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Attitude of Students Towards Cheating and Plagiarism: University Case Study

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Abstract: During their studies, many students commit some form of academic dishonesty, such as cheating and plagiarism, often to obtain higher grades than they are capable of. The current widespread use of the Internet, mobile and wireless devices has made it easier for students to illegally access information and at the same time it has become difficult for academic institutions to control and discover such instances. Hence, it is essential that students become aware of the seriousness of these offences and be encouraged to avoid them. In this study, the attitude towards cheating and plagiarism among female students in the College of Computer and Information Sciences (CCIS) at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia was studied. We aim to highlight the most prevailing practices, the underlying reasons, the popular sources of illegal information and the conception of students towards the ethicalness of exercising such practices. The results of the study indicate that both cheating and plagiarism are common among our students, despite the fact that most of them believe that they are unethical and against religious values. After having analyzed the results, we tried to propose some recommendations that may help combat cheating and plagiarism among students in higher education.

Key words: Cheating, plagiarism, academic dishonesty, ethics

INTRODUCTION

Academic dishonesty at universities is a common phenomenon among students of all ages and specialties. Nowadays, the widespread use of the Internet and the popularity of mobile and wireless devices have made it easier for students to reach and transmit information in illegal and dishonest ways. Academic dishonesty can be defined as the students' use of illegal activities, techniques and forms of fraud during their examination or evaluation processes, usually for the purpose of achieving better grades.

In the literature many types of academic dishonesty have been observed. For example, the collaboration when doing assignments, completely or partially copying an assignment from another student, using the Internet as a source for help for solving difficult problems, submitting the same work for multiple courses, copying text from another source (book, Internet, etc.), paying someone to do an assignment, using hidden resources during an exam and many other forms (Sheard *et al*., 2003).

In general, academic dishonesty can be divided into three main categories: Cheating, plagiarism and collusion (Moon, 2006). The first two categories seem to be the most common among students, especially those of younger ages. In general cheating is considered as an intended violation of rules in order to acquire illegal advantage or better academic results in exams or similar forms of assessment. This may happen by 'stealing' ideas and other material from different sources (Mares, 2005; Dobrovska and Pokorny, 2007). On the other hand, plagiarism involves passing off someone else's work as your own without acknowledging the source (Carroll, 2002). Thus, plagiarism may or may not be intentional, due to some students' lack of knowledge regarding relevant standards of quoting. Hence why, plagiarism may not always be considered as cheating.

An increasing number of incidents of cheating and plagiarism are being observed daily. One reason could be that electronic communication through handheld and other popular devices makes it even easier for students to copy and transmit information both inside and outside the classroom. While doing so, students do not think much about the legality of this action, since improving their grades and passing the course come up as their only concern and ultimate goal that they hope to achieve. Although getting better grades may seem as the most compelling factor for making students cheat or plagiarize, other less obvious reasons could be: Peer pressure, playing smart, making fun of the instructor, or just because they can!

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The academic community is currently giving a lot of attention to increasing the awareness of students about ethical issues, including ethics of copying and using information in the electronic age. Publishing ethical codes of practice and teaching ethics courses have become an essential part of almost every discipline in the university which indeed can help in fighting academic dishonesty prevailing among students. In addition, studying students' attitudes, what they think about academic dishonesty and why they practice it may help overcome this phenomenon, while increasing the students'-as well as the faculty members'-consciousness about the danger and consequences of such acts.

In our department which is a female only department in King Saud University, the phenomena of cheating and plagiarism are rather noticeable. This is despite efforts done by faculty members to combat cheating and severely punishing students who are caught with academic misconduct. These practices seem to be more prevailed among younger students who have recently joined the college. Many of those students face difficulty passing preparatory courses and may repeat each course several times. Such students may find it acceptable to cheat or plagiarize; this being the only way they can pass the course and move to the next academic level. Other more mature students may also feel that getting help from someone or copying information from some resources without citing the source is not unethical. For them, this may seem a smart practice that is not harmful, especially with the large amount of information available electronically and the ease of incorporating all or part of this information into one's own work.

