Cheating: It depends how you define it

Milan Jelenic, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Lynne N. Kennette, Faculty of Liberal Studies, Durham College

Abstract

Cheating in academia is defined multidimensionally and might include dishonesty, fraud, stealing, and unauthorized use. This behaviour appears to be on the rise in higher education, though it may be somewhat subjective. Beyond the ethical issue of cheating, inadequately learned skills and unqualified practitioners put lives at risk (e.g., medicine, engineering), as well as the institution's reputation and integrity in producing proficient graduates. We asked Canadian students and faculty from a two-year college to define academic cheating in their own words and rate a number of behaviours to indicate their perception of whether the behaviour should be considered cheating or not. Overall, there was a great overlap between the themes evoked in students 'and faculty's definitions of cheating. Differences between students 'and faculty's ages might suggest a different degree of moral reasoning which may have impacted the responses. This study further contributes to knowledge about cheating because we surveyed college students (rather than university students), which are greatly under-represented in the literature.

Keywords: Canada, cheating, college, definition, faculty, integrity, students

Cheating: It depends how you define it

Cheating. According to the University of British Columbia's website, cheating is defined as: "i) receiving or giving assistance for an individual assessment activity; ii) use or possession in an examination of any materials (including devices) other than those permitted by the examiner; iii) Impersonating a student to write or submit an assignment/exam." (University of British Columbia, n.d.). Or it "involves unauthorized use of information, materials, devices, sources or practices in completing academic activities" (Northern Illinois University, n.d.). And another definition describes cheating, "as fraud, deceit, or dishonesty in an academic assignment...use materials, or assisting others in using materials that are prohibited or inappropriate in the context of the academic assignment in question" (Walden University, n.d.). The latter definition referred to *plagiarism* and academic cheating which is the focus of this paper: "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own; to use (another's production) without crediting the source; to commit literary theft; to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source (Merriam-Webster, n.d). Although we all feel we have a sense of what cheating is (and isn't), Eaton (2017) points to the lack of consistency across Canadian institutions with their policies and definitions surrounding plagiarism, and especially as it relates to contract

cheating which is defined as the outsourcing of a student's academic work to another (Stoesz et al., 2019). Interested readers may refer to the University of Calgary's Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning for a more nuanced explanation of various terms used to speak about honest and dishonest academic behaviour (Eaton, 2022).

Viewed sociologically, Bowers (1964) believed cheating was a type of deviance; diverging from expected norms. After reading multiple definitions from various outlets, one thing was clear: Cheating is wrong. If we asked random people whether stealing is wrong, the response would be an astounding "yes." If that is so, then why do we have such a preponderance of *stealing* in academia? In ancient China, "…the penalty for being caught cheating, or assisting in it, was death" (Jackson et al., 2002, p. 1031). We hypothesize the issue lies in the definition. Not the basic notion of cheating as wrong, rather the context and subjective perception: "Is *this* really cheating?" Miller and Izsak (2017) presented the idea that using knowledge that was "unsanctioned" was academic dishonesty. *Sanctioned* is something authorized, approved, or allowed (dictionary.com), so the opposite of that. Regardless of how comprehensive a definition seems, details are *not* explicitly mentioned.

Looking at plagiarism, what exactly is *passing off words as one s own* really mean? Am I really claiming the words I used are mine, or am I using words and/or an idea that I agree with and that fit into my paper? It is complicated, and clear instructions of *everything* that is not allowed was *not* covered. Students have presented obviously plagiarized papers and denied it claiming things like, "I found it and typed it out, so they are *my* words." According to Pincus and Schmelkin (2003), there are "…inconsistencies in the definition of academically dishonest behaviours and the lack of consensus and general understanding of academic dishonesty among all members of the campus community" (p. 196) and those (definitions) that do exist are, "broad and ambiguous" (p. 197). The authors went on to say certain behaviours are obvious to all: e.g., copying of another person's exam, while collaboration on homework and/or getting help from a tutor, are not as definitive (Pincus & Schmelkin, 2003).

