

INFLUENCE OF INSECURITY ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS EXAMINATION TAKING BEHAVIOUR IN THE UNIVERSITIES OF SOUTH-EAST GEOPOLITICAL ZONE

ANYANWU CLEMENTINA

Department of Curriculum Studies & Instruction
Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, Nigeria

IPEM, JOSEPHINE NKECHINYERE (Ph.D)

Department of Educational Psychology/ G &C
Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, Nigeria

ELUEMUNO AZUKAEGO IFEOMA. (PhD)

Department of Educational Psychology/ G &C
Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, Nigeria

azukaego.eluemuno@alvanikoku.edu.ng

&

OGUNSOLA, ANDREW OLADELE

Department of Curriculum Studies of Instruction
Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The study investigates the influence of insecurity on undergraduate students' examination taking-behaviour in the Universities of South-East Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria. Today, testing has become an inherent part of the society, and many important decisions are based on test results. However, insecurity during test has become a prominent problem in schools. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and was guided by three research questions and three hypotheses. The population of the study comprised all the government owned Universities in the South-East Geopolitical Zone, giving a total of 13693 students. The sample comprised 240 respondents from psychology departments of the selected Universities. A purposive sampling technique was adopted for the selection. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Insecurity and Undergraduates' Examination Taking Behaviour Questionnaire (IUETBQ). The IUETBQ was validated by experts in psychology and measurement and evaluation all from Imo State University. To test the reliability of the instrument, test re- test method of an interval of two weeks was used on selected students from two Universities that were not involved in the real study. Using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Statistics, a reliability index of 0.88 was obtained. Data collected were analyzed using mean statistics. Findings revealed the respondents agreed that insecurity influence students' examination taking behaviour. These included: examination malpractice, copying from others, and use of machineries. The finding also revealed that insecurity influence students' anxiety behaviour in examination taking. It was also the finding of the study that insecurity influences the emotional behaviour of students in examination taking. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that: students should be assisted to develop good study habits so as to study hard before tests and examinations, Governments at all levels and

managements of tertiary institutions should try as much as possible to improve security conditions in all tertiary environments.

Keywords: Insecurity, Examination taking Behaviour, Emotional-anxiety behavior, Undergraduates.

INTRODUCTION

The case of insecurity in Nigeria and South East in particular has been an issue that has been eating into the bone marrow of every aspect of human endeavor for a decade; be it economic, social, and political or education. Human and material resources in education have suffered greatly. Lecturers, students, school administrators and other stakeholders in education as well as government, are tensed, frustrated and depressed as a result of insecurity in the zone. According to Ipem, Ajileye, Eluemuno and Onah (2022), this has led to a state of decay in the education system of the Nation. Students and lecturers in the South East has been at risk, as the continually loss their lives to kidnappers, bandits insurgence; straight bullets, abductions, Fulani herdsmen, terrorists and unknown gun men. Ipem et al (2022), also noted that lecturers and their students in recent time, has become victims of attacks, kidnapping and rapes This distractions discourages students and lecturers from going to school, taking tests and examinations. A typical example was what happened in Orlu when the ‘unknown gunmen’ disturbed the junior WAEC examination. Another factor of insecurity, is the issue of sit – at – home and lock down, which has become another cancer worm that is eating the down the system of education in the South East Geo-political Zone. For instance, in the South East any examination scheduled on Monday, on a sit- at-home day or any day of Nnamdi Kanu is to appear before the court in most cases might not hold because of fear of being kidnapped or killed. These could be a serious threat to student’s examinations and could lead to some examination taking behaviours such as examination malpractices of different forms, anxiety and emotional behaviour (Igbam, 2022).

Insecurity could be a factor to examination tension, loss of memory, aggression, examination malpractices, absent mindedness, truancy, poor attendance to school, and loss of interest on school activities, poor academic performance and school dropout. Gicholi (2019) argued that the fear of being kidnapped and killed, has led to academic anxiety and as such resulted to poor academic performance among University students. Ipem and Azubuike (2022), noted that anxiety is heightened by feeling of insecurity Ochigbo, Nwanshak and Charles- Zalakoro (2021), noted that insecurity has affected undergraduates attendance to school and examination. Ochigbo, Nwanshaki and Justinalere (2021) found that insecurity has significant effects on students’ academic performance. Ajobor and Ichazu (2022) noted that the goal of education can only be achieved in a conducive and peaceful school environment. However, if there is insecurity in and outside the school environment, both the teachers and students will be deterred. This might affect students’ academic performance.

