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ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF ODUDUWA UNIVERSITY, IPETU-MODU, NIGERIA: MODERATING ROLES OF PERSONALITY TRAITS AND TASK VALUE

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Abstract:

The thrust of the study was to investigate the level of academic dishonesty among undergraduate students of Oduduwa University, Ipetu-modu, Nigeria, and to examine the factors that could predispose students to academic dishonesty. These were with a view to providing information on the factors that could predispose students to academic dishonesty. The study employed the survey research design. A sample of 500 students was selected for the study using a multistage sampling procedure. An adapted instrument titled "Questionnaire on Personality Traits, Task Value and Students' Academic Dishonesty (QPTSA) was used to collect data from the students. The results showed that there was a low level of involvement in academic dishonesty among the students 286(57.5%). It was showed there was a significant relationship between extraversion ($\beta = .051$, p < 0.05), agreeableness ($\beta = .131$, p < 0.05), neuroticism ($\beta = .327$, p < 0.05), openness ($\beta = .002$, p < 0.05) and academic dishonesty, while a negative relationship existed between conscientiousness (β =.-264, p > 0.05) and academic dishonesty. Lastly, the result showed that there was a negative correlation between task value and academic dishonesty among undergraduate students (r = -.028, p >0.05). It was concluded that the incident of academic dishonesty was low among the students in the study area. However, neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, and openness were responsible for the academic dishonesty among the students in the study area.

Keywords:

Academic, Dishonesty, Personality Traits, Task Value And Undergraduates

Introduction

One of the important responsibilities of higher institutions of learning is to create an environment conducive to learning and produce graduates who will not only highly skillful and technically competent but also demonstrate high standards of honesty, ethical responsibility and commitment to serving their relevant profession and society well. However, the above aims and objectives may look mirage especially when the issue of academic dishonesty is not well resolved among the students. Nowadays, students find various illegitimate means of achieving success in their academic (Adejoke, 2010). One of such means is academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty among students has remained one of the perennial problems not only at the primary or secondary level but also in higher institutions of learning (Mebratu, 2014; Akanni & Odofin, 2015, Hodges, 2017, Jacob, Ayinde & Jacob, 2018). Academic dishonesty has been seen as a great challenge facing academic institutions all over (Prenshaw, Straughan, & Albers-Miller, 2001; Teixeira & Rocha, 2010). The trend has been a concern to academics and researchers alike and it is usually perpetrated by students from many nations both from developing and in developed nations (Ubaka, Gbenga & Ndidiamaka, 2013).

According to Lang (2013), academic dishonesty is dated back over 2,000 years ago. Its occurrence was first noticed in China when Chinese Civil Service Commission conducted an examination on the Civil Servant. Also, in Nigeria, Fasasi (2008) reported that the history of academic dishonesty could be traced back to the colonial days. It was first noticed when the questions of Senior Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate leaked. Since that time, there has been an upsurge in the cases of academic dishonesty among students at levels (Isa, 2006; Adegoke, 2010). It has also been reported that the emergence of innovations in technology has even made the problem to continue unresolved (Koss, 2011; Mebratu, 2014, Miller & Ronit, 2016, Hendy, 2017).

Stuber, Wisely and Hoggart (2009), defined academic dishonesty as any act involving dishonesty in academic works, whether imitating, buying assignments, or copying and printing the work of others without permission. To Teixeira and Rocha (2010), academic dishonesty is the act which covers areas identified as illegal, unethical, immoral or that goes against the rules, either in the course or in the universities. In his own contribution, Jones (2011) viewed academic dishonesty as any deceitful or fraudulent act commit by a student which is meant to distort standard rules or practices in order to obtain an undue advantage over the others. From the foregone, it suffices to state that academic dishonesty may be seen as an academic activity that is criminally committed either directly or indirectly by a student or a group of students to seek or get unmerited favour or benefit over others. In their own contribution, Maldonado and Lacey (2010) remarked that most at times, undergraduate students use whatever means that is available to them to commit academic dishonesty. This implies that such students can go to any length or device any means just to perpetuate the illegality.

For obvious reasons, students engage in academic dishonesty for several reasons. For instance, Sarita (2015) explained that students commit academic dishonesty as a result of competition for class rank among them. In the opinions of Emaiku (2012) and Petters and Okon (2013) the much emphasis on paper qualification, fear of failure and inadequate preparation for examinations are some of the reasons influencing students to perpetuate academic dishonesty. Besides, Odunayo and Olajuwon (2010) opined that corrupt practices in the education sector are deeply rooted in the acceptance of negative values and attitudes by members of society. In some instances, some innocent students are encouraged to take part in the illicit act because

they feel that those students who are caught engaging in examination cheating are usually gone scot-free. Hence, the duo of Novotney (2011) and Otokunefor (2011) believed that such innocent students are negatively influenced by joining the group.

