

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

**AN EXPLORATION OF UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENTS' SELF-REPORTED ACADEMIC
DISHONESTY AT ADDIS ABABA AND JIMMA
UNIVERSITIES**

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ABSTRACT

Academic dishonesty is a global phenomenon that exists almost in every country. Its effect has been long-lasting and catastrophic in many instances and its impediment for growth is largely looming. This study attempted to investigate students' self reported academic dishonesty in Ethiopian University settings. The findings show that 96.4% of respondents admitted in engaging on assignment-related dishonesty while 82.1% and 82% on research-related and exam-related ones, respectively. Scores on performance avoidance and mastery orientation, Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), awareness of academic rules and regulations, assessment practices, faculty, and university attended predicted the different types of academic dishonesty with varying levels of significance.

INTRODUCTION

Today's undergraduate students are in a mounting pressure to be the best achieving learners because there are fierce competitions for the most desired jobs and limited places in those popular academic institutions for graduate studies (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001). With this connection, improving academic quality and employability of graduates are becoming crucial concerns of universities (Reichert and Tauch, 2003). On top of that, universities are usually perceived as ideal

sources of truth and honesty (UNESCO, 2003). Due to such demands, universities are paying attention to graduates' development in a range of attributes such as: disciplinary knowledge, practical skills, interactive skills, problem solving, ethical responsibility and professional commitment (Brimble and Stevenson-Clarke, 2005; Harvey, 1997).

It is true that, "Universities should legitimately be held accountable for their

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use of public money and the quality of their outputs (graduates, research, and regional engagement)” (Salmi, 2007, p. 4). University graduates that have multiple competencies obtained from attending university programs can play a key role in the socio-economic development of a country (Salmi, 2003). But failure in achieving these due to a crippling situation like academic dishonesty is so devastating to the country’s development effort (Rocha and Teixeira, 2005). Part of the dispute is that the fate of tomorrow’s job environment is mainly in the hands of today’s university graduates since these are the best part of the society to the world of work (Tefera, 2001; Lawson, 2004).

Academic dishonesty, which is also known as academic misconduct or fraud is a serious problem in establishing academic quality culture in universities because it is unethical behavior (Brimble and Stevenson-Clarke, 2005), which contradicts with the academic policies (Harding, Carpenter, Montgomery, & Steneck, 2001), and academic integrity of the Universities (Kremmer, Brimbel, & Stevenson-Clarke, 2007). It also intimidates the quality of university learning, teaching and research (Brimble and Stevenson-Clarke, 2006; Sebek, 2006; Teixeira and Rocha, 2006).

Academic dishonesty has been a topic of research interest since 1940s and numerous evidences have shown that students’ self-reported dishonesty is increasing in university academia. From the historical perspective, Davis, Grover, Becker, and McGregor (1992) produced a synthesis of the different studies that signify a growing increment of the self-reported dishonesty from 23% in the 1940s to 38% in the

1950s. The percent continued to increase to 49-64% in the 1960s, and 76% in the 1970s. Taking a large sample of 5000 students from 99 US colleges and universities, Bowers (as cited in McCabe et al., 2001) found out that 75% of the sampled students who participated in the study had cheated in some way at least once in their stay in the colleges and universities. A similar finding was reported by McCabe and Trevino (1997) though the size of the institutions and students included in the study were relatively small, in the latter case.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Research studies revealed that dishonest behaviors started in high schools can sustain in colleges, and likewise, students who are engaged in academic dishonest behaviors in college tend to engage in dishonest acts in the workplace (Harding, Carpenter, Finelli, & Passow, 2004). Regarding this, Harding et al. concluded that dishonesty is more likely to be used in various times and situations, if once considered acceptable. This implies that the potentials of dishonest behaviors to persist across time and situation.

In this regard, the Ethiopian government is currently working towards curbing the various forms of corruption that are budding in different sectors of the country. The Anti Corruption and Control Office (ACCO) are employing various strategies to combat and control corruption. Among the strategies teaching the public through the mass media and sue corrupt officials are worth mentioning. However, these are not sufficient to curb the problem hence any effort to eliminate corruption should target collaboration with schools, colleges

and universities, as research showed that academic dishonesty learned in these institutions can possibly happen in the work situation in sophisticated manner after graduation.

Despite the abundance of researches on academic dishonesty, most of the empirical evidences come from North America, particularly US (Christensen Hughes and McCabe, 2006). There are some studies conducted elsewhere in Europe (Teixeira and Rocha 2006); Asian-Pacific, particularly Australia (Brimble and Stevenson-Clarke, 2005; 2006), and in Africa, particularly Ethiopia (Damtew, 2001) and Nigeria (Olasehinde-Williams, Abdullah, & Owolabi, n.d.), amongst others.

