Students' Experiences with Academic Cheating: Perspectives of Grade 10 students, Addis Ababa City Administration

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore students' experiences with academic cheating from perspectives of grade 10 students within the context of phenomenology research design. To that end, participants of the study shared their experiences on students' attitudes towards academic cheating, techniques used in cheating, factors forcing students towards cheating and consequences of cheating. Empirical data was gathered via focus group discussions (FGD) and in-depth interviews from 15 participants purposefully selected among grade 10 students. To analyze the data, initially the researcher used structural coding to organize transcribed data from which he highlighted significant statements, and clustered meanings which developed in to themes. The researcher used the significant statements and themes to write textual and structural description, conclusion and implications of the study. Thus, the finding of this study reveals that academic cheating has been increasing with its sophisticated tactics; school management, teachers, students and parents were identified as factors encouraging or discouraging cheating. Specifically, neither preset rule nor directive to control academic cheating; no orientations for students and teachers on how to reduce cheating; no close collaboration among stakeholders to curb the problem; and teachers' carelessness were widely raised by participants. Thus, large proportion of students have been tending to engage in cheating rather than studying, or attending the teacher in the classroom attentively, or involving themselves in attempting tasks and trying to solve difficult problems. Therefore, strong collaboration among stakeholders and wide scope future research capable of informing policy on students cheating highly sought to hold back problem.

Key words: Academic, cheating, students, experiences

1. Introduction

Academic cheating which is becoming a serious problem among high school and college students. It has a propensity to diminish the effectiveness of a country's education system by distorting truthful competition (Evans and Craig, 1990; Jensen, Arnett, Feldman, Cauffman, 2001; Teixeira and Rocha, 2008). It has been drawing wider attentions and becoming global challenges (McCabe, Trevino, Butterfield, 2001; Strom and Strom, 2007). The problem initiates in lower grades and increases as students go on through higher education institutions (Anderman and Midgley, 2004; and Dahiya, 2015). As McCabe and Treviño revealed, though there was only a modest increase in overall cheating, momentous increases were found in the most explicit forms of test or exam cheating. Studies (Khodaie, Moghadamzadeh, Salehi, 2011; and Strom and Strom, 2007) claim that 95 percent of the students engaging on tests and assignments cheating were never caught and consider themselves to be morally responsible individuals. Unless the problem get appropriate solutions, after observing students who cheat in exam go unreported or unpunished, those students, who honestly complete their work, start to think they cannot afford to be disadvantaged and coerced by themselves to participate in cheating (McCube et al., 2001). Previous studies on students academic cheating gave due consideration to perceptions of the prevalence and seriousness of academic dishonesty factors affecting the probability of academic cheating (Brimble, Clarke, 2005; Evans, Craig,1990; Pulker, 2012; Teferra, Getachew, 2009); (Carrell, Malmstrom, West, 2008; Etter, Cramer, and Finn, 2006; Khodaie et al., 2011).

Academic dishonesty among high school and college students is rampant (Jensen et al., 2001; Koss, 2011; Teixeira, Rocha, 2008; Wangaard, Stephens, 2011); and attitudes toward, and intentions to report academic cheating among students is pathetic (Lim, See, 2001; Nath, Lovaglia, 2008). Though studies on academic dishonesty and cheating were widely conducted in

USA focusing on universities and college with quantitative approach little is known about experiences of grade 10 students in academic cheating from the perspectives of the students.

A number of studies (Anderman and Midgley, 2004), suggested the need of further studies that examine different types of cheating; like cheating on exams, cheating on projects, and plagiarism, so as to boost up researchers knowledge base. It is important if studies might examine students' own motives for engaging in academic cheating in order to better understand their internalized conceptions of cheating (Jensen et al. 2001). It would also be helpful if such studies include groups of students that we already know differ on evaluations of cheating and frequency of engaging in cheating behavior. Studies on students' in academic cheating enable every actor involved in educational institutions to uphold the sense of responsibility to obstruct the process of cheating behaviors (Farnese 2011). Moreover, Nath and Lovaglia (2008), argue the need for effective approach that requires well-organized method for identifying a significant proportion of cheating together with a procedure for dealing with accused cheaters that have some academic advantage.

Similarly, scholars (Nath, Lovaglia, 2008; Steinberg, 1996) call for research efforts that boost up understanding of people's outlooks toward cheating; so as to design and implement organizational interventions to hold back such behaviors. Taking the above calls for future studies in to consideration, the researcher is motivated to conduct the proposed study because; few or no study is conducted on the topic in general secondary schools of Ethiopia. However, the studies carried out by local researchers like Tefera and Kinde (2009 and 2010), mainly focus on cheating at higher education institutions and quantitatively approached. Above all, the issue of academic cheating has been given due attention by the Ethiopian National Examination and Assessment Agency under the motto of: "ከሪጃ የትምህርትና ጥሬት ነቀርሳ ስለ ሆነ በቀርስ!"

In the Ethiopian context, complaints on devastating increase of academic cheating has been heard from different corners including the Ministry of Education, which is the core business owner, teachers, students and school managers from elementary schools to higher education institutions. However, with the exception of two studies by Tefera Tadesse and Kinde Getachew on faculties 'response and students' self reported academic dishonesty at Jimma and Addis Ababa Universities, little or no research was carried out so far on grade 10 students experiences of academic cheating from their own perspectives. In response, the researcher conducted this qualitative study to provide detailed views of students in their own words, complex analyses of multiple perspectives, and specific school context that shape students' experiences with academic cheating so as to shade light on further studies and to encourage other researchers on similar topic.

