

EFFECT OF PSYCHO-EDUCATION ON PRONENESS TO ACADEMIC CHEATING BEHAVIOURS AMONG IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Academic cheating behaviours are common in the Nigerian education system, and secondary school students are not immune because many of them are prone to it. This practice/menace continues to exist despite several countermeasures that have been implemented. Counselling intervention, however, are thought to be able to significantly reduce, if not completely abolish, students' academic cheating behaviours. The study investigated the effect of psycho-education on proneness to academic cheating behaviours among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria. Three null hypotheses guided the study and a quasi-experimental pre-test post-test control group design was adopted to carry out the study. 37 participants (17 participants for experimental group and 20 participants for the control group) were selected from the three Local Government Areas of Ilorin Metropolis. The instruments for data collection are Proneness to Academic Cheating Behaviour Questionnaire by Selehi and Gholampour (2021) and Self-Efficacy Questionnaire by AbdulGafoor and Ashraf (2006); with reliability indices of 0.89, and 0.90 and respectively. The descriptive statistics of percentage was used

to describe the demographic factors of the respondents; while the inferential statistics of Analysis of Co-Variance (ANCOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses. The findings revealed that psycho-education is an effective counselling intervention for reducing students' proneness to academic cheating behaviours and improved their self-efficacy regardless of their gender difference. It was recommended among others that school counsellors and the authorities should consider integrating counselling interventions into the school counselling programmes to reduce students' susceptibility to academic cheating behaviours and to enhance their self-efficacy.

Key Words: Academic cheating behaviours; In-school adolescents; Psycho-education; Proneness: Self-efficacy

Introduction

Cheating in academics refers to any attempt to fraudulently provide or accept aid without the required recognition during a formal academic exercise. Academic cheating is a pervasive behavioural issue that has increased in the educational system, which is meant to be a learning environment for developing character, knowledge, and abilities. Cheating behaviour among students is a contemporary issue among education stakeholders and a very contending subject in educational research. Researches have been carried out on academic cheating behaviours in order to understand different parameters (such as plagiarism, knowledge of academic cheating, factors responsible for it, methods of cheating, strategies to curb the menace, its prevalence and its demographic disparities) associated with the cheating behaviour; yet the depth of researches still remains inexhaustible (Athanasou & Olasehinde, 2002; Anderman & Midgley, 2004; Al-Qaisy, 2008; Diego, 2017; Dejene, 2021)

Academic cheating behaviours as deceiving or depriving another through fraud, deception, tricking or misleading them in order to succeed or perform well in one's educational pursuits (Davis, Drinan and Gallant , 2009). It was described by Rana and Ajmal (2013) as an attempt by a student to submit someone else's academic work as his/her own. Cheating includes imitating someone else's writing or other work dishonestly through activities or behaviours intended to earn the best grade on examinations (Wahyudiati, 2015). Therefore, any dishonesty or inappropriate behaviour manifested during an examination in violation of the set rules and regulations is a cheating behaviour, for example, asking for and receiving test answers from peers, copying answers of homework or other assignments from peers, using illegal materials such as already prepared answers on pieces of paper, answer booklet and phones while taking the test, writing on a wall, desk, palms, dozing off during the test, using crib sheets, plagiarizing word for word, and

claiming ownership of a task completed by someone else are some common cheating behaviours (McCabe, 2009; Power, 2009). Some of these cheating behaviour are not peculiar or limited to students only.

Also the use of coded communication, writing on the body, collaboration on individual assignments, presenting information without citing a source, fabricating data, allowing someone to copy in an examination and use of smart phones are other forms of academic cheating behaviours (Alarape & Onakoya, 2003). Other instances of academic cheating behaviour identified by Michaut (2013) include lying, using or displaying notes or other information devices inappropriate to the required test conditions, taking or receiving copies of an examination questions papers without the instructor's permission, and discussing at any time in an examination or test, unless such discussion is specifically authorized by the examiner.