Over the years, efforts have been made to investigate the rate of involvement of university students in academic dishonesty. Amie and Mckibban (2013) reported the alarming rate of academic dishonesty in the educational sector in developed and developing countries. The scholars opined that the incident of academic dishonesty is on the high rise in the whole nations. While analysing the rate in the past, Jones (2011) revealed that 92 percent of students got involved in academic dishonesty because of the desire to obtain higher marks, while about 75 percent of the students perpetrated the act because they were too busy with lessons and assignments which prevented them from making adequate preparation for the examination. In his contribution, Olatunbosun (2009) confirmed that the problem of academic dishonesty in the Nigerian educational institution has been on the increase. While reacting to the above, Olutola (2014) disclosed that a large number of Nigerian students engaged in different types of academic dishonesty. In another study outside Nigeria, Willian, Nathanson and Paulhus (2010) reported that the percentage of academic dishonesty among students is approaching 100% as compared to previous years. The problem as being observed by many scholars has directly or indirectly undermined the integrity of the institutions to produce suitable candidates for manpower in the country. It has continued to put pressure on academics and institutions in terms of managing. While reacting, Okon (2016) observed that academic dishonesty serves as an obstacle in getting accurate information about students' academic performance. Apart from this, it can hinder some educational institutions from achieving their academic goals in disseminating knowledge (Jurdi, Hage, & Chow, 2011). Above all, academic dishonesty among students has been seen as a predictor of unethical behaviour in the workplace (Deshpande, Joseph & Berry, 2012; Desalegn & Berhan, 2014, Krueger, 2014).

Arising from the numerous problems that have been cited above, studies have been carried out on the factors that were responsible for students' inclination to the academic dishonesty. One of such efforts was that of Grieve and Elliott (2013) who revealed that digital technology, learning climate and organisational culture were responsible for students' academic dishonesty. In addition, Nyamwange, Ondima and Onderi (2013)'s report showed that inadequate preparation, performance pressure and lack of facilities were responsible for students' involvement in academic dishonesty. Also, in Nigeria, a study conducted by Emaiku (2012) revealed that emphasis on paper qualification, fear of failure and inadequate preparation greatly influenced academic dishonesty among students. In spite of the numerous past studies, the attempt to provide a solution to the problem is still far-fetch. Although studies have been carried out on the influence of personality traits and task value on academic dishonesty, most of the studies that have been conducted in the past had failed to maintain a common ground on the extent to which personality traits and task value can influence the involvement of students in academic dishonesty. This is why this study is being carried out in order to take a cursory look at the relationship which personality traits and task value could have with the students' academic dishonesty.

According to Oladele (2004), personality is the unique and distinctive characteristics which set a person apart from others. In his own position, Adeniyi (2018) defined personality as the individual's totality which includes attributes, interest, abilities, likes and dislikes, disposition or attitude to life which make him/her a different entity from other individuals. Meanwhile,

one of the theories that have been propounded on personality is personality traits. The theory which was propounded by Goldberg (1998) was also known as the Big five. Goldberg (1998) in his theory classified person traits into openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. This is usually called the Big five. From his argument, every individual has a collection of these traits. But the type of personality trait that is dominant in someone's genetic make-up will ultimately determine the individual's overall behaviour (Adeniyi, 2018). This is why it is necessary to state that the type of trait that is prominent in one's personality goes a long way in determining the extent of an individual's involvement in academic dishonesty.

In the meantime, previous studies have been carried out on the influence of personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism), on academic dishonesty among students. One of such studies was Aslam and Nazir (2011) who reported that there was no significant relationship between openness and cheating. In the same vein, Masood and Mazahir (2015) study showed a negative relationship between openness and academic dishonesty. Conversely, William, Nathanson and Paulhus (2010) remarked that there was a positive relationship between openness and academic dishonesty. Also, upholding the finding were Day, Hudson, Dobies and Waris (2011) who believed that there was a high and significant impact of openness on cheating behaviour. Another trait that has been variously debated on is conscientiousness. DeBruim and Rudnick (2007) revealed that there was a negative relationship between conscientiousness and academic dishonesty. In their own study, Bratton and Strittmatter (2013) found a negative influence of conscientiousness on students' academic dishonesty. Also, Giluk and Postlethwaite (2015) concurred that no relationship was found between the two variables. This implies that students who are highly conscientious are likely to involve less in deviant behaviour because of their self-discipline and control nature.