Bowers (1964) conducted the largest scale study ever on cheating; over 5000 students at 99 schools. Behaviours ranged from plagiarism type issues: copying without footnotes, and referencing sources not in paper, to "advantage" type: getting answers from students who already took the test, to outright dishonesty: group work on individual assignments, submitting someone else's work, copying from someone during a test, and using materials unauthorized by the instructor (e.g., crib notes). With the significant increase in technological advancements, cheating has gained traction and the methods reflect the present ethos. A recent study by Lancaster (2019) looked at contract cheating or using a third-party to complete a student's work for them (Clarke & Lancaster, 2006), and how social media advertises and markets their services. Ahmed (2018) studied the possibility of culture (collectivist vs. individualistic) playing a role in cheating behaviour, whereas Kolker (2012) boldly labeled it "a new culture of sharing" and rationalized its use by stating, "Wall Street titans, politicians, and other high visibility

leaders…cheat [and]…get away with it" (p. 2).

Do role models dictate our behaviours and determine potential actions? According to Gentina et al. (2017) conventional wisdom suggests delinquency can be curbed through the presence of strong social bonds, however, their research identified "counter intuitive" results. In their study of over 900 French and Chinese teenagers (M_{age} = 15.88 years), they found parental attachment and moral values diminish cheating among French teens, whereas all four social bonds (parental attachment, academic commitment, peer involvement, and moral values) contributed to cheating among Chinese adolescents, suggesting cultural differences. Martin (2012) found academic dishonesty was more prevalent in individualistic cultures (e.g., Western), whereas in Eastern cultures it was ignorance of it (Ramzan et al., 2012). Is being popular more individualistic or collectivistic? Gentina et al. (2017) found that popularity had a profound effect on cheating behaviour. They observed that popular French girls cheated in school and unpopular Chinese boys also engaged in cheating behaviour.

Does the basis for cheating lie in the sexes? According to research, males were much more likely to commit acts of academic dishonesty, and much more likely to find it acceptable (Hensley et al., 2013; Thomas, 2017; Yang, 2012). Interestingly, women also tended to deny being guilty of academic dishonesty more than their male colleagues (Witmer & Johansson, 2015). And Sendağ et al. (2012) noticed one's major (e.g., hard sciences) was more indicative of instances of cheating than other majors (e.g., social sciences major). Although more men in engineering would support this as an explanation, another explanation could that there are differences in the ease of cheating across disciplines based on the types of evaluations most prevalent in those courses (e.g., it may be easier to cheat on a math assignment because there is only one correct answer whereas an essay in a psychology course may create additional challenges for students who attempt to cheat). Alarmingly, 97% of *medical* students "willingly admitted" to cheating (Taradi et al., 2012) which arguably gives the impression your physician is an unqualified, indefensible cheat who is likely to kill you on the operating table.

Why is Cheating so Serious?

According to Miller and Izsak (2017), "excellence and achievement" are highly regarded in higher education, and cheating weakens the outcome. Echoing McCabe and Trevino (1997), students violated rules to accomplish a goal, thus devaluing the diploma and/or degree. Brimble and Stevenson-Clarke (2015) stated the goal of learning institutions was to produce qualified and technically skilled graduates who present with high degrees of honesty, ethics, and responsibility, and are committed to serving society. If students cheat, this becomes moot, and insinuates their lack of integrity may continue into the future: once a cheater, always a cheater (Lupton et al., 2010). Despite the significant rise in recent decades of elementary school children being rewarded with participation ribbons rather than more merit-based rewards, we do live in an increasingly competitive society: entry into the best schools, the best companies, getting the best