Proneness refers to the likelihood that a person would engage in a specific behaviour or action. It is a prevailing movement in a specific direction. According to Novotney (2011), proneness refers to a high likelihood that something will transpire in a specific manner. In the light of these definitions, cheating proneness can be described as a tendency, likelihood or disposition that a student would engage in dishonest actions in order to pass or to be successful in his/her academic pursuits. It is an inclination of a student to manifest attitudes, traits and characteristics as well as express opinions in favour of cheating. Negative proneness could heighten the possibility of thoughts, feelings and physiological arousal to engage in examination misconduct.

There are internal and external factors that can cause academic cheating behaviour. Low self-efficacy, laziness, poor academic performance, poor time management and procrastinating behaviours are some examples of internal factors that lead to academic cheating behaviour, while the external factors include peer pressure, parental pressure, unclear school rules and teachers' inaction toward students who engage in cheating behaviour (Hartanto, 2012). Diego (2017) stated that some students who cheated on tests did so out of a desire to help others, another factor identified as motivating cheating is peer pressure. Dejene (2021) also discovered that most students have a higher tolerance for the majority of academic dishonesty, which was demonstrated by their lower assessments of the seriousness of the actions. The main justifications given by students for engaging in academic cheating were found to be other factors responsible for academic cheating behaviours could be lower likelihood of getting caught and the lack of harsh penalty (Dejene, 2021).

A desire to display competence, either by attempting to be better than others or by trying to avoid being worse than others. Al-Dossary (2017) opined that students will develop favourable attitudes toward cheating if they have prioritized their grades without backing it up with hard work. Friends, families and teachers

also contribute to academic cheating behaviour. Kustiwi (2014) revealed that the involvement of the teacher is most often the cause of cheating.

Some personal attributes that may be responsible for academic cheating behaviour are self-efficacy, procrastination and locus of control. High academic self-efficacy people manage challenging situations, solve issues patiently, perform well in school and in the workplace, and have confidence in their abilities to succeed (Korkmaz, 2011). Self-efficacy and academic cheating had a negative association (Nora & Zhang, 2010). According to Smith, Burnett and Wessel (2017), reinforcement and vicarious learning are two aspects that can aid in boosting self-efficacy in relation to particular activities. Self-efficacy, which refers to a person's confidence in carrying out a task or action, is a key factor in determining whether a behaviour is enhanced or inhibited (Denler, Walters & Benzon, 2014). As the behaviour is reinforced by not having to personally deal with the consequences or by witnessing others cheat without dealing with the consequences, students' self-efficacy levels in relation to cheating may rise. This higher level of self-efficacy may make it easier to carry on with the harmful conduct (Smith, et al., 2017).

It has been demonstrated that cheating tends to raise emotions of incompetence, poor academic planning and conscientiousness, lack of good study habits and low skill acquisition (Badejo & Gandonu, 2010). Among students of various age groups, genders and educational settings. The propensity to academic cheating behaviour is a significant precursor and predictor of actual engagement in examination misconduct (Barabanell, Farennes, Tramontano, Fida, Ghezzi, Paciello & Long, 2018). It carries the inherent risk of encouraging students to cheat on examinations, which can be disastrous for schools, students, teachers and the country as a whole. Certain punishments and penalties such as expulsions, orientations, suspensions and counselling employed in schools to reduce tendencies for academic cheating behaviour do not seem to be very successful. Therefore, additional interventionist programmes such as psycho-education and cognitive restructuring techniques need to be taken into consideration if the menace of academic cheating behaviour is to be curbed.

Psycho-education has been described as interventions that help people learn about their problems by assisting them, providing information, and teaching them problem-solving techniques. It is a systematic and didactic approach to informing clients about their issues and their management, thereby, promoting understanding and personal management of the concerns (Bai, Wang, Yang & Niu, 2015). It is suitable for the provision of certain information on some of the areas of their concerns. The emphasis is on instructing, orienting and cross-examining clients' beliefs, values, attitudes and opinions through the use of planned skill-building or improve in their social skills exercises and information which can help them to acquire skills in psycho-educational groups (Gerrity & DeLuciaWaack, 2007).

