

# The Indispensable Role of Guidance and Counseling as a Veritable Tool for Re-Cultivating Academic Integrity in Tertiary Institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

*The study examined the indispensable role of Guidance and Counseling as a veritable tool for re-cultivating academic integrity in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. Two research questions and hypotheses were utilized. The survey design was adopted; since the study was concerned with determining the opinion of respondents in the study area. The population was 11765 and a sample size of 603 respondents, which comprises 251 males and 352 female students were randomly selected from one federal institution and one state-owned institution. The instrument for data collection was a 4-point Likert questionnaire titled Counseling as a veritable tool for re-cultivating academic integrity questionnaire (CVRAIQ) which consists of 30 items and ranged from Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The instrument was validated by experts in measurement and evaluation the reliability co-efficient ranged from 0.91- 0.97. The findings revealed that the level of academic integrity among students in tertiary institutions is low. In addition, it was revealed that if guidance services are properly utilized in tertiary institutions it would help to curb the menace of academic dishonesty. It was recommended that tertiary institutions should instill good morals, values and maintain high academic integrity through the utilization of guidance and counseling.*

**Keywords:** Indispensable, Guidance and Counseling, Veritable tool, Re-cultivating, Academic integrity.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Guidance and counseling is a professional service whose tenet is built on honesty, integrity and humility. One of the principles of counseling is on respect and confidentiality principle which upholds, respect and in the maintenance of academic integrity. Counselors are trained professionals whose training is targeted at maintaining integrity. In carrying out of its functions especially in schools which is the pivotal point of getting teenagers and young adults of all background, the counselor is expected to maintain high level of integrity. So therefore, the need for guidance and counseling in re-cultivating academic integrity in a corrupt academic society cannot be over emphasized.

In a report of over a thirty years follow up study on student's cheating, Wotring (2007) remarked that the population of students' cheaters increased from 63% to 70%. He declared further that the cheaters of 1990s compared to those of 1960s have advanced in variety of cheating behaviors and cheated more often. A study by Diekhoff, LaBeff, Clark, Williams, Francis, and Haines (1996) also found a percentage increase in the level of academic integrity violation over a period of ten years (1984 – 1994). Similarly, some researchers (based on survey studies) reported that almost one-third of the six thousand students from thirty one colleges and universities had indulged in cheating (McCabe,1999); more than 30% plagiarized on all their papers (Bloomfield, 2005); and one hundred and seventeen fresh students used emails to exchange answers in an examination (Wilson, 1999). The aforesaid reports depict the dangerous dimensions that academic dishonesty has assumed on a global scene. The Nigerian educational institution is not an exception in this unholy academic practice.

One of the greatest challenges confronting the educational system today in Nigeria is the introduction of this sharp, deviant, and unacceptable practices in the disguise of getting quick, unmerited, fraudulent rewards or gains. This trend has introduced several academic mishap such as "sorting", examination malpractice, examination racketeering, sex for marks, plagiarism, and to crown it all corruption which is the mother of them all. Corruption according to (Transparency International, 2011) defines the word as the abuse of entrusted power for private gains. In higher education, corruption is a monster that takes different forms and kinds starting from nursery, primary and continues to higher institutions of learning were it becomes full blown. This acts can be monetary, or non- monetary, it takes different forms ranging from cash or in kind, the misuse of university funds to fake research, fake certificates, plagiarism, ghost writing, favoritism, cheating etc is becoming a norm. This deviant act is sometimes done with

or without the direct involvement of the students (Denisova, 2017). This implies that students who practice deviant behavior may use their peers to commit such acts.

Olatunbosun (2009) remarked that in the last two decades, the Nigerian educational institution have witnessed an increase in the rate of examination malpractices leading to a low academic integrity standard. According to him, several news reports from the Nigerian daily newspapers had decried the rate of involvement of students, parents and teachers in the pervading examination imbroglio (Daily Independent, 2004; Nigerian Tribune, 2009; Vanguard, 2005; Weekend Pointer, 2005, in a recent documentary by the BBC Africa Eye 2019, released a 13minutes footage of a senior lecturer in the University of Lagos and a senior Pastor of Four Square Gospel church sexually harassing a disguised reporter who was assumed by him to seek admission, he insists on sex before working on her admission request. Undermining the standard of institutions and the bank of knowledge. In a response to this, the government is strongly demanding that public universities should address the professional development needs of faculty as part of a culture that increasingly defines students as customers (Brown, 2010). The government of Mohammadu Buhari in a bid to address this menace has introduced the whistle blower policy in universities to check mate academic fraud, misappropriation of funds etc.

