

Cultivating Academic Integrity in Educational Management through Students' Study Habits and Class Size in Cross River University of Technology, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria

Okey, Stella-Maris Aki (Ph.D)

Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Cross River University of Technology, Calabar

Abstract- The study examined academic integrity in educational management through students' study habits and class size in Cross River University of Technology, Calabar. Two independent variables of study habit and class size, were used to formulate two research questions and hypotheses. The population of the study comprised of all the 2019/2020 graduating students of the Faculty of Education. Survey research design and stratified random sampling techniques were adopted in the selection of a sample of two hundred (200) respondents for this study. The research instrument used for data collection was Academic integrity in educational management through students' study habit and class size questionnaire (AIEMSSHCSQ). Pearson product moment correlation analysis was the statistical technique used in testing the hypotheses. Based on the analysis of data, the study showed that study habit and class size have significant relationship with student's disposition to academic integrity in CRUTECH. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended amongst others that, the university management should come up with strategies that would built up study habit skills in the students as a way of ensuring institutional best practices in academics.

Index terms- Academic integrity, Educational management, Academic misconduct, Academic dishonesty, Study habits, Class size

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic integrity is crucial in the world of educational enterprise. It is critical to all aspects of the educational system and at all levels. It is the cornerstone of ethical academic practices which is premised upon a set of values such as honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage.

Academic integrity entails upholding ethical standards in all aspects of academic work. It encompasses values such as upholding academic standards, honesty in research and academic publishing, avoidance of cheating or plagiarism. Quality and integrity is at the heart of education since it determines how much and how well students learn and the extent to which their education achieves a range of personal, social and development goals (Ndum and Okey, 2010).

Academic integrity is the moral code that governs academic instructions as well as the entirety of educational management by the school, parents, government and the society. Therefore, promoting academic integrity is key to all aspects of educational development of any nation.

Current trends in educational management have shown that there is complete lack of trust, honesty as well as breaches in the educational system of Nigeria making the goal of achieving academic integrity a major challenge. Also over time, a number of factors have been identified as being responsible for violation of respective educational rules and order which includes pedagogy, socio cultural environment, economic environment, infrastructure deficit, institutional policies and management systems.

According to Ndum and Okey (2013) Nigerian universities have for decades been faced with so many crisis ranging from challenge of quality and integrity, conflict between academic staff and university administrators, students versus academic staff, students versus university authorities , non-academic staff versus university administrators. The

conflicts have given rise to distrust and hostility among professionals and academics, thus, contributing in hampering smooth, effective and efficient administration in the universities. It also appeared that despite this situation, stakeholders in education seemed to develop nonchalant attitude towards these conflicts and integrity challenge.

Animashaun (2014) identified institutional stakeholders as being responsible for academic dishonesty in schools especially during examination which according to him amounts to various forms of examination misconduct in schools. These stakeholders include students, parents, teachers, schools and government.

Oyegbami (2011) claimed that the cause of academic dishonesty in schools is due to the nature of students which he stated that students are academically incompetent, lazy with poor study habits, poor time management skills, truant, suffering from peer influence, over ambitious in desiring high grades and desiring to succeed at all costs.

The above identified situations affect the students overall academic integrity. It is on this note that Famoiyo (2007) also identified the factors that are related to how government support has effect on institutional management which includes poor funding and monitoring of the schools, overcrowding of classrooms, poor incentives for the teachers, inadequate libraries and poor quality of teaching and learning materials. In line with these, Akpomi, (2018) believes that the role of government in any educational system goes a long way to uphold the values to which the school is established to pursue. This by implication means that any act of government's failure either by way of funding education or providing adequate oversight in the management of education in institutions of learning is likely to instigate academic dishonesty in schools.

One of the most common causes of academic misconduct is ineffective or inadequate study habits for example, superficial reading practices which leaves learners either completely empty or with little achievement from schools. Yet, excellent academic performance by students is key to cultivating academic integrity in school practices. This in part is because success can only be achieved through study habits and by extension performance.

Also, when students perform what is expected of them during study periods, it means they have good

study habits. It is on this note that Mayland Community College (2002) identified good study habits to include various skills such as time management, self-discipline, concentration, memorization and effort.

Afful-Broni and Hagrey (2010) on the other hand stated that good study habits could assist students in improving their academic performance. This means that if a student has good study habits, he will perform creditably in academic work; which in part is gateway to building academic integrity.

Nonis and Hudson (2012) stated that one of the causes of academic misconduct is that most students lack the required skill to develop their study habits. The direct consequence of this is that such students would begin to resort into inappropriate ways of earning grades in school since they have failed to build up the legitimate culture of improving performance.

