

SELF-CONCEPT AND PEER PRESSURE AS DETERMINANTS OF EXAMINATION CHEATING BEHAVIOUR AMONG STUDENTS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN LAGOS STATE (IMPLICATIONS FOR EVALUATORS).

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Abstract

Examination cheating behaviour is an endemic situation that cuts across all levels of education but is more pronounced at the tertiary level of education. It is against this background that the study examined self-concept and peer pressure as determinants of examination cheating behaviour among students in universities based in Lagos State. A descriptive survey research design was employed. Multi-stage sampling technique, which involves purposive and proportionate stratified sampling techniques, was used to select one hundred and sixty (160) undergraduate students from two public universities in Lagos State. Three hypotheses were developed and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The data for the study were collected using a self-constructed questionnaire titled: Self - Concept, Peer Pressure, and Examination Cheating Behaviour (SCPPECB) questionnaire). The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients for the sub-scales in the questionnaire were 0.63 (Self- Concept), 0.84 (Peer Pressure), 0.95 (Examination Cheating Behaviour). The empirical results revealed that self-concept and peer pressure are strong determinants of students' examination cheating behaviour respectively. Moreover, the joint effect of students' self-concept and peer pressure was significant on students' examination cheating behaviour, where such effect accounted for 71.8% of the variance in the students' examination cheating behaviour. Examination cheating behaviour was prevalent (i.e. statistically significant) in some faculties of learning than in others in both universities. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that university authorities should develop and strictly enforce clear and comprehensive policies on examination malpractice. Penalties for cheating should be well publicised and consistently applied to deter students from engaging in dishonest practices. Moreover, universities should introduce peer-mentoring programmes and positive peer-group activities that promote integrity, ethical conduct, and academic excellence.

Keywords: self-concept, peer pressure, examination, cheating, behaviour.

Introduction

Education is a strong pillar upon which every nation's economy stands as well as a source of empowering the youths morally, socially, and intellectually. Education is usually considered to be the cornerstone and pillar of economic growth and development. In fact, western education has become synonymous with modern civilisation, enlightenment, and socialisation. This is because the more advanced a nation is in terms of qualitative education, the better the country is in terms of development, human transformation, innovation and social change. Education is expected to prepare the minds of its recipients for effective performance. It equips the individual with the knowledge necessary for a high level of human functioning. The Federal Republic of Nigeria in her National Policy on Education, (FRN, 2013) recognises education as the greatest force that can be used to change the world, and it is also the greatest investment that any nation can venture into for the quick development of its economic, political, sociological and human resources. This shows that qualitative and quantitative education is a sine-qua-non for the political, economic, and social change of any society or nation. This explains why adolescents' and young adults, who are the future leaders of tomorrow, should be educated.

Adolescence is a crucial stage of growth marked by identity formation, self-esteem building, and the need for social acceptance, all of which influence students' academic behaviour. One major concern in schools today is **examination malpractice** which undermines the credibility of assessments and the integrity of education. Examinations remain the key measure of competence and progress in education, serving as feedback for teachers and proof of knowledge acquisition. However, in Nigerian universities,

the integrity of examinations has been eroded, with many students resorting to dishonest practices to succeed.

Cheating in higher institutions is a growing global problem, affecting the quality of education and producing poorly prepared graduates. Studies show that students who cheat are more likely to engage in workplace dishonesty. Cheating encompasses acts such as forgery, plagiarism, identity theft, and counterfeiting, and has become widespread worldwide as students attempt to avoid failure or boost grades without remorse. This phenomenon has drawn significant attention from researchers globally, highlighting its damaging impact on education systems and the society at large.