Academic integrity is a problematic phrase as it is open to different interpretations (Bruce, 2015), the term integrity has to do basically with the conducts of persons in the circle of academics notably in relation to cheating, plagiarism, bribes, corruption etc. Integrity has been viewed in different dimensions by people of different cultures for instance, the Chinese view the word integrity as being made of two key words of “cheng” and “xin”. The modern word “chengxin”, was used in traditional Chinese as “Xin” meaning honesty, truthfulness and sincerity (Wu, 2010). The root of “integrity” in English is derived from the Latin words “integer and integrates” meaning who or entire integrating different parts of one’s true self. In moral philosophy the word “integrity” is closely associated with the virtues that constitute a good person (MacIntyre 1981) as mentioned in (Bruce, 2015). The phrase “academic integrity” is interpreted as an umbrella term in two ways. Firstly, academic practice or what it means to be an academia which is conventionally broken down into three component functions which are teaching, research and service (Cummings, 1998) as mentioned in (Bruce, 2015). These are activities that academia undertake and by reference to which their integrity or lack of it may be judged. Secondly, the word integrity may be treated as a synoptic term incorporating the excellence of character one might expect from a good person or by extension, a good academia. Applying virtue ethics to academic integrity, several authors have identified excellence of character such as humility as a researcher or proper pride as a teacher in relations to academic function. (Macfarlane & Ottewil, 2004). Academic integrity therefore has to do with the honesty, truthfulness, sincerity on the part of every one revolving in the circle of academics devoid of any form of fraud such as plagiarism, cheating, data manipulation, sex for marks, banking of results, favoritism etc which negates from the ethics of academics.

In our schools today, academic integrity is fast eroding away as the standard is being raped on a daily basis, students no longer fancy reading clubs, have personal reading schedule, attend tutorials, night classes, ask questions in class, conduct research, visit libraries and even attend lectures but fancy going to cinema houses, night clubs, bet houses, visits their lovers etc, since other means of passing exams has been introduced into the academic world. This trend continuous to plough havoc into the system as the end products which are the students end up going through school but not letting the school go through them (not achieving anything worthwhile). The porous nature of the system has given room for greedy, wicked, self-centered, corrupt officials to have an in-road into the system which most time lacks checks and balance thereby producing unemployable graduates annually, and causes high rate of unemployment. Hard work today is not celebrated rather other frivolous activities for instance, B. Bnaija, much emphasis has been placed on paper qualifications rather than on the individual output and productivity.

This continuous upsurge of academic fraud is a shameful act not only to the academia but to the entire society at large. Lack of academic integrity otherwise known as academic dishonesty has eaten deep into the fabrics of the entire decency of the system. Parental involvement into this shameful act is a thing of concern to everyone as many parents are abetting and aiding their wards to cheat in order to end good grades. McCabe (2001) identified other factors that can influence academic dishonesty as pressure to get high grades, parental pressures to be like others, desire to excel, pressure to get a job, laziness. cheating in exams is fast becoming a culture as students have devise many means to cheat. According to (Miller, Murdock, Anderman & Poindexter 2007), indicates that “there are no clear cut profile of a students who cheats” (Pp.26) so the likelihood of creating an accurate means to deterring cheating may be difficult. Differences in cheating behavior among high school students face a plethora of challenges in everyday life that range from dealing with increasingly rigorous coursework, to consistent peer groups. The way in which students cheat varied from a collaborating with others such as school teachers, peers and a host of many others etc (Miller et al 2007). Schmelkin (2010) reported that student cheating behavior could be grouped into two categories; paper based tasks which includes those activities that include writing papers or assignments for class mates that are somehow plagiarized and exams -based tasks which includes ways in which students may adopt to cheat in exams. Kano (1978) contends that cheating behavior is based on the belief that a person’s ability to obtain a decent job and socio-economic mobility are by and large a function of this paper qualifications. A large percentage of students cheat when they are faced with a possibility of failing on a particular examination. Faking of academic grades which is been carried out by lectures has it resultant effects on the long run for instance from a recent

