

Rebuilding Trust in Learning Environment for Reduction of Academic Dishonesty among University Students in South - South Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the influence of learning environment and academic dishonesty among year three students in tertiary institution of South-South, Nigeria. Survey design was used for the study and 200 students were sampled out using Krejcie and Morgan sampling method from 2,000 students thus forming 10% of the total population. The analytical tool used was a dependent t-test after collecting the needed data with a questionnaire tagged learning environment and academic dishonesty (LEADQ). The instrument was validated and pre-tested for reliability with Krejcie and Morgan sampling method and it yielded an index of .89. Physical environment and psychological environment as the possible environmental components were analyzed using dependent t-test. The result showed that learning environment influences academic dishonesty among tertiary institution students. To redeem the standard of education and reawaken our students towards achievable goals, recommendations were provided which include proper orientation of academic staff's job description upon employment

Keywords: Academic, Dishonesty Environment, Learning, Trust.

Introduction

Learning environment goes way beyond the physical characteristics (structure) seen. It is a place where knowledge is transmitted, characters molded, potentials developed, friendship built and future defined. Learning environment can be exciting and stressful to learners at the same time but when looked past to the bigger picture, the outcome is rewarding as different professions, dignitaries, scholars are all products of one learning environment or the other. Education is a change agent, a weapon that adds value to one's personality and attitude (Ezike 2018), it is a phenomenon that gives a pointer to a greater achievement and can occur at a place termed "learning environment", learning environment like every other phenomenon has a negative side despite its overwhelming positive parts.

Learners in the school system are faced with lots of challenges ranging from the physical to psychological problems. Sometimes these problems stem from the conventional way of activities, marring the integrity and progress of educational system rather than promoting it. It is a place where teacher's encouragement boosts the student's abilities, giving them a sense of motivation, purpose driven and directions specially as teenagers are found in the tertiary institutions these days. Problems that stems from learning environment could be seen with the

lackadaisical attitude of lecturers towards improving contents taught, degrading lecture halls to tutor's unreceptive attitude in carrying out their duties. Learning environment encompasses the aspect of physical structure and psychological environment; these various aspects are contributory factor to learner's interest in academic which give rise to promotion in academic excellence or dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty is cancer eating deep into the fabric of values and morals, a norm in our school system rendering the integrity of education useless. Academic dishonesty can be viewed as a classroom or examination misconduct to gain an unauthorized assistance for unmerited benefits or favours. In the words of Saana, Ablordeppey, Mensah, and Karikari (2016) students engage in academic dishonesty to impress family members and guardians with good academic records. This therefore renders trust in educational system void as different factor contributes to academic dishonesty among students hence the need for a rebuild.

Statement of the Problem

Academic dishonesty is almost becoming a norm as most of our graduates when given the paper qualification cannot defend neither can they be compared to western world counterparts who are exposed to ethics and values of education, basic amenities, well-grounded content and well involved lecturers who are ever ready for guidance and support when the need arises. The decadence of student's physical learning environment can be seen with students struggling to participate during lectures with tight over crowded space, lack of seats and poor lightening conditions provides an encouragement to academic dishonesty which has eaten deep into our academic system devaluing the standards and loosing educational ethics as it is almost becoming a legalized way of operations hence forcing one to think of way forward. Different scholars have investigated possible causes of academic dishonesty in relation to physical and emotional learner's environment but this work sought to understudy causes of academic dishonesty in consideration to physical and psychological environment of learners in South-South region of Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the level of learning environment on students' academic dishonesty in South- South tertiary institutions of Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. How physical learning environment influences academic dishonesty.
2. How psychological learning environment influences academic dishonesty.

Significance of the study

The findings of this study will be of great importance to educational board management as it will help them plan better academic structures with adequate facilities to encourage learners and researchers.

It will be significant to government as it would guide them in allocating substantial amount of budget to education sector for academic projects and funding of academic researches.

This study will be of great importance to educators in providing a serene physical and psychological environment to their students.

It will be significant to students as it will help them to make proper research for their course of interest which will form a base for intrinsic motivation and not follow the multitude's choice

Research Questions

1. How does physical learning environment influence academic dishonesty?
2. How does psychological learning environment influence academic dishonesty?

