

Exploring Cheating Behaviour of College Students in Khairpur, Sindh, Pakistan

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Abstract

An explorative survey conducted in Khairpur, Sindh, Pakistan, to find the cheating behaviour of college students. To get admission to notable universities, fifty-eight per cent of students use unfair means to get higher grades. Moreover, students adopt cheating behaviour to please their parents. Resultantly fifty-five per cent of students go for cheating largely. Eighty respondents were sampled, which sixty male and twenty female pre-engineering, pre-medical, commerce and arts and humanities students were examined. Questionnaires used to collect the data and analyzed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Pearson correlation revealed that academic anxiety motivates college students to use unfair means in their educational institutions.

Keywords: Cheating behaviour, Academic anxiety ,Unfair means

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INTRODUCTION

This study investigated the students' situational and ethical factors to know their behaviour, who was involved in academic dishonesty, and whether or not this led to workplace dishonesty. From the results, it was clear that students' dishonesty at their institutions and the cheating behaviour in academic life ethically weaken them with growing time, ultimately provoking them to be dishonest at their workplace.¹ Furthermore, students who cheat during their academic tenure can lead to cheating in the workplace as the behaviour reflects their personality. Therefore, is a significant concern about academic dishonesty to control cheating among students.²

Global Cheating Dynamics

This study was initiated at Roxas National Comprehensive High school in Palawan, where it was discovered that cheating is common among students. They consider it a routine and rational choice to go for academic dishonesty and adopt this pattern from their peers (LEO, 2017).³ The disruptive behaviour of students who practiced dishonesty in their academia was studied in which childhood disruption without abundance leads to cheating and dishonesty. Over time, individuals who develop with disruptive behaviour without any criticism will become dishonest in their academic careers and deviate from social and educational values.⁴ In another article, the attitudes of students and teachers were studied. According to this study, students perceive cheating as a usual affair and know how to cheat in examinations.⁵

Academic Cheating In Pakistan

To investigate the prevalence of academic duplicity among students of higher education level in Punjab, the study initiated and disclosed that a substantial amount of academic misleading prevailed among the students.⁶ A study conducted in the medical colleges of Karachi to know the students' behaviour regarding using unfair means in academic settings. From the results, students admitted they cheat to overcome the burden of study and, most of the time, copy assignments to submit for higher grades. This created a gap between knowledge and their profession as less interest, which is dangerous for patients and society. In Pakistan, the educational system weakens day by day. Therefore, take serious measures to minimize this cheating behaviour of students in the country.⁷

Different measures of morality were studied, from which they came to know that morality is not associated with gender but with growing age. Pakistan is a spiritual country where allegiance and persuasion in sovereign authority pace up to higher levels of honesty and

¹ Ellahi, a., mushtaq, r., & khan, m. B., Multi-campus investigation of academic dishonesty in higher education of Pakistan. *International journal of educational management*, Vol: 27 (6), (2013), 647-666

² Nazir, m. S., & aslam, m. S., Academic dishonesty and perceptions of Pakistani students. *International journal of educational management*, Vol: 24 (7), (2010), 655-656

³ Leo, d. B., Friends with benefits: causes and effects of learners' cheating practices during examinations. *Iafor journal of education*, Vol:5 (2), (2017), 122

⁴ Loona, m. I., & kamal, a., Translation and adaptation of disruptive behavior, disorder-rating scale. *Pakistan journal of psychological research*, Vol: 26 (2), (2016), 149-165

⁵ Evans, b. D., & craig, d., Teacher and student perceptions of academic cheating in middle and senior high schools. *The journal of educational research*, Vol: 84 (1), (2015), 44-45

⁶ Quraishi, u., & aziz, f., Academic dishonesty at higher education level in Punjab, Pakistan. *Journal of research and reflections in education*, Vol: 11 (1), (2017), 66

⁷ Hafeez, k., khan, m. L., jawaid, m., & haroon, s., Academic misconduct among students in medical colleges of Karachi, Pakistan. *Pakistan journal of medical sciences*, Vol: 29 (3), (2013), 699-702

genuine behaviour. The ethical precipitate is the progress of men's ability to differentiate well from evil.⁸ In Sindh, a sixty per cent literacy rate was recorded in 2010. Literate people in the district Khairpur are 35.50 per cent, where the girl ratio is 19.7 per cent against boys, which is 49.7 per cent. Rural literacy is 30.61 per cent, while the urban literacy ratio is 50.68 per cent.⁹