Insecurity challenges have caused closure of school and reduction in admission, destruction of school facilities, and distortion of school academic calendar and programmed activities. It has caused less enthusiasm in school and academic activities by students. There is increase in fear of bombing, killing and kidnapping. As a result of insecurity, there is reduction of trust

on school boarders; no conducive environment for studies. Hence, there is reduction in the quality of education outcome (Ajabor and Ichazu, (2022).

Studies has shown that students' examination taking behaviours can be influenced by insecurity conduct, physical and emotional as a result of anxiety especially their actions/behaviour in taking examination. The study concluded that there is significant relationship between influence of anxiety and students' misconduct, physical and emotional behaviour while taking examination in the universities of the South-East Geopolitical zone.

When students are subjected to increasing number of tests, assessments and examinations in tertiary institutions, insecurity can influence their physical behaviours in examination taking (Wang, 2013). Insecurity is a phenomenon that people frequently encounter in their daily lives. It can be described as the tense on settling anticipation of a threatening but vague event, a feeling of uneasy suspense (Rachman, 2004). Insecurity heightens by feeling of anxiety. Examination anxiety is nervousness before a test or an examination. No wonder Cherry (2012) examination anxiety is a combination of psychological over –arousal, tension and somatic symptoms alone with worry, dread fear of failure and catastrophes that occur before or during test or examination situation. It is a physiological condition in which people experience extreme stress and discomfort during and/or before taking a test or examination. This anxiety creates significant barriers to learning and performance of students. Damer & Melendres (2011) labeled it as anticipatory stress, situational stress or evolutionary stress. Some anxieties are normal and often help a person to stay mentally and physically alert. For example, when one experiences too much anxiety, however, it can result in emotional or physical distress, difficulty in concentrating, and emotional worry. Inferior performance arises not because of intellectual problems or poor academic preparation, but because testing situations create a sense of threat for those experiencing test anxieties resulting from the sensed threat then, disrupts attention and memory function.(Joseph,2020).

Majority of students face serious stress towards examinations and such affects their behaviours - physical and emotional in examination taking. Cizek and Burg (2006) argued that though an optimal level of arousal is necessary for a candidate to best complete a task such as an examination performance or competitive event. However, when the anxiety or level of arousal exceeds that optimum, the result is a decline in performance. Thus students who have consistent anxiety during examination may likely perform poorly in their examinations. Today, students' behaviour during examination taking poses problems to the Universities. The anxiety they face affects student's physical and emotional behaviour in taking examination. The level of anxiety students experience might make them engage in different kinds of examination misconduct such as examination malpractices, making noise in examination halls; and other negative vices while taking examinations. It also makes students not to concentrate in their studies, in such cases; they carry unauthorized aids to examination halls. From the foregoing, could it be said that there is no remedy or ways to reduce the extent of students' anxiety and emotions instability on examination taking-behaviour in the Universities. It is against this background that the researchers seek to study the influence of insecurity on undergraduate students' examination taking-behaviours in the Universities of South-East geopolitical Zone in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

For two decades in Nigeria, insecurity seems to have continued to savage the peace and wellbeing of the nation. The state of education in Nigeria and South East in particular is assumed to be in a distraught and deplorable situation. This is as a result of insecurity which is bent on damaging both human and material resources in the education system. Insecurity in the South East may have caused poor attendance to school thus decrease in academic performance among students. Insecurity could increase examination malpractice among students. With the issue of sit-at-home every Monday and any day Nnamdi Kanu is to appear in the court, lock down, closure of schools, lecturers and their student might not be able to cover their course contents; thus examination malpractices and other irregular activities might follows. It is on record on how the unknown gun men attacked some secondary school students of Orlu in Imo State as they were about seating for their English Language for junior WAEC. This was just to enforce their sit-at-home policy.