Psycho-educational group work has the enormous potential to improve students' development and achievement, but it is also flexible in its applicability and may be adopted to handle a wide range of issues. These might cover subjects like the improvement of social skills, aggression (Schechtman & Ifargan, 2009), that will improve their tendencies towards cheating behaviours (Tamami, Rahmawati, Dewingga, Permana & Ramadhani, 2015), emotional and behavioural disorders (Marlow, Garwood & Van-Loan, 2017), mental health or psychological wellbeing (Makama, Bisji, Umar, Ogbole, Banje, Takyum, Gideon, Ishakum & Raymond, 2019), among many others.

With regard to this current study, it is observed that despite the prevalence of examination malpractices among students, psycho-education technique had rarely been used as counselling interventions for solving adolescents academic cheating behaviours, particularly, among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State; hence, the need for the conduct of this study.

Statement of the Problem

Education is meant to build responsible citizens who should be worthy both in learning and character in order to facilitate growth and development of the nation. In the past three or four decades, students upheld these qualities by taking pride in working hard, diligence and commitment to achieve success in their academic pursuits. Degrees and certifications were awarded based on merit and academic excellence. It is unfortunate however, that this contemporary educational system in Nigeria seems to be confronted with several vices such as academic cheating behaviours. In Nigeria and Ilorin in particular, students seem to have currently become inventors, perpetrators and advocates of academic dishonesty and are not ashamed to engage in different forms of academic cheating behaviours. Education stakeholders such as the parents, teachers, invigilators, school authorities, examiners, examination boards among others seem to be seen as supporting these cheating behaviours in schools. For example, some school principals were indicted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) for their involvement in examination malpractice in the May/June, 2022 West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination (Adebayo, 2022).

It appears that secondary students' reliance on cheating tends to have affected the study culture among many in-school adolescents who seem to place less value on education by trying to cut corners to achieve academic success. Academic cheating behaviours are caused by both external and internal variables. Internal factors include low self-efficacy, subpar academic achievement, locus of control, ineffective time management, and procrastination. Peer pressure, parental pressure, ambiguous school policies, and teachers' passivity towards cheating pupils are some of the external variables that contribute to academic cheating conduct. Again lack of knowledge and good character tend to have contributed

immensely to the pervasiveness of academic cheating behaviours among secondary school students which calls for urgent intervention.

However, the government, education scholars, and other relevant stakeholders have used various approaches and strategies to reduce academic cheating among secondary school students, such as the government in the Examination Malpractices and Miscellaneous Offences Act of Nigeria, which proclaimed 21 years' imprisonment for those caught with academic cheating behaviour, but unfortunately, academic cheating continues to rise. Education scholars and researchers recommended different strategies to stem the situation. For instance, Jackson, Johnson and Persico (2015) suggested proper funding and effective supervision of the system; while Oluwasegun (2017) proposed guidance and counselling technique.

Studies of this type are scarce in Ilorin, some of the known related-research (like Asikhia, 2014; Zakariyah, Raheem, Ogunwale, Garba & Yakubu, 2018) were on reducing Mathematics anxiety and self-concept using cognitive restructuring; Jacob, Ayinde and Jacob (2018); Aderinto, Adebayo and Idoko (2021) were survey researches; thus, the researcher's intent to conduct a quasi-experimental study to provide an evidence-based management of academic cheating behaviours among secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis. In the light of this, this current study intends to adopt the psycho-education counselling techniques to reduce proneness to academic cheating behaviours among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the effect of psycho-education on proneness to academic cheating behaviours among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, this study will:

1. determine the difference in the post-test mean scores of academic cheating behaviours among in-school adolescents exposed to psycho-education and control group.
2. examine the difference in the post-test mean scores on self-efficacy among in-school adolescents exposed to psycho-education and control group.
3. examine if there would be significant gender difference in the post-test mean scores on self-efficacy among in-school adolescent exposed to treatment and control group.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised in this study:

1. To what extent will there be any difference in the post-test mean scores of academic cheating behaviour among in-school adolescents exposed to psycho-education and control group?

