



## **Effect Of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy On Examination Misconduct Of Male And Female Students In Secondary Schools In Makurdi Local Government Area Of Benue State, Nigeria: Implications For Counselling**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study determined the effect of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) on examination misconduct of male and female students in secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. Two research questions were raised and two hypotheses formulated for the study. The study employed quasi-experimental design of non-randomized control group, pre-test and post-test design. The population of the study comprised all Senior Secondary 2 (SS11) students in 80 secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. The sample of the study was 393 students in 12 secondary schools. Multi stage sampling technique of was used in the study-purposive proportionate stratified simple random sampling was adopted for the study, Two sets of instrument namely; Examination Misconduct Observatory Scale (EMOS) developed by the researchers and School Examinations by various schools were used for the study. Cronbach Alpha reliability method was applied to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained. A Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) was used to observe the examination misconduct of the students. Descriptive statistics was used to answer the research questions and ANCOVA was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that: The use of cognitive behaviour therapy reduced examination misconduct in secondary schools. This was found to be statistically significant. The use of cognitive behaviour therapy reduces examination misconduct of female more than male students in secondary schools. Some of the recommendations of the study are: Guidance counsellors should be encouraged to adopt the use of CBT in tackling examination misconduct of students in secondary schools. Professional bodies such as Counselling Association of Nigeria and Nigerian Society for Educational Psychologists should popularize the use CBT during counselling and the use of CCTV during examinations in their workshops and seminars

**Keywords**-Examination, examination misconduct, cognitive behaviour therapy, low self-esteem, hi-tech malpractice, ghost voice method,

### **INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria, like many other nations of the world, has a strong faith in education as the key to economic progress, political stability, social transformation, as well as scientific and technological development (Olayinka & Akande, 2006). Education, according to Emaikwu (2012), is expected to train the mind of its recipients for effective performances. It equips the individual with the information necessary for high level of human functioning. The school is seen as the most formal agency for cultivating necessary skills, knowledge and values as enunciated by the Federal Government of Nigeria (2004) in the NPE. The school achieves this through constant evaluation and assessment carried out during examinations.

According to Ojiah, 2003, cited in Olayinka and Akande (2006), examination is a common feature of any educational system. It is seen as a measure of students' intelligence, competency, achievement or ability

in a specified domain and the grades obtained are used for promotion, placement, feedback, and other purposes. Examination, according to Nnachi (2006), refers to the use of formal test to assess the cognitive, affective and psychomotor ability of a candidate in any dimension of human endeavour. From the above definitions, examination can be summed up to mean an evaluative tool used to measure students' learning outcomes with the hope of ascertaining the level of academic knowledge, skills and competencies, which they have acquired (Ojogbane,2016).

Fuandai 2006, cited in Ojogbane (2016), opined that for an examination to be valid and reliable, all rules and regulations guiding its conduct before and after the exercise should be strictly adhered to. However, this is not the case in Nigeria. There are evidences of high prevalence rate of examination misconduct in Nigerian secondary schools. For example, Umeh (2001) noted that West African Examinations Council (WAEC) statistics indicated leakages in 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1995 examinations. WAEC cancelled 60,346 results in 1996 May/June Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE), (Guardian, Sunday July 12, 1998). In 1997, Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) cancelled 91,000 results of candidates who had cheated in various ways during the examination, (Champion, October 3, 1997). WAEC withdrew recognition from 113 secondary schools nationwide as punishment for examination misconduct. Results of 30,654 candidates that sat for the May/June 2012 West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) were cancelled, (Daily Sun, Newspaper), to mention but a few.

According to Onyechere, 1996, cited in Fuandai (2006:173), "any act of omission or commission, which contravenes WAEC rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity and reliability of the examinations and ultimately the integrity of certificates issued by West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) are considered as examination misconduct." Buoro, 2003, cited in Aliyu (2006, p.244) defines examination misconduct as "any irregular behaviour exhibited by candidates or anybody charged with the conduct of examination in or outside the examination hall, before, during or after the examination."

Osisoma in Oniyama, Ikekhua and Amroma (2006) itemized ways in which students carry out misconduct in examinations; these among others include: Introduction of foreign materials into the examination hall, collusion between candidates, impersonation, assault and intimidation, solving question papers before hand, hi-tech malpractice (that is, the use of handsets, electronic calculators), ghost voice methods (this is a situation whereby a person dictates the answer from afar through a microphone hung in the class).

