



# **Perceived Influence Of Students Unethical Behavior On The Academic Performance In Public Secondary School In Rivers State**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study examined the perceived influence of students' unethical behavior on the academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The study was delimited to the senior secondary school teachers who were selected as respondents because they were better positioned to give account and disclose the true situation of things about students' unethical behaviour as it academic performance. The population for the study was seventy-three thousand, three hundred and six (73,306) teachers and students from two hundred and seventy-six Public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The population comprised seven thousand, one hundred and forty-two (7,142) male teachers and sixty-six thousand, one hundred and sixty-four (66, 164) students, according to the Rivers State Senior Secondary School Board (RSSSSB) (2020). The sample size for the study was 777 respondents which comprise 379 teachers and 398 students. The Taro Yamen's formula was adopted with a 0.05 error precision. A total of 777 copies of the questionnaire were administered, retrieved and used for data analysed. Data obtained from the administered instrument were analyzed using Scientific Package for Social Sciences. The study used mean score and standard deviation for answering all the research questions while z-test was implored in testing hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings from the study revealed that unethical behaviour among students manifests itself in so many ways; some of which are lateness to school, examination malpractice, indecent dressing and absenteeism. With regard to the findings above, the study therefore concluded that lateness to school, examination malpractice, indecent dressing and absenteeism all have negative influence on academic performance of students in public secondary schools. Thus, unethical behaviour is a precursor to academic performance of students and it was therefore recommended among other things that the public secondary schools should put more emphasis on curbing unethical behaviour among students in order to gain competitive advantage in their students' academic performance.

**Keywords:** academic performance, examination malpractice, misconduct, unethical behavior

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is regarded as the engine room for personal and community development. It is the way in which society produces the knowledge and skills needed to survive and thrive. It improves people's understanding of them and the world. According to Yusuf (2009), education improves quality of life and leads to greater personal and social benefits. Education is the lifeblood of all human settlements. Character formation is required for minors. Getting an education requires that you apply ethical principles. Education when it comes to proper behavior continues to increase the value of any nation. Although there is an anti-moral behavior among students pursuing education at various levels including tertiary level.

Studies have proven that higher education is a crucial stage in initiating healthy development. Puberty is important for moral development. Within such a framework ethical education plays an important role in building a morally mature person. The importance of primary education in the education system cannot be overemphasized. In addition to serving as a link between primary and secondary education, it gives the child the opportunity to acquire more knowledge, skills, and features beyond the basics. A major factor in the need for higher education in Nigeria is that basic education seems insufficient for the child to acquire the lasting literacy, communication, and numeracy skills expected at the end of the course or training (Chinelo, 2011; Ige, 2011).

As in all other professions, education at the high school level has a code of conduct that guides the behavior of students and staff. The Code of Conduct here refers to the guidelines or rules of conduct with which we intend to live, work and interact with people (Asinya, 2012). If these rules and regulations are not followed, they become immoral. Student misconduct in the school not only threatens the dignity of the parties but also adversely affects the school's ability to provide quality educational resources to students and other stakeholders. It undermines and undermines human relationships (Kaptein, 2011). One of the biggest challenges facing any educational institution is the unethical behavior of its students. This may have a negative impact on the sustainability of the institution (Grant & Visconti, 2006) and as a result, it would not be unexpected for unhappy stakeholders to put pressure on management to effectively eliminate unethical practices within the institution (Treviño, Weaver, & Reynolds, 2006).

In terms of common misconduct in schools, Adukwu-Bolujoko (2012) identified absenteeism, late arrival at school, cheating on exams, improper dress, drug abuse, lying and late arrival at school and classes. This unethical behavior disturbs the minds of teachers and students, disrupting the learning of both students and their peers (Aduma & Auwal, 2007). The level of education of parents depends on what affects their children, which is a school environment that depends on shaping students' behavior. Practicing learning and work ethic is a good aspect of quality education. Schools where illegal practice is more active cannot produce good and decent students. This lowers the value of our school products, based on the degree to which they judge human behavior. In other words, the rules of etiquette, promoting those things that are considered good and reducing or avoiding those things that are considered bad at home and at school.

Immoral behavior has a profound effect on students and society as a whole. One area that has such an impact is student academic performance. Student academic performance is the center through which the entire education system revolves around. The success and failure of any educational institution is measured by the performance of students in their studies. Academic performance refers to the information obtained and marked, marked by the teacher. In the case of education, academic achievement is a goal of education that a student, teacher or institution must achieve in a particular period and is measured by continuous tests or assessment and the policy may differ from one person to another. Academic performance is a result of education, the degree to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals. Educational concerns and academic achievement were the opposite and closely related to each other (Murthy and Kulshreshta, 1999). Performance in personal studies is influenced by various factors such as personality, intellectual ability, environment, etc.