Studies of academic cheating help education institutions to develop commonly agreed up on and an up to standard academic integrity policies that need to be distributed, explained and gained acceptance among teachers, students and other stakeholders (McCube 2001). Such studies clarify students' expectations like honesty, other important values, and the certain consequences they might face in the case of breaking the rules (Khodaie et al, 2011). In addition, examining students' experiences on academic cheating using qualitative approach helps the teachers, students, parents and school management to better understand its immediate and long-term negative consequences.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore students' experiences with academic cheating from the perspectives of grade 10 students, Yekatit 23 general secondary school within the context of phenomenology. More specifically the study answered the following questions:
1. What have you experienced in terms of academic cheating of grade 10 students at Yekatit 23 general secondary school?

- What is the attitude of the students towards academic cheating in the views of participants?
- What are the techniques used by students during cheating in various assessment techniques?
- What factors force students towards cheating?
- What are the consequences of academic cheating?

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Research Design

In this study the researcher used phenomenological research design which he begun with narrating data, reducing the stories and describing to their essential themes, and systematically analyzing words and concepts to describe the phenomenon (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009). The researcher employed the design because its final outcomes enable him to describe the essence or essential common structure of students' experiences. While employing phenomenological research design, he collected data from individuals who have experiences of the phenomenon of the study; and in order to get detail understanding of their views of the phenomenon, he bracketed out his own experiences (Creswell, 2007). For the success this research design he used, 4 cautiously prepared semi-structured research questions so as to touch the lived experiences his participants have on academic cheating (Creswell, 2007).

2.2 Sampling Strategies

The researcher deliberately used purposeful sampling to select the setting and participants of the study, to better understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). More specifically, he used typical sampling strategy to select Yekatit 23 General Secondary School because, it is typically the oldest school in its establishment when compared to other general secondary schools in Addis Ketema sub city. The researcher used both maximal variation and homogeneous sampling strategies to select high, medium and low achieving students from grade10, with the hope that they can provide rich data by sharing their experiences through discussions on the problem of the study. While maximum variation sampling was employed due to participants differences in their academic achievement; homogeneous sampling was employed because participants were members of grade 10 students, possessing common characteristics like taking similar subjects, and taking similar teacher made exams, group works, assignments and going to seat for the EGSECE in this academic year (Creswell, 2012).

2.3 Data Gathering Strategies

Consistent with Creswell (2007), to secure the necessary data, the researcher used focus group discussions, individual interview and documents. As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) rightly describe FGD helps discussions to develop among group members, thus yielding a wide range of responses. An FGD is thus, used to pull together shared understanding from different individuals as well as to get views from specific participants; and member of a group is often four to six (Creswell, 2012). In the proposed study the researcher conducted two group interviews, FGD_1 with 6 members lasted 55 minutes; and the second FGD_2, with 6 members lasted 45 minutes. Members for both FGI and individual interviews were selected from 5 sections of grade 10 students those with high, medium and low grades in their academic achievements. To meet the purpose of the study, 4 cautiously prepared semi structured interview questions with different probing related to students' attitude of academic cheating, factors leading students to cheat, techniques used by students to cheat and consequences of academic cheating were asked and discussed in detail.

To verify data obtained through FGD, the researcher also conducted 3 individual interviews each lasted 45 minutes, on the same questions raised in the FGD. In both FGDs and individual interviews, while the researcher ask interview questions by jotting down key ideas that emerge during discussions; his colleague attending MA in center of African studies assisted him in taking detail notes.

2.4 Methods of Data Analysis

At the initial stage of data analysis, first the researcher transcribed data gathered via both FGD and interviews from Amharic in to English, then typed on his PC, and he used structural coding. Using the epoch process he bracketed his prior experience before the commencement of data analysis to minimize biases that perhaps happens while analyzing data. Then he structurally coded the data and highlighted the significant statements and clustered meanings which later developed in to themes (Creswell, 2007). He used the significant statements and themes to write textual and structural description of participants' experiences of the phenomenon under the discussion part framing with available theories. Lastly, he provides conclusion and implications of the study.

3. Discussions

3.1 Epoch

Epoch is the first step of the reduction process in phenomenological study which requires the researcher to set aside his/her views about experiences on the phenomenon of the study while reporting the views of the participants to avoid personal prejudices and presumptions (Creswell, 2007b; Lin, 2013). To achieve epoch, the researcher bracketed (put aside) his previous high school teaching experiences of 6 years back when he came across students engaging in academic cheating. When he recalls back the time, academic cheating was rampant in the high school and students used various sophisticated techniques including repeating the grades or changing their names to alphabetically similar or nearly similar with those good performing students so as to facilitate conditions to seat for national or regional exams nearby those students from whom they suppose to cheat. Even though his experiences that he practically came across while he was in high school is the one that made him enthusiastic towards carrying out this study, he left his mind free and disconnected himself from his experiences and concentrated his attention towards what his participants presented and shared him during interview and FGI without framing and decorating their experiences with his prior experience (Urdahl and Creswell, 2004).