In academic settings, cheating has always been a problem, and it is increased with technological furtherance. Nowadays, students in Pakistan are using different tactics to cheat in examinations. Android cell phones play an essential role in cheating patterns. Unfortunately, cheating has become a pervasive part of the lives of several students. Involvement in extra-curricular activities is one of the factors behind academic cheating because less time will be given to studies.¹⁰ A comparative study was conducted among three components of the educational sector, Madrassa, Private and Public, to know which of these develop more socially and ethically oriented students. The conclusion reveals that Madrassa produced more socially and ethically developed students in terms of honesty, tolerance and respect for others and patriotism in the students from the other two systems of education.¹¹

LITERATURE REVIEW

Plagiarism, Institutional Policies and Procedures to Overcome Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a type of cheating through which students easily convenient to a wide range of information through the internet, and the increased use of modern technology illegally in any work is considered plagiarized.¹² Knowingly, using other people's work as own in any academic field is plagiarism. Through the years, plagiarism has remained an issue of concern, and there are seven types of plagiarism, which are explained as follows, Sham paraphrasing, illicit paraphrasing, other plagiarism, verbal copying, recycling, ghostwriting and purloining. Sham paraphrasing is such a type when a material is copied verbatim from the text, and the source is acknowledged in line but represented as a paraphrase. When a material is paraphrased without in-line acknowledgement of the source is known as illicit paraphrasing. One person plagiarized any information, and the second person copied this assignment with permission of the owner is another plagiarism. Finally, verbal plagiarism is copying from explicit material without acknowledgement.

Recycling is plagiarism when students submit an assignment for more than one course; any assignment codified by another person and represented as their work is call a ghost assignment. There are many reviews on why students plagiarize. One of the genuine reasons is that the students lack knowledge about citing, quoting, paraphrasing and referencing. Another reason, which lead to plagiarism, is lack of time given to assignments, engagement in other social activities, academic deadlines and family pressures which altogether trapped students in the cage of plagiarism. Several universities take different measures in the United States and the United Kingdom to address cheating. At Stanford University, there is a code of honour

⁸ Bahaudin, g. M., sikander, a., akhtar, n., & afza, t., Business ethics of Pakistanis in Islamabad and Lahore: do age, gender and data collection process make difference. *International journal of learning and development*, Vol: 2 (3), (2012), 1-2

⁹ Ali, s., Policy analysis of education in Sindh. *Unesco* , 2011, 1-3

¹⁰ Batoool, s., abbas, a., & naeemi, z. Cheating behavior among undergraduate students. *International journal of business and social science*, Vol:2 (3), (2011), 246-247

¹¹ Ahmed, r. N., shaukat, s., & abiedullah, m., Role of different educational system in the development of moral and social traits in Pakistani students. *Sindh university research journal*, Vol: 19 (1), (2009), 1-2

¹² McNair, m., & haynie, l. Academic dishonesty: a multi-discipline view of faculty and students perception. *International journal of caring sciences*, Vol: 10 (1), (2017), 294

according to, which the first offence of any academic misconduct is suspension for one-quarter of the semester. On multiple violations, a three-quarter suspension will be imposed. Forty hours of community service is to be sanctioned to the offender, while in Oxford, there is the court of summity justification, which can take action against plagiarism.¹³

In Nigeria, it is a law that academic cheating is a criminal activity. Regardless of this legal obligation, offenders practising this in the nation's educational institutes all over the country are un-apprehend by law enforcement agencies. No one is prosecuted in the ordinary court of law. Relatively academia has prescribed extra-judicial measures to punish offenders without recourse to the law, and basically, such law has no acted powerfully, and cheating is found in every institution¹⁴. From the survey analysis, it was clear that the concept of grades in educational policies does not involve illegal processes during examinations. Still, it also destroys social values and moralities from society.¹⁵

Factors Encouraging Cheating Behavior

Cheating at the secondary level should not be considered as mere customary practice gauging the world but as one of the looming challenges to the sureness of grades, fear of low grades and competence at the school level. The real problem arises from fear of final grades, a prerequisite for entrance to higher educational levels.¹⁶ Another interesting finding was that students with lower grades also tended to cheat. One of the factors that lead to cheating is the lack of academic integrity between students and staff of academic institutions. There is no sense of academic integrity among students, and such lack of academic integrity leads to cheating and plagiarism, sometimes students have no any idea whether what are they doing and students practice academic dishonesty due to pressure of scores, academic workloads, unawareness about academic integrity and less response of teachers towards students to control such culture. Student cheating trends be clarified through a defined code of academic integrity, guidelines, instructions, behaviour, and expectations and they should be treated harshly for violating this code. Plagiarism is representing others' work without acknowledgement. Ninety per cent of the students have witnessed their classmates plagiarizing in their assignments regularly. My students have disclosed that male undergraduates, members of Greek Social Organizations and low self-esteem students cheat more.¹⁷

