

*Full length Research paper*

# Lecturer and student affectability to scholastic contemptibility intercession approaches in the University of Benin, Nigeria

Olatomi James Adeola

Arts and Social Sciences Education Department, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.  
E-mail: [olatojamesade@yahoo.com](mailto:olatojamesade@yahoo.com).

Accepted 25 October, 2015

This paper presents the report of a survey of lecturer and students' expression of preference for, and willingness to engage in intercession approaches to curbing the menace of affectability to scholastic contemptibility in the University of Benin, Nigeria. The study also explored the possible connections between gender and the respondents' responses. The sample comprised 87 staff and 232 final year undergraduate students, randomly drawn from five faculties in the university; and data were collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire patterned after Hinman's (2000) 'Police', 'virtues' and 'prevention' approaches to curbing scholastic contemptibility. The study employed frequency counts, percentages and the chi-square statistics to establish the degree of significance of observed differences between the responses of staff and students with regard to preference and engagement for each approach. Findings of the study showed that while the 'Police' approach was the most preferred by staff, the students expressed preference mostly for the 'Virtues' approach; significant differences existed between the staff and students in the degrees of their expressed willingness to engage in the 'Police' and 'Virtues' approaches; however, gender had no significant influence on respondents' preference for or willingness to engage in any of the three approaches. The implications of the findings for integrated approach to curbing scholastic contemptibility and for instituting scholastic integrity policy in Nigerian universities were highlighted.

**Key words:** lecturer and student, affectability, scholastic, contemptibility, curbing approaches.

## INTRODUCTION

Academic dishonesty as used in this paper refers to cheating, or the use of fraudulent means by university students to pass examinations either before, during or after the examination. Kohlberg's (1984) theoretical framework of moral development, moral reasoning and moral action provide some understanding of the basis for academic dishonesty among students. When faced with temptation to cheat, students are confronted with an ethical decision: whether to comply with the academic norm not to cheat or to give into temptation and engage in academic dishonesty. The manner in which the decision is made, the factors that influence the decision and the outcome of the decision might differ between individuals because of differences in their moral reasoning and action. Baldwin et al. (1996) however cautioned that academic dishonesty is a complex psychological, situational and social phenomenon and that many factors are involved in determining whether an individual

will engage in academic dishonesty. One of such factors is motivation (Rest, 1994; Olasehinde, 2005). Cognitive Psychologists (Rawsthorne and Elliot, 1999; Ryan and Deci, 1996) made a distinction between two basic types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic, which propel human beings to act in particular ways. In relation to academic behaviours for instance, students may be extrinsically motivated (for instance, the desire to impress significant others) to score highly in a course of study; and such students may succumb to academic dishonest behaviours to obtain desired grades (Feldman, 2002). Fortunately in spite of the fact that academic dishonesty is a symptom of poor moral and motivational adjustment, students can be helped to overcome the problem or even prevented from succumbing to any such dishonest behaviour in the first place (Marzean, 2001). Concerned about its potential to compromise the quality of certificates, researchers have suggested various approa-

ches to curbing the menace of academic dishonesty in the university system. Approaches being employed so far include: application of stiff punishment, deemphasizing the worth of the certificate, reinforcement of positive values in the society and systemic reorientation (Olasehinde, 2000; Hinman, 2000). However in spite of the fact that literature is replete with such multifarious approaches to curbing academic dishonesty, it is common knowledge that sanctions enforced by the student disciplinary committee, remains the sole approach employed in most universities in Nigeria. Little or no attention is paid either to the evaluation of its effectiveness as required for quality, currency and usefulness assurance (Pulvers and Diekhoff, 1999) or to the issue of enforcing and sustaining it. This laxity, may strongly explain the apparently low success rate of the war against academic dishonesty in many universities, the world over, to date.

There is ample evidence in the literature to suggest that enforcement and sustenance of any approach to curbing academic dishonesty thrive only when all key players in the system (administration, academic staff and students) have high degree of sensitivity (in terms of attitude and participation) to the instituted approach (Dufresne, 2004; Olasehinde-Williams, 2005). This is logical because just as administration has responsibility for enforcing sanctions, academic staff has key roles to play in preventing and/or sanctioning dishonest behaviours and students also have responsibility to refrain from, and obligation to report, observed cases of academic dishonesty. It should however be recognised that the sensitivity of these stakeholders to any instituted approach for curbing academic dishonesty can not be taken for granted. Staff and students may not necessarily share the same opinions in their preferences for any instituted approach to curbing academic dishonesty; and/or in their willingness to engage in activities needed to achieve its objectives for a variety of reasons. Reasons likely to be responsible for the differences between academic staff and students may include their perceptions of the process involved in dealing with cases (Keith-Spiegel et al., 1998); fear of personal safety (Schneider, 1999); length of time required (Cabot, 1999); and level of effectiveness of the approach (Olasehinde-Williams, 2005). However, research in this area of psychology is still relatively new in Nigeria. Recognition of the need to make up for this gap in knowledge and provide objective data to further our understanding of the sensitivity status of staff and students to approaches to curbing academic dishonesty informed this study.

