bringing chips answers written on tiny papers, tearing of examination answer sheets and dictating answers during examination.

Recent researches have shown that majority of students who gained admissions into tertiary institutions in Nigeria are products of examination malpractice (Eba & Emaikwu, 2007). The frequency of occurrence of examination malpractice indicates a state of hopelessness and helplessness. The incidence of examination malpractice has become so endemic that the penalty hitherto meted out to its perpetrators is almost having no statistical significant effects on them. There is an astronomical increase in the number of people and institutions involved in this social malaise. As a result of frequent cases of examination malpractice, the society is losing confidence in the certificates awarded by some institutions and examination bodies (Eba & Emaikwu, 2007; Ogum, 2007).

Test anxiety in literature is a state of uneasiness, worry or feelings of uncertainty about an impending or on-going evaluation programme (Okorodudu & Ossai, 2004). Examination anxiety as an educational phenomenon is well documented in research literature. Spilberger & Vagg (1995) identified two types of anxiety states which impede academic performance. These are “State” and “Trait” anxiety. “State”

anxiety manifests in form of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry as well as other related physiological stimulation which emanate from the stimulation of the autonomic nervous system. “State” anxiety is identifiable from bodily reactions such as excessive perspiration, trembling hands, increased heartbeat and so on. Most students actually experience “state” anxiety at the moment of taking important examinations but the degree of its intensity will depend among other things on the students’ level of Trait Anxiety. Trait anxiety is a relatively stable proneness to react to situations or impending events with high level of worry or apprehension. Trait anxiety accounts for individual differences in the tendency to respond to situations perceived as threatening with elevations in “state” anxiety symptoms. For example, the amount of “state” anxiety exhibited by a student who is preparing for or actually writing examinations will depend on the students’ level of trait anxiety. Hence, individuals could be classified as having either high or low examination anxiety levels.

Studies have shown that high levels of trait examination anxiety lead to poor academic achievement (Mealey & Host, 1992; Sweetnam, 2002; Okorodudu & Ossai, 2004). Students who possess higher examination anxiety tend to perform poorly in academic work due to their lack of knowledge in the subject matter as well as the cognitive distraction created by task-irrelevant thinking in the examination situation which, if care is not taken, the individual with high levels of trait examination anxiety has a greater probability of indulging in examination dishonesty. Based on this school of thought, the present study investigated the relationship between examination anxiety and dishonesty tendency among Open Distance learners in

University of Ibadan and National Open University of Nigeria.

Computer self-efficacy is another construct that has its place in this study. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has contributed immensely to most areas of human endeavour such as medicine, banking, agriculture, transportation, and engineering. The field of education is not exempted. Today, ICT has become an important tool that many tertiary institutions and academics use for teaching and learning purposes. Open Distance Learning is teaching and learning taking place with the teachers at a distance from the learners which is often bridged by modern communication media. In view of this, computer is an inevitable instrument as far as open distance learning is concerned (Odedokun, 2015).

Self-efficacy is an individual judgment and belief in his/her capability to effectively execute, perform and succeed in a particular task (Bandura, 1997). It is the belief in one's competence to handle novel and challenging task. According to Compeau and Higgins (1995), computer self-efficacy is the "judgment of one's capability to use a computer". In this study, computer self-efficacy is conceptualized as a distance learner's judgment and belief in his/her capability to effectively execute, perform and succeed in the use of computer and other computer-related activities. High computer self-efficacy increases computer-related performance and the ability to persevere when faced with computer-related difficulties (Holcomb, Brown, Kulikowich, & Zgeng, 2003). It reduces computer-induced anxiety and increases positive attitude toward computer (Compeau & Higgins, 1995). This could be because individuals who possess high computer self-efficacy are assertive and believe that their

efforts will produce success (Balogun & Olawoye, 2013).

In contrast, individuals who have low level of computer self-efficacy will lack confidence and often see computer-related activities as a threat to be avoided and shy away from because of their perceived incapability to execute the activities (Pajares & Shunk, 2001). People with low computer self-efficacy will also harbour pessimistic thoughts about their performance. According to social cognitive theory, individual's efficacy beliefs influence the amount of anxiety (Bandura, 1997). For instance, during Computer Based Testing, (CBT), a student who has a low level of computer self-efficacy experiences higher CBT anxiety while the one with high level of computer self-efficacy experiences low level of CBT anxiety. Several researches have shown that lower self-efficacy is correlated with higher test anxiety (Galla, & Wood, 2012), even among students (Onyeizugbo, 2010), and also in the setting of E-learning. The Canadian university students with low computer self-efficacy have also be found to experience higher level of computer anxiety in E-learning (Saade & Kira, 2009).