As Caruana, Ramaseshan, and Ewing (2000) asserted, "Little research appears to have been done to try and identify variables that have an effect on academic dishonesty" (p. 23). Moreover, research coverage on academic dishonesty is limited and uneven, especially in developing countries (UNESCO, 2003). This study contributes to fill in the existing gap in academic dishonesty literature, based on empirical evidences of student's dishonesty in two universities in Ethiopia.

This paper has two important objectives. First, it critically examines academic dishonesty among undergraduate university students in an attempt to uncover its frequency of occurrence. Second, it identifies those factors that predict various types of academic dishonesty. More specifically, this study tries to investigate the following research questions:

1. What are the prevalence rates of the various types of academic dishonesty among Addis Ababa University and Jimma University students?
2. How do individual factors like gender, age, achievement goal orientation, Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) and awareness of rules and regulations, and environmental factors like institution or faculty attended, assessment practices, social relations, perceived teaching behavior of academic staff, perceived practicability of rules and regulations and perceived severity of the penalty for academic dishonesty predict the various types of academic dishonesty?
3. What possible strategies help to prevent or reduce the occurrence of academic dishonesty in the Ethiopian university setting?

The Context

At the present time, the Ethiopian higher education is in the process of rapid massive expansion both in terms of student enrollment and number of universities (Ministry of Education, 2005). Between 1996/7 and 2004/5, the number of universities grew from one to nine and in 2004/5 the students number grew from 35,000 to 187,500 (Ashcroft, n.d.). In 2008/9 academic year, the number of universities has grown further to more than 20 with a considerable faster increment of students' enrollment.

Conceptual Framework Of The Study

One of the most influential American psychologists, Albert Bandura theorized that behavior formation is the effect of

three mutually linked and mutually interacting factors namely: behavior, the individual (personal cognition and internal variables) and environment (institutional and social variables). This theory is special glue for the missing links between behaviorists and cognitive learning theorists indicating the continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences (Pajares, 2002).

In their review of an article, R. Zhou and X. Zhou (2007) critically analyzed the various features of Bandura’s model visa-a-vise academic dishonesty among university students. As R. Zhou and X. Zhou said,

environmental factors are the driving force for university students to behave dishonestly because environment provides the stage for the creation of replace behavior motive. In response, the resulting dishonest behavior is the factor that encourages the replace behavior motive to establish and sustain. R. Zhou and X. Zhou further noted that improper self-cognition and self-adjustment mediates the establishment of dishonest motive. The above lines of argument imply that both environmental and individual factors complement each other to the formation of dishonest behavior and in return, the dishonest behavior influences both the individual and external factors. Put it diagrammatically, the relationship of the three factors is illustrated in figure 1.

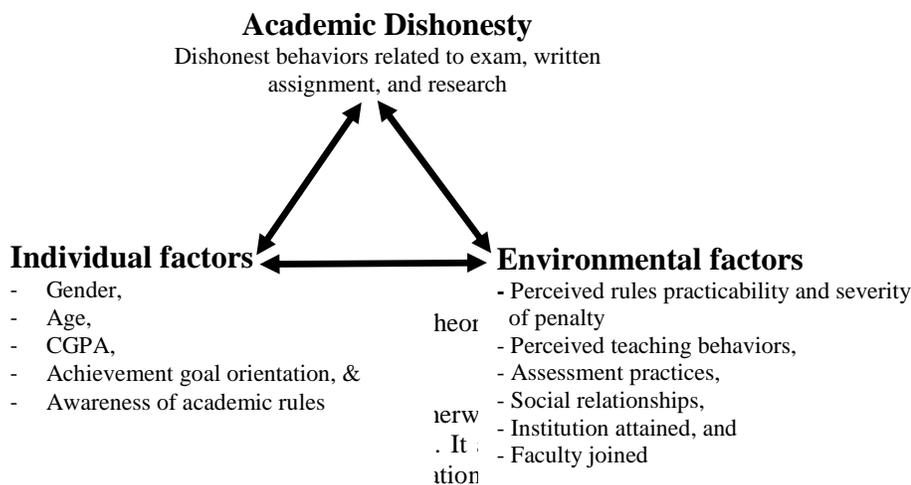


Figure 1. Academic Dishonesty

Bandura’s model is most suitable for this study because of the following reasons. First this model is comprehensive enough to address those wider variables in the individual factors as well as environmental factors that have relationship with academic dishonesty. Second, the model provides a systematic sketch for the different factors to be included in this study

domains (Academic dishonesty, the individual factors and environment factors). This framework is particularly useful to point out those multiple dimensions of academic dishonesty and to improve mal-adjusted behaviors of students (Pajares, 2002).

