

Causes of Scholastic Dishonesty among the Examinees

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Abstract

The present study was an attempt to explore the causes of scholastic dishonesty among the examinees. Random sampling procedure was used to select 100 teachers and 300 students of graduate class. A self-constructed checklist was administered to collect the data. Simple percentage and ranks were calculated. The obtained results indicate that teachers and students differ with regard to the causes of scholastic dishonesty among the examinees.

INTRODUCTION

Our examination system is in shambles and almost every level has reached its nadir. In fact, there has been a virtual collapse of this system. Due to its cumulative effects, it is rightly regarded as a bundle of evils and its fall out encompasses the entire fabric of our educational system. It is due to the pernicious effects of the examination that the whole fabric of education is crumbling fast. In this context, someone has rightly said that the system of examination was originated by Chinese, who are said to have invented gunpowder; and in our country, it is the examination that have played more havoc than the gunpowder.

Today leakage of question papers, mass copying and approaching the examiners for extorting high marks have become the norm. A visit to various examination centres presents a horrifying sight. The examinees are not only armed with slips of papers, with answers scribed on them but they are also helped by scores of friends, lurking in the vicinity of centres. These helpers hurl paper-missiles, with answers scribed on them, through the windows of the examination room. It is also heard that answer sheets of some influential candidates are smuggled out of the hall and are written in the hostel room by their friends who have textbooks and guides handy.

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Any attempt by the invigilators to check these “going-ons” are met with violence. In a nutshell, scholastic dishonesty reigns supreme in the conduct of examination, right from the elementary level to the university level.

Many studies (Lalithamma 1975), (Mathew 1976), (Prakash 1975) and (Sharma 1975) have been conducted with regard to correlates of achievement. A few studies have been undertaken by researchers to investigate the causes of scholastic dishonesty, which the students generally resort to fetch high scores. Meagre (1965) and Sharma (1965) conducted their studies to this effect but in the present atmosphere when this epidemic is spreading at a sputnik speed and thereby vitiating the atmosphere of education, there is a crying need to diagnose and identify its causes. To fulfil this purpose, the present study was undertaken.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the causes of scholastic dishonesty among the students;
2. To find out sex differences, if any, concerning the causes of scholastic dishonesty;
3. To study the views of teachers with regard to the causes of scholastic dishonesty.

In the present study the term ‘scholastic dishonesty’ includes copying, recommendations and approaching the examiners for

getting better awards in the examinations.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study was conducted on three hundred graduates of Azamgarh district in Uttar Pradesh only.
2. The teachers included in the sample were of degree stage only.
3. The size of the sample was small for broad generalisation.

PROCEDURE

SAMPLE

The sample for this study consisted of three hundred graduates, of which, 150 were boys and 150 were girls. Two hundred students were from urban area and the remaining were from rural area.

TOOL

For the collection of data, a checklist was developed by the investigator. It was constructed after following the normal procedure of checklist construction. The final form of the checklist contained ten items.

In order to avoid non-response, the tool was distributed among the respondents personally and they were asked to tick mark only one of the reasons, they think, to be the most important. The responses were collected on the same day.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

For the analysis and interpretation of data, frequency distribution, percentages and ranks were calculated.

Table 1
Causes of Scholastic Dishonesty in view of the Students as whole

S.No.	Causes	Frequency	Percentages	Rank
1	Foundation of students are poor	30	10	
2	Services and admission to higher classes are linked with degrees	73	24	I
3	Students do not work hard	20	7	
4	Students take failure as a matter of shame	35	12	III
5	Students imitate each other	50	17	II
6	Guardians induce their wards	12	4	
7	Atmosphere of our society is corrupt	28	9	
8	Moral degeneration of teachers	19	6	
9	Security persons and police are helpful	3	1	
10	College being the self-centre of the examination	30	10	

Table 1 indicates that seventy three students (24%) are of the view that resorting to scholastic dishonesty is due to the reason that services and admission to higher classes are linked with degrees. This reason has been accorded first rank. This is natural because in our society, too much premium is placed on marks and degrees. Admission to higher classes and services are directly linked with marks and degrees obtained in various examinations. This is the reason that no hold is now barred for scoring maximum possible marks on the part of students as a whole and it has become an ordeal for the examinees and examiners alike.

Fifty students (17%) think that malpractices in examination occur due to the reason that students

imitate each other. This reason gets second rank. It is really true that due to malpractices prevalent in our examination, the whole atmosphere has been vitiated. Even the studious and conscientious students are tempted to take leave of their studies. They think that like their fellow students, they will come up with flying colours by resorting to dishonest means in the examination.

