



RELATIONSHIP AMONG EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, INSTITUTIONS' ATTITUDINAL DISPOSITION AND CHEATING TENDENCIES AMONG STUDENTS OF FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, ZARIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING

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Abstract

This research work takes into consideration the factors that persuade students at the college to cheat. In the study, factors taken in to account are students' emotional intelligence and institutions attitudinal disposition on the level of cheating done by students. A Correlation Research design was adopted for the study. The research was carried out among all the final year students from Federal College of Education, Zaria 2018/2019 session. Simple random sampling technique was used to select two hundred and five (205) students each from five schools in the college making a total of one thousand and twenty five (1025). The instrument used for the study was developed by the researcher on the variables of Emotional Intelligence and institutions' attitudinal disposition and the Potential for Academic Cheating Scale was adopted from Hassan (2004) which was used as measures of tendency to cheat. Three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated and tested respectively that guided the study. It was discovered from the results of the analysis using multiple regressions that students' emotional intelligence and institutions attitudinal disposition significantly and simultaneously influence cheating tendency among college students used for the study. The paper therefore recommended that students should always check their emotional intelligence and use them in the right perspectives while the institutions of higher learning should ensure that proper steps are taken to reduce incidence academic cheating and tendencies among students.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Institutions' attitudinal disposition, cheating tendency and counselling.

Introduction

Cheating which is sometimes referred to as academic dishonesty has always been a problem in the academic settings to the extent that it has become an epidemic and a disturbing phenomenon for many universities and other higher institutions of learning around the world. Cheating in examinations is a fraudulent behaviour that involves some form of deception in which a candidate's efforts or the efforts of other candidates are misrepresented (Prescot, 1989 as cited by (Symth and Davis, 2003). Over the years, cheating has been considered to be pervasive, irrespective of the fact that academic integrity is one of the most important values of higher education (Pulvers and Diekhoff, 1999). Unfortunately it has become a very ordinary part of the lives of many students (Bunn, Caudill and Gropper, 1992). Nowadays cheating event is a serious problem from primary school to university even it is not just among students but also in jobs and in the society which are based on competition. Tendency of cheating increases year by year as a result of changing of examination as an aim from means. The art of cheating in examinations is increasing in sophistication, ranging from physical possession of unauthorized materials to the use of technology (Clabaugh and Rozycki, 2009). It takes many forms from simply copying another student's paper to stealing an exam paper, to forging an official university transcript (Pincus and Schmelkin, 2003).

A lot of novel ideas have been used by researchers in order to measure cheating behaviour and to identify its determinants. Previous studies have examined factors related to cheating intentions. These studies show that the positive correlates of cheating intentions include presence of high aggression characteristics, male gender prior cheating frequency, perceived pleasure from cheating, friends' cheating behaviours, and lack of self-control (Buckley, Wiese, & Harvey, 1998). In contrast, negative correlates of cheating intentions include high GPA, anticipated shame, moral beliefs, high detection probability, and severe punishment (Buckley et al., 1998). Previous models of academic cheating have included measures of individual differences among students, institutional constraints (e.g., tolerance of cheating, punishment of cheaters), and student rationales for cheating (Nowell and Laufer, 1997; Salter, Guffey and McMillan, 2001).

Goleman (2004) thinks that emotional intelligence is a skill that anyone who owns it tries to control his life with self awareness and improve it with self management and perceive its effects through sympathy or by managing the

relations he tries to improve his or others' moral. To Mayer and Salovey (2004) emotional intelligence is the ability of recognition, evaluation and expressing emotions, the ability of controlling emotions to improve the growth of emotion and ration while Baron (2000) has stated that emotional intelligence is a factor of abilities, adequacy, and unknown skill that affects the ability of individuals to succeed in overcoming stress and environmental stress. Antonakis (2009) thinks that emotional intelligence includes innate factors (self awareness, self control, feeling independence and capacity), and external factors (relationship, ease in sympathy and amenability). Due to different reasons such as the difference among people who are engaged in this concept, there are different definitions of emotional intelligence but most of the definitions focus on ability, traits and synthetic pattern (Petrides and Furnham, 2000).