The problem of this study is that for more than a decade before this study is carried out, the problem of insecurity has continued to linger. Scholars has been working on the issue of examination malpractices, poor attendance to school and poor academic performance yet these problems continue to accelerate in the University system more especially in the South East. Moreover the issue on the influence of insecurity on undergraduate student examination taking behavior in the South East Universities has not been well researched. Thus the gap the study tried to fill.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to identify the influence of insecurity on the examination taking behaviour of students the South East Universities. Specifically the study sought to:

1. Find out the extent to which insecurity influence students' examination taking behaviours.
2. Examine the extent to which insecurity influence students' anxiety behavior in examination taking.
3. Find out the influence of insecurity on students' emotional behaviour in examination taking.

The study was guided by the following research questions.

1. To what extent does insecurity influence students' examination taking behavior?
2. To what extent does insecurity influence students' anxiety behaviour in examination taking?
3. In what various ways does insecurity influence students' emotional behavior in examination taking?

Method

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. This is a research procedure which seeks data from respondents and relates same to already anticipated variables. It obtains information, reports them as they are and have them further analyzed. The population of the study consisted of all government owned Universities in the South-East Geo-political zone totaling Ten (10) Universities in the five States (Abia, Anambra, Imo, Enugu and Ebonyi) and all psychology students in each of the Universities totaling 13,693 students. The study sampled four Universities in the South-East Geopolitical Zone; (two from Imo State and two from Abia State) respectively. The sample comprised of 200 levels Psychology students. A total number of 60 students each was sampled from each of the Universities selected, totaling

240 students. The study adopted purposive sampling techniques. This is to ensure that the variables of the study are contained in the sample and also time-frame factor.

The instrument used for data collection was a set of structured questionnaire titled Insecurity and Undergraduates' Examination Taking Behaviour Questionnaire (IUETBQ). The instrument was validated by two experts in measurement and evaluation. To test the reliability of the instrument, test re-test method of an interval of two weeks was use on psychology students in one of the Universities in the South East Geopolitical Zone that did not participate in the real study. The two score obtained from the two tests were correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Statistics and a reliability index of 0.88 was obtained. Data collected were analyzed using mean scores to answer research question

Results

Research Question 1:

To what extent does insecurity influence students' examination behaviour in taking examination?

Mean ratings of the respondents on ways insecurity influence students' examination behaviour.

S/ N	Item	No of Resp.	VLE	LE	SE	VSE	X	Decision
	The following are way in which insecurity influences students examination behaviour taking							
1.	Insecurity can make students to practice giraffing in examination halls.	240	90	140	8	2	3.2	
2.	It can lead to copying in examination halls.		111	125	3	1	3.5	
3.	Can make students to intimidate teachers and invigilators with dangerous weapon in examination halls.		187	52	1	-	3.8	
4.	It can lead to using of missiles or bullets in examination halls.		153	82	2	-	3.6	
5.	It can make students employ and use scientific devices such as organizers and mobile phones in examination halls		172	63	4	1	3.7	
6.	It can lead to noise making in examination halls and smuggling question papers out of the examination hall.		166	71	3	-	3.8	
7.	Students can exchange answer booklets for note comparison as a result of insecurity.		192	45	2	1	5.1	
8.	Students can engage in bribing the teachers or supervisors.		122	101	7	-	3.4	

9.	Students engage in use of inscription or Tattoo by writing key points on their body parts.	175	64	1	-	3.7
10.	Students hire mercenary to examination halls.	189	50	1	-	3.8

Grand Mean = 3.8

Result on table 1 revealed a grand mean of 3.8 which is greater than the decision mean of 2.50. This implies that the respondents agreed that insecurity can influence students' examination taking behaviour.

Research Question 2: To what extent does insecurity influence the anxiety taken behaviour of students?

Table 2: Mean ratings of the respondents on influence of insecurity on anxiety taken behaviour.

