

CAUSES OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AMONG SENIOR SCHOOL STUDENTS IN DELHI

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ABSTRACT

Academic dishonesty is a growing concern at all levels in the Indian education system today. Despite being illegal, it has flourished to an extent of becoming endemic. With technology making it easier to have access to different tools, students are faced with a decision to choose academic integrity or academic dishonesty. Cheating during exams, fabricating, excuses for incomplete work, trying to give bribes to obtain grades are all examples of academic dishonesty. It can be classified broadly as yet another form of corruption. With increasing demands, stressors, and pressure, students may choose academic dishonesty over academic integrity. The objective of the present paper is to study the students' perception with regards to the causes of academic dishonesty amongst them. A self constructed inventory was administered for collecting the data and 50 senior secondary school students from Delhi were taken as sample for the study. Findings reveal that requirement of good grades for getting admission in colleges, cheating done by the classmates/others, being school itself is the centre for examination and failure as a matter of shame are found vital reasons for academic dishonesty among students.

The findings of the present study would contribute in developing a sense of sincerity, integrity and responsibility towards the society among the pupils. This will help in creating an honest and corruption free society in the times to come.

KEYWORDS: Academic Dishonesty, Cheating, Students.

INTRODUCTION

Academic dishonesty can come under different titles like plagiarism, fabrication, deception (providing false information or excuses), cheating, bribery, sabotage, professional misconduct, impersonation, etc. The act of engaging in behavior in which a student borrows an assignment to copy from another

student, copies off of an exam, or obtains assignments and/ or exams from previous semesters. It also includes engaging in behavior where one would write answers anywhere on the body, clothing, desk, or paper in order to advance oneself on an exam.

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Academic dishonesty is commonly referred to as cheating throughout the literature reviewed.

Dishonesty and corruption are present in every level of society. There is a need to eradicate it, especially at the academic level for collective community desire for an honest, hard working and sincere set of future citizens. To prevent this, it is necessary to instill in the younger generations, the importance of honesty, hard work and work ethics. The purpose of this research was to study the causes of academic dishonesty among students in senior secondary schools in Delhi.

RATIONALE

The pressure of a fast paced, ultra-competitive environment that people are thrown into these days may attribute to academic dishonesty among students. Many business models in the real world seem to show students that academic dishonesty is an acceptable way to success in a world with cut-throat competition and no mercy. Or maybe, it is just plain old laziness and unwillingness to put in the effort required to study. While studies show that there isn't too clear a correlation between academic dishonesty and success, that hasn't deterred students with cheating habits from carrying on. Meagre (1965) and Sharma (1965) conducted their studies to find out the causes of academic dishonesty but in the present atmosphere when this epidemic is spreading at a sputnik speed and thereby vitiating the

atmosphere of education, there is a crying need to diagnose and identify its causes. Therefore the investigator has taken an initiative and conducted the survey to address this matter of great concern in today's educational system.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the causes of Academic Dishonesty among senior secondary school students.
2. To find out the gender differences, if any, concerning the causes of Academic Dishonesty among senior secondary school students.

RESEARCH DESIGN

For the present qualitative research, descriptive survey method was used.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The children of senior secondary schools studying in grade 11 and 12 in Delhi were considered as the population for the study. A sample of 50 students from four schools (urban and 2 rural schools) located in South- west Delhi was taken to collect data.

TOOL

Initially, an inventory containing 20 items was developed by the investigator. After the pilot study and discussion with experts, finally the 14 items were selected in inventory found relevant for the investigation.

FINDINGS

OBJECTIVE 1: TO FIND OUT THE CAUSES OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Table 1. Causes of Academic Dishonesty among senior secondary school students (in %age)

S. No.	WHY DO I NEED TO CHEAT?	Always	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Never
1	My concepts of the subject are not clear.	4	12	18	56	10
2	I did not work hard.	0	14	18	54	14
3	Students initiate each other.	26	46	14	10	4
4	Cheating is easier than studying thoroughly.	0	22	10	16	52
5	Failing in the exam/test would be shameful.	42	6	4	20	28
6	Others also cheat.	56	20	4	6	14
7	Parents/guardians encourage cheating.	10	4	0	4	82
8	Atmosphere of our system is corrupt.	26	12	26	14	22
9	Teachers do not teach properly.	10	12	32	42	4
10	Invigilators are not strict.	4	14	28	28	26
11	School itself is the centre for examination.	52	16	20	12	0
12	I don't have enough time to study.	16	18	0	36	30
13	This subject/ topic is not important.	4	10	8	24	54
14	I need good grades for getting admission in colleges.	78	10	12	0	0

