<u>**Original Article**</u>

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY OF THE STUDENTS: A STUDY ON A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY OF BANGLADESH

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Abstract:

This article focuses on academic dishonesty among the students of a public university of Bangladesh. The objective of this research is to explore the frequency, reasons, and perceptions about academic dishonesty. Both qualitative and quantitative tools are applied for data collection. For questionnaire survey sample size is 63. Respondents are current students and selected based on random sampling method. Key informant interviews and In-depth interviews are used for qualitative data collection. Findings reveal that during examinations unauthorized facilitation is the most frequent. In assignments copy and paste from internet sources, use others' works without citation, and reproduce from others' assignments are frequent. In group presentations absence of group work is frequent. The acts, students do frequently, are perceived as less severe dishonesty. Lack of preparation is the main cause of dishonesty among the students. Moral development, be regular and attentive in study, take preparation properly are the expected roles from the students to stop academic dishonesty. Responsibility and pro-activity, counseling and motivation, ensure proper environment in the examination hall, ensure punishment, and ensure equal justice are the expected roles from teachers. Proper dissemination of university rules, participatory teaching method, creative questioning, action and fieldwork based assignments, course on ethics in education, and development of teacher-teacher collaboration are suggested by the faculty members to control academic dishonesty. Finally, a complete 'Code of Academic Integrity' is suggested to control academic dishonesty.

1. Introduction

Higher education is very important both for individual and society (Kyllonen, 2012). The basic underlying norm of higher education is students will be evaluated objectively by the faculty and will be rewarded for their performance (Happel and Jennings, 2008). But, academic dishonesty at this level effects entire higher education system. In long run it exerts impact on entire socio-economic development of a nation. Academic dishonesty is widespread everywhere regardless of place, institution or person. Even good governed the Nordic countries are not free of it (Bjorklund and Wenestam, 1999). Dishonest practices undermine the value and credibility of the institution as a whole. On the other hand, maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity ensure the value and reputation of degree programs (Councils, 2006). Bangladeshi public universities are empowered to arrange the examinations and award degrees (Bangladesh, 1990). In recent years different projects have implemented to improve the quality of education in public universities. But, there is a scarce of research over the behavior of students. The aim of this study is to explore the types and reasons of dishonest behavior among the students of a public university of Bangladesh. Specific research questions are: a) what types of cheating are most common among the students? b) how the students perceive academic dishonesty? c) why do students involve themselves with different academic dishonesty? and d) which best practice do students and faculty members think would reduce academic dishonesty?

2. Literature Review

There is no precise definition of academic dishonesty. A group of researchers said it intentionally unethical behavior and another group of researchers emphasized upon particular violation behavior (Lambert et al., 2003). In general, academic dishonesty is any form of cheating in formal academic exercise. Broadly, it includes plagiarism, fabrication, deception, cheating, bribery, sabotage, professional misconduct, and impersonation (Wikipedia, 2013).

Research on academic dishonesty has a history of 70 years (Etter et al., 2006). But, it does not mean academic dishonesty did not exist before that period. According to scholars, thousands of years ago cheating was common in Chinese civil service examinations. During that time cheating carried out death penalty both for the examinee and examiner (Wikipedia, 2013). But, it is important to make it clear that the form of education system is not universal. Academic dishonesty is closely associated with formal education system. In the history of west formal examination system was introduced in Shrewsbury, London, in 1818 (Bhushan,

2005). In the college campuses of United States cheating was widespread during late 19th and early 20th centuries and it was not considered as shameful (Wikipedia, 2013). But, nowadays it is considered as serious crime (Eckstein, 2003, McCabe et al., 2001, Kizza, 2009, Koss, 2011, Batool et al., 2011).

Before 1990 only a few studies focused on contextual factors that influence cheating behavior (Batool et al., 2011). Studies about a decade ago have focus on the globalized job market. To face the challenges of global market student's of today are going through huge competition. To face the increasing competition for the most desired position in the job market today's students are experiencing considerable pressure to do well (McCabe et al., 2001). Some of the researchers have tried to identify the root causes of academic dishonesty. Koss (2011) has emphasized upon the grown up period of a student. He argued that academic dishonesty is such a problem starts in elementary school and continues till doctorate level programs. Koss has indicated, beside the classroom environment and other reasons changing, the newer technological innovations are contributing to the rise of academic dishonesty (Koss, 2011). Whitely has reviewed 107 studies of the prevalence and correlates of cheating among college students published between 1970 and 1996. In this review he found the factors like having moderate expectations of success, having cheated in the past, studying under poor conditions, holding positive attitudes toward cheating, perceiving that social norms support cheating, and anticipating a large reward for success (Whitley, 1998). Based on a grounded theory, theory of planned behavior (TPB), Imran and Nordin, in their study on Malaysian public universities, have examined the underlying psychological motives (like subjective norms, ethical belief) for academic dishonesty (Imran and Nordin, 2013).

