Development of Student’s Scale for Anti-intellectualism

Fortuno, Renz Carlo DS.
Cuason, Sherwin U.

In developing this scale, the researcher underwent a series of steps. First was item construction, with the help of universally accepted definitions of Anti-intellectualism, the researcher listed 60 items that could possibly determine a person’s possession of high or low levels of anti-intellectual attitude. Second, the scale went through a process called “face validation”, wherein the 60 item scale was screened by 4 experts in the field of psychology, as well as 2 psychology students. The validators then selected which items should be retained. After the process of face validation, only 25 items remained, and from there, the researcher conducted an online pilot study to 40 psychology students. The result of the pilot study was interpreted using a software referred to as “IBM SPSS Statistics 24”, the cronbach alpha of the scale had been identified to be 0.876. This identifies how high the reliability of the student’s scale for anti-intellectualism really is. Lastly, items that didn’t have a standard deviation of 0.7 below and a correlational value of 0.5 and above were eliminated from the scale, leaving only 5 items to complete the student’s scale for anti-intellectualism.

Key Words: Anti-intellectualism, Self-efficacy, Academic dishonesty

In a school setting, usually when a student gets a failing grade, his/her initial response used to be disappointment, but nowadays, you will find students laughing at this predicament. When a person downgrades any form of intellectual display, that person practices anti-intellectualism. Anti-intellectualism refers to an individual's lack of interest in and disrespect for intellectual pursuits and critical thinking. Study shows that anti-intellectualism can be considered a predictor of academic dishonesty. The higher the student’s anti-intellectualism attitude is, the more likely it is that that student will cheat in school (Heppner, 2015). In contrary, another study suggested that academic achievement in college has more to do with the educational environment and a robust intellectual self-concept at college entry than with a culture of anti-intellectualism (Darnell Cole, 2011). With regards to academic dishonesty, despite the rules and regulations of the school, a number of students still manage to get away with cheating, this can be in the form of copying others’ answers on a test or assignment or even plagiarism. Various research suggest that cheating is associated with perceived peer behavior while business students are more likely to cheat than nonbusiness students (McCabe, Butterfield & Trevino, 2006). However, another study opposes McCabe et al. and suggest that it is non-business students who are more likely to cheat than the latter (Iyera & Eastmana, 2006). Either way, failure to address academic dishonesty may lead to a further undermining of Academic Integrity. Which is why educators should shift their student’s attitude by closely monitoring their performance as well as their behavior in order to decrease their level of anti-intellectual attitude and for them to be more efficient as students (Eliasa, 2008).

Therefore, given the facts with regards to anti-intellectualism, educators around the world should focus on redirecting students who possess high levels of anti-intellectualism attitude due to the fact that it could manifest into behavioral or educational problems in the future. Before giving an intervention, the researcher must first identify those individuals who possess high levels of anti-intellectual attitude. Unfortunately, the researcher has no access to the existing student anti-intellectualism scale (Eigenberg & Sealander, 2001), furthermore the scale is outdated and has yet to be modified for it to be applicable in other countries with different culture like the Philippines. That being said, the researcher aims to construct a scale for anti-intellectualism that is more fitting for Filipino students.

Anti-intellectualism attitude and Academic Performance

A very specific brand of ignorance is currently on the rise called Anti-intellectualism. Anti-intellectualism is defined as the depreciation of the complexity associated with intellectual pursuits, and a rejection of the elitism and self-aware attitude of distinction that is commonly associated with intellectual life (Shogan, 2007). According to (Triki, Nicholls,Wegener, Bay & Cook, 2012), anti-intellectualism may impact student’s performance in academic education. Students high in anti-intellectual attitudes and those with low academic self-efficacy were more likely to engage in academic dishonesty, they also tend to show lack of interest
in class. They are often the ones who display academic dishonesty and consistently downgrades intellectuals and their work. However, student’s anti-intellectual attitudes can be lowered through the education process and low anti-intellectual attitude can predict academic success (Elias, 2008).