Null Hypotheses

1. There is no significant influence between physical learning environment and academic dishonesty
2. There is no significant influence between psychological learning environment and academic dishonesty.

Literature Review

The primary purpose of teaching and learning process is to bring out in the learner's desirable change in behavior through critical thinking Nuhu (2015). A good learning environment is interesting, engaging, anxiety free and productive. According to Nuhu (2015), it presents learning as a lifelong enterprise and enables students to discover appropriate value system that can be their compass for self-awareness and national consciousness. On the other hand, a threatening environment is boring, creates tension, laziness and according to Maloshonok (2016), encourages cheating, discourages competition and makes students to slack off. These, however, are signs of academic dishonesty. Damin (2017) cited Thomas (2016) explained that developing a stimulating learning environment could motivate students and decrease acceptance of academic dishonesty.

One of the factors that pose a threat to the realization of vision 2020 is the poor state of physical facilities in Nigerian schools. Sanusi and Akpotu (2015) cited NUC report of 2011 that only about 30% of the students in universities could have access to classrooms, lecture theatre, laboratories and other physical facilities as opposed to vision 2020 that predicted schools equipped with functional physical or e-libraries facilities, laboratories, classrooms well furnished with modern instructional technology gadgets, projectors, audio-visual and video conference equipment. Numerous problems impede student's total concentration in lecture halls, such could be seen in Nigerian university lecture halls where students receive their lectures in overcrowded space with little ventilation and some of them are seen standing for hours to receive lectures Abutu (2018). The implication is that the facilities and manpower are not enough, the ratio of large crowd of students to few lecturers poses a problem to educational standard. There is no room for individualized instruction and some ethical issues such as guidelines to term paper presentation to avoid plagiarism are not well communicated to the students. With this insatiable desire, they may be apathetic to learning apart from being tempted to resort to dishonest means of helping themselves to succeed. As posited by Akomolafe and Adesua, (2016) a situation where students don't have access to library, adequate seats contribute to low performance of students. Furthermore, they listed that, there should be adequate classroom spacing, good sitting facilities, laboratory and internet facilities and a host of other physical facilities that could enhance the level of motivation and academic performance of students.

Psychological environment affects learners greatly as they relate with their teachers, peers and their physical environment as well. Student's class activities, decisions and goals are shaped by the environment as man interacts with it daily. According to Anderman and Murdock (2007). Students involve in academic dishonesty due to various factors such as extrinsic outcome which involves targeted grade and maintaining a perceived image to themselves and

to their peer, explaining further, others cheat because they lack the requisite self-efficacy to engage in complex tasks or because of the types of attributions they have developed (rephrase). Students are constantly faced with setbacks, disappointments and wrong turns, it is in the place of tutors to offer valuable assistance and encouragement to make study easier, interesting and gainful. Academic motivation encourages students to complete their task hence enhancing their success in learning and academic progress Yousefi, Ghasemi and Firouzniya (2009). From a careful study of Sadeghi, Ofoghi, Hamidi, Hosein, Niayfar and Babaei (2016) explained that good relationship existing between college professors and students creates positive psychological learning environment in students such as increased confidence, learning motivation and improving professional skills, positive learning experiences, reducing unnecessary fear and anxiety, reducing the probability of academic failure and improving professional identity. Putting into perspective all these positive outcome, academic dishonesty in tertiary institutions could be greatly checkmate.

Lack of extrinsic or intrinsic motivations can be seen when students procrastinate academic work and studies thereby rushing to grab or get it done at last minute, these gives rise to cramming and cheating in order to achieve targeted goal. Environmental factors can mar or make a student in various ways as stated earlier, the physical environment boost academic interest and seriousness in student's likewise psychological factors like motivations, reinforcement and words of encouragement from peers, tutors to examination officers. Most of these students involved in academic dishonesty could be as a result of lack of direction towards achieving realistic goals, help towards inept understanding of course concept, help towards achieving positive self-view which will give rise to the student presenting original ideas in assignments and presentations. The world is changing, so does human behaviors, interest and goals, hence it is necessary for academia to update their mentoring methods/styles to suit this century. Lecturer's mentoring can be of great benefit to students as it will point them in the right direction, encourage in special skills development, offers professional advices and help ease into academic work spurring them towards excellence. Adebisi, Al-Hassan, Hansborough, and Edginton, (2007) explained that the archaic motivation methods used by teachers over the years do not explore students' original values for education or establish values for education as a foundational motivational tool.