### **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which staff and students in the University of Ilorin, Nigeria, prefer each of three approaches of curbing academic dishonesty. It was also to ascertain the res-

pondents' degree of willingness to engage in each approach. Importantly, the study also probed into the possible contribution of gender to staff and students' preferences for, and/or willingness to engage in, specific approaches to curbing academic dishonesty.

### **Review of the literature**

McCabe (1993) investigated the disposition of academic staff to take action against students involved in academic dishonesty in a number of universities in America. Findings of the survey showed that academic staff generally preferred to deal directly with student deviants rather than press cases against them through institutionalised procedures based on such staffers' level of dissatisfaction with the established procedures. Keith-Spiegel et al. (1998) investigated the disposition of 127 academic staff to issues of academic dishonesty in their institutions. Findings of the survey revealed that academic staff generally ignored dishonest practice on account of the cumbersome, anxiety-laden and time-consuming procedure of dealing with alleged cases in their institutions. As part of their elaborate survey of the prevalence and profile of academic dishonesty in New Zealand's institutions, Taylor et al. (2002), compared the perceptions and practices of 381 students and 113 academic staff in 14 tertiary institutions. The researchers also explored the reasons behind action or inaction of the respondents. Both students and staff were asked to indicate their perceptions of the effectiveness of their institutions' procedures for dealing with cases of academic dishonesty. Findings of the study showed that 49% of the respondents reported that the procedures employed were effective while only 5.3% reported that their institutions' procedures were ineffective. However, the fact that these studies were mainly carried out in foreign countries justified the present study.

No doubt, the connection between gender and attitude to academic dishonesty is well reported in literature. For instance, Ameen et al. (1996) studied the possible connections between gender and the willingness to tolerate unethical academic behaviour among accounting students in four public institutions in the U.S.A. Among other findings, it was reported that females were less tolerant of academic dishonesty than males. On the other hand, Simon et al. (2001) investigated the efforts made by academic staff to deter cases of academic dishonesty in a medium-sized university in the USA and found that female academic staff was less likely, than their male counterparts, to use formal administrative approaches to deal with cases of academic dishonesty. Thus, research is apparently still inconclusive about the direction and magnitude of observed gender differences in attitude to curbing approaches to curbing academic dishonesty; and this informed the inclusion of gender as a variable in the present study. The present study profited from such existing studies in terms of design and choice of variables.

However, the initial impetus for this study was provided by Olasehinde-Williams' preliminary study of 2004. In the study, a survey of fifty lecturers' perception of the effectiveness of existing disciplinary procedure in the University of Ilorin Nigeria was undertaken. Data were collected through a 6-item questionnaire from five randomly selected faculties in the University. Findings of the study showed that 35% of the academic staff considered the existing procedure effective; 27% considered it fair, 23% adjudged it thorough while 68% complained about long delays in concluding and implementing sanctions. The fact that only small proportions of the respondents endorsed the effectiveness and timeliness of the existing arrangement made the study reported in this paper imperative. Findings of the study, it was hoped, would lead to the identification of pragmatic approach/es to curbing the menace of academic dishonesty in Nigerian universities. Hinman (2000), distinguished between three possible approaches to curbing academic dishonesty: 'Police', 'Virtues' and 'Prevention' approaches. According to the author, while the 'Police' approach has to do with paying attention to catching and punishing students involved in academic dishonesty; the 'Virtues' approach focuses on boosting students' moral and ethical values to the point that academic dishonesty will have no temptation value for them; and the 'Prevention' approach emphasises providing conditions that can discourage students from cheating but also check-mating every possible opportunity for students to engage in academic dishonesty. The present study investigated of these three approaches to curbing academic dishonesty staff and students would prefer the most and which they would be most willing to engage in. The choice of these approaches was informed by the fact that they are consistent with the behavioural theory which emphasizes the importance of environmental manipulation, complete with appropriate application of reward and punishment, to effect behavioural change. Academic dishonesty is a behavioural problem (Olasehinde-Williams, 2005) for which the behaviour modification theory is appropriate.

### Research questions

#### The following research questions were answered:

- i.) Which approach to curbing academic dishonesty is most preferred by staff?
- ii.) Which approach to curbing academic dishonesty is most preferred by students?
- iii.) Which approach are staff most willing to engage in?
- iv.) Which approach are students most willing to engage in?
- v.) Is there any difference between staff and students in their degrees preference for each of the three approaches?

vi.) Is there any difference between staff and students in their degrees of willingness to engage in each of the three approaches?

vii.) Is there any difference between male and female staff in terms of preferences for, or willingness to engage in, each of the three approaches?

viii.) Is there any difference between male and female students in terms of preferences for, or willingness to engage in, each of the three approaches?

### Hypotheses

The following 4 hypotheses, derived from research questions 5 - 8, were also tested in the study.

i.) There is no significant difference between staff and students in their degrees of preferences for each of the three approaches.

ii.) There is no significant difference between staff and students in their degrees of willingness to engage in each of the three approaches.

iii.) There is no significant difference between male and female staff in terms of preferences for, or willingness to engage in, each of the three approaches.

iv.) There is no significant difference between male and female students in terms of preferences for, or willingness to engage in, each of the three approaches.