Eigenberger & Sealander (2001) created the Student Anti-intellectualism Scale (SAIS) to assess the attitude of anti-intellectualism among college students and university students. Using this scale, researchers found that students in a more practically oriented majors such as business administration, scored high on a student anti-intellectualism scale (SAIS), meaning they are more likely to display hostility towards intellectual endeavors and those who engage in intellectual activities compared to students in more theory driven majors such as psychology and sociology who had relatively lower student anti-intellectualism scale (SAIS) scores (Laverghetta, Antonio; Nash, J. Kathleen, 2010). However, a study conducted by Cole (2011) suggests that educational environment and a robust intellectual self-concept has more to do with academic achievement compared to the culture of anti-intellectualism among African American students. At present, there are no studies available with regards to anti-intellectualism and student’s academic success here in the Philippines.

Academic Self-efficacy and Academic Performance

Anti-intellectual attitude is just one of the factors that can affect a student’s academic performance, another factor might be self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the belief in one's competence to cope with a broad range of stressful or challenging demands, usually constrained to a task at hand. (Luszczynskaa, Scholzb & Schwarzzerb, 2005) said that self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment. There has been a lot of studies that suggest that self-efficacy could be an indicator of success in college or academics to be specific. In a study conducted by (Turner, Chandler, Hefffer, 2009), both intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy can be used to predict academic performance. While a reciprocal cross-lagged model revealed that high perceived efficacy for self-regulated learning in junior high school contributed to junior high school grades and self-regulatory efficacy in high school, which partially mediated the relation of junior high grades on high school grades and the likelihood of remaining in school (Caprara, Fida, Vecchione, Del Bove, Vecchio, Barbaranelli, Albert, 2008).

In another study, it was found that academic self-efficacy beliefs can indeed predict college outcomes but this relationship is dependent on when efficacy beliefs are measured, the types of efficacy beliefs measured, and the nature of the criteria used (Gore Jr.1, 2006). In order to solidify if the effects of having high self-efficacy is positive, there should be a study with regards to the relationship between anti-intellectualism and self-efficacy. If there is indeed a positive correlation, then it would solidify findings that suggest that self-efficacy can serve as a predictor of academic success.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is an important issue for the academic integrity of higher education institutions, and one that has lately been gaining increasing media attention (Brimble, Stevenson-Clarke, 2005). There are many reasons why students engage in academic dishonesty, graduate business students cheat more than their non-business-student peers. Cheating is correlated with perceived peer behavior, certainty of being reported by a peer, and the understanding and acceptance of academic integrity policies by students and faculty (McCabe, Butterfield & Treviño, 2006). Contrary to McCabe et al., Iyera et al suggest that non-business students are more likely to cheat as compared to business students (Iyera & Eastmana, 2006).

Studies show that there is a lack of research with regards to academic dishonesty in asian countries (Lin & Wen, 2006). Academic dishonesty has four domains: cheating on test, cheating on assignment, plagiarism, and falsifying documents. Based on n = 2,068 Taiwanese college students, the prevalence rate for all types of academic dishonesty among the sample was 61.72%. The most practiced modes of academic dishonesty among the sample were providing papers/assignments for fellow students, giving prohibited help on assignment, copying others’ assignments, and passing/copying answers to other students. Females engaged in less academic dishonesty as compared to males. Lastly freshmen had more reports of academic dishonesty than other class ranks. 1206 students and 190 academic staff were surveyed across four major Queensland universities, results indicate a higher tolerance for academic misconduct by students as compared to staff, particularly with
falsification of research results and plagiarism, as well as considerable underestimation by staff of the prevalence of virtually all forms of student academic misconduct (Brimble, Stevenson-Clarke, 2005).

A national survey published in Education Week found that 54% admitted to internet plagiarism and 76% admitted to cheating; and the center for academic integrity found almost 80% of the college students surveyed admitted to cheating at least once. In November 2010, more than 200 of the 600 students in a university of central Florida business class confessed that they benefited from accessing online test questions prior to taking their midterm exam (The Ticker, 2010). Overall academic dishonesty is considered one of the biggest threat to an institution’s reputation and failure to address this problem may lead to a further undermining of the academic integrity.

**Synthesis**

Anti-intellectualism is a form of mockery towards intellectuals and their intellectual pursuits by commending ignorance over intellect. It has unfortunately made its way into Filipino culture and has plagued the country for decades. Anti-intellectualism is very evident especially in the media, it is viewed as something humorous by many people not only here in the Philippines but also around the world. Everyday many people experience or witness anti-intellectualism, in some cases even practice it themselves. There is nothing funny about anti-intellectualism and according to various research, it could lead to poor academic performance or even heighten the tendency of academic dishonesty among students.