Emotional intelligence is a key factor in the appearance of disruptive behaviours based on an emotional deficit. Students with low levels of emotional intelligence show greater levels of impulsiveness and poorer interpersonal and social skills, all of which encourage the development of various antisocial behaviours (Extremera and Fernandez-Berrocal, 2004; Petrides et al., 2004). Some researchers suggest that people with lower emotional intelligence are more involved in antisocial behaviours (Trinidad, Unger, Chou and Johnson, 2005). Adolescents with a greater ability to manage their emotions are more able to cope with them in daily life, facilitating better psychological adjustment, and so they see no reason why they must cheat. Specifically, adolescents with a wider repertoire of affective competencies based on the understanding, management and regulation of their emotions will develop sense of efficacy and will not require any assistance or external aid before they can confidently sit for any examination (Osakuade, 2011).

Another cause of growing academic dishonesty, according to some students, may be faculty attitudes (Walker and Townley, 2012). This is because in most colleges and universities, the penalty of being caught in cheating in a test or assignment is being rewarded a grade of zero. These penalties are small and at times are considered non-existent and fail to prevent students from cheating. Further, before the student is punished for the act, the teacher or staff concerned has to prove that the student did cheat in the test or examination, something that is difficult to ensure. Such provisions have made invigilators to be reluctant in prosecuting cheaters a trend that creates and promotes an environment for cheating among students. When invigilators are forced to document the student's

information on misconduct and approve his claims in open hearings, they are reluctant to punish students who cheat. This has resulted in an environment that is forgiving and permissive of acts of cheating among students of higher institutions, a factor that has greatly made cheating easier. Bennett (2005) suggests that the probability that a student will plagiarize is predicted not by the variables describe above but by a set of attitudinal characteristics and their interrelationship. A number of authors have explored this further (Ashworth & Bannister, 1997; Del Carlo & Bodner, 2004; Dordoy, 2002) and their work supports the idea that students and staff think differently about cheating and plagiarism. According to McCabe (2005), “students suggest that faculty who do nothing about what appears to be obvious cheating simply invite more of the same from an ever-increasing number of students who feel they are being ‘cheated’ by such faculty reluctance”. A Duke University study found that 30% of their faculty were aware of cheating and chose to do nothing about it (Ruderman, 2004). The reasons likely include a lack of support from administrators, favoritism for certain students and overly legalistic policies that often find guilty students innocent (McCabe, 2005). Many faculty deal with cheating quickly and quietly because “the university judicial process is laborious, even labyrinthine, and the punishments frequently bear little connection to the crimes” (Schneider, 1999).

Statement of the Problem

Cheating can be defined as the act of being dishonest in examinations or assignments at school. This is a practice that is rampant in higher institutions of learning and a large number of students have accepted that they do cheat in examinations. There are different behaviours that have been singled out as being consistent as to what constitutes cheating. These include copying from different exams or tests, using crib notes, copying from other students while at the examination hall, getting help or giving help to someone while in an exam room, or even getting assignments and term papers done by others. The behaviour of cheating can be traced to few decades ago among college and university students. Although, cheating has been researched on as early as 1970s, it is a behaviour that was not common in schools and colleges given the strict rules and disciplinary action that were associated to it then. However, nowadays, cheating has become not just a common problem in; it is a learned behaviour that has serious implications in the future, and this problem is spreading more widely among students in higher institutions.

Most of the researches on academic dishonesty has dwelled on identifying students who cheat and coming up with methods of stopping them from doing same. However, the findings from these research works have not been efficient given that the practice has become more common and rampant in our institutions. This study dwell more on establishing the relationship that exists among variables such as emotional intelligence and institutions' attitudinal disposition as motivating factors in cheating. Understanding reasons as to why students cheat in examinations can be helpful in developing good student codes in colleges and universities and thereby coming up with better ways of ensuring that the culture does not spread and damage the quality of higher education especially in Nigeria.

There has therefore been the attempt on effort towards providing psychological solutions to the problem. It is the furtherance to this approach that this study is designed to determine the contribution of emotional intelligence and institutions' attitudinal disposition towards academic cheating among students. The main purpose of this study is to examine the singular and combined contributions of students' Emotional Intelligence and Institutions' attitudinal disposition to the prediction of potential for academic cheating, so as to know which of the variables will be the best predictor of academic cheating.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised in the pursuance of the study.