### METHODOLOGY

#### Population

This was a survey research which employed the questionnaire for the purpose of data collection. Population of the study comprised all lecturers (called staff in this study) and final year undergraduate students (students) of the University of Ilorin, Nigeria in the 2004/2005 academic session. All staff and students in 5 randomly drawn faculties constituted the target population. The choice of the University for this Study was partly because its strategic location, at the geographical and cultural confluence of the north and south of Nigeria, attracts students and staff, with varying dispositions towards academic dishonesty, from different parts of the country. Also, the fact that existing procedure for handling issues of academic dishonesty in the University at the period of this study was typical of what obtained in most other Federal universities in Nigeria (since they all respond to the same guidelines from the National University Commission) meant that findings from the study should, to a large extent, be generalisable to other Federal universities in the country.

#### Sample and sampling techniques

The 5 Faculties of Arts, Business and Social Science, Education, Law and Science were randomly drawn from

8 of the 9 faculties existing in the University using the simple random sampling technique (the Engineering faculty, where no female lecturer was available at the time of the study, was deliberately left out of the survey). Forty male and female staff was randomly drawn from each of the 5 faculties.

To achieve this number, all female staff in each faculty was purposively included while male staff was randomly selected to make up the forty staff required for each faculty.

The inclusion of all willing female staff in the sample was because out of about 700 staff in the employment of the University as at the time of this study, information provided by the University's Academic Planning Unit showed that less than 70 were females.

In the case of students, stratified and incidental sampling techniques were employed to select 60 students from each of the 5 faculties. The stratification was on the basis of gender at ratio 70:30 to reflect the proportion of male to female student enrolment in the University.

With these sampling procedures, the final sample size was 500 (200 staff and 300 students), determined by logistic expediency.

The sample was however considered adequate enough to yield objective data for valid conclusions to be derived and generalizations to be made in relation to the study area.

### **Instrument for data collection**

A questionnaire designed by the researcher, but patterned after Hinman's (2000), "Police, Virtues and Prevention" approaches to curbing academic dishonesty, was used for the purpose of data collection. The questionnaire technique was considered appropriate for eliciting data in this study because of its potential to enhance the objectivity of the responses as respondents remained virtually anonymous.

Divided into five sections, the questionnaire investigated the sensitivity of staff and students to the three major approaches to curbing academic dishonesty. In Section A, respondents were required to rate from 1 - 5 (1 = lowest and 5 = highest rating) the extent to which they preferred 'Paying attention to catching and punishing students involved in academic dishonesty'; 'Boosting students' moral and ethical values to the point that academic dishonesty will have no temptation value for them'; and 'Blocking opportunities for students to engage in cheating'.

The degree of respondents' willingness to engage in each of the three approaches, again from 1 - 5, was requested in Section B. Section C required them to preferentially rank each of the three approaches; and in Section D, each respondent was requested to supply one major reason for his/her ranking in C.

Section E of the questionnaire merely elicited respondents' demographic details (status, sex, faculty

and age).

### **Validation and reliability of instrument**

Two colleagues in Measurement and Evaluation confirmed the face and content validity of the instrument; after which it was administered to 10 lecturers and 25 final year undergraduate students in the Faculty of Agriculture, which did not participate in the final study, to ascertain the degree of its reliability. The test-retest method of reliability check was employed with a three-week retest interval. Using the Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistic, a test-retest reliability of 0.72 was obtained.

### **Data collection**

In each of the five faculties, the researcher personally gave every female staff a copy of the questionnaire while the rest were distributed to available male lecturers at the time of visit. A lecturer was then requested to assist in retrieving the completed copies of the questionnaire. It took one week to retrieve a sizeable proportion of the copies distributed to the staff.

The administration of the instrument to the students was relatively easier and quicker as it was done during a one-day seminar on entrepreneurship organised by the Academic Planning Unit of the University for all final year undergraduate students on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2005. The fact that the seminar took place at a central location (the convocation arena) made it possible for the researcher to complete the administration same day for all the five faculties. The 60 copies meant for each faculty were divided into two packs of 42 and 18 (ratio 70:30) for male and female students respectively. As they came to the seminar registration desk, the students were requested to pick from appropriate pack on the basis of gender. Five postgraduate psychology students (stationed one per faculty since the seating arrangement at the seminar was on faculty basis) then assisted in retrieving the completed forms from the students before the end of the seminar. As in the case of lecturers, however, not all the forms were returned and some others were returned either uncompleted at all or only partially completed. As a result, data analysis in the study was based only on the duly completed and returned 319 forms comprising 87 staff (66 males and 21 females) and 232 students (133 males and 99 females).