Recent events in some distance learning institutions in Nigeria have shown that distance learning students are not immuned against examination dishonesty which could be traced to their inability to make use of computer as a tool of examination or computer self-efficacy. This is not because the students lack cognitive abilities or they have not really master the content of their courses (subject mastery) but as a result of lack of computer skills. This is due to the fact that the use of computer for examination is recently introduced in most Nigerian universities (Bodmann & Robinson, 2004). From the perspective of interference model (Sarason,1988), undergraduates who

experience low computer self-efficacy may have poor performance in computer based examination and in order to avoid this, the thought of dishonesty may set in which, if not well handled or subdued, could push an individual student to exhibit academic dishonesty. Computer efficacy has not received much attention among the scholar, especially, among Open Distance learners. This study, therefore, sought to investigate the predictive tendency of computer self-efficacy on examination dishonesty among open distance learners in University of Ibadan and National Open University of Nigeria, Ibadan Centre.

Procrastination has come to stay as one of the problems facing humanities. Worrisome is the fact that Open Distance learners are not exempted from this cankerworm. Open Distance learners who, to some extent, are the architects and masters of their own time compared with their colleagues in the regular mode who are restricted to the four walls of the campuses, are also grossly involved in academic procrastination. This attitude, not only leads to poor performance, but also leads to examination dishonesty as a result of poor time management. It is stated in the literature that 70% of university students have procrastinating behaviours as a lifestyle (Ellis & Knaus, 1977). This, therefore, requires urgent proactive approach.

Several authors have defined procrastination in various forms. Lay (1986) conceived procrastination as a frequent failure at doing what ought to be done to reach goals while Ellis and Knaus (2002) described procrastination as the desire to avoid an activity, the promise to get it late, and the use of excuse making to justify the delay and avoid blame. Furthermore, Noran (2000) considered a procrastinator as someone who plans to perform a task, but

does not complete the task, or excessively delays performing the task. Thus, working on less important obligation, rather than fulfilling the more important obligation, then using his time wastefully in some minor activities or pleasure. Past studies revealed that procrastination is related to poor academic performance (Çakıcı, 2003; Fritzsche, Young, and Hickson, 2003), difficulty in following instructions (Lay, 1986; Rothblum, Solomon, and Murakami, 1986), inadequate motivation (Sene'cal, Koestner, and Valler and, 1995).

Procrastination leads to poor satisfaction in studying, gangsterism, and an increased risk of school dropout (Adeyemi, 2010; Ibukun & Oyewole, 2011). Such tendencies have also been shown to cause low skill acquisition, increased feelings of incompetency and ineffectiveness in students, lack of good study habits, academic planning and conscientiousness (Badejo & Gandonu, 2010). Popoola (2005) noted that the lives of university students are characterized by frequent deadlines given by university teachers and administrators to carry out various responsibilities such as registration for courses, completion of course forms and submission of class assignments or term papers. Factors of procrastination may be situational or personal. The causes of procrastination have been a major concern for many theorists. Among the situational factors, the work load of assignments and improper time management by the students have been found important causes of academic procrastination (Sultan & Hussain, 2010). Research studies have revealed that personal dispositional factors associated with fear of failure, such as depression and anxiety often lead to procrastination (Chang, 2014; Milgram & Toubiana, 1999; Senecal, Koestner, & Vallerand, 1995). Academic

procrastination has been seen as an impediment to academic success because it decreases the quality and quantity of learning while increasing the severity of stress and negative outcomes in students' lives (Howell & Watson, 2007). When a student procrastinates, it promotes academic dishonesty because no student plans to fail. The students are tempted to be involved in academic dishonesty behaviour in order to avoid examination failure. While much has been discussed by different researchers on examination malpractice, few studies have been carried out on the influence of academic procrastination on academic dishonesty, especially, among open and distance learners, hence, this paper sought to examine this.

The calamity of examination dishonesty is not just the havoc it wrecks on the educational system but the gradual introduction of the future leaders into the practice of frauds and corruption. Owing to malpractices in universities, examination results tend to give a false picture of the state of affairs; hence a good number of school graduates cannot defend the grades obtained in examinations which in recent years have led to the questioning of the validity and reliability of the examinations as well as the authenticity of the results and certificates obtained. Several works have been carried out on virtually all levels of schooling in Nigeria but not much has been done on Open Distance learners. It could be because of its relatively newness or acceptability in the educational system of the country compared with other levels. This study, therefore, investigated the predictive influence of examination anxiety, academic procrastination and computer-efficacy on examination dishonesty among learners in Open Distance mode in two higher institutions in Oyo State namely: University

of Ibadan and National Open University of Nigeria, Ibadan Centre.