Student performance plays an important role in producing elite students who will become leaders and major workers in the economic and social development of the country (Ali in Asikhia, 2010). Student academic performance may be affected by a variety of factors such as class schedules, class size, English textbooks, homework, location of applied classroom technology and finances. Other studies (Laddunuri, 2012) found a number of factors contributing to student failure in fourth grade examinations in Tanzania including lack of qualified teachers, poor school infrastructure, lack of textbooks in the school library, high textbook costs and frequent shifts.

Educational performance is a multi-faceted structure built on student skills, attitudes, and actions that help him or her succeed in class (Hijazi & Naqvi, 2006). As students develop and complete their school experience, the level of achievement is satisfactory and high (Tinto, 1993). However, little attention is given to the perceived influence of students' unethical behaviour on their academic performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Thus, this paper examined the

perceived influence of students' unethical behaviour on their academic performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Overtime, unethical practices have affected the quality of our educational system in Nigeria, which is perhaps on its lowest ebb now. The secondary school system were once prided ourselves as citadel of learning and centre of academic excellence, has joined the maddening crowd to shed its core values. A comparison between the secondary schools of the 1960s and 1970s with those of the past two decades will show wide disparity in terms of the quality of both the inputs and the outputs (Adukwu–Bolujoko, 2012). Our present educational systems risk the chance of losing the mandate of providing qualitative education if the progressive decline in ethics is allowed unchecked. A close look at the system revealed an entire gamut of unwholesome and unethical practices bedeviling it. The rot has permeated every facet of the education sector. It cuts across all ages, parents, teachers, government and the society at large.

Studies indicate that student unethical values have been changing cyclically since the 1950s (Fisher & Baron, 2002) and the main reasons include materialism; monetary and selfish goals; me first attitude and developing a philosophy of life. The high wave of indiscipline, dishonesty and injustices that characterize the Nigerian educational system is therefore not surprising (Mni, 2008).

In view of this worrisome trend, there is an absolute need for an in-depth study and analysis aimed at tutoring each and every stakeholder in the education system on how their actions and inactions have individually and collectively contributed to the collapsing state of education in Nigeria. Thus, this study is set out to review the perceived influence of students' unethical behaviour on their academic performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study is to examine the perceived influence of students' unethical behavior on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the extent lateness to school influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. Examine the extent examination malpractice influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. Examine the extent indecent dressing influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does lateness to school influence academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does examination malpractice influence academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
3. To what extent does indecent dressing influence academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- Ho<sub>1</sub>. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and students on the extent lateness to school influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and students on the extent examination malpractice influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Ho<sub>3</sub>. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and students on the extent indecent dressing influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Theoretical Review

The theoretical foundation of this study was derived from the attribution theory.

#### Attribution Theory by Heider (1958)

The attribution was propounded by Heider in 1958. The attribution theory is concerned with how individuals interpret events and how this relates to their thinking and behavior. Heider (1958) was the first to propose a psychological theory of attribution. But Weiner (2010) developed a theoretical framework that has become a major research paradigm of social psychology. Attribution theory assumes that people try to determine why people do what they do, i.e., attribute causes to behavior. A person seeking to understand why another person did something may attribute one or more causes to that behavior. A three-stage process underlies an attribution: (1) the person must perceive or observe the behavior, (2) then the person must believe that the behavior was intentionally performed, and (3) then the person must determine if they believe the other person was forced to perform the behavior (in which case the cause is attributed to the situation) or not (in which case the cause is attributed to the other person).

Weiner (2010) focused his attribution theory on achievement. He identified ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck as the most important factors affecting attributions for achievement. Attributions are classified along three causal dimensions: locus of control, stability, and controllability. The locus of control dimension has two poles: internal versus external locus of control. The stability dimension captures whether causes change over time or not. For instance, ability can be classified as a stable, internal cause, and effort classified as unstable and internal. Controllability contrasts causes one can control, such as skill/efficacy, from causes one cannot control, such as aptitude, mood, others' actions, and luck.

### Conceptual Review

The various related concepts that provided support for this work are presented in this section.

#### Concept of Unethical Behaviour

Misconduct in the workplace can be defined as any act that is inconsistent with the ethical standards established by the organization. Immoral behavior can even violate the law in some cases. Thus, immorality is a practice that falls short of what is considered right or proper for a person, a profession, or an industry. People can behave inappropriately as businessmen, professionals and politicians (David, 2014). Over time, bad habits have affected the fortunes of our education system in Nigeria, which may be at a very low level now. Our current education system risks the risk of losing their right to provide quality education if a continuous decline in ethics is allowed without testing. A closer look at this program reveals a whole host of unethical and immoral practices that are distorted. Corruption has permeated every aspect of the education system. It affects all ages, parents, teachers, government and society as a whole.

