

THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL STATUS ON STUDENTS' TENDENCY TO CHEAT IN EXAMINATION IN CALABAR SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The influence of parents' educational status on students' tendency to cheat in examination was investigated in Secondary Schools in Calabar South Local Government. The objective was to determine whether parents' educational qualification and current enrolment in higher institutions influence students' tendency to cheat in examinations. A sample of 206 Secondary School students from 8 secondary schools in Calabar South Local Government area was randomly selected for the study using causal-comparative design, with questionnaire to collect data from the students. Results show that there is a significant influence of mother's educational qualification on students' tendency to cheat in examination, with students whose mothers are holders of only First School Leaving Certificate having the highest tendency to cheat. There was also significant influence of parents' current enrollment in school on students' tendency to cheat. Students whose parents were currently pursuing higher education tended to cheat more than those students whose parents were not currently enrolled in school. It is recommended that women should not marry until they have at least Senior Secondary School Certificate which will equip them to properly assist their children to prepare adequately for examination. Parents should devote more time and resources to their children studies in order to curb to the menace of examination malpractice in the country.

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian educational sector has been struggling with the issue of examination malpractice and cheating as a cankerworm. It seems to have defied solutions as all antidotes applied so far have been faulted by fraudsters. Examination malpractice is therefore one of the most serious problem facing our educational system and may gradually grind the system to a halt. Innocent students have had to suffer

frustration of cancelled result and delay in proceeding to the next stage of academic pursuit. The reason advanced for their involvement in this act is because of pressure from their home environment or even peers.

Cheating in examination has become rampant in almost every school and in all levels of education. It has grown more frequently than what it usually has been. The rate of students involvement keeps escalating with modernized cheating innovations. Hardly any year passes

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that one examination board or another has not been constituted to investigate and find lasting solutions to this problem as results of some are being withheld because of cheating. Students have found many ways to perfect cheating, so it is not easily detected (Fain 2000). The type of school attended, the importance attached to certificate, disciplinary level of parents, parenting styles and fear of failure are also to be associated with propensity to cheat in examination.

Whereas in the past, students tended to hide the acts, now they advertize them with reckless abandonment. It has become a prolific business enterprise branded with the name of private examination centres, aid by corrupt examination officials, supported by parents, who will not want their children to be left out from the Greek gift of malpractice (Adogoke, 2013).

The importance of home environment in children's growth and development cannot be over emphasized. From childhood an individual begins to learn and build up his character at home and the immediate environment. Most of the attitude and character the youth portrays are reflection from his home environment particularly parental attributes. Seth (2006) noted that the youths have great strength, energy, agility and dynamic powers, which could easily be misdirected if care is not taken.

Admittedly, parents play an indispensable role in the proper development of the child's personality, emotions, self concept, achievement, morality and his social adjustment. Okordudu (2010) reported that lassair-faire parenting style effectively predicts adolescents delinquency while authoritarian and authoritative did not. Parents who are demanding and responsive will make their adolescents socially competent and goal oriented. Seth (2006) also reported that many homes have not been helpful in the upbringing of children. There are many problems in the homes that are greatly affecting the young people and also destroying their future. Such problems are emotional and physical violence, joblessness, child abuse, lack of communication, irritating habits and separation. Also the involvement of children in too much household chores and other errands caused by societal challenges of failure of public electricity supply are also a problem. Udoh 2011 reported that factors such as lack of educational facilities, the inability of schools to cover prescribed syllabuses and poor study habits have worsen

the problem of examination malpractice in the Nigerian educational system.

Chaminuka and Nudzo, (2014) identified fear of failure and inadequate preparation for examinations, shortages of learning and teaching resources among other factors as possible causes of examination malpractice and fraud. Udogi and Ivowi (1995) stated that inadequate preparation for the examination, peer influence, poor facilities in schools, societal expectation as other causes of examination malpractice. On his findings, Chukudi-Oji (2013) attributed examination malpractice to scarcity of textbooks, closure of educational institutions due to strike and students rampages as causes of the cheating. Parental factors have been limited to parental pressure and expectation and outright sponsorship of cheating. Parents' educational status has not been given a thorough consideration as possible factors in examination malpractice.

This study is thus aimed at investigating the extent to which the parent's educational status influences students' cheating behaviour in examination among secondary school students in Calabar South local Government Area of Cross River State.