DISCUSSION

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation, certain findings were sought in relation to the causes of academic dishonesty among senior secondary school students. The major findings have been summarized as follows:

- 78 percent of the students were of the view that resorting to academic dishonesty is due to the reason that they need good grades for getting admission in colleges. This is natural because services and admissions to higher classes are directly linked with degrees obtained in various examinations. This is the reason that no hold is now barred for scoring maximum

possible marks on the part of students as a whole and it has become an ordeal for the examinees and examiners alike. This finding is supported by a survey "Causes of Scholastic Dishonesty among the Examinees" carried out by Ravi Prakash Rai (2013) which concluded that this was the top ranked reason given by the students for indulging into scholastic dishonesty.

- 56 percent of the students think that academic dishonesty occurs due to the reason that "others also cheat". It is really true that due to malpractices prevalent in our examination, the whole atmosphere has been vitiated. Even the studious and conscientious students are tempted to take leave of their studies. They think that like

their fellow students, they will come up with flying colours by resorting to cheating in the examinations.

- 52 percent of the students believe that the “School itself is the centre for examination” is also a vital reason for academic

dishonesty among students. As the students are familiar with the school premises, teachers, school management and practices, it becomes easy for them to indulge in malpractices during examinations.

OBJECTIVE 2: TO FIND OUT THE GENDER DIFFERENCES, IF ANY, CONCERNING THE CAUSES OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Table 2. Gender differences, if any, concerning the causes of Academic Dishonesty among senior secondary school students

S. No.	Why Do I Need To Cheat?	Always		Very Often		Often		Some times		Never	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1	My concepts of the subject are not clear.	0	8	0	24	12	24	68	44	20	0
2	I did not work hard.	0	0	12	16	12	24	56	52	20	8
3	Students initiate each other.	20	32	40	52	20	8	12	8	8	0
4	Cheating is easier than studying thoroughly.	0	0	20	24	12	8	8	24	60	44
5	Failing in the exam/ test would be shameful.	40	84	12	0	8	0	32	8	8	8
6	Others also cheat.	20	92	32	8	8	0	12	0	28	0
7	Parents/ guardians encourage cheating.	12	8	8	0	0	0	8	0	72	92
8	Atmosphere of our system is corrupt.	32	20	0	24	28	24	20	8	20	24
9	Teachers do not teach properly.	12	8	8	16	40	24	32	52	8	0
10	Invigilators are not strict.	0	8	20	8	32	24	20	36	28	24
11	School itself is the centre for examination.	52	52	0	32	40	0	8	16	0	0
12	I don't have enough time to study.	32	0	28	8	0	0	20	52	20	40
13	This subject/ topic is not important.	0	8	20	0	0	16	40	8	40	68
14	I need good grades for getting admission in colleges.	72	84	20	0	8	16	0	0	0	0

DISCUSSION

After analyzing the collected data following gender differences have been found under study:

- 8 percent of the girls believed that they indulge in academic dishonesty because their concepts are not clear. While the majority of the boys (68 percent) and girls (44 percent) believe that the not having clear understanding of the subject matter is sometimes the reason for indulging in malpractices during examination.
- Majority of the boys (56 percent) and girls (52 percent) reported that academic dishonesty is the resort for them, sometimes, because they did not work hard.
- 20 percent of the boys and 32 percent of the girls indulge in cheating because they always initiate each other while majority of them (40 percent of boys and 52 percent of girls) believe that this happens very often. The students think that they can fair well in the examinations by resorting to malpractices during the examinations just like their fellow students.
- Majority of the students, 60 percent of the boys and 44 percent of girls reported that they never head to academic dishonesty due to the reason that cheating is easier than studying thoroughly.
- 40 percent of the boys and 84 percent of the girls reported that they believe that failing in the examination is shameful and this is the cause for indulging in academic dishonesty.
- 32 percent of the boys cheat very often because they believe that others also cheat. While 92 percent of the girls reported their reason for cheating is that others also cheat.
- Only 12 percent of the boys and 8 percent of the girls resort to cheating because they are encouraged by their parents or guardians. The majority of them, 72 percent of the boys and 92 percent of the girls reported that they never indulge in malpractices due to encouragement by their parents or guardians.
- 32 percent of the boys and 20 percent endorse malpractices in examinations due to the atmosphere of the education system being corrupt. Though, this reason was considered responsible very often by 24 percent of the girls, often by 28 percent of boy and 24 percent of the girls.
- 40 percent of the boys and 24 percent of the girls believe that they sometimes indulge in malpractices because the teacher does not teach properly. 12 percent of the boys and 8 percent of the girls reported this reason to be always resulting in academic dishonesty in the students.
- Majority of boys (32 percent) believed that leniency on the part of the invigilator results in academic dishonesty. 36 percent of the girls believe that this reason is sometimes a cause for academic dishonesty among students.
- Majority of boys and girls, 52 percent each, believe that academic dishonesty takes place due to the school being the examination centre for the students. This is because of the familiarity of the place and practices.
- Most of the boys, 32 percent of them, reported that they always indulge in malpractices because they don't have enough time for study. Meanwhile, 52 percent of the girls were of the view that they sometimes resort to academic dishonesty due to lack of time for studying and preparation.
- The unimportance of the subject matter is never a reason behind academic dishonesty among students; this is evident as 40 percent of the boys and 68 percent of the