However, bad practices in public high schools, as identified by Leke (2009) include teacher and student absenteeism, cheating during exams, improper dress, drug abuse, lying and late arrival at school and classes, leaking exam questions among others. These unethical practices disrupt the minds of teachers and students, disrupting the learning of students and their peers (Aduma & Auwal, 2007). The level of education for parents depends on what affects their children which is a school environment based on the discipline of students. Practicing learning and work ethic is a good aspect of quality education. Schools where illegal practice is high in performance cannot produce good and decent students. This lowers the value of our school products, based on the degree to which they judge human behavior. In other words, the rules of etiquette, promoting those things that are considered good and reducing or avoiding those things that are considered bad at home and at school. Public schools not only have bad habits at school but also face administrative problems. Sidhu (2007) pointed out that the challenges are: student overcrowding, lack of trust, poor resources, political turmoil, lack of cooperation, unemployment, lack of commitment, outdated expertise, waste and instability.

According to Ajayi and Adeniji (2009), a major cause of misbehavior in our education system may be due to laxity in home management and parental supervision, many school conditions that promote

misconduct, attitudes toward teachers, school communities. Students developing and implementing, with the advent of ICT and technology, the Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy introduced by the State Government in 1976 introduced unprecedented enrollment of students in educational institutions and Ignorance of misconduct.

### **Unethical Behaviour in Public Senior Secondary Schools**

According to Fayokun and Agih (2015), some of the unethical behaviours seen in public senior secondary schools include:

#### **1. Lateness to School**

The word "lateness" literally refers to a situation in which a person arrives after the appointed, planned, or customary time (Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, 5th ed., 1995). Furthermore, Lauby (2009) defines it as a term for "people who don't turn up on time." Breezes et al. (2010) contributed by saying that lateness is synonymous with "tardiness", this implies being slow to act or react, and therefore failing to adhere to proper or normal timing. As a result, lateness can be seen as a method of network collapse (Peretomode, 2011); the criterion and determinant of lateness is a situation of not keeping up with a program as a function of time.

Maile and Olowoyo (2017) found that watching television or playing games till midnight, working on lots of homework which must be submitted the next day. The author further elaborated that apart from the school homework, catering and attending to house chores made it difficult for some female learners to sleep early. In situations where the house chores overwhelmed the children and eventually makes them tired before going to bed, the time they wake up the next day was also affected. The study also revealed that discouragement is another issue for concern; some learners were discouraged from attending a particular class because of the teacher that teaches the subject. Learners were sometimes influenced by their friend, most of the learners walked to school in peers, chatting and dragging their feet on their way to school and thereby get to school late. Sultana and Rashid (2013) reported that punctuality and time management problems among students in schools occurred related to the lateness to entering classroom. The author further explained that students involved are mostly influenced by their own behaviours, peer's influence, parents' ignorance and teacher's unattractive class lectures to conduct such types of punctuality and time management problems.

#### **2. Examination Malpractice**

According to Oko and Adie (2016), exam malpractice, also known as cheating, is the unethical activity that students engage in during exams in order to improve their grades by cutting corners. It is defined as an act or a non-standard method of evaluating candidates that violates the rules and conventions that regulate the conduct of examinations. According to Nwana (2000), examination malpractice is a widespread and unprecedented violation of rules and regulations governing external and public exams, starting with their scheduling and ending with their administration, from the labeling and grading of their papers to the announcement of the results and the issuance of certificates. While Nnawuchi as cited by Esrom(2013), claims that it is searching, receiving, or providing undue assistance to any applicant prior to, during, or after the review.

Onyibe, Uma and Ibina(2015) reported that the Examination Malpractice Act (1999) explains that examination malpractice is any act of omission or commission by a person who in anticipation of, before during or after any examination fraudulently secure any unfair advantage for himself or any other person in such a manner that contravenes the rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity, reliability, authenticity of the certificates issued. It is commonly described as deliberate wrong doing that is contrary to the official examination rules, regulations and guidelines designed to give an unfair advantage or disadvantage to an examiner. In their own description, Onuka and Dorowaju(2013) reported that examination malpractice is any dishonest or unauthorized action or deed committed by an examinee on his own or in collaboration with others such as fellow students, guardians, parent, teachers, examination officials, supervisors, invigilators, security officers or anybody or group before, during or after examination in order to obtain undeserved marks or grades.