It would be interesting to know the extent of the spread of academic dishonesty among students and the reasons behind committing it. It is also important to understand the attitude of students towards cheating and plagiarism and what their conception is about their ethicalness. This may help in targeting the reasons behind the spread of these actions and could increase the awareness of students about the danger and consequences involved thereof. Overcoming academic dishonesty is essential in preparing students for a promising and successful professional future. To this end, we conducted a study among the female students in our department. A survey about cheating practices and another about plagiarism practices have been distributed among students from different levels. This is the first time this type of study has been conducted in our college. In this study we will analyze the results obtained by those surveys to determine the extent of the spread of academic dishonesty. We try to propose some recommendations about how to confront the phenomena of cheating and plagiarism and to increase the awareness about them among our students.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

The use of technology in education has been one of the major changes of the past decade. The learning and teaching process with the use of information technology is becoming increasingly popular. Almost every student today is a skilled Internet user and the availability of Internet resources helps students meet their study requirement within a short amount of time and may encourage them to become more engaged in the learning process. Students of the information age are thus more exposed to sources of cheating and plagiarism than their older peers. Although universities today strive to combat these phenomena, students still heavily rely on easily accessible resources to get their work done, most probably because of the lack of awareness about what is considered an act of cheating and/or plagiarism. Indeed, it is sometimes hard to distinguish these two concepts, since both of them involve using some material that is not the product of one's own effort and presenting it as one's own work in some way.

It is important to understand the difference between cheating and plagiarism, in order to increase the awareness of students about both and make them realize the situations in which committing them becomes a serious academic offence.

Both cheating and plagiarism are considered as a subcategory of academic dishonesty (Howard, 2000). Cheating in the academic context is the 'theft' of ideas and other forms of copy righted material (Mares, 2005; Dobrovska and Pokorny, 2007). The act of cheating is intended to give the cheater some advantages (profit); for example, the achievement of higher grades than what one is capable of. Thus, the student's academic performance becomes less reliable (Mares, 2005). Cheating takes place only when there is an intention to commit this act. So, it is a dishonest act with intention. Also, cheating usually takes place during examination or other assessment processes by providing or obtaining information from an unauthorized person.

On the other hand, plagiarism is defined as "Passing off someone else's work, whether intentionally or unintentionally, as your own for your own benefit" (Carroll, 2002). The most common form of plagiarism is copying information and using it as part of one's assignment or essay, without acknowledging the original

source of information (Underwood and Szabo, 2003). The source of information could be an article, a website, a book, or any other electronic or non electronic material whose author is not personally known to the student.

According to Quinn (2011), plagiarism can be classified into the following types:

- Copying a text from another source without surrounding it with quotation marks and without citing the reference
- Paraphrasing the words of someone else without citing the source
- Incorporating a figure or a drawing from another source without acknowledging the source
- Using information that is not common knowledge without citing the source
- Using ideas or theories of another person without giving credit to that person

In addition, students sometimes plagiarize by copying all or part of other students' work (Park, 2003). Also, students may resort to 'smart' forms of plagiarism by altering some words, grammatical structures, or using synonyms of the original words instead of straightforward copying and pasting to disguise their plagiarism (Howard, 2000). Plagiarism is thus considered one form of cheating. However, the act of plagiarism may be unintentional, since, students, as previously mentioned, may not be aware of the seriousness of their acts and it being considered a form of fraud.

REASONS FOR CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

In the academic field cheating is not a new phenomenon. The only recent change is in the ways students cheat, mostly due to ease of access to the Internet and the richness of web resource and the popularity of mobile and wireless devices.