### **Data analysis**

Frequency count and percentage were used to analyze the data and provide information for answering the research questions 1 - 4, while the chi-square statistics was employed in testing the hypotheses and answering questions 5 - 8. To objectively answer the first four research questions, ratings of 5 and 4 were combined to

indicate High Preference, 3 as Medium Preference, while ratings of 2 and 1 together indicated Low Preference. This was in order to be able to categorise respondents into three on the basis of their ratings. The same interpretation was maintained for Engagement ratings. All Medium ratings were however discountenanced in this analysis because they were considered ambivalent.

## RESULTS

### The data were analysed according to research questions and hypotheses.

**Question 1:** Which approach to curbing academic dishonesty is most preferred by staff?

In answer to this question, result of the data analysis showed that, in general, staff in the University expressed high preference for all the three approaches with more

than 60% endorsing each approach. However, as shown in Table 1, 'Police' approach, that is, 'Paying attention to catching and punishing students involved in academic dishonesty' appeared to be the most preferred by the staff. Of the 87 staff who participated in the study, 76 (87.36%) expressed high preference for the 'Police' approach; while 73 (83.91%) and 56 (64.4%) expressed high preference for 'Virtues' approach and 'Prevention' approach respectively.

**Question 2:** Which approach to curbing academic dishonesty is most preferred by students?

More than 70% of the students expressed high preference for 'Virtues' and 'Police' approaches. However result of the data analysis, presented in Table 1, showed the 'Virtues' approach, (that is, boosting students' moral and ethical values to the point that academic dishonesty will have no temptation value for them), to be the most preferred among students in the University. As shown in

**Table 1.** Frequency table of staff and students' preference ratings of curbing approaches.

Approach	Status	X	High (%)	Preference		Total
				Medium (%)	Low (%)	
Police	Staff	87	76 (87.36)	07 (8.05)	04 (4.60)	87 (100)
	Student	232	182(78.45)	20 (8.62)	30 (12.93)	232 (100)
Virtues	Staff	87	73 (83.91)	07 (8.05)	07 (8.05)	87 (100)
	Student	232	189(81.5)	13 (5.6)	30 (12.9)	232 (100)
Prevention	Staff	87	56 (64.4)	10(11.5)	21 (24.1)	87 (100)
	Student	232	128(55.2)	26(11.21)	78 (33.6)	232 (100)

Preference: Degree of endorsement of approach

**Table 2.** Frequency table of staff and students' engagement ratings of curbing approaches.

Approach	Status	X	High (%)	Engagement		Total (%)
				Medium (%)	Low (%)	
Police	Staff	87	77 (88.51)	04 (4.60)	06 (6.90)	87 (100)
	Student	232	155(66.81)	36 (15.52)	41 (17.67)	(232 (100)
Virtues	Staff	87	86 (98.85)	NIL (0%)	01 (1.15)	87 (100)
	Student	232	201(86.63)	19 (8.19)	12 (5.17)	(232 (100)
Prevention	Staff	87	62(71.26)	11( 12.64)	14 (16.09)	87 (100)
	Student	232	135(58.19)	43 (18.53 )	54 (23.28)	(232 (100)

Engagement: Degree of willingness to utilize approach.

the Table, 189 (81.5%) of the 232 students indicated high preference for the 'Virtues' approach; compared to 182 (78.45%) for 'Police' approach and 128 (55.2%) for 'Prevention' approach.

From the summary of the data analysis therefore, it was apparent that most staff preferred the 'Police' approach while most students preferred the 'Virtues' approach. Conversely, both staff and students expressed the least preference for 'Prevention' approach, which involves blocking opportunities for students to engage in

cheating.

**Question 3:** Which approach are staffs most willing to engage in?

Data analysis showed that more than 70% of the staff who participated in the study expressed willingness to engage in each of the three approaches (Table 2). Specifically, while 86 (98.9%) of the 87 staff expressed high willingness to engage in the 'Virtues' approach, 77 (88.51%), and 62 (71.26%) of them expressed high willingness to engage in the 'Police' and 'Prevention'

**Table 3.** Chi -square summary of differences between staff and students’ degree of preferences for each curbing approach.

POLICE APPROACH							
	5	4	3	2	1	Total	X <sup>2</sup> cal
Student	148(151.3)	34(36.4)	20(19.6)	18(13.8)	12(10.9)	232	6.12
Staff	60(56.7)	16(13.6)	7(7.4)	1(5.3)	3(4.1)	87	NS
Total	208	50	27	19	15	319	

  

VIRTUES APPROACH							
	5	4	3	2	1	Total	X <sup>2</sup> cal
Student	160(160)	29(30.5)	13(14.55)	12(10.2)	18(16.7)	232	2.41
Staff	60(60)	13(11.5)	7(5.45)	2(3.8)	5(6.3)	87	NS
Total	220	42	20	14	23	319	

  

PREVENTION APPROACH							
	5	4	3	2	1	Total	X <sup>2</sup> cal
Student	92(101.1)	43(41.2)	43(37.3)	24(18.9)	30(30.5)	232	8.93
Staff	47 (37.9)	15(15.8)	11(14.7)	2(7.09)	12(11.5)	87	NS
Total	139	58	54	26	42	319	

df = p < 0.055 = Highest preference for use of approach 1= Lowest preference for use of approach