2. Is there any difference in the post-test mean scores on self-efficacy among in-school adolescents exposed to psycho-education and control group?
3. To what extent will there be any gender difference in the post test mean scores on self-efficacy among in-school adolescent exposed to treatment and control group?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for testing in this study:

1. There is no significant difference in the post-test mean score of academic cheating behaviour among in-school adolescents exposed to psycho-education and control group.
2. There is no significant difference in the post-test mean score on self-efficacy among in-school adolescents exposed to psycho-education and control group.
3. There is no significant gender difference in the post test mean scores on self-efficacy among in-school adolescent exposed to treatment and control group.

Scope of the Study

The study was limited to public secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State only three selected schools was used. A counselling techniques of psycho-education training was used to reduce or eradicate the level of proneness of the respondents to academic cheating behaviours, within a six-week period. The variables covered in this study include proneness to academic cheating behaviours, self-efficacy and gender.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was quasi-experimental design which involves pre-test, post-test, control group design. The choice of quasi-experiment was because of its strength to maximize internal and external validity in the effect of psycho-educational intervention on proneness to academic cheating behaviours among secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis.

Dependent Variable: Proneness to Academic Cheating Behaviour

Moderating Variables: Gender; Self-efficacy

Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques

The target population for this study consists of all SSS1 students in Ilorin metropolis, which is 11,850 according to the Kwara State Ministry of Education as at 2022.

Multi-stage sampling process was employed for this study. The first stage was the adoption of the existing three Local Government Areas in Ilorin Metropolis. The second stage involved using systematic sampling technique to select one senior

secondary school from each of the three LGAs. The third stage involved identification of SS1 students with high level of proneness to academic cheating behaviours in each of the schools selected from the three LGAs through base-line assessment. The research instrument used was an adapted questionnaire titled “Proneness to academic cheating behaviours Questionnaire” developed by Salehi and Gholampour (2021) and “Self-Efficacy Questionnaire” by AbdulGafoor and Ashraf (2006);

The SSS1 students were considered suitable for the study because they are at the intermediate level of senior secondary education and middle adolescence who are preparing to write their West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) towards their future career choices. Also, these students were being placed in different classes (science, business and arts) on tentative mode which are subjected to change based on their performance at the end of the session.

At the last stage 37 participants were selected using purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling was used to select senior secondary school students with “high level of proneness to academic cheating behaviours” (that is, those ranked topmost among the students sampled) from SSS 1 classes in each school; making a total of 37 participants all together.

Table 1: Distribution of Sample into Study Groups

S/N	School	Groups	Treatment	N of Participants	
				M	F
				Total	
1	School A	Experimental Group 1	Psycho-Education	9	8
				17	
2	School B	Control Group	No Treatment	10	10
				20	
Total				37	

The research instruments used to obtain relevant data for the study:

1. Proneness to Academic Cheating Behaviour Questionnaire by Salehi and Gholampour, 2021.
2. Self-efficacy Questionnaire by AbdulGafoor and Ashraf (2006)

Description of the Instruments

Proneness to Academic Cheating Behaviour Questionnaire (PACBQ) is adapted from Salehi and Gholampour (2021). Some of the modification made on the original instrument was that the “second-person singular – you” tone used was changed to “a first-person singular – I”. The adapted instrument consists of 18 items on different methods of academic cheating behaviour but the researcher added two more items to make it 20 items based on thorough review of related literature. In

addition, the scoring method was not specified for the original instrument; thus, the researcher adopted a five-point Likert rating scale of; Always; Very Often; Sometimes; Rarely and Never; with 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 scores respectively. The reliability value of the instrument was 0.89 which is considered to be within the highly acceptable range.

The Self-Efficacy Scale (with reliability index f 0.90) was adapted from AbdulGafoor and Ashraf (2006); The scoring method used for this scale consisted of Exactly True = 5, Nearly True = 4, Neutral = 3, Nearly False = 2 and Exactly False = 1. This instrument was referred to as adapted because 10 items were selected from the original instruments that contained 40 items.

