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## An Examination of Peer Group Influence and gender as correlates of Library and Information Science Students' Attitude towards Examination Malpractice: Implication for the development of students

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# **An Examination of Peer Group Influence and gender as correlates of Library and Information Science Students' Attitude towards Examination Malpractice: Implication for the development of students**

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## **Abstract**

Examination malpractice has become a global cankerworm that has eaten so deep into our educational system and posing a serious threat to total development of students in our educational system. In search of solution to this anti-educational behavior, experts have attributed it to many factors including peer influence on the assumption that birds of a feather flock together and on the axiom; 'show me your friends and I will tell you who you are'. This study therefore examined the peer group influence and gender as correlates of Library and Information Science students' attitude towards examination malpractice and its implication for all round development of students. The study applied a correctional research design with a population sample of 259 LIS randomly selected from seven public universities in Nigeria offering degree programs in library and Information Science. The study was guided by three research questions and hypotheses respectively while the principle instrument used to elicit responses from the respondents was a structured question on peer group and library and information science students' attitude towards examination malpractice' whereas, the data obtained were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) (Pearson r) which basically was used to establish the relationship between peer group influence and Library and Information Science students attitude towards examination malpractice. The outcome of this study revealed that library and information science students generally have negative attitude towards examination malpractice and frown at it. The result also shows that both male and female students' attitude towards this canker-worm was same. In the end, it was recommended among others that parents, university management and heads of library schools should regularly organize school programs promoting healthy peer relationship and upholding students' value of negative attitude towards examination malpractice as discovered by this study for all round development of students.

**Keywords:** Peer group influence, Gender, Attitude, Examination malpractice, Library and information science students, Development

## **1.1. Introduction**

Globally, one of the main objectives of formal education is to prepare individuals from childhood to face future challenges and develop them to meet nations' manpower requirements (Sulaimon, 2010). The main objective of schools to this end is to equip students with the required knowledge and skills to enable them to contribute effectively to national development. Education therefore is a lifelong experience that formatively affects the way one thinks, feels or acts and usually delivered and acquired through skillful exposure to a number of academic discipline, vocational studies, industrial experiences and ethical orientations (Oyekan, 2006). Suffice it to say, that education is a process by which one society inculcates its' norms, values and attitude into the young (Ugwu, 2008). In the context of librarianship, library and information science education is all about inculcating the Professional norms, values, ethics and attitude to will be librarians as well as enabling them to be responsible individuals both to themselves and the society at large through contributing their quota meaningfully towards the development of the society. That is to say, that proper education in library and information science has to do with the balanced development of the intellectual, emotional and practical domain of a librarian-to-be.

To ascertain the degree of realization of the above objective, this demands periodic assessment and evaluation which are basically in the form of examinations and tests aimed at ascertaining the level of knowledge and competence of students. Although these are not the only yardstick for assessing and evaluating a student's knowledge, it is the major established practical means of assessment. As posited, the world preferred tool for objectively assessing, evaluating or establishing whether the desired knowledge and skill were transferred and acquired from the teacher to the learner, is the examination (Olatubosun, 2012). The implication is that examination is a sine-qua-non for students' success in the world today and such success is usually measured by the grade scored and manifested by obtaining high level certificate which assists in placing one in a better position and getting good job in the society as in the case of graduates and to

achieve good results and certificates students get involve in fierce competition of survival of the fittest and due to the misconceptions about examination, examination malpractice has become a trend despite the fact that every examination is guided by regulated code of conducts and institutionalized ethics, government or examination bodies (Joshua, Obu, Edet & Ekpo, 2010). The university system evaluates the achievement of students' learning by administering two major types of examinations. Each course is evaluated by continuous assessment test (C.A. Test) and semester examination. These two types of examination are not spared of malpractices or irregularities of one type or the other.

In this view, examination malpractice is any action taken to negate and compromise the intent of an examining body. In other words, it is any active or passive action that goes against the rules and regulations of an examination. There are different shades of examination malpractice in existence of which many people who do not really understand the meaning of examination malpractice have constantly argued not to be a form of malpractice. The researcher has often heard students refer to examination malpractice as 'brain support'.