The **Examination Malpractice Act (1999)** defines malpractice as any act before, during, or after an exam that fraudulently secures unfair advantage, thereby undermining the validity, reliability, and integrity of examinations and certificates. In essence, it refers to any behaviour that violates examination rules, regardless of whether it benefits the candidate. Similarly, **UNESCO** views academic dishonesty as deliberate actions that misrepresent academic work, such as plagiarism, data fabrication, or tampering with records, which lower educational standards. In Nigerian universities, such misconduct has eroded trust in the system. Researchers identify multiple causes of malpractice, including **peer pressure, time pressure, difficult courses, fear of failure, parental pressure, poor teaching, inadequate facilities, weak study habits, and misuse of technology**. A dishonest societal environment further fuels the problem. However, for the purpose of this study, the focus is narrowed to **self-concept** and **peer pressure** as key

psychosocial determinants of the examination cheating behaviour among students.

Among the factors that may predispose adolescents to engage in examination malpractice, self-concept and peer pressure stand out as significant determinants. Self-concept and peer pressure often reinforce each other. A student with low confidence may be more susceptible to peer influence, while strong peer pressure can further erode self-concept. Together, they create a cycle that increases vulnerability to examination malpractice. Self-concept, which refers to an individual's perception of their abilities, worth, and overall identity, plays a critical role in shaping motivation, confidence, and decision-making. Adolescents with a low or negative self-concept may doubt their capacity to succeed through honest effort, making them more vulnerable to cheating as a coping strategy to avoid failure or shame. Conversely, those with a positive self-concept are more likely to exhibit self-control, value personal achievement, and uphold academic integrity. Self-concept has become an important subject in psychology and education because of its influence on behaviour. Self-concept is defined as an organised and consistent way an individual thinks, feels, and reacts to issues concerning himself or herself arising from his/her personal experience in life (Pelemo, 2014 in Nalah, 2024).

Self-concept is also the image an individual has which is a composite of the beliefs he or she has about himself or herself, including his or her physical, academic, psychological, social and emotional characteristics, aspirations and achievements. Self-concept is very significant to psychologists and educationists because whatever a person feels or thinks about himself is very important and could be a strong determinant of his behaviour, even at school (academic performance).

Self-concept is widely believed to influence human activities, including education. Research links it to academic performance and

behaviour. **Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger and Vohs (2023)** noted that while self-concept often correlates positively with academic achievement, it tends to be a consequence rather than a cause, suggesting that improving academic skills can strengthen self-concept. Similarly, **Crawford (2013)** observed that students' self-concept affects their performance, but the effort they invest in learning significantly contributes to building self-concept and boosting achievement. In addition, **Idiaka, Idika and Egbona (2021)** asserted that psycho-social factors such as self-concept are related to students' involvement in examination malpractice. Since self-concept is part of the psycho-social construct, it can directly influence the likelihood of engaging in dishonest practices during examinations.

Peer pressure plays a significant role during adolescence, as the need for approval and belonging within a peer group often shapes behaviour. In school environments, students may be openly or subtly influenced by friends who normalise cheating as an acceptable way to secure good grades. The fear of rejection, ridicule, or isolation can push individuals to conform, even when such actions conflict with personal values. According to **Weinfied (2020)**, peer pressure represents the emotional or mental forces exerted by people within the same social group (such as age, grade, or status) to behave in similar ways. **Jones (2020)** further describes it as the ability of individuals of the same age or social rank to influence one another. While peer pressure is commonly associated with teenagers, its influence extends to children, young adults, and even mature adults, who may act in certain ways to gain peer acceptance.

Peer pressure is often linked to adolescent risk-taking behaviours such as delinquency, drug abuse, and sexual misconduct, since these activities typically occur in peer settings. However, it can also have positive outcomes. For