Treatment Procedure

Psycho-Education: The goal of Psycho-Education interventions in therapy is to give clients information about psychological ideas, their unique difficulties, and the connections between thought, emotion and action. By giving the client the chance to inquire about the results of various treatment options, they are also a crucial part of obtaining informed consent to treatment. Four components make up the psycho-educational services offered to clients; they include: Informing a client about their issue or condition; learning problem-solving techniques; developing communication skills; and receiving assertiveness training.

Session One: Introduction. Session one started by introducing one another, explain the goals of the group, the dos and don'ts of the group, expectations and responsibilities of each group members, confidentiality issue and explanation about the topic of discourse, that is, proneness to academic cheating behaviours.

Session Two: Give the Facts. Defining the cheating behaviour proneness is the main focus of this session. The researcher shared with the participants the meaning of proneness to academic cheating behaviours and asked them to imagine a situation where they were cheating in the examination. The counsellor explored with the participants the nature of cheating proneness and explain to them how cheating behaviour could become habitual.

Session Three: Common Crisis Reaction. Explain the dangers inherent in becoming a cheater and the reasons why students engage in the maladaptive behaviour. Help students identify common reactions to the crisis event. Explain how students are "probably having normal feelings and thoughts in response to an unusual event or situation (cheating behaviour). Direct students to draw a picture of how someone may feel in response to a crisis event.

Session Four: Managing the Maladaptive Behaviour. The researcher discussed with the students how to ameliorate the level of proneness to academic cheating behaviours in order to enhance their capability of self-control against their maladaptive behaviour. The participants were equipped with communication, problem-solving and assertiveness training skills that they can adopt to avoid

susceptibility to academic cheating behaviours. Assignment was given after this session for the participants to put the training they have undergone into practice.

Session Five: Retraining. Activities in the fourth session are reviewed to understand the participants' level of mastery. Retraining was carried out to get the participants well acquainted with the skills being imparted in them. The participants were encouraged to keep practising the skills for positive outcome and to avoid future relapse.

Session Six: Evaluation and Termination. At the conclusion of the sessions, participants were asked to identify what they had learnt from the activities and how they can use this information to meet their individual goals for change. In addition, group members were asked what activities and information had not been helpful to them. Participants were given a list of negative statements and had them change the statements to positive or coping statements. They were again asked to rate the level to which they were satisfied with the training and whether or not it should be terminated at this juncture. Participants' positive responses to the above led to the closure of the treatment sessions. Finally, the researcher compared pretest evaluation on definitions of academic cheating behaviour with posttest evaluation. Every session was conducted with the revision of the preceding session

Control Group

The individuals in this group did not receive any treatment, but they were given assertiveness training to keep them occupied in order to prevent a "John Henry" impact on the main experimental groups. John Henry effect is an experimental bias introduced into social experiments by reactive behaviour by the control group. They also underwent a post-test using the same instruments following the treatment sessions.

Results and Discussions

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the post-test mean score of academic cheating behaviour among in-school adolescents exposed to psycho-education and control group.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Academic Cheating Behaviour of Experimental Group

Group	N	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Mean Difference
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Psycho-education	17	64.50	7.56	38.35	13.48	-26.15
Control Group	20	64.90	9.81	65.05	10.92	0.15

* N = Number of participants; SD = Standard Deviation

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation comparing the pre-test and post-test scores of academic cheating behaviour of the participants. The table shows that the psycho-education and control groups have mean values of 65.50 and 64.90 respectively at pre-test, indicating a high level of academic cheating behaviour. At the post-test stage, the mean scores of the experimental group reduced drastically to 38.35 while that of control group increased to 65.05 respectively. Hence, the mean differences of -26.15 indicate that psycho-education interventions followed the order of ranking; while control group is not (with mean difference of 0.15). In order to determine if the differences in mean values were significant, the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was computed as shown in the Table 2.