jobs, and so on. One may wonder if we are not becoming more performance-based rather than knowledge-based. Nonis and Swift (2001) observed a trend whereby students saw schools as being solely "credential granting bodies" rather than environments where actual learning takes place. The authors argued this led to an "us" versus "them" mentality where the students rationalized cheating by blaming poor teaching. an abundance of assigned work, and unreasonably high expectations by faculty as reasons to cheat and even things out. Vandehey et al. (2007) explained this phenomenon as "neutralizing" and equated it to rationalizations and/or defense mechanism that normalized the behaviour: "I needed to maintain my enrolment in the program, so you can't really blame me for cheating." With this rationale, cheaters would get ahead, honest students would be left behind, and society would become accepting of deceitful behaviour. Barbaranelli et al. (2018) suggested cheating would destroy the labour market by admitting unskilled workers with invalid credentials. In the introduction of their seminal book on academic cheating, Anderman and Murdock (2007) summarized the role of classroom competition in the following way: "Competition is perhaps the single most toxic ingredient in a classroom, and it is also a reliable predictor of cheating" (p. XIII). Yet, Orosz et al. (2013) found that competition and extrinsic motivation (e.g., grades) are not reliable at predicting cheating.

Wotring (2007) believed an operational definition was needed to address limitations in understanding social attitudes and behaviours regarding cheating. She defined it as, "fraudulent behaviour involving some form of deception in which one's own academic efforts or the academic efforts of others are misrepresented" (p. 15). Wotring (2007) mentioned UC Irvine's policy on dishonesty and how it clearly differentiated between the types:

> cheating (defined as copying from others during an examination or using notes during an exam) from dishonest conduct (defined as stealing an exam or answer key from an instructor, or changing academic records without sanction), plagiarism (defined as passing off another's work as one's own, or failure to credit creative productions), and collusion (defined as knowingly or intentionally helping another to cheat or plagiarize) (p. 20).

Burrus et al. (2007) found students do not understand what constitutes cheating, and Higbee and Thomas (2002) noticed discrepancies between students 'and faculty's definitions. Gehring and Pavela (1994) mentioned "intentionality" and how the perpetrator plays a voluntary role in the dishonest behaviour. Alzahrani and colleagues (2012) looked at *literal* and *intelligent* plagiarism, differentiating types: changing words (i.e., using synonyms) and/or word order, adjusting text length, and so on. While they believed "cheating" was too narrow a term and focused on test impropriety, we see it as inclusive for all behaviours possessing an inherent lack of ethics, fairness, and honesty. Wideman (2011) also suggested an operational definition be established, however, they found instructors seldom explicitly defined cheating as they believed it to be a universally understood construct. Considering the pervasive nature of cheating, this is definitely not the case. Peters et al. (2019) interviewed professors to see whether the problem of

plagiarism was in its instruction. The results identified seven different types of professors; different in regards to how plagiarism was addressed. Students are either fortunate to get an "Ambassador" professor who "deliberately includes activities…to help students…write their assignments with integrity" (p. 6), or they get stuck with the "Detached" professor "who takes no responsibility for the teaching of academic integrity" because, "I do not have time for that" (p. 7). That is, in some instances, professors may not feel it is their responsibility to instruct students about academic integrity and plagiarism, and that could be an obstacle to students ' understanding of these behaviours because the same information is not being repeated across all of their classes, or they may be receiving inconsistent messaging.

Why do People Cheat?

Thomas (2017) found the level/year of study, academic major, and gender directly impacted on the deviant behavior, but it is clear that cheating is serious. Raines et al. (2011) believed perception; the organization and interpretation of experiences in the brain led to understanding and belief, leading to the likelihood, or not, of committing the behaviour. According to Eisenberg (2004) everyone lies, "Some lie in cards, some about their age, others in taxes, yet others in their personal relations" (p. 163), at all education levels, and considering most research is self-report, the number is underestimated. Eisenberg (2004) discovered most cheaters were in Kohlberg's (1973) fourth stage of moral judgement or higher: They would be considered "good" people morally. So, if it is not bad people doing it, what is the reason most people cheat?