instance, **Kellie (2023)** notes that youth may be encouraged by peers to engage in constructive behaviours such as volunteering for charity or excelling academically. **Glaser, Shelton and Bree (2020)** observed that peer group influence plays a major role in students' involvement in examination malpractice, as members often conform to group norms even when they conflict with parental expectations. Associating with peers who neglect studying until the last minute can lure students into dishonest practices. There is a clear link between **self-concept, peer influence, and examination cheating behaviours**. For example, peers may encourage those with low self-concept to skip classes, cheat, or engage in risky behaviours such as substance abuse. Negative peer pressure can also push students into groups that indulge in alcohol, smoking, or drugs. Given the rising incidence of examination malpractice and its long-term impact on educational quality and societal development, it is crucial to examine how self-concept and peer pressure jointly or independently predict adolescents' involvement in cheating. Understanding these relationships will provide valuable insights for educators, parents, and policymakers to design interventions that foster positive self-concept, strengthen moral values, and reduce negative peer influence. This study therefore investigated the impact of **self-concept and peer pressure** as determinants of examination cheating behaviours among undergraduates in Lagos universities.

Statement of the Problem

Examination malpractice, also called cheating or dishonesty, is a major threat to education and national development. It has become widespread across all levels of education, especially in tertiary institutions, making it difficult to control. Since examinations are the main tool for measuring teaching, learning, and educational

quality, dishonesty undermines their purpose. Students often view passing exams as a "do or die affair," leading to fraudulent practices that compromise the credibility of results and certificates. Research shows that cheating is more prevalent in universities, with rates of **21.9% in private universities** and **31.3% in public universities**, raising concerns about the validity and reliability of examinations in these institutions.

Examination malpractice in Nigeria has become deeply entrenched, raising doubts about the quality of graduates and the credibility of the education system. Despite penalties, cheating has grown so widespread that it is often seen as a normal way of passing exams. This undermines the reliability of examinations as a measure of knowledge and ability, leading to the introduction of extra qualifying tests such as POST-UTME and job aptitude exams to verify certificates. The consequences extend beyond education, damaging Nigeria's academic reputation globally, as foreign institutions increasingly distrust Nigerian certificates. Many graduates cannot defend their grades, and this moral decay contributes to wider societal problems such as corruption, economic sabotage, and crime.

Research highlights factors like laziness, stress, competition, parental pressure, poor teaching, and heavy workloads as causes of exam fraud. However, **self-concept** and **peer pressure** stand out as key influences, especially among adolescents. Students with poor self-concept often lack confidence and resort to cheating, while peer influence compels others to conform to dishonest practices. Ultimately, examination malpractice threatens not only academic integrity but also national development, as students who cheat in school may carry fraudulent behaviour into workplaces, politics, and leadership. Addressing psychosocial factors like self-concept and peer pressure is essential to curbing this persistent challenge. It is therefore pertinent as a matter of urgency to curtail this social malady in our education system. The present study hence seeks to investigate self-concept and peer pressure as determinants of examination cheating behaviour, with the aim of providing evidence-based recommendations for fostering academic integrity among students in universities located within Lagos State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine self-concept and peer pressure as determinants of examination cheating among students in public universities in Lagos State. In specific terms, this study intended to:

1. Examine the influence of self-concept on the examination cheating behaviour of students in public universities in Lagos State
2. Determine the influence of peer pressure on the examination cheating behaviour of students in public universities in Lagos State
3. Determine the combined influence of self-concept and peer pressure on the examination cheating behaviour of students in public universities in Lagos State

State

Research Hypotheses

1. Self-concept has no significant influence on the examination cheating behaviour of students in public universities in Lagos State.
2. Peer pressure has no significant influence (a measure of relationship) on the examination cheating behaviour of students in public universities in Lagos State.
3. Self-concept and peer pressure have no significant influence (a measure of regressive influence) on the examination cheating behaviour of students in public universities in Lagos State

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design as well as the correlational research design. According to Best (1981), descriptive survey research design is a research method which enables the researcher to obtain the opinions of a representative sample of a target population so as to infer the perception or view of the entire population.