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

A descriptive survey design was used for the study.

Study population

The target population of this study was 10,500 students (7930 males and 2570 females), of these, 5700 students (4000 males and 1700 females) were from AAU and the other 4800 students (3930 males and 870 females) were from Jimma University. Faculty wise distribution shows that in AAU 4460 students (3170 males and 1290 females) were from Education Faculty and 1240 students (830 males and 410 females) were in Business and Economics Faculty while in Jimma University, 2730 students (2250 males and 480 females) were from Education and 2070 students (1680 males and 390 females) were from Business and Economics Faculty.

Sample Size, Study Participants and Sampling Technique

Regarding sample size, 10 %, that is, 1050 students (793 males and 257 females) of the target population was taken. In terms of University wise distributions, 570 were from AAU and 480 were from JU.

The distributions of study participants in the two faculties of AAU show that 446 students (317 males and 129 females) were taken from Education while the rest 124 students (83 males and 41 females) were from Business and Economics. Similarly, in JU 273 students (225 males and 48 females) were from Education Faculty while the rest 207 students (168 males and 39 females) were from Business and Economics Faculty. The response rates of study participants were 87% in AAU and 96.5% in JU. Thus, a total of 959 respondents participated in this study. Of which, 496 (51.7%) were from Addis Ababa University and the rest 463 (48.3%) were from Jimma University.

Multi stage sampling was employed.

Specifically, stratified sampling was used to select a proportional sample of participants across departments, class years and gender and simple random sampling was used to select the required participants. The socio-demographic characteristics of study participants are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Socio demographic characteristics of student respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Stand. dev.
University	AAU	496	51.7		
	JU	463	48.3		
	Total	959	100	_____	_____
Faculty	Education	662	69.0		
	Business	297	31.0		
	Total	959	100.0	_____	_____
Gender	Male	711	74.1		
	Female	248	25.9		
	Total	959	100	_____	_____
Age				21.58	3.24

As indicated in Table 1, 496 (51.7%) participants were from “Addis Ababa University” and 463 (48.3%) were from “Jimma University”. Regarding the distribution of students participants by faculty, 662 (69.0%) and 297 (31.0%) of the participants were from Education Faculty and Business and Economics Faculty, respectively. In addition, the table indicates that 711 (74.1%) of the participants were males and 248 (25.9 %) were females. The mean age score of participants was 21.58 with a standard deviation of 3.24.

Instrument and Measurement

A questionnaire was used to secure information. This questionnaire was adopted from Broeckelman and Pollock (2006) and pilot testing was made in Jimma University to test and fit the instrument with the university setting in Ethiopia. As a result, 40 students from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences participated in the pilot test. The Cronbach alpha coefficients of all the items included in the main study were acceptable with the coefficient values of 0.70 and above.

The questionnaire consisted of five parts. In the first part participants gave general information like University joined (AAU coded 1, JU coded 2); Faculty joined (education coded 1, business and economics coded 2) gender (male coded 1, female coded 2), age and Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA).

The second part contains two sections. In the first section participants circled the sources, from a given list from where they have learnt academic rules and regulations and if a participants circled one or more sources from the given list, he/she would be considered aware (coded 1) and if he/she circled never been informed he/she

would be considered unaware (coded 0) of rules and regulations. In the second section, participants rated their perceived rules practicability and severity of penalties for students’ academic misconduct on two items (1= very low, 2=low, 3=medium, 4= high, 5=very high; and the higher the score the higher the rules practicability and severity of penalties for students’ academic misconduct).

The third part contains items in which participants rated how often they have been engaged in the various types of academic dishonesty on a five point scale (1=never, 2= rarely, 3=sometimes, 4= mostly, 5= always and the higher the score the higher the academic dishonesty) and 9 items were intended to measure exam-related dishonesty, another 9 items were intended to measure assignment-related dishonesty and 7 items were used to measure research-related dishonesty.

The fourth part of the questionnaire intended to measure achievement goal orientation of participants. Participants rated their motivational orientation on 19 items on a four point scales (1= never, 2= mostly not true, 3=mostly true, 4= always true; and the higher the score the higher the motivational orientation) and 11 items were used to measure mastery orientation , 5 items for performance approach orientation and 3 items were used to measure performance avoidance orientation.

The fifth part of the questionnaire consisted of 11 items in which participants rated to what extent they would agree on item that probed assessment practices, perceived teaching behavior and social relationship on four point scales (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= agree, 4= strongly agree; and the higher the score the higher the

attribute would be) and 4 items were used for assessment practices, 5 items were used for perceived teaching behavior and 2 items were used for social relationship.