1. Will there be any relationship between Emotional Intelligence and students' tendencies toward academic cheating among students of FCE, Zaria?
2. Will there be any significant impact of institutions' attitudinal disposition on students' tendencies toward academic cheating in FCE, Zaria?
3. What is the combined and singular contribution of emotional Intelligence, institutions' attitudinal disposition to the prediction of potential for academic cheating among students of FCE, Zaria?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will give direction to the study:

1. Tendencies of students of FCE, Zaria towards academic dishonesty will have no significant difference with their emotional intelligence.
2. There will be no significant impact of institutions attitudinal disposition on students' tendencies toward academic cheating among students of FCE, Zaria.

3. There will be no significant joint impact of emotional intelligence, institutions' attitudinal disposition and tendencies toward academic cheating among students of FCE, Zaria.

Methodology

The study adopted correlation design with ex-post facto research method. The design is adopted because the respondents had already experienced the events that are being investigated and the researcher is not going to control the independent variable. The study employs correlation research design in investigating the relationship among existing variables for the purpose of making inference from the perception of the estimated population.

The target population for this study constitutes all the final year students from Federal College of Education, Zaria. Simple random sampling technique was used to select two hundred and five (205) students each from five schools (Arts and Social Sciences, Languages, Sciences, Voc. and Tech. and Early Childhood and Primary Education) making a total of one thousand and twenty five (1025).

The instrument used for the study was developed by the researcher on the variables of Emotional Intelligence and institutions' attitudinal disposition. The questionnaire has a four point Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree with three sections. Section A consisted of bio data of the respondents, section B is a subscale on respondents' emotional intelligence while Section C had a scale on institutions' attitudinal disposition towards cheating. The reliability of the instrument was established through pre-testing on fifty students in a school (School of Special Education, Adult and Non formal Education) different from the target population wherein a significant Spearman's correlation coefficient (0.83) recorded after a two-week interval. As for the dependent variable (Academic Cheating) Potential for Academic Cheating Scale was adopted from Hassan (2004). The scale had already been validated by the author, but the researcher later revalidated it by administering the scale concurrently with academic dishonesty scale developed by McCabe & Trevino (1997) on other students.

The one thousand and twenty five (1025) questionnaires were administered to the respondents along with other four lecturers during EDU 324 (Introduction to Guidance & Counselling) lectures for 2018/2019 session. However, only nine hundred and ninety nine questionnaires were recovered for analysis.

Data Analysis and Presentation of Findings

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

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix table showing relationship between independent and dependent variables.

S/N	Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	1	2	3
1	Students' cheating tendency	999	29.54	4.67	1.000		
2	Emotional intelligence	999	33.43	5.97	.215**	1.000	
3	Institutions' attitudinal disposition	999	1.11	0.32	.129*	.232**	1.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01level (2 tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05level (1 tailed)

Table 1 shows a description of the measure and nature of relationship among the variables of the study. It revealed the extent of the correlation among them wherein Emotional intelligence is more correlated with Students' cheating tendency. Institutions' attitudinal disposition had an inverse relationship with Students' cheating tendency and Emotional intelligence.

Table 2: Summary of PPMC for relationship between Emotional intelligence and Students' cheating tendency

S/N	Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	R	df	P	R
1	Students' academic cheating	999	29.54	4.67	.215	998	0.000	Sig.
2	Emotional intelligence	999	33.43	5.97				

Table 2 indicated a mean and standard deviation of 33.43and 5.97 respectively for Emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence significantly correlates Students' academic cheating as $r(1,998) = .215, p < .05$ thereby making hypothesis one which states that there is no significant relationship between Emotional intelligence and Students' academic cheating to be rejected.

Table 3

S/N	Variable	N	Mean	Std.Dev.	R	df	P	R
1	Students' academic cheating	999	29.54	4.66836	-.129	998	0.000	Sig.

2	Institutions' attitudinal disposition	999	1.116	0.32039				
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Table 3 indicated a mean and standard deviation of 1.11 and 0.32 respectively for Institutions' attitudinal disposition. This shows that institutions' attitudinal disposition significantly correlates Students' academic cheating as $r(1,998) = -.129, p < .05$ thereby making hypothesis two which states that there is no significant relationship between Institutions' attitudinal disposition ² and Students' academic cheating to be rejected.