girls believe that this is never a cause for academic dishonesty for them.

- Majority of boys (72 percent) and girls (84 percent) were of the view that requirement of good grades for getting admission in colleges is mostly a strong reason for students indulging in academic dishonesty in senior schools. This was the main cause as per the study carried out by the researcher.

SUGGSSTIONS AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The examination system has been dilapidated by neglect and will be in ruins in no time if interventions are not made. For overcoming the evil academic dishonesty, the following suggestions may be given.

FOR POLICY MAKERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

1. Increased Use of Essay Examinations and Questions: Researches indicates that the only commonly used deterrent for cheating on examinations that is consistently effective is the use of essay questions.
2. Random Seating for Examinations: Since students tend to sit near their friends or become friendly with those sitting near them during the term, allowing students to sit in their usual seats during the examination increases the likelihood of answer sharing or copying.
3. Widely Spaced Seating during Exams: Here again the goal is to change the incentives for cheating. Studies indicate that, if students believe others are cheating, they themselves are more likely to cheat. A study found that even students with strong moral compasses are more inclined to cheat when both the temptation and opportunity are present. Separating test

takers will serve to reduce some of their incentives and motivations to cheat.

4. There needs to be a common ground with clear understanding of what academic dishonesty is and what the consequence will be for anyone who chooses academic dishonesty over academic integrity. The more academic dishonesty is talked about and the more awareness is turned towards it in the schools, the less it will occur (Strom & Strom, 2007).

FOR TEACHERS

There are several steps that shall be taken by the teachers to prevent academic dishonesty;

1. Teachers should devote time at the beginning of the academic session to discussing the criteria for academic conduct and scholarship. This will allow the students to develop an appreciation for what is considered acceptable and unacceptable behavior.
2. Students should be given specific instruction outlining the forms of plagiarism and cheating; this direction can be provided orally and followed up with written information.
3. It would be helpful to inform the students on the standards for assessing their performance, and reviewing their progress throughout the term.
4. Teachers should be conscientious and true to their profession, so that they may not become a party to this evil.

FOR PARENTS

1. Parent should discourage and desist their wards from adopting under-hand means in the examination.
2. It is good and proper for parents to desire good success for their children/wards, but wrong and condemnable if they would find

no way of helping them succeed other than aiding them one way or the other in examination malpractice.

CONCLUSION

Results and findings suggest that academic dishonesty is a complex problem and several causes are responsible for it. Majority of the students think that linking degrees with admission to higher classes, colleges and employment is the most potent cause for compelling the students to resort to academic dishonesty. This is the reason that many people feel that the admissions in universities and employment shall be delinked with degrees. With the sky high cut offs in the government universities like Delhi University, Jamia Islamia Milia and various others in the NCT, students fall prey to the tempting unfair means for qualifying their examinations on a gravy train. Majority of the boys opine that the need for good grades leaves students with little options but resorting to malpractices in examinations and is the main cause of academic dishonesty among students, followed by the reason that others also cheat, which has a downbeat effect on the students who work hard and sincerely for the examinations. This reason has been endorsed by the majority of the girls. The increase in the number of cases that are brought to light through media and other sources induces the sincere and conscientious students to indulge in unfair means and temptation of passing with flying colours without putting in sincere and honest efforts. Keeping these views in mind, one can reach the conclusion that there are multiple causes responsible for this blight. Teachers, students'

guardians and administrators are collectively responsible for it.

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