Jones (2011) interviewed business communication students and revealed the main reasons for cheating were: grades, procrastination, and being too busy. Iberahim et al.'s (2013), results showed grades, difficulty of task, and inadequate preparation to be the least likely reasons to cheat, while pressure from friends and the material being irrelevant scoring very high on the scale; the "lecturer does NOT mind the behaviour" was the number one reason given for students 'cheating. Participants claimed that instructors who did not enforce academic integrity standards actually encouraged cheating and rationalized their behavior by claiming that the teacher did not care or that everybody cheats anyways. (Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002). Students with a mastery versus performance approach towards goals perceived their emotions differently from those who did not possess these characteristics (Putwain et al., 2013; Vassiou et al., 2016). In addition, the amount of effort a student is willing to exert academically has a strong influence on achievement emotions as well (Tempelaar et al., 2012). Lastly, if students value grades then grades can serve as a predictor for outcome-focused emotions such as joy, hope, or pride (Pekrun et al., 2007; Putwain et al., 2013).

The Present Study

Based on the literature described, we wondered whether a subjective definition of cheating and situational rationalization might lead to academic dishonesty. As reviewed, cheating is common

in education, with studies showing incidents rates ranging from 30-90%. We think the definition of cheating can help to explain some of the reasons for this. Students have their own subjective definition of cheating and use this in context- and content-specific situations to vindicate dishonest behaviour. The purpose of this study was to get information about how students and faculty define cheating (broadly defined) in an academic context, including which behaviour(s) they consider to be cheating and which they do not. We also wondered whether the students ' definitions would be consistent with their perceptions of which behaviours constituted cheating. Finally, we wanted to see whether students and faculty perceived the same items to be cheating. This information may be used to better understand why students cheat and how we can prevent it from happening.

Method

Participants

The study was conducted at a two-year college in Ontario. Both students (n = 15) and faculty (n = 10) responded to the online survey about cheating in academia. For students, most of the respondents were female (87%) and aged between 18 and 20 years old (60%). Almost half began their current studies directly from high school the previous year (47%). Of the faculty respondents, 60% were male, and half had been teaching for 5-10 years, with an additional 30% having been professors for longer than 10 years. We did not collect any additional demographic information from the faculty sample because those variables did not relate to any hypotheses and would significantly increase the risk that we could identify our colleagues 'responses.

Materials and Procedure

This research was approved by the college's Research Ethics Board. Student participants were recruited through the college email system with a posted invitation followed by a reminder approximately one week via the Announcement feature on the course site by the course instructors. Participants were given bonus marks for participating in the study, and those who chose not to participate were given an alternative writing option to earn these bonus points (although no student chose to complete the alternate writing activity). Faculty were recruited via email by the researchers and were not compensated.

The questionnaire was made up of two sections. In the first section, participants were asked to define cheating in an academic context. In the second section, they were provided with a number of scenarios and were asked to indicate whether the behaviour was considered cheating by means of a ten-point Likert-type scale: (1) *Definitely NOT cheating* and (10) *Definitely IS cheating* (see Appendix A). The questions and/or scenarios were adapted from various sources (see Kuntz & Butler, 2014; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002). Additionally, participants were asked to complete demographic descriptors to detail the composition.

Results

In order to gain greater understanding of how cheating is defined, our participants were first provided a text box in which to write out *their* definition of cheating. We specified that we were not asking about the "relationship" type of cheating (i.e., infidelity), but left the scope of the definition open to participants 'interpretation. Then, they identified how strongly they believed a series of behaviours to be cheating. First, we present the student response data, then the faculty data, and finally we examine the relationships, differences, and similarities between these two groups.

Student Data

The data were collected and we coded the data to identify themes brought forward in the definitions. Two coders rated each response and any disagreements were discussed and agreed upon by both coders. The following four major themes were identified: stealing/misrepresentation, rules, aids, and helping (see Table 1). The most frequently included theme was that cheating constituted stealing or misrepresenting the work.

Table 1. *Percent (and frequency) of Unique Student and Faculty Participants whose Response Included each Theme.*

Student	Theme and example	Faculty
66.67% (10)	Stealing/misrepresentation	100% (10)
	"...commonly understood to be used for unfair advantage or shortcuts..."	
46.67% (7)	Rules	60% (6)
	"...use of material that isn't otherwise allowed (because of faculty rules, school policy, disciplinary expectations, etc.)..."	
40% (6)	Aids	70% (7)
	"Cheating is using other resources, including that of other students..."	
6.67 (1)	Helping	20% (2)
	"...taking screen shots of quiz and sending it to your friends so they give you answers or they know the questions of quiz."	
0% (0)	Unfair advantage	40% (4)
	"...submitting work that is not your own, or that you did not come up with on your own..."	