To make easier and clearer to the readers in identifying the range of perspectives about the phenomenon of the study, he collected and tabulated the significant statements reflecting the entire sentences, and their respective meaning units from the transcripts to learn how individual participants experienced academic cheating.

Accordingly, of 15 verbatim, 44 significant statements and 20 meaning units were extracted (See Appendix B). The 20 meaning units deduced to 6 themes for which discussions were made by elucidating with earlier literatures to understand participants' experiences of academic cheating (Urdahl and Creswell, 2004).

3.2 Academic Cheating

Theme 1: *Concepts of academic cheating*

Academic cheating comprises of plagiarism, stealing tests, fabricating academic documents, purchasing term papers, or copying from someone's exams, and thus, most likely happen when students reproduce and submit the work of their peers, or allow other students to duplicate from their work during examination and homework settings (Nath and Lovaglia, 2008; Pluker, 2012;

Pincus and Schmelkin, 2003). Similarly, almost all participants conceptualize academic cheating as taking and submitting another student's work without any devotion, unfairly and dishonestly to get good scores, grades, pass mark, and even cheap popularity. They identified cheating with two disparate meanings, negative and positive meanings. Edom, an FGD participant clearly explained the extreme ideas as follows:

> As to my understanding, in academic cheating with positive meaning student can cheat (copy) best practices like how to systematically solve difficult mathematical problems and how to study to foster one's academic performance from high achieving students. However, for me academic cheating for which I attach negative meaning is a disgracing phrase because, when one said to be engaged in cheating, he or she seems inferior or inept to the person from he/ she cheat.

Accordingly, participants define academic cheating on one hand as adopting of best practices and on the other hand deceptive behaviors that committed by learners at any grade level hopping to pass from one grade level to the next. Concurrent to authors (Anderman and Midgley, 2004; Dahiya, 2015) participants say "students' engagement in academic cheating has been increasing with its complex techniques, and virtually all students at any grade level either directly or indirectly engage in deceptive behaviors. Straight forward talking of Tofik, an FGD_2 participant, attracted the attention of the group members from different corners:

> Often we see academically poor students scoring better score than the high achieving students; so, I and few students get surprised by cheaters high scores on different kinds of exams because the techniques they use while cheating have been not clear, they use hidden techniques that is even hard for the invigilators to be aware.

Supporting the ideas a number of studies (Teixeira and Rocha, 2008), attest that students with high academic average have been less likely to engage in cheating while those with low academic averages have high tendency towards cheating behavior. Thus, academic cheating can be conceptualized as complex and sophisticated techniques that involves an act of taking, copying, printing others academic works, exams, assignments, thesis, dissertations with hopping to get good grades, pass marks, promotion with or without the permission of the owners from which they cheat.

Theme2: *Attitude and Trust in cheating*

Learners develop positive attitudes towards cheating because, they see it as means of managing their time to work after school, avoiding efforts, to gate good grades, to surprise parents (Wangaard, and Stephens, 2011); and those cheaters in tests and assignments were never caught and as a result consider themselves to be morally responsible individuals (Strom and Strom, 2007). This moral feeling seems to develop within them due to their positive attitudes.

A great deal of participants of this study said students at elementary, junior, high school, college or university have great trust and positive attitudes towards academic cheating to get good grades or pass grades that can help them to obtain certificate that may perhaps assist them to be employed at good organizations. Participants reported that "we practically observe that students rely and fill confident on cheating to pass from one grade level to the next grades". Similarly, the following excerpt discusses what Sinan said with regard to students' attitudes and trust:

> I think **s**tudents have positive attitude towards cheating because cheating enable them use the work done by those clever students, who study very hard day and night with loss of their sleep and use their time properly. Especially, the propensity to rely on cheating is high when student from whom they cheat is intelligent. Most of the time, I see students, who couldn't attend the teachers in the class; frequently absent; and delinquent, but scoring high grades or scores. You know, this indicates how much cheating is prevalent in my school.

It is clear to understand from participants' that most students believe and trust in cheating, because it doesn't require them to go ups and downs to read, study, practice or solve difficult problems that can prepare them for their future academic success; they prefer the shortest path for their success rather than studying and trying to solve challenging tasks in teaching learning processes which in turn shaped by their attitudes.

**Theme 3:** *Techniques used in cheating*

Consistent with Teixeira and Rocha (2008), participants of this study reported, "Cheating is observed in all kinds of assessment techniques." Nevertheless, "dreadful cheating is common in exams, home work and class work." Samrawit, an FGD_1 sayings in the next excerpt verify the ideas of other participants,

> Look, if you compare students' result of home works and individual works in a particular class, you get what seem the works of one or two individuals. In such kinds of assessments any clever student or 1 to 5 arrangement leaders do the works and come up with answers that are copied and used by other students to get scores. For example, most of the time we are ordered to do our group works in 1 to 5 arrangements. However, all group activities are performed by our group leader, the duty of other group members is to contribute money for photocopy and printing purposes.

Academic cheating reduces the quality of education by distorting truthful competition among students (Jensen, Arnett, Feldman, Cauffman, 2001; Teixeira and Rocha, 2008). Nonetheless, the majority of group members neither do group work with group leader nor have interest to learn how the group activities performed. It is the work of few clever students that can be copied and submitted by the whole class. This in turn is curtailing students' independent activities to solve their immediate teaching learning problems.

