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Parental Involvement and Teachers' Leadership Roles that Influence Students' Cheating Behaviour in Senior Secondary Schools

Adebile, Ruth Foluke

Department of Special Education and Curriculum Studies,
Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo
bile.ruth@yahoo.com

&

Omoluwa, O.

Department of Educational Foundations and Counselling,
Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo
segluwa@yahoo.com

Abstract

In recent times, the frequent examination question paper leakages, irregularities and mal-practices at all levels of education in Nigeria are becoming worrisome. Examination malpractice has become a serious moral scourge and has constituted one of the sources of the greatest threat to the nation's education system. Several approaches at curbing this problem have been adopted, but with little success. Thus, this study examined the relationship between teachers' leadership roles, and students' attitudes

towards cheating behaviour. Five hundred (500) male and female SSS III students' participants were drawn from five secondary schools in Ondo West Local Government Area by random sampling technique. Forty (40) questionnaire items were used as instruments for the findings. The study adapted the idea of examination cheating behaviour by Oyekan, (2006). Three hypotheses (3) were raised at 0.05 level of significance. Correlation coefficient and multiple regression analyses were used for the findings. The results indicated that the kind of leadership roles of both the parents and the teachers were predictive of students cheating behaviours, with teachers ineffective control and parents' permissive styles showing the strongest prediction. The conclusion was drawn and recommendations were suggested for improved control of students' cheating behaviour in Nigerian senior secondary schools.

Introduction

Education is often seen as a systematic action of imparting knowledge, skills and habits to the learners in their preparation for meaningful life and contribution to better society. It is usually delivered through skilful exposure to a number of academic disciplines, vocational studies, industrial experiences and ethical orientations towards all vibrant aspects of good life (Oyekan, 2000).

Thus, instructional leadership engages the teachers to making crucial decisions about what to teach, mode of teaching, and how it is to be taught or evaluated, with a variety of materials to enhance students' conceptual understanding and achievement. When there are deficiencies in the above variables, students tend to look for various means of achieving excellence in academic performance.

Parents are not left behind as they also have important roles to play in their children's academic achievements. Parents and their roles have some supportive influence towards improving students' attitude towards learning and achievement in academics (Alvaea, 2009). Also, studies have revealed that parental influence contributes to students' performance in school and that improved achievement could be associated with students having parents who are highly involved in their school work than those whose parents have less involvement or influence in their school work.(Gray & Steinberg, 1999). As such, where parental involvement and influence are not properly

recognised, students tend to look for means of good academic achievement at all costs.

Therefore, parents and teachers as leaders and monitoring agents towards students' academic performance are expected to perform their roles excellently. Parents and teachers are expected to be pillars of motivation, encouragement and good examples in the home and classroom, because both possess tremendous power with which they can employ to make a child's life miserable or joyous. Both can either be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration towards students' academic achievement (Bay, 1992).

Studies have shown that students' cheating behaviours in examinations existed and it appears an age-long problem of morality and corruption in human life. It has become a serious moral scourge against positive development, progress, and harmony of a developing nation (Oyekan, 2000).

The first authentic record of examination cheating behaviour happened in 1914 in Nigeria. This was during the senior Cambridge Local Examinations (CLE), which was announced leaked, and since then it has become a normal occurrence. For instance, in 1984, a similar incident was recorded in the then Yaba Technical College (Olusola, 2006). Cheating in examination is fast becoming an aspect of the students culture in the Nigerian secondary schools and even in higher educational institutions regardless of the school authority's prevention and punitive measures to discourage examination cheats.

Deliberate acts of indiscipline adopted by the students or their privileged accomplices to secure facile success and advantage before, during or after the administration of the tests and examinations are referred to as examination cheating behaviours. Such unethical practices that usually surface when assessing the learning outcomes might be hinged on some inadequacies of the students and the influences of some leadership roles expected from the teachers, parents and the school as a whole (Oyekan, 2006).