Academic dishonesty has numerous consequences. It raises the question about the quality of a degree program of an institution, value of the degree, and the potentiality of its graduates (Wideman, 2008). Involvement with academic dishonesty as a student can bring serious consequences in academic career. Students involved with misconduct can be expelled from the university permanently. Created disciplinary record may impact on future opportunities (Austin, 2010). Academic dishonesty is a normative behavior. A student, who cheated in academic institutions, in future with a business career may think everyone is cheating in business, and may consider cheating in business is common and acceptable. An unethical student of today can be an unethical business leader of tomorrow (Eastman et al., 2008).

Angela M. V. Robinson, a British volunteer education advisor with the Church of Bangladesh said, 'Cheating in examinations in schools, colleges, universities everywhere is rampant. Only

a few are expelled; many more are successful cheaters. The government should act to stamp out cheating which seems to have become a tradition in Bangladesh' (Rahman, 2002). K.L. Rahman, a Bangladeshi educator said, 'Mass cheating in examinations is producing graduates with very low capabilities. Their academic degrees and certificates are virtually worthless. It is unfortunate that many of these pass-outs are becoming teachers and making the educational system in Bangladesh even more corrupt and weaker' (Rahman, 2002).

The role of academic code of ethics to prevent the corrupt practice done by the students has reflected with significance in recent studies. These studies argued that academic honor codes play significant responsibility on students to maintain an environment of academic integrity (McCabe et al., 2001).

3. Basic Terms

Plagiarism means using writings, ideas, innovations of others and reuse without proper citation and reference to the source (Dey and Sobhan, 2006). It is theft and lying in using information that doesn't belong to the user and passing it off as user's own (Brandt, 2002).Plagiarism contributes increasing the chance of injustice to the honest students, degrades academic standards, reputation of the institution, creates negative impact on professional standards (Dey and Sobhan, 2006).

Unauthorized collaboration refers to work with peers for preparing an assignment without the specific permission of the instructor. This collaboration can be during in-class or take-home tests, papers, labs, or any homework assignments (University of California, 2006, Technology, 2012).

Cheating includes processing unauthorized information during examination, copy from others, permitting other to copy work, submitting assignments done by others, multiple submission of same assignment, hold on material that is instructed to return, do assignment for others etc. (California State University, 2013). Cheating is punished strongly in many universities. On 1 February 2013 between 60 and 70 Harvard students were forced to withdraw from school as the conclusion of a cheating scandal (Simpson, 2013).

4. Materials and Methods

The present study deals with the academic dishonesty of among the students of a public university of Bangladesh. A combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches is applied in this research. In one side quantitative findings have reflected the quantitative

scenario and on the other side qualitative findings given the evidence and triangulated the findings. Specific qualitative tools like Key Informant Interview (KII) and In-depth Interview are used in this research. Five KIIs are conducted among the faculty members of different discipline. Specific checklist is used to conduct KIIs. These interviews helped the researcher to get the point of views of faculty members. Beside the KIIs, In-depth Interviews of eight students were taken to get a more diverse and in-depth view about academic dishonesty. These students are selected purposively.

Questionnaire is used to collect primary data directly from the students. It is used as quantitative tool in this study. Data is collected by using a complete questionnaire in combination of open ended and close ended questions. Respondents are requested to provide information based on the experience of last one year.

For questionnaire survey among the students random sampling method is used to select the respondents(Science, 2013). The sample size is 63. For data collection a team of three pre-oriented field enumerators, were engaged. About 19 percent of the total questionnaires are checked on the spot.

