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**Understanding Academic Dishonesty: Determinants, Consequences, and Strategies for Mitigation**

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**Original Article**

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**Keywords**

Academic dishonesty,  
Intrinsic goal, Grades,  
Competition, Guilt, Academic  
integrity

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**Abstract**

This study investigates the intricate factors that contribute to student cheating in educational institutions, particularly focusing on the consequences of prioritizing grades and competition. The research also identifies potential areas for introducing measures to mitigate academic dishonesty. The research methodology includes an exhaustive review of existing literature and an online survey, which reveal that the undue emphasis on securing high grades, as opposed to actual learning, significantly sways student behaviour. The findings of the literature review indicate that students face immense pressure from parents, peers, educational institutions, and society to achieve high grades. This pressure intensifies when students lack self-confidence, leading to a fear of failure and subsequently, academic dishonesty. These factors are further exacerbated when students observe cheating among their peers and in society, without any appropriate repercussions. The survey was employed also to corroborate the potential starting points identified in the literature review to curb academic dishonesty. The conclusions drawn from the literature review and the questionnaire results underscore the complex emotional dynamics associated with cheating behaviours. The research concluded that a significant number of students experience negative emotions when they cheat, suggesting an inherent disapproval of such actions. Capitalizing on these inherent feelings against cheating could aid in cultivating a culture of academic integrity and dissuading cheating practices among students. Academic institutions can successfully discourage students from cheating on examinations by fostering a culture of academic integrity.

## 1. Introduction

Academic dishonesty hinders the quest of educational objectives as it impedes the genuine attainment of knowledge. Education is fundamentally about acquiring knowledge, and dishonest practices like cheating contradict its very core principles. Cheating is not only an hindrance to learning but also provides an unfair advantage (Bouville, 2010). It is also widely accepted by students and rest, that cheating in academic institutions is unethical, adversely effects self-confidence, and is the cornerstone of unethical attitude for workplaces in future, still students cheat all around the world, Table 1.

Grades are the representation of students' capabilities and knowledge and what students may be able to do in the future. Good grades are basic and strong factor for admission to colleges and universities and for a good job as well, - good grades hold the capacity to influence students' future prospects as well. Hence, parents pressurise their kids for good grades and grades have significant importance in schools, colleges, universities (Soling, 2015).

The intense pressure to excel academically and secure high grades compels students to seize any opportunity they can. The competitive nature of grading, coupled with various stressors and the fear of failure, fosters an environment that is ripe for dishonest behaviour.

Students are exposed to a world where ethical violations are commonplace. Almost every facet of society, from small tuck-shop to business to sports, politics, government officials, and social media, is plagued with issues of integrity and corruption, and often sorted out to no justifiable punishment. This creates a perception that cheating is not only acceptable but perhaps even necessary. Some students believe that no one cares if they cheat and rationalize that in a win-at-all-costs environment, they must use every means available, including cheating, to achieve high grades (McCabe, Butterfield, & Treviño, 2012).

This study investigates the intricate factors behind student dishonesty in academic settings, with a special emphasis on the effects of focusing too much on grades and competition (perceived success). The research also seeks to pinpoint potential areas where actions could be initiated to reduce academic dishonesty.

The possible determinants of students cheating in exams are, more importance to grades rather than actual knowledge, poor time management, societal, peer, and parental pressure, insufficient intellectual maturity, stress, fear of failure, comparison with peers, the perceived obligation to assist others during exams, poor study habits, competition, the belief that they can avoid punishment, the influence of social media, and the mindset that "everyone is doing it". This research works on the correlation between grades and cheating, proposing the hypothesis that "prioritizing final grades (over actual knowledge) leads students to cheat in exams". The hypothesis suggests that when grades (rather than learning) are prioritized, students are more inclined to resort to dishonest means to secure higher marks. The research also found that a considerable number of students (based on a questionnaire) experience negative emotions when they cheat, indicating an innate disapproval of such actions. Utilizing these inherent negative feelings towards cheating could aid in cultivating an environment of academic integrity and deter cheating among students. By promoting a culture of academic integrity, institutions can effectively dissuade students from cheating in exams.

## **2. Methodology**

The literature of students' academic dishonesty mainly uses two methods: questionnaires and documentary analysis. Other methodologies like interviews and experimental methods are also used, but less frequently.

This study gathered necessary data through two methods. First, we analysed previous research articles on students' academic dishonesty in relation to our hypothesis and to identify possible initial steps for implementing measures to reduce academic dishonesty. Second, we conducted a survey (questionnaire) among students to understand the prevalence and causes of cheating in our study population, specifically in the context of higher education in Pakistan. The questionnaire also helped validate the potential initial steps identified in the literature review.

The selection of research articles was based on