

The Practice and Future

OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION IN NIGERIA



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Prof. (Rev. SR) T.E. Abang)

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Chapter 31

A MULTI-CAUSAL SURVEY OF CHEATING BEHAVIOUR AMONG THE HEARING IMPAIRED STUDENTS

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Introduction

The challenges facing the provision of sustainable education programme for the citizens of Nigeria as reflected in the National Policy of Education (2004) seem to be too complicated for management. The challenges cut across all the stakeholders in the education ventures. While Falaye (2003) identifies provision of adequate psychological and physical settings and facilities, Ayorinde, Kolawole and Abam (2003) see imperfection in the curricular of the education system. Apart from these, there are a number of maladaptive behaviours among stakeholders that never will allow the realization of national educational objectives. Maladaptive behaviour is inimical to meaningful or result-oriented living. One of such maladaptive behaviours is cheating in test or examination by testees.

It is the contention of Aremu and Sokan (2003) that as long as there are subjects to be taught and learners to receive instruction there will also be evaluation procedures. Test or examination is a procedure used in academic institutions to determine teaching- learning outcome. Without it, it would be difficult to prove that the right type of value or education has been inculcated. The outcome of evaluation should therefore be a true reflection of ability of testees. For this to be, the test items should meet reliability requirements as well as ensuring that no student

has undue advantage over others before, during and after the test. Whenever a student has unmerited favour over others before, during or after, examination cheating behaviour is established. Cheating behaviour which is also synonymous with academic dishonesty is described by Olasehinde (2006) as the use of fraudulent means to pass examinations. The perpetration of cheating could be the singular effort of the testees or in collaboration with others such as teaching/examination bodies/security agents etc.

The rate at which students engage in cheating behaviour the world over calls for drastic actions. Technological innovations in modern times have improved cheating techniques in both internal and external tests. The cheating behaviour of students nowadays is aptly summarized from McCabe's (a leading researcher in academic integrity) comment in an interview made available by Plagiarism Resource Site (2006). McCabe was quoted as saying that:

... about 20% of all students are dedicated cheats and they will act dishonestly whenever the opportunity presents itself. Another 10% will never cheat, regardless of circumstances. The remaining 70% are the students who can be reached and influenced.

If the above statement is anything to go by, a greater percentage of students are susceptible to cheating behaviour. Hence, there is urgent need to remediate this menace before it turns education industry into a worthless enterprise. One of such pragmatic ways of finding solution is identifying factors responsible for cheating behaviour. This is relatively important because when factors are exposed, attempts would be made to block loop-holes the cheats have been using to carry out their nefarious activities or efforts will be geared towards providing resources that would hinder cheats from cheating.

Quite a number of reasons have been adduced for cheating from review of relevant literature. Such reasons include

high stakes of the examination, teacher and school status, personality dispositions, quota systems, inadequate school facilities and teachers, inadequacies of the examination, location of examination centres, low salary levels (Olowu, 2005); lack of preparation by students, distractions in examination venue, distractions in university, ineffective supervision, over-population of students, inadequate sitting arrangement, weak academic performance, inability to cover syllabus, and poverty of parents (Oduwaye, 2005); competition for marks, opportunities to cheat, peer pressure, fear of failure, time pressure, to improve grade, unannounced test, sickness, excessive academic workload (Nwagugo, 2005).

It is, however, worthy of mention that cheating behaviour is not limited to students without special needs or with disabilities. Quite a number of students with special needs among whom are the hearing impaired, visually impaired, physically handicapped etc have received punishment which ranged from warning to expulsion. For instance, the report of the examination misconduct committee of the Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo in 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 academic session respectively showed that:

Name withheld (Pre-NCE) a hearing impaired student was caught with prepared material relevant to the on-going examination during BED 014. Exhibit attached. Candidate admitted and pleaded for mercy. The candidate was found guilty.

Name withheld a hearing impaired student was caught with material relevant to MAT 221 examination in progress. The candidate admitted the offence both orally and in writing but claimed that due to his disability (Hearing Impairment) he could not memorize and that was the reason why he brought the exhibit into the exam hall. The candidate was found guilty.