Examination malpractice in contemporary schools in our society seems to pervade all strata of education from primary to tertiary institutions. It is fast becoming students' way of life regardless of school authority's steps and measures towards curbing this menace (Adebile & Omoluwa, 2013). Considering the role education is supposed to play in any nation building, a nation stand the risk of being under-developed in terms of accumulation of illiteracy, disease and poverty when its youths reject the honor of getting sound education and seem to opt for fraudulent and deceptive in making ends meet as epitomized by examination malpractice. As noted by Ogunsanya (2004), the product of such a system can only grow up to be pessimist, insensible, dishonest. Ignorant, powerless to act, create and succeed.

Indeed, studies have shown that examination malpractice is a common habit among students who have these factors: laziness, indiscipline, negative peer influence, unserious attitude, fear of failure, poor reading skills and low self-esteem (Adeyemi, 2010 & Ugwu, 2008). . These negative effects of examination malpractice turn out to be mockery to the ranking of a wholesome developed student which proper education intends to provide. Since library and

information science students in university spend most of their times with their peers which invariably influences their conduct and decision making this assertion appears to hold water.

Peers in this context are seen as those individuals with whom library and information science students identify and spend their quality time with in their schools. They may or may not be of the same age mate but can be course-mates or of equal standing based on a specific grading. Students in library and information science departments in various universities interact and develop friendship that form peer groups. As expressed by Fadell and Temkow (2010), they choose their peers as the case may be that are more intimate, exclusive and more constant than in their earlier years, based on shared interests rather than convenience. These friendships are an essential component of the development of a sense of belongings for the students (Guzman, 2007).

It is in consideration of the assertions that the need of carrying out a study of establishing the influence of peer group on the attitude of library and information science students as a microcosm of the macrocosm- students towards examination malpractice was nurtured.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

One of the most outstanding challenges being faced in the education system in most parts of the world still remains examination malpractice. It has become so prominent amongst scholars that many times it has been justified with crazy excuses such as after all, examination is not a true test of knowledge". Surprisingly, teachers are not left out of this as some of them encourage this act because of little stipend. While strategies have been put in place to check malpractice, it appears that on a daily basis malpractice assumes an alarming trend and dimension and this is due to fear of failure, laziness, lack of confidence, and inadequate preparation.

Students have perfected the various forms of examination malpractice. Some of the methods employed under this practice include bringing foreign materials into the examination halls. These foreign materials include prepared notes and materials written on palms, thighs and textbooks, Other forms of malpractice include having an illegal prior knowledge of the examination questions (also known as Expo), sharing information with other participants of the examination, exchanging either question papers or answer sheets, bribery, impersonation, etc. Mass cheating is

another dimension that examination malpractice has assumed. Nowadays, the whole thing has become more sophisticated with the advent of electronic assisted materials. Mobile phones, though not allowed in examination halls are sneaked in because messages could be sent to them candidates in the hall.

The truth is that library and information science students are not left out of this peer influence accusation towards examination malpractice. As the microcosm of the student body and future information manager there came the need to establishing what influence peer groups have on their attitude towards examination materials and also their general attitude towards examination malpractice putting into consideration gender and to bridge the gap in knowledge in this aspect of librarianship as it was noticed that there is dearth of literature in this area as in library and information science. This study therefore is aimed at examining the peer group influence and gender as correlates of Library and Information Science students' attitude towards examination malpractice and its implication for all round development of students using seven universities in Nigeria offering library and information science degree program as areas of study.

### **1.3. Research Objectives**

The principle objective of this study is to examine peer group influence and gender as correlates of Library and Information Science students' attitude towards examination malpractice and the implication for all round development of students. Other objectives include:

- a) To ascertain the correlation between peer influence and library and information science students' attitude towards examination malpractice,
- b) To examine the relationship between peer influence and male LIS students' attitude towards examination malpractice and
- c) To examine the relationship between peer influence and female LIS students' attitude towards examination malpractice.

### **1.4. Research Questions**

The study was guided by three research questions. Vis:

- a) What is the correlation between peer influence score and library and information science students' attitude towards examination malpractice score?

- b) What is the correlation between peer influence score and male library and information science students' attitude towards examination malpractice?
- c) What is the correlation between peer influence score and female library and information science students' attitude towards examination malpractice?