S/N	Items	No of Resp.	VLE	LE	SE	VSE	X	Decision
1.	Anxiety can lead to low concentration when preparing for examination.	240	198	42	-	-	3.8	
2.	Frequently tensed stomach gets upset causing diarrhea and nausea.	141	93	4	2		3.6	
3.	Feel fainting and at times fainted.	124	112	2	2		3.5	
4.	Rapid heartbeat/fast breathing	196	43	1	1		3.8	
5.	Fall sick days before an examination	113	123	4	-		3.5	
6.	Inability to settle down.	199	41	-	-		3.8	
7.	Frequently getting nervous and forgetting facts already known and low morale and tendency to make more mistakes.	189	50	1	-		3.8	
8.	Experiencing panic attack.	194	44	2	-		3.8	
9.	Student developing serious headache	178	61	1	-		3.7	
10.	Sweating profusely.	188	52	-	-		3.8	

Grand Mean = 3.3

Result on table 2 above revealed a grand mean of 3.3 which is greater than the decision mean of 2.50. This implies that to a large extent insecurity influences the anxiety taking behaviour of students.

Research Question 3: In what ways does insecurity influence students’ emotional taking examination?

Table 3: Mean ratings of the respondents on ways insecurity influences emotional behaviour in examination taking.

S/N	Items	No of Resp.	VLE	LE	SE	VSE	X	Decision
1.	Students feel anxious when preparing for examinations.	240	221	19	-	-	3.9	
2.	Students have tendency to rely on other students and cheat in examinations.		201	36	2	1	3.8	
3.	They experience helplessness and disappointment as they do not prepare well before taking examinations.		198	40	2	-	3.9	
4.	Students experience restlessness		176	62	1	1	3.7	
5.	Students sometimes have feeling of anger during examinations.		188	50	2	-	3.8	
6.	They sometimes experience nervousness		191	45	3	1	3.8	
7.	Students have continual doubt of their ability		135	100	4	1	3.5	
8.	Students feel afraid of Exams		179	60	1	-	3.7	
9.	Students in most cases have fear of failure.		201	37	1	1	3.8	
10.	Students usually get depressed.		186	53	1	-	3.8	
Grand Mean =				3.8				

The result on table 3 revealed a grand mean of 3.8 which is greater than the decision mean of 2.50. This implies the respondents agreed that the items identified as ways in which insecurity influence students’ emotional behaviour in examination taking are all accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed the major ways insecurity influences student's examination taking behaviour in the Universities. These includes students’ giraffing in examination halls, copying in examination halls, use of scientific malpractice such as organizer, mobile phones making noise in examination and smuggling out question papers and answer scripts out of examination halls and make use of inscription or tattoo by writing key points on their body parts. This finding is in line with Ajabor and Ichazu (2022) who noted that such practices leads to the reduction in the quality of education in Nigeria.

The findings of the study also revealed that insecurity has many negative effects on the anxiety behaviour of students. Students are likely to enter into different vices if not properly handled at the onset. This is in accordance with Ipem and Azubuike (2022) who noted that anxiety is

heightened by a feeling of insecurity. They also found that anxiety can lead to examination malpractice. Also in consonance with this finding is Jekayinfa (2006) who opined that examination malpractice manifest in different forms including leakages, impersonation, external assistance, smuggling of foreign materials, copying, collusion, substitution of scripts, teachers assistance, ghost centers, marker malpractice (sorting, arbitral award of marks), use of hand sets, writing on body part, use of signs and symbols and teaching malpractices.

The findings of the study also revealed that to a large extent insecurity influence students' emotional behaviour of students in examination taking. These includes developing low concentration when preparing for examination, fear of failure, frequent tense that stomach gets upset causing diarrhea and nausea, feel fainting and at times fainted, rapid heartbeat/fast breathing, fall sick days before an examination, inability to settle down, frequently get nervous and forget facts already known and low morale and tendency to make more mistakes, experience panic attack, develop serious headache and sweat excessively or profusely. This is in agreement with Gichioli (2019) who found that fear of being kidnapped and killed in examination hall can lead to heightened emotional sensitivity and anxiety among students.