Population of the Study

The population for this study comprised all the undergraduate students within four (4) faculties at the University of Lagos (UNILAG), Akoka and as well as at Lagos State University (LASU), Ojo, Badagry.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A multi-stage sampling method combining purposive and proportionate stratified sampling was applied. Two public universities in Lagos State, namely: University of Lagos (UNILAG) and Lagos State University (LASU), were purposively selected. Within each university, four faculties (Education, Environmental Sciences, Science, and Arts) were chosen. From each faculty, five undergraduate students were randomly selected across the four levels of study, making 20 students per faculty. This yielded 80 students per university (20×4 faculties), and a total sample size of 160 undergraduates across both institutions.

Research Instrument

The Self-Concept, Peer Pressure and Examination Cheating Behaviour (SCPPECB) Questionnaire was the instrument used in this study, comprising four sections. Section A captures the demographic information of respondents. Section B captures the Self-Concept scale originally developed by Robson (1989) with 30 items rated on an 8-point scale (from “completely disagree” to “completely agree”). It had a Cronbach’s reliability of 0.89 and clinical validity of 0.70. Later, Ghaderi (2005) refined the scale through factor analysis, producing a five-factor solution (29 items) that explained 46% of variance, with internal consistency between .94 and .97 and strong discriminant validity. Section C is based on a Peer Pressure scale adapted by Kebede (2019) from Santor, Messervey, and Kusumakar (2000) which consists of 15 items rated on a 5-point scale (5 = always to 1 = never). Content validity was ensured, and Cronbach’s reliability coefficient was 0.76. Section D captures an Examination Cheating Behaviour scale developed by Bashir and Bala (2017) as part of their Academic Dishonesty Scale which is built on a Cronbach’s reliability coefficient of 0.95.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument

The research instrument was validated using face, content and experts' validity procedure. The comments and corrections from the experts were effected to obtain the final draft. To ensure reliability of the research instrument, the researcher carried out a pilot test. Using the Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis, the reliability coefficients for each of the three subscales in the questionnaire were respectively 0.634 (Self-Concept Subscale), 0.836 (Peer Pressure), and 0.948 (Examination Cheating Behaviour Subscale). Hence, the instruments were found valid and usable.

Results

Descriptive Analysis of Students' Demographics

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Students

Variables		No of Students (n)	Percentage (%)
school name	University of Lagos –UNILAG	80	50.0
	Lagos State University – LASU	80	50.0
	Total	160	100.0

Table 1 shows that one hundred and sixty (160) undergraduates were involved in the survey across the two (2) selected Universities (University of Lagos and Lagos State University). 80 (50.0%) of the 160 undergraduate students were from University of Lagos, while 80 (50.0%) of them were from Lagos State University. There were equal proportions of students from both universities.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: Self-concept has no significant influence on the examination cheating behaviour of students in Lagos universities

Table 2: An “r” statistical table showing the impact of students’ self-concept on their examination cheating behaviour in UNILAG

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>d.f</i>	<i>r-cal.</i>	<i>Sig. Value (p)</i>	<i>Decision</i>
Students’ Self-Concept	80	81.05	8.36				
Students’ Examination Cheating Behaviour	80	48.30	21.77	78	0.565**	0.01	Reject H₀

$p = 0.01 < 0.05$

Table 3: An “r” statistical table showing the impact of students’ self-concept on their examination cheating behaviour in LASU

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>d.f</i>	<i>r-cal.</i>	<i>Sig. Value (p)</i>	<i>Decision</i>
Students’ Self-Concept	80	82.20	14.21				
Students’ Examination Cheating Behaviour	80	45.35	22.13	78	0.594**	0.01	Reject H₀

$p = 0.01 < 0.05$

In table 2 and 3, the r-calculated value of 0.565** emerged for UNILAG and 0.594** emerged for LASU. These imply that a positive as well as a direct relationship was observed between students; self-concept and their examination cheating behaviour in UNILAG and LASU respectively. As for UNILAG students, the calculated “r” (r-cal. = 0.565**) was with 78 degrees of freedom given that the obtained level of significance (p-value) is $0.01 < 0.05$ (*statistical benchmark*). As for LASU students, the calculated “r” (r-cal. = 0.594**) was with 78 degrees of freedom given that the obtained level of significance (p-value) is $0.01 < 0.05$ (*statistical benchmark*). By implication, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Hence, *self-concept has significant influence on the examination cheating behaviour of students in Lagos Universities.*

Hypothesis 2: Peer pressure has no significant influence on the examination cheating behaviour of students in Lagos universities.