Ma *et al*. (2007) suggest that reasons that contribute to an increase in academic cheating include: Peer culture, websites that facilitate plagiarism, pressure for high academic achievement, few consequences and/or punishments and the lack of understanding of the concept of plagiarism. McDowell and Brown (2001) point out to the danger of mass access to higher education which results in the lack of familiarity with students' capabilities. In addition, changes in the form of assessment (like group projects), the communication and information technology dilemma, focusing on obtaining high grades and the fear of future unemployment, all contribute to increasing incidents of cheating and plagiarism.

In summary, students cheat for a variety of reasons including: Peer culture, pressure to succeed, high family expectations, importance of good grades, external work commitments, heavy course loads, fear of future career damage, competition with other students and the limited time students have to complete assignments.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Various researches have studied factors that may contribute to the tendency to cheat and plagiarize. These factors can be classified into three categories: Demographic Factors, Societal and Technological Factors and Situational Factors (Harding *et al*., 2001).

Berry *et al.* (2006) studied the relationship between some demographic factors that may be related to the tendency of students to cheat. Demographic factors include: gender, engagement in extra-curricular activity, church attendance, age and the student's educational level (undergraduate and graduate). The results of this study showed that at least 90% of the student engaged in some form of cheating, although no significant difference was found in inclination to cheat based on the different studied variables.

Societal and technological factors that may contribute to increased tendency towards cheating and plagiarism include: lack of awareness, peer culture, lack of punishment, absence of risk and pressure to achieve (Ma *et al.* (2007). In addition, the use of the Internet for assignment completion was found to be strongly positively correlated to plagiarism (Eccles *et al*., 2006). The level of mastery of the English language is another important factor that affects the students' tendency to plagiarize; the more proficient the student is in the English language, the less likely the student's tendency to plagiarize (Eccles *et al*., 2006). Therefore, non-native English speakers may be more at risk of committing plagiarism than their native English speaking peers. Other societal factors include high family expectations, importance of grades for future career chances and external work commitments.

Situational factors also contribute to the students' tendency to cheat or plagiarize. For example, some students find their work challenging or boring, fear failure, lack training and may be pressured by insufficient time to study and heavy workloads (Sheard *et al*., 2002; Razera *et al*., 2010).

HOW TO COMBAT CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

There are many studies that recommend methods to overcome cheating and plagiarism in the academic field.

Some of these methods are effective on the long run, such as giving more attention to the moral characteristics of students. This obviously involves the collaboration of parents, schools, faculty members and the students themselves.

To reduce incidents of cheating during exams, departments can increase the number of test proctors, use non-multiple choice exams and use different versions of the exam (Kerkvliet and Sigmund, 1999).

To combat plagiarizing from the Internet, high-tech defenses such as blocking, filtering and rating systems can be used (Lathrop and Foss, 2000). Also, using sites like turn-it-in.com and submitting the results with the assignment may help the students revise their work and reduce incidents of plagiarism (Berry *et al.* (2006).

Teachers can play an important role in fighting academic dishonesty by being alert and detecting and reporting incidents of cheating and plagiarism. In addition, teachers can reduce the tendency to cheat by involving students in interesting assignments that are more engaging and relevant to the students themselves (Renard, 2000; Ma *et al*., 2008). Teachers can also create classroom assignments that are evaluated on the spot (Berry *et al*., 2006). In addition, it is important to teach students how to document resources properly (Renard, 2000).

Academic institutions can play their role by having signed codes of ethics by new students (Berry *et al*., 2006). Teaching ethics courses and explaining non ethical behaviors in each course is also important in increasing the awareness of students towards cheating and plagiarism.

CASE STUDIES

The growing trend of cheating and plagiarism among students in higher education at Howard University was explored in Owunwanne *et al.* (2010). The study investigates whether the conduct of the team leader reflects the conduct of the group. Also investigated is what students think about cheating and the proportion of students' misconduct of various types. The methodology used was a survey designed to address the ease of use of information, importance of group projects and influence of professional working environment on students. The results positively indicated that the team leaders' views reflect the views of the general student body. In addition, there was a surprising involvement of team leaders in academic misconduct for work completed outside the classroom. The percentage of students' engagement in some type of academic misconduct through independent and/or group research was high. On the other hand, a relatively smaller percentage of students were involved in cheating during examination.