### **Methodology**

The design of the study is the descriptive design of *ex-post facto* type. This simply implies that the researcher usually has no control over the variables under study and therefore, cannot manipulate them. The population of this study comprised of all the learners in the two higher institutions. Multi-stage sampling technique was used in selecting three hundred and seventy two (372) open distance learners from two distance centres namely University of Ibadan and National Open University of Nigeria, Ibadan Centre.

### **Instrumentation**

**Computer Self-Efficacy Scale:** This was measured using an adapted version of the 10-item scale developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). Some sample items include: "I can manage to solve computer-related problem if I try hard enough." "I am certain that I can solve computer-related task", "I can solve most computer-related tasks if I invest the necessary effort", "When I am confronted with a computer-related problem, I can find several solutions". The items of the scale are rated on a 4-point scale from exactly true of me = 4. The adapted scale was piloted on a sample of fifty (50) open distance learners and yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .71. High score indicates higher level of computer self-efficacy while low score implies low level of computer self-efficacy.

**Examination Anxiety Scale:** This was measured using an adapted version of the 22-items Cognitive Test Anxiety Scale developed by Cassady and Johnson (2002). The adapted scale was piloted on a sample of fifty (50) distance learners. Some sample

items included: “I lose sleep over worrying about examination”, “During examination, I find myself thinking of the consequences of failing”, “At the beginning of an examination, I am so nervous that I often can’t think straight“. Cassady and Johnson (2002) obtained an internal consistency coefficient of .91 for the original scale. The test re-test yielded a coefficient of 0.75.

**Academic Procrastination Scale:** The modified version of the validated 35 item Likert type procrastination scale developed by Tuckman (1991) was used to measure the procrastination tendency of the participants. The scale has an original reliability coefficient of  $r = 0.90$ . Twenty-one (21) items were adopted from the original version and revalidated before use. The modification of the items in the instruments was done with regards to its application to the area of study. High score indicated decreased intensity of academic procrastination, while low scores indicated increased intensity for academic procrastination. The revised scale reported a reliability coefficient alpha of 0.72 using two weeks test re-test procedure (Aremu, Agokei & Ugoji, 2011).

**Academic Dishonesty Scale:** The current study requires a scale that results in a report of actual incidence of cheating so that the

relationships between test anxiety, academic procrastination, computer-efficacy and academic dishonesty can be examined. In view of this, a 17-item measure of motivation for academic dishonesty developed by Anne, Janette, Ann, and Brenda (2014) was adapted. Three of the items were: “Others cheating put you at disadvantage”, “My job leaves no time for studying”, “I did not attend classes”. The scale was pilot tested on a sample of fifty (50) open distance learners and yielded a Cronbach’s alpha of .74. High score indicated higher level of academic dishonesty while low score implied low level of academic dishonesty.

### Data analysis

The data collected were analyzed, using the Multiple Regression Analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

### Results

**Research Question One:** What is the significant relationship among the three independent variables (test anxiety, academic procrastination and computer-efficacy) and examination dishonesty among Open Distance Learners’ mode in the two universities in Oyo State?

**Table 1: Showing the Inter-correlations among the variables.**

| Variables                | N   | Mean  | SD    | 1    | 2    | 3    | 4    |
|--------------------------|-----|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|
| Academic Dishonesty      | 372 | 51.55 | 28.95 | 1.00 |      |      |      |
| Test Anxiety             | 372 | 54.60 | 24.55 | .794 | 1.00 |      |      |
| Academic Procrastination | 372 | 67.00 | 31.73 | .783 | .886 | 1.00 |      |
| Computer Efficacy        | 372 | 25.25 | 11.88 | .754 | .867 | .873 | 1.00 |

Table 1 showed that the students' examination dishonesty is significantly correlated with: examination anxiety ( $r = .794$ ;  $p < .05$ ); academic procrastination ( $r = .783$ ;  $p < .05$ ); and computer efficacy ( $r = .754$ ;  $p < .05$ ). There were also significant correlations among the three independent variables.

**Research Question Two:** What is the combined effect of the independent variables on academic honesty among learners in Open Distance Mode in the two universities in Oyo State?

**Table 2: ANOVA showing the combine effects of independent variables on the dependent variable.**

| Multiple R(adjusted)=.851               |                    |     |             |        |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------|-----|-------------|--------|
| Multiple R <sup>2</sup> (adjusted)=.724 |                    |     |             |        |
| Standard error of estimate=14.01        |                    |     |             |        |
| Analysis of variance                    |                    |     |             |        |
|                                         | Sum of square (SS) | DF  | Mean square | F      |
| Regression                              | 116784.82          | 3   | 29196.21    | 113.90 |
| Residual                                | 49984.68           | 368 | 256.33      |        |
| Total                                   | 166769.5           | 371 |             |        |

Table 2 showed that the three independent variables (test anxiety, academic procrastination and computer-efficacy) when pulled together has significant influence on academic dishonesty among Open Distance Learners' Mode in the two institutions in Oyo State. The table also showed a coefficient of multiple correlations (R) of  $=.851$  and a multiple R<sup>2</sup> (adjusted) of  $.724$ . This means that 72.4% of the variance in the academic dishonesty of open distance learners is accounted for by all the three independent variables when taken together. The significance level of the composite contribution was tested at  $p < 0.05$  using the F -ratio at the degree of freedom ( $df =$

$(3,368)$ ). The analysis of variance performed on the multiple regressions yielded an F-ratio value of 113.90 at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the contribution of the dependent variable was significant and other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance.