In addition, class size which refers to the number of students in a given course or classroom specifically either in the number of students being taught by individual teachers/ lecturers, or the average number of students being taught by teachers in a school system. There is no doubt that teachers with fewer students devote more time and attention to each student including more time diagnosing specific learning needs, Critiquing students work and assignments and giving students individualized academic support. These level of specific focus on the problems of the learners improves academic achievement as well as strengthens academic integrity at the school and students' level.

Tlali, Mukununge and Bhila (2019), believe that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has in recent time been compromised by the growing problem of academic dishonesty especially in large class sizes. This problem which he blamed on 'massification' of education is said to be an issue of serious concern to institutions of learning and by extension to the society. Also, the problem of large class sizes which has often precipitated issues such as lack of control on the part of the teacher during instructions, mass cheating during examinations has left the schools in difficulty in the quest to attain the required academic heights. Worse in this direction is the poor infrastructures across institutions of higher learning.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was guided by the following objectives :

- 1 Examine the relationship between study habit and students disposition to academic integrity in CRUTECH.
- 2 To determine the relationship between class size and students' disposition to academic integrity in CRUTECH

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were formulated to direct the study:

- 1 Is there any relationship between study habit and students disposition to academic integrity in CRUTECH?
- 2 Is there any relationship between class size and students disposition to academic integrity in CRUTECH?

4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following null hypothesis have been formulated to guide the study

- 1 There is no significant relationship between students study habits and disposition to academic integrity in CRUTECH.
- 2 There is no significant relationship between class size and students disposition to academic integrity in CRUTECH.

5. METHODS

The research design adopted for the study was the survey design. Survey design was chosen because it is appropriate for educational fact-finding as it yields a great deal of information, which is accurate Cohen, Marion and Morrison (2000). The population of this study comprised all the 2019/2020 graduating students of the Faculty of Education, Cross River University of Technology, Calabar Campus. The total population of the students as was given as at when records were taken stood at 691 undergraduates (Direct Entry inclusive). The breakdown of this population further reveals that 368 of the 2019/2020 graduating students were females while 323 are males (Deans office, February, 2020).

Stratified random sampling technique was used to select students from five out of the seven Departments in the Faculty used for the study due to the fact that the other two Departments are new so do not have graduating students. The choice of using this sampling technique was to enable every student in the selected Departments to be represented in the sample. In each of the Departments, students were selected using the hat and draw method of simple random sampling. Using the sampling frame containing the list of students in each Department, each student's serial number was written in a piece of paper, folded and placed in a chalk box. This was shuffled and one piece of paper picked at each time with replacement, until the required sample size was obtained. The sample of the study comprised of two hundred (200) 2019/2020 graduating students of Faculty of Education, Cross River University of Technology. The breakdown of the selection show that, 40 students were selected from Department of Guidance and Counseling, 40 from Elementary Education, 40 from Educational Management, 40 from Curriculum and Instructional Technology, and 40 from Vocational and Technical Education.

The instrument used for data collection was Academic Integrity in Educational Administration through Student study habits and class size Questionnaire (AIEASSHCSQ). The questionnaire was divided into two sections, Section "A" had to do with the respondents personal data such as department, sex, and age. Section "B" consisted of a twenty-six items to elicit information from the respondents. Each response was scaled on modified likert-4-point scale and a degree of scores ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to test the two hypotheses.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between study habits and students disposition to academic integrity in CRUTECH. To analyze this hypothesis, data were extracted from the data bank and summarized into mean (\bar{x}), sums ($\sum x \sum y$), sum of squares ($\sum x^2 \sum y^2$) and sum of product ($\sum xy$). The summarized data was then subjected into analysis using Pearson product

moment correlation co-efficient (r) statistics. The results of the analysis are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between study habits and students' disposition to academic integrity (N = 200)

Variables	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-value
Study habit (x)	1519	63880		
			326820	0.52
Students' disposition to academic integrity (7)	1220	78400		

*Significant at $p < .05$, critical $r = 0.138$, $df = 198$.

The result of the analysis as presented in table 1 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.52 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.138 at 0.05 level of significance with 198 degree of freedom. The result of the analysis is significant since the calculated r-value is higher than the critical r-value. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. This implies that there is a significant relationship between study habits and students' disposition to academic integrity in CRUTECH.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant relationship between class size and students disposition to academic integrity in CRUTECH. To analyze this hypothesis, data were extracted from the data bank and summarized into mean (x), sums ($\sum x \sum y$), sum of squares ($\sum x^2 \sum y^2$) and sum of product ($\sum xy$). The summarized data were then analysis using Pearson product moment correlation co-efficient (r) statistics. The results of the analysis are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between class size and students' disposition to academic integrity (N = 200)

Variables	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-value
Class size (x)	1614	68575		
			477380	0.73
Students' disposition to academic integrity (7)	1220	78400		

*Significant at $p < .05$, critical $r = 0.138$, $df = 198$.