Shifting our attention to the list of rated behaviours, mean scores and standard deviations for each are shown in Table 2 (note: missing values were replaced with the item average). The items with the highest average scores (i.e., were rated the highest as definitely being cheating) appeared to also be the less ambiguous cases of cheating behaviour (i.e., more intentional), including copying from another student during a test or exam without their knowledge; turning in work done by someone else; taking a test or part of a test for someone else; and copying a few sentences from an internet site (word for word) without citing them. The least consistent offences included using a false excuse to obtain an extension on a due date and doing less than your fair share of work on a group project, although these lowest items still obtained an average score above the "neutral" score of 5, indicating that students did still perceive these instances to be cheating.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations for students' and faculty's assessment of cheating behaviours.

Students				Faculty	
M	*SD*	Survey Item		*M*	*SD*
7.73	2.69	Changing a graded test/exam and returning it for more marks/credit		9.00	1.79
8.53	2.31	Copying a few sentences from an internet site (but changing a few words) without citing them		7.90	1.58
9.47	1.41	Copying a few sentences from an internet site (word for word) without citing them		9.10	1.04
9.40	0.95	Copying from another student during a test/exam WITH their knowledge		10.00	0.00
9.87	0.34	Copying from another student during a test/exam WITHOUT their knowledge		9.90	0.30
5.27	3.02	Doing less than your fair share of work on a group project		4.50	1.91
8.00	2.45	Fabricating data (e.g., adding extra, unused references at the end of a paper)		8.60	2.24
6.07	3.21	Failing to report a grading error (e.g., the teacher gave you a higher mark than you earned)		2.80	1.66
8.13	2.73	Getting questions and/or answers from someone who has already taken the test		7.80	2.52
9.33	1.35	Letting another student copy from your test or exam.		9.89	0.30
7.47	2.78	Letting another student copy your homework or assignment		8.56	1.62

Students		Survey Item	Faculty	
M	*SD*		*M*	*SD*
9.33	1.14	Submitting a paper done completely, or in part, by another student	9.80	0.40
8.27	2.52	Submitting substantial portions of the same paper to more than one course without consulting with the instructor	7.40	2.87
9.53	1.09	Taking a test or part of a test for someone else	9.50	1.50
9.53	1.26	Turning in work done by someone else	10.00	0.00
5.80	3.31	Using a false excuse to obtain an extension on due date	7.60	2.62
7.67	2.47	Using an electronic or digital device (e.g., phone) during a test/exam	8.80	1.72
8.80	2.07	Using notes during a test/exam when your professor said not to	9.90	0.30
7.67	3.38	Using resources prohibited by the professor to complete an assignment	9.40	1.50
6.20	3.33	Working as a group on an assignment (or homework) that was supposed to be completed individually	7.20	2.64
8.10	0.91	Overall	8.38	0.91

Faculty Data

Two coders rated each faculty response and disagreements were dealt with by discussion. Similar to the student-identified themes, faculty also brought forward the same themes in their definitions (stealing/misrepresentation, rules, aids, and helping). An additional theme was also present, that of cheating bringing about an unfair advantage. These data are displayed alongside the student data in Table 1. Moving to the behaviours rated on a Likert-like scale, missing values were replaced with the item average before proceeding. Mean scores and the standard deviations for each question are in Table 2. The most consistent responses from faculty about what definitely was cheating included copying from another student during a test (both with and without their knowledge); turning in work done by someone else; using notes during a test/exam when your professor said not to; letting another student copy from your test or exam; submitting a paper done completely or in part by another student; and taking a test or part of a test for someone else.

Faculty score two items quite low, suggesting that they did not really view these as cheating: failing to report a grading error (e.g., the teacher gave you a higher mark than you earned); and doing less than your fair share of work on a group project.

