

TIME MANAGEMENT AS A PREDICTOR OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated time management as a predictor of academic dishonesty among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 43,085 undergraduates from two public universities in Anambra State. The sample size consisted of 400 undergraduates (191 males and 209 females) selected using proportionate stratified sampling procedures. Two instruments were used for data collection, namely the Time Management Questionnaire (TMQ) and the Academic Dishonesty Questionnaire (ADQ). The reliability coefficients of the instruments were 0.94 and 0.88 for the TMQ and ADQ respectively. The data collected were analyzed using simple regression statistics to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that time management negatively predicted academic dishonesty among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. The findings also showed that time management negatively predicted academic dishonesty among both male and female undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. Based on the findings of the study, conclusions were drawn. In view of the findings, the study recommended, among others, that university administrators should integrate programmes that inculcate adequate time management skills into the academic curriculum and extracurricular activities through regular seminars, workshops, and ethical leadership training aimed at reducing academic dishonesty associated with poor time management among students.

Keywords: public university, Academic Dishonesty, Time Management, undergraduates

Introduction

The university is the highest level of education where high quality research, teaching and community service are the hallmark. It is a higher learning institution that brings men and women to a high level of intellectual development in the arts and science, and in the traditional professional disciplines, and promotes high-level research. Excellence and quality in these three core roles of the university (research, teaching and community service) can be disrupted by academic dishonesty (Alemu, 2018). Academic dishonesty has emerged as a pervasive challenge within higher education institutions globally, and Nigerian universities are not exempted from this trend. In public universities across Anambra State, the prevalence of unethical academic practices among undergraduates has become increasingly evident.

Academic dishonesty entails lack of honest and moral behaviour in an academic setting. It is described as behaviours or actions that are not accepted by academic institutions because it undermines academic honesty (Bali, 2015). It is also referred to as academic misconduct, academic cheating, academic fraud and misrepresentation to explain the scenario of academic dishonesty (Asadi & Mokhtar, 2016). It implies all forms of cheating such as plagiarism, unauthorized assistance on assignments and examinations which has increased substantially in higher education. It embodies the lack of fundamental core values of fairness, honesty, trust, respect, and responsibility, and from the student's perspective equates to cheating, lying, or stealing.

Academic dishonesty is the cornerstone of falsehood, high un-ethics in academic quality which promotes incredible intellectual and knowledge standard. Academic dishonesty is very wide in its scope and encompasses various forms of dishonest behaviour observed in schools at all levels. According to Shijimol (2022) academic dishonesty is defined as a student's use of unauthorized assistance with intent to deceive an instructor or other such person who may be assigned to evaluate the student's work in meeting course and degree requirements. It consists of any deliberate attempt to falsify, fabricate or otherwise tamper with data, information, records, or any other material that is relevant to the student's participation in any course, laboratory, or other academic exercise or function. These include both modern and traditional methods of academic cheating among university students which mar academic world in our country today and create more dismal and fraudulent future for academic businesses.

Academic dishonesty has been an issue of concern in most universities; causing a stumbling block in genuine research activities, crippling talents and potentials of students who are the future leaders in every field of life. It has made education ineffective in Nigeria today, Anambra State inclusive. Studies such as Bali (2015), Alemu (2018), Guthrie (2019) among others have shown that academic dishonesty has been entrenched in most high educational system. Bali. (2015) for instance noted that academic dishonesty at higher education is simply a

transition from academic dishonesty behaviours at high schools. Guthrie (2019) also observed that in higher learning institutions, students acknowledge that they have been engaging in one way or another in academic dishonesty. So, academic dishonesty has negative consequences for the higher education system including the universities.

In this context, academic dishonesty embodies all indecent, shameful, dishonourable, unchaste behaviours and exhibitions practiced among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. This poses serious challenge for academics who value ethical education and moral development. The researcher, through direct observation and interaction within the academic environment, has noted that many students engage in dishonest behaviours such as plagiarism, examination malpractice, falsification of academic records among others which could be attributed to university undergraduates' poor time management.