In the same vein, studies have shown that agreeableness students are less likely to engage in academic dishonesty. Karim, Zamzuri and Nor (2009) revealed that individuals with high levels of agreeableness participate less in the academic dishonesty. Similarly, Williams, et al. (2010) posited that the agreeableness students are not inclined to academic dishonesty. The above result was also confirmed by Clariana (2013) that a negative relationship was observed between agreeableness and academic dishonesty. However, it is also possible that agreeable students may be susceptible to cheating behaviour. This is because of their "interpersonal tendencies". For instance, such students, because of their attitude to help others may decide to go to any length just to sacrifice their conscience in order to help their fellow students. Apart from the above traits, extraversion has also been considered as one of the traits that may predispose students to academic dishonesty. Karim et al. (2010) held that extraversion was not a good predictor of academic dishonesty. This position was also maintained by Correa (2017) who has proved a negative relationship between extraversion and students' cheating behaviour, However, Bratton and Strittmatter (2013)'s report showed that there was a relationship between extraversion and students' inclination to cheating behaviour. This report was upheld by Ashton, Lee and Vries (2014) that there was a strong link between extraversion and academic dishonesty. According to Ashton, et al. (2014), honesty-humility is considered as the good predictor of cheating behaviour among students. In view of this, Giluk and Postlethwaite (2015) believed that extraversion has different facets and its excitement seeking facet has been linked to dishonesty and cheating.

Other studies conducted on personality traits found that neuroticism was the best predictor of unethical behaviour among students. For examples, Karim, *et al.* (2009) and Clariana (2013) found a positive relationship between neuroticism and academic dishonesty. Arising from the findings, it is assumed that an association can be made between a high level of anxiety, stress and inability to cope or handle examination situations which may, in turn, lead an individual to resort to unethical behaviour. While reacting, Giluk and Postlethwaite (2014) indicated that the mood of neurotic students changes constantly, and they can carry out their impulses without rationality. Aside from that, it is also believed that neurotic students may not have hope for a better future, hence are likely to choose unethical ways. On the contrary, Christine and James (2008)'s report indicated that no significant impact was found between neuroticism and academic dishonesty of students. According to him, neurotic students were not likely to engage in academic dishonesty.

Apart from the personality traits, the influence of task value on academic dishonesty has been variously debated by different scholars. According to Halstead and Taylor (2000), task value can be defined as the principles and ideals that guide behaviour and standards that are assessed in terms of which actions are good or desired. Also, Wigfield and Eccles (2000) viewed the task value of how a certain task meets different individual needs. This is the motivation or incentive which an individual feels he/she will derive by engaging in a task. It is believed that task value can predict academic behaviour of students in many ways. For instance, in task value, the position of a student on academic dishonesty is guided by three-component values which are attainment (important of doing well in a task), utility (relevance of the task to one's future academic) and intrinsic (interest one displays on the task). From the above, it is pertinent to state that individual beliefs about the value and importance of the task may determine whether an individual will engage in academic dishonesty or not. For instance, Hemin, Masoud, Lavasan and Malahmadi (2010) maintained that once students see a task of more useful and valuable, their motivation is enhanced and consequently choose a deeper to the task. This might explain why Devy, et al. (2007) revealed that task value could be a predictor to academic dishonesty. For instance, Devy, et al. (2007) explained that students who perceived their education extrinsically such as to have a high-paying job is more likely to be dishonest in academic compared to students who view education as a reward of itself.

In spite of the several studies that have been conducted, especially on the personality traits and academic dishonesty, yet there was no agreement among the researchers on which of the traits actually responsible for students' academic dishonesty. More so, it is believed that not much has been done on the relationship between task value and academic dishonesty among students especially at the local level. Based on this premise, this study is designed to ascertain the relationship between each of personality traits, task value and academic dishonesty among students.

Objectives of the Study

- a. investigate the level of involvement in academic dishonesty among undergraduates of Oduduwa University, Ipetu-modu, Osun State, Nigeria;
- b. determine the relationship between personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism) and academic dishonesty among the undergraduates; and
- c. ascertain the relationship between task value and academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the study area.