publication by <http://channelstv.com/August23:2019>: indicates that three corps members with fake certificates were arrested and handed over to the police for persecution in another similar publication by <http://punch.com/August30:2019> indicates that over fifty (50) graduates were arrested at different orientation camps across the country with fake certificates during the NYSC 2019 batch B stream II orientation course. Now the big question in the mind of everyone is, who is responsible for this act and how did the certificates come about?. Universities as institution for higher learning which is expected to be functioning in a peaceful atmosphere, however, observations shows that this expectation has often been hindered due to the sad experiences by both staff and students of the wicked corrupt practices thriving in campuses. Some of such practices includes examination malpractice, gangsterism, extortion, cultism, murder, kidnapping, rape, embezzlement of staff funds etc. with all this abnormalities, experts are of the opinion that Nigerian educational system is at a verge of collapse or best described as sitting on a keg of gun powder.

With the increasing cases of academic dishonesty in our school system which has tarnish the image, respect and reputation of the decency in academics where even the best university in Nigeria is ranked 401 in the world and 5<sup>th</sup> in Africa according to Times Higher Education (THE 2019). It becomes imperative for guidance counselor to brace up the challenge by advocating preventive and remedial guidance and counseling measures to ameliorate this menace. Ahmada ( 2017) “the prevention of unethical behaviors requires multiple strategies which are; promoting a culture of academic integrity at institutional level which includes focusing on learning, shunning corrupt practices, integrating ethics throughout the curriculum etc. Azuka and Oyaziwa (2017), “School counselor may consider advocating the introduction of an examination ethics club and through the club activities useful information would be disseminated to all students and staff of an institution”. The counselor could collaborate with the ethics club in organizing debates in the media to create mass awareness about the virtues of academic integrity and the ills of academic falsity by enlightening them on the legal stand point of the crime. Counselor by virtue of training is well equipped to guide students towards achieving acceptable academic behavior through the conduct of orientations, group counseling, group guidance, encouraging students to shun all form of academic duplicity. The counselor is expected to ensure proper sensitization of all stakeholders involved in the educational setting by highlighting the dangers involved in academic fraud. Ahmad (2017) by effective communication between the counselors and lecturers, counselor and school management, counselor and other significant others can go a long way curtail the scourge of academic dishonesty.

## **2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The issue of lack of academic integrity in our tertiary institutions have been a course for concern by parents and stakeholders in the academic environment. This is so because of the recent trends of anti-social behavior such as fraud, bribe, cultism, sex for marks that does not conform to the acceptable academic standard. This act has eaten deep into most of our tertiary institutions. So, disheartening to say that counselling has not been fully utilized as most institutions of higher learning lacks guidance and counselling directorate which could help reduce these anti-social issues in our academic environment. Consequently, there is a need to vigorously tackle this problem of academic dishonesty in tertiary institutions to salvage and restore the educational system from total collapse and to restore its lost glory. It is for this reason that the study was carried out to suggest the roles guidance and counselling can play in re-cultivating academic integrity for a corrupt free society. It is hoped that these strategies if adopted would help to reorient all stakeholders in the educational system in maintaining academic integrity.

## **3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study is to investigate:

1. To examine the level of academic integrity in higher institutions.
2. To examine the extent to which guidance and counseling can help in re-cultivating academic integrity.

Specifically, the study seeks to investigate the impact of guidance and counseling as a veritable tool for re-cultivating academic integrity in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **3.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions were asked to guide the researcher on the study:

1. What is the level of academic integrity in tertiary institution?
2. To what extent does guidance and counseling help in re-cultivating academic integrity?

**3.2 STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESES**

To further delve into the study, these two hypotheses were stated:

1. The level of academic integrity in tertiary institutions is not significantly high.
2. There is no significant relationship between guidance and counseling roles in re-cultivating academic integrity.

**4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study on guidance and counseling as a veritable tool for re-cultivating academic integrity in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria adopted the survey research design. The design is concern in determining the relationship that exists amongs variables. The design was appropriate for the study because the study was aimed at determining the degree of association between the variable of the study. The population was 11765 and a sample of 600 respondents was considered using the stratified and simple random sampling technique. A breakdown of the sample revealed that 350 students were female and 250 were males. The instrument for data collection was a 4- points likert type questionnaire and comprises of three sections. Section A elicited personal information of the respondents such as gender, age and year of study. Section B was counselling as a veritable tool for re-cultivating academic integrity questionnaire (CRAIQ) developed by experts in Measurement and Evaluation and it consisted of guidance services such as information/ orientation, referral and counselling services. Section C of the instrument was re-cultivating academic integrity through guidance and counseling questionnaire (RAIQ) which consisted of 15 items and ranged from strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly disagree. The instrument was trail tested by administering it to 40 students who were not part of the main study. Pearson product analysis method was employed to ascertain the instrument degree of consistency which yielded reliability which estimates 0.91 – 0.96 coefficients respectively.