Comparing Student and Faculty Perceptions

Looking first at the definitions provided by both groups (and corresponding themes), we can see much agreement. However, there is one difference which is quite interesting. Although no student identified the unfair advantage brought about by cheating, 40% of faculty did. An additional inconsistency across the two groups involved the frequency of inclusion for the theme of aids. Faculty reported this theme (70%) nearly twice as often as students (40%). Similarly, faculty included helping behaviour as part of their definition much more frequently (20%) than did students (6.67%). This could simply be a case of faculty including more fulsome definitions than students, and including more themes because there were more words. To examine this, we counted the number of words for each response. Indeed, faculty used nearly twice as many words on average (M = 43.55, SD = 28.61) than students (M = 21.20, SD = 13.46), a difference which is significant ($t(13)$ = 2.40, p = .02, d = .99). The difference in the length of definition of cheating will be further explored in the discussion section.

For the specific behaviours which were rated as being cheating or not on a Likert-type scale, there again appeared to be a great deal of consistency between what students and faculty considered to be the "worst" cases of cheating and the "least bad" examples. To assess this quantitatively, we ranked the items for each group based on their average score and then examined this relationship with a Spearman correlation. This analysis showed a strong, positive correlation (r_s = .80, p < .001), suggesting that the items tended to be in approximately the same order for both students and faculty. However, there were two items whose rankings were substantially different between the two groups. First, for "using resources prohibited by the professor to complete an assignment", faculty ranked it higher (rank = 8) than students (rank = 14.5) suggesting that this was viewed as more definitively cheating by faculty than students. Second, for "submitting substantial portions of the same paper for more than one course without consulting with the instructor", the reverse pattern was seen, with students reporting that this was more definitely cheating (rank = 10) than faculty (rank = 17).

Unlike in the student data, faculty actually scored two items below the "neutral" score of 5, suggesting that they did not really view these as cheating: failing to report a grading error (e.g., the teacher gave you a higher mark than you earned); and doing less than your fair share of work on a group project. Students being stricter about what constitutes cheating was somewhat surprising as we expected faculty to perceive more items as cheating than students.

Discussion

Our study employed open-ended text to extract students 'and faculty's definitions of academic cheating, with as little influence from us as possible. We looked for common themes to narrow down the definition by group, and possibly uncover reasons behind academic dishonesty. Does the hierarchical relationship between students and faculty also result in differences in

subjectivity in defining cheating behaviour? Although similar themes were found in the definitions of both groups, faculty additionally pointed to the idea that cheating gives an unfair advantage to students, possibly a result of their fully developed pre-frontal cortex (Arain et al., 2013; Rubia et al., 2000; Sowell et al., 2003), and/or reflecting their more advanced moral reasoning compared to students (Kohlberg, 1973). An additional interpretation for this difference is that the difference in gender breakdown across our two groups (student respondents were primarily female whereas faculty respondents were mostly male) could point to a different interpretation of collaboration and competition in the academic context. As such, future research should explore the possibility of gender differences in defining cheating, both from the student perspective as well as the faculty perspective. Based on the average age of student respondents, they are likely in the conventional level of moral reasoning where behaviour is governed by conformity, rules and laws coming from authority figures; "good" or "bad" are black and white. Conversely, given that most faculty had 10 or more years of experience teaching (require at least a Master's degree), we could estimate that most are probably reasoning at the post-conventional level in which ethics and morality also come into play when judging whether a behaviour is "good" or "bad." Future research might investigate these possibilities.

It was also particularly interesting that faculty perceived two items in the list (not signaling a grading error resulting in a higher grade on an assignment, and, not doing your fair share on a group project) as not really cheating, whereas students did. This is peculiar considering no student mentioned "unfairness" in their definitions, but these items clearly provide an unfair advantage. Again, this could be related to the moral reasoning differences we posited, but outside the scope of this study.