Table 4: An “r” statistical table showing the impact of students’ peer pressure on their examination cheating behaviour in UNILAG

Variables	N	Mean	SD	d.f	r-cal.	Sig. (p)	Value	Decision
Students’ Peer Pressure	80	33.33	12.89					
Students’ Examination Cheating Behaviour	80	48.30	21.77	78	0.948*	0.01		Reject H₀

$p = 0.01 < 0.05$

Table 5: An “r” statistical table showing the impact of students’ peer pressure on their examination cheating behaviour in LASU

Variables	N	Mean	SD	d.f	r-cal.	Sig. (p)	Value	Decision
Students’ Peer Pressure	80	31.90	12.93					
Students’ Examination Cheating Behaviour	80	45.35	22.13	78	0.748*	0.01		Reject H₀

$p = 0.01 < 0.05$

In Tables 4 and 5, the r-calculated value of 0.948** emerged for UNILAG and 0.748** emerged for LASU. These imply that a high positive as well as direct relationship was observed between students’ peer pressure and their examination cheating behaviour in UNILAG and LASU respectively. As for UNILAG students, the calculated “r” (r-cal. = 0.948**) was with 78 degrees of freedom given that the obtained level of significance (p-value) is $0.01 < 0.05$ (*statistical benchmark*). As for LASU students, the calculated “r” (r-cal. = 0.748**) was with 78 degrees of freedom given that the obtained level of significance (p-value) is $0.01 < 0.05$ (*statistical benchmark*). By implication, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Therefore, peer pressure has significant influence on the examination cheating behaviour of students in Lagos universities.

Hypothesis 3: Self-concept and Peer Pressure have no significant influence (a measure of regressive influence) on the examination cheating behaviour of students in Lagos universities.

Table 6: Multiple Linear Regression Model of Independent Variables (i.e. Students' Self-Concept, Peer Pressure) and their Relative Contributions on Students' Academic Performance)

Variables	B-Coefficient	Std. Error	t-statistic	Prob.
(Constant)	-8.340	6.861	-1.216	0.226
Students' Self Concept	0.128	0.100	1.271	0.206
Students' Peer Pressure	1.372	0.091	15.150	0.000
R-Squared	0.721	F-statistic	203.195	
Adjusted R-Squared	0.718	Prob. for the (F-statistic)	0.000	
Std. Error of the Estimate	11.65231	d.f. for regression	2	
Sum of Squares Residual	21316.885	d.f. for residual	157	

The Estimated Function is stated as: **Students' Examination Cheating Behaviour = - 8.340 + (0.128) Students' Self Concept + (1.372) Students' Peer Pressure**

The table 6 indicates that coefficient of determination (Adjusted R²) = 0.718, which gives proportion of variance (Adjusted R² x 100) = 71.8%. This implies that the independent variables (i.e. students' Self-Concept, students' Peer Pressure) accounted for 71.8% of the variance in the dependent variable (Students' Examination Cheating Behaviour). Besides, the joint effect of the independent variables (i.e. students' Self-Concept, students' Peer Pressure) was observed to be significant on students' Examination Cheating Behaviour (F=203.195; df. = (2; 157); significant value p = 0.000 < 0.05). In addition, the table reveals the individual contribution of the independent variables (i.e. students' Self-Concept, students' Peer Pressure) to students' Examination Cheating Behaviour. It

was observed that students' Peer Pressure had significant effect on students' Examination Cheating Behaviour [students' Peer Pressure: B= 1.372, t= 15.150, p=0.000 < 0.05], while students' Self-concept had no significant effect on students' Examination Cheating Behaviour [students' Self-concept: B= 0.128, t= 1.271, p=0.206 > 0.05].