## **1.5. Research hypotheses**

The study was further guided by three postulated and tested hypotheses at significance level of 0.05.

**H01:** There is no statistical significant relationship between peer influence and students' attitude towards examination malpractice

**H02:** The relationship between peer influence and male LIS students' attitude towards examination malpractice is not significant

**H03:** There is no statistical significant relationship between peer influence and female students' attitude towards examination malpractice

## **2.0. Literature review**

### **2.1. Conceptual Framework**

#### **2.1.1. Examination and Examination malpractice**

As defined by Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2000) examination is spoken or practical test at school or college especially an important one that you need to do in order to get a qualification. It is further asserted that an examination is an assessment intended to measure a test-takers knowledge or skill, aptitude, physical fitness or classification in many other topics (e.g. beliefs). An examination may be administered orally, on a paper, on a computer or in confirmed area that requires a test taker to physically perform a set of skills. Examination is an organized assessment technique which presents individuals with a series of questions or tasks geared towards ascertaining the individual acquired knowledge and skills (Oduwaiye, 2014). While, examination malpractice is defined as any deliberate act of wrong doing, contrary to the rules of examinations designed to give a candidate an undue advantage. Examination malpractice also known as cheating is the illegal action that students take during their examinations to try to

make good grades by cutting corners. Examination malpractice is an act or irregular manner of testing candidates which contravenes the rules and conventions guiding the conduct of examinations. Examination malpractice has done a lot of harm to students since many of them have neglected their books with the hope of performing the magic they are used to in every examination. Examination malpractice as defined by West African Examination Council (WAEC) (2003) is any irregular behaviour or act exhibited by candidates or anybody charged with the responsibility of conducting examination in or outside the examination hall, before, during or after such examination with the aim of taking undue advantage.

### **2.1.2. Peer Group**

Peer group is seen as a group of equals and a social group consisting of people who are equal in such respects as age, education or social class. It is within this umbrella that students learn to relate to different roles and to experiment with interpersonal interaction skills that will eventually transfer to the world of adults (Carter & McGoldrick, 2005). Peer group is not a formal institutionalized agent of society as it is not legally backed up to formally ascribe functions or duties, yet it pervades the life of the students as they develop and grow older and performs prominent functions in teaching them ways of behavior (Yeh, 2006) Peer group is therefore a source of great influence to students (Chauban, 2007) which may be positively or negatively.

Peer group is more or less an agency of enculturation and learning. The desire to feel accepted and to fit in, is one of the strongest forces paramount to students' bonding; this can lead to do things that are risky, just to feel accepted among peers. On the other hand, the desire to keep up with the peers can also inspire students to achieve goals that they might never aim at on their own. Peer group presents independence from parental control, having precious and confident feelings, as well as group approval and acceptance (Cook & Daley, 2001). As emphasized by Okorodudu (2013), peer influence has much impact on students; behavior than any other factor adding that students' interaction with their peers are direct and much more powerful than the influence of counselors, teachers, librarians and other significant figures. Peer influence so-to-speak is used to describe instances where individuals feel indirectly swayed into changing their behavior to match that of their peers (Eder & Nenga, 2003)



## **2.2. Empirical and theoretical framework**

Many of these irregularities or misconducts surrounding examination came to an alarming rate in the last three decades. The hues and cries about examination malpractice taking place at all levels of our educational system which library and information science schools is a microcosm, is nothing but a reflection of the decay in the value system of the society. The Nigerian society is that which celebrates mediocrity and views cheating as being smart. The society does not want to know how an individual achieves success. The important thing is the success. In fact in Nigeria the end justifies the means instead of the means justifying the end. In actual fact examination malpractice is a variant of the wrongs and corruption in the society. The politicians employ rigging at elections and enjoy enviable political offices and so do students cheat from primary to tertiary institutions to move from one level of education to another. All sorts of misconducts take place in and around examination venues to take undue advantage of the process and achieve “success”. To make matter worse it is not only students that are involved, Business centres inside or around schools, parents, teachers, school heads, and examination officers all collude with students to perpetrate this misconduct. Unachukwu and Okereke (2012), noted that the negative impact of examination malpractice on educational ethics and practice casts aspersions on the persons of the examiners and supervisors easily. Oniye and Alawaye (2008) revealed that engaging in examination malpractice leads to cancellation of results which in the other hand, is a waste of resources to parents and society and brings agony and injustice to innocent students.