There appears to be more of researches on students without disabilities and fewer on students with special needs with

regards to exam misconduct. In fact, virtually all findings in cheating behaviour present the views of students without disabilities. There is therefore lack of empirical information in factors responsible for cheating behaviour among students with disabilities. As students without special needs have reasons for cheating so also students with special needs. These reasons may be influenced by nature of disability. This could not be determined unless a study of this nature is carried out.

On the basis of this background information this paper intent is some causative factors of cheating behaviour among hearing impaired students. The hearing impaired in this context is someone who has partial or total loss of sense of hearing. Those who are experiencing partial loss and can still hear with the assistance of hearing aids are known as the-hard-of-hearing while those who cannot hear even with aid are referred to as deaf.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the reasons predisposing cheating behaviour among the hearing impaired students?
2. Do male and female hearing impaired students differ in the most expressed reason predisposing them to cheating behaviour?

Method

The study adopted a survey design using a self-developed questionnaire to obtain subjects responses. All the hearing impaired students of the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo in 2005/2006 academic session constituted the population of the study. The sample of the study, however, comprised 144 hearing impaired students purposively selected from all the levels with the following breakdown: Pre-NCE = 18 (12.5%) NCE I = 48 (33.33%) NCE II = 30 (20.83%) and NCE III = 48 (33.33%). They were purposively selected because they indicated that they have cheated in the past test or exam. They were made of 73 (50.69%)

males and 71 (49.31%) females. Their age ranged between 18 and 34 with a mean age of 21.69.

A self-constructed questionnaire was used to gather data. The questionnaire has 3 sections. Section A sought for demographic information: Sex, age, religion, level, school and nature of disability. Section B inquires whether the respondent has cheated in the past while Section C consists of 26 items on causes of cheating behaviour. The respondents were instructed to tick as many reasons as possible for their cheating behaviour. The test-retest reliability index of the instrument was found to be 0.67 using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The questionnaires were personally administered by the researchers to the respondents in group and were collected on the same day. Only those that were properly filled were used for data analysis.

Results

The data generated from the study were analysed using frequency count, percentage and rank-order for the first research question and chi-square for the second research question. The tables below present the result of the analysis:

Table 1: Frequency, percentage and Rank-order of reasons predisposing cheating behaviour among hearing impaired students.

ITEMS	RESPONSES		TOTAL	RANK
	YES %	NO %		
1. I find myself bored in the exam	54 (36.81)	93 (63.19)	144	17 th
2. I find myself nervous during assessment	40 (27.5)	104 (72.5)	144	26 th
3. I find myself unable to hear the questions	39 (27.08)	105 (72.92)	144	22 nd
4. I find myself unable to grasp the meaning	46 (32.18)	98 (67.82)	144	20 th
5. I find myself unable to hear the teacher's	40 (27.78)	104 (72.22)	144	23 rd
6. I find myself unable to hear the lecture	52 (36.11)	92 (63.89)	144	9 th
7. I find myself unable to hear the parents	110 (80.56)	34 (23.44)	144	1 st
8. I find myself unable to hear the	66 (45.83)	78 (54.17)	144	13 th
9. I find myself unable to hear	40 (27.78)	104 (72.22)	144	21 st
10. I find myself unable to hear the subject	38 (26.39)	106 (73.61)	144	24 th
11. I find myself unable to hear the	58 (40.28)	86 (59.72)	144	4 th
12. I find myself unable to read and pass	62 (43.06)	82 (56.94)	144	12 th
13. I find myself unable to hear the	61 (42.36)	83 (57.64)	144	13 th
14. I find myself unable to hear the	65 (45.14)	79 (54.86)	144	10 th
15. I find myself unable to hear the	67 (46.53)	77 (53.47)	144	10 th
16. I find myself unable to hear the	40 (27.78)	104 (72.22)	144	23 rd
17. I find myself unable to hear the	55 (38.19)	89 (61.81)	144	16 th

13	The number of students on a seat were too low	61(63.16)	53(56.81)	144	6 th
14	Book guide material presented the investigators	63(43.75)	81(56.25)	144	11 th
15	Too many courses and credit	79(54.86)	65(45.14)	144	7 th
16	Too many subjects to write exam on	114(62.17)	30(20.83)	144	2 nd
17	Too strict for the exam or paper	79(54.86)	65(45.14)	144	7 th
18	Others have not been punished before	35(24.31)	109(75.69)	144	26 th
19	Inadequate penalties for cheating	50(34.72)	94(65.28)	144	18 th
20	Educational facilities are inadequate	78(54.17)	66(45.83)	144	9 th
21	The subject test for lecturer marking style was too strict	106(73.61)	38(26.39)	144	3 rd