5. Limitation of the Study

A larger sample size would be statistically more representative. But, due to time and budget constraint the research dealt with a small sample size. This is considered a major limitation of this research. Lack of reliable data is another limitation of this research. Researcher has faced a serious lack of prior research work on academic dishonesty in context of Bangladesh. Prior studies in context of Bangladesh would provide the researcher more in-depth insight about research topic. Qualitative data from KIIs and In-depth Interviews might have unfortunate bias. A future research on this issue can use this tool to ensure finer tune research.

6. General Information

According to the analysis 29 percent of the respondents are female and 71 percent respondents are male. About one fourth of the respondents (27 percent) are from fourth year. Others are, from first year about 21 percent, from second year about 16 percent, from third year about 13 percent, and from fifth year about 24 percent. Among the respondents the highest GPA is 3.81 and the lowest GPA is 2.48. Average GPA is 3.21.Average age of the respondents is 23.44 years.

7. Findings and Discussion

7.1 Dishonesty during Examination

According to the analysis of field survey data four types of different academic dishonesties are very frequent among the students during examinations. These are: a) supporting classmates by telling answer or information, b) listen answer of information from classmates, c) allow classmates to watch over the answer sheet, and d) watch over the answer sheet of classmates.

During examination supporting classmates by telling answer or information is the most frequent attitude among the students. According to survey data about 85 percent of the respondents have involved with this academic dishonesty for one or several times in last one year. About 67 percent have said they have helped their classmates by telling answer or information several time.

Table 1: Frequency of Supporting Classmates by Telling

Frequency of involvement	Number	Percentage
Never	9	14.75
One time	11	18.03
Several times	41	67.21

Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2013

From in-depth interviews with the students most of the participants said that facilitating friends or classmates by telling answer of information is very common among the students. It is observed that participants usually like to tell about giving support rather than taking support, whether their class position is.

From the faculty members' points of view, among the students, facilitate each other is not that severe, when invigilators stay in the examination hall. But, it may occur when invigilators move outside the examination hall. One of the key informants has said that the frequency of 'side talking' may vary from teacher to teacher. It is very common in that examination hall, if invigilator is known as 'flexible' among the students.

According to the analysis of field data a significant relationship between supporting classmates by telling and GPA is exposed. From the above mentioned table it is reflected that all the respondents, who scored GPA in 2.40-2.75 range, have involved in supporting classmates by telling several times. In contrary, all the respondents, who scored in 3.76-4.00

range, have never involved with this activity in last one year. It is also reflected from the table that several times involvement is higher among the lower GPA ranges (GPA from 2.40 to 3.25). The chi^2-testshow, above statement is significant at 5 percent level (Pr = 0.040).

7.2 Dishonesty in Assignments

Assignment is a smart approach of modern teaching method. Beside the regular examinations, assignments make students compatible with thinking creatively, write creatively, and sometimes with group works. To know about the frequency of different academic dishonesty in doing assignments by the students an 'Assignment Related' section was included in the questionnaire. Seven different types of practices were included in that section. Respondents were asked to answer based on their experience of last one year.

The most frequent dishonesty in doing assignments is copy-pasting from internet sources. About 74 percent respondents said that in last one year they have prepared their assignments for one or more times by copy-pasting from internet sources. The following table shows that about 67 percent respondents were involved with this dishonesty several times in last one year.

Table 2: Frequency of Copy-paste from Internet Sources

Frequency of involvement	Number	Percentage
Never	16	26.23
One time	4	6.56
Several times	41	67.21

Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2013

The key informants have expressed their deep concern about copy-pasting from internet sources. One of the key informants said that nowadays students are not reading to prepare an assignment. Rather they are using technology, using internet sources, and copy-pasting to prepare assignments. In most of the cases they are doing it without proper concern about what they are doing. They even do not know what plagiarism is. One of the informants has criticized the traditional concept of doing assignment by writing an essay. The informant questioned the existing teaching method and has offered participatory action based methods of teaching.

The in-depth interviews unveil more surprising truth. One of the participants said, "I can challenge teachers won't able to find out from where I copied". Many of the participants have expressed copying and pasting as their credit. They said that everyone cannot dig required information from internet sources. Special skill is needed for it.

Reproducing from the assignments of same batch, previous batch or other disciplines is the easiest way of cheating in doing assignments. According to the survey data about 41 percent of the respondents have involved with this cheating in last one year for one or several times. One of the key informants said that few of the residential students have the business of printing. They store assignments of different batches in their computers. Students can get an easy access from those stored assignments. Fieldwork based and action based assignments were suggested by them.

