

AN OBSERVATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE SYMPTOMS OF CHEATERS IN COLLEGE EXAMINATION AND TECHNIQUES FOR CONTROL CHEATING BEHAVIORS

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Abstract

Many studies have indicated that Cheating in the exams is a widespread problem in higher education, and it has been found that the prevalence of cheating increasing more and more in the present day with the advancement of information and communication technology. Cheating is observed to occur more in large and crowded examination room with few invigilators. This study aimed to identify various behavioral symptoms of signs of cheating in the exams. The study also focus to categories the symptoms in to groups in order to promote further studies. The universe of the study included students who appeared in the end term examination in Churachandpur College, Churachandpur District of Manipur, India, during December, 2018. The sample of the study consisted of students sitting in a randomly selected 12 examination room in the first, third and fifth end semester or end term examinations held during December, 2018. The

Keywords:

Symptoms;

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researcher adopted unstructured observation and analytical method to study the symptoms of cheating behavior of college students in first, third and fifth end semester or term examinations held during December, 2018, in Churachandpur College. The college students of Churachandpur College were observed by the researcher during the 2 consecutive end term examinations in its natural setting and ensure that they were not aware not aware of the study conducted. The result of the study disclosed 31 symptoms demonstrated by cheaters during the end term or semester examinations in the Churachandpur College during December, 2018. It was also found that all the 31 symptoms of cheating could be grouped into 7 categories. The study also revealed 14 skills and techniques that the invigilators could use to prevent cheating in exams.

1. Introduction

After observing and analyzing the students' behavior in the 2 consecutive end term examinations held at Churachandpur College, Churachandpur District of Manipur, India, during December, 2018, the researcher was able to identify the peculiar characteristics and pattern of behavior of student cheaters in the examinations under study.

Student cheaters are those who resorted to illegal acts of copying answers from prohibited materials or media, other students' answers and using impersonation for their project works, assignments, seminar papers, practical notes and or end term examinations. It also includes those students who copy other students' answers, in any forms, written, and visual, verbal and sign languages.

From the above statement, cheating in exams is any illegal acts of students in copying other students' answers by one-self or through impersonation with the goal to achieve guarantee or higher academic successes, either in the forms of written or visual, verbal and sign languages. Many studies have reported that cheating in exams is a common problem in schools colleges and universities and studies have also found out that the prevalence of this problem is increasing (Cizek, 1999; Evans, Craig, & Mietzel, 1993; Maramak & Maline, 1993; Nowell & Laufer, 1997; Schab, 1991; Baillo, 2000; Reyes, 1998; Bautista, 1980; Berhan & Desalegn, 2014).

Such an academic dishonesty and its impact was investigated by Hulsart & McCarthy, 2009. Their findings asserted the possible long-term effects of academic dishonesty on the students and the school and the society. They estimated that cheating will result to unethical behavior of the individual in their place of work (Mohr, Ingram, Fell & Mabey, 2011). It was also revealed that such low academic integrity can question the credibility of the degrees and certificated conferred to the graduate and also the capability and moral character of the graduates themselves (Resurreccion, 2012).

The most egregious cheating behaviors, according to students, were using an unauthorized cheat sheet on an exam and looking at or copying from someone else's exam during a test (Helen A. Klein, Nancy M. Levenburg, Marie McKendall & William Mothersell, 2007)

Students indicate that they are less likely to cheat on campuses that have a community atmosphere, where faculty members are committed to the courses they teach and care about their students, and where they (the students) are aware of their institution's policies concerning academic honesty (McCabe and Trevino, 1996).

Students are more likely to cheat because academic integrity policies (including their reporting and penalty components) are weaker or more weakly enforced (Donald L. McCabe, Kenneth D. Butterfield & Linda Klebe Trevino, 2006).

2. Need and Importance of the Study:

As mentioned earlier, most of the studies were aimed to find out the prevalence, methods of cheating and the factors favouring and boosting such illegal acts of the students. Other studies aimed to investigate the differences between male and female students in cheating behaviors in exams. Few studies recommended practical solutions to control cheating but superficially. In spite of so many studies, the prevalence of cheating is not only growing exponentially but has also become more and more sophisticated. Therefore, in order to control cheating every dimension associated with cheating behavior, even if a speck of an issue, must be taken into consideration.