Time management is a vital key to efficiency in all facets of life. According to Sagredo et al (2020) time management has been defined in various ways for research purposes, although these approaches converge on a central idea that lies in the completion of tasks or activities in a given time, obtaining quality results, through procedures such as planning, organization or prioritization. Time management should be considered as one of the most important resources in university life. Likewise, if time is properly managed, it will be used to its fullest. According to Gallardo-Lolandes et al (2020), it is necessary to indicate that university students are willing to comply with their obligations and, therefore, with the demands of their respective academic programs if not inconvenienced by having inadequate time management, a fact that limits their honesty in academics. The benefits of time management tend to reduce situations of procrastination among students and attenuate dishonest behaviour levels. It also allows them to enjoy free time and regulate their academic behaviours against dishonesty.

Time management should be focused on planning, organization and prioritization. Time management converges on the central ideas that lies on the completion of tasks or actions at a given time. Through procedures of planning, organization and prioritization, the student can obtain quality results with zero indulgence in dishonest behaviours in academics. This reduces waste and optimizes its use and capable of limiting academic dishonesty. Time management can play a vital role in limiting students' academic dishonesty. Each and every student should have time management ability which includes setting goals and priorities, using time management mechanism and being organized in using time. Time management practices could have an impact on the academic honesty of students. In spite of knowing about the impact of time management on academic behaviours, this relationship is not given importance by the students (Sevari & Kandy, 2017). At higher education level the study schedule must be properly planned, implemented and controlled for better results.

Emphasizing time management also helps to develop cost effective educational policies by the authorities especially at higher education level. Ongoing problem of scarcity of knowledge in connection with time management and academic dishonesty is due to lack of easiness and of costly ways of collecting data (Razali et al, 2018). Driven by this fact, particular emphasis has been paid in the modern education system to time management issues by evaluating journal of literature, languages and linguistics. Human resources and its functions controlled by associations can be improved over the span of time or be changed with the passage of time; however, the main resource that cannot be changed, controlled, obtained or put away is time itself. The key to making progress in life is efficiently dealing with this asset that everybody has equally and paying adequate attention to planning by proper time management. In this context, time management entails every form of self-management among university students with a clear emphasis on time in understanding what activities to do, how to do them more efficiently, in what time it should be done and when is the correct time for the particular activity geared towards avoidance of dishonesty in academic activities which could differ due to the student's gender.

Awareness of gender as a central feature of all aspects of everyday life and society has become more and more widespread. Gender, according to Hannan (2017) refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men; girls and boy. The concept of gender also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviours of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). These roles and expectations are learned, changeable over time and variable within and between cultures. Gender analysis has increasingly revealed how women's subordination is socially constructed and therefore able to change, as opposed to being biologically predetermined and therefore static (Akinboye, 2018). Every student has a different ability and a different personal value and time management approach. The interest here is to explore if the predictive values of personal values and time management on academic dishonesty could be due to student's gender.

Despite the growing concern, existing literature has not adequately examined how time management skills may predict students' propensity to engage in academic dishonesty, particularly within the public universities in Anambra State of Nigeria. This gap underscores the importance of investigating these psychological and behavioral dimensions, with the aim of fostering academic integrity and contributing to the development of effective, evidence-based strategies for promoting ethical conduct in higher education. Therefore, it is pertinent to understand the harm academic dishonesty had done to the academic system in our country today. Our youths no longer read, because for them, with money one can make it through dishonesty, misplacement of priority and

moral decadence which could be attributed to lack of optimal time management. Hence, the thrust of the present study is to ascertain the predictive value of time management on academic dishonesty.

Statement of the problem

The university is the highest level of education where high quality research, teaching and community service are the hallmark. Excellence and quality in these three core roles of the university (research, teaching and community service) are still questionable due to varied factors including dishonesty in academics among university undergraduates. The academic dishonesty exhibited by undergraduates in most Nigerian universities today is worrisome. This includes but not limited to cheating, plagiarism and other academic misconducts. It is thus an issue that gives much concern to parents, teachers, education administrators and stakeholders in education. This ugly situation has been attributed to some factors yet the situation remained uncurbed. Some studies have been conducted on the causes of academic dishonesty at the secondary level within and outside Nigeria. Yet these studies have not proffered solution to the problem especially at university level. From literature and to the best knowledge of the researchers, not much empirical studies have been done at the university level on academic dishonesty in relation to time management. This ugly development has created a gap which the present study sought to fill. The problem of the study posed in question form is: what is the predictive value of time management on academic dishonesty among university students?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate time management as a predictor of academic dishonesty among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. Specifically, this study sought to:

- a. determine the predictive values of time management on academic dishonesty among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State.
- b. find out the predictive value of time management of male and female on academic dishonesty among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the predictive value of time management on academic dishonesty among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State?
2. What is the predictive value of time management on academic dishonesty among male and female undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: Time management will not significantly predict academic dishonesty of undergraduates in public universities in Anambra state.

H₀₂: Time management will not significantly predict academic dishonesty among male and female undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State.

Method

The study employed correlational research design. The population for this study was 43,085 undergraduates drawn from two public universities in Anambra State. The sample size of the study consisted 400 undergraduates (191 males and 209 females) drawn using proportionate stratified sampling procedures. Two instruments were used for data collection. Thus; Time Management Questionnaire (TMQ) and the Academic Dishonesty Questionnaire (ADQ). The reliability coefficients of the instruments were 0.94 and 0.88 for TMQ and ADQ. The data collected were analyzed using simple regression statistic to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. All analyses were carried out using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26.

Results

Research Questions 1

What is the predictive value of time management on academic dishonesty among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State?

Table 1: Simple Regression with Time Management as Predictor of Academic Dishonesty among Undergraduates in Public Universities in Anambra State

Predictor	Dependent Variable	β	SE	B	Remark
Constant		63.08	6.97		
Time Management	Academic Dishonesty	-0.34	0.13	-0.13	Small negative predictive value
R = 0.13 R ² =0.02 Adj. R ² =0.02					

Result of the study in Table 1 showed the summary of simple regression result which showed that time management predicts academic dishonesty among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra., The beta coefficient (β) was -0.13 while the R and R² were 0.02 and 0.02 respectively. This indicated that personal values accounted for 2% of the variance in academic dishonesty. The β of -0.13 showed that the personal values have small predictive value for academic dishonesty. The negative value indicated that a unit increase in positive Time Management of undergraduates led to a 0.13-unit decrease in academic dishonesty of undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State.

Research Questions 2

What is the predictive value of time management of academic dishonesty among male and female undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State?

Table 2: Simple Regression with Time Management as Predictor of Academic Dishonesty among Male and Female Undergraduates in Public Universities in Anambra State

Predictor	Dependent Variable	β	SE	β	Remark
Constant		51.45	12.40		
Time Management	Academic Dishonesty in Males	-0.10	0.23	-0.04	Negative predictive value
R = 0.04 R ² =0.00 Adj. R ² = -0.01					
Constant		68.49	8.39		
Time Management	Academic Dishonesty in Females	-0.45	0.15	-0.19	Negative predictive value
R = 0.19 R ² =0.04 Adj. R ² =0.03					

Result of the study in Table 2 revealed the summary of simple regression result wheretime management predicts academic dishonesty among male and female undergraduates in public universities in Anambra., For the males the beta coefficient (β) was -0.04 while the R and R² were 0.00 and 0.01 respectively. This indicated that personal values accounted for almost 0% of the variance in male academic dishonesty. The β of -0.04 also showed that the time management have small predictive value for academic dishonesty. The negative value indicated that a unit increase in positive time management of female undergraduates leads to no decrease in their academic dishonesty. While for the female undergraduates the beta coefficient (β) was -0.19 while the R and R² were 0.04 and 0.03 respectively. This indicates that time management accounted for 3% of the variance in academic dishonesty. The β of -0.19 shows that the time management has small predictive value for academic dishonesty. The negative value indicated that a unit increase in positive time management of undergraduates leads to 0.19-unit decrease in academic dishonesty of female undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 1

Time management will not significantly predict academic dishonesty of undergraduates in public universities in Anambra state

Table 3: Test of Significance of Simple Regression Analysis with Time Management as Predictor of Academic Dishonesty of Undergraduates in Public Universities in Anambra State