Table 3: ANCOVA Results of Academic Cheating Behaviour across Experimental Groups

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2021.392 ^a	16	126.337	0.418	.861
Intercept	301.924	1	301.924	13.160	.000
Covariate	22.942	1	22.942	.102	.712
Group	3357.621	15	223.841	3.115	.032
Error	215.558	3	71.853		
Total	36639.000	20			
Corrected Total	2936.950	19			

Table 3 shows the ANCOVA result showing the significant effect of the experimental groups on the participants' cheating behaviour. The Table indicates that there is statistically significant difference in the means of the experimental group [$F(15, 3) = 3.115$; $p = .032 < .05$]; hence, the hypothesis is rejected, which implies that there is a significant difference in the post-test mean scores of the experimental condition.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the post-test mean score on self-efficacy among in-school adolescents exposed to psycho-education and control group.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on Self-Efficacy of Experimental Groups

Group	N	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Mean Difference
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Psycho-education	17	23.50	3.72	33.30	6.80	9.80
Control Group	20	16.40	3.76	14.35	4.61	-2.05

* N = Number of participants; SD = Standard Deviation

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation comparing the pre-test and post-test scores of self-efficacy of the participants. The table shows that the psycho-education, and control groups have mean values of 23.50 and 16.40 respectively at pre-test. At the post-test stage, the mean scores of the two experimental groups increased significantly to 33.30 while that of control group reduced to 14.35 respectively. Hence, the mean differences of 9.80 indicate that psycho-education intervention followed the order of ranking; while control group is not (with mean difference of -2.05). In order to determine if the differences in mean values were significant, the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was computed as shown in the Table 5.

Table 5: ANCOVA Results of Self-Efficacy across Experimental Groups

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	481.978 ^a	13	37.075	7.472	.011
Intercept	764.126	1	764.126	153.993	.000
Covariate	22.942	1	22.561	4.547	.077
Group	478.455	12	39.871	8.035	.009
Error	29.772	6	4.962		
Total	27523.000	20			
Corrected Total	511.750	19			

Table 5 shows the ANCOVA result for the significant effect of the experimental group on the participants' self-efficacy. The Table indicates that [$F(12, 6) = 8.035$; $p = .009 < .05$] there is statistical significant difference in the means of the experimental group; hence, the hypothesis is rejected, which implies that there is a significant difference in the post-test mean scores of the experimental condition.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant gender difference in the post test mean scores on self-efficacy among in-school adolescent on the treatment and control groups.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics on Self-Efficacy across Gender and Experimental Groups

Group	Gender	N	Pre-test		Post-Test		MD
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Psycho-Education	Male	9	25.33	3.80	36.33	7.91	11.00
	Female	8	22.00	3.03	30.91	4.88	8.91
	Total	17	47.33	6.83	67.24	12.79	19.91
Control Group	Male	10	15.50	4.72	11.20	1.75	-4.30
	Female	10	17.30	4.87	17.50	4.45	0.20
	Total	20	32.80	9.59	28.70	6.20	-4.10

* SD = Standard Deviation; MD = Mean Difference

Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation comparing the pre-test and post-test scores of self-efficacy of the participants across gender. The Table indicates that at pre-test, male participants have self-efficacy mean values of 25.33, 20.00 and 15.50 for psycho-education and control groups respectively. At post-test, the male participants mean values were 36.33 and 11.20 for the two groups respectively. On the other hand, the female participants have 22.00 and 17.30 at pre-test; while at post-test they have 30.91 and 17.50 for the psycho-education and control groups respectively.

The mean differences indicate that male participants have the highest mean value of 11.00 in psycho-education group. The Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was thus computed to determine the significant difference in means as presented in Table 12.

Table 7: ANCOVA Results of Self-Efficacy across Gender and Experimental Groups

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	501.696 ^a	16	31.356	9.356	.045
Intercept	577.000	1	577.00	172.164	.001
Covariate	16.946	1	16.946	5.056	.110
Group	398.765	12	33.230	9.915	.042
Gender	1.469	1	1.469	.438	.555
Group * Gender	18.325	2	9.163	2.734	.211
Error	10.054	3	3.351		
Total	27523.000	20			
Corrected Total	511.750	19			

Table 7 shows the ANCOVA result for the significant effect of the experimental group on the participants' self-efficacy across gender. The Table indicates that there is no statistical significant difference in the means of the experimental group across gender [$F(2, 3) = 2.73$; $p = .211 > .05$]; hence, the hypothesis is upheld, which implies that there is no significant gender difference in the post-test mean scores on self-efficacy among in-school adolescent on the treatment and control groups.

