




Tosun, Ü. & Taşören, A. B. (2024). A review of academic dishonesty among university students . *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET)*, 11(4), 854-869.

Received : 12.06.2024
Revised version received : 17.09.2024
Accepted : 19.09.2024

A REVIEW OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Research article

Ülkü Tosun  0000-0002-7273-2513

Istanbul Medipol University, Turkey

utosun@medipol.edu.tr

Corresponding Author:

Aslı Burçak Taşören  0000-0002-5864-6475.

Istanbul Medipol University, Turkey

abtasoren@medipol.edu.tr

Biodatas:

Ülkü TOSUN is an Associate Professor at Istanbul Medipol University, Faculty of Education, Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling (English), Istanbul, Türkiye

Aslı Burçak Taşören is an Associate Professor at Istanbul Medipol University, Faculty of Education, Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling (English), Istanbul, Türkiye

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Ülkü TOSUN

utosun@medipol.edu.tr

Aslı Burçak TAŞÖREN

abtasoren@medipol.edu.tr

Abstract

The aim of the present is to examine academic dishonesty in exams and in preparing homework assignments among university students. Descriptive method and purposeful sampling were used in the present study. One hundred thirty-two female students and 82 male students studying at the department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling and Psychology, participated in the study. The Academic Dishonesty Tendency Scale and open-ended questions were conducted to assess student views on academic dishonesty. No significant differences were found in terms of gender, grade levels and between students studying at the department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling and the department of Psychology. Open ended questions showed that the rate of students who didn't cheat and refused to help cheat, was higher than those who did. The number of students who reported cheating (21.50%) was close to those who reported sharing answers with classmates (23.36%). The proportion of students who shared answers depending on circumstances was relatively high (31.30%). This percentage was higher than those who reported cheating depending on circumstances (15.88%). The proportion of students who reported citing sources while preparing their assignments and research was 42.52%. The proportion of students who saw no harm in preparing their assignments and research using the copy-paste technique was 11.68%. The results have revealed that one of the main reasons behind academic dishonesty is peer pressure. Emphasis on principles such as honesty and fairness will help students internalize these values and generalize them in their academic lives. Teachers, instructors should be cautious to apply a fair grading system and to not unknowingly reward academic dishonesty.

Keywords: Academic dishonesty, university students, Plagiarism, peer pressure, Citation.

1. Introduction

Education encompasses activities aimed at changing and developing student behaviors in accordance with predetermined goals. While educators strive to help students reach these goals by fostering positive attitudes and behaviors, it is also necessary to set boundaries and help students avoid negative behaviors. With the advancement of technology, the range of sources students use to gather information has expanded with the increased availability of the internet, computers, and smartphones, making it easier to access information (Howard, 2007). Using Turnitin and iThenticate as a tool helps students reduce plagiarism and prepare assignments in a more academically acceptable way (Halgamuge, 2017). Teachers and instructors can promote the use of these software to discourage plagiarism and improve academic writing.

1.1. Academic Dishonesty as Student Behavior

Individuals adapt to their culture by learning the principles that define right from wrong. When individuals learn to derive satisfaction or contentment, from engaging in behaviors that align with certain values, rules, or expectations such as following rules and feeling guilt when not, they will be more likely to act with integrity and honesty even when unsupervised. Truthfulness and honesty are among the values that are part of individuals' moral development (İnanç, Bilgin & Atıcı, 2012). The value of truthfulness, which reflects good interpersonal relationships and mutual trust, has been one of the moral virtues that education has tried to instill in individuals throughout history (Tekdemir, 2015). Ethics, a branch of philosophy that examines societal values from a moral perspective, determines standards for right and wrong. Professional ethics, one of the topics studied in applied ethics, has gained importance as ethical issues in professions have been tackled. Professional ethics refers to the moral principles and standards that guide behavior in specific professions and involves behaving justly, with integrity, adhering to values of truthfulness and honesty in all relations, and avoiding harm to others (Aydın, 2003). To promote ethical behavior in students, educators and educational institutions must actively foster an environment that emphasizes the importance of integrity, accountability, and the long-term consequences of dishonest actions. The cultivation of ethical behavior is essential for personal development. Relatedly, in recent years, numerous studies have focused on the growing issue of academic dishonesty among university students, who either knowingly or unknowingly violate ethical guidelines (Büyükgöze, 2017; Ömür, Aydın & Argon, 2014; Uçak & Ünal, 2015).