**Table 4.** Chi-square summary of differences between staff and students’ degree of willingness to engage in each curbing approach

POLICE APPROACH							
	5	4	3	2	1	Total	X <sup>2</sup> cal
Student	120(146.9)	40 (32)	37(26.90)	15 (10.9)	20 (14.5)	232	48.67*
Staff	82 (55.1)	4(12)	0 (10.1)	1 (4.1)	0 (5.5)	87	
Total	202	44	37	16	20	319	

  

VIRTUES APPROACH							
	5	4	3	2	1	Total	X <sup>2</sup> cal
Students	170(183.3)	31(25.4)	19(13.8)	3(2.9)	9(6.5)	232	
Staff	82(68.7)	4(9.5)	0 (5.18)	1(1.1)	0(2.5)	87	14.6*
Total	252	35	19	4	9	319	

  

PREVENTION APPROACH							
	5	4	3	2	1	Total	X <sup>2</sup> cal
Students	92(101.1)	43(42.2)	43(39.3)	24(18.9)	30(30.5)	232	8.93
Staff	47(37.9)	15(15.8)	11(14.7)	2(7.09)	12(11.5)	87	NS
Total	139	58	54	26	42	319	

\*df =p>0.055 = Highest degree of willingness to engage in approach 1 = Lowest degree of willingness to engage in approach

approaches respectively.

**Question 4:**

Which approach are students most willing to engage in? More than 60% of the students expressed high degree of willingness to engage in the ‘Virtues’ and ‘Police’ approaches. However, as shown in Table 2, whereas 201 (86.63%) of the 232 students expressed high willingness to engage in the ‘Virtues’ approach; 155 (66.81%) and 135 (58.19%) expressed high willingness to engage in

the ‘Police’ and ‘Prevention’ approaches, respectively. From the summary of the data analysis in Table 2, therefore, staff and students in the study appeared to be most willing to engage in the ‘Virtues’ approach and least willing to engage in the ‘Prevention’ approach.

**Hypotheses testing**

To ascertain the degree of validity of each of the four hypotheses generated for the study, the chi- square statistics was employed. This section presents the results

**Table 5.** Chi-square summary of differences in male and female staff preference and engagement ratings of the 'Police' approach.

PREFERENCE							
Gender	5	4	3	2	1	Total	X <sup>2</sup> cal
Male	45 (45.2)	13(12.1)	5(5.30)	1(0.8)	2(2.3)	66	1.96
Female	15(14.5)	3(3.9)	2(1.7)	0.(0.2)	1(0.7)	21	NS
Total	60	16	07	01	03	87	

  

ENGAGEMENT							
Gender	5	4	3	2	1	Total	X <sup>2</sup> cal
Male	42(39.4)	18 (18.97)	2(3.03)	2(2.3)	2(2.3)	66	2.69
Female	10(12.6)	7(6.03)	2(0.97)	1(0.7)	1(0.7)	21	NS
Total	52	25	04	03	03	87	

**Table 6.** Chi-square summary of differences between male and female staff preference and engagement ratings of the 'Virtues' approach.

PREFERENCE							
Gender	5	4	3	2	1	Total	X <sup>2</sup> cal
Male	45(45.2)	10 (9.8)	5(5.1)	1(1.5)	5 (3.8)	66	2.41
Female	15(14.8)	3 (3.1)	2(1.9)	1(0.5)	0(1.2)	21	NS
Total	60	13	7	2	5	87	

  

ENGAGEMENT							
Gender	5	4	3	2	1	Total	X <sup>2</sup> cal
Male	61(62.2)	4(3.0)	0(0.0)	1(0.8)	0.(0.0)	66	1.62
Female	21(19.8)	0(1.1)	0(0.0)	0(0.2)	0(0.0)	21	NS
Total	82	4	0	1	0	87	

**Table 7.** Chi -square summary of differences between male and female staff preference and engagement ratings of the 'Prevention' approach.

PREFERENCE							
Gender	5	4	3	2	1	Total	X <sup>2</sup> cal
Male	27(26.6)	14(15.9)	8(7.6)	4(4.55)	13(11.4)	66	2.26
Female	8(8.4)	7(5.1)	2(2.4)	2(1.45)	2(3.6)	21	NS
Total	35	21	10	6	15	87	

  

ENGAGEMENT							
Gender	5	4	3	2	1	Total	X <sup>2</sup> cal
Male	36(35.7)	12(11.4)	7(8.3)	2(1.5)	9(9.1)	66	1.62
Female	11(11.3)	3(3.6)	4(2.7)	0(0.5)	3(2.9)	21	NS
Total	47	15	11	2	12	87	

of the data analyses according to the hypotheses.

### Hypothesis 1:

There is no significant difference between staff and students in their degrees of preferences for each of the three approaches.

Statistical analyses of respondents' ratings resulted in X<sup>2</sup>cal of 6.12, 2.41 and 8.93 for the Police, Virtues and Prevention approaches respectively, each of which = p < 0.05 with 4df (Table 3). Hypothesis 1 was thus confirmed and it was concluded that the staff and students were not

statistically different in their preference for any of the three curbing approaches. In answer to research question 5, therefore, there is no difference between staff and students in their degrees of preference for each of the three approaches.

### Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant difference between staff and students in their degrees of willingness to engage in each of the three approaches. Data analyses yielded X<sup>2</sup>cal of 48.67 (p > 0.05), 14.6 (p > 0.05) and 8.93 (p < 0.05) for

**Table 8.** Chi-square summary of differences in male and female student preference and engagement ratings of the 'Police' approach.

PREFERENCE							
Gender	5	4	3	2	1	Total	X <sup>2</sup> cal
Male	85(84.8)	13(19.5)	13(11.57)	13(10.3)	9(6.9)	133	8.63
Female	63(63.2)	21(14.6)	7(8.5)	5(7.7)	3(5.1)	99	NS
Total	148	34	20	18	12	232	

  

ENGAGEMENT							
Gender	5	4	3	2	1	Total	X <sup>2</sup> cal
Male	66(68.8)	20(20.1)	17(20.64)	11(8.6)	19(14.9)	133	5.98
Female	54(51.2)	15(14.9)	19(15.36)	4(6.4)	7(11.1)	99	NS
Total	120	35	36	15	26	232	

**Table 9.** Chi-square summary of differences in male and female students' preference and engagement ratings of the 'Virtues' approach.

PREFERENCE							
Gender	5	4	3	2	1	Total	X <sup>2</sup> cal
Male	98(91.7)	15 (16.6)	5 (7.5)	5 (6.9)	10 (10.3)	133	4.59
Female	62 (68.3)	14 (12.4)	8(5.5)	7 (5.1)	8 (7.7)	99	NS
Total	160	29	13	12	18	232	

  

ENGAGEMENT							
Gender	5	4	3	2	1	Total	X <sup>2</sup> cal
Male	102(97.5)	17(17.8)	8(10.9)	1(1.7)	5(5.2)	133	4.95
Female	68(72.5)	14(13.2)	11(8.1)	2(1.3)	4(3.8)	99	NS
Total	170	31	19	3	9	232	

**Table 10.** Chi-square summary of differences in male and female students' preference and engagement ratings of the 'Prevention' approach.

PREFERENCE							
Gender	5	4	3	2	1	Total	X <sup>2</sup> cal
Male	57(53.3)	19(20.1)	12(14.9)	6(8.6)	39(36.1)	133	
Female	36(39.7)	16(14.9)	14(11.1)	9(6.4)	24(26.9)	99	7.65
Total	93	35	26	15	63	232	NS

  

ENGAGEMENT							
Gender	5	4	3	2	1	Total	X <sup>2</sup> cal
Male	55(52.7)	27(24.6)	17(24.7)	14(13.8)	20(17.2)	133	
Female	37(39.3)	16(18.3)	26(18.3)	10(10.2)	10(12.8)	99	8.59
Total	92	43	43	24	30	232	NS

df = p < 0.05

Police, Virtues and Prevention approaches, respectively. As shown in Table 4, the results suggested existence of significant differences between the staff and students in the degrees of their expressed willingness to engage in the 'Police' and 'Virtues' approaches since the observed chi-square values were each higher than the 9.487 required for significance at 0.05 level with 4df. Significantly higher proportions of staff expressed willingness to engage in the 'Police' and 'Virtues'

approaches than students. No such significant difference however existed between staff and students in their expressed willingness to engage in the 'Prevention' approach. Hypothesis 2 was thus rejected in respect of differences in the respondents' ratings of the Police and Virtues approaches only. Thus, in response to question 6, staff and students differed in their degrees of willingness to engage in the Police and Virtues approaches but not in the Prevention

approach.

### Hypothesis 3:

There is no significant difference between male and female staff in terms of preferences for, or willingness to engage in, each of the three approaches.

Chi-square analyses were computed to ascertain the possible connection between gender and observed preference and engagement ratings of each of the three approaches. Each approach yielded  $X^2_{cal}$  of 1.96 and 2.69 respectively for the 'Police' approach (Table 5);  $X^2_{cal} = 2.41$  and 1.62 respectively for 'Virtues' approach (Table 6); and  $X^2_{cal} = 2.26$  and 1.62 respectively for 'Prevention' approach (Table 7). Each of the  $X^2_{cal} = p < 0.05$  with 4df thus confirming hypothesis 3. As shown by this result therefore, male and female staff did not differ in terms of preferences for, or willingness to engage in, each of the three approaches as probed in question 7.

### Hypothesis 4:

ii.) Significant differences existed between the staff and students in the degrees of their expressed willingness to engage in the 'Police' and 'Virtues' approaches.

iii.) Though higher proportion of female, than male, staff expressed high preference for 'Prevention' approach, the difference was not statistically significant.

iv.) Male students did not differ significantly from the females either in their preference for, or degree of willingness to engage in, any of the three approaches.

There is no significant difference between male and female students in terms of preferences for, or willingness to engage in, each of the three approaches.