Examination misconduct affects genuine learning, the validity and reliability of examination and the integrity of certificates issued are in doubt. Examination misconduct leads to increase in the number of dishonest, half-baked graduates, incessant cancellation of examinations and results and production of quack professionals, among others (Ike-Nwafor, 2006).

Some of the reasons advanced for students' involvement in examination misconduct are: low self-esteem, ill-preparedness on the part of students for examination; high stake of the examination, personal factors, quota systems, poor remuneration for teachers, location of examination centres (Mustapha, 2006). Low self-esteem has made students to strongly belief in their inability to pass examination through their personal efforts. These misconceptions are internalized through socialization. Secondary school students do everything possible to pass examinations; thus, examination misconduct is the option available to them. If students can be made to think rationally using cognitive behaviour therapy, they are likely not to act in consonance with society's distorted beliefs, making its citizens to adopt illicit behaviour of "arriving" by all means (Ojogbane, 2016).

Many students in secondary schools develop irrational and illogical thoughts; they tend to be controlled by the thoughts of peers and significant others around them to define their values and give them direction. For example, parents who want their children to pass examinations by all means so that they can make them proud and read courses of their choice impact negatively on the attitude and thoughts of these students. Parents pay for "canopy" or "cooperation fee" in "miracle centres" to enable them have access to question papers for their children and wards before examinations (Momodu, 2013).

Examination misconduct is one of the corrupt practices in Nigeria that disturbs the minds of many educationists and scholars. Denga and Denga, 1998, in Imona (2006) described it as an ugly social virus that is rapidly acquiring the mean status of a social, moral and educational epidemic in Nigeria.

The following efforts among others were made to bring this social malaise to a halt. Decrees have been promulgated (Decree No. 20 of 1984; No. 22 of 1986 which stipulated a jail term of 21 years for examination fraudsters and No. 33 of 1999). There was also the Examination Ethics Project formed in 1996 as a non-governmental, non-profit, non-partisan organization; and the West African Examination Council (WAEC) had cancelled results of candidates, schools or even centres. Also many commissions of enquiry have been set up, staff of examination bodies and institutions have been dismissed while the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) has employed the use of alternate forms of the same examination in the conduct of its examination to mention but a few.

In secondary schools, tremendous efforts have been made by school administrators to curb examination misconduct through the activities of counsellors during general orientation and counselling given to students individually. Denga and Denga, 1998, Bulus and Rimfat, 2001, cited in Imona (2006) observe that in spite of all the counselling activities in schools, the Nigerian Federal Government has not been able to stop misconduct during examinations. This ugly situation continues to exist. No wonder Denga and Denga, 1998, in Imona (2006) lamented:

*If education is a major means of providing the intellectual yeast which can ferment the social, economic, political and technical development in Nigeria, then more serious efforts should be made to curb examination malpractice that tend to pollute the education system. We must combat examination malpractice with all armouries at our disposal p.27*

Since the above mentioned efforts have failed to tackle the menace of examination misconduct by students, there is the need for a psychological approach through cognitive behaviour therapy as a possible remedy for this malaise.

Researchers have been concerned about gender-based differences in examination misconduct among students in secondary schools. The term gender refers to socially constructed relationship between men and women in the society (Bent, 2005). Gender issues and examination misconduct are of great concerns to educationists. Divergent views have also been expressed about the rate of examination misconduct among male and female students. It is evident from the literature reviewed that gender of students influences examination misconduct (Aminullahi, 2006). The result of the study by Igborgbor and Igbrobor (1999), indicates no significant difference in the proportion of the sexes involved in examination misconduct. This means that both male and female students have equal chances of being involved in examination misconduct. According to Olatoye (2002), examination misconduct is a general phenomenon among male and female students. Yahaya (2003) in a study indicated that male and female are significantly different in their attitude toward examination misconduct. Ariel (2004) investigated gender differences in perceived self- efficacy and CBT of students using test anxiety. The female students had significantly lower self- efficacy in test anxiety than the male. Blenco (2005) carried out a study on gender and self-efficacy belief of College students. It was found that women showed lower dissatisfaction and improvement possibility. Bello (2006) investigated sex and level based differences in students' involvement in examination; the result showed that male students were involved in examination fraud than expected. Omonijo and Nnedum (2012b) found that male students are more involved in cheating habit than their female counterparts. It is hoped that this study will proof the authenticity of these divergent views.