Discussion of Findings

Findings from hypothesis one showed that Self-Concept significantly influences examination cheating behaviour among students in Lagos universities. This aligns with Rosenberg's (1979) Self-Concept theory, which explains that individuals with low self-esteem or negative self-perception often seek external validation and may

engage in behaviours that help them avoid failure or humiliation. In examination settings, such students may resort to cheating as a means of protecting their self-image and escaping the consequences of poor performance. Empirical evidence supports this relationship. Obidike and Nnaemeka (2016) found that students with low academic Self-Concept were more prone to examination malpractice due to a lack of confidence in their own abilities. Similarly, Adeyemi (2010) reported a strong negative relationship between positive Self-Concept and academic dishonesty, noting that students who perceive themselves as competent and capable are more likely to uphold personal values and resist unethical practices. In the same vein, Okorodudu (2024) observed that students with low Self-Esteem often experience heightened anxiety and fear of failure, increasing their likelihood of cheating during high-stakes examinations, whereas those with high Self-Concept tend to exhibit stronger self-discipline and greater resistance to situational pressures. These findings also correspond with Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy theory, which emphasises that individuals' beliefs in their competence strongly influence their behaviour. Students with high Self-Efficacy and positive Self-Concept are more willing to prepare diligently and trust their ability to succeed honestly, while those with low Self-Concept may view cheating as the only way to achieve success. Overall, the study confirms that Self-Concept is a critical psychological determinant of examination cheating behaviour. Enhancing students' Self-Concept through academic counselling, mentorship, and Self-Development programmes can therefore reduce their susceptibility to cheating and foster a stronger culture of academic integrity in universities.

Results from the second hypothesis revealed that peer pressure has a significant impact on students' examination cheating behaviour in Lagos universities. This finding is consistent with existing literature that emphasises the strong influence of peer norms on academic dishonesty. According to Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (1991), individuals' intentions are shaped by subjective norms and the perceived social pressure to act in certain ways. When students believe their peers condone or engage in cheating, they are more likely to view it as acceptable and conform to avoid ridicule or exclusion. Empirical evidence from Olatoye and Ogunsanya (2008) found that students with peers involved in dishonesty were more likely to cheat themselves, driven by fear of rejection or desire for acceptance. McCabe, Butterfield, and Treviño (2012) identified peer norms as one of the strongest predictors of cheating in higher education, showing that students cheat more when they perceive "everyone else is doing it." Also, Okoro and Okoro (2016) observed that peer influence often directly encourages students to share answers, use unauthorised materials, or engage in group malpractice, with loyalty to friends outweighing fear of sanctions. Theoretical support also comes from Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which explains how students imitate behaviour they observe in peers, especially when those peers succeed without consequences. This modelling reinforces the perception that cheating is both acceptable and necessary for success. Collectively, these findings highlight peer pressure as a critical determinant of examination malpractice. The study underscores the need for peer-led integrity campaigns, mentorship initiatives, and group counselling programmes to counter negative peer influence and promote a culture of honesty and accountability in Nigerian universities.