Research Question

What is the level of involvement in academic dishonesty among undergraduates of Oduduwa University, Ipetu-modu, Osun State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

- 1. There is no significant relationship between personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism) and academic dishonesty among the undergraduates.
- 2. There is no significant relationship between task value and academic dishonesty among undergraduates in the study area.

Methodology

The study employed the survey research design. The population of the study comprised undergraduates of Oduduwa University, Ipetu-modu, Nigeria. However, a sample of 500 students was selected for the study using a multistage sampling procedure. The first stage of the selection involved three out of five faculties which were selected using a simple random sampling technique. From each faculty, two departments were selected using a simple random sampling technique. Thereafter, 500 students from Parts One to Five were selected using a proportionate sampling technique. An adapted instrument titled "Questionnaire on Personality Traits, Task Value and Students' Academic Dishonesty (QPTSA) which contained four subscales was used to collect data from the students. The first scale of the instrument was used to collect information on the students' personal data. The second sub-scale titled "Academic Dishonesty Scale" (ADS) contained 15 items on students' academic dishonesty. Again, the third sub-scale: "Students' Personality Traits Scale" (SPS) comprised 28 items which sought information on the five personality traits, while the fourth sub-scale Students' Task Value Scale (STS) which was on task value contained 19 items. Scales two, three and four were dully validated and the reliability tests were conducted on them. Thus, the results showed that the scales on students' academic dishonesty, personality traits and task value yielded the Spearman-Brown split-half correlational results of 0.78%, 0.84% and 0.89% respectively. The above results indicated the three sub-scales were appropriate and suitable for the study. Data collected were analysed using percentage, Pearson Product Correlation formular and multiple regression analyses.

Results

Research Question

What is the level of involvement in academic dishonesty among undergraduates of Oduduwa University, Ipetu-modu, Osun State, Nigeria?

The data collected on the level of involvement in academic dishonesty among undergraduates of Oduduwa University, Ipetu-modu, Osun State, Nigeria was analysed using percentage. The results are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Level of Involvement of Undergraduates in Academic Dishonesty

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)		
Low	286	57.5		
Moderate	161	32.3		
High	50	10.2		
-	497	100.0		

Table 1 indicated that there were different levels of involvement of students in academic dishonesty. For instance, the results showed that 286(57.5%) of the students indicated low involvement in academic dishonesty, 161(32.3%) had a moderate involvement while the remaining 50(10.2%) of students expressed that they were highly involved in the academic dishonesty. From the results, it can be concluded that involvement of most students in academic dishonesty was low.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism) and academic dishonesty among the undergraduates

Table 2: Model Summary between Personality Traits and Academic Dishonesty among Undergraduates

				Std. Error of the
Model	R	\mathbb{R}^2	Adj R ²	Estimate
1	0.174^{a}	0.030	0.020	8.03459

From Table 2, the results show the Pearson correlation index (R = 0.174) between predictors variables and actual scores of the academic dishonesty, the squared multiple correlations ($R^2 = 0.030$) and adjusted squared multiple correlations (Adj. $R^2 = 0.020$). This shows that the model accounts for 2.0%) of variance in academic dishonesty.

Table 3: Coefficient between Personality Traits and Academic Dishonesty among Undergraduates

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	В	Std. Error	Beta		
I (constant)	18.378	2.588		7.101	.000
Extraversion	.112	.119	.051	.948	.344
Agreeableness	.131	.172	.045	.760	.448
Conscientiousness	264	.143	111	-1.849	.065
Neuroticism	.327	.112	.144	2.933	.004
Openness	.002	.107	.001	.016	.987

- a. Predictors (constant), (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism)
- b. Academic Dishonesty

Results of the beta weight in Table 3 showed that neuroticism contributed significantly to the academic dishonesty of students. It was also showed that extraversion, agreeableness, openness had a positive relationship with the dependent variable, while conscientiousness had a negative relationship. This is expressed in the equation below:

DV = 18.378 + .112(Extraversion) + .131(Agreeableness) - .264(Conscientiousness) + .327(Neuroticism) + .002(openness).

From the above, it can be deduced that a unit in change (increase) in conscientiousness will result in the negative change (decrease) in academic dishonesty by 0.264. Whereas, a unit change (increase) in the respondents' extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism and openness will amount to a positive change (increase) in academic dishonesty among students by 0.112, 0.131, 0.327 and 0.002 respectively.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between task value and academic dishonesty among undergraduate students in the study area.