Conclusion

The study was on the influence of insecurity on the examination taking behaviour of university Students in the South East Geopolitical Zone. It is not exaggeration to state the issue of insecurity in the South East has caused more harm on the education system that is already declining. In the South East, insecurity have been found as a serious factor influencing the examination taking behaviours , the emotional and anxiety behaviour of students' in examination taking. This means that when there is insecurity in the zones the University environment will be affected drastically and the academic outcome will be poor. There is need therefore for governments at all levels to wage war against insecurity of any kind to safeguard all tertiary institution in the Zones. This in turn, will help students to have peace of mind and study hard for examinations and tests.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study therefore, it was recommended as follows:

- Students should be helped to develop good study habits, and study at least a week or two weeks before the examination in small increment of time and over a few days. Students should also be helped to establish a consistent pre-test routine, learn what works for each student, and follow the same steps each time students are getting ready to take a test. This will ease students stress level and assures that they are well prepared..
- Students should be encouraged to practice relaxation techniques, if one feels stressed during the examination, one is advised to take a deep, slow breath and consciously relax muscles, one at a time. This can invigorate one's body and will allow one a better focus on the examination.
- Students should be encouraged to stay healthy. They should eat on the day of the test to avoid running on empty stomach when test time arrives. They should also drink sufficient water and have enough sleep, exercise and allow for personal time. If one is exhausted - physically or emotionally - it will be more difficult for one to handle stress and anxiety.
- Students should be encouraged to visit counseling centres, talk therapy (psychotherapy)

with a psychologist or other mental health providers that can help one work through feelings, thoughts and behaviours that cause or worsen anxiety.

- The government and managements of tertiary education should improve the security conditions of educational institutions.

REFERENCES

- Cherry, K. (2012). Test anxiety symptoms. About.com <http://sas.calpolv.edu/asc/ssl/testanxiety.html> retrieved 4th March 2016
- Cizek, M. and Burg, S. (2006). Coping with Test Anxiety. College teaching volume: 40, issue:4. 147 <http://sas.calpolv.edu/asc/ssl/testanxietyv.html> retrieved 4th March 2016
- Darner, D.E., Melendres, L.T. (2011). Tackling Test Anxiety: a groups for college students. *The journal for specialists in group work*, 36(3): 163-177
- Jekayinta, M.C. (2006). Eradicating examination malpractices: a macro-theoretical framework option. *Nigerian Journal of Development Issues: socio, political economic development*, 2(2) 72-85
- Rachman, S. (2004). *Anxiety*. 2nded. New York Psychology press Ltd. <http://www.adaa.or/living-with-anxietyv/children/test-anxietyv> Retrieved 4th March 2016
- Young, D.J. (1999). Affect in foreign language and second language learning. Boston, MA; McGraw-Hill
- Wang, Z. (2013). The effect of pressure on high and low working memory students: and collaboration of the choking under pressure hypothesis: British journal of education psychology. 1-13 <http://www.edu/academics/more> test anxiety tips.htm retrieved 4th March 2016.
- Ochigbo, S.E., Nwanshak, M.B. & Justinalere, C.Z. (2021). Effect of Insecurity on academic performance of secondary school students in Benue State Science and Education Development Institute, Akure, Ondo State Nigeria (978 – 978-54770-4-7).
- Ajabor, D.N. & Ichazu, K. (2022). Assessment of the influence of security challenges on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Delta State. *International Journal of Educational Research and Library Science*.
- Igbam, C. (2022) The overwhelming impact of sit- at-home order on the education system in Nigeria. Campus reporter. <https://campusreporter.ng>
- Ipem, J.N. & Azubuike, O.J. (2022). Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Insecurity and poor school attendance among NTI PGDE students in Owerri Study Centres.
- Ipem J. N, Ajileye , I C. Eluemuno, A. I.& Onah, T. (2022) Perception of students on the impact of insecurity and sit –at- home on academic achievement os undergraduates of A.I.F.C.EOwerri Eastern Nigeria. Paper presented at the annual conference of Nigerian Council of Educational Psychologist.
- Joseph, B. (2020). Examination anxiety as a correlate of Jumoa high school pupils' academic performance in Effutu municipality of Ghana. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal* 7(1) 10 – 23. Doi:1014738/assrj.71.7528.