Chi-square estimates of the significance of observed differences in male and female students' preference and engagement ratings of the 'Police', 'Virtues' and 'Prevention' approaches yielded  $X^2_{cal} = 8.63$  and 5.98 (Table 8);  $X^2_{cal} = 4.59$  and  $X^2_{cal} = 4.95$  (Table 9);  $X^2_{cal} = 7.65$  and 8.59 (Table 10), respectively. Each  $X^2_{cal} = p < 0.05$  with 4df. It was therefore taken that no significant differences existed among the students either in their preference for, or willingness to engage in, any of the three approaches on the basis of gender, thus confirming hypothesis 4. In response to question 8 therefore, male and female students did not differ in terms of preferences for, or willingness to engage in, each of the three approaches. Following were the major findings of the study:

i.) The 'Police' approach was the most preferred among the staff surveyed in the study; while the 'Virtues' approach was the most preferred among the students.

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The most preferred approach among the staff was the Police approach. Findings of the studies of McCabe (1993) similarly supported the potency of stiff penalties in deterring academic dishonesty. Most respondents who indicated high preference for this approach justified their

ratings by emphasising its ability to serve as deterrent to others. In this researcher's opinion however, another plausible explanation for this finding may in fact be a reflection of the staff's familiarity with the Police approach as a major method of effecting behavioural change in this environment. Conversely, many of the students in their reasons for preferring the Virtues approach cautioned about what they described as the Police approach's hardening effect.

The Prevention approach was found to be the least preferred among staff and students alike. This finding contradicted evidence in the literature in support of the efficacy of culturally appropriate interventions to prevent academic dishonesty rather than sole reliance on punishment (Fishbein, 1994; Olasehinde, 2000). The finding may thus just be a reflection of the mind set of many of the staff. For instance, as observed from the reasons they supplied in the survey for their ratings of the approaches, many of the staff found it difficult to believe that any procedure could be put in place to prevent students from engaging in academic dishonesty. One respondent described this approach as rather 'utopian and unachievable given the realities of our society where some people tend to engage in dishonesty at the least opportunity.' It thus appeared that many of the staff perceived the university environment as a reflection of similar moral laxities in the society (Olasehinde, 2000).

Except for the 'Prevention' approach, statistically significant differences were observed between staff and students' expressions of willingness to engage in the 'Police' and 'Virtues' approaches. More staff than students endorsed each of the two approaches. Similar statistically different observations between staff and students were found by Keith-Spiegel et al. (1998). Similar to the explanation by Schneider (1999) a plausible explanation for the finding in this report might be students' fear of personal safety especially from cultists, many of whom may engage in academic dishonesty and who may deal ruthlessly with any one who dare to stand in their way. Students therefore rarely report known cases of academic dishonesty and the few who ever report do so under strict anonymity.

As shown in this study, gender had no statistically significant influence on respondents' preference or engagement ratings. Neither staff nor students differed significantly in their preference for or willingness to engage in any approach on the basis of gender. Similar finding among academic staff was reported by McCabe (1993), and Keith-Spiegel et al. (1998). A plausible explanation for this finding could thus be that sensitivity to issues of academic dishonesty is more a matter of attitude and perception than gender.

A major implication of the findings of this study was the fact that they called attention to the need to take a second look at the reason why the war against academic dishonesty in our universities is yet to be won from the point of view of staff and students who are important to the success of any instituted approach. In this regard it

will be important for administrators to enlist the support of staff and students in engendering effective approaches in the system. The findings, for instance, suggested that sole dependence on the Police approach (traditionally employed in our universities) may need to be reviewed and integrated with the Virtues approach for which many staff and students expressed willingness to engage in. Full integration of the three approaches should in fact be the ultimate (Hinman, 2000). One way our universities can achieve this is by instituting Academic Integrity Policy because of its tract record of success in universities that have embraced it in many parts of the world. Academic Integrity Policy enables effective integration of the three approaches investigated in this study; and functions in a way that makes engagement by staff and students less cumbersome and less threatening. Such integration will not only enhance students' moral development to the point that they might not consider academic dishonesty as an option, it will evolve procedures to effectively block opportunities for potential culprits to operate, and also employ potent aversive measures to deter academic dishonesty.

The fact that many respondents in this study expressed preference for the Virtues approach has curriculum implication.

It is the considered opinion of this researcher that elements of moral/ethical education should be integrated into the university curriculum, for instance in General Studies (GNS) courses.

This appears to be a practical means of engendering moral/ethical reorientation such that academic dishonesty will cease to have temptation value for students.

## CONCLUSION

The war against academic dishonesty can hardly be won by the university administration alone. Rather, every component of the university community, administration, academic and non academic staff and students, has complementary obligations and responsibilities to curb academic dishonesty.

Also, as shown in this study reliance on the traditional Police approach alone, as currently obtains in many universities in Nigeria, may not be the effective in curbing the menace of academic dishonesty.

An integrated approach which contains elements of the Police, Virtues and Prevention approaches; and with which staff and students can openly and fearlessly identify is therefore proposed for adoption by Nigerian universities.

