



Academic Dishonesty – Perceptions of Undergraduate Nursing Students in a Middle Eastern University

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Introduction

Academic dishonesty (AD) is widely found in many universities worldwide because of the extensive availability of internet resources for the millennial generation in today's fast paced electronic world.

Academic integrity is essential in nursing because it forms the basis of professional practice in the clinical setting. Unfortunately, it is documented in published research that today's student appears to normalize academic dishonest behaviours.

The **integrity of the nursing profession** may be jeopardized as students with the habit of cheating graduate and enter this noble profession. The increased availability of internet resources presents a conducive environment for academic dishonesty.

Research has suggested a relationship between **unethical behaviour in the classroom and dishonesty in the workplace** (Harper, 2006). Students who cheat to pass the courses in which the principles and values are taught may miss out on the integration of valuable knowledge necessary for safe practice (Johanson, 2010).

Until recently, very few efforts have been made to study the **dishonest behaviour in Middle-Eastern universities**.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to describe the perception of academically dishonest behaviors among undergraduate nursing students in a Middle Eastern setting.

Methods

Design

- Cross-sectional descriptive survey

Sample

- Convenience sample of 151 nursing students of a public university in Oman

Tool

- Academic Integrity Perceptions Survey designed by McCabe, 2007

Results

1. Demographics

Among 151 nursing students, 67.5% of them were female and the mean age group of the participants was 21.26±2.360. The majority of the nursing students were from fourth year (41.1%) and 46.4% of them were living in the student nurses complex inside the campus.

2. Academic Dishonesty



Almost 80% of the students have indulged in at least one form of cheating. 80% of the nursing students have witnessed cheating, and 90.7% expressed that they are unlikely to report it to the faculty.



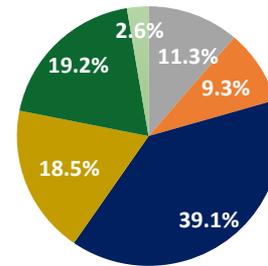
Around 30% of the nursing students expressed that inappropriately sharing work in group assignments, cheating during tests or examinations, and submitting the same paper in more than one course without specific permission were the most frequent behaviors.



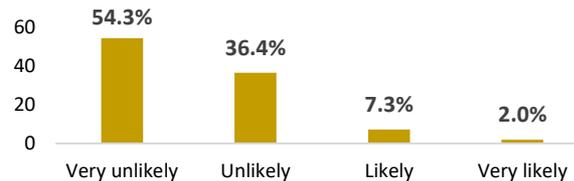
Female nursing students perceived the listed academically dishonest behaviors to be more serious than the male nursing students did.

3. Frequency of witnessing cheating at the University

- Never
- Once
- A few times
- Several times
- Many times
- Missing



4. Students reporting an incident of cheating



5. Students' agreement with the statements on academic integrity in the University



Cheating is a problem at SQU	64.4	35.6
The investigation of suspected incidents or cheating is fair and impartial at SQU	72	28
Students should be held responsible for monitoring the academic integrity of other students	77.3	22.7
Faculty members are vigilant in discovering and reporting suspected cases of academic dishonesty	58.3	41.7
Faculty members change exams and assignments on a regular basis	59.3	40.7
The degree of difficulty in my exams and assignments is appropriate for my year level and program	63.6	36.4
The types of assessment used in my courses are effective at evaluating my level of understanding of course concepts	66.9	33.1

Discussion

Because nursing is known as a profession of integrity, faculty may not suspect student nurses would become involved in acts of dishonesty, and they may not be alert to this potential.

The findings of the study provide a dashboard of information on the perspectives of nursing students on academic dishonesty. It paves the way for a needed revision of the existing academic integrity policies, the establishment of rigorous practical measures aimed to combat cheating in examinations and assignment submission, and the implementation of culturally appropriate ethical and moral behavioral standards..

Conclusion

1. Going forward, additional research is needed to focus on finding effective strategies to counteract academic dishonesty among nursing students in both the classroom and clinical settings
2. Academic dishonesty in nursing programs lays a foundation for dishonesty in the nursing profession.
3. If an environment of honesty is encouraged and fostered in the academic realm, there are likely to be positive results. Honestly!

References

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