Findings from hypothesis three 3(a) revealed that the joint effect of the independent variables (i.e. students' Self-Concept, students' Peer Pressure) was observed to be significant on students' Examination Cheating Behaviour ($F=203.195$; $df. = (2; 157)$; significant value $p = 0.000 < 0.05$), when such effect accounted for 71.8% of the variance in the dependent variable (Students' Examination Cheating Behaviour). Findings from hypothesis 3(b) revealed that peer pressure had a significant effect on students' examination cheating behaviour [$B = 1.372$, $t = 15.150$, $p < 0.05$], whereas Self-Concept showed no significant independent effect [$B = 0.128$, $t = 1.271$, $p > 0.05$]. The strong combined influence of both variables, which explained 71.8% of the variance in Cheating Behaviour, highlights the interaction of personal and social factors, as explained by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979). This supports earlier findings by Olatoye & Ogunsanya (2008) and McCabe et al. (2012) that both psychological and social influences jointly predict academic dishonesty. Although previous studies (e.g., Adeyemi, 2010; Obidike & Nnaemeka, 2016) linked self-concept to cheating, its effect in this study was overshadowed by the stronger influence of Peer Pressure. This aligns with Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which suggests that Peer modelling and group rewards can override individual self-control, and with Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (1991), which emphasises the power of social norms in shaping behaviour. Similarly, McCabe & Treviño (1997) and Okoro & Okoro (2016) reported that Peer norms are stronger predictors of cheating than personal attitudes, as students often fear social isolation more than failure. The present finding also agrees with Glaser, Shelton, and Bree (2010), who observed that group membership compels adherence to Peer values, but it contrasts with Enu (2014), who found a significant

relationship between academic Self-Concept and cheating tendency among senior secondary students in Nigeria.

Conclusions

This study established that Examination Cheating Behaviour remains a significant challenge in tertiary institutions, with Peer Pressure emerging as a stronger determinant than Self-Concept among undergraduate students in universities in Lagos State. While both factors jointly influenced Cheating Behaviour, Peer Pressure had a more pronounced independent effect. These findings highlight the critical need for targeted interventions that address social influences and strengthen students' moral values. By enforcing strict examination policies, promoting positive peer relationships, and enhancing counselling services, universities can foster a culture of academic integrity and reduce the incidence of examination malpractice.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion in this study, it would be appropriate to recommend that: University authorities should develop and strictly enforce clear comprehensive policies on examination malpractice. Penalties for cheating should be well publicised and consistently applied to deter students from engaging in dishonest practices.

Since peer pressure was found to be a strong predictor of examination cheating, universities should introduce peer-mentoring programmes and positive peer-group activities that promote integrity, ethical conduct, and academic excellence.

Counsellors and psychologists should provide regular workshops, seminars, and individual counselling sessions focused on building self-esteem, self-awareness, and decision-making skills. These services will help

students develop positive self-concepts and resist negative peer influences.

Awareness campaigns on the dangers and long-term consequences of examination malpractice should be organised across faculties and departments. These campaigns can include talks, debates, and interactive sessions to reinforce the value of honesty and hard work.

Implications of the Study for Evaluators

The findings of the study on self-concept and peer pressure as determinants of adolescents' examination cheating behaviour have several important implications for evaluators in educational settings. These are:

Holistic Assessment of Student Behaviour: Evaluators should recognise that examination cheating is influenced not only by cognitive ability but also by psychological (Self-Concept) and social (Peer Pressure) factors. Evaluation processes must therefore go beyond test scores to include assessments of students' self-esteem, self-efficacy, and social interactions. **Integration of Socio-Psychological Indicators in Evaluation:** Continuous evaluation should incorporate tools such as attitude scales, peer interaction checklists, and self-concept inventories to identify students at risk of cheating due to low Self-Concept or high peer influence. **Need for Preventive Interventions:** Evaluators can use data from formative and summative assessments to recommend early interventions, such as counselling, peer mentoring, and self-development programmes, to help students build positive Self-Concept and resist negative peer pressure.

Fair and Transparent Assessment Practices : The strong influence of peer norms highlights the need for evaluators to design fair, transparent, and secure examination procedures that minimise opportunities for collusion and reduce the temptation to cheat.

Feedback for Policy and Curriculum Development: Evaluators' reports can guide school administrators and policymakers in developing policies on academic integrity, integrating character education, and promoting peer-led initiatives that discourage cheating.

Monitoring Group Dynamics: Evaluators should pay attention to group behaviour during tests and classroom activities to identify clusters of students whose peer relationships may foster dishonest practices.

In summary, the study underscored the need for evaluators to adopt a multi-dimensional approach to student assessment, an approach that considers personal attitudes, peer influences, and psycho-social factors alongside academic performance.

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