Students use various techniques like crib notes, looking at and copying someone's answers during exams or exchanging information regarding exams or exercises, hiding notes in the bathroom toilet tank, in the brims of their baseball caps or up their sleeves, storing of information in graphing calculators, pagers, cell phones, and other electronic while cheating (McCube et al, 2001; Sarita and Dahiya, Strom and Strom, 2007 2015; Strom and Strom, 2007). Corroborating the findings almost all participant this study identified that copying answers; exchanging question paper, threatening others; sitting on exams with cheat sheets; writing different formulas, words, diagrams, pictures on their body parts such as arms, wrist, palm, legs are the most widely used techniques of cheating. For example, Abel, participant of an FGD_1 clearly said "we hide answers or cheat sheet in our socks, pockets, write them on our shoes, t-short, soft, birr, peelings of chewing gums and we sometimes use our cell phone to exchange exams answers via text messages."

Picture 1 Example of students' use of their Palm for academic cheating
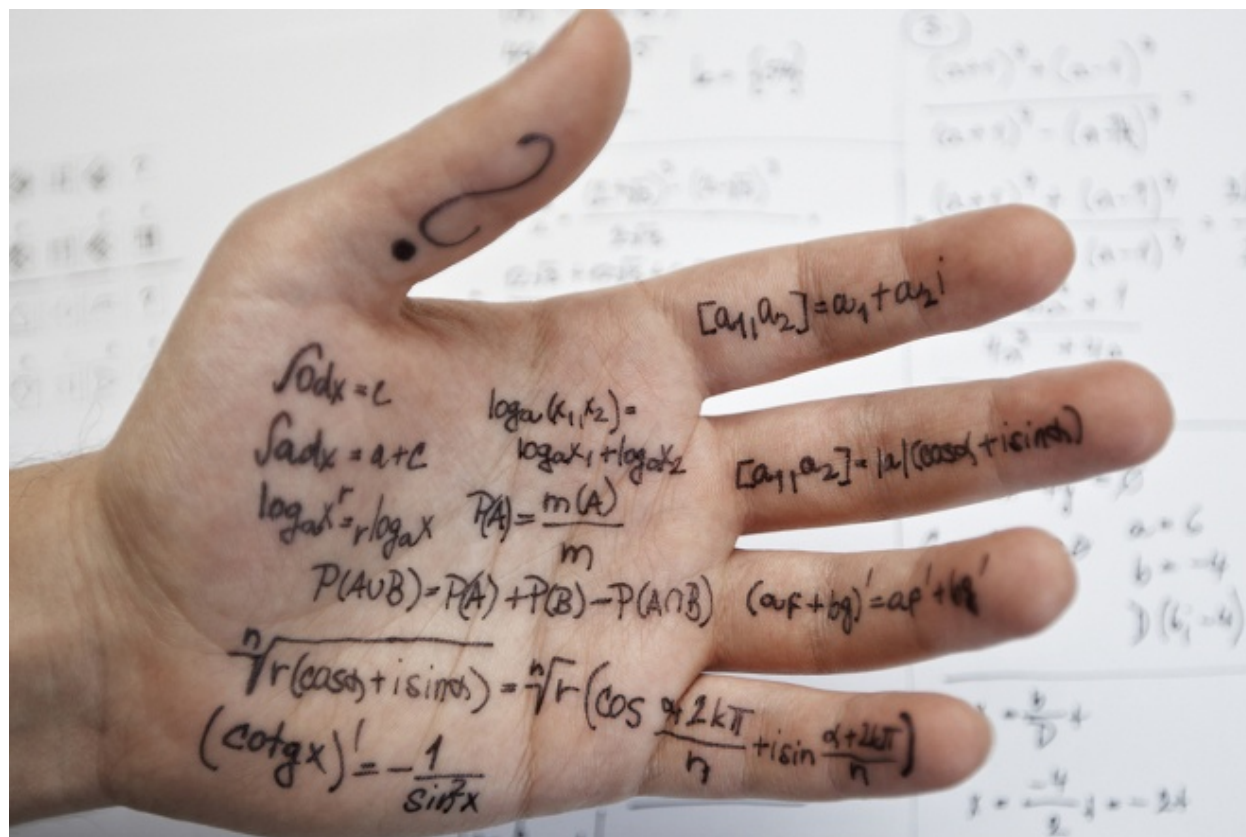
Source: Google internet post

During academic cheating, students also exchange few words by codes which they developed prior to the test, using body language and the clicking of writing utensils (McCube, 2001). Similarly, participants of this study confirmed students use different symbolic gestures and body movements to communicate answers to their peers and other classmates. Nearly all participants of the study agreed with what Ahmed fluently said in the next passage,

> It is obviously known among all students to use a finger to say the answer of a particular question is 'A', two fingers to mean 'B', three fingers to mean 'C' and five fingers meaning all are answers. Answers can also be communicated by moving their heads and eyelashes sideways, up and down.

On the other hand, what has drawn the attention of the participants in both FGD_1 and FGD_2 and pulled long discussion from different corner was the technique students' use during test or exams in making the invigilator to communicate answers by asking questions. With this regard, almost all participants share what Kumilachew of FGD_2 talked as follows:

> You know, in using this technique, students whom are supposed know the answers (high or medium achieving students) communicate answers to the whole class by asking the invigilator in such a way; "Choice A of question number X is not readable or, I didn't understand the question, please, could you read it once?" This is obviously known among the examinees, that the answer of question number X is A. If the answer for question number Y is "C" another student may ask the invigilator in similar way as, "Choice C of question number Y is not readable; please, could you read once?" Other students may subsequently ask the remaining questions in similar fashion to disseminate answers in similar ways.