Every examination season, students develop new strategies, methods and dimensions of perpetrating examination malpractices. Oko and Adie (2016) identified some of the forms of impersonation, leakage of questions, tampering with results, computer frauds to other fraudulent practices by invigilators as:

### **3. Indecent Dressing**

Dressing is an integral part of a man's culture and life, and it helps him bond with his tribe or ethnic group. Humans dress according to their cultural standards, beliefs, weather, and resources available in their geographic area. A person's dress communicates his or her status and position in society, as well as knowledge about the cultural community to which he or she belongs (Obeta & Uwah, 2015). There are several different ways to dress; however, certain styles or appearances are considered indecent or inappropriate in society. Indecent dressing, like other social vices like substance abuse, prostitution, and cultism, has become a major moral transgression among students in not only Adamawa State's citadel of higher learning, but also Nigeria's tertiary institutions in general.

Indecent dressing is the improper and provocative way of dressing relative to the society or culture of the students. Corroborating this view, Olori (in Fareo & Jackson, 2018) added that this form of dressing is provocative, improper, and morally unacceptable. Ewulo (2016) opined that indecent dressing is any form of dressing that does not conform with the acceptable moral standard of decent dressing. Oluwadare, Otunaiya, and Opeoluwa (2020) add, indecent dressing means any type of dressing that is not in conformity with the socially acceptable mode of dressing in the particular community of reference. Egwin (in Fareo & Jackson, 2018) referred to indecent dressing as the attitude of someone, male or female that dresses to show off parts of the body such as the breasts, buttocks, or even underwear that need to be covered. Hence indecent dressing is concerned with the exposure of vital parts of the body to the public, and flaunting it everywhere. According to Oyeleye (in Ojogbane et al, 2020), indecent dressing simply means the deliberate exposure of one's body to the public. This practice is contrary to the acceptable norms and the values of society.

### **Concept of Academic performance**

Academic performance is the outcome of education acquired by the students. This shows the grade/marks obtained by students in tests and examinations. It can be said to be the accomplishment of students' achievement measured against predetermined educational standards/goals. Craig (2009) maintains that education will be more beneficial to students in the 21st century in following areas: 1) Acquisition of knowledge and skills, and application of what have been learnt to deal with real world challenges rather than simply reproducing the information on tests for academic excellence, 2) Ability to think critically about information and solve novel problems, communicates, collaborate and adapt to change.

Academic performance of students is one of the current educational issues of public concern, based on poor academic performance of students, especially in public examinations and at schools and other higher education institutions. This supported their argument that the issue of underachievement among schoolchildren has persisted in a variety of subjects. This also echoed the fact that students' academic performance in secondary and postsecondary school is concerning. Over time pupils' academic performance in both internal and external examinations had been used to determine excellence in teachers and teaching (Ajao, 2001).

**Internal Examinations:** Internal examinations refer to examinations conducted within the schools. It could be conducted by given test to the class for the purpose of grading continuous assessment for the students or done at the end of the term for students in the classes of SSI and SSII.

**External Examinations:** External examinations are those examinations conducted by authorized examinations bodies such as the West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO) and Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB), etc. It is taken by final year students in the Senior secondary school class (SSIII).

### **Implications of Unethical Behaviour on Students' Academic performance**

A holistic review of ethical issues in our educational system shows that the sector has received serious battering which has greatly dented its credibility, damaged its image, reduced its effectiveness and has not helped to allow it make the expected impact that it ought to make on character formation, positive lifestyles and the development of our country. It would not be wrong to aver that the moral decadence, depravity, exuberance and turpitude, which seem to pervade the school system, have been vicariously nurtured by our indolent parents and the school system, these are steadily being transmitted into the society of which the students and teachers are part of and are re-packaged to be re-cycled into every facet of our life Kazeem & Ige (2010).

On the whole, our value system has been seriously jaundiced, perverted, inflected with gross immorality, circumventing alibis and short-cuts, damaging inundated with false pretences, negative lifestyles and foul-plays. Relating consequences of unethical practices to real business world, Wole (2012) argue that organizations that practice unethical conduct face severe and long-term consequences, such consequences are hidden but it has negative impact to the organization in long-term profitability and even in sustainability. The first of these consequences as stated by Ridley (2008) is obviously reputational damage, which affects an organization's ability to attract new and repeat business. Unethical practices also create a plethora of problems related to employees and employee productivity. Honest employees will battle to work in an unethical business environment, with increased absenteeism and lack of productivity the inevitable result. A recent Harvard Business School study showed, for example, that corruption in an organization has a marked negative impact on employee morale. And employee morale is directly linked to employee commitment and ultimately to company performance. An unethical work environment can provoke honest employees to leave, Flint (2008). In situations where unethical behaviour is rife, organizations often opt for intrusive surveillance within the workplace, and an increasingly elaborate framework of rules. Such an approach represents not only a significant direct extra cost to the business, but also contributes to a paranoid, adversarial and thus dysfunctional work environment: one that promotes poor productivity and attempts by employees to assert their freedom by acting in ways that are hostile towards the company's best interests.