Statement of the problem

The state of Nigerian education is now a matter of great concern to various stakeholders in education. This incidence arises from the widespread incidence of examination malpractice in the school system. Some students are given special seats during examinations in some of the secondary schools. Previous research has identified many social, cultural and economic factors associated with students' tendency to cheat in examination. No consideration has been given to parents' educational status as a possible factor in students' cheating tendency in Secondary Schools. This study therefore is an attempt to investigate the influence of parents' educational status on students' tendency to cheat in examination..

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to determine the influence of parents' educational status as an environment on students' tendency to cheat in secondary schools. Specifically, this study seeks to determine the influence of parents' educational

qualifications and their current enrollment in Schools and the involvement of their children as students, in cheating in examinations.

Research questions

The following questions were posed to guide this study: Is there any relationship between parents' educational qualification and students' tendency to cheat in examination? Does parents' current enrolment in higher institution influence students' cheating tendency in examinations.

Statement of hypothesis

It is seen that solutions to the above questions can be attained through the testing of the following null hypotheses:

- (1) There is no significant influence of parents' educational qualification and students' tendency to cheat in examination.
- (2). There is no significant influence of parents' current enrollment in School on students' tendency to cheat in examination.

Significance of the study

The results of this study will be beneficial to the government, educational planners and parents. It will sensitize the government to the need of providing counsellors to all learning institutions from lowest to highest educational system. It will also help educational planners, examinations bodies, principals and teachers and majorly parents in refocusing their goals on curbing cheating behaviours with emphasis on cheating habits and positive attitudinal change. The result of this study will help parents realize the need to build into their children at an early age the philosophy of hard work, honesty and accountability. This will then eradicate fear, frustration, anger, shame and depression often associated with students caught cheating in examination.

Research Methodology

This study adopted the causal-comparative design. The study area was Calabar South local

government area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The targeted population of the study was the secondary school students in Calabar South. There were about twenty- four public and private Secondary Schools in the Area. From the targeted population, sample of 206 students was selected. Eight secondary schools out of the twenty –four secondary schools were used for the study. A minimum of twenty students and a maximum of thirty were selected from each of the schools, drawn from the senior Secondary school section.

A questionnaire was used to collect data from the students for the study. The questionnaire was divided into two major parts. The first part provided data on independent variables (parent educational qualification) while the second part provided data on the dependent variables (tendency to cheat). The questionnaire took the form of Likert scale. Statement that relate to tendency to cheat was presented and students were required to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the practices of tendency to cheat. This provided data on their tendency to cheat.

Fifty of the completed questionnaires were chosen at random to test for reliability using SPSS (1999) students' version 10.0. The statistical tool used was the scale reliability analysis. The standardized item alpha showed a reliability coefficient of 0.59. This figure was considered adequate in achieving the research objectives. The administration of the questionnaire was done by the researcher. The percentage response was 100 percent. The data collected were analyzed using the SPSS version 10 (1999).The independent t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to test the hypothesis.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1

This hypothesis states that parent's educational qualification does not significantly influence the students tendency to cheat in examinations. This was tested using ANOVA as presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: ANOVA showing influence of mothers' educational qualification on a child's tendency to cheat

Source of variation	SS	DF	MS	F
between groups	502.99	5	100.6	2.32
Within groups	8628.1	199	43.36	
Total	9131.0	204		

Significant at $p < 0.05$, df 5 F=2.21

From Table 1, the critical F-value is less than the calculated F-value at significant level 0.05 with the degree of freedom 5, 199. Hence there is a

significant influence of mothers' qualification on students tendency to cheat in examination. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 2: There is no significant influence of a father's qualification on students' tendency to cheat.

Source of variation	SS	DF	MS	F
between groups	382.6	5	76.5	1.75
Within groups	8768.9	200	43.8	
Total	9151.5	205		

Not significant at $p > 0.05$, df 5, 200, F=2.21

From Table 2 the critical value is greater than the calculated F at significant level of 0.05 with degree of freedom 5, 200. Hence there is no significant influence of father's qualification on students' tendency to cheat in examination. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 2

This hypothesis states there is no significant influence of parents' current enrollment in school on students' tendency to cheat in examination. To test for this hypothesis, the independent t-test was performed and the result is shown on Table 3.

Table 3: Independent t-test showing the influence of father's current enrollment in school on students' tendency to cheat.