The result of the analysis as presented in table 2 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.73 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.138 at 0.05 level of significance with 198 degree of freedom. The result of the analysis is significant since the calculated r-value is higher than the critical r-value. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. This implies that there is a significant relationship between class size and students disposition to academic integrity in CRUTECH.

7. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the testing of the null hypothesis which guided the study, the statistical analysis shows the following results:

- 1 There is a significant relationship between study habits and students disposition to academic integrity in CRUTECH.
- 2 There is a significant relationship between class size and students disposition to academic integrity in CRUTECH.

8. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Study habit and students' disposition to academic integrity

The statistical analysis of hypothesis one of this study showed that there is a significant relationship between study habits and students disposition to academic integrity in Cross River University of Technology. The finding of the study is in agreement with studies such as that of Read & Hagen (2006), Elliot, McGregor & Gable (1999), Meter (2010), Kagu (2013) and Ossai (2014). In these studies it was found that good study habits contribute to high academic integrity, improve learning/ disciplined behavior while poor study habits lead to poor academic performance, dishonest behavior, examination malpractices and juvenile delinquency.

The reason for this result in relation to the study area might be due to the fact that undergraduate students especially those of them who do not have good study habits will always go extra length to succeed in their academic endeavors not minding what will be involved. Secondly, many students believe that based on the unethical practices of some lecturers, spending

reasonable time to study may at the long run yield a fruitless effort because having good grades in some of the courses is not measured by students' performance but by paying money. What a shame!

Corroborating with the above finding, Okorodu and Ossai (2014) found that students who were highly anxious of examination typically had poor study habits as well as negative, non-productive attitude towards academic work which ultimately led to poor academic performance. By extension, the study showed that students who had high examination anxiety also tended to have poor study habits, as well as negative examination behavior. Such students were disposed to engage in acts of academic dishonesty such as examination malpractice. The findings of this research has further corroborated the deficit model theory of the relationship among study habits, examination anxiety and academic dishonest behavior as propounded by Birenbaum and Pinku (2012). A student who has a good study habit in the other way round is likely to be deficient of any form of examination malpractice behavior. This is because good study habit makes a student to be very competent rather than trying to carry out dishonest practices before, during or after examination.

Class size and students' disposition to academic integrity

The statistical analysis of hypothesis two of this study showed that there is a significant relationship between class size and students' disposition to academic integrity in Cross River University of Technology. The finding of the study is in line with Stevenson (2014) who stated that class sizes whether small or big were associated with increased student cheating in mathematics and science subjects. The author further stated that class size had a relationship with reading, and completion of term papers/ assignments especially for serious students.

The reason for this finding as it relates to the study area might be as a result of overcrowding of students in lecture halls and examination halls. The Cross River University of Technology is still developing and has not yet erected standard classroom sizes in accordance with the regulations of National Universities Commission (NUC). Because of this, students are disposed to cheat in a crowded classroom during test, and examinations. Secondly, the non-availability of adequate sitting desks in the examination hall or venues makes copying or

cheating very easy for the students as more than five students are seen using a desk meant for three persons during exams. The finding of hypothesis two further agrees with the study of Oluwatosin, Christiana, and Evelyn (2017) which revealed that class size has significant influence on senior secondary classroom discipline, engagement and examination honesty.

Class sizes have been understood as being responsible for an honest or dishonest teaching and learning environment (Tobi, 2013). On one side, classroom congestion in terms of large class is blamed by researchers as fostering students' indiscipline and on the other hand, low utilization of classrooms in the sense of small class size have been identified as a common feature of low cognitive capacity building in senior secondary schools in Nigeria. So conflicts have often appeared on the ideal class size. Akpomi, (2018) stated that in tertiary institutions, National Universities Commission (NUC) has approved 80-100 population of students in a lecture hall as a standard class. In reality, many universities allow over 300 students in a lecture class and even do same during test or examination Amesi, Akpomi and Amadi (2014). The implication of this is that students are disposed to cheating, copying from one another, impersonating and using GSM phones indiscriminately during tests and examinations. These are all cases of academic dishonest behaviors due to large class sizes in Nigerian Universities.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1 Government should revisit and review the policy of provision of infrastructures in schools. This review will take enrolment into focus and then the provision of infrastructures in line with student enrolment
- 2 The university management, government and the Alumni should equip the university library with adequate materials to enable students read and study their books. This will help to improve study habits of students.
- 3 The school management should come up with policies and regulations that will put all those who commit academic dishonesty to serious disciplinary measures.

- 4 Sensitization on the culture and habit of reading should form a major part of Departmental and Faculty orientation programmes so as to institutionalize the practice and habit of student reading.