### **Review of Empirical Studies**

Kwanuba and Sababa<sup>2</sup> (2020) studied students' Perception of Indecent Dressing in Adamawa State Citadel of Higher Learning. Education is concerned with the development of the total personality of students and positive changes in their behavioural patterns. Citadels of higher learning are supposed to serve as a training ground for youths who are supposed to be leaders of tomorrow. However, the proliferation of indecent dressing among students of higher institutions has become a subject of debate among education stakeholders. Because of this, the study investigated students' perception of indecent dressing in Adamawa State citadel of higher learning. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A multistage sampling technique was used in selecting 400 students from four citadels of higher learning in Adamawa State. "Perception of Students on Indecent Dressing Questionnaire" (PSIDQ) was the instrument used in data collection. The instrument was validated and the reliability tested using Cronbach alpha statistic. A reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The results showed that the students agreed with the 10 causes of indecent dressing in Adamawa State citadel of higher learning; 12 negative consequences of indecent dressing on academic performance, and the 11 roles of parents and tertiary institutions in curbing indecent dressing in Adamawa State citadel of higher learning. Also, the study revealed that the students demonstrated a negative attitude towards decent dressing on campuses. Based on these findings, the study recommended among others the strict implementation of the dress code policy in Adamawa State citadel of higher learning.

Amaewhule and Nukan-Adebayo, (2019) investigated Perceived Influence of students' Indiscipline on Academic Performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. The study investigated the perceived

influence of students' indiscipline on academic performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The study adopted descriptive survey design, five research questions and five hypotheses were formulated for the study. The population of the study was 2,094 teachers from thirty-three (33) senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. A total of 336 teachers were adopted as the sample size using Taro Yamene formula. The findings of the study revealed that truancy and examination malpractice influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. It was concluded that the acts of truancy, bullying, examination malpractice, lateness to school and noisemaking influence students' academic performance in secondary schools. It was recommended that principals and teachers should checkmate bullying by disciplining any student who intentionally or incidentally engages in these dastardly acts. That law on examination malpractice should be strictly implemented because it is highly detrimental to learning attitude of the students

Chukujindu, James, and Chiamaka (2020). Investigated the influence of Late Resumption on the Academic Performance of English Education Students in Benson Idahosa University, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The purpose of this study was to examine the influence late resumption on the academic performance of English Education students in Benson Idahosa University. To guide the study, two research questions were raised and two hypotheses were formulated. The study employed descriptive survey employing ex-post facto research design and the population of the study comprised of all English Education students in Benson Idahosa University. Total number of 104 Full-time Education students in levels 100 - 400 in the department were used as the sample for the study. The research instrument used for this study was a questionnaire. The analysis of data obtained showed that there is a significant difference between the academic performance of students that resume early and those that resume lately to academic activities among the Education Students in Benson Idahosa University however, there is no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female students that resume lately to academic activities among Education Students in Benson Idahosa University. Based on the findings of this study, it was, therefore, recommended that Benson Idahosa University authority and lecturers should emphasize on students' early resumption as late resumption has a negative influence on their students' academic performance.

Obilor and Ikpa (2020) did an assessment of the Impact of Examination Malpractice on Academic Achievement of Students in Higher Institutions in Rivers State. The study assessed the impact of examination malpractice on academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study was 745 respondents which comprised 491 lecturers and students in the Faculty of Education of Rivers State University and 254 lecturers and students in the Faculty of Education of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 260 fixed using the Tsaro Yamen Formula. Data was collected through a questionnaire developed by the researchers titled Examination Malpractice and Academic Achievement (EMAA) with a reliability coefficient of 0.79 computed with the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation test statistic. The research questions were answered using means and standard deviations. The null hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance using the z-test. Results indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean perceptions of lecturers and students on the types, causes, consequences of examination malpractice that hinder academic achievement of students, and measures adopted to minimize the rate of examination malpractices to improve academic achievement of students in higher institutions in Rivers State. It was concluded that that the act of examination malpractice is dishonest, illegal and immoral. Given the above, the study recommended that the enacted government legislations on examination malpractice should be enforced to the letter to serve as deterrent to others, adequate teaching and learning materials should be provided to make teaching and learning more effective, and parents and guardians should avoid putting undue pressure on children



## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The design was used to carry out a field investigation and to elicit information from a sample of public senior secondary school teachers. The population for the study was seventy-three thousand, three hundred and six (73,306) teachers and students from two hundred and seventy-six public senior secondary schools in rivers state. The population comprised seven thousand, one hundred and forty-two (7,142) male teachers and sixty-six thousand, one hundred and sixty-four (66, 164) students, according to the Rivers State Senior Secondary School Board (RSSSSB) (2020). The sample size for the study was 777 respondents which comprise 379 teachers and 398 students. In determining the sample size for this study, the Taro Yamen’s formula was adopted with a 0.05 error precision (Okpu & Kpakol, 2015).