7.3 Dishonesty in Presentations

Presentation is one of the smart approaches of modern teaching. Through PowerPoint presentations students develop their presentation skill. The presentations are usually group work based. But, about 43 percent of the respondents said they did not do group work in group presentations for one or several times in last one year. Rather they have imposed or have taken the load of work. One or few fellows have done the work of entire group. About 18 percent of the respondents said they have used presentation sides of previous batches, other disciplines, or organizations. For one or more times, about 18 percent have used the downloaded presentations from internet sources without prior concern of course teacher.

One of the participants of in-depth interview said that group works are not usually group work in presentations. Most of the time one or few students do entire group work. Rest of the group members even do not know how the work is going on. They have little concern about it.

7.4 Perception about Different Practices

Irrespective the frequency of involvement in last one year, respondents have responded how they actually perceive a specific act or behavior. Four options were mentioned in the questionnaire to choose an answer. The options were, a) not at all a dishonest behavior, b) very mild dishonest behavior, c) moderate dishonest behavior, and d) severe dishonest behavior.

From survey data it is found that during examination respondents perceive using crib sheet in the examination hall is the most severe academic dishonesty. About 84 percent of the

respondents have considered it as a serious academic dishonesty. The second most severe dishonesty in the examination is using cell phone in the examination hall. About 83 percent respondents have perceived it as a severe dishonesty. Written in hand/body, written in bench/desk, using documents stored in bathroom are also staying in the higher position of perception scale. Respectively about 75 percent, about 73 percent, and about 71 percent respondents have considered these activities as severe academic dishonesty.

On the other hand, during examination, supporting classmates by telling is considered as the least severe dishonesty according to the respondents. About 16 percent respondents have perceived it as a severe dishonesty. Listen from classmates is also less severe (about 19 percent) according to the respondents.

Table 3: Involvements Rate in the Activities Perceived as Highly Severe

Activity	Percentage of one or several times' involvement in last year
Use of cell phone	1.61
Using the documents stored in bathroom	1.64
Write-down in hand, body, or clothes	4.84
Using crib sheet	5.08
Write-down in the bench or desk	12.90

Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2013

If a look can be given over the rate on involvements in last one year, surprising analysis can be drawn. The less involved practices/attitude/behavior is perceived as severe at a very high rate (more than 70 percent). It refers to a negative correlation between the degree of involvement and degree of perceptions. Supporting classmates by telling is considered as

the least severe dishonesty. But, in last one year the involvement rate of respondents with this dishonesty was about 85 percent for one or several times. This statement is statistically significant. The chi^2-test shows involvement with telling classmates has significant relationship with perception at one percent level.

Table 4: Involvements Rate in the Activities Perceived as Less Severe

Activity	Percentage of one or several times' involvement in last year

Support classmates by telling answer or information	85.25
Listen answer or information from classmates	75.81
Allow classmate to watch over	73.02

Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2013

The participants of in-depth interviews said that they take preparation properly for the examinations. But, they take or give support when they forget any point. In their view giving or receiving such support is not any serious dishonesty. But, faculties have expressed different opinion. One of the key informants said that students usually do not read the rules to obey in the examination hall mentioned in the cover page of examination sheet. Another key informant said due to existing teaching method a gap prevails in the students' level of understanding.

In doing assignments, analysis of field data showed that most of the respondents perceive multiple submission of same assignment as the most severe dishonesty. About 63 percent respondent perceived it as a severe dishonesty. In assignments the second most severe dishonesty perceived by the students is using false information or data. About 70 percent respondents perceived it as severe dishonesty. Copying and pasting from internet sources is perceived as the least severe dishonesty in preparing assignments. About 29 percent of the respondents perceived it as a severe dishonesty. From the experience of last one year in doing assignments respondents has involved with this activity the highest (about 74 percent). The chi^2-test shows involvement with copying and pasting has significant relationship with the perception about copying and pasting.

According to the analysis of field data using downloaded presentations from internet sources without prior concern of respective course teacher is perceived as the most severe dishonesty by the respondents. But, the least severe dishonesty perceived by the respondents is not involving in group works, imposing or taking the load of entire group work upon one or few. Surprisingly respondents have involved with this act most frequently (about 43 percent) in presentations in last one year.