Cheating in the current high schools has been getting out of control because the techniques cheaters use have been changing from time to time and difficult for invigilators to consciously be aware.

Theme 4: *Motivating factors of cheating*

The atmosphere of the school, societal norms, classroom teachers, classroom sizes, peer and family factors, counselors, administration and others can either facilitate or prevent academic cheating (Koss, 2001; Wangaard and Stephens, 2011). Participants of this study identified teachers, students, school management, and parents as causative factors for students' engagement in academic cheating.

Teacher: Aligned with scholar (Sarita and Dahiya, 2015; Wangaard, and Stephens, 2011) participants stress "teachers accountability for student academic success or failure in many ways" such as "teaching ethical behavior", "supporting students according to their needs and interests", "following students' academic progress", "creating linkage with each student's parent and discussing on their academic success and failure on continuous basis." Teachers' related factors can be seen from two perspectives; "stand in maintaining academic integrity" and his/ her "pedagogical skills and knowledge." Other participants also share the following talk by Abel:

> When students copy from each other and come up with similar works during different types of assessments like exam, homework, group work and individual assignment, teachers do not cross-check answers of each student. Amazingly, during exam, invigilators get out for calling telephone, to talk to somebody and carelessly oversee examinees to facilitate cheating; deliberately say, "You can help each other!"; made students to exchange exam paper, discuss exams answers on tutorials, intentionally looking outside through the window or other places while students are cheating. We see invigilators sometimes sign after 1 or 2 oral warning on answer sheets of cheaters, but immediately before leaving exam room, make the student to change his/her answer sheet so as to discard the signed one. Nevertheless, few teachers who are serious and take strict measures on cheaters are hated or disliked among majority of the students.

> Consistent with Strom and Strom (2007), few teachers and principals encourage students to cheat through provision of test answers, changing answers after completing of tests and before submitting to school district officials for processing, and giving students more extra time to complete examinations than is allowed by test directions. Wangaard, and Stephens (2011), on their part reveal cheating is likely be reduced by orienting students towards task accomplishment through curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Teacher's pedagogical skills and knowledge plays a prominent role in encouraging or discouraging student teaching. Here is what is captured from Muhaba, female FGD_1 participant:

> As already my colleagues discussed, what we all equally share is, majority of teachers confine themselves only to entering the class rooms and trying to impart the lessons of the day through chalk and talk. They also do not emphasis on to what extent students understand content of the daily lessons, and gain the required knowledge and skills. This disappoints us, make us hate learning and we become unconfident. These in combination with other factors force us to commit cheating. You know, all teachers are not the same. Obviously we respect, trust and we are afraid of teachers who are well equipped with pedagogical skills and knowledge, use diverse methods of teaching, committed to their professional ethics; closely control each student's academic progress. Some students, even those good performing, engage in cheating to reduce loss of teachers' affection.

Student related factors: Srtom and Strom (2007) mentioned the main reasons for students' engagement in cheating like; the need of good grades to join college, lack of enough time to do the work, the feeling that everyone else is cheating, and students' underestimation of the importance of the course, pressure to get high grades, parental pressures, a desire to excel, pressure to get a job, laziness, a lack of responsibility, a lack of character, poor self-image, lack

of pride in a job well done, and lack of personal integrity also encourage students engagement in cheating (McCabe, 2001 and 1999). Sinishaw's talking represents the participants' view of how students expose themselves to cheating:

> Often students engage themselves in academic cheating because, they feel disappointed, lack of interest to study, unwillingness to work hard, bad attitude towards learning, feeling of oneself as academically inferior, lack of future vision, absenteeism, feeling of unconfident, peer pressures, miss management of time, and feeling of dependency on others to pass from grade to grade and the like.

Nowadays majority of the students want to pass from one grade to another by shortcut, as a result students prefer to cheat than wasting time on studying what they learn to be independent learner.

School Management: Ensuring academic integrity requires high priority (Strom and Strom, 2007), starting from institutional policy formulation up to implementing of academic rules and regulations (Tefera and Kinde, 2009). As reported by participants ensuring academic integrity is the sole duty of the school management. McCube et al. (2001), mentioned factors determining learners' engagement in academic cheating; like the degree to which the honor code is deeply embedded in a culture of integrity; the degree to which a school has a supportive, trusting atmosphere; competitive pressures; the severity of punishments; the existence of clear rules regarding unacceptable behavior. Tarikua's taking in the following passage best represents the ideas of the participants:

> I think school management has responsibility to ensure academic integrity through taking corrective measure in collaboration with teachers whenever academic cheating happens. To do so; first we have to be provided with awareness of the issue, but we are not aware whether it is punitive or not, most students see it as normal. So … the problem is not with students, it is also not with the lack of the existence of rules and regulations to control cheating, but the problem is with school management, teachers and students integrity and commitment to prevent academic cheating to make a difference.