A study on the relationship between students' attitude towards cheating and demographics factors was reported in Al-Qaisy (2008). The factors considered were gender, faculty and educational level. The methodology used was an online survey for registered student of B.A., B.E and B.S.C with an age ranging from 18-25. The survey was conducted at Tafila Technical University with a random selection of 380 surveys, of whom 123 were female participants and 157 were males. The survey was comprised of two components, the first section dealing with the demographic information including faculty's department, gender and university rank, while the second section dealt with evaluating the attitude on academic dishonesty. The study concluded that students in the humanity faculties are more inclined to cheat than students in other faculties. It was also found that there is no distinction between the educational level of students and their attitude towards cheating, while there exist a gender discrepancy, since male students were more inclined towards cheating.

Marshall and Garry (2005) examined the extent to which students are aware of the concept of plagiarism in an academic context. They tested the relationship between students' awareness and the violation of copyright. The methodology used was a survey conducted at a medium size New Zealand university among first year students enrolled in three different courses. The 181 responses were anonymously selected from 186 students during a class in the absence of a teacher. The questionnaire included demographic information and instances of plagiarism and copyright violation. The students were asked whether or not a certain behavior is considered as plagiarism. The results concluded that there is a poor understanding concerning the concept of plagiarism. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct special programs to widen the knowledge among students, in order to be more acquainted with instances that are considered as plagiarism and other non acceptable behavior.

Some of the reasons why young people cheat were explored in Ma *et al*. (2008). They develop a strategy to combat digital plagiarism in the classroom. The strategies for the teachers include the need to discuss the definition of plagiarism and teaching students how to cite references properly and how to use bibliographies. In addition, they recommend using "high tech defense against high tech cheating", by utilizing anti plagiarism software packages. Other strategies include combining

punishment with parents' responsibility to build ethical model for their children and using peer culture as a tool to combat digital plagiarism.

A study on the extent of Iranian language students' engagement in cheating was reported in Ahmadi (2012). The study examined the attitude of students towards cheating, reasons and methods to cheat. The study also examines whether the attitude towards cheating differs with individual factors such as gender, field of study, academic level, occupational status, marital status and age. The methodology used was a survey at Iranian universities in the department of Foreign Language. The 132 students participated, of whom 52 were males and 79 were females, with an age ranging 18-36. The participants were from TEFL (Teaching English as Foreign Language) and Language and Literature departments which are the major fields of study. The results showed that cheating is common in Iranian language students and it was noted that the reason to cheat were: Not preparing for the exam, lack of time to study, carelessness and lack of punishment from instructors. The most common methods of cheating were found to be copying from other test studys and talking to neighbors during the exam, besides using certain gestures to get answers from others. The results with respect to the students' field of study and academic level indicated that it may make a significant difference in cheating, since Literature students were found to cheat more than TEFL students. Moreover, occupational status was found to have a significant effect, since jobless students cheated more than employed students. On the other hand, no effect has been found with respect to gender, marital status and age to be correlated with instances of cheating and attitude towards cheating.

The effect of demographic factors on the attitude of students towards cheating was studied in Berry *et al.* (2006). Variables such as: Gender, class, age, extracurricular activities and church attendance were considered. Extracurricular activities include: employment, athletics, social activities, government and interest clubs. The methodology used was an online survey for 63 students conducted at Jacksonville University College of Business for both undergraduate and graduate levels. The analysis was based on the comparison of appropriate critical values of Chi square for five factors. The study suggests that there is no relationship between the above five factors and cheating. It was also noted that at least 90% of students engaged in some form of cheating and students in general do not regard digital cheating as an academic violation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the current research, two surveys were used to assess female students' attitude towards cheating and plagiarism in the College of Computer and Information Sciences (CCIS) at King Saud University, where female students are segregated from male students. The Arabic language was used to write both surveys, since almost all students are native Arabic speakers and they are usually more comfortable using Arabic than English.

