Original Research Paper

Education

ACADEMIC CHEATING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN RELATION TO THEIR HOME ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT The present study was undertaken to study the academic cheating among secondary school students in relation to their home environment. Academic cheating was treated as dependent variable whereas home environment was treated as an independent variable. Descriptive survey method was used for the present study. Random sampling technique was used to select the sample for the present study. The sample comprised of 220 secondary school students of private schools affiliated to Central Board of School Education (CBSE). Academic cheating scale by Kalia and Kirandeep (2001) and Home environment inventory by Mishra (2012) were used. Mean, SD, 't' test and Coefficient of correlation (r) were used to analyse the data. The findings of the study revealed that the academic cheating of male and female secondary school students did not differ significantly. Significant difference was found in the academic cheating of rural and urban secondary school students. It was also found that the home environment of male and female secondary school students did not differ significantly. Significant difference was found in the home environment of rural and urban secondary school students. It was found that there exists significant relationship between home environment and academic cheating of secondary school students.

KEYWORDS : Academic Cheating, Home Environment

INTRODUCTION

Cheating can be considered as one of the most important issues in schools, because it is a major obstacle to infer the competence of the students. Romney & Steinbart (2003) defined cheating as "to use any means to achieve an unfair and unjust privileges that include: lying, concealing the truth, deceive, deceit and violation of trust". However, in test situations, the term means is a violation of rules. Wilkinson (2009) stated cheating means copying from other students during exams, one of the forms of misconduct that has become one of the biggest concerns of educational institutions. Pavela (1978) defined that there are four areas of academic cheating or dishonesty: a) cheating by using unauthorized materials on any academic activity such as assignment or a test, b) fabrication of information, references or results c) plagiarism and d) helping other students engage in academic dishonesty. Some reasons identified for the rise of academic cheating include pressure from teachers, parents, school and peers; unhealthy environment both at home and school; peer influence etc. Hooda and Chaudhary (2015) stated home environment is the potential factor in affecting the social maturity of adolescent students.

A child spends most of his time at the home in the company of his or her parent. It is the person's primary environment from the time he is born until the day he dies; hence its effect on the individual is also most significant and enduring. Sometimes parents place an immense pressure on their children to perform better. When the pressure builds up and it gets to be too much, they may break. Due to this pressure child may cheat on assignments and tests to achieve a high score on those and their report card. Cracking under pressure and feeling overwhelmed may also contribute to why students choose to cheat (Riera & Di Prisco, 2002). Parents should provide congenial environment to the child. If congenial home environment is provided to the child, he can concentrate on study and concentration in study will result in more learning. This will result in less involvement in academic cheating.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS USED

Academic Cheating: Academic cheating is defined as fraud, deceit or dishonesty in an examination or in an assignment or in class by using or attempting to use methods which are prohibited and inappropriate (Maslach, 2004).

Home Environment: Home environment refers to the quality and quantity of the cognitive, emotional and social-support that has been available to the child within the home.

VARIABLES USED
Independent Variable: Home Environment
Dependent Variable: Academic Cheating

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
1. To study and compare the academic cheating of male and female secondary school students.
2. To study and compare the academic cheating of urban and rural secondary school students.
3. To study and compare the home environment of male and female secondary school students.
4. To study and compare the home environment of urban and rural secondary school students.
5. To find out the relationship between home environment and academic cheating of secondary school students.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY
1. There exists no significant difference between academic cheating of male and female secondary school students.
2. There exists no significant difference between academic cheating of urban and rural secondary school students.
3. There exists no significant difference between home environment of male and female secondary school students.
4. There exists no significant difference between home environment of urban and rural secondary school students.
5. There exists no significant relationship between home environment and academic cheating of secondary school students.

METHOD
Descriptive survey method was used in the present study.

SAMPLE
The sample for this study consisted of 220 secondary school students affiliated to C.B.S.E. selected on the basis of random sampling method.

TOOLS USED
1. **Academic Cheating Scale** by Kalia and Kirandeep (2011).
2. **Home Environment Inventory** by Mishra (2012).

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED
Mean, S.D, 't' test and coefficient of correlation (r) were used to analyse the data.