The third rank goes to the reason: 'Students take failure as a matter of shame.' This reason has been endorsed by thirty five (12%) students. This is inevitable for students who have been driven to the conclusion that in our society everything is forgotten and forgiven except failure. The ordeal of examination is really trying enough. Everybody notices that as the time approaches for

announcement of the results, tempers are frayed, expectations are roused and disillusionment grips many, when failure stares them in the face. The announcement of the result is in the nature of a curtain raiser.

Table 2 shows that fifty boys (33%) view that scholastic dishonesty breeds because, appointment and admission to any higher class depends upon the marks and degrees. While this reason has been given the

first rank by the boys, the girls do the same to the reason 'students take failure as a matter of shame.' Girls have opted for this reason because in this part of the country, girls study mainly not for getting service but for self-satisfaction and enhancing their marriage prospects.

Thirty boys (20%) think that there is a tendency among the students to follow and imitate each other.

Table 2
Comparison between Responses of Boys and Girls

S. No.	Causes	Boys			Girls		
		Frequency	%	Rank	Frequency	%	Rank
1	Foundation of students are poor	10	7		20	13	III
2	Services and admission to higher classes are linked with degrees	50	33	I	23	15	II
3	Students do not work hard	10	7		10	7	
4	Students take failure as a matter of shame	9	6		26	17	I
5	Students imitate each other	30	20	II	20	13	
6	Guardians induce their wards	12	8	III	00	00	
7	Atmosphere of our society is corrupt	8	5		20	13	
8	Moral degeneration of teachers	8	5		11	7	
9	Security persons like PAC and police are helpful	3	2		0	0	
10	College being the self-centre of the examination	10	7		20	13	

While the boys consider the reason “students imitate each other” in the second place and “guardians induce their wards” in the third place; the girls give second place to the reason “services and admission to the higher classes are linked with degrees”. The girls accord the third rank to the three reasons standing at serial number 1, 5 and 10.

It is clear from Table 3 that the teachers (34%) consider the reason “foundations of the students are poor” in the first place. This may be because students from the very primary stage want to pass the examination by hook or by crook. Consequently, they are found, in general, to be mediocre and they find it very difficult to adjust to the higher classes.

The reason “employment and admission to higher classes are linked with degrees” get the second rank. This is the reason that many people feel that employment should be delinked with degrees.

The third rank goes to the reason “guardians induce their wards”. A visit to any examination centre reveals that many guardians go and exercise their influence upon the invigilators to do favour for their wards. Hence, the guardians cannot be exonerated from the charge that they also play a dubious role in this abominable racket.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results suggest that scholastic dishonesty is a complex problem and several causes are responsible for it.

Table 3
Causes of Scholastic Dishonesty in view of Teachers

S.No.	Causes	Frequency	Rank
1	Foundation of students are poor	34	I
2	Services and admission to higher classes are linked with degrees	27	II
3	Students do not work hard	6	
4	Students take failure as a matter of shame	6	
5	Students imitate each other	3	
6	Guardians induce their wards	10	III
7	Atmosphere of our society is corrupt	1	
8	Moral degeneration of teachers	2	
9	Security persons like PAC and police are helpful	1	
10	College being the self-centre of the examination	10	

The students and the teachers differ among themselves with regard to causes that give rise to the malaise. Majority of the students think that linking degrees with employment and admission to higher classes is the most potent cause for compelling the students to resort to scholastic dishonesty. Majority of the girls opine that our society has set so much in store by the so-called academic qualifications that failure cannot be countenanced. In our society, everything can be forgotten except failure. Teachers hold different views in this regard. Majority of them think that the background of the students is very poor. As a result, the students fail to adjust to the higher classes and ultimately resort to unfair means for getting success in the examination of which hinges their future life.

Keeping these views in mind, one can safely reach the conclusion that there are multiple causes responsible for this malady. Teachers, students, guardians and administrators are collectively responsible for it. For overcoming this evil, the following suggestions may be given:

- Degree should be delinked with employment and job should be properly classified on the basis of

skills needed for their competent performance.

- Admission to higher classes should not be done on the basis of academic scores only.
- Academic session should be maintained and the prescribed course should be completed.
- Habit of hard work should be developed among the students so that, they become sincere to their studies.
- Teachers should be conscientious and true to their profession, so that they may not become a party to this evil.
- Strong public opinion should be built against this evil.
- Parents should discourage and desist their wards from adopting under-hand means in the examination.
- The practice of colleges being the self-centre should be abolished.

The above mentioned nostrums can go a long way to stem the rot. If this problem goes unheeded and unsolved, the country will be plugged into chaos by millions of half-baked unemployable young men, who are being spewed out in increasing numbers by our degree manufacturing factories to spell ruin all round.

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