Adopting unfair tactics has always been a problem in educational institutions, and the progression of technology, such as cheating on papers through computer systems, created more pressure on students. As a result, the fear of failure increased, and the desire for higher grades increased to get admission to top-rated universities. Therefore, cheating has become a very regular part of the lives of many students. During a survey in some American universities, it was observe that a shocking percentage of students were cheating during exams. Four hundred forty- three students were engaged as samples among eighty-three per cent of the students said that they cheat because it is easy to cheat than study and work hard. The survey also recorded

¹³ Macatangay, j., Understanding, perception and prevalence of plagiarism among college freshman students of de la salle lipa, philippines. *International journal of social science and humanity*, Vol: 5 (8), (2015), 115-116

¹⁴ Adebayo, s. O. Common cheating behavior among Nigerian university students: a case study of university of ado-ekiti, nigeria. *World journal of education*, Vol: 1 (1), (2011), 144-145

¹⁵ Rocha, m. M., silva, g. A., nascimento, l., siqueira, j. O., & otta, e. Cheating on college examinations. *Psychological reports*, 2007, 379-380

¹⁶ Sorgo, a., vavdi, m., cigler, u., & kralj, m. Opportunity makes the cheater: high school students and academic dishonesty. *Ceps journal* , Vol: 5 (4), (2015), 67-70

¹⁷ Ekahitanond, v. Students' perception and behavior of academic integrity: a case study of a writing forum activity. *Turkish online journal of distance education*, Vol: 15 (4), (2014), 150

fear of failure in exams as a factor in cheating. Therefore, cheating has become a very normal part of the lives of many students. Several pieces of research been conducted to determine the factors behind cheating. Among these researches, cheating has always been a problem in academic settings. Factors on which research is carried out are students' grade point average (GPA), the pressure of parents, lack of preparation for the exam, and time consumption in extracurricular activities. After the completion of research, some of the results favour factors such as parental pressure became invalidate after the findings that there is no parental pressure on students, which would be the reason for cheating during exams. Despite this, parents gave freehand to their children and encouraged them instead of pressuring them during exams. Another fact revealed from this research was that students cheat during the examination to maintain a high GPA. Another major factor was the involvement of students in extracurricular activities. When students take part in other activities, they do not bother about their studies and go for cheating in exams. It also explained in the research that male students are more involved in cheating in comparison with female students during exams, homework, assignments and quizzes.¹⁸

Male and Female Cheating Perceptions

Cheating in academic institutions is not the only issue for students. However, it also affects faculty and institutions of higher education. Among the above-discussed issues, cheating during examination is a significant issue. There are various forms of cheating, from which copying the text of fellow students, informing examination, using crib notes, turning in an unauthentic term paper, plagiarizing, sabotaging laboratory experiments, dry sobbing, padding bibliographies, theft and stashing of library materials, stealing lecture notes, falsifying transcriptions and letters of recommendations. This study revealed that most students follow their peers and most of them, especially males from natural science discipline, use unfair tactics to pass the examination.¹⁹

Cheating can be defined as academic dishonesty, which is described as a behaviour of a person who is purposeful and deceitful. There are various types of plagiarism. Some papers, which students wrote, some of these papers are questionable because they edited references provided in bibliographies. When these papers are checked out, the source leads to someone else's work hidden by students through inserting their paragraphs and a whole piece from others' work through the help of the internet and such papers are presented without mentioning the real author. Students, who are prone to cheating in college, will be the same student who cheats in the workplace. Their habit of cheating will not be remove, and they habitually destroy the rules of norms and values that prevail in society. So the fear of failing or lust for the achievement of high grades also indulged the students' personality in conducting unethical concerns not only at the school or college level but also in workplace cheating. Not only in Nigeria but also in many colleges and universities around the globe, there are rules for the code and conduct of honour. These codes and rules mold the attitudes and behaviour of students. The codes of honour and rules that exist in academic institutes create an environment of honesty; research was initiated in different colleges and universities in those academic institutions where codes of honour and rules exist, and some of the institutes taken where these were absent. The results found that in such colleges and universities where these rules and codes of honour prevail,