Predictor	Dependent Variable	B	SE	β	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	Remark
Constant		63.08	6.97		9.05	0.000	
Time management	Academic Dishonesty	-0.34	0.13	-0.13	-2.68	0.000	Significant
R = 0.13 R ² =0.02 Adj. R ² = -0.02							

Result of the study in Table 3 showed the simple regression results with Time management predicting of academic Dishonesty of Undergraduates in Public Universities in Anambra State. As shown in Table 7, time management was a significant predictor of academic dishonesty of undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State, *t*= -2.68, *p*= 0.000. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected since the *p*-value was less than 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 2

Time management will not significantly predict academic dishonesty among male and female undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State.

Table 4: Test of Significance of Simple Regression Analysis with Time Management as Predictor of Academic Dishonesty among Male and Female Undergraduates in Public Universities in Anambra State

Predictor	Dependent Variable	B	SE	β	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	Remark
Male:							
Constant		51.45	12.40		4.15	0.000	
Time management	Academic Dishonesty	-0.10	0.23	-0.04	-0.46	0.648	Not Significant
R = 0.04 R ² =0.00 Adj. R ² =0.01							
Female:							
Constant		68.49	8.39		8.16	0.000	
Time management	Academic Dishonesty	-0.45	0.15	-0.19	-2.97	0.003	Significant
R = 0.19 R ² =0.04 Adj. R ² =0.03							

Result of the study in Table 4 showed the simple regression results with Time management as predictor of academic Dishonesty among male and female undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. The results showed that time management was not a significant predictor of academic dishonesty among male Undergraduates in Public Universities in Anambra State, *t*= -0.46, *p*= 0.648. On the other hand, among female undergraduate. Time management was a significant predictor of academic dishonesty, *t*= -2.97, *p*= 0.003. Consequently, the null hypothesis was not rejected for male undergraduates because the *p*-value was greater than 0.05 level of significance, while for the females, the null hypothesis was rejected since the *p*-value was less than 0.05 level of significance.

Discussion of findings

The findings of the study with respect to research question one and the corresponding hypothesis one showed that time management has small predictive value for academic dishonesty among undergraduates; and that time management was a significant predictor of academic dishonesty among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. This significant negative predictive value of time management on academic dishonesty among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State highlights the importance of effective scheduling and prioritization in curbing dishonest academic behaviors. Poor time management often leads to last-minute cramming, increased stress, and reliance on unethical shortcuts such as cheating. Students who effectively manage their time are better prepared for assessments and are less likely to resort to dishonest means. The finding is consistent with the study by Allen (2023) which identified poor time management as a major cause of academic dishonesty among students in Jamaica. Eshun et al (2023) also found that conscientiousness, a trait closely linked to good time management, significantly reduced dishonest academic behaviours among students.

The findings of the study with respect to research question two and the corresponding hypothesis two showed that time management has negative predictive value for academic dishonesty among male and female undergraduates; and that time management was not a significant predictor of academic dishonesty among male undergraduates, but it was a significant predictor of academic dishonesty among female undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. This is an indication that time management skills are crucial for both genders in reducing unethical academic behaviour. This finding implies that academic dishonesty is more a function of students' ability to manage their academic workload effectively rather than any inherent gender-related differences. This finding is corroborated by studies such as Allen (2023) which found no gender differences in how poor time management led to academic dishonesty.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that time management had little or no predictive value for academic dishonesty among undergraduates and was not a significant predictor of academic dishonesty among undergraduates. The study further concluded that time management had a negative predictive value for academic dishonesty among male and female undergraduates and was not a significant predictor of academic dishonesty among male undergraduates, but was a significant predictor of academic dishonesty among female undergraduates.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. University student support services in universities in Anambra State should implement targeted time management training programmes that focus on effective study habits, prioritization techniques, and stress management, to help students manage their academic workload more effectively and reduce the temptation to engage in dishonest practices.
2. University lecturers and student support units should provide gender-responsive time management training that acknowledges the different academic pressures faced by male and female students. This could include personalized time management plans and support groups that help students balance academic and personal commitments more effectively.

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