The data collection instrument for this study was the questionnaire titled “Perceived influence of students’ Unethical Behaviour on academic performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State Questionnaire (PISUBAPPSSRSQ)”. Likert’s rating scale was used in the construction of the questionnaire not only because of its simplicity in being understood by respondents but for its ability to measure attitudes, opinions, interests, feelings and other qualitative attributes that exist in groups, organizations and even in the individuals (Agih, 2015). The instrument was coded using a four-point likert scale of: (4) Very High Extent (VHE), (3) High Extent (HE), (2) Low Extent (LE) and (1) Very Low Extent (VLE). The reliability scores were all above 0.70.

Since the sample size of this study is 777 respondents, a total of 777 copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents. The same 777 copies were returned and used for data analyses. Therefore, a response rate of 100% as depicted in table 4.1 below was recorded. This implies that the response rate of 100%, in this case, was very good and was accepted. The study used mean score and standard deviation for answering all the research questions while z-test was implored in testing hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. In calculating the mean responses for the research questions, the criteria for the acceptance or rejection of the mean responses were as follows: From the four-point Likert scale: (4) Very High Extent (VHE), (3) High Extent (HE), (2) Low Extent (LE) and (1) Very Low Extent (VLE).

## DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

**Research Question 1:** *To what extent does lateness to school influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State?*

**Table 1: Mean Score Rating of Teachers and students on the extent lateness to school influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State**

S/N	Statement	Teachers (N=379)		Rmk	Students (N=398)		Rmk
		Mean	SD		Mean	SD	
1	Lateness disorganizes and causes distraction to the individual and the whole school.	2.64	0.87	High Extent	2.65	0.87	High Extent
2	Lateness inhibits the process of achieving the goals of the school.	2.70	0.99	High Extent	2.72	0.98	High Extent
3	Lateness leads to absenteeism and general failure in life	2.50	1.03	High Extent	2.53	1.03	High Extent
4	When a student continuously shows up late to class, other students are distracted. Attention is drawn away from the teacher or assignment and toward the child who has just arrived.	2.65	0.99	High Extent	2.67	0.98	High Extent
5	In addition, students who are routinely late at the primary and middle school levels are more likely to fail in senior school -- or even drop out.	2.72	0.91	High Extent	2.75	0.89	High Extent
6	Attendance is one of the ways children show they can meet their obligations	3.06	0.89	Very High Extent	3.08	0.89	Very High Extent
	<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>2.71</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>High Extent</b>	<b>2.73</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>High Extent</b>

Source: Research Data, 2022 (SPSS Output, Version 23.0)

Table 1 above for research question one shows the mean responses of teachers and students on the extent lateness to school influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The table showed that the mean and standard deviation value of teachers were 3.06 and 0.89 while the mean and standard deviation of students were 3.08 and 0.89. The table also showed that both teachers and students agreed that lateness to school influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Research Question 2:** *To what extent does examination malpractice influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State?*

**Table 2: Mean Score Rating of Teachers and students on the extent examination malpractice influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State**

S/N	Statement	Teachers (N=379)		Rmk	Students (N=398)		Rmk
		Mean	SD		Mean	SD	
7	Examination malpractices discourage good students from studying harder.	2.73	1.04	High Extent	2.74	1.04	High Extent
8	Students have become dependent rather than independent as a result of examination malpractice.	2.52	1.07	High Extent	2.51	1.01	High Extent
9	Examination malpractices make students to be very lazy.	2.50	0.91	High Extent	2.53	0.91	High Extent
10	Examination malpractice leads to de recognition of examination results of secondary school	2.71	0.88	High Extent	2.73	0.89	High Extent
11	Examination malpractice leads to inadequate adherence to stipulated code of ethics promotes.	2.42	0.97	High Extent	2.45	0.96	High Extent
12	Examination malpractices make student To be corrupted	2.63	1.06	High Extent	2.65	1.05	High Extent
	<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>0.99</b>	High Extent	<b>2.60</b>	<b>0.98</b>	High Extent