The last part of the questionnaire consisted of an open-ended question that intended to secure information from the participants on possible ways of preventing academic dishonesty in their universities.

Procedures

A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the participants to fill out while they were in class. To do this, first a formal permission letter was obtained from deans of faculties and then from the heads of departments to have contact with the

instructor while the class was going on. The questionnaire was distributed to the students after getting consent from the respective instructor. Of course, the presence of the researchers in the classroom where students fill out the questionnaire was taken advantages of giving explanation about the purpose of the study to solicit genuine information from the research participants.

RESULT

In general, it was discovered that the prevalence rates of the various types of academic dishonesty were found to be high among participants. Specifically, the findings disclosed that assignment-related Dishonesty was more prevalent, followed by research and exam-related dishonesties.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distributions of the three types of academic dishonesty

Variables		Frequency	Percent
Assignment-related dishonesty	At least once	924	96.4
	Not at all	34	3.5
Research-related dishonesty	At least once	787	82.1
	Not at all	170	17.7
Exam-related dishonesty	At least once	786	82.0
	Not at all	172	17.9

As Table 2 depicts, nearly 924 (96.4%) of the participants reported that they were engaged at least once in one form of assignment-related dishonesty. Similarly, 787 (82.1%) and 786 (82.0%) participants reported they were involved at least once or more on research and exam-related dishonesty, respectively.

Descriptive statistics of the various types of academic dishonesties were computed and indicated in Table 3. As clearly indicated in the table, participants reported high level of assignment-related dishonesty followed by research and exam-related dishonesty.

Table 3: Means and standard deviations for the three types of academic dishonesty

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Exam-related dishonesty	1.9074	.85899
Assignment-related dishonesty	2.2854	.82217
Research I related dishonesty	1.9406	.84445

Then, correlation coefficients were computed and step wise multiple regression analysis were conducted to identify those individual and environmental variables that significantly predicted each type of academic dishonesty.

The correlation coefficients between individual variables and exam-related dishonesty indicated that CGPA, scores on mastery orientation of students and awareness about rules and regulations had weak significant negative relationships ($r = -.118, p < .01, r = -.074, p < .05$ and $r = -.078, P < .05$ respectively). On the other hand, performance avoidance orientation had a significant positive relationship with exam-related dishonesty ($r = .186, p < .01$).

For the environmental variables, Faculty joined (education coded 1 and business coded 2) significantly negatively correlated

with exam-related dishonesty ($r = -.148, p < .05$) and university attended (AAU coded 1, JU coded 2) significantly positively related with exam-related dishonesty ($r = .069, p < .05$).

Then after, a step wise multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify those individual and environmental factors that significantly explained and predicted exam-related dishonesty. The step wise multiple regression analysis revealed that 8.1% of the variation on exam-related dishonesty was attributed for by the linear combination of the performance avoidance orientation, Faculty attended, mastery orientation, university attended, students' CGPA, awareness of rules and regulations and assessment practices ($F_{7,949} \text{ df} = 13.049$ and $p < .05$). Like wise, the beta coefficient were computed and displayed in Table 4.

Table 4: R^2 change, predictors and t-value of exam-related dishonesty

Variable	adjusted R^2	B	Std. error	t value	Sig
Constant		2.971	.266	11.168	.000
Per. Avo.	.034	.151	.027	5.542	.000
Faculty	.050	-.290	.059	-4.889	.000
Mastery	.060	-.015	.006	-2.537	.011
University	.069	.190	.056	3.407	.001
CGPA	.075	-.126	.048	-2.627	.009
Awa. Of rr	.078	-.161	.078	-2.053	.040
Assessment	.081	-.028	.014	-2.006	.045

N.B: Per. Avo.= Performance Avoidance; CGPA = Cumulative Grade Point Average; Awa.of rr = Awareness of the academic rules and regulations.

As Table 4 shows, it was discovered that performance avoidance orientation significantly predicted exam-related dishonesty (b= .151, t= 5.542, α= .000); faculty attended significantly predicted exam-related dishonesty (b= -.290, t= -4.889, α= .000); mastery orientation significantly predicted exam-related dishonesty (b= -.015, t= -2.537, α= .011); university attended significantly predicted exam-related dishonesty (b=.190, t= 3.407, α = .001); students CGPA significantly predicted exam-related dishonesty (b= -.126, t= -2.627, α= .009); awareness of rules and regulations significantly predicted exam-related dishonesty (b= -.161, t= -2.053, α= .040) and assessment practice significantly predicted exam-related dishonesty (b= -.110, t= -2.006, α = .045).