Summary of Findings

The following are the summary deduced from the results of this study:

- The participants exposed to the psycho-education intervention have the lowest level of proneness to cheating behavior compared to the control group.
- The participants exposed to the psycho-education intervention have the high level of self-efficacy compared to the control group.

- The self-efficacy of both male and female participants exposed to the psycho-education interventions did not significantly improve compared to the control group.

Discussion of Findings

The results of the study revealed that the participants who received psycho-education intervention, exhibit significantly lower levels of proneness to academic cheating behaviours compared to the control group. This finding suggests that the intervention has a stronger effect in reducing proneness to academic cheating behaviors. This result is in line with the study of Anyamene, et al. (2015), Tamami, et al. (2015); whose findings revealed that psycho-education reduced the participants' tendencies to academic cheating behaviours. The finding of this study is in line with the previous studies perhaps, because of the fact that they were conducted among secondary school students who were adolescents with similar characteristics.

The findings of the study revealed that participants in the experimental group, exhibit significantly higher levels of self-efficacy compared to the control group. This finding suggests that psycho-education intervention has a stronger impact in increasing self-efficacy. This finding highlights the importance of multifaceted interventions in fostering higher levels of self-efficacy. The outcome of this study is consistent with the findings of Nihayati, et al. (2021); Larsen and Gibson (2020); Qaishum and Adhityawarman (2021); which indicated that psycho-education intervention enhanced self-efficacy of the participants compared to the control group. The outcome of this study is similar with the previous research, perhaps, because they adopted the same methodology. By addressing both the educational and cognitive aspects of self-efficacy, the students are better equipped to challenge self-limiting beliefs, develop empowering perspectives and cultivate a stronger sense of confidence, persistence and belief in their capabilities.

The finding of this study also revealed that the self-efficacy of both male and female participants exposed to psycho-education intervention did not significantly improve compared to the control group. This implies that both male and female participants in the experimental group, did not exhibit a significant improvement in self-efficacy compared to the control group. The result of this is inconsistent with the findings of Ochwa-Echel (2011); Gor, et al. (2020), which showed that gender, brought about difference in the participants self-efficacy. This finding suggests that psycho-education training did not effectively enhance male and female participants' self-efficacy.

Contributions to Knowledge

1. The study established the effectiveness of psycho-education intervention in addressing academic cheating behaviours and to enhance self-efficacy among adolescents.
2. The findings ascertained that the effectiveness of the intervention is consistent regardless of gender variation. This adds to the understanding of gender differences in cheating behaviour and suggests that the intervention can be applied universally to both male and female adolescents. It challenges previous assumptions or stereotypes regarding gender differences in response to interventions targeting academic cheating behaviours.
3. The study revealed the significance of taking a holistic approach to address cheating behaviours and enhance self-efficacy. By considering various psychological, social and environmental factors, the study emphasizes the need for interventions that target multiple levels of influence. This contributes to knowledge by promoting a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to academic cheating behaviours and the importance of addressing them in an holistic manner.

Recommendations

1. School counsellors should play a crucial role in promoting academic integrity in schools by providing training to students on the importance of academic integrity and ethical management of academic challenges.
2. Counsellors and teachers should be trained on the principles and techniques of psycho-education . This will enable them to effectively implement these interventions with students and provide ongoing support.
3. Schools should foster collaboration among counsellors, parents, and educators to reinforce interventions and deliver relevant messages about academic integrity and self-efficacy to students.
4. Stakeholders should foster a positive school climate that values academic integrity, encourages ethical behaviour, and supports students' self-efficacy. Aligning policies, practices, and disciplinary measures with integrity to reduce academic cheating behaviours.
5. Stakeholders should emphasis on examination success/certificates and promote competence among secondary school students.

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