Even the penalties stipulated in Act 33 of Nigerian 1999 constitution ranging from cancellation of results to 21 years jail- term has failed to achieve any significant shift from the cheating culture due to the effect of collusion (Ijaiya, 2004; Oduwaiye, 2014).

Indeed, research concerning the effect of peer influence on academic achievement has had a long history (Haller and Butterworth 1960; McDill & Coleman 1965; Duncan et al. 1968; Davies & Kandel 1981; Ream & Rumberger 2008; Hasan & Bagde 2013). In *The Adolescent Society*, Coleman advances an important argument: there exists a subculture among adolescents distinct from adult culture, and as peers at the same age, adolescents are more likely to be influenced by each other. Moreover, the effect of peers on the student’s achievement is even larger than that of

teachers and the school (Coleman 1961). Coleman also believes that peer inputs, in which better students are put into the group of students with disadvantages, is a major solution to school issues (Coleman 1988). In a scholarly debate about social capital and academic achievement published in *American Sociological Review*, the two sides both acknowledge the significant effect of peers on academic achievement (Morgan and Sorensen 1999; Carbonaro 1999). Rich (2009) even goes as far as to suggest that the only way parents can influence their children is to choose peers for them. Harris might be exaggerating, but his idea that peers are the important path of generational reproduction coincides with the Wisconsin School's emphasis on the effect of significant others.

On the other hand, scholars never stopped questioning the importance of peers. Specifically, after taking endogeneity into account, some scholars argue that the effect of peer social capital is weak, unstable, and even negligible (Foster 2006), or that it only holds under certain conditions (Zimmerman 2003; Stinebrickner and Stinebrickner 2006). Giordano's (2003) review of a large amount of literature concludes that the convergence of young people and their peers on multiple dimensions is mainly an endogenous effect due to homogeneity bias, whereas the effect of peer network takes a subordinate, secondary role. In other words, the effect is one of "birds of the same feather flock together," rather than one of "taking the behavior of the company." In this respect, if we are not careful about endogenous selection in socialization when talking about peer social capital, the conclusion could be pale regardless of its generalization.

It is pertinent to state that many peer groups can be a positive influence on their friends as well. In view of this, Hasan and Bagde (2013) divide the mechanism of influence of social influence on academic achievement into direct and indirect effects, but disagree on which effect is the major one. It is thought that intelligent students help their peers bring up their grades. Likewise, girls with good friends who are considered intelligent tend to do better in school. There definitely seems to be a pattern in the influence of studious students. With that is said, another common theme is similar aspirations. Students that want to excel academically tend to hang out with others with similar aspirations. In line with the above division, Cheng (2020), believes that a peer in the same major as the student can affect the latter both directly through providing study resources and support, and indirectly through influencing the student's value and behavior. But

when the peer and the student are in different majors, it is possible that only the indirect effect is at play, as the peer would not be able to directly provide study help or knowledge material to the student. Based on this consideration

According to a study published by the Williams Project (2011) on the Study of Economics in Higher Education, stronger students do have an impact on their peers and actually help improve the overall academic performance of the peer group. A large study done by (the Center for Research in Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE) (1999) suggested that peer groups can "exert extraordinary influence" during early adolescence on personal goals and school aspirations. A study by the Uzezi & Deya (2017) showed that there was a "significant difference between students that belong to peer group and those that do not belong to peer group on the academic achievement of chemistry. Experts do agree that peer groups can have an influence on academic performance. However, they don't agree on the extent and variables of that influence.

Onwubiko (2022) in his study discovered that there was a positive correlation between peer influence and academic achievement drive of library and information science students  $R(0.386) = 334, p < 0.05$ ) with peer influence mean and standard deviation as 33.93 and 2.30 respectively. The implication is that peer influence could positively or negatively impact on the academic achievement of library and information science students. Likewise, Cheng (2020), believes that a peer in the same major as the student can affect the latter both directly through providing study resources and support, and indirectly through influencing the student's value and behavior. But when the peer and the student are in different majors, it is possible that only the indirect effect is at play as the peer would not be able to directly provide study help or knowledge material to the student.