In the light of this fact, the study aimed to identify the various behavioral symptoms or signs of a cheaters particularly during the examination hours. The study also attempted to explain the different skills and techniques for controlling cheating in the examination hours. These are the objectives which has never attracted the attention of any researcher so far. The educational implications of such study is significant for controlling cheating in the institutions and for providing training to the teachers for effective detections of illegal behavior of the students no matter how brilliantly skillful they (cheaters) are in concealing their illegal materials and acts during exams. Hence, the present study is needed.

3. Objectives of the Study:

- 3.1. To find out the symptoms manifested by the student cheaters in the end term examination hours at Churachandpur College, Churachandpur, Manipur, India.
- 3.2. To categorise the symptoms into groups in order to promote further in-depth studies in this field.
- 3.3. To identify the skills and techniques for detecting cheating behavior of the students during examination hours.
- 3.4. To recommend holistic practical solutions to control and eradicate cheating during examination.

4. Research Questions

- 4.1. What were the symptoms of student cheaters in the end term examination hours at Churachandpur College, Churachandpur, Manipur, India?
- 4.2. Categorize the symptoms exhibited by the cheaters in exams.
- 4.3. What are the skills and techniques for detecting cheating behavior of the students during the examination hours?
- 4.4. What are the means to control and eradicate cheating during examination?

5. Limitation of the Study:

The study was conducted under the following limitations;

- 5.1. The field of study covered the Churachandpur College, Churachandpur District of Manipur, India.
- 5.2. The investigation was conducted to study the cheating behavior of first, third and fifth semester students in their end semester or term examinations during December, 2018.
- 5.3. The undergraduate students of Churachandpur College were observed by the researcher during the 2 consecutive end term examinations in its natural setting, wherein the students were not aware that they were under observation.

6. Design and Methodology of the Study.

6.1. Method of the Study

The researcher used unstructured observation and analytical methods in the present study as they are the most suitable ones. The students cheating behavior during the examination were observed and analyzed in the natural examination environment.

6.2. Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of students of Churachandpur College who had appeared the first, third and fifth end semester or end term examinations held during December, 2018.

6.3. Sample of the Study

The sample of the study consisted of students sitting in a randomly selected 18 examination room in the first, third and fifth end semester or end term examinations held during December, 2018. This can be simplified in the following Table 1.

Table 1: Sample of the study

End Term or End Semester Examination held on December, 2018	Number of Examination Rooms Observed
I Semester	4
III Semester	4
V Semester	4
Total	12

6.4. Study Tool

The researcher had developed an inventory consisting of items to record body movements, eyes gestures, hands and legs gesture, sitting positions, facial expressions, etc. and a camera to capture the posture of cheating behavior for future analysis.

7. Procedures of the Study

This study has been conducted according to the following steps:

- 7.1. Preparation of study tool- inventory- till the final version was compiled.
- 7.2. Determined study population and selection of sample examination rooms.
- 7.3. Observation of cheating behavior of students in the selected examination rooms and symptoms of cheating behaviors was recorded in the inventory.
- 7.4. Extracting and analyzing the inventory and discuss them, and recommend suitable measures.

8. Observational Analysis:

After recording the cheating behavior in the inventory and capturing in the camera, the various symptoms or signs of cheating were compiled and categories and the result of the study was finalized.

9. Results of the Study:

The following are the results of the study according to the sequence of questions:

9.1. Results of the first question: *What were the symptoms of cheater in the examination hours?*

To answer this question, the inventory was analyzed and the various symptoms of cheaters in exams are shown in Table 1.

Table 2: Symptoms of cheaters in the examination hours

Sl. No	Symptoms of cheating in the examination
1.	Sudden repositions of the body
2.	Frequent repositioning of the butt with careful movement
3.	Leaning on the table or desk and peeking at the invigilators
4.	Abnormal walking when returned from break
5.	Humping in the front waist
6.	Humping in the back waist
7.	Bulging front pockets
8.	Wearing jackets with open zip
9.	Face turned pale
10.	Fear
11.	Alertness
12.	Lacking concentration
13.	Sitting 45 degree facing toward the walls
14.	Facing toward the side which is not easily accessible to the invigilators
15.	Sitting in the middle of the bench
16.	Facing most towards the back
17.	Sitting at the extreme end of the bench
18.	Folding of legs
19.	Upward push of the desk or table with the leg
20.	Hiding palm between the thigh
21.	Sudden upward rising of leg
22.	Scooping palm

23.	Constant covering of something by the palm on the desk or table
24.	Hiding hand under the desk or table
25.	Hiding hand between the bench and thigh
26.	Hasty displacement of papers by hand
27.	Following the invigilators with the eyes
28.	Bulging eyes
29.	Peeking eyes
30.	Frequent turned glancing at two locations
31.	Consistent glancing near the belly

Analysis of the above Table 2 explicitly showed the various symptoms of cheaters during and examination hours. The result revealed 31 symptoms demonstrated by cheaters during the end term or semester examinations in the Churachandpur College during December, 2018.