The widespread use of online sources, often seen as public resources, has contributed to a rise in academic dishonesty in homework assignments (Şentürk, 2020). When it comes to academic dishonesty, any deceitful behavior during exams is described as 'cheating,' while unethical behaviors in assignments and research processes are termed 'plagiarism' (Gerdeman, 2000, cited in Kırал & Saracaloğlu, 2018; Howard, 2007; Kauffman & Young, 2015; Park, 2003; Şentürk, 2020). Cheating includes receiving or giving help during an exam and using unauthorized materials, and it is considered a disciplinary offense (Gümüştül et al., 2013). Park (2003) describes cheating and plagiarism as acts of stealing, drawing attention to their prevalence among undergraduate as well as graduate students. According to research conducted in the last 20 years, academic dishonesty, such as cheating on exams and using the copy-paste technique in assignments, is widespread among university students (Aluede et al., 2006; Lin & Wen, 2007; Arslantaş & Acar, 2008; Uçak & Birinci, 2008; Gümüştül et al., 2013). Maurer and colleagues (2006, cited in Ömür, Aydın & Argon, 2014) classify types of plagiarism as accidental, unintentional, intentional, and self-plagiarism. Vartiainen and Siponen (2002) also include the unauthorized reproduction of information taken from the internet within the scope of plagiarism (Kırал & Saracaloğlu, 2018).

Research conducted with students from the faculty of education, who wish personally to avoid encountering cheating when they become teachers, shows that despite knowing cheating is morally and ethically wrong, they still engage in this behavior and try to rationalize their actions (Gümüştül et al., 2013; Kırал & Saracaloğlu, 2018; Ünal & Uçak, 2017). Studies also show that those who engage in academic dishonesty during their student years continue their tendency toward dishonesty in their professional lives (Eminoğlu & Nartgün, 2009; Memduhoğlu & Tayız, 2016; Öztürk-Başpınar & Çakıroğlu, 2019). McCabe and Bowers (1994) note that the rate of cheating is low among students in schools that are strict about applying ethical rules (cited in Tayfun, Aysen & Silik, 2020).

Laziness, procrastination, lack of knowledge, fear of exams, conditions or circumstances that make it easier or more likely for individuals to engage in cheating, and fear of failure are

among the facilitating factors behind academic dishonesty (Büyükgöze, 2017; Kırıl & Saracaloğlu, 2018). Individual factors such as gender, academic year, GPA, etc., peer pressure, e.g., if friends cheat in exams and there is a pressure to conform, are among the factors contributing to academic dishonesty. Teaching methods and instructor influence, for instance, if the teacher is disengaged, the subject appears irrelevant to students, or if the exam format and question content fail to capture students' interest; school policies, e.g., if rules are not clear, if there are no serious penalties for dishonesty, etc., are other factors cited in the literature (Kırıl & Saracaloğlu, 2018; Tayfun, Aysen & Silik, 2020).

2. Aim of the Present Study

The aim of the present study is to examine academic dishonesty in exams and in preparing homework assignments among students in the Guidance and Psychological Counseling and Psychology departments. These students receive a professional ethics course during their university education and are expected to follow clear professional ethics rules, and are required to adhere to these rules in their professional lives. In addition to exams, they are also expected to complete assignments and conduct research.

The study examines the tendencies of students in the Guidance and Psychological Counseling and Psychology departments towards academic dishonesty, including tendencies to cheat during exams, dishonesty in assignments and project work, dishonest behavior during research and reporting, and tendencies toward plagiarism in citations. It also explores their views on cheating and dishonest practices in assignments and exams.

2.1. Research Questions

1. Are there any significant differences in academic dishonesty of university students according to their gender, department, grade level, and grade point average?
2. What are the views of university students about cheating in exams?
3. What are the views of university students about helping others in exams?
4. What are the views of university students about using and citing internet sources while doing research and completing assignments?

3. Method

This is a descriptive study and the details of the method are presented below.

3.1. Participants

Purposeful sampling was used. All students received a course in research methods. Although all students didn't receive a course on ethics in psychology or psychological counseling, the topic was discussed in several courses. Thus participants had knowledge on academic honesty and ethics which was accepted as an eligibility criteria.