**Research Question Three:** What is the relative effect of each of the three independent variables among learners in Open Distance Mode in the two institutions in Oyo State?

**Table 3: Relative contribution of independent variables to the prediction of examination dishonesty**

|                          | Unstandardized coefficients | Standardized coefficients |      | T     | P      |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------|-------|--------|
| Model                    | B                           | Standard error            | Beta |       |        |
| Model                    | B                           | Standard error            | Beta |       |        |
| Constant                 | .632                        | 2.814                     |      | .225  | P<0.05 |
| Examination anxiety      | .110                        | .133                      | .093 | .824  | P<0.05 |
| Academic procrastination | .682                        | .087                      | .362 | 3.792 | P<0.05 |
| Computer efficacy        | 1.285                       | .298                      | .680 | 4.290 | P<0.05 |

Table 3 showed that each of the independent variables made a significant contribution to the prediction of students' academic dishonesty. In term of magnitude of contribution, computer efficacy made the most significant contribution (Beta= .680;  $t=4.902$ ;  $P<0.05$ ) to the prediction. Other variables made significant contributions in the following order: academic procrastination (Beta= .362;  $t=3.792$ ;  $P<0.05$ ), and examination anxiety (Beta= .093;  $t=.824$ ;  $P<0.05$ ).

### Discussion of findings

The result of analysis revealed that the computer self-efficacy, academic procrastination and examination anxiety individually and jointly predict academic dishonesty among Open Distance Learners Mode in the two universities in Oyo State. The result is in agreement with Cocoradi (2014), that high computer self-efficacy has strong link with better performance which inhibits academic dishonesty. Students who possess high computer efficacy are computer efficacious coupled with knowledge of the subject content would not

even think of cheating in an examination, let alone get involved in the act of dishonesty. Furthermore, the findings are corroborated by Galla, & Wood, (2012), Onyeizugbo, (2010), and Saade & Kira, (2009) that lower computer self-efficacy correlated with higher test anxiety which leads to academic dishonesty. Examination anxiety was also found to have predicted academic dishonesty in this study. This result was corroborated with the study of Idika (2005) who examined the composite and relative contributions of test anxiety on students' cheating tendencies among senior secondary school students in Edo state, Nigeria.

The finding of this study is also in agreement with the findings of Otu (2009) and Oyama (2019) that there is a significant relationship between test anxiety, parental socio-economic background, attitude and students' cheating tendencies during examination. The implication of this finding is that even when students are academically sound but got soaked with examination anxiety, it leads to examination dishonesty because of fear of failure.

Lastly, findings from this study also indicated that students who procrastinate are likely to engage in academic dishonesty. This result is consistent with study of Ferrari, Johnson, & McCown (1995) that showed 93% students who procrastinated engaged in academic dishonesty. Procrastinating students have less time to complete their homework and studies. Students with lack of preparation could not achieve as good as those who prepare well. For this reason, students are more likely to develop anxiety of being called a failure or considered stupid. To reduce this anxiety by keeping up good grades, students opt for academic dishonesty (Barzegar and Khezri 2012).

In this study, the researcher examined the three independent variables (test anxiety, academic procrastination and computer-efficacy) and examination dishonesty among Open Distance Learners Mode in the two universities in Oyo State. In the process of researching these variables, the researcher realised that the independent variables have influence on the dependent variables. The findings of this study have implications for stakeholders in educational administration, especially, the management of open distance learning institutions to design intervention programmes that will reduce academic dishonesty among their learners.

### Conclusion and recommendations

- (i) Significant orders (Teachers/Lecturers/Facilitators and Counselling Psychologists) should identify strategies of reducing test anxiety among the learners as it will help reduce cheating tendencies during examination.
- (ii) Appropriate and timely sanction should also be meted out to errant students as this would serve as deterrent to other students who have the tendencies to be involved in the acts of academic dishonesty.
- (iii) It is also recommended that computer-efficacy training should be a prerequisite for admission of learners as this would enhance their computer-efficacy and reduce academic dishonesty.
- (iv) Lastly, training on time management skills should be packaged for the open distance learners as this would reduce procrastination tendencies, leading to academic dishonesty among the learners

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