Festinger (1956) in his cognitive dissonance theory posited that human beings constantly strive for mental consistency. Cognitive dissonance refers to any incompatibility that an individual might perceive between two or more attitudes or between behavior and attitudes (Robbins & Judge, 2007). Festinger (1956) construed that any form of inconsistency, conflicting cognition or dissonance makes people uncomfortable and as a result of the discomfort, individuals will attempt to reduce the dissonance by so doing, the discomfort until their cognition is in harmony with itself. Students may try to reduce discomfort by changing their attitude when they

experience dissonance as a result of conflicting attitude with their peers. The implication is that the already formed attitude could be changed by peer influence to be in harmony with that of their peers.

Obviously, some past researches have shown that peer influence emerged over the decades to be the principle source of values and behavioral influence in students, replacing the influence of adults (Hammed, Odedare & Okoiye, 2013). This trend in influence no doubt has contributed to the rise in examination malpractice and other anti-social behavior (Neufeld & Mate, 2005)

Gender is one of the factors that moderate peer influence. Gender implies being male or female. Females are said to exhibit higher conformity to peer influence than males. Affirming to the above assertion, Uslu (2013) in his study reveals in terms of gender, female students have a higher level of peer pressure than their male counterparts. In the same vain Boujlaleh (2006) reports that girls are the most influenced by peers and suffer from pressure which is sometimes more than the pressure faced by boys. All the same, there was no consensus as to whether gender actually determines students' attitude towards examination malpractice. Some researchers posited no significant relationship was found between gender and students' attitude towards examination malpractice. In other words both sexes exhibit same attitude towards examination malpractice as well as their involvement in the act (Adeluju & Obinne, 2013; Okoro & Udoh, 2014; Okorodudu, 2013). Some the above studies did indicate that gender do positively correlate with students' attitude towards examination malpractice. On the other hand, researchers such as Yahaya (2003) and Obidigbo (2011) found that male students engage in examination malpractice more than the female students, while Omolara, Dare and Onyekwere (2014) in their own study discovered otherwise. That is to say that, female students are more involved in examination malpractice than their male colleagues.

Writing on students' attitude towards examination malpractice, Oparah (2021) averred that though parents are also one of the major causes of examination malpractice but students are not left out too, stating that while many parents try as much as possible to ensure their children get the best educationally, some students are lazy and all they are waiting for is a shortcut as they do not believe in adequate preparation, hard work and total dedication to their studies. This is a very

wrong attitude to possess by any student because the effect of such a nonchalant attitude is always disastrous.

### **3.0. Methodology**

The study applied a correctional research design in examining the correlation between peer influence and library and information science students' attitude towards examination malpractice with a population sample of 259 respondents (122 (47.1%) male and 137 (52.9%)) female randomly selected from seven public universities in Nigeria offering degree programs in library and Information Science with each one having 37 respondents.. They include; Abia State university, Uturu; Imo State University, Owerri, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Bayero, University, Kano and University of Uyo, while the principle instrument used to elicit responses from the respondents was a two set validated structured questionnaire by experts in measurement and evaluation titled: Peer Influence Scale (PIS) adopted from Brown and Clasen (1985) 'Peer Influence Inventory and self developed Students' Attitude Towards Examination Malpractice Scale (SATEMS). To ascertain the reliability of the instruments, a pilot test was conducted and data collected analyzed using Cronbach Alpha showing a reliability coefficient score of 0.77 and 0.84 respectively.

The SATEMS was a four point modified Likert scale structure of SA=strongly agree with 4 points; A=Agree with 3 points, DA=Disagree with 2 points and SDA=strongly disagree with 1 point, negatively worded items were reversed while scoring. On the other hand, items in PIS were paired with individuals deciding whether they were encouraged by peers to do or not to do certain things. Each item was scored from -3 to +3 with 'no influence' option scored as zero while 3= a lot of influence from peers; no influence=0, somewhat or a bit of influence from peers=2 and little influence from peers=1. The potential range was from 0 – 167, negative influence ranged from 0 – 55; low influence ranged from 56 – 112 while positive influence ranged from 113 – 167. The implication was that high scores indicated positive peer influence from the positive angle whereas, low scores implied poor influence from the negative perspective. While the data obtained were analyzed and tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) (Pearson r) using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) which basically was used to establish the correlation between peer group influence and Library and

Information Science students attitude towards examination malpractice as well as relationship between peer influence and gender attitude towards examination malpractice.