Hundred thirty-two female students (61.7%) and 82 male (38.3%) students participated in the study. Data was collected from students enrolled in the departments of Guidance and Psychological Counseling and Psychology.

Table 1. *Demographics*

Demographics	Groups	N	%
Gender	Male	82	38.3
	Female	132	61.7
Department	Psychological Counseling	95	44.4
	Psychology	119	55.6
Language of education	English	67	31.3
	Turkish	147	68.7
Grade	Sophomore	80	37.4
	Junior	122	57.0
	Senior	12	5.6
GPA	Below 2	9	4.2
	2.00-2.50	58	27.1
	2.50-3.00	66	30.8
	Higher than 3.01	81	37.9

3.2. Data Collection Instruments

3.2.1. Questionnaire

Participants completed questions assessing gender, department, grade, grade point average and whether they received education in Turkish or English.

3.2.2. Academic Dishonesty Tendency Scale

The Academic Dishonesty Tendency Scale was developed by Eminoğlu and Nartgün (2009) to assess academic dishonesty among university students. The scale is a self-report instrument consisting of 22 items and 4 subtests. Subtests are as follows: tendency towards cheating, dishonesty tendency at studies as homework project, etc. – common, dishonesty tendency at research and process of write up, and dishonesty tendency towards reference. Internal consistency coefficients measured by Cronbach's alpha are 0.71, 0.82, 0.78, 0.77 for the subscales, and 0.90 for the total score.

3.2.3. Open-ended Question Form

Three open-ended questions were asked to assess student views on academic dishonesty.

(1) What are your views about cheating during exams?

(2) What are your views about helping others (cheat) during exams?

(3) When using the internet while preparing your homework assignments, how do you report your sources, references? Could you explain your method/technique?

4. Data Analysis

SPSS-22 software was used for the analysis of quantitative data. According to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test results, all variables except for the tendency towards dishonesty in assignments/projects ($p > 0.05$) were found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). Since the Shapiro-Wilk test also indicated that all subtests were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), non-parametric tests, namely the Mann-Whitney U test and the Kruskal-Wallis H test, were used in data analyses.

For the analysis of the open-ended questions, responses to three open-ended questions were analyzed. Themes were identified, and frequencies and percentages were calculated. In descriptive analysis, data is presented according to predetermined themes. Participants' views are included with direct quotations which are organized and interpreted (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005).

5. Findings

5.1. The First Research Question Examined Differences in Academic Dishonesty of University Students According to Their Gender, Department, Grade Level, and Grade Point Average.

A significant difference was found on the subscales of tendency towards dishonesty in assignments and projects, tendency towards dishonesty in research and reporting, and plagiarism in citations, between males and females. Male students showed a higher tendency towards academic dishonesty on these subscales. No significant differences were found between males and females on the tendency to cheat subscale (see table 2).

Table 2. Results of the Mann-Whitney U Test for academic dishonesty tendencies based on gender

Subscales	Gender	N	Rank average	Rank Total	U	P
Tendency to cheat	Male	82	105,16	8623,00	5220,00	0.66
	Female	132	108,95	14382,00		
Tendency towards dishonesty in assignments and projects	Male	82	120,11	9849,00	4378,00	0.01
	Female	132	99,67	13156,00		
Tendency towards dishonesty in research and reporting	Male	82	119,38	9789,50	4437,50	0.02
	Female	132	100,12	13215,50		
Plagiarism in citations	Male	82	125,93	10326,50	3900,50	0.00
	Female	132	96,05	12678,50		

As can be seen from table 3, students with a GPA above 3.01, had the lowest points in tendency to cheat, tendency towards dishonesty in research and reporting, and plagiarism in citations. No significant differences were found on the tendency towards dishonesty in assignments and projects subscale.

Table 3. Results of the Kruskal-Wallis H Test for the academic dishonesty tendencies based on students' grade point averages (GPA).