**4. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS**

The result of the study is presented hypothesis by hypothesis as shown below

Hypothesis 1: The level of academic integrity in tertiary institutions is not significantly high. The only variable involved in this hypothesis is academic integrity. To test this hypothesis the population t-test as presented in Table 1.

**TABLE 1 Results of the level of academic integrity in tertiary institutions (N=511)**

Variable	$\bar{x}$	$\mu$	SD	df	p-value
level of academic integrity	16.34	2.50	4.27	510	.000

\*p<.05

The result of the study in table 1 revealed that revealed that the result showed that the p-value was .000 was found to be less than the chosen alpha of .05 this implies that the level of academic integrity in tertiary institutions is significantly high.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant influence of guidance and counseling roles in re-cultivating academic integrity. The independent variable: Guidance and Counselling (high, moderate and low), while the dependent variable is academic integrity categorized in term of adherence to examination rules, prompt release of students result and avoidance of reward for grades To test this hypothesis One way-ANOVA was utilized as presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Summary of one way ANOVA with the influence of guidance and counseling roles in re-cultivating academic integrity**

Levels of Guidance services	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Referral	184	17.98	3.16
Placement	166	17.24	3.55
Orientation	161	16.04	3.56
Total	511	17.13	3.50

  

Sources of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value.
Between Groups	326.207	2	163.104	13.963	.000
Within Groups	5934.008	508	11.681		
Total	6260.215	510			

\*p<.05

The result in table 2 revealed that the p-value of .000 was less than the chosen alpha of .05 this implies that there is a significant influence of guidance and counseling roles in re-cultivating academic integrity. The rejection showed that a post hoc comparison was executed.

**Table 3: Post hoc comparison with the influence of guidance and counseling roles in re-cultivating academic integrity.**

(I) services	guidance (J) integrity	academic (I-J)	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
High	Moderate		.74273*	.36586	.043	.0239	1.4615
	Low		1.94022*	.36883	.000	1.2156	2.6648
Moderate	High		-.74273*	.36586	.043	-1.4615	-.0239
	Low		1.19749*	.37805	.002	.4548	1.9402
Low	High		-1.94022*	.36883	.000	-2.6648	-1.2156
	Moderate		-1.19749*	.37805	.002	-1.9402	-.4548

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

## 5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The present study on Guidance and Counselling as a veritable tool for re-cultivating academic integrity in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted two research hypotheses. The findings indicates that the level of academic integrity in Tertiary institution is not significantly high as shown in table 1. This indicates that the low level of academic integrity in tertiary institutions can be attributed to laziness among students and lecturers, parental involvement, societal pressures on paper qualifications, getting quick rewards, indiscipline among students and lecturers etc, this results also corresponds with the result of McCabe, 2001, Transparency International, 2011, Olatunbosun, 2009, BBC Africa Eye 2019) who identified other factors that can impede on academic integrity as pressure to get high grades, desire to excel, corruption among lecturers and school management, neglect of academic standards, indiscipline among lecturers such as “sex for marks” etc. The second hypotheses state that there is no significant influence of guidance and counselling roles in re-cultivating academic integrity. The result of the findings as shown in table 2 indicates that certain strategies such as regular group guidance and counselling for all stakeholders in the tertiary institutions by outlining the dangers associated with academic dishonesty should be adopted. This results is in consonant with that of Azuka & Oyaziwa (2006) who identified the introduction of examination ethics club were information on academic standards can be disseminated and examination ethics committee can be formed to enforce academic integrity. Also, the findings of Ahmed (2017) also identified effective communication between the counselor and lecturers, counsellor and school management etc. can aid in curtailing the scourge of academic integrity.

Consequently, researchers are of the opinion that our value systems and morality should be inculcated amongs students, stiffer measures should be adopted to check mate all forms academic fraud, indiscipline among students should be outwardly discouraged and dealt with, this can go along way in restoring the dent image of the academia.

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