7.5 Reasons of Involvements

To analyze the reasons of involvements researcher has considered the highest involvements in examination, assignment and presentation. These are a) support classmates by telling answer

or information (about 85 percent), b) copy-paste from internet sources (about 74 percent), and g) not doing group work in group presentations (about 43 percent).Respondents were asked to choose maximum three reasons for a particular involvement for one or several times in last one year. A list of 21 reasons was given to the respondents to choose the reason codes. Respondents were asked to put the main reason at first.

Most of the respondents said the main reason of supporting classmates by telling information is solely to help the friend. About 43 percent respondents have expressed it as the main reason. About 24 percent said they have told to classmates from the fear of dismissal of friendship. The analysis of all the reasons (including main reasons) also shows that about 33 percent of the responses were solely to help the friends.

Three main reasons behind copying and pasting from internet sources to make an assignment have got the focus. Most of the respondents said they have copied and pasted from internet sources because of inadequate time fix up by the respective teacher for submission. About 29 percent respondents have considered it as the main reason of copying and pasting. Lack of proper instruction from the course teacher (about 12 percent) is another significant main reason. About 12 percent have said they did it to get better grade than the contestant.

The main reason of not doing group work in group presentation is inadequate investment of time in group work for being involved with tuition. Other focused reasons are habitually, for being involved with important family and professional affairs etc.

From the multiple responses analysis of all of the reasons it is found lack of preparation is the root cause of different academic dishonesty. Another important cause is tendency to help the friends. In many cases dishonesty occur due to inadequate time fix up for a specific task by the respective teacher. The load of huge syllabus is other important cause of academic dishonesty according to the respondents. To maintain a good friendship dishonesty occurred in many cases. According to the survey data causes behind different academic dishonesty has also reflected the causes explained by the key informants. One of the key informant said students involve with different academic dishonesty do not give emphasize upon their time. Finally, they cannot complete their syllabus properly and involve with different dishonest practices. The informant emphasized upon the company a student gives. Sometimes it influences to be engaged with academic dishonesty. In some cases students make suggestion of questions and prepared for some limited questions. But, when they find question out of their suggestion in the examination hall they involve with different cheating practices.

Another key informant said students involve with different cheating practice due to get better marks in the examinations. Sometimes they induced to do it as their survival strategy, to get qualifying marks. According to the informants, students, who are relatively less focused in the class, usually involve with different academic cheating.

8. Recommendation from Students and Teachers

The survey questionnaire was developed in such a way so that respondents can recommend the expected roles from the teachers and students to stop the academic dishonesty. Specific coding approach is followed to manage the data. Most of the respondents expected moral development of the students. Be regular and attentive in studying are another two significant expected roles from the students.

Table 5: Expected Roles from the Students

Expected Roles	Percentage
Moral development	21.9
Study regularly	20.7
Attentive in studying	14.8
Avoidance of ill Practices	11.8
Proper preparation	11.2
Others	19.5

Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2013

According to the analysis of codes the most expected roles to the teachers is the responsibility and pro-activity of the teachers. About 22 percent of total expectations have come in this category.

Table 6: Expected Roles from the Teachers

Expected Roles	Percentage
Responsibility and pro-activity	22
Counseling and motivation	15.2
Proper load analysis	12.8
Ensure punishment	12.2
Ensure favorable environment at hall	11
Equal justice	9.8

Others	6.7

Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2013

During KIIs the informants are asked about their recommendations to control academic dishonesty. The magnet points of their recommendations are a) university's existing rules and regulation needs to be disseminated among the students properly, it should not be limited only in orientation, b) participatory active teaching method should apply, c) special attention is needed for the less focused students, d) questions for creative writing can be applied in the examinations, e) all assignments should action based or fieldwork based, f) non-credit courses should incorporate in the syllabus like ethics in education, and g) teacher to teacher collaboration gap need to be minimized.

9. Conclusion

Both from qualitative and quantitative findings of this research it has come to light students of the selected public university are involved with different academic dishonesty. Mostly they involve with cheating during examinations. Unauthorized facilitations with each other are very common and frequent among the students. In submitting assignments students are involving with copying and pasting. Students are not properly group-working in their group presentations. The survey finding unveils in which academic dishonesties they involved most frequently in last one year have perceived those as less severe dishonesty. To fight against academic dishonesty both students and faculties have important roles to play. But the greatest initiative can be taken by the university authority. Beside the recommendations from teachers and students a complete 'Code of Academic Integrity' is an unavoidable necessity for the studied public university.

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