Subscales	GPA	N	Rank average	sd	Chisquare	p
Tendency to cheat	Below 2	9	122.61	3	9.251	0.02
	2.00-2.50	58	119.97			
	2.51-3.00	66	114.30			
	Above 3.01	81	91.35			
Tendency towards dishonesty in assignments and projects	Below 2	9	119.67	3	3,538	0.31
	2.00-2.50	58	117.93			
	2.51-3.00	66	107.10			
	Above 3.01	81	99.01			
Tendency towards dishonesty in research and reporting	Below 2	9	103.89	3	12,411	0.00
	2.00-2.50	58	123.88			
	2.51-3.00	66	115.89			
	Above 3.01	81	89.33			
Plagiarism in citations	Below 2	9	88.22	3	21.188	0.00
	2.00-2.50	58	132.08			
	2.51-3.00	66	115.23			
	Above 3.01	81	85.74			

No significant differences in academic dishonesty were found across department and grade level.

5.2. The Second Research Question: Views of University Students About Cheating in Exams.

Table 4. Student views on cheating in exams

Student views	N	%
Accept	46	21.50
Reject	132	61.68
Conditionally reject/Accept	34	15.88
No answer or neutral answer	2	0.94
TOTAL	214	100

The percentage of students who didn't cheat during an exam was 61.68%, which is higher than those who accepted cheating (21.50%) by looking at a friend's paper or by looking at previously prepared material. The percentage of students who occasionally cheat and decide to cheat based on the circumstances was 15.88%. Below are quotes from students who accept, reject, or conditionally accept or reject cheating:

Statements of students who accept cheating (21.50%)

"People learn while cheating." (Guidance and Psychological Counseling; Female; 3rd year; Turkish education; GPA: 2.00-2.50)

"Personally, I think it's a form of helping. I don't see anything wrong with it. I wish the professors would allow it." (Guidance and Psychological Counseling; Female, 2nd year; Turkish education; GPA: 2.51-3.00)

"If someone can cheat despite all measures, that's an achievement and should be appreciated." (Psychology; Male; Turkish education; 2nd year; GPA: 2.00-2.51)

"Every student cheats. The system pushes us into it cheating. We cheat out of fear of failing for something we don't know. I am against the exam system." (Psychology; Male; Turkish education; 2nd year; GPA: Below 2.00)

Statements of students who reject cheating (61.68%)

"Cheating is perceived normal, many people boast about it. There should be conferences to explain the consequences of cheating." (Guidance and Psychological Counseling; Male; 3rd year; Turkish education; GPA: Below 2.00)

" In order to maintain a high-quality education system, cheating must be eliminated, and those who engage in it should face strict consequences to reinforce this standard among students." (Guidance and Psychological Counseling; Male; 3rd year; Turkish education; GPA: 2.51-3.00)

"I am against cheating in university. Here, you are learning things related to your profession. If you know it, you know it; if not, learn it because there's no higher education than this one." (Guidance and Psychological Counseling; Female; 2nd year; Turkish education; GPA: 3.01 and above)

Statements of students who accept or reject cheating based on circumstances (15.88%)

"Cheating is not right, but when there is unnecessary pressure from professors, students helping each other is acceptable." (Psychology; Male; Turkish education; 3rd year; GPA: 2.51-3.00)

"Sometimes it saves lives. It's not ethical and religiously it's wrong, but it's fun." (Guidance and Psychological Counseling; Male; Turkish education; 2nd year; GPA: 2.51-3.00)

"If it's an important exam and cheating is easy, I might give it a try." (Psychology; Female; English education; 2nd year; GPA: 3.01 and above).

5.3. The Third Research Question: Views of University Students About Helping Others in Exams.

Table 5. Student views on sharing information during exams

Student views	N: sharing	%
Accept	50	23.36
Reject	95	44.39
Conditionally reject/Accept	67	31.30
No answer or neutral answer	2	0.94
TOTAL	214	100

The percentage of students who refuse to share answers of questions with their classmates during exams is 44.39%, which is higher than those who accept doing so (23.36%). The percentage of students who occasionally share answers with classmates and decide based on the circumstances was 31.30%. Below are quotes from students who accept, reject, or make decisions based on the circumstances regarding giving answers during exams:

Statements of students who accept sharing answers (23.36%).

"It's helping out, of course it's not right, but it's something students can't do without." (Psychology; Female; Turkish education; 2nd year; GPA: 2.00-2.50)

"It's the right thing to do. This is called helping each other. What's important is learning the subject matter. The person learns while receiving the answer." (Psychology; Male; Turkish education; 3rd year; GPA: 2.50-3.01)

"When a student's human and moral concerns come into play, when they see their friends in a difficult situation, they step in to help." (Psychology; Male; Turkish education; 3rd year; GPA: 2.00-2.50)

Statements from Students Who Reject Sharing Answers (44.39%).