Cheating survey consists of three parts: The first part is composed of six questions intended to assess the frequency of some cheating practices among students. The second part consists of seven possible reasons for committing cheating and is intended to survey the students' opinion about the relevance of these reasons to practicing cheating. The third part consists of one question asking the student about her opinion regarding whether the cheating practices described are ethical or not, then giving the reason for her answer. The English version of this survey is shown at the end of the study.

Similarly, the plagiarism survey consists of three parts: The first part tries to determine if the student knows the meaning of plagiarism, besides assessing the frequency of practicing some common plagiarism acts (three practices were included). The sec part tries to examine the most common sources of plagiarism. The third part asks the student about her opinion regarding the ethicalness of such practices and giving the reason for her answer. The English version of this survey is shown at the end of the study.

The target sample for the cheating survey was undergraduate students in levels 3-6 (a level is equivalent to one semester; so level 1 is the first semester of the student in the college, level 2 is the sec semester, etc.). There were 148 students who anonymously answered the cheating survey. The target of the plagiarism survey was a random sample from both undergraduate students and Masters students; 115 undergraduate students and 25 Masters Students anonymously answered the plagiarism survey.

RESULTS

Cheating survey results

Cheating practices: The results of part 1 of the cheating survey, shown in Table 1, indicate that 15.54% of students have previously copied answers from others during an exam, 54.73% have been pressured at sometimes to give answers during an exam, 6.08% of students have previously used body parts to hide written answers for the purpose of cheating during an exam, 49.32% of students have previously resorted to extracting hints from instructors during an exam, 21.62% have previously paid someone to do an assignment for them and 8.78% of students have previously changed answers after grading and claimed an error in the marking of an exam.

Table 1: Assessing the frequency of some cheating practices among students

Parameters	Copy from another student	Pressured by a colleague to give answers	Use of body parts	Extract hints/answers from instructor	Paid someone for doing assignment	Changed answer after grading
Frequently (%)	0.00	3.38	1.35	2.03	0.68	0.00
Sometimes (%)	4.73	18.92	0.68	22.97	7.43	4.73
Rarely (%)	10.81	32.43	4.05	24.32	13.51	4.05
Never (%)	84.46	45.27	93.92	50.68	78.38	91.22

Table 2: Reasons for practicing cheating

Parameters	Difficulty of the exam	Not ready for the exam	Lack of time to study	Lenience of instructors	Having fun/playing smart	Helping a friend	Importance of grades
Agree (%)	31.52	30.43	36.96	9.78	7.61	14.13	31.52
Neutral (%)	30.43	29.35	30.43	35.87	17.39	30.43	19.57
Disagree (%)	38.04	40.22	32.61	54.35	75.00	55.43	48.91

Table 3: Meaning and common plagiarism acts-undergraduate

Parameters	Know what plagiarism means	Submitting another person's work	Replacing words without citing	Using exact words
Yes (%)	72.17	11.3	32.17	40
No (%)	11.3	66.09	44.35	41.74
Uncertain (%)	16.52	22.61	23.48	18.26

Table 4: Common sources of plagiarism-undergraduate

Parameters	Electronic resources	Printed resources	Ideas/work of others
Frequently (%)	39.13	20	9.57
Sometimes (%)	44.35	42.61	41.74
Rarely (%)	10.43	27.83	26.96
Never (%)	6.09	9.57	21.74

Table 5: Meaning and common plagiarism acts-masters

Parameters	Know what plagiarism means	Submitting another person's work	Replacing words without citing	Using exact words
Yes (%)	84	16	52	32
No (%)	8	72	32	60
Uncertain (%)	8	12	16	8

Reasons for cheating: Among the 145 students who answered the cheating survey, 92 students answered Part 2. The results of Part 2, shown in Table 2, indicate that 31.52% of students agree that difficulty of the exam is one possible reason to cheat. In addition, 30.43% agreed that not preparing enough for the exam made them cheat and 36.96% have agreed that lack of time to study is a reason of cheating. On the other hand, 9.78% agreed that having a lenient instructor encouraged them to cheat and 7.61% did it because they were playing smart or because they had fun doing it. Regarding helping a friend, 14.13% thought this was one reason to cheat and 31.52% agreed that importance of grades justified cheating. Finally, the results of the third part of the cheating survey showed that 11.5% students thought that cheating was ethical.