Methodology

The researchers used a descriptive survey design in order to describe the influence of learning environment on academic dishonesty. The South-South States in Nigeria, also called the Niger Delta States are: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and River State. They are the oil producing states of the nation. They have natural resources like gas, limestone, glass sand, salt, crude oil, clay and other solid minerals. The people of these areas are mainly farmers, fishermen, traders, blacksmiths and civil servants. They speak both English language and their different dialects. They practice both Christianity and Traditional religion. There are so many educational institutions in this geo-political zone ranging from Nursery/Primary, Secondary and Tertiary institutions, example of tertiary institutions are University of Uyo, University of Port Harcourt and the rest. The total population of year three students used for this research was 2,000. This population comprised of two departments each from faculty of Education in five federal south-south universities in Nigeria. A total of 200 students formed the sample of the study. This was drawn from the population of year three students from the faculty of education in the different federal universities of the geo-political zone. Krejcie and Morgan

sampling method was used in selecting the research sample. The instrument, Learning Environment and Academic Dishonesty Questionnaire (LEADQ) was constructed by the researchers. It was used to determine influence of learning environment on academic dishonesty. This was validated by test and measurement experts thereafter; the instrument was used to collect information from the respondents based on the stated variables. The research was answered using mean and standard deviation. A cutoff point of 2.5 was taken as a decision level hence scores above 2.5 was regarded as influential while those below 2.5 were regarded as not influential. The hypothesis was tested using a dependent t-test and the significant level was regarded as .05

Results

The results of data analysis carried out on data for the study are presented below:

Research Question I: How does physical learning environment influence academic dishonesty?

Table I: How physical learning environment influence academic dishonesty using mean to answer standard deviation

S/N	Physical Environment	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	We are more than 100 students in our class	3.43	0.84	Influential
2	There are so many lecture halls in my school	3.24	0.85	Influential
3	Our lecture halls are spacious	2.98	1.51	Influential
4	Our lecture halls are well ventilated	3.51	0.81	Influential
5	All the lecture halls are provided with projectors	3.60	0.79	Influential
6	We also have Audio/visual aids in our classes.	3.38	0.86	Influential
7	There are well equipped facilities in our laboratories	3.32	0.83	Influential
8	We have a digital library	3.22	0.91	Influential
9	We have an analogue library	2.01	1.92	Not Influential
10	Our school environment is wi-fi enhanced	3.26	0.82	Influential
	Total	3.26		Influential

The above data shows that, at a decision level of mean 2.5, the mean of the responses of 200 respondents for each of the four items in research question one is far above 2.5, indicating that, the respondents agreed to the items in the instrument. We are more than 100 students in our class with a mean of 3.43, there are so many lecture halls in my school with a mean of 3.24, our lecture halls are spacious with a mean of 2.98, our lecture halls are well ventilated with a mean of 3.51, all the lecture halls are provided with projectors with a mean 3.6, we also have Audio/visual aids in our classes with a mean of 3.38, there are well equipped facilities in our laboratories with a mean of 3.32,our school environment is wi-fi enhanced with a mean of 3.26. the total score for mean was 3.30 except we have an analogue library with a mean score of 2.01, we have a digital library with a mean score of 3.22. Hence, physical learning environment influences academic dishonesty.

Research Question II: How does psychological learning environment influence academic dishonesty?

Table 2: How psychological learning environment influence academic dishonesty using mean to answer standard deviation

S/N	Psychological Environment	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Our class size is too large lecturers to manage	3.30	0.91	Influential
2	Our lecturers don't know us by names	3.14	0.88	Influential
3	Our classes are fully controlled by the lecturers	3.06	0.85	Influential
4	There is no room for individualized instruction	3.00	0.85	Influential
5	We are not exposed to arrays of learning methods	3.37	0.82	Influential
6	We don't normally do group work or presentation	3.33	0.83	Influential
7	There is no room for self-expression in our class	3.29	0.82	Influential
8	Lecturers don't relate well with students	3.45	0.83	Influential
9	Students don't relate well with fellow students in my class	2.88	1.82	Influential
10	We do not have time to discuss personal issues with our lecturers	3.39	.084	Influential
	Total	3.22		Influential