Table 4

Model	Sum Squares (SS)	df	Mean Squares	F- Ratio	Sig.
Regression	1093.963	2	546.982		
Residual	20677.828	997	20.740	26.373	.000
Total	21771.791	999			

R= 0.224

R²= 0.050

Adj R²= 0.048

Std Error= 4.55412

Table 4 shows a multiple correlation output of 0.224 for Emotional intelligence and institutions' attitudinal disposition. The R² value of 0,050 which is a measure of the strength of the relationship from the two independent variables means that 5% is the proportion of variance of Students' academic cheating tendency that can be explained by the presence of Emotional intelligence and institutions' attitudinal disposition. The significance of R²= 0.050 was tested to determine their combined effect size on Students' academic cheating tendency and the computed $F(2,997) = 26.373, P <$ was derived. This made the third hypothesis which stated that there will be no significant joint impact of emotional intelligence, institutions' attitudinal disposition and tendencies toward academic cheating among students of FCE, Zaria to be rejected.

Discussion

The first finding revealed that there was a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and tendencies toward academic cheating among students of FCE, Zaria. This means that, the increase in emotional intelligence level will positively disposed students tendencies toward academic cheating

among students. Since there is need to meet the demands and challenges of the modern life, students need to be emotionally stable. This finding corroborated the findings of Adegboyega (2016) who found that relationship exists between emotional intelligence and attitude to brokerage firms' performance in Tehran Stock Exchange was significant. The finding raises ethical concerns regarding the behaviour of students with higher emotional intelligence. It indicates that even individuals who possess higher emotional intelligence may engage in academic dishonesty. This challenges the assumption that emotional intelligence always leads to morally upright behaviour. The correlation between emotional intelligence and academic cheating implies the need for further research. It is essential to explore the underlying mechanisms that explain this relationship and identify potential moderators or mediators. Additional studies could investigate other variables such as academic stress, peer influence, or situational factors to gain a more comprehensive understanding

Another finding from the study revealed that institutions' attitudinal disposition significantly correlates Students' academic cheating. This finding agrees with the researches within the field of school effectiveness which pointed to the importance of the school contextual features for counteracting unwanted students behaviours such as bullying (Modin, Låftman, and Östberg, 2017) and truancy (Ramberg, Låftman, Fransson and Modin 2018) and it seems reasonable to assume that they also have an impact on the extent of students' cheating and its tendencies at the school. The study suggests that the attitudes and values fostered by institutions play a crucial role in shaping students' behavior, including their propensity for academic dishonesty. If institutions have a lax attitude toward cheating or fail to emphasize the importance of academic integrity, it can inadvertently contribute to a higher incidence of cheating among students. Institutions should recognize their responsibility in promoting a culture of honesty and integrity to mitigate cheating tendencies. The finding suggests the need for support systems within institutions to help students navigate academic challenges effectively. Students may resort to cheating when they feel overwhelmed by academic pressures or lack the necessary skills to succeed. By providing adequate academic support, including tutoring, mentoring, and counseling services, institutions can reduce the likelihood of cheating and promote a positive learning environment.

Conclusions

The study succinctly revealed through the findings that emotional intelligence and institutions' attitudinal disposition are related to academic cheating tendencies. Therefore efforts should be made to improve students' emotional

intelligence and institutions too need to improve on their attitudes towards academic cheating.

Counselling implications and recommendations

Results from this study have implications for counsellors in training and practice. The implication of the finding for counsellors in training is that counsellors need to be equipped with relevant counselling skills in guiding and counselling students on appropriate components of emotional intelligence and how to use such intelligence to avoid cheating in examinations. The implication for counsellors in practice is that with the cooperation of the College managements, they need to design appropriate intervention strategies to enhance good study habits rather than having tendency to cheat in examinations.

It is therefore recommended that students should always check their emotional intelligence and use them in the right perspectives while the institutions of higher learning management should ensure that proper steps are taken to reduce if not totally eradicated the incidence of academic cheating and tendencies among students. Educational institutions and policymakers may need to develop comprehensive interventions to address academic dishonesty effectively. Traditional approaches that primarily focus on improving cognitive skills may be insufficient. Strategies that foster emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, and character development could prove beneficial.

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