Plagiarism survey results

Undergraduate students

Meaning and common practices: As shown in Table 3, 72.17% of undergraduate students indicated that they know what plagiarism means. The Table aslo indicates that 11.30% of students have previously copied all or parts of another person's work and submitted it as their own without citing the source, while 32.17% have replaced the words of someone else with their own words without citing the source. In addition, 40% of students have used the exact words of someone else without quotations and without citing the source.

Source of plagiarism: As shown in Table 4, 83.48% of undergraduate students have frequently or occasionally used electronic resources as a source of plagiarism. Also, 62.61% have used printed resources and 51.31% have used ideas and/or work of others like parents, colleagues, etc. as a source of plagiarism during their undergraduate studies.

In the final part of the survey, when students were asked about whether they agree that the act of plagiarism is ethical or not, 34.75% of undergraduate students believed that it is ethical!

Masters students

Meaning and common practices: As shown in Table 5, when asked about knowing the meaning of plagiarism, 84% of Masters students indicated that they know what it means. The Table shows that 16% of Masters students have previously copied all or parts of another person's work and submitted it as their own without citing the source, 52% have replaced the words of someone else

Table 6: Common sources of plagiarism-masters

Parameters	Electronic	Printed	Ideas/work of others
Frequently (%)	56	44	12
Sometimes (%)	16	20	32
Rarely (%)	12	20	32
Never (%)	16	16	24

with their own words without citing the source and 32% of students have used the exact words of someone else without quotations and without citing the source.

Sources of plagiarism: Table 6 shows that 72% of Masters Students have frequently or occasionally used electronic resources as a source of plagiarism. As the table indicates, 64% of students have used printed resources and 44% have used ideas and/or work of others like parents, colleagues, etc. as a source of plagiarism during their studies.

Finally, when asked about whether they think it is ethical or not, 24% of Masters Students indicated that plagiarism is ethical!

DISCUSSION

Following conclusions can be drawn from the results of the cheating survey: The majority of students (approximately 85%) have never copied answers from someone else during the exam, whereas a large percentage of them (approximately 55%) were pressured to give answers to someone during the exam. Most students did not resort to using body parts to hide written answers during an exam and the majority also did not try to change the answer after grading. On the other hand, extracting hints from the instructor during the exam was relatively common, where approximately 50% of students had practiced it. Strangely enough paying someone to do an assignment seems to be a common practice among our students, where approximately 22% of students have admitted committing this act. This is surprising because in our community and especially among female students, getting access to professionals (a private tutor or a software company for example) who are paid to do a difficult homework like a project or a research study is usually infeasible without the consent of a parent or a guardian. Thus, it seems plausible to assume that parents themselves do not find this practice unacceptable!

Regarding the reasons for cheating, the most relevant reason for cheating is the lack of time to study, followed by the difficulty of the exam, importance of good grades and not preparing for the exam (in order). On the other hand, helping a friend, having a lenient instructor and playing smart, were less important factors that can lead to cheating.

When asked about the reason, 65% of students who believe cheating is unethical indicated that cheating is forbidden in Islam and against Islamic values. Most of them cited the Hadith (saying) of Prophet Mohammed "He who cheats us does not belong to us". The results indicate that 14% believe that cheating gives one what is not right for them, while 4% said it is not honest and another 4% said that the benefit they get from cheating is "not blessed". Similarly 4% said that they are afraid of Allah (God). Other less frequent responses included: "Who cheats can do more serious offences"; "it is like stealing"; "being honest is essential for the development of the society"; "a student who cheats is irresponsible"; and "because exams are intended to assess your understanding of the subject".