"There's no difference between giving answers and cheating, and it should be punished." (Guidance and Psychological Counseling; Female; Turkish education; 3rd year; GPA: 2.00-2.50)

"I did this in high school, but in university, cheating or allowing others to cheat is a moral weakness." (Guidance and Psychological Counseling; Female; Turkish education; 3rd year; GPA: 3.01 and above)

"By sharing answers, you're teaching that person to rely on others and not learn for themselves." (Psychology; Female; Turkish education; 3rd year; GPA: 2.00-2.50)

Statements of students who accept or reject based on depending on the circumstances (31.30%).

"If the course is easy and the person is going to fail, I will share answers. There's no difference between sharing and receiving. In other situations, I wouldn't share" (Guidance and Psychological Counseling; Male; Turkish education; 3rd year; GPA: 2.51-3.00)

"It depends on the effort of the other person. If they studied but just forgot at one point, I will help." (Guidance and Psychological Counseling; Female; Turkish education; 3rd year; GPA: 3.01 and above)

"Not for all questions. If my friend studied and just got confused for a moment (like due to noisiness in the classroom), I might help." (Guidance and Psychological Counseling; Female; Turkish education; 2nd year; GPA: 3.01 and above)

"If the professor explains everything clearly, sharing answers is unfair, and I wouldn't do it. But if the opposite is true, I would." (Psychology; Male; Turkish education; 3rd year; GPA: 2.51-3.00).

5.4. The Fourth Research Question: Views Of University Students About Using and Citing Internet Sources While Doing Research and Completing Assignments

Table 6. *Citation in assignments*

Student views	N	%
Citation	91	42.52
Summarize without citation	74	34.58
Copy-paste	25	11.68
Decide based on situational variables	21	9.81
No answer	3	1.41
TOTAL	214	100

The percentage of students who cited the internet sources which they used while preparing assignments and conducting research, was 42.52%. The percentage of students who modify and transform the information they take from the internet and present it as their own without citing was 34.58%. The percentage of those who retrieved information from the internet using the copy-paste method and presented it as their own view was 11.68%. The percentage of students who decide whether to use information from the internet with or without citation, using the copy-paste method or slightly modifying it, depending on the assignment and/or the expectations of the instructor, was %9.81. Below are quotes from students.

Statements of students who cited the internet sources they used (42.52%).

"I read, understand, and express it in my own sentences, and I cite the source." (Guidance and Psychological Counseling; Male; Turkish Education; 4th year; GPA: 3.01 and above)

"I fully comply with the referencing methods (including in-text citations) that I learned in the courses (course codes provided) I took on my first year." (Psychology; Female; English Education; 2nd year; GPA: 3.01 and above)

"Before starting the psychology department, I used to directly retrieve and use information, but now I use APA format in all my assignments." (Psychology; Female; English Education; 3rd year; GPA: 3.01 and above)

Statements of students who didn't cite the internet sources they used (34.58%)

"I read from the internet and combine it with my own thoughts." (Guidance and Psychological Counseling; Male; Turkish Education; 3rd year; GPA: 2.00-2.50)

"I interpret the information I access and transfer it to my assignment." (Guidance and Psychological Counseling; Female; Turkish Education; 3rd year; GPA: 2.00-2.50)

"I prefer to analyze and synthesize the information I find on the internet and write it as I understand it." (Guidance and Psychological Counseling; Male; Turkish Education; 3rd year; GPA: 2.51-3.00)

Statements of students who copy and paste information (11.68%)

"Of course, I do it using the copy-paste method. I think it's a waste of time to rewrite what's already written." (Guidance and Psychological Counseling; Male; Turkish Education; 3rd year; GPA: below 2.00)

"We do copy-paste. The education system kills my creativity." (Guidance and Psychological Counseling; Female; Turkish Education; 3rd year; GPA: 3.01 and above)

"Copy-paste. Of course, I check it afterwards." (Psychology; Female; English Education; 3rd year; GPA: 3.01 and above)

Statements of students who decide based on situational variables (9.81%)

"I transfer it as it is when preparing a presentation for an assignment. If it's a crucial assignment, I write where I got the information from and cite the source." (Guidance and Psychological Counseling; Female; Turkish Education; 4th year; GPA: 3.01 and above)