DATA ANALYSIS
In order to verify the objectives and to test the null hypotheses, the present study has been analyzed as given below:

1. To study and compare the academic cheating of male and female secondary school students.
For this purpose the following null hypothesis was formulated:

$H_0 1$ There exists no significant difference between the academic cheating of male and female secondary school students.

To test the null hypothesis, Mean, SD and t-value were calculated from the scores obtained by administering the academic cheating scale. The

results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics related to the Academic Cheating of male and female secondary school students

Group (Academic Cheating)	N	Mean	SD	't' value	Level of Significance
Male	104	127.7	31.34	1.1 (NS)	Not Significant
Female	116	122.8	35.08		

** Significant at .01 level   * Significant at .05 level
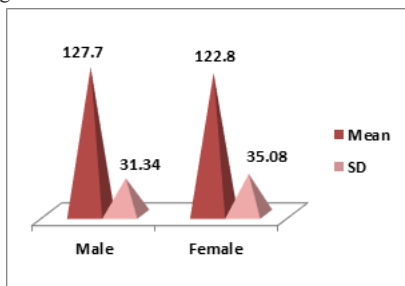NS- Not significant

Fig.1: Gender wise mean academic cheating scores and SDs of Secondary School Students

From the Table 1 and Fig.1, it can be observed that the t-value of 1.1 was not found significant at 0.05 level, which indicates that the academic cheating of male and female secondary school students did not differ significantly. So, the null hypothesis i.e. there exists no significant difference in the academic cheating of male and female secondary school students, is retained. Thus, we can say that academic cheating is not affected by gender. The finding of this study is in consonance with the finding of Barzegar and Khezri (2012) who also found that gender has not an important role in academic cheating.

2. To study and compare the academic cheating of rural and urban secondary school students.

For this purpose the following null hypothesis was formulated.

$H_0$2 There exists no significant difference between the academic cheating of rural and urban secondary school students.

To test the null hypothesis, Mean, SD and t-value were calculated from the scores obtained by administering the academic cheating scale. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics related to the Academic Cheating of Rural and Urban secondary school students

Group (Academic Cheating)	N	Mean	SD	't' value	Level of Significance
Rural	122	134.5	11.2	5.34**	Significant
Urban	98	125.1	14.2		

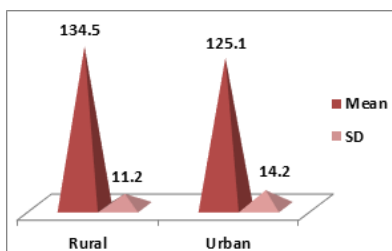** Significant at .01 level * Significant at .05 level   NS-Not significant

Fig. 2: Locality wise mean academic cheating scores and SDs of Secondary School Students

From the Table 2 and 2, it can be observed that the t-value of 5.34 was found significant at 0.01 level, which indicates that there is significant difference in the academic cheating of rural and urban secondary

school students. So, the null hypothesis i.e. there exists no significant difference in the academic cheating of rural and urban secondary school students, is **rejected**. In terms of Mean, it can be seen that mean academic cheating score of rural secondary school students i.e.**134.51** has been found higher than that of urban secondary school students i.e. **125.12**. This can be due to the reason that urban secondary school students are aware about the fact that it is the age of competition and merely having marks without knowledge are of no use.

3. To study and compare the home environment of male and female secondary school students.

For this purpose the following null hypothesis was formulated:

$H_0$3 There exists no significant difference between the home environment of male and female secondary school students.

To test the null hypothesis, Mean, SD and t-value were calculated from the scores obtained by administering the home environment inventory. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Descriptive statistics related to the Home environment of male and female secondary school students

Group (Home environment)	N	Mean	SD	't' value	Level of Significance
Male	104	224.1	17.0	0.79(NS)	Not Significant
Female	116	226.2	21.4		

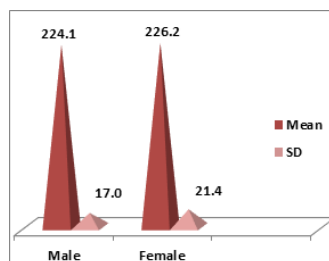** Significant at .01 level   * Significant at .05 level   NS-Not significant

Fig. 3: Gender wise Mean Home Environment scores and SDs of secondary school students

From the Table 3 and Fig.3, it can be observed that the t-value of 0.79 was not found significant at 0.05 levels, which indicates that the home environment of male and female secondary school students did not differ significantly. So, the null hypothesis i.e. there exists no significant difference in the home environment of male and female secondary school students, is **accepted**. The present finding is in consonance with the finding of Rani (2013) who also found that there exists no significant difference between home environment of boys and girls studying in science stream of senior secondary school.