¹⁸ Batool, s., abbas, a., & naeemi, z. Cheating behavior among undergraduate students. *International journal of business and social science*, Vol: 2 (3), (2011), 246-247

¹⁹ Mensah, Christopher, and Edem M. Azila-Gbettor. "Religiosity and students' examination cheating: evidence from Ghana." *International Journal of Educational Management* 32, no. 6 (2018), 1156-1172

cheating was absent during tests and exams, while cheating was common in the institutions where these rules are lacking.²⁰

Students are more likely to cheat because they must submit their work within a defined time. Another reason for cheating in the Pakistani education system is students' GPA. Some students cheat during academic life to create high records to maintain or achieve GPA, and some cheat because they need to enhance their grades, which are going low. Because of some prototypes, there is an indication that male students are more likely to cheat than females because males have lower levels of discipline typically. Boys are more expected to dishonesty as women are more sensitive, and levels of shame make them less likely to cheat.²¹

The research conducted in a Florida school to find reasons for cheating among students. One of their most interesting findings was that cheating is unique because it is perceived as normal behaviour. Several students are inclined towards this behaviour because they see their peers doing it. So far, academic dishonesty in the online schooling system in Florida is concerned, it was found that thirty-three per cent of the students are copying documents from the internet and sixty per cent are involved in cheating during a class test or examination, and forty-one per cent of them admitted to cut and paste the notes from internet. In this electronic and technological era, schools, colleges and universities do not exist in structural or building shapes. The educational system become more advance, and the online schooling system has been introduced. With these opportunities, plagiarism becomes a more accessible way to fulfil or complete the instructions given online to students. Other factors that lead to plagiarism are the amount of interaction of instructors with the students, more personal students, and face-to-face relationships with their instructors are less inclined to cheat. In online schooling, less interaction strengthens cheating in these classes. Another reason for cheating is the method of diction in the online teaching system. Teachers do not have the advantage of physically watching their students, so without any fear, students go for plagiarized work and submit their assignments.²²

There are several reasons for cheating. One of the factors is the competitive nature of academia and the pressure on students to earn good grades to secure admission to a reputable academic institution; otherwise, they would be suspended from institutions, and society will know them as failures. In all these situations, even toppers violate academic integrity. In turn, they ease their workload to pass their courses. Such type of academic rules only produce machines, not intellects. Such rules destroy all the creative skills of students. The current generation of students who are admitted to colleges is a generation who are resourceful, peer-dependent, inventive and self-sufficient. They are fun seekers, and such students have different mindsets. Cheating during exams and plagiarizing the work of others is not any academic dishonesty for them. This generation is superior to all prior generations and can make their own different cheating methods. The use of cell phones, emails, and messaging during class is expected in this era of students who directly support new cheating methods. Then such procedures become viral throughout academic institutions nationwide. Researchers have investigated the occurrence of cheating behaviour in college students, eleven hundred sixty-one students from six educational programs surveyed and deducted that forty-two per cent of the sample is

²⁰ Rujoiu, o., & Rujoiu, v. Academic dishonesty and workplace dishonesty: an overview. Management challenges for sustainable development, 2014, 928-930

²¹ Murtaza, G., Zafar, S., Bashir, I., & Hussain, I. Evaluation of student's perception and behavior towards plagiarism in Pakistani universities. Acta bioethica, Vol: 19 (1), (2013), 125-126

²² Middleton, m. K. An examination of academic dishonesty in secondary online English education. Honors thesis, English language arts education, university of central Florida, Orlando, Florida, 2012, 1-2

involved in more than different techniques of cheating and among such ratio, males are more tended towards academic cheating than females.²³

Regarding students' perception of cheating in online business, research conducted in two Universities and questions were asked about cheating in online business courses. Their awareness regarding cheating, opinions about its prevention and views towards online courses were asked. From them, forty-six per cent knew students who receive help online, forty-two per cent of students disagreed with the response of online courses, and seventy-five per cent of the students indicated that yes, there is a tradition of cheating. For its prevention, there should be different papers for each student. The purpose of conducting this research was to collect the data on which students' perceptions regarding cheating be analyzed in online business courses. Basically, in this research, there were two motives of the researcher. The first was to involve students in the research and make them aware of the cheating that happens online in business studies, and the second was to understand the perceptions and opinions of students by the administration about cheating to resolve the issues and enhance the quality and credibility of these courses.²⁴