"Sometimes, based on the material I use, I transform the sentence's intended meaning in my mind into a different sentence, and sometimes I work by immediately providing a reference after the sentence." (Psychology; Female; English Education; 2nd year; GPA: below 2.00)

"If it's for an important research assignment, writing a paper, etc., I read it, write my own synthesis, and provide the reference. For less important assignments, I may just copy-paste." (Psychology; Female; English Education; 3rd year; GPA: 3.01 and above)

6. Discussion

Academic dishonesty can be defined as any form of cheating or deceptive behavior in an academic setting that violates the integrity of learning, teaching, and research. This includes practices like plagiarism, cheating on exams, falsifying data, and unauthorized collaboration. Plagiarism is defined as the act of using someone else's work, ideas, or words without acknowledgment and giving a reference (Bokosmaty et al., 2017). It is accepted as one of the most common forms of academic dishonesty, especially with the availability of online sources. Plagiarism is often facilitated through the use of the internet, which makes it easy to copy and paste information, but difficult to trace unless anti-plagiarism tools are used (Eret & Ok, 2014).

Cheating on exams is another form of academic dishonesty which involves using unauthorized materials, copying from another student, or getting answers during an exam. Cheating is also widespread among cultures and educational settings (Lin & Wen, 2007)

Unauthorized collaboration with others when individual work is required, such as working with others on a take-home exam or copying homework assignments is another form of academic dishonesty. Unfortunately students often are not aware that this kind of behavior is problematic due to the fact that collaboration has become a norm due to the prevalence of group work and online resources (Blaber & Brady, 2018; Chen et al., 2023)

Gender differences on academic dishonesty show mixed results. In the present study male students showed a higher tendency towards dishonesty in assignments and projects, in research and reporting, and a higher tendency of plagiarism in citations. These results are in line with several research findings (Boyacı, Gündoğdu & Güner, 2017; Eret & Ok, 2014; Kadı, Beytekin & Aslan, 2016; Küçüktepe & Küçüktepe, 2012; Dellal, Yönet & Akın, 2017). These results can be explained by the cultural expectations placed on males, such as the pressure of holding a job. These expectations may lead to academic dishonesty as a final resort. On the other hand, no significant differences were found between males and females on the tendency to cheat subscale which is in line with several findings (Hançer, 2017; Tayfun, Aysen, & Silik, 2020).

In terms of GPA, there were no significant differences in the participants' tendencies towards dishonesty regarding "preparing assignments/projects", which is consistent with several research findings (Ömür, Aydın & Argon, 2014; Taşgın et al., 2019). The lowest scores for cheating tendencies related to "cheating, conducting research, reporting, and citations" belonged to students with a GPA of 3.0 and above. The low tendency for cheating related to research and citations among students with a GPA below 2.00 is also consistent with some research findings (Ömür, Aydın & Argon, 2014; Taşgın et al., 2019). Based on these results, it

can be predicted that the fear of academic failure and time pressure may lead to a tendency toward academic dishonesty.

No significant differences in academic dishonesty were found between Guidance and Psychological Counseling and Psychology students, and also no difference was found in terms of grade level. This result aligns with several research findings (Kıral & Saracaloğlu, 2018; Küçüktepe & Küçüktepe, 2017; Tayfun, Aysen, & Silik, 2020). While the cheating tendencies of sophomore and junior students were found to be low in almost all studies, some research shows that freshman year students and, in some cases, senior year students scored higher on academic dishonesty (Başpınar & Çakıroğlu, 2019; Boyacı, Babadağ & Güner, 2017; Gümüşgül et al., 2013; Taşgın et al., 2019). Freshman students may have higher academic dishonesty scores due to the fact that they haven't yet learned rules applying to plagiarism, and senior students may be more likely to engage in cheating due to the pressure to graduate. The absence of first-year students in this study may have affected the results. In almost all studies, low scores in all sub-dimensions for junior year students are explained by their willingness to learn.