Studies on Students' Cheating Behaviour in Examination

Cheating in examination in contemporary Nigerian schools seems to pervade all strata of education from the primary through secondary to the tertiary institutions. Various forms and types have been discovered by researchers over the years. Some of which are: bringing textbooks, notebooks, jotters and

other related hard copies to the examination venues. Other methods of cheating in examination include copying method, electronic method otherwise known as a e-cheating; making use of instrument such as mathematical set, Global System Communication (GSM), and Media Players (MP3). Similarly, students connived with categories of persons and bodies like invigilators, teachers, typists, secretaries, clerks, messengers and even drivers where applicable. These agents are often pre-settled monetarily by the candidates and/or their parents; or apply any other pre-planned methods (Ijaya, 2004 & Adebola, 2011).

Adebola (2011) summarised the causative factors of examination cheating behaviours as:

- i) Poor psychological status of students as a result of stress and anxiety, trying to make up for examination success.
- ii) Environmental factors such as crowded nature of classrooms with few or only the invigilator.
- iii) Teacher's inability to conclude syllabus due to closure of schools.
- iv) Obscured and obsolete instructional materials.
- v) The intelligence level of the students, where weak academic students will have no option than to take to examination cheating behaviour to make up with the brilliant students.

Also, Oyekan (2006) highlighted some causative factors of examination cheating behaviours. They are:

- Laziness and non-challant attitudes towards academic work.
- Excessive values attached to high grade and good certificates.
- Frustration from heightened fear of imminent failure and shame.
- Poor teaching and poor study habits.
- Lack of self-confidence to succeed.
- Influence of bad peer groups.
- Poor parental involvement in students' academic achievement.

- Poor time management

However, a successful eradication of examination cheating behaviour poses some thought – provoking questions to all. Are teachers well taken care for so as to develop the required integrity to resist any form of corruption, external influence, inducement or “settlement” in the course of discharging their duties? Is the school environment conducive to effective academic work? What has been the stand of the institution in the face of assault of its staff from student culprits? Should we reprimand and repel or guide and reform the examination cheats? Some of these questions must be adequately taken care of if examination cheating behaviour must be effectively curbed.

Also, a synopsis of the trends of examination malpractices in Nigeria secondary schools might significantly aid educators in the development of appropriate intellectual capacities, and proper value orientations for the survival of their students and the society. This crisis situation is definitely unhealthy to a viable intellectual and manpower development in a development in a developing nation, and must not be allowed to continue for a moment.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated:

1. There is no significant positive relationship between teachers' leadership roles and students' examination cheating behaviours.
2. There is no significant positive relationship between parents' involvement and students' examination cheating behaviours.
3. There is no collective contribution of both teachers' leadership roles and parents' involvement on the prediction of students' examination cheating behaviours.

Methodology

Population

There were five hundred (500) male and female participants randomly selected from five senior secondary schools in Ondo West Local Government Area (OWLGA) of Ondo State. The questionnaire was designed on parental involvement and teachers' leadership roles that influence students' cheating

behaviours in some selected senior secondary schools. The questionnaire which was designed for the purpose of this study were distributed to the participants in their different schools. The completed questionnaires were collected for data analysis and results.

Instruments

The following instruments were used for the purpose of the study. The instruments for the study were divided into 3 parts.

Part A: A self-designed questionnaire on “Parental Involvement and Teachers’ leadership roles that influence students’ attitudes towards cheating behaviour in senior secondary schools”. The items of the questionnaire were drawn to determine the influence of parents’ and teachers’ leadership influence on students’ cheating behaviours. Part B: Correlation coefficient and multiple regression analyses were used to show the relationship between the variables at different levels.

Design

A combined ex-post facto and correlational design were adopted in this study in view of the fact that the researcher had no direct control of the independent variables as its manifestation has already existed. It was only its relationship with the dependent variable that was retrospectively studied.

Data Analysis

The three (3) hypotheses that were raised on this study were analyzed using correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis as shown in the tables below.