The data on relationship between task value and academic dishonesty among undergraduates were analysed with Pearson Product Correlation

Table 4: Relationship between Task Value and Academic Dishonesty among Undergraduates

		C II a CI SI a a a a a a a	•			
Variables	\overline{X}	S.d	N	df	r	p
Academic	23.0161	8.11732	497	495	028	0.531
Dishonesty						
Task Value	66.8189	9.80883	497			

Table 4 shows a Pearson correlation coefficient (r = -.028, p > 0.05). This indicates that there is a negative correlation between task value and academic dishonesty among undergraduate students. It also means that task value does not in any way contribute to the students' involvement in academic dishonesty.

Discussion of Findings

The findings on the level of involvement of undergraduate students in the academic dishonesty had revealed low level participation of the students in the academic dishonesty. It was showed that more than half of the students indicated that they hardly participated in the academic dishonesty. However, the findings contradicted the findings of Olatunbosun (2009) and Jones (2011) which found the majority of students involving in academic dishonesty. This position was also maintained by Olutola (2014) that numerous Nigerian students engaged in academic dishonesty. From the above, it can be summarized that though academic dishonesty is a prevalent problem that crosses all disciplines at the university level, the types of policies being put in place by individual institutions may also be a determinant factor whether students will engage in the problem or not.

It was also revealed from the study that neuroticism contributed significantly to the academic dishonesty of students. Extraversion, agreeableness, openness had a positive relationship with the dependent variable, while conscientiousness had a negative relationship. This implies that among the five traits, neuroticism was the greatest predictor of students' academic dishonesty. This finding was supported by scholars such as Karim, *et al.* (2009) and Clariana (2013) that Copyright © GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (M) SDN BHD - All rights reserved

there was a positive relationship between neuroticism and academic dishonesty. While corroborating the finding, Giluk and Postlethwaite (2015) expressed that neurotic students are characterised with mood changes which constantly predispose they to carry out actions without giving it a second thought. This means that neurotic students may be easily frustrated and thereby resulted to unethical academic behaviour. However, the duo of Christine and James (2008) believed that there was no significant impact of neuroticism and academic dishonesty of students.

Moreover, it was revealed through the findings that extraversion, agreeableness and openness had a positive relationship with academic dishonesty. These findings were supported with the studies of Bratton and Strittmatter (2013)'s which showed a strong relationship between extraversion and students' inclination to cheating behaviour. The same position was maintained in Ashton, Lee and Vries (2014) study which indicated a strong connection between extraversion and academic dishonesty. Contrarily, Karim et al. (2010) and Correa (2017) indicated that extraversion was not a good predictor of academic dishonesty. More so, William, et al. (2010) remarked that there was a positive relationship between openness and academic dishonesty. Also, the position was maintained by Day, et al. (2011) that there was a high and significant impact of openness on cheating behaviour. In their own different findings, Aslam and Nazir (2011) indicated that there was no significant relationship between openness and cheating. While buttressing the findings, Masood and Mazahir (2015) averred that a negative relationship was found between openness and academic dishonesty. By and large, from all indications, it is likely that students who have openness as a dominating trait may be less susceptible to academic dishonesty. Because such students are regarded as explorers who are very curious to seek new experience and intellectual matters and who are ready to work hard positively to achieve their academic goals or targets.

Above all, it was revealed in the study that task value did not have any relationship with academic dishonesty among students. However, the above finding was rebuffed by Devy, *et al.* (2007) who believed that task value could be a predictor to academic dishonesty. Apart from this, Devy, *et al.* (2007) opined that perceived importance students attach to an academic task would inform their readiness to engage in academic dishonesty or not. While buttressing the above, Hemin, *et al.* (2010) averred that once student discovered that a task is very important to them, their motivation is enhanced and consequently choose a deeper to the task. From the above, it is important to state that task value may be a good predictor of academic dishonesty. Especially when consider the fact that task value goes a long way in assisting students in taking decision regarding their academic activities. Besides, task value can also be related to both students' intentions and actual choices of academic tasks.

Conclusion/Recommendations

From the findings above, it could be concluded that fewer number of undergraduate students in the study area took part in the academic dishonesty. It was also concluded that traits such as neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness and openness positively disposed students to academic dishonesty, while conscientiousness and task value did not correlate with students' academic dishonesty. It is, therefore, recommended that the school authority should make concerted efforts and policies that can reduce the incident of academic dishonesty among students to its barest minimum. Also, stringent punishment should be meted to any student or any person who is linked to academic dishonesty.

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