Academic dishonesty has been a matter of serious concern in higher education; such an issue is widespread among students of graduate and undergraduate levels. Students involved in cheating or any type of unethical behavior in their academic life also practice unethical tactics in the workplace.²⁵ If marks were used to evaluate who should be admitted to a top-ranked institution, then every student would choose the same way, even a more intelligent, talented or cheater.²⁶ It was found in a study that male students at the undergraduate level are more involved in cheating. The findings acknowledged that male students do not follow the code of ethics in their academia.²⁷

Research Question

Why are youth adopting cheating behaviour in academia?

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology followed in the study is quantitative, whereby statistical data collected through a survey of closed-ended questionnaires. Khairpur, Sindh, was the universe of the study because of people's perception that cheating is common among college students in the region. Therefore, college students of intermediate level in Khairpur were the target population for the examination. A non-Probability, purposive sampling technique was designed to select respondents from four colleges of Khairpur. Finally, the collected data presented in a tabular and numerical format. The Pearson correlation test is conducted to find the relationship between academic anxiety and college students' use of unfair means in academia through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

²³ Hausfeld, k., & Vujanov, c. Effects of gender and class standing on perception of academic dishonesty in baccalaureate nursing students. Survey, college of nursing, the University of Akron, Ohio, 2011, 1-2

²⁴ Watters, m. P., robertson, p. J., & clark, r. K. Students' perceptions of cheating in online business courses. Journal of instructional pedagogies, Vol:1 (1), (2011), 1-3

²⁵ Nazir, M. S., & Aslam, M. S. Academic dishonesty and perceptions of Pakistani students. International journal of educational management, Vol: 24 (7), (2010), 655-656

²⁶ Bouville, M. Why is cheating wrong? Studies in philosophy and education, Vol: 29 (1), (2010), 68-69

²⁷ Memon, G. R. Education in Pakistan: the key issues, problems and the new challenges. Journal of management and social sciences, Vol:3 (1), (2007), 47-55

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Table 1
Admission & Cheating

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Great extent	47	58.8
Some extent	18	22.5
Not at all	15	18.8
Total	80	100.0

This shows college students' perception of cheating to get admission to noble universities. Fifty-eight per cent of the selected sample said largely. Therefore, college students indeed cheat to get admission to famous institutes. Therefore, from the data, we can understand that most college students cheat to get admission to noble universities.

Table 2
Cheating & Parental Pressure

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Great extent	44	55.0
Some extent	17	21.3
Not at all	19	23.8
Total	80	100.0

To please their parents, students cheat in their examinations. On the other hand, students who believed in making happy their parents through academic achievements were fifty-five per cent of the respondents. From the data, we learned that most respondents agreed with the perception, yet we can say it is one of the reasons behind the cheating behaviour among college students.

Table 3
Pearson Correlation

Variable	Value
Pearson Correlation	0.341
P-Value	0.002
N	80

Pearson correlation was used to analyze the relationship between the uses of unfair means among colleges caused by academic anxiety. The table shows the linear and positive association between both the variables, i.e. academic anxiety and use of unfair means, independent and dependent variable, respectively. $r = 0.341$ with a significance of 0.002 ($p\text{-value} < 0.01$). From the findings, it can be summed up that thirty-four per cent of academic anxiety motivates college students to use unfair means in their regional educational settings.

CONCLUSION

Several reasons were identified, which include a couple of important reasons behind cheating to get admission to noble institutions, which motivates college students to cheat. Resultantly 58.8 per cent of the respondents go for cheating in their examinations to get admission to famous universities. Another interesting factor came forward in the findings that most college students cheat to make their parents happy with their academic achievements. 55.0 per cent of the selected students agreed with this largely. 'Academic anxiety motivates college students to use unfair means in their educational institutes' is tested through Pearson Correlation and is accepted. This cheating violates meritocracy and can lead to corruption because the behaviour shapes the attitudes towards achievement either by fair or unfair means.

Recommendations

- Strict administrative policies be introduced to deal with academic misleading, and any violation should be dealt with seriously.
- Provide knowledge about the importance of education to students and parents through awareness programs.
- There should be an initial exam and uniform curriculum to maintain quality and equality throughout the country.

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