It is glaring from the above table I that the strongest reason why the hearing impaired students engaged in cheating is that they wanted to satisfy their parents (Item 7). This is respectively followed by too many courses to write exam on (Item 21) and strictness of teachers in marking (Item 26). Other items in order of frequency are 11; 6; 18; 22; 20; 25; 14; 19; 12; 13; 8; 15; 17; 1; 24; 5; 16; 9; 3; 4; 10; 2; and 23.

Table II: Gender difference is the most expressed reason for cheating behaviour among hearing impaired students.

Subj	Gender	Yes		No		Total	X ² Calc	X ² Crit	DF	P	Decision
		Obs	Exp	Obs	Exp						
Subj	Male	61	62.5	32	34.5	73	0.05	3.84	1	0.05	NS
	Female	54	57.5	30	33.5	71					
Total		115		62		144					

The analysis from Table II above which compared the gender difference in cheating behaviour indicates that the calculated X² value of 0.05 is less than critical X² value of 3.84. Based on this outcome there is no significant difference between male and female hearing impaired students on the most preferred reason for cheating behaviour.

Discussion

The outcome of this study has demonstrated that a single factor could not be held responsible for cheating behaviour among the hearing impaired students. Of all reasons adduced for

cheating the desire to satisfy parents occupies the top position (Item 7). This result contradicts Oduwaye (2005) whose finding shows students wanting to pass examination despite their weak performance and Nwagugo (2005) who reported that emphasis on paper qualification as the strongest cause of cheating behaviour. The findings of these scholars' are at variance with this study because they used students who are not basically cheats like this study; use students who are predominantly able or without disabilities; an item which is the strongest cause in this study was absent in their studies.

The fact that subjects of the study strongest reason for cheating is to satisfy their parents did not provoke any surprise. This is because Anti-Essay (2006) has identified loving parental pressure as a fact that will generate the need to cheat in school. Secondly, most hearing impaired students who are opportuned to be in the College where this study was carried out have caring and dedicated parents who will not stop at anything to ensure that their wards are properly educated at all cost. Hence, it will not be out of place if they desire to succeed so as to please their parents as well as replicate the good gesture of their parents. Every good turn, the adage says, deserves another.

There is also no doubt that the second strongest reason for cheating - too many courses (Item 21) - justifies the reality at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo where the study was carried out. The students are expected to take courses in Education, General Studies, and Teaching Subjects and Special Education areas. This at times makes a student to have as many as 15 courses to learn and write exams on. If therefore you have so much and you are not well taught or you missed lectures or failed to prepare sufficiently for the tests, the temptation to cheat would be very high. For the hearing impaired students who relied on the sign interpreters to learn when they are not available or incompetent the case is complicated as well as predisposing them to cheating behaviour.

The fact that strictness of lecturers in marking was identified as the third factor predisposing the hearing impaired to cheating is not unexpected. This is because most of them from interaction believe that their nature of disability should attract special marking guide that would be different from other students without special needs. Consequently, when the same guide is used to mark their scripts the lecturer-in-charge is said to be unjustifiably strict.

The result of the second research question which confirmed the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in respect of gender was expected. This is because the love and care received from parents are not gender sensitive or restricted to a particular sex as such significant difference would not be recorded.

Implication for Counselling Profession

The outcome of this research has a number of implications for counselling profession. First, counsellors in schools/colleges are expected to intensify their efforts at combating the menace of cheating among the hearing impaired students. Since all the subjects used for this study have cheated one time or the other, attempts at remediating cheating behaviour should involve x-raying the peculiar nature of the people with special needs. Second, efforts should be made by counsellors to prevent special students from cheating in exam. Effective study habits/techniques should be disseminated to students to enable them cope with numerous numbers of courses specified by the authorities. This is premised on the fact that when they are well prepared for an exam they are not likely to be tempted to engage in cheating behaviour.

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