The next analysis was aimed at identifying those individual and environmental variables that significantly predicted assignment-related dishonesty. First the correlation coefficients between individual variables and assignment-related dishonesty were computed. Performance approach orientation and performance avoidance orientation were significantly positively related with assignment-related

dishonesty (r= .085, p< .01, and r=.197, p<.01). On the contrary, weak significant negative relationships were observed between respondents' age, CGPA and awareness of rules and regulations (r= -.089, P< .01, r = -.151, P< .01 and r= -.070, p < .05 respectively) and assignment-related dishonesty.

For the environmental variables, university attended and perceived teaching behavior significantly positively related with assignment-related dishonesty (r= .138, P < .01 and r= .104, P< .01 respectively) and faculty attended significantly negatively related with assignment-related dishonesty(r= -.165, p< .01).

The step wise multiple regression analysis revealed that the proportion of variance on assignment-related dishonesty that was attributed for by the linear combination of performance avoidance orientation, Faculty attended, university attended, and CGPA was 9.9 % (F_{4,953 df} , t= 27.427 and P< .000) .

Table 5: R² change, predictors and t-value for assignment-related dishonesty

Variable	adjusted R ²	B	Std. error	t value	sig
Constant		2.656	.175	15.215	.000
Perfo. Avo.	.038	.129	.025	5.083	.000
Faculty	.059	-.320	.056	-5.732	.000
Uni. att	.083	.263	.052	5.096	.000
CGPA	.099	-.190	.045	-4.250	.000

N.B: Per. Avo.= Performance Avoidance; CGPA = Cumulative Grade Point Average; Uni. Att = University attended

Moreover, the test revealed that performance avoidance orientation significantly predicted assignment-related

dishonesty (b= .129, t= 5.083, α=.000); faculty attended significantly predicted assignment-related dishonesty (b= -.320, t=

-5.732, $\alpha = .000$); university attended significantly predicted assignment-related dishonesty ($b = .263$, $t = 5.096$, $\alpha = .000$) and CGPA significantly predicted assignment-related dishonesty ($b = -.190$, $t = -4.250$ and $\alpha = .001$).

The final analysis was determining individual and environmental variables that significantly predicted research-related dishonesty. The correlation coefficient between individual variables and research-related dishonesty indicates that performance approach orientation and performance avoidance orientation were significantly positively correlated with research-related dishonesty ($r = .091$, $p < .01$, and $r = .213$, $p < .05$ respectively). On the other hand, age, CGPA and awareness about the rules and regulations significantly negatively related with research-related

dishonesty ($r = -.085$, $p < .01$, and $r = -.181$, $p < .01$ and $r = -.057$, $p < .05$ respectively).

For the environmental variables, university attended and perceived practice and severity for academic dishonesty significantly positively related with assignment-related dishonesty ($r = .121$, $P < .01$, $r = .070$, $P < .05$ and $r = .128$, $P < .01$ respectively) and Faculty attended significantly negatively related with assignment-related dishonesty ($r = -.220$, $P < .01$).

The step wise multiple regression analysis revealed that the proportion of variance on research-related dishonesty that was attributed for by the linear combination of Faculty attended, performance avoidance orientation, CGPA, university attended and awareness of rules and regulation was nearly 13.3 % ($F_{5,952}$ df, $t = 27.427$ and $P < .000$).

Table 6: R^2 change, predictors and t-value of research-related dishonesty

Variable	adjusted R^2	b	Std. error	t value	sig
Constant		2.661	.186	14.327	.000
Faculty	.047	-.427	.056	-7.566	.000
Perf. Av.	.083	.139	.026	5.435	.000
CGPA	.108	-.229	.045	-5.060	.000
Uni. Att	.130	.258	.052	4.968	.000
Awa. Of rr	.133	-.155	.075	-2.079	.038

N.B: Per. Avo. = Performance Avoidance; CGPA = Cumulative Grade Point Average; Uni. Att = University attended; Awa.of rr = Awareness of the academic rules & regulations

Moreover, the test revealed that faculty attended significantly predicted research-related dishonesty ($b = -.427$, $t = -7.566$, $\alpha = .000$); performance avoidance orientation significantly predicted research related dishonesty ($b = .139$, $t = 5.435$, $\alpha = .000$); CGPA significantly predicted research

related dishonesty ($b = -.229$, $t = -5.060$ and $\alpha = .001$); university attended significantly predicted research related dishonesty ($b = .258$, $t = 4.968$, and $\alpha = .000$) and awareness of rules and regulations significantly predicted research-related dishonesty ($b = -.155$, $t = -2.079$, $\alpha = .038$).