Data in Table 2, shows that, at a decision level of mean 2.5, the mean of the responses of the 200 respondents for each of the items in the questionnaire were above 2.5, indicating that, the respondents agreed to the items in the instrument. Hence, psychological learning environment has a high Influences on academic dishonesty

Null Hypothesis I There is no significant influence between physical learning environment and academic dishonesty

Table 3: Dependent t-test table of the influence of physical learning environment and students' academic dishonesty (n=200)

Variables	n	mean	SD	df	t-value	Sign
Physical learning environment	200	3.30	.82			
Students' academic dishonesty.	200	2.87	75	199	9.34	.001

The result in Table 3 shows calculated t is 9.34 of 199 degree of freedom and is statistically significant at .05 significant level. The null hypothesis of no significant influence between the two groups was therefore rejected. There is significant influence of physical learning environment on students' academic dishonesty.

The findings proved that physical environment promotes learner's academic dishonesty. In consideration of the tabula rasa theory propounded in the 17th century, student's academic output is as a result of his learning environment hence learning should not occur in abstract but with presented facts and comfortable environment. In support, Ezike (2018) stated that, poor physical environmental condition of learners gives rise to learner's lack of interest in academics and classroom activities. In the same vein, fact presented in a study by fielding (2010) in Nuhu, (2015) explained that, students are spurred into motivation by their school's interior environment, thus giving improvement to more academic success. Nidzam and Ahmad (2018) posit that student's intellectual activities, interaction, generation of ideas, cooperation and friendship building are spurred through a well- equipped learning environment, also noting promotion of student's growth and personal development as possible outcome.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant influence between psychological learning environment and academic dishonesty

Table 4: Dependent t-test table of the influence psychological learning environment and students' academic dishonesty(n=200)

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig
Psychological learning environment	200	3.22	0.85	199	7.83	.001
Student's academic dishonesty	200	2.87	.75			

The result in Table 4 shows calculated t is 7.83 of 199 degree of freedom and is statistically significant at .05 significant level. The null hypothesis of no significant influence between the two groups was therefore rejected. There is significant influence of psychological learning environment on student's academic dishonesty.

Discussion of Findings

Psychological environment affects learner's greatly as they relate with their teachers, peers and the physical environment as well. Psychology of environment can be seen as the relationship between an individual and the environment. Most activities, decisions and goals are shaped by the environment as man interacts with it daily. Academic motivation encourages students to complete their task hence enhancing their success in learning and academic progress Yousefi, Ghasemi, and Firouzniya (2009). Adebisi, Al-Hassan, Hansborough, and Edginton (2007) explained that the archaic motivation methods used by teachers over the years do not explore students' original values for education or establish values for education as a foundational motivational tool. A teacher's choice in instructional approaches and classroom management style promotes academic interest, for example, the use of problem-solving strategies in the classroom contributes to a more positive perception of the learning climate (Khine, 2001).

Lack of extrinsic or intrinsic motivations can be seen when students procrastinate academic work and studies thereby rushing to grab or get it done at last minute, these will give rise to cramming and cheating in order to achieve targeted goal. Sadeghi, Ofoghi, Hamidi, Hosein, Niayfar and Babaei, (2016) explained that good relationship existing between college professors and students creates positive psychological learning environment in students such as increased confidence, learning motivation and improving professional skills, positive learning experiences, reducing unnecessarily fear and anxiety, reducing the probability of academic failure and improving professional identity.

Conclusion

The findings of the study showed that learning environment has great influence on academic dishonesty. It explained the effect of poor physical environment on student's lack of interest in education. Education being the gateway to any nation's development could be thwarted by poor psychological learning environment which has been seen to make a mar student's interest, motivational drive, commitment and focus.

Recommendations

1. Government and stakeholders should ensure that the lecture halls are conducive for learning
2. Adequate learning materials like the library with current text books should be provided by educational committee and the government.
3. Proper orientation of academic staff's job description upon employment should be made available to employee by school managements.

4. Course advisers should be accessible by students in all the departments

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