On the other hand, when asked about whether cheating is ethical, approximately 12% thought it is ethical! Among the reasons given for being ethical are: "I am not very religious"; "it depends on your values"; "I have to do it because the distribution of grades is not fair" and "I have to do it to succeed".

Following conclusions can be drawn from the results of the plagiarism survey: The majority of undergraduate students know what plagiarism means. The most common practice was to copy exact words without citing the source. Paraphrasing without citing the source is another common practice. On the other hand, submitting someone else's work (an assignment for example) as their own is not a very common practice among students.

Regarding the source of plagiarism, undergraduate students agreed that electronic resources are the most popular source of plagiarism followed by printed resources. Slightly less common is the use of work or ideas of someone known to them like parents or colleagues.

A large percentage of undergraduate students (approximately 35%) indicated that the act of plagiarism is ethical. However, most of those who said that did not give a relevant reason for believing so. Instead, they said that if the source is mentioned or it is an open source it is "okay" to use it. Some of those who believed it is ethical mentioned reasons like: "to help me"; "it depends on your intentions"; "it doesn't hurt to make use of some text in my research if I write it in my own way"; "I may have to do it because of lack of time"; "I am just using it without mentioning it is mine"; and one person said "I don't know"!

On the other hand, 81% of undergraduates who believed it is unethical said that plagiarism is like stealing the work of others, 16% said that it violates intellectual property rights and 3% said that it is against Islam.

Regarding Masters Students, the majority of them know what plagiarism means (with a slightly higher percentage than undergraduate students). The most common practice among Masters Students was paraphrasing without citing the source, followed by using exact words without quotations. Again submitting others' work instead of theirs was not a very common practice.

In terms of the most popular sources of plagiarism, the same pattern as undergraduate students can be realized among Masters Students: electronic resources, followed by printed resources and finally a known person.

Regarding the ethicalness of the act, approximately 25% indicated that they believe it is ethical. However, similar to undergraduate students almost half of them said in their comment: "It is ethical if the source is mentioned" which shows that they probably did not understand the question properly. The other half said that sometimes they do not remember the source.

On the other hand some of the reasons given for being unethical are: "everyone should be given their right"; "it is a form of stealing/cheating" and "it does not help me learn".

It appears from the results observed from the cheating survey that our students generally practice cheating by giving answers during an exam if pressured to do so by someone. They frequently resort to extracting hints from the instructor during the exam and they sometimes pay money to get their homework done. As a result, we recommend that teachers be vigilant during the exam and avoid answering unnecessary questions by students. In fact, it is advisable to prohibit answering questions during the exam and to discourage the proctoring of the exam by the instructor of the course.

Regarding paying someone to do the homework, it is advisable that the instructor tries to get more acquainted with the students to recognize their individual levels. Also, having assignments of incremental nature, where every part is submitted separately, may help discourage this phenomenon. More interesting assignments that need creativity and discussion after submission may also help combat the students' tendency to rely on others.

It can also be observed that importance of grades, competition with peers and expectations of parents are among the factors that can lead to cheating. Trying to motivate the students to learn and giving rewards that are not dependent on grades may help reverse the effect of these factors.

To increase the awareness of students, teachers as well as parents should stress the fact that cheating is unethical, not only because it is against religion but because it is a form of fraud that makes someone gets what is not right for them and it is harmful for the society. Policies against cheating and relevant punishments should be made clear at the introduction of every course and implemented seriously by all faculty members.

From the results of the plagiarism survey, it seems that students (both graduates and undergraduates) think that it is less serious than cheating during an exam. This can be deduced from the lower percentage of correlating plagiarism with being 'anti-religion' compared to cheating. Most probably students think it is less serious because it is not directly done during the exam, or because it is more difficult to discover and the source of information is mostly unknown. Also, cheating by nature is often more stressed upon in the pre-college education than plagiarism. Therefore, students may be inclined to think that cheating is more serious than plagiarism.