#### 4.0. Data Presentation and Analysis

Data analyzed using PPMC were presented in line with the three research questions and hypotheses while analyzed data from the students' attitude towards examination malpractice scale (SATEMS) were inculcated in table 1.

**Table 1:** A summary of PPMC coefficient analysis of the correlation between peer influence and library and information science students' attitude towards examination malpractice

Variables	N	Score	SD	r	p-value	Sig
Peer influence	259	126.69	17.56	-0.008	0.835	NS
Attitude towards Examination malpractice	259	26.14	6.00			

\*Key; NS=No statistical significant correlation at 0.05 level of significance

Going by the analyzed data as displayed in table 1 above and as contained in data collected under SATEMS, the correlation between peer influence and library and information science students' attitude towards examination malpractice was in the negative and therefore negligible. The implication is that the correlation between peer influence and library and information science students towards examination malpractice at  $r=-0.008$ ,  $p>0.05$  is also insignificant. In this situation and going by the decision rule which states that when the p-value is higher than the value at 0.05 the null hypothesis should be upheld but where otherwise should be rejected. In this end, the  $H_0$  was upheld which implies that there is no statistical significant relationship between peer influence and library and information science students' attitude towards examination malpractice.

**Table 2:** A summary of PPMC analysis of the relationship between peer influence and male library and information science students' attitude towards examination malpractice

Variables	Male	Score	SD	r	p-value	Sig
Peer Influence	122	36.70	7.28	0.054	0.350	NS
Attitude towards Examination malpractice	122	13.10	2.00			

\*Key; NS=No statistical significant correlation at 0.05 level of significance

The data as expressed in the summarized PPMC coefficient analysis in table 2 showed the relationship between peer influence and male library and information science students' attitude

towards examination malpractice. The data revealed that the relationship between peer influence and male library and information science students' attitude towards examination malpractice was negative and negligible. This means that there was no significant relationship between peer influence and male library and information science students' attitude towards examination malpractice ( $r=0.054$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). To this end, H02 was also upheld.

**Table 3:** A summary of PPMC analysis of the correlation between peer influence and female library and information science students' attitude towards examination malpractice

Variables	Female	Score	SD)	r	p-value	Sig
Peer influence	137	42.69	0.28	-0.062	0.078	NS
Attitude towards Examination malpractice	137	16.91	3.02			

Table 3 above showed also that gender as in the area of female library and information science students' attitude towards examination malpractice is negative. This indicates that peer influence has no correlation with female students' attitude towards examination malpractice at Pearson ( $r$ )= -0.062,  $p$ -value=0.078 under 0.05 level of significance. The H03 was therefore not rejected thus the conclusion that there is no significant correlation between peer influence and female library and information students' attitude towards examination malpractice.

## 5.0. Discussion of Results

The outcome of this study revealed that library and information science students' attitude towards examination malpractice is generally in the negative and that peer influence has no correlation with their attitude towards examination malpractice. One can therefore deduce that the act of engaging in examination malpractice is a thing of an individual mindset and personalized decision and has no link with peer influence. In fact available data revealed that peer group even promotes optimal academic involvement of library and information science students and makes them to think positively towards examination success as they share ideas and reading skills geared towards academic excellence. This result is in conformity with that of Aneto (2014) Bruno and Obidigbo (2012) and Unachukwu and Okereke (2012) who in the respective students revealed that students generally have negative attitude towards examination malpractice but ironically indulge in it. This may be explained by social identity hypothesis which makes students to join their colleagues in perpetuating evil even when they dislike such

act. This outcome all the same, is in contrary to the discovering of Okorodudu (2013) who agrees that peer pressure significantly relates to and influences students' attitude towards examination malpractice.