School environment: The atmosphere of the school, societal norms, classroom teachers, classroom sizes, peer and family factors, counselors, administration and others can either facilitate or prevent academic cheating (Koss, 2001; Wangaard and Stephens, 2011). Teixeira and Rocha (2008) on their part identified contextual factors and the environment, peer pressure, and attitudes towards academic dishonesty leading students towards cheating. Regarding school environment, Selam sayings the follows paragraph can exemplify other participants of the study:

> I think unfulfilled school facilities like lack of sufficient teaching classes, narrow exam rooms, unventilated classrooms, suffocating classrooms, unattractive school environment, insufficient students seats and text books, disruptive (noisy) learning classes, absence of well equipped library, laboratory, models and other teaching materials and the like are either directly or indirectly encouraging cheating.

Attractive school environment means, school with well furnished teaching, laboratory, library, and ICT rooms, pedagogical center, playground, recreational lounge, ventilated classrooms, and separate latrine for both male and female students, and teachers have a proclivity to motivate students learning and to promote their academic performance.

Parent related factors: **S**tudents acquire a large portion of knowledge at home. Parents level of investments in their children's learning, cognitive development and the amount of time they spent with their children on learning determine the degree to which their children engage in academic cheating (Sarita and Dahiya, 2015). According to the discussions among participants,

parents play significant roles in making their children to be good citizen who hate cheating. The idea is more expounded by Ahmed, an FGD participant as follows:

> You know… parent may hold the hope that in the future my child will support me at my retirement after being self-sufficient through learning and growth. Considering the hope, they invest their resources in their children learning. But, all parents do not have similar hope, some may neither think at long distant for the future fate of their children, nor they invest in them, they remain careless.

Besides, more or less similar to concerted cultivation and accomplishment of natural growth child rearing approach (Lareau, 2002), the study participants identified two types of parents with regard to supports they offer to their children while learning: *supportive and reluctant parents.*

*Supportive parents***:** Nearly similar to concerted cultivation of Lareau (2002) reported by participants are "parents having high level of thinking and consideration for future growth and life of their children and follow up and control where they spend their daily life, what and how they are learning, and how they are studying. The following talks by Dejen can best represent participants' perspectives of what supportive parent is:

> Often, parents following and controlling their children's learning, having good linkage with school management and teachers; and closely follow their children's academic activities and take remedial actions in collaboration with teachers where and when necessary. As such children get continuous support from both teachers and parents; they seriously resist academic cheating and become academically straightforward. However, when they are academically unsuccessful in accordance with the needs and interest of their teachers and parents, such students are forced to participate in cheating to satisfy their teachers and parents in return to their support.

*Reluctant parents***:** Nearly similar to accomplishment of natural growth child rearing approach (Lareau, 2002), "reluctant parents do not worry about their children's learning and future life and may or may not provide their children with school uniform, learning materials." Kumelachew, FGD_2 participant and academically low achieving, drew group's attention by sadly talking about his parent reluctance characters as shown in the next excerpt;

> I feel… sorry! I can label my parent in this category. At the beginning of each academic year my father sends me to the school by providing me with unsatisfactory educational materials, he doesn't worry about what and why I learn, whether I study or not, whether I pass or fail. Often I feel hopelessness; my mother passed away when I was at grade five. That is why I am frequently absent from my class to wonder for my bread to survive and I choose to cheat in exams.

Participants agreed that students from reluctant parents receive minimal support and control from parents; spend their time unnecessarily and comeback to parent's home whenever they like. It is in these ways that they become meager people with "gangster" behavior, and start to spend their time with them and begin to cheat from clever students who study and work hard by missing their sleep day and night.

In general parental close control of child's behavioral development, support to their learning; relations with school and teachers; engagement in school's decision making, follow up their children's progress all determine the student's academic competence and hence, their engagement can help to reduce cheating and advance ethical development. Most of the time cheating is prevalent among the students who are not supported by parents; where parent-school and parent-teacher relationship is weak.

Theme 5: Effects of Cheating

Pupil's cheating intimidates the fairness and effectiveness of instructional measurement, so that students' virtual abilities couldn't precisely be measured; and the students who cheat probably reduce their levels of learning so that they remain less prepared for advanced study or application of materials presented in the courses (Brimble and Clarke, 2005). Mentioned by participants, among the other things, "academic cheating negatively affects student, school, parents and the country". "Cheaters frequently do not give attentions to what they learn; they would prefer to survive with others' work in academia by cheating". "In the long run students' engagement in academic cheating imposes negative consequence on individuals, organization and the country". Concurrently scholars (Jensen, Arnett, Feldman, Cauffman, 2001; Teixeira and Rocha, 2008) reveal academic cheating reduces the quality of education by distorting truthful competition among students. Shared by other participants, Tofik's report effect academic cheating on cheaters discussed here under,

> I think students who promote from grade to grade can face different problems like lack of self- confidence, inadequate academic knowledge and skills, lack of capacity to create and innovate something, and dismissed after joining colleges or universities. I also think cheaters neither pass entrance exams for employment nor productive in work place after graduations, they can't survive and solve problems encounter them in their life. I think in the long ran academic cheating can negatively affect the countries overall economic growth and development due to scarcity of citizen with theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to solve societal problems, and increase productivity in different sectors. I also suspect that academic cheating can lead to rising of unemployment rate, lack of skilled man powers to run various industries, and thus, lead to technological backwardness.