Father's enrolment	N	X	SD	F	sig
Enrolled	90	59.0	7.06	2.33	0.005
Not enrolled	116	56.4	6.2		

Significant at $P < 0.05$, df 204. Critical t= 1.96

From Table 3 the critical value is less than the calculated value F at significant level 0.05 with degree of freedom 204. Hence there is significant

influence of father's current enrolment in school on student's tendency to cheat in examination. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 4: Independent t-test showing the influence of mother's current enrollment in school on students' tendency to cheat.

Mother's enrolment	N	X	SD	F	sig
Enrolled	100	58.6	6.5	2.46	0.014
Not enrolled	105	56.4	6.6		

Significant at $P < 0.05$, df 204. Critical $t = 1.96$

From Table 4, the critical value is less than the calculated value F at significant level 0.05 with degree of freedom 204. Hence there is significant influence of mother's current enrolment in school on student's tendency to cheat in examination. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

DISCUSSION

The first finding of this study indicates that there is no significant influence of father's educational qualification on students' tendency to cheat in examination, however there is a significant influence of a mother's educational qualification on students' tendency to cheat in examination. Students whose mothers have first School Leaving Certificate as their highest educational qualification showed greater tendency to cheat than students whose mothers had first degree. Parental educational level is a major component of the family's socioeconomic status which in turn according to Demarest *et al* (1993) is correlated with the ability to prepare students for greater success in school. While investigating the influence of parenting styles on adolescent delinquency in Delta State, Okorodudu (2010) discovered that parents who are positively oriented in their styles will make their adolescents socially competent and goal-oriented while uninvolved parents and parents who are non-responsive to adolescent needs will create negative behaviour in the adolescents. This explains why students whose parents have low educational qualification as FSLC have greater tendency to cheat in examination because their parents, particularly mothers, are non-involved in their studies since they are not competent. Mothers with qualifications above FSLC are better exposed and more equipped with secondary school subjects and hence have

a better disposition to coach and prepare their secondary school wards for examinations. Such adequate preparation will inculcate confidence and better acquisition of knowledge to the students, thereby minimizing their cheating tendency in the examinations.

That the mother's educational qualification has significant influence on students cheating tendency while the father's educational qualification does not, accentuates the importance of the mother as a child's primary educator. From the womb, mothers have first contact with their children and after delivery for another one year to two the child sucks the mother's breast and continues to learn from her. It is natural therefore for a mother's educational qualification to influence a child's tendency since it is always the mother that may have more time to coach the child while the father claims to be too busy for children

A closer look at our analysis shows that children whose mothers have M.Sc. shows greater tendency to cheat in examination than students whose mothers have first degree. This is intriguing, though. This seems to imply that mothers with first degree have more time for their children than mothers with Masters' degree. Ostensibly because mothers with higher degree are employed in the University and have less time and occasion to handle their children with secondary school subjects for that matter. This calls on mothers to create adequate time to coach their children.

That both parents' current enrollment in schools has a significant influence on a child's tendency to cheat in examination can be explained by the socioeconomic implications of school enrollment. When parents enroll in schools alongside with their children, economic demand of the family is overstretched since the

parents will have to pay their school fees, buy their books and then those of the children. There is the tendency that if the parents have paid their own school fees, they may delay payment of their children school fees. This may affect the child's attendance in school. Also a child may be denied the privilege of having learning materials like relevant text books, thus may not be adequately prepared for any examination. Such a child will therefore resort to cheating in examination. Chudi-Oji (2013) and Chaminuka & Nudzo (2014) implicated lack of textbooks and shortage of learning and teaching resources in examination malpractices. Sadly, educationists and educators seem to shirk away from this stark reality.

CONCLUSIONS

From the results of this study a mother's educational qualification has a strong influence on a child's tendency to cheat in examination. Parents should ensure that they are done with their children education before they think of returning to pursue more academic attainment, except those parents whose enrollment will not affect their child's education because they have high socio-economic status.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We strongly recommend that, women should not marry until they have gotten at least Senior Secondary School Certificate. This should be made a law in Nigeria. This will enable mothers to be better equipped to assist their children while in Secondary Schools. We also recommend that parents, particularly mothers should assist in the coaching of their children in preparation for examinations and not to leave the job to teachers alone. We believe that if these recommendations are heeded examination malpractice in our public schools will be eradicated or at least minimized.

Since this work seems to be the first on parental educational qualification as a major factor in students cheating tendency, we recommend that further research on this topic be done elsewhere in the country since examination malpractice is a national problem.

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