The result also showed that in the area of gender, that there is negative relationship between peer influence and male library and information science students' attitude towards examination malpractice. The obvious as discovered in this study is that the relationship between peer group influence and male students' attitude towards examination malpractice is non-significant and negligible (see table 2). This discovering is contrary to the finding of Yahaya (2003) and Obidigbo (2011) who in their separate studies found that male students engage in examination malpractice more than the female students.

The study further found that the peer group influence has no correlation with female library and information science students' attitude towards examination malpractice. The relationship is in the negative and therefore has no positive influence on the attitude of the female students towards examination malpractice. The implication of this finding is that peers can have positive influence on students. Female students who associate themselves with peers with negative attitude towards examination will definitely work into conforming to such attitude or risk being rejected by the peers, a thing any right thinking student detests. In other words, being affiliated with peers who have negative attitude towards examination malpractice will make such student cultivate good habits and make sound decisions which will help in the adoption of negative attitude examination malpractice and by extension shun the act. This outcome agrees with the finding of Bruno and Obidigbo (2012) and Amobi (2007) that most female students perceive examination malpractice negatively and that of Onwubiko (2022) who in his study discovered that there was a positive correlation between peer influence and academic achievement drive of library and information science students. On the other hand, the result negates the views of Omolara, Dare and Onyekwere (2014) who posit that female students are more involved in examination malpractice than their male colleagues.

### **5.1. Implication for the development of students**

It is true that many factors including peer group influence have been associated with examination practice in our institutions but the outcome of this research has implication for all round



development of students as the study has revealed that peers can also have positive influence on the attitude of students towards examination materials. The type of peer group kept by a student matters a lot as it could in a large extent shape the attitude and by extension behavior positively or negatively. As the result of this study has proven, if students identify with peers with good moral standing, who are focused with positive academic goals and have negative attitude towards examination malpractice, will be positively influenced by them and will eventually develop self-confidence which will lead to writing any examination without engaging in this antisocial act. This assertion was buttressed by Cheng (2020), who believes that a peer in the same major as the student can affect the latter both directly through providing study resources and support, and indirectly through influencing the student's value and behavior. But when the peer and the student are in different majors, it is possible that only the indirect effect is at play as the peer would not be able to directly provide study help or knowledge material to the student.

The bottom line is that any student who associates with peers who have negative attitude towards examination malpractice will definitely develop same attitude if not for any other thing, for the sake of being rejected. This implies that good company breeds good manners. To this end, positive attitude embedded in students as a result of positive peer influence, will impact in them the conscious of avoiding examination malpractice thus a veritable tool to check examination malpractice as experience in our schools today. This has become imperative because if this ugly trend is not checked with the seriousness and urgency it requires, may spell doom to the growth and all round development of the individual in particular and society at large. Furthermore, with this at the back of their minds, this antisocial behavior (examination malpractice) could be eschewed by students to facilitate their all round development which is what education is tailored to achieve in them and justify the attestation; 'found worthy in character and learning' that is usually inscribed in degree certificates.

## **5.2. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The outcome of this study negates some assumptions that peer influence has contributed immensely towards examination malpractices in schools as it did show that peers in library and information science schools in Nigeria irrespective of gender have negative attitude towards examination malpractice. The assertion is that peer groups with positive attitude towards

academic excellence stand as a better tool for wholesome development of a student as associating with them will create that consciousness of frowning at examination practice and by so being avoiding the act. It is line with this outcome that the following recommendations are propounded.

- ❖ Parents, management of library and information science schools and other stakeholders in this field of study should promote and sponsor on regular basis departmental and out-of-departmental programs with a view to promoting healthy peer relationship among library and information science students irrespective of gender and to uphold their values of negative attitude towards examination malpractice as discovered in this study.
- ❖ Library and information science school heads as well as lecturers of various courses as formatters and educators should spearhead group reading for students through which views are shared and goals towards the realization of their academic dreams are set. With this positive mindset, these peer will work towards academic excellence divulge of any sort of malpractice.
- ❖ The government and the university managements as a whole should provide enabling environment for learning that will promote healthy team studying among students so that their attitude towards academic achievement will be in the positive.
- ❖ On a final note, students should be doctored through moral instruction and orientation by both parents and schools on the needs to associate with peers that share same academic vision as them and their usefulness towards achieving their academic goals and being better individuals that can contribute meaningfully in society.

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