The qualitative analysis also revealed that the sampled students' involved in this study reflected that lack of commitment for mastery learning, grade motives, and lack of confidence in academia are some of the factors they perceived as adversely affecting students honest behavior in the universities.

Moreover, institutional/contextual factors like unfair/biased treatment of some teachers in scoring and grading based on ethnicity, gender, and religion, lack of close academic contact between teachers and students as well as between students and department heads, lack of positive relationship between students and teachers, carelessness in assessment practices that are explained in terms of repeating previous exam questions as they were, lack of careful control mechanism in exam Duplication, poor compiling, and poor invigilation seriously affected the students honest behavior in their respective faculties.

For clear understanding of these issues, some of the students' critical reflections are drawn as they appeared on the questionnaire.

- Actually I suggest on behalf of the students to work hard so as to be self confident
- The students should avoid a habit of copying assignment works or one student should not give his assignment for another to copy.
- Some of the teachers simply give the handout to the students without any discussion or explanation of the concepts included in the handout. However, at the end, they set very difficult exam to the students and give very

bad grade (weak in teaching but very strong in setting exam questions).

- First, teachers' commitment is a crucial factor to tackle the problem. Second, awareness rising sessions to the university students needs to be focused and given attention from the top. Third, rules and regulations should be implemented so as to take corrective measures.
- In my suggestion, it is better that students and teachers work closely. The teachers should have to see the students like their brothers not as enemies, giving timely advice and support, checking the students performance and then if there is unsatisfactory result help them to improve their performance.
- University instructors must be committed enough to measure their students with new exam questions. Repeating exams and tests is deep-rooted problem which have been practiced in our department. There should be strict rules and regulations to control students cheating in the exam as well as in copying the assignments and project works of others.
- Enough books and working papers as well as internet access ought to be provided so as to reduce plagiarism.
- The university should take a strict measure to those who damage library materials or course materials or hide library materials.
- I suggest everyone, students and especially teachers could be honest in their position. Honesty by means of being responsible and not being careless. In my stay at

this university I have experienced few careless teachers who are even bored to be punctual at their class time and whenever they get to class I perceive all their feelings, which could hardly influence students.

- In order to avoid such problem, there is a need to create harmonious relation between teachers and students and in other members of the university. Some teachers give strong assignment beyond our capacity. This creates confusion to the students and teachers should read the feeling of the students to avoid such confusion.

DISCUSSION

Prevalence of Academic Dishonesty

As per the findings of this study, the three types of academic dishonesty are widespread among university students in Ethiopia with the prevalence ranging from 82%-96%. Moreover, assignment-related dishonesty is significantly higher than exam-related and research-related dishonesties. Probably this is attributed to the fact that assignments are meant for mere submissions, students doubt instructors marking assignments, lack of communicating group norms in doing group assignment, inability to supplement group work with other assessment techniques like oral questioning, lack of clear instruction in doing individual assignments, time pressure etc. With regard to research, it seems that lack of essential knowledge and skills of conducting and reporting research and lab works, lack of close supervision and frequent feedback, time pressure, free access of previously done graded lab and research reports, other teachers are not serious about it, lack of ethical values etc. might contribute for high

incidences. Regardless of this, the prevalence of exam-related and research-related dishonesties is equal.

Even if, it is difficult to make comparison between academic dishonesty studies due to methodological inconsistencies (Crown and Spiller, 1998), the result of this study is indicative that academic dishonesty in Ethiopian Universities is as high as some dishonesty studies reported earlier, which show a prevalence rate of 84% (Broeckelman and Pollock, 2006), 82% - 90% (Davis et al., 1992), and 62%-94% (Teixeira and Rocha, 2006).

However, the prevalence rate evidenced in this study is very high compared with some other studies elsewhere. For example, it has been evidenced that 72% of the sampled undergraduate students of Australian universities involve in some form of academic misconduct (Brimble and Stevenson-Clarke, 2006). A Nigerian study among the students of Ilorin (federal) university evidenced a magnitude rate of 76.5% (Olasehinde-Williams et al., n.d.).

It is also very high compared with some other meta-analysis and large scale studies. The mean score of meta-analysis comprising of 107 studies was reported an average of 70.4% (Whitley, 1998).

Similarly, a recent large scale study by Professor Donald McCabe, the founding president of the Center for Academic Integrity (CAI), in collaboration with the Center for Academic Integrity at Duke University pointed that 70% of the 50, 000 undergraduate students involved in the survey admitted to some form of dishonest acts (McCabe, 2005). Compared with these, the findings of this study indicated a significant percentage departure from the mean.