A major limitation of the study related to its small sample size. On that account, its findings were essentially limited to the university in which the survey was undertaken. Besides, the extent to which respondents were consistent in their preference and engagement ratings was not investigated.

It should be more informative, for instance, to determine the extent to which specific individuals who expressed high preference for an approach also were willing to engage in it.  
generalisable to comparable universities in Nigeria.

## REFERENCES

- Ameen EC, Guffey DM, McMillan JJ (1996). Gender differences in determining the ethical sensitivity of future accounting professionals. *J. Bus. Ethics*, 15: 591-597.
- Baldwin D, Adamson T, Sheehan J, Self D, Oppenberg A (1996). Moral reasoning and malpractice: A pilot study of orthopaedic surgeons. *Am. J. Orthop.*, 25: 481-484.
- Cabot J (1999). The chronicle of higher education colloquy. 19 January. Retrieved March 15, 2002 from <http://chronicle.co-m/colloquy/99/cheat/11.htm>.
- Dufresne RL (2004). An action learning perspective on effective implementation of academic honor codes. *Group Organ. Manage.*, 29: 201-218.
- E:\An Action Learning Perspective on Effective Implementation of Academic Honor Codes - Dufresne 29 (2) 201 -- Group and Organization Management.htm
- Feldman RS (2002). *Understanding psychology* (6<sup>th</sup> Ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Fishbein L (1994). We can curb college cheating. *Education Digest*, 59: 58-62.
- Hinman LM (2000). Academic integrity and the world wide web. E:\Academic Integrity and the World Wide Web.htm
- Keith-Spiegel P, Tabachnick BG, Whitley Jr. BE, Washburn J (1998). Why professors ignore cheating: Opinions of a national sample of psychology instructors. *Ethics Behav.* ,8: 215-227.
- Kohlberg L (1984). *The psychology of moral development: essays on moral development* (vol.2). San Francisco: Harper and Row.
- Marzean B (2001). Why different responses to academic integrity do and don't work. Millersville University Academic Integrity <http://www.home.fuse.net/bcheck/review04.htm>. Retrieved Feb. 28, 2004.
- McCabe DL (1993). Faculty responses to academic dishonesty: The influence of student honor codes. *Res. High. Educ.*.. 34: 647-58.
- McCabe DL, Bowers WJ (1994). Academic dishonesty among males in college: A thirty year perspective. *J. Coll. Stud. Dev.*.. 1: 5-10.
- Olasehinde O (2000). Cheating in examinations: A This should be of interest to further studies in this area of psychology.
- These limitations notwithstanding however, findings of the study remain valid for the study area and are contemporary issue in, and a challenge for Nigerian university education in the new millennium. Change and Choices in the New Century Referred Conference Proceedings.152-159.
- Olasehinde-Williams O (2004). Gender differences in the quantity and quality of graduates produced in the University of Ilorin: Implications for women empowerment. *Gender Discourse: J. Univ. Ilorin Women Academics*. 1: 47-64.
- Olasehinde-Williams O (2005). Instituting academic integrity policy in Nigerian universities: Psychological perspectives of morality and motivation. *J. Sociol. Educ. Afr.*, 4: 153-165.
- Pulvers K, Diekhoff GM (1999). The relationship between academic dishonesty and college classroom environment. *Res. High. Educ.*, 40: 487-498.
- Rawsthorne LJ, Elliot AJ (1999). Achievement goals and intrinsic motivation: A meta-analytic review. *Pers. Soc. Psychol. Rev.*, 3: 326-344.
- Ryan RM, Deci EL (1996). When paradigms clash: Comments on Cameron and Pierce's claim that reward does not undermine intrinsic motivation. *Rev. Educ. Res.*.. 66: 33-38.
- Schneider A (1999). Why professors don't do more to stop students who cheat. *Chron. High. Educ.*, 45: A8-A10.
- Simon C, Carr J, DeFlyer E, McCullough S, Morgan S, Oleson T, Ressel M (2001). On the evaluation of academic dishonesty: A survey of students and faculty at the University of Nevada, Reno. In Taylor et al. *Academic Dishonesty- Realities for New Zealand Tertiary Education staff and New Zealand Education Institutions*. Retrieved October 5, 2006 from [http://www.tefma.com/info-services/papers/2002\\_AAPPA\\_Brisbane/L\\_Taylor.pdf](http://www.tefma.com/info-services/papers/2002_AAPPA_Brisbane/L_Taylor.pdf)
- Taylor L, Ellen N, Lambert K. (2002). *Academic dishonesty- Realities for New Zealand tertiary education staff and New Zealand education institutions*. Retrieved October, 5, 2006 from [http://www.tefma.com/info-services/papers/2002\\_AAPPA\\_Brisbane/L\\_Taylor.pdf](http://www.tefma.com/info-services/papers/2002_AAPPA_Brisbane/L_Taylor.pdf)
- Whitley BE, Nelson AB, Jones CJ (1999). Gender differences in cheating attitudes and classroom cheating behaviour: A meta-analysis. *Sex Roles*. 41: 9-10, 657-680.