Do we agree with Bowers (1964) that cheating is a form of deviance, or allow for a more nuanced perspective? Perhaps objective reality is adjusted to fit the individual's needs through the construction of meaning (Ardiansyah & Ujihanti, 2018). Since our experiences define us, do we find fault with one's decision to diverge from the norm and define the world differently, or do we allow context, culture, values to establish right and wrong? According to Martin (2012), Western culture is far more likely to have instances of academic cheating. Similarly, could the differences in the cheating behaviours observed be a product of specific academic disciplines and the types of assessments that are the most common in those disciplines? Is it because we cheat more, or is it because we define collaboration on solitary tasks to be unacceptable and therefore define it as such? The issues underlying cheating are many. While a devalued diploma and/or degree reflects poorly on the granting institution, an unqualified professional practicing in their field is egregious and also potentially puts lives at risk. We need to consider the reasons behind cheating, as well as the means of correcting the behaviour early, or risk a trend of continued transgression (Lupton et al., 2010). In addition to the differences is faculty's perceived role in the instruction of academic integrity (Peters et al., 2019), new research suggests that differences could also exist in how full-time and part-time contract faculty approach this topic (Dyer et al., 2022). Although we did not ask faculty to identify whether they were full-time or part-time,

future research may be able to collect this additional information to help tease apart some of the questions posed here.

Cheating behaviour can be influenced by distal influences originating from differences in the educational systems and societies in which students are embedded. In Eastern-European countries, the prevalence of academic cheating is 87.9%, in comparison with approximately only 5% measured in Scandinavian countries (Teixeira & Rocha, 2010). Furthermore, according to Grimes (2004), in post-socialist countries, students self-report cheating significantly higher than in the U.S.A. Poltorak (1995) believed pervasive cheating at the societal level explained how Russian students who regarded academic dishonesties as cheating, found collaborative, assignment-related dishonesties acceptable. She argued Russians acclimated to the lack of competition due to egalitarian ideology during Socialism leading to collaboration. Furthermore, opposition to authority can lead to the legitimization of cheating and provide an explanation for rampant cheating by Moscovites and Eastern Europeans compared to Western Europe or North-America. The possibility exists a more socialistic society could increase cheating behaviour, while simultaneously disregarding it as deviant behaviour. Cheating was once shameful behaviour; however, academic cheating behaviours may be trending towards being more socially acceptable.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to develop a better understanding of why students cheat, with the hopes of being able to better prevent transgressions. We described themes that emerged in students 'and faculty's definitions of academic cheating, and found that faculty demonstrated a much greater awareness of the unfair advantage that cheating places on students, a notion that students did not include in their definitions. Additionally, because much less is known about the behaviours of college students (compared to university students), this descriptive study fills an important gap in the current literature. Future studies should build on the work presented here and further explore the possible explanations proposed here of differences in moral reasoning and more inherent gender differences, as well as the effects of specific academic disciplines.

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Appendix A

Part 1: In your own words, define cheating as it relates to school (we are NOT interested in your definition of cheating in the context of relationships):

Part 2: For each of the questions below, please indicate whether you think it is cheating or not, where 1 = Definitely NOT cheating and 10 = Definitely IS cheating.

1. Using resources prohibited by the professor to complete an assignment.
2. Using notes during a test/exam when your professor said not to.
3. Using an electronic or digital device (e.g., phones) during a test/exam.
4. Copying a few sentences from an internet site (word for word) without citing them.
5. Copying a few sentences from an internet site (but changing a few words) without citing them.
6. Getting questions and/or answers from someone who has already taken the test.
7. Working as a group on an assignment (or homework) that was supposed to be completed individually.
8. Copying from another student during a test/exam WITHOUT their knowledge.
9. Copying from another student during a test/exam WITH their knowledge.
10. Using a false excuse to obtain an extension on due date.
11. Letting another student copy your homework or assignment.
12. Letting another student copy from your test or exam.
13. Doing less than your fair share of work on a group project.
14. Changing a graded test/exam and returning it for more marks/credit.
15. Submitting substantial portions of the same paper to more than one course without consulting with the instructor.
16. Fabricating data (e.g., adding extra, unused references at the end of a paper).
17. Failing to report a grading error (e.g., the teacher gave you a higher mark than you earned).
18. Submitting a paper done completely, or in part, by another student.
19. Turning in work done by someone else.
20. Taking a test or part of a test for someone else.