The terms cognitive therapy (CT) and the generic term cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) are frequently used as synonyms to describe psychotherapies based on the cognitive model. The term CBT is also used for a group of techniques in which a cognitive approach and a set of behavioural procedures are combined. According to Knapp and Beck (2008), Cognitive Behaviour Therapy is a form of psychotherapy that emphasizes the important role of thinking on how one feels and what one does. It is based on the cognitive model; the way we perceive situations that influences how we feel emotionally.

Beck and Rector (2005) explained that CBT is a form of talking therapy that combines cognitive therapy and behaviour therapy. It focuses on how one thinks about the things going on in one's life, that is, one's thoughts, images, beliefs and attitudes (one's cognitive processes) and how this impact on the way one behaves and deal with emotional problems. It then looks at how the person can change any negative pattern of thoughts or behaviour that may be causing him difficulties. Cognitive behaviour therapy assumes that changing maladaptive thinking leads to change in behaviour. Therapists use CBT techniques to help individuals challenge their patterns of thoughts and beliefs and replace "errors in thinking such as over generalizing, magnifying negatives, minimizing positives and catastrophizing" with "more realistic and effective thoughts, thus decreasing emotional distress and self-defeating behaviour" (Hassell & Gevirtz, 2009). These errors in thinking are known as cognitive distortions. Cognitive distortions can be either a pseudo-discrimination belief or an over-generalization of something. CBT helps individuals replace "maladaptive... coping skills, cognitions, emotions and behaviours with more adaptive ones" by challenging an individual's way of thinking and the way that they react to certain habits or behaviours. Based on these observations, the researcher has a strong feeling that cognitive behaviour therapy could curb examination misconduct of students in secondary schools. Therefore, this study determined the effect of cognitive behaviour therapy on examination misconduct of male and female students in secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State.

Several efforts ranging from promulgation of decrees, setting up of tribunals, examination ethics, cancellation of results of candidates, schools or even centres have been put in place to end examination misconduct in secondary schools. Also, many commissions of enquiry have been set up, staff of examination bodies and institutions have been dismissed while the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) has employed the use of alternate forms of the same examination in the conduct of its examination. Government intensified campaigns in schools and public examination outfits; increased remuneration for staff in charge of examination and even token payments, to examiners who are able to detect misconduct during marking sessions by some bodies (for example, WAEC). In view of the fact that the various measures put in place to check examination misconduct have not yielded result, there is need to use a psychological approach in restructuring the faulty distorted and irrational thoughts of students through cognitive behaviour therapy. Could CBT help in reorientating the illogical and irrational thoughts of examination cheats in secondary schools in Benue State? It is against this background that the researcher set out to find out the effect of cognitive behaviour therapy on examination misconduct of male and female students in secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria.

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the effectiveness of cognitive behaviour therapy on examination misconduct of male and female students in secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study sought to determine:

- i whether secondary school students would reduce their involvement in examination misconduct when exposed to CBT;
- ii if male and female students in secondary schools would reduce their involvement in examination misconduct as a result of CBT.

#### **Research Questions**

The following research question was raised to guide this study:

- i. What are the mean ratings of students in examination misconduct exposed to CBT and those not exposed to CBT in secondary schools?
- ii. What are the mean ratings of male and female students exposed to CBT on examination misconduct in secondary schools?

#### **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypothesis were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- i. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings in examination misconduct of students exposed and those not exposed to the CBT in secondary schools.
- ii. There is no significant difference in mean ratings of male and female students exposed to CBT in examination misconduct in secondary schools.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a quasi-experimental design. The design is non-randomized control group, pre-test, post-test design. The rationale for the use of quasi-experiment pretest- protest control group design was based on the fact that the design is the most suitable for establishing cause and effect relationships between the independent and dependent variables. The independent variable (cognitive behaviour therapy) was manipulated and its effect on the dependent variable (examination misconduct) observed.

The sample size of the study was 393 students in 12 secondary schools (4 rural and 8 urban) in Makurdi Local Government Area, Benue State. This consists of 233 students exposed to CBT and 160 students not exposed to the therapy. 130 were male and 103 were female. Multi stage sampling technique was used in the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select co-educational schools with qualified Guidance Counsellors. Proportionate stratified random sampling was used to ensure the inclusion of male and female in the study. Simple random sampling was used to select one SS2 class where there was more than one arm.