Majority of the research established with regards to academic dishonesty suggest that business students are more likely to cheat than nonbusiness students. There are many ways to cheat, an example would be copying from other students, getting prohibited help, internet plagiarism/plagiarism or even manipulation of data gathered from research. One of the reasons why they give in to such misconduct is because of its availability. Internet plagiarism is very rampant these days, with the help of the internet, copying and pasting someone else’s work and taking credit for it is very convenient for students. The worst part about this is that students are not the only one who display academic dishonesty, even the staffs do as well, mostly falsifying documents. In order to address this issue, schools should strictly implement their rules in such a way that students will be given the chance to further develop their skills and more importantly their character to be good citizens in the future and at the same time divert themselves from all forms of academic dishonesty.

On the other hand, self-efficacy is considered one of the determinants of an individual’s academic success. Majority of the studies with regards to self-efficacy have found that it has a positive relationship with one’s performance, could be in school or out there in general. However, there is also a contrary study that claims Self-efficacy could lead to overconfidence and hence could increase the likelihood of committing logical error that could possibly lead to academic failure.

The researcher created the scale for anti-intellectualism to identify if the existing literatures with regards to anti-intellectualism also apply in Asian countries like the Philippines. Whether it is true that students from a theory-based major such as psychology do possess low levels of anti-intellectualism or not. The researcher believed that legitimately validating the scale would unlock the immense potential of the topic “anti-intellectualism”. The scale can be used as a tool in many correlational studies, anti-intellectualism can be compared to many different variables such as academic dishonesty, self-efficacy and many more. Also, once the scale is complete, it will be easier for experts to identify those students who possess either high or low level of anti-intellectualism attitude and from there, create an intervention that will perhaps redirect or counteract the students high level of anti-intellectualism attitude. The intervention might eventually decrease the likelihood of academic dishonesty or even improve academic outcomes in the school setting.

**Method**

**Research Design**

A quantitative research design was used by the researcher to gather the information needed from the participants. A validated five (5) point Likert scale consisting of five (5) items was created by the researcher in order to measure that the intensity of psychology student’s anti-intellectual attitude.
Participants

Based on majority of the literature, anti-intellectualism is correlated with academic performance. Studies also state that students from a theory-driven major such as psychology possess low levels of anti-intellectualism compared to students from a practically oriented course. The researcher used purposive sampling technique and targeted third year level psychology students from a private school within Alabang.

Based on the school’s records, the third-year level have a total of 76 psychology students. The researcher was able administer the test in three 3 different class, 56 out of 76 agreed to take the test and signed a waiver that gives the researcher consent to use their GPA, while the remaining 20 students decline on the request of the researcher to send a screenshot of their GPA due to confidentiality issues. A total of 73% of the psychology students from the third-year level participated in the data gathering procedure.

Materials

The scale the researcher used started as a 60 items test that intends to measure a student’s anti-intellectual attitude. The researcher consulted 4 experts in the field of psychology and 2 students to have the scale validated. After the face validity process, the scale had 25 items left and it was used for an online pilot study that had eventually increased the scale’s validity and reliability. Based on a software called “IBM SPSS Statistics 24”, the Cronbach alpha of the test was 0.876. Out of 25 items, only 5 was retained due to high standard deviation and low correlation scores of most of the item. A waiver was distributed among the participants, giving the researcher permission to make use of the participant’s GPA.

Procedures

The researcher initially produced various items that had a potential to measure the target variable namely anti-intellectualism. The researcher listed down 60 items that focused on measuring the intensity of anti-intellectual attitudes that psychology students may possess, which; according to various researches are of low levels. From there, the researcher had consulted 4 experts; a psychologist, a social psychologist and educators who are knowledgeable about anti-intellectualism, as well as 2 psychology students in order to validate the scale. Out of the initial 60 items, the validators selected which items should be retained and which items should be eliminated. Each item should have had at least 4 votes from the validators for it to be retained.