4. To compare the home environment of urban and rural secondary school students.
For this purpose the following null hypothesis was formulated.

$H_0$4 There is no significant difference between the home environment of urban and rural secondary school students.

To test the null hypothesis, Mean, SD and t-value were calculated from the scores obtained by administering the home environment inventory. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Descriptive statistics related to the Home Environment of Urban and Rural secondary school students

Group (Home environment)	N	Mean	SD	't' value	Level of Significance
Rural	122	221.7	20.3	4.9 **	Significant
Urban	98	234.7	18.6		

** Significant at .01 level   * Significant at .05 level   NS-Not significant
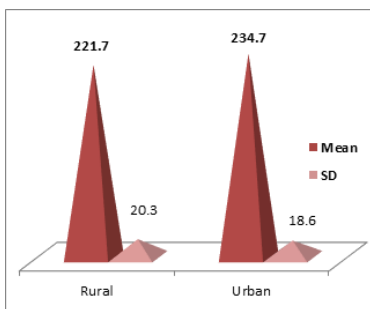
Fig.4: Locality wise mean Home Environment scores and SDs of secondary school students

From the Table 4 and Fig.4, it can be observed that the t-value of 4.9 was found significant at 0.01, which indicates that there exists significant difference in the home environment of rural and urban secondary school students. So, the null hypothesis i.e. there exists no significant difference in the home environment of urban and rural secondary school students, is **rejected**. In terms of Mean, it can be seen that mean home environment score of urban secondary school students i.e. **234.65** has been found higher than that of rural secondary school students i.e. **221.67**. This can be due to the reason that parents living in urban areas are familiar with the fact that in the present age of competition there is a lot of stress on their child and they try to provide more congenial environment to their child.

5. To find out the relationship between home environment and academic cheating of secondary school students.
For this purpose the following null hypothesis was formulated.

$H_0 5$ There exists no significant relationship between home environment and academic cheating of secondary school students.

Table 5
Coefficients of Correlation between home environment and academic cheating of secondary school students

Sr. No.	Variables	N	Coefficients of Correlation
1.	Home Environment	220	0.43**
2.	Academic cheating	220	

** Significant at .01 level   * Significant at .05 level   NS-Not significant

The Table 5 reveals that coefficient of correlation between home environment and academic cheating of secondary school students is 0.43 which is positive and significant at 0.01 level of significance. So the null hypothesis "There exists no significant relationship between home environment and academic cheating of secondary school students." is **rejected**. The magnitude of 'r' indicates that there is moderate correlation between home environment and academic cheating of secondary school students. In other words, academic cheating of secondary school students is associated with increase or decrease in home environment. This can be due to the reason that in congenial home environment student can concentrate on their study and concentration in study will result in more learning. If learning is there, there will be no need of academic cheating.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY
- It was found that the academic cheating of male and female secondary school students did not differ significantly.
- Significant difference was found in the academic cheating of rural and urban secondary school students.
- It was found that the home environment of male and female secondary school students did not differ significantly.
- Significant difference was found in the home environment of rural and urban secondary school students.
- A positive and significant relationship was found between home environment and academic cheating of secondary school students.

CONCLUSION
The problem of academic cheating is gaining much attention from parents, educators, researchers and policy makers as it is not just an educational problem but also a social issue with huge social costs. Based on the result of the data analysis the researcher concluded that more congenial environment should be provided to the students. If congenial home environment is provided to the student, he can concentrate on study and concentration in study will result in more learning. If learning is there, there will be no need of academic cheating. Parents need to know their role in the education of their children. They should contribute to the education of their children through encouragement, provision of learning facilities etc. No doubt, if such environment is provided at home where parents involve with students in academic effort, it may ultimately reduce negative school behaviors including academic cheating.

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