9.2. Results of the first question: *categorization of symptoms exhibited by the cheaters in exams.*

To answer this statement, the inventory was analyzed and the broad categories of symptoms of cheaters in exams were reformulated. The result is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Categories of symptoms of cheaters in the examination hours

Sl. No	Categories	Symptoms of cheating in the examination
1.	Body Movements	Sudden repositions of the body
		Frequent repositioning of the butt with careful movement
		Leaning on the table or desk and peeking at the invigilators
		Abnormal walking when returned from break
2.	Facial Expressions	Face turned pale
		Fear
		Alertness
		Lacking concentration
3.	Sitting Positions	Sitting 45 degree facing toward the walls
		Facing toward the side which is not easily accessible to the invigilators
		Sitting in the middle of the bench

		Facing most towards the back
		Sitting at the extreme end of the bench
4.	Leg Gestures	Folding of legs
		Upward push of the desk or table with the leg
		Hiding palm between the thigh
		Sudden upward rising of leg
5.	Hands Gesture	Scooping palm
		Constant covering of something by the palm on the desk or table
		Hiding hand under the desk or table
		Hiding hand between the bench and thigh
		Hasty displacement of papers by hand
6.	Eyes Gestures	Following the invigilators with the eyes
		Bulging eyes
		Peeking eyes
		Frequent turned glancing at two location
		Consistent glancing near the belly
7.	Others	Humping in the front waist
		Humping in the back waist
		Bulging front pockets
		Wearing jackets with open zip

Analysis of Table 3 showed the various categories of the symptoms of cheaters in the college end term examinations. The researcher found out 7 broad categories of symptoms demonstrated by cheaters during the end term or semester examinations in the Churachandpur College during December, 2018.

9.3. **Results of the first question:** *What are the skills and techniques for detecting cheating behavior of the students during the examination hours?*

To answer this question, Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentages Score of items of skills and techniques of controlling cheating in the college examinations was computed and the result is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentages Score of items of skills and techniques of controlling cheating in the college examinations

Sl. No.	Skills and Techniques for controlling cheating	M	S.D	%	Degree of Utilization
1.	Avoid being friendly to the examinees	3.55	1.52	47.50	Moderate
2.	Always appear serious to the examinees	4.90	0.63	97.50	Very High
3.	Invigilators seat must be at the higher position than the students	4.38	0.74	65.50	High
4.	Pretend to be casual for few minutes and suddenly look around to detected any symptoms or sign of cheating	4.43	0.64	67.00	High
5.	Pretend to ignore the suspected cheaters but remain watchful	4.88	0.33	92.50	Very High
6.	Gradually and smoothly walk around the room then suddenly look toward the students at your back	4.48	0.51	68.50	High
7.	Always watchout for the symptoms of cheaters	4.90	0.30	94.00	Very High
8.	Always confirm that you have seen the illegal materials bits and pieces	4.95	0.32	97.50	Very High
9.	When suspected of cheating ask the examinees to stand so as to rearrange the bench and desk	3.13	0.94	20.00	Very Low
10.	Stand near the suspected examinees to study their facial expressions	4.93	0.27	95.50	Very High
11.	Have through understanding of the symptoms of cheaters.	5.00	0.00	100.00	Very High
12.	Know your powers as an invigilators	5.00	0.00	100.00	Very High

13.	Walk out of the room and look for cheater from outside through the window	3.4 0	0.50	16.00	Very Low
14.	kin observer of examinees' behaviour	5.0 0	0.00	100.00	Very High
	Total scores of the techniques and skills for controlling cheating in examinations	4.4 9	0.88	88.04	Very High

Analysis of Table 4 clearly showed a very high degree of utilization as the skills and techniques for controlling cheating in the college end term examinations which has come at a Mean of (4.49), Standard Deviation of (0.88) and Percentage of (88.04). The researcher found out 14 skills and techniques for controlling cheating in the college end term examinations with a very high probability for effective controlling of the cheating behavior in the college examinations.

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