Two sets of instruments namely: Examination Misconduct Observatory Scale (EMOS) and school examinations were used for the study. The EMOS was developed by the researchers from literature reviewed. EMOS contained 25- items structured on a four-point rating scale of Very Frequent (VF), Frequent (F), Not frequent (NF) and Never (N); with corresponding values of 4,3,2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was divided into two parts: A and B; part A was made up of three items which contained information on personal data of the student. Part B contained the 25-items on examination misconduct. The examination misconduct was checked by the researcher through observation from Closed Circuit Television (CCTV). To establish the face validity of the EMOS, one expert from Educational Psychology, two from Guidance and Counselling and two from Measurement and Evaluation from University of Agriculture Makurdi were given the items to establish the suitability in terms of the content and behaviour they were expected to measure, language suitability and correctness of the terms.

A trial test was conducted with 60 students from four secondary schools (36 male and 24 female). These schools were not part of the main study. The Cronbach-alpha formula was adopted as the items have no right or wrong answers, as they were not dichotomously scored. Again it was considered appropriate as it ensures the homogeneity of the items on the clusters. The instrument yielded a reliability estimate of .83

The researcher at the end of the class examination tallied and ranked the examination misconduct using the four point rating scale to elicit which misconduct behaviours are very frequent, frequent, not frequent or never used by the examinees. The data collected from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed in line with the research questions and hypotheses. Descriptive statistics was used to answer research questions while analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected where the p-value was less than the alpha value of 0.05 while it was not rejected where the p-value was equal to or greater than the alpha value of 0.05

**Research Question 1**

What are the mean ratings of students in examination misconduct exposed to CBT and those not exposed to CBT in secondary schools? Answer to this research question is presented in Table 1

**Table 1: Mean And Standard Deviation Of Examination Misconduct Of Students Exposed And Those Not Exposed To Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT)**

Groups	N	Pre-test Mean	SD	Post-test Mean	SD
Exposed to CBT	233	1.23	0.12	1.04	0.06
Not exposed	160	1.15	0.16	1.15	0.08
Mean Difference		0.08		-0.11	
Total	393				

Table 1 shows the mean ratings of secondary school students exposed to CBT in the pre-test is 1.23 with a standard deviation of 0.12 and those not exposed to CBT in the pre-test as 1.15 and standard deviation of 0.16. Their mean difference is 0.08. For the post-test, those exposed to CBT had a mean rating of 1.04 with standard deviation of 0.06 and those not exposed to CBT had a mean rating of 1.15 with standard deviation of 0.08. Their mean difference is -0.11.

**Research Question 2**

What are the mean ratings of male and female students exposed to CBT in examination misconduct in secondary schools? Answer to this research question is presented in Table 2

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Examination Misconduct Of Male and Female Students Exposed To CBT**

Groups	N	Pre-test Mean	SD	Post-test Mean	SD
Male	130	1.20	0.10	1.05	0.06
Female	103	1.26	0.12	1.01	0.02
Mean Difference		-0.06		0.04	
Total	233				

Table shows that the mean ratings of male students in secondary school exposed to CBT in the pre-test to be 1.20 with standard deviation of 0.10 and those of female students had a mean of 1.26 and a standard deviation of 0.12. Their mean difference is -0.06. For the post-test, male students had a mean rating of 1.05 with standard deviation 0.06 while female students had a mean rating of 1.01 with standard deviation of 0.02. Their mean difference is 0.04.

**Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings in the examination misconduct of students exposed and those not exposed to CBT in secondary schools. Test result of this hypothesis is presented in Table 3

**Table 3: Analysis Of Covariance Of Those Exposed And Those Not Exposed To CBT In Examination Misconduct In Secondary Schools**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	225.418 <sup>a</sup>	2	112.709	34.082	.000
Intercept	312.613	1	312.613	91.531	.000
Pretest all	155.943	1	155.943	47.155	.000
Group	39.078	1	39.078	11.817	.000
Error	1293.208	391	3.307		
Total	166846.000	394			
Corrected Total	1518.626	393			

Table 3 shows that the p-value is .00 while the set p-value is 0.05. Since this p-value of 0.00 is less than the set p-value of 0.05, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was therefore rejected.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings in examination misconduct of male and female students exposed to CBT in secondary schools. Test result of this hypothesis is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Analysis of Covariance of The Mean Ratings In Examination Misconduct Of Male And Female Students Exposed To CBT In Secondary Schools**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	634.028 <sup>a</sup>	2	317.014	47.600	.000
Intercept	14.710	1	14.710	2.209	.000
Pretest	330.931	1	330.931	49.689	.000
Gender	19.731	1	19.731	2.963	.000
Error	1538.494	231	6.660		
Total	121216.000	234			
Corrected Total	2172.522	233			

Table 4 shows that the p-value is .00 while the set p-value is 0.05. Since this p-value of .00 is less than the set p-value of 0.05, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was therefore rejected.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the data collected and analysed for this study, the following major findings were made: The use of cognitive behaviour therapy reduced examination misconduct in secondary schools. This was found to be statistically significant. The use of cognitive behaviour therapy reduces examination misconduct of female more than male students in secondary schools.