REFERENCES

- [1] Afful-Broni, A; & Hagrey, M. (2010). Study habits as predictors of academic performance: a case study of students at Zion Girls Senior High School Winneba; Ghana. *Global Journal of Educational Research*, 9 (1&2), 57-63.
- [2] Akpomi, M. E, (2018). Sustaining effective learning through class size management: A case of Business Education students in Port-Harcourt. *Nigerian Journal of Business Education (NIGJBED)* 5(1).79-85
- [3] Amesi, J., Akpomi, M.E & Amadi, N.S (2014). Teacher knowledge and application of classroom management techniques in Business Education. *Journal of Education & Practice (IRSTE)*. 5(15), pp. 147-154
- [4] Animashaun, R. A,(2004). The menace of examination malpractices in Nigerian secondary schools and remediative measures towards attitudinal reorientation: The counselors perspective. *African Journal for psychological studies of social issues*, 16 (2), 300-309
- [5] Bireubaum, D. &Pinku, G. (2012). Some good news about academic integrity. *Change in Educational Standard Journal*, 33(5), 32-39.
- [6] Cohen L; Marion, L & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education* (5th Ed). London: Routledge Falmer.
- [7] Dean's Office (2020). Faculty of Education, Cross River University of Technology, Calabar Campus, Calabar.
- [8] Elliot, J. D., McGregor, G. & Gable, M. A. (1999). The why's of small class size: Student behavior in small classes. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 97(2), 214-223.
- [9] Famoriyo, B. (2007). Curbing examination malpractices. The key note address presented by the Honourable Commissioner for Education at the workshop organized by Osun State Ministry of Education on a day sensitization on how to curb examination malpractices. Held at Zaso Hotel, Osogbo.
- [10]Kagu, J. (2013). Academic dishonesty attitudes and self-reported behaviors in a university population. Dissertation abstracts. International, Section A: Humanities & social sciences, 59, 11-A.
- [11]Mayland Community College, (2002). *Developing Effective Study Habits*. S.O.A.R Programme.
- [12]Meter, A. O. (2010). Peer group pressure as a determinant of adolescents social adjustment in Nigerian Schools. *Asian Pacific Journal of Educators and Education*, 25, 189-202.
- [13]Ndum, V. E., & Okey, S.-M. (2010). Quality Education, Good Governance and Human ResourceDevelopment in Nigeria, Intuition. Retrieved :22/05/2020: from: https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=bo-CFSMAAAAJ&hl=en#d=gs_md_cita-d&u=%2Fcitations%3Fview_op%3Dview_citation%26hl%3Den%26user%3Dbo-CFSMAAAAJ%26cstart%3D20%26pagesize%3D80%26citation_for_view%3Dbo-CFSMAAAAJ%3Ad1gkVwhDpl0C%26tzm%3D-60
- [14]Ndum, V. E., & Okey, S.-M. (2013). Conflict Management in the Nigerian University System. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 3(8), 17. Retrieved from <http://www.richtmann.org/journal/index.php/jesr/article/view/1733>
- [15]Nonis, S. A; & Hudson, G. I. (2010). Performance of College Student: impact of study time and study habits. *Journal of Education for Business*. 85, 229-238.
- [16]Okorodu, L. &Ossai, D. (2014). Is plagiarism more prevalent in some forms of assessment than others? Proceedings of the 21st ASCILITE conference (online) Available: <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/perth04/procs/pdf/alam.pdf>
- [17]Oluwatosin, B. J., Christiana, R. L. & Evelyn, B. J. (2017). Effects of peer, Faculty and parental influences on students' persistence. *Sociology of Education*, 63, 208-225.
- [18]Ossai, V. (2014). A comparative study of emotional maturity in relation to intelligence and cheating. M. Ed. Dissertation, Punjab University, Chandigarh.
- [19]Oyegbami, J.(2011). The menace of examination malpractices. Paper presented at the counseling

seminar organized for the CEC students of the polytechnic, Ibadan.

- [20] Read, M. G. & Hagen, J. A. (2006). Effects of academic dishonesty on dimensions of spiritual well-being and satisfaction: A comparative study of secondary school and university students. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 39(3), 349-363.
- [21] Stevenson, J. P. (2014). Student reports and faculty perceptions of academic dishonesty. *Teaching Business Ethics*, 7(3), 205-214.
- [22] Tlali, N, Mukurunge, T & Bhila, T. (2019). Examining the implication of massification of education on quality assurance and assessment in higher institutions in Lesotho. *International Journal of Trend Science Resource Development*. 3(3); 1568. <https://doi.org/10.31142/ijtsrd23493> (retrieved 4/3/2020)
- [23] Tobi, E. (2013). Cheating has come a long way. *Moody monthly review*, 72(10), 6970.