The results of the open-ended questions show that the majority of the students report not cheating (61.68%) and not sharing answers of exam questions with their classmates (44.39%). The number of students who report cheating (21.50%) is close to those who report sharing answers with classmates (23.36%). Although the proportion of students who admitted to sharing answers during an exam was lower than the proportion of those who admitted to cheating, the proportion of students who shared answers depending on circumstances was relatively high (31.30%). This percentage is higher than those who report cheating according to circumstances (15.88%). This finding is interesting which draws attention to the dynamics of peer relations: Students are more strict towards themselves in terms of plagiarism, but tend to be more flexible when it comes to peers. If cheating becomes a norm among peers and refusing to share answers when asked could harm social relations, cheating and sharing answers may become inevitable. In this sense, it may be advisable to teach values such as "truthfulness, honesty" in families and schools (Gerdeman, 2000, cited in Kıral & Saracaloğlu, 2018; Şentürk, 2020).

Research shows that students with an internal locus of control are less likely to cheat in exams and use plagiarism in their assignments (Büyükgöze, 2017). Unfortunately an external locus of control may be affected by overly controlling parenting styles. Another form of sharing information is while preparing homework assignments. A high number of students share homework answers with classmates. Often students misunderstand the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable collaboration (Stepp & Simon, 2010).

Failure to cite references is another important problem encountered in the study findings. Copying directly without giving reference is a widespread practice among students. Often one of the main reasons behind not citing references in assignments is the lack of knowledge on the necessity and techniques in citing references (Kargbo, 2010). Students may engage in academic dishonesty due to their lack of knowledge about citation, as well as concerns about grades and perceiving some courses/assignments as insignificant (Uçak, 2012). Students' tendency to give reference to the information they use in their assignments was relatively high in the present study. This is probably due to courses students enrolled in, as well as guidance from instructors. The proportion of students who reported citing sources while preparing their assignments and research was 42.52%. One of the factors contributing to neglecting to cite, is that students may perceive information easily accessible from the internet, as anonymous (Gümüşgül et al., 2013; Kıral & Saracaloğlu, 2018). When instructors don't have clear cut predetermined rules in grading assignments don't provide feedback, this may lead students to

ignore ethical rules. So to say, eventhough students know the rules and the techniques, they may not apply them when there is no supervision or feedback.

The proportion of students who saw no harm in preparing their assignments and research using the copy-paste technique and who openly admitted to it was 11.68%. The abundance of information available on the internet, the ease of access, students' failure to internalize values of honesty and integrity, and societal acceptance of these behaviors, along with concerns about low grades or failing a course, are reasons for the widespread use of this method (Boyacı, Babadağ & Güner, 2017; Ersoy & Özden, 2011; Şentürk, 2021). Again the role of instructors in guiding students is crucial in this case (Austin & Brown, 1999) for some may believe copying is a form of learning and lack proper understanding of how to use internet resources ethically (Chang et al., 2015). Relatedly, the use of plagiarism detection software in addition to instructional techniques could help reduce copy-paste methods in student assignments (Chao et al., 2009).

When students face challenging assignments, or they may be failing a course, they may be more inclined to engage in plagiarism. When an assignment is difficult, students may resort to plagiarism due to fear of failure, cultural attitudes, and the belief that they will not be caught (Park, 2003). In this study, the percentage of students who made their decisions to plagiarize based on circumstances was 9.81%. In Ersoy and Özden's research (2011), it was found that 75.1% of students' decisions to cite sources were influenced by the attitude of their instructors, which can be explained by what Gerdeman (2000) identified as the "method and teacher effect," which is one of the causes of plagiarism (Kıral & Saracaloğlu, 2018; Tayfun, Aysen & Silik, 2020).

6.1. Conclusions

The findings of the present study highlight the impact of peer pressure, ease of internet access, and academic challenges on dishonest behaviors like cheating and plagiarism.

The results of this current study indicate that peer pressure is one of the key facilitators of academic dishonesty. If cheating becomes normalized in peer groups, refusing to share answers could damage social relationships, making such behavior more common. On the other hand, this pressure can also be used in favor of honesty. In this case, if cheating is accepted customary among peers, and that it's a necessary part of friendship, then it may become inevitable. Principles such as honesty and fairness should be emphasized in order to raise awareness. When values such as honesty, fairness, and hard work are not internalized, and instead of trying to face and solve challenges, students try to achieve without putting much effort, and try to find the easy way out from problems, then tendency towards academic dishonesty increases. Also when students observe their peers cheating and plagiarizing and getting high grades, they may feel frustrated and discouraged. In this case teachers and instructors should be cautious to apply a fair grading system and abstain from unknowingly rewarding academic dishonesty.

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