After the validation process, the remaining 25 items were used for an online pilot study amongst 40 psychology students from a different year level to test if the scale can measure the student’s level of anti-intellectual attitude. The researcher used a software called “IBM SPSS Statistics 24” to identify the Cronbach alpha of the scale which was revealed to be 0.876. Based on the data gathered using IBM SPSS Statistics 24, items with a standard deviation below 0.7 were retained, along with items with a correlational value of 0.5 and above, thus, 5 items remained.

Data Analysis

The researcher constructed a 5 point Likert scale that is composed of 5 items and it intends to measure a student’s level of anti-intellectual attitude. Every answer/option has a corresponding score, 1 point for strongly disagree, 2 points for disagree, 3 points for neutral, 4 points for agree and 5 points for strongly disagree. The final score ranges from 5 - 25 points, the closer to 5 the lower the level of anti-intellectual attitude, while the closer to 25 the higher the level of anti-intellectual attitude.

To solidify the scales reliability, the researcher used a software called “IBM SPSS Statistics 24” to measure the internal consistency of the data of the online pilot study using Cronbach’s alpha. The closer to “1.00” the higher the reliability of the scale.

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Based on the records of the school, the third-year level have 76 psychology students. The researcher administered the test to all the psychology section, however, only 56 students complied with the requirements set by researcher for the data gathering procedure. According to the computation of the researcher, the correlation coefficient of anti-intellectualism and the student’s GPA was 0.0827. The value of Pearson’s r is equal to 0.0827.

**Results/Discussion**

In designing the student’s scale for anti-intellectualism, the researcher went through a lot of procedures, starting with the item construction. For the item construction, the researcher made use of definitions of anti-intellectualism that are universally established/understood in order to come up with questions that may have the potential to determine whether an individual possess high or low levels of anti-intellectual attitude. After constructing 60 items for the scale, the researcher consulted with 4 experts in various field of psychology and 2 psychology students from a different year level for the face validation. The validators received a tabular form of the scale and their job was to simply select which items should be retained and which items should be disregarded. Each item needed 4 votes from the validators to retain a certain item. After the face validation, out of the original 60 items, only 25 items were retained.

Using the remaining 25 item scale, the researcher conducted a pilot study to a sample of students quite like the researcher’s target population which was 40 psychology students from the different year level. The researcher used a software called “IBM SPSS Statistics 24” to measure the internal consistency of the online pilot study scale using Cronbach’s alpha which was 0.876. Also, items with a standard of deviation below 0.7 were retained, as well as items items with a correlational value of 0.5 and above, thus, 5 items remained.

In order to solidify the findings with regards to anti-intellectualism having an impact on a student’s academic performance in school (Triki et al., 2012), the researcher correlated the participant’s score on the student’s scale for anti-intellectualism and their GPA. The correlation coefficient from the two variables served as an additional proof of reliability along with the face validity and the Cronbach alpha of the scale. Based on the research’s computation, the correlation coefficient of the scale was 0.0827. Given the data, the researcher concluded that the student’s score on the student’s scale for anti-intellectualism and GPA had low correlation. The outcome is in lined with one of the literatures that suggest anti-intellectualism is not the main key factor as to why a student achieve academic success (Darnell Cole, 2011). Therefore, a student’s anti-intellectual attitude alone does not determine whether a student will achieve academic success or failure.

**Conclusion/Recommendation**

The outcome of the actual data gathering procedure is in lined with one of the literatures that is in contrary to the findings of the majority. (Darnell Cole, 2011), suggested that an individual’s level of anti-intellectual attitude is not essential in terms of predicting the outcome of the individual’s academic performance. Even though students from a theory-driven major such as psychology does in fact have low anti-intellectual attitude, it does not guarantee that the student will get better grades compared to someone with higher anti-intellectual attitude.

For the succeeding researchers of the topic “Anti-intellectualism”, the researcher highly encouraged the use of other psychological tests/scales to measure certain variables and correlate them to the individual’s anti-intellectual attitude to see if there is a significant relationship between the two. For example, the use of IQ test to determine if a person’s IQ is either positively or negatively correlated with his/her level of anti-intellectual attitude, or make use a personality test to see if certain personality types possess high or low anti-intellectual attitude and many more. Lastly, maximize the use of data gathering tools, adapt both qualitative and quantitative approach to solidify findings and have a more in depth understanding of your data.
REFERENCES