**Source:** *Research Data, 2022 (SPSS Output, Version 23.0)*

Table 2 above for research question two shows the mean responses of teachers and students on the extent examination malpractice influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The table showed that the mean and standard deviation value of teachers were 2.60 and 0.99 while the mean and standard deviation of students were 2.60 and 0.98. The table also showed that both teachers and students agreed that examination malpractices influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Research Question 3:** *To what extent does indecent dressing influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State?*

**Table 3: Mean Score Rating of Teachers and students on the extent indecent dressing influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State**

S/N	Statement	Teachers (N=379)		Rmk	Students (N=398)		Rmk
		Mean	SD		Mean	SD	
13	Indent dressing leads to lack of concentration in class	2.31	1.09	Low Extent	2.33	1.09	Low Extent
14	Indecent dressing leads to seduction of teachers and students	2.83	0.98	High Extent	2.85	0.98	High Extent
15	Indecent dressing can influence awarding of marks for sexual favours	2.71	0.90	High Extent	2.73	0.89	High Extent
16	Indecent dressing leads to gross insubordination to teachers.	2.53	1.02	High Extent	2.55	1.02	High Extent
17	Indecent dressing can make to become school dropouts	3.24	0.77	Very High Extent	3.27	0.74	Very High Extent
	<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>2.72</b>	<b>0.95</b>	High Extent	<b>2.74</b>	<b>0.94</b>	High Extent

**Source:** *Research Data, 2022 (SPSS Output, Version 23.0)*

Table 3 above for research question three shows the mean responses of teachers and students on the extent indecent dressing influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The table showed that the mean and standard deviation value of teachers were 2.60 and 0.99 while the mean and standard deviation of students were 2.60 and 0.98. The table also showed that both teachers and students agreed that indecent dressing influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Testing of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Teachers and students on the extent lateness to school influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 4: z-Test Analysis on the difference in the mean ratings of Teachers and students on the extent lateness to school influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.**

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	z-calc	z-crit.	s/level	Decision
Teachers	379	2.71	0.94	775	0.775	±1.96	0.05	Accepted
Students	398	2.73	0.94					

**Source:** *Research Data, 2022 (SPSS Output, Version 23.0)*

Table 4 showed that male respondents had a mean and standard deviation of 3.39 and 0.63 respectively, while female respondents had a mean and standard of 3.63 and 0.68 respectively. The z-calculated value was 0.775, while the z-critical value was ±1.96 at 0.05 level of significance for a two-tailed test. The result showed that z-calculated was less than z-crit which means that the null hypothesis was accepted. Thus, the findings indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Teachers and students on the extent lateness to school influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Teachers and students on the extent examination malpractice influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 5: z-Test Analysis on the difference in the mean ratings of Teachers and students on the extent examination malpractice influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.**

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	z-calc	z-crit.	s/level	Decision
Teachers	379	2.60	0.99	775	0.073	±1.96	0.05	Accepted
Students	398	2.60	0.98					

**Source:** *Research Data, 2022 (SPSS Output, Version 23.0)*

Table 5 showed that male respondents had a mean and standard deviation of 3.43 and 0.60 respectively, while female respondents had a mean and standard of 3.77 and 0.67 respectively. The z-calculated value was 0.073, while the z-crit was ±1.96 at 0.05 level of significance for a two-tailed test. The result showed that z-calculated was less than z-crit which means that the null hypothesis was accepted. Thus, the findings indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Teachers and students on the extent examination malpractice influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Teachers and students on the extent indecent dressing influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 6: z-Test Analysis on the difference in the mean ratings of Teachers and students on the extent indecent dressing influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.**

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	z-calc	z-crit.	s/level	Decision
Teachers	379	2.72	0.95	775	0.070	±1.96	0.05	Accepted
Students	398	2.74	0.94					

**Source:** *Research Data, 2022 (SPSS Output, Version 23.0)*

Table 6 showed that male respondents had a mean and standard deviation of 3.57 and 0.66 respectively, while female respondents had a mean and standard of 3.67 and 0.82 respectively. The z-calculated value was 0.070, while the z-crit was ±1.96 at 0.05 level of significance for a two-tailed test. The result showed that z-calculated was less than z-crit which means that the null hypothesis was accepted. Thus, the findings indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Teachers and students on the extent indecent dressing influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

#### 4.3. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study are discussed below in line with the objectives of the study.