Complementing to authors (Anderman and Midgley, 2004; and Dahiya, 2015**),** participants of this study reported that students begin to cheat at elementary level and continue through junior and high school and reach at university and college; where their tendency to be dismissed will be high, which in turn lead them to face difficulties in their future life. On the other hand failure to lead one's own life mean is to become poor in income which may lead to theft of others properties and committing criminal acts. Similarly if they successfully complete university graduation by cheating, he/she may also face difficulty to pass entrance exam of employment; and even if employed, he/she may not be productive because he/ she did not acquire the necessary creativity knowledge and skill that help them to perform their duties as required by the employer organization. This is to say there is a close relationship between cheating in schools and professional behavior in the workplace (Khodaie et al, 2011). Likewise academic cheating is rampant, the school may face lack of trust from parents, its immediate community, government, teacher, and students.

Theme 6: Maintaining Academic integrity

Scholars like Wangaard, and Stephens (2011) interestingly mentioned possible ways to ensure academic integrity in education institutions. For example the authors pointed towards school communities as responsible bodies to create such culture of integrity through the use of honor codes, establishing academic integrity committees at different levels, communicating the honor code with different bodies, establishing mutual trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. According to the participants of this study "It is quite difficult to wipe out cheating once; it can be reduced by close collaboration among school management, teachers, students and parents." Similarly Anan, says "To minimize cheating, I think school management together with teachers need to empower, closely advice and support students. Kelemework adds, "Yah! As to me there should be strong link among parents, school management, and teachers to closely follow up, advice, encourage and support children on continuous basis so as to improve academic

performance". Abel on his part says "We want the school to have viable rules and regulation that should be obeyed by all stakeholders and the school management is also expected to undertake awareness creation campaign for all stakeholders so as to insure academic integrity".

School Management roles: In support of Sarita and Dahiya (2015) participants of this study said that to tackle students academic cheating "there should be governing rules and arranged continuous discussion forum among school management, teachers, students and parents;" "establishing academic integrity committee comprising of students", "teachers and school management in which students plays a major roles in teaching about the severity of academic cheating through role play and drama on issue." "The academic integrity committee should be established at classrooms, and grades level and school rank so as to foster awareness for the whole school community incessantly". Tarikua's saying in the next excerpt matches with all participants' ideas:

> I am very glad if there is rule governing academic cheating in my school. I am also happy if both cheaters and students from which cheaters cheat are punished in accordance with rule governing academic cheating at the same school. I also prefer if there is encompassing academic honesty in my school.

Therefore, school management plays significant roles in promoting academic integrity through formulating and enforcing shared academic rules, forming and following the operation academic integrity committee, undertaking awareness creation campaign in collaboration with students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders.

Teachers' role: Students more likely engage in cheating when their teacher is pedagogically poor and unable to come up with diversified approaches that can meet their interests (Kohn, 2007). However, a teacher can reduce students' engagement in cheating by developing challenging activities which are less likely vulnerable to cheating (Strom and Strom, 2007). Similarly teachers who integrate the theme of integrity into their class expectations, syllabi, moral discussions, and class procedures can reduce cheating (Wangaard, and Stephens, 2011). According to participants, teachers are expected to offer continuous advisory services, identify students' learning needs, offer supports according to their needs, communicating parents on students learning, offering timely feedback for the learners, designing various sitting arrangements during examinations. Teachers need to take appropriate and corrective actions when cheating happen. In the words of the participants, Kumilachew talks,

> I do not think majority of the teachers are in the class during tests and final exams to discourage or keep students from cheating. I doubt …that they enter the class simply to distribute question papers and wait until the students fill and return answer sheets. Teachers are not worried whether or not the students cheat. However, there are few teachers truly, who do not want student to engage in academic cheating. Such teachers use various techniques moving here and there between rows and looking at every corner of the exam room, arranging separate seats for high and medium achieving students, cross checking of answers of students seating alongside, being serious, signing on cheaters answer sheets with red pen, tearing answer sheets of cheaters, warning, etc to control cheating.

School management alone can't ensure academic integrity. However, it also requires teachers' commitments and devotions because other than anybody, teachers have close, direct, and routine contacts with students. As teaching and shaping the future generation is determined in their hands they are required to emphases, and to update themselves professionally, before all to meet the changing needs of the learners to create academically competent and nearly self sufficient learners. More importantly, teachers are expected to make issues of academic cheating part of their day to day instructional activities, advice the students to obey the existing rules, and taking appropriate remedial measure where rule violations occur.

Parent's role: On the other hand, parents responsibility is not only limited to feeding and sending their children to school. But they are equally responsible for their children schooling by following their learning, communicating with school management and teachers, facilitating study places, arranging home tutors, supplying learning materials, scheduling their study, offering advisory services on continuous bases and the like.

Students' roles: High school students should be aware of the importance of academic honesty and teachers should feel obliged to respond to cheaters at the proper time and manner. Students should also be ready to receiving consultancy to overcome stress, depression, and family crisis in difficult situations rather than cheating (Khodaie et al, 2011). Participants eagerly talk:

> All students are required to obey the rules and regulations set by the school, and clearly understand their rights and responsibilities; and they are supposed to properly attend teaching- learning process taking place in the classroom, study hard, practice to solve difficult problems, develop feeling of "I can do it", avoiding frustration, ready to learn from others, hating any cheating attempt, tell their interest to teachers, carefully attend tutorials and make up class, try any question first and then ask others to get direction or hints.