We also believe that weakness in the English language which is the language of instruction in our college and the inability of students to express their thoughts properly in English, can lead to plagiarism. The most common forms of plagiarism are copying exact words and paraphrasing without citing the source. In addition, electronic resources stand out as the most popular source of plagiarism.

To combat plagiarism, students should be made aware of the seriousness of this act and that it can affect not only their academic studies but also their future careers. Students should be warned about legal issues that may be involved with violating intellectual property rights. To help students combat their tendency to plagiarize, proper citation and referencing methods should be taught. Students should also try to improve their language and writing skills. They should practice quoting and paraphrasing techniques. Introductory research methods and writing courses should be given to all students starting from the undergraduate level. Plagiarism detection software should be used and the students can be advised to try them and review their essays to get rid of plagiarism before submission.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Motivated by the spread of practicing cheating and plagiarism among our students, we surveyed a sample from female students in different college levels about cheating and plagiarism practices. The surveys focused on the most prevalent practices, the reasons for doing them and the awareness of students about the ethicalness of such acts.

The results indicated that, despite being aware of the immorality of these practices, students sometimes

resort to cheating by taking or giving answers during the exams. However, a more common practice was to pay someone to do the homework on their behalf. This seems to be a serious offence that should be given more attention and severely punished by both the administration and faculty members.

Plagiarism practices seem to be even more common among students. It appears to be less serious in their view than cheating during exams. Increasing the awareness of students about the seriousness of this practice is essential. Moreover, helping them by improving their language and writing skills and teaching proper referencing, quoting, paraphrasing and citation styles are also important to discourage this phenomenon.

In the future we intend to examine whether the level of study is related to patterns and frequency of cheating and plagiarism. For example, it would be interesting to know whether students at introductory courses cheat more or less than students who are approaching graduation. Whether there is an effect of gender on the tendency and prevalence of cheating is also worth studying.

(a) **Plagiarism survey**

Part 1

	Yes	No	Uncertain	
Do you know what plagiarism means?				
Have you ever copied and submitted as your own all or parts of another person's work*, without citing** the source?				
Have you ever copied and submitted as your own another person's work by replacing their words with other words having the same meaning, without citing the source?				
Have you ever used in your work exact words of another person without surrounding them with quotations and citing the source?				

Part 2

Have you ever used the following as a source of plagiarism during your educational study?

	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Electronic resources (blogs, websites, e-books, social networks, etc.)				
Printed resources (books, newsstudys, magazines, journals, etc.)				
Ideas/work of others (friends, parents, teachers, classmates, older colleagues, etc.)				

Part 3

	Yes	No
Do you think that the above acts are ethical?		
Referring to your answer in the previous question, why do you think that?		

(b) **Cheating survey**

Part 1

	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Have you at any time copied answers from another student's sheet during an exam or a quiz?				
Have you ever been pressured by a colleague to give her answer during an exam?				
Have you ever used body parts (e.g. writing on your palm) as a source for copying during the Exam?				
Have you ever tried to extract hints/ answers from the instructor by claiming that you don't understand the question during the exam?				
Have you ever paid someone to do an assignment for you?				
Have you ever changed an answer on your test sheet after grading has been done and reported a grading mistake to your instructor?				

Part 2

If you have ever done any of the above, why did you do that?

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree1
Difficulty of the exam/homework			
Not ready/prepared for the exam			
Lack of time to study			
Lenience of the instructor			
Having fun/playing smart			
Helping a friend/pressure from a Friend			
Importance of having good grades/competition with peers/pressure from parents			

Part 3

	Yes	No
Do you think that the above acts are ethical?		
Referring to your answer in the previous question, why do you think that?		

*Work refers to any form of written text (study, document, report, etc.),**Citing means mentioning the source's bibliographic information (author, title, where published, etc.)

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