##### **Influence of Lateness to school influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.**

The result of the analysis of research question 1, gave grand mean scores of 3.39 and 3.63 for the teachers and students respectively. The result of hypothesis 1, gave a z-calculated value of 1.67 which showed that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of the teachers and students. These results indicated that both the teachers and students accepted that there is a significant negative influence of lateness to school influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The outcome of this finding is supported by Peretemode (2011), who posited that a learner that is not regular in school, faces learning problems resulting from late – coming to school such as, truancy, and inability to read and not consulting with the teacher. Lateness can be viewed as an outcome of laxity or system breakdown (Peretemode, 2011). Lateness is a function of time and as such time is usually used as the criteria for determining lateness. Late coming violates the principle of punctuality and if not checked at the onset, may become a habit with the individual involved and may have negative consequences (Breeze et al., 2010). The importance of education is increasing and is regarded highly. The societies of the past are on the front rank of the world civilization on account of education, this educational system may be seriously hampered as a result of late-coming especially in high schools. In most developing countries, Lateness is a major and a continuous administrative problem among high school learners (Egbule, 2004; Dafiaghor, 2011). The society suffers a lot as the children of school going age hang around the street corners, intimidating other people and stealing properties of those who are in school and other places of work. Lateness could result into poor academic achievement, disruption in class, difficulty in keeping accurate records, reduced ability to meet instructional target and damage of school reputation.

##### **Influence of examination malpractice influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State**

The result of the analysis of research question 2, gave grand mean scores of 3.43 and 3.77 for the teachers and students respectively. The result of hypothesis 2, gave a z-calculated value of 1.52 which showed that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of the teachers and students. These results indicated that both the teachers and students accepted that there is a significant negative influence of examination malpractice influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Nwana (2000) gave support to the outcome of this finding when he said that examination malpractice is a widespread and unprecedented violation of rules and regulations governing external and

public exams, starting with their scheduling and ending with their administration, from the labeling and grading of their papers to the announcement of the results and the issuance of certificates. While Nnawuchi (1993), as cited by Esrom (2013), claims that it is searching, receiving, or providing undue assistance to any applicant prior to, during, or after the review. Onyibe, Uma and Ibina (2015) reported that the examination malpractice act (1999) explains that examination malpractice is any act of omission or commission by a person who in anticipation of, before during or after any examination fraudulently secure any unfair advantage for himself or any other person in such a manner that contravenes the rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity, reliability, authenticity of the certificates issued. It is commonly described as deliberate wrong doing that is contrary to the official examination rules, regulations and guidelines designed to give an unfair advantage or disadvantage to an examiner.

### **Influence of indecent dressing influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State**

The result of the analysis of research question 3, gave grand mean scores of 3.57 and 3.67 for the teachers and students respectively. The result of hypothesis 3, gave a z-calculated value of 1.58 which showed that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of the teachers and students. These results indicated that both the teachers and students accepted that there is a significant negative influence of indecent dressing influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The outcome of this finding is supported by Olori (in Fareo & Jackson, 2018) who claimed that indecent dressing is provocative, improper, and morally unacceptable. Ewulo (2016) opined that indecent dressing is any form of dressing that does not conform with the acceptable moral standard of decent dressing. Oluwadare, Otunaiya, and Opeoluwa (2020) add, indecent dressing means any type of dressing that is not in conformity with the socially acceptable mode of dressing in the particular community of reference. Egwin (in Fareo & Jackson, 2018) referred to indecent dressing as the attitude of someone, male or female that dresses to show off parts of the body such as the breasts, buttocks, or even underwear that need to be covered. Hence indecent dressing is concerned with the exposure of vital parts of the body to the public, and flaunting it everywhere. According to Oyeleye (in Ojogbane et al, 2020), indecent dressing simply means the deliberate exposure of one's body to the public. This practice is contrary to the acceptable norms and the values of society. Adebayo (Selase & Mawuli, 2013) described indecent dressing in respect to the situation: the indecent dressing is the wearing of clothes that are not appropriate for a particular occasion or situation.

### **CONCLUSION**

Unethical behaviour among students manifests itself in so many ways; some of which are lateness to school, examination malpractice, indecent dressing and absenteeism. With regard to the findings above, the study therefore concluded that lateness to school, examination malpractice, indecent dressing and absenteeism all have negative influence academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Education is the fulcrum upon which other developmental facets are hinged upon in any given nation. Here in Nigeria, it is already on the precipice; ready to trip over. All hands must be on deck to protect and avert a total and imminent collapse of this all important system.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Schools management should give orientation to new students immediately after their admission and registration exercise on the ethical conducts related to examination malpractices, lateness to school and indecent dressing.
2. Conference, seminars, and workshops should be organized for both the students and staff to create public awareness on the menace of unethical behaviour such as examination malpractice.
3. School management should give rewards for ethical behaviour, especially for punctuality to school and penalty for unethical behaviour such as indecent dressing

4. Government and other stakeholders in the education sector should encourage secondary schools in developing enforcing policies to curb the menace of lateness to school.
5. Teachers and other staff members should be reminded and encouraged to help in implementing ethical behaviour.

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