It was found in Table 1 that cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) drastically reduced examination misconduct of students in secondary schools. This noted reduction was found to be statistically significant. The test of hypothesis in Table 3 shows that the difference in the effect of cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) on the examination misconduct of students exposed and not exposed to the therapy was statistically significant. The finding has the support of Yahaya (2006), who found that cognitive restructuring strategy was effective in modifying the subjects' attitudes towards HIV/AIDS patients. The attitudes of the experimental group were found to be better than that of the control group after exposure to cognitive restructuring strategy. On the hypothesis, there is a contradiction because the present study revealed that the effect of cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) on the examination misconduct of students exposed and not exposed to the therapy was statistically significant while Yahaya found that there was no significant difference in the attitude of the control group at pre-and post test level. This was as a result of the adoption of the new technology, CCTV. Also, Obi-Nwosu (2007) in a study on the effects of Rational Emotive Therapy (RET) and Systematic Desensitization on anxiety among caesarean section (CS) patients, found that both RET and Desensitization groups showed significantly lower anxiety than control but RET did not show significantly reduced anxiety compared with desensitization.

It was found in table 2 that cognitive behaviour therapy has more effect on the examination misconduct of female than male students in secondary schools. The test of hypothesis in table 4 revealed that the difference in the effect of cognitive behaviour therapy on the examination misconduct of students based on gender was not statistically significant. This indicates that gender is a significant factor of the effect of cognitive behaviour therapy on the examination misconduct of students in secondary schools. The result of Yahaya (2003) who investigated the relationship between study habit and attitude of secondary school students toward examination misconduct in Kwara State showed that male and female students are significantly different in their attitude towards examination misconduct. This implies that the two groups of male and female differed from each other in terms of their attitude to examination misconduct. This is evidenced in the fact that the male group had a significantly higher mean. In a related study, Esere and Arewah (2000) showed that male adolescents get more involved in deviant behaviours than their female counterparts. This disposition of male adolescent may not be unconnected with the belief that male are very brave and could take risks and withstand hardships. This may not be unconnected with the fact that female students' fear of being caught and penalized for violating examination rules which also

corroborates Lombroso (1903) cited by Burke (2001), who concludes that real female criminals are rare. Females have not evolved like males, due to the inactive nature of their lives. This study has the support of Omonijo and Nnedum (2012b) who found that male students are more in cheat habit than their female counterparts. Also in support, is the work of Bello (2006) who investigated sex and level based differences in students' involvement in examination misconduct; the result showed that there were no significant differences between the observed frequencies of expected male and female students involved in examination malpractice between 2001/2002 and 2003/2004 academic sessions. However, a higher number of male students were involved in examination fraud than expected. However, the result of the work by Omolola, Dare, & Onyekwere, (2014) on influence of personality types and socio-demographic characteristics of students on examination malpractice: Case of secondary schools in Ibadan, disagrees with this study; their work indicated a significant relationship with female students more prone to examination malpractice than male students. The findings of the authors cited helped to add credence to the result of this study.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the data collected and analyzed, it was concluded that cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) reduces the examination misconduct of students in secondary schools the reduction was statistically significant at one round of treatment. Gender is a significant factor of the effect of cognitive behaviour therapy on the examination misconduct of students in secondary schools. The finding of this study has some implications for Guidance and Counselling practice in Nigeria. The gross neglect of cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) in tackling examination misconduct in secondary school in preference to punitive measures need to be de-emphasized. Professional counsellors need to be employed and posted to secondary schools in order to provide necessary information to students on the benefits of refuting irrational and illogical thought patterns that lead to maladaptive behaviours. The school counsellors can positively influence the lives of secondary school students through the effective use of CBT in schools and Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) during examinations. Professional bodies such as Counselling Association of Nigeria, (CASSON) and Nigerian Society for Educational Psychologists (NISEP) should popularize this novel method of counselling (CBT) and the use of the new technology (CCTV) during examinations in their workshops and seminars.

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