Since students are at frontline to be affected as victims, they are required to know their rights and responsibilities. They are expected to have visions which will be reached through studying hard; need to develop positive attitudes towards learning, feeling academically independent, actively engage in various extracurricular activities that may assist to be ethical.

4. Conclusion

In this phenomenological study participants have nearly similar understandings with the concept of academic cheating. Aligned with authors (Nath and Lovaglia, 2008; Pluker, 2012), participants of the study defined academic cheating as taking and submitting other student work without any devotion, unfairly and dishonestly to get good scores, grades, pass mark, and even cheap popularity, which they referred "negative meaning" as opposed to "positive meaning" the one involving adopting of good practices like study techniques, systems to solve difficult mathematical problems. Throughout this study main emphasis is given to academic cheating, which participants conceptualized negatively.

Students taking part in cheating are often not caught while cheating; as a result they think themselves as morally responsible individuals (Strom and Strom, 2007). The report of this study confirms that students have positive attitudes and trust in cheating to get good grades without laboriously committing their time and energy so as to be employees' of better organizations.

Complimenting the work of Brimble, Clarke (2005), participants reported that academic cheating is increasing from time to time with its sophisticated ways of occurrences; benefiting cheaters unfairly and distorting truthful competition. As a result a large proportion of students have been tending to engage in cheating rather than studying, attending the teacher in the classroom attentively, involving themselves in attempting tasks and trying to solve difficult problems.

Among the other things the most shocking type of cheating is occurring among members of 1 to 5 arrangements, one of the newly introduced "reform tools in education institutions to maintain quality." The reports claim that in 1 to 5 arrangements while every group activities are performed by group leaders, the duty of group members limit themselves to contributing money for the purposes of copying and printing.

It was also reported that ensuring academic integrity involves the interaction and integration of school management, school environment, parents, teachers and students because either directly or indirectly they encourage or discourage learners' engagement in cheating.

With regard to school management there are no preset rules and regulations. Orientations, trainings, awareness creation to both teachers and students, are not given. Academic integrity committee does not know how to handle compliance pertaining academic cheating. Parental support also reported as determinant of learners' engagement in cheating. Here the study identified two types of parents: supportive and reluctant parent; depending on the nature of their support to children, communicating with schools and students (Lareau, 2002). It was reported that supportive parents have good vision for their children; they provide sufficient educational materials, offer continuous advisory and study supports, closely communicate and discuss their children's academic progress with teachers and the principal. In contrast, reluctant parents do not bother how and why their children learn, study and pass from one grade to the next. However, such parents seldom supply insufficient learning materials and throw their children to school at the beginning of each academic year. Though students from both types of parents engage in academic cheating, the crime was rampant among children of reluctant parents.

Even though various studies (Kuhn, 2007, Strom and Strom, 207; Wangaard, and Stephens, 2011) rightly enumerate the roles of teachers in minimizing the likely occurrences of academic cheating, the participants of this study reported that greater parts of teachers are in a position to support students' engagement in cheating. However, few teachers who tend to be serious and strict against cheating were hated among the majority of the cheaters.

5. Implications

The participants of the study reported that learners have positive attitude towards cheating. It was said that they rely on cheating to get good grades, pass marks, and avoid hard tasks demanded by academic activities. Shaping these attitudes requires close collaboration among school management, parents, teachers and students so as to provide continuous advisory services, awareness creation, empower and involve the learners in different extracurricular activities where they learn ethical behaviors.

Reports of the participants reveal that learners' engagement in academic cheating has been rising from time to time with hidden and invisible tactics. The participants' pointed towards school management, parents, teachers and students as factors for the rapidly increasing crimes of dishonesty. So, it is the interaction of these factors that can also play significant roles in holding back the problem.

In order to reduce academic cheating, beyond formulating viable rules and directives that can help to regulate academic cheating, first of all a school management is required to collaborate with parents, students, teachers and other stakeholders in discussing the rules and directives, establishing academic integrity committee comprising members from all stakeholders, and taking corrective and educative measures whenever the rule is violated. Regarding 1 to 5 arrangements the school management together with students and teachers need to reconsider and follow its operation by setting guiding rules to ensure the functionality of the group.

Secondly, ahead of updating their profession from time to time, teachers require to use diversified teaching approaches and assessment techniques to meet the rising needs of the learners and treating them accordingly. More importantly, teachers need to provide students with continuous advices and make their advisory services part of their daily academic instructions. In addition they are required to be aware of the various techniques students use while cheating and rightly report or take corrective measures whenever they see cheating either during invigilation or at anytime they are supposed to look vigilantly.

Thirdly, in addition to supplying their children with sufficient educational materials, parents have to create strong link with their children, teachers and school managements so as to oversee how, what and to what extent their children are meeting the required levels of learning, and to closely discuss failures and successes of their children so as to take corrective actions on time.

Fourthly, as the first victims from academic cheating, students required to be alert about the future consequences of academic cheating. Beyond struggling to reduce academic cheating, they are required to attend and positively accept orientation and trainings, actively participate in academic integrity committee and other clubs established to curb academic cheating. Moreover, they are expected to attend their class and teachers' instructions properly, engage in different activities involving learning, try and attempt any challenging tasks and ask support either from teachers or friends whenever faced difficulties so as to be academically independent and self sufficient.

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