Results

Hypotheses 1: *There is no significant positive relationship between teachers’ leadership roles and cheating behaviours in examination.*

Table 1: A Table of Pearson Correlation showing Positive Relationship between Teachers' Roles and Students' Cheating Behaviours in Examination

		Teachers' Leadership roles	Cheating behaviours
Teachers' leadership roles	Pearson Correlation	1	.547**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	500	500
Students' Cheating behaviours	Pearson Correlation	.547**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	500	500

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

Table 1 shows that there is a significant positive relationship between teachers' leadership roles and students' cheating behaviour ($r = .547$, $N = 500$, $p < .05$, one tailed).

This shows that there is a moderately strong relationship between students cheating behaviour and teachers' leadership roles, as only 30% of variation in cheating behaviour scores can be attributed to teachers' leadership roles.

Hypotheses 2: *There is no significant positive relationship between parents' involvement and examination cheating behaviours.*

Table 2: A Table of Pearson Correlation showing Relationship between Parents' Involvement and Students Cheating Behaviours

		Cheating behaviours	Parents' involvement
Cheating behaviours	Pearson Correlation	1	.376**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	500	500
Parents' involvement	Pearson Correlation	.376**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	500	500

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

Table 2 shows that there is a significant positive relationship between parents' involvement and students cheating behaviour ($r = .376$, $N = 500$, $p < .05$, one tailed). This shows that the relationship between parents' involvement and students cheating behaviour is not strong, as only 14% of variation in students cheating behaviour scores can be attributed to parents' involvement.

Hypotheses 3: *There is no collective contribution of both teachers' leadership roles and parents' involvement on the prediction of students' examination cheating behaviours.*

Table 3: A Table of Pearson Correlation showing Contribution of Teachers' Role and Parents' Involvement in Students Cheating Behaviours

		Cheating behaviours	Teachers' leadership roles	Parents' involvement
Pearson Correlation	Cheating behaviours	1.000	.547	.376
	Teachers' leadership roles	.547	1.000	.135
	Teachers' involvement	.376	.135	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Cheating behaviours		.000	.000
	Teachers' leadership roles	.000		.001
	Teachers' involvement	.000	.001	
N	Cheating behaviours	500	500	500
	Teachers' leadership roles	500	500	500
	Teachers' involvement	500	500	500

The result shows that 39.3% of the variance (Adjusted $R^2 = .393$) as the two variables – teachers' roles and parents' involvement collectively accounted for 39% of variability in students cheating behaviours.

This indicates that the regression coefficient of parents' involvement reveals a unit increase in a corresponding increase of 0.617 in cheating behaviour of students.

Discussion

Research findings from this study reveal that:

- (i) There was a moderately strong positive significant relationship between teachers' leadership roles and students; cheating behaviours.
- (ii) There was no strong positive significant relationship between parents' involvement and students' cheating behaviours.
- (iii) There was a relatively significant collective contribution in both variables i.e. the teachers' leadership roles and parents' involvement in students' cheating behaviours.

On this premise, the two independent variables contributed to students' cheating behaviours. However, the first independent variable – (teachers' leadership roles) appears strongest. This implies that inefficient leadership roles of teachers in their responsibilities in schools make students to be more prone to much other unethical behaviour besides cheating in examinations. Also, students are more prone to good moral behaviours when parents are adequately involved in their children's academic activities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has shown that selected leadership roles in education are indicators to examination cheating behaviours, most especially when the leadership roles are not well designed and addressed. The consequences of the above will result to increase in students' cheating behaviours in Nigerian secondary schools. It is therefore recommended that:

- Professional teachers should mount more pressure on using the various forms of punishment against any form of students' examination cheating behaviour.
- Teacher should instil confidence for academic success on the students, through effective teaching and pleasant learning.
- Government should provide vital instructional resources for effective teaching learning process.
- Motivation, encouragement and financial incentives be provided for teachers for the reason of efficiency.
- Strong security measures should be provided to prevent any form of hazards on the part of the teachers from the students' culprits.
- Parents should not be too busy with their jobs, domestic and other activities as to become indifferent to their children academic programmes.

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