Factors that Lead to Academic**Dishonesty**

This study found out that individual variables such as performance avoidance goal orientation, mastery goal orientation, CGPA, and awareness of the academic rules predicted academic dishonesty while gender, age, performance approach goal orientation did not. Similarly, environmental factors such as assessment practices, institution attended, and faculty joined predicted academic dishonesty while perceived rules practicability and severity of penalty, perceived teaching behavior and social relation did not. In fact, the predictive potential and its direction (either positive or negative) of each variable differ from one type of dishonesty to the other.

When the results of this study are compared with other studies conducted earlier, some of them are complementing previous findings while some others are contradicting. As previous studies confirmed, there is a significant negative correlation between academic dishonesty and GPA (McCabe and Trevino, 1997). The higher the students' GPA, the lower the possibility of involving in dishonest acts (Crown and Spiller, 1998). The same is true for this study. With regard to age, previous studies have shown that younger students are more likely to engage in different forms of academic dishonesty than older students (Crown & Spiller, 1998; McCabe & Trevino, 1997; Whitley, 1998). However, in this study, age has no significant influence in predicting academic dishonesty.

Although there is less clear understanding on the relationship between academic dishonesty and gender, studies are commonly showing that either male cheat more or no significant difference between male and female (Crown and Spiller, 1998; Whitley, 1998). This study supplements the

later assertion that says there is no significant difference between male and female students.

In terms of achievement goal orientation, previous studies show that both mastery and performance avoidance orientations significantly predict students dishonest behavior (Broeckelman and Pollock, 2006). The same authors further stated that students that strive for understanding the subject based on their own personal initiation and effort have mastery orientation and such students are less likely to involve in academic dishonesty. On the contrary, they disclosed that students that emphasize superficial understanding with little effort but targeting to conceal their incompetence have performance avoidance orientation and such students are more likely to involve in academic dishonest acts. The result of this study is in support of this fact.

Research findings evidenced that communicating institutional policies tend to decrease dishonest behavior among the students (Crown & Spiller, 1998). In light of this evidence, it is clear that this study has similar conclusions. However, the evidences in this study indicated that students perceived severity of penalties and effective enforcement of the policies, perceived teaching behavior of teachers and social relationship did not significantly predict academic dishonesty.

The most outstanding finding of this study is that performance avoidance orientation has more influence on the three types of academic dishonesty than other individual and environmental variables.

In a previous study by McCabe and Trevino (1997), to investigate the relative effect of contextual and individual factors on cheating behavior, the result shows that the institutional context factors have more influence on cheating behavior than the individual factors. As the authors concluded, the contextual factors (peer cheating behavior, peer disapproval of cheating behavior, and perceived severity of penalties for cheating) were significantly more influential than the individual factors (age, gender, GPA, and participation in extracurricular activities).

Although all the variables of McCabe and Trevino were not considered in this study, the result shows a mixed influence, which means the relative influences of the individual and contextual factors were comparably equal. This implies a point of departure to the previous finding probably indicating that the relative influence of the variables may not necessarily be the same in different educational setting, e.g., Ethiopian universities. Apart from this, care should be given in comparing the results since methodological inconsistency, sample size variation and the nature of the institutions (public or private; large or small) could also affect the results.

CONCLUSIONS

Academic dishonesty is becoming a serious problem in higher institutions. Dozen of researches have shown that it results in a debilitating effect on quality of education and they attempted to identify the magnitude and factors that lead to academic dishonesty. However, few researches are conducted in Ethiopian higher institutions on academic dishonesty.

This study, therefore, attempted to investigate the magnitude of the assignment, exam and research related academic dishonesties among Jimma and Addis Ababa University Students of Education and Business Faculties of Ethiopia. Moreover, the research pinpointed factors that could lead to the various form of academic dishonesties, and suggested possible remedies that serve best to mitigate the problem.

To achieve the objectives, 959 students' participants (711 males and 248 females) filled out questionnaires. Percentage and a step wise multiple regression analysis were used to explore the magnitude and factors that lead to the various forms of academic dishonesties respectively .

Though the study came up with important findings, it is not without limitations. The first limitation of this research was that the participants may not truly report their true behaviors of the various forms of academic dishonesty as the topic is a sensitive one. As a result, respondents may under report or over report their behaviors. The second limitation was that only two faculties were considered for the study. This also limits the generalizeability of the findings. Moreover, relying on self-reported academic dishonesty using survey questionnaires lacks depth of information as to why and how academic dishonesty is severe in the institutions (McCabe et al., 1999). In spite of these limitations, the following major findings were obtained.

- It was found that all the three forms of academic dishonesty were rampant among Jimma and Addis Ababa University Students of Education and Business Faculties. Specifically assignment related dishonesty was reported as

having the highest rate; and exam and research related dishonesties were also existed comparably.

- The research discovered that performance avoidance orientation, faculty attended, pedagogical variables, mastery orientation and Cumulative Grade Point Average significantly predicted exam related dishonesty.
- It was also found out that performance avoidance orientation, faculty attended, pedagogical variables, university attended and Cumulative Grade Point Average significantly predicted assignment related dishonesty
- It was also found out that performance avoidance orientation, faculty attended, pedagogical variables, university attended and Cumulative Grade Point Average significantly predicted research related dishonesty.
- Students pointed out that intervention strategy aimed at students, teachers, and testing procedures are needed to alleviate academic dishonesty in university and thereby promote a culture of academic integrity.

Implications

This study adds theoretical knowledge to the academic dishonesty literature demonstrating the current picture in Ethiopian Universities, particularly in the Faculty of Education and Faculty of Business and Economics at Addis Ababa and Jimma universities. It also increases global understanding of the issue by contributing to fill in the missing gap in Africa. This study contributes to provide an insight that verifies that Ethiopian

universities, particularly, Addis Ababa and Jimma universities are not exceptions to the plague of academic dishonesty with the prevalence rate of 82-96% for the three types of dishonesty and relatively highest percentage report of assignment-related dishonesty compared with the others.

This study is only a beginning to have a baseline picture particularly, in Ethiopia. Hence much has to be done to understand the problem through extensive studies that covers larger samples of students, variables, faculties, and universities (Governmental and Non-governmental; Small and large). It is equally important to make use of qualitative studies to solicit in-depth information from the participants that answers the why and how of academic dishonesty (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 1999).

If priority has to be given to mitigating the problem of assignment-related dishonest acts, low achieving students should be the target. Assessment practices should also get due attention as it was found out that poor assessment practice correlates with students engagement in academic dishonesty. In this regard, there should be continuous assessment, frequent follow up and feedback to the students. Providing varied assignments and exam types and changing/modifying the assignments and exam questions from time to time should be taken into account. Equally important is cross validation of the students research work using different mechanisms such as oral questioning and portfolio evidencing.

By and large, establishing the notion of honor codes in the Ethiopian Universities academia, which is represented by the five core values such as “fairness, responsibility, accountability, transparency and equity” (The Fundamentals Values of Academic Integrity, 1999, p. 4), should be

capitalized on and should be coupled with the commitment of the top management, teachers and students. It is evident that cheating is lower in institutions that have honor codes than those institutions without honor codes (McCabe & Trevino, cited in McCabe et al., 2001). There should also be collaborative instances between the academic institutions and the concerned governmental organizations. The message behind this argument is that the root causes of academic and social dishonesty are grounded in the education system hence emphasis should be given to establishing honor codes and collaboration among the top management, teachers and students should be considered important to fight the problem.

Above all, universities can play a pivotal role in creating awareness among students about academic rules and regulations of the universities and the importance of knowing and abiding by the rules and regulations.

Education and corrective actions are essential to promoting an environment in which academic integrity will flourish in the universities. But this alone is not adequate to avoid academic dishonesty without the help of taking some punitive actions. The final message is that universities should complement preventive strategies with curative measures so as to address the problem in a comprehensive manner.

There is a rapid decline in the quality of higher educations in Africa, which is mainly the result of mismatched swift expansion against reduced institutional efficiency (Tefera, 2000; UNESCO, 1995; World Bank, 2000). When this reality is exacerbated by more than 80% self-

reported academic dishonesty among university students, it heavily damages the quality of the institutions learning. This runs against to the mission and core values of the universities (Gallant and Drinan, 2006). For example, part of the mission statement of Addis Ababa University says "...to provide quality educational programs...". Similarly, one of the core values of Jimma University reads aloud that "quality is a hallmark of what we do". From this it is possible to deduce that quality is a benchmark for both Universities. While this is their aspiration, a high prevalence rate of academic dishonesty in these institutions would greatly influence the aspiration to be converted into illusion.

Hence faculties and administrations should prevent academic dishonesty in organized forms. Research shows that "Doing nothing simply reinforces the belief that high levels of cheating are common place and acceptable" (McCabe, Butterfield, & Trevino, 2006, p 304). Rather giving due emphasis to the general climate of dishonesty through promoting academic integrity has a profound influence on the problem (McCabe et al., 2001). Creating academic integrity among university students and academic staff can be maintained using different strategies such as: having a clear policy on academic dishonesty, making sure the policy is discussed, and enforcing its provisions. Moreover, creating a discussion forum and providing clear instruction for the students at the very beginning of the course also help significantly to minimize academic dishonesty (Davis et al., 1992) and faculty administration and course instructors should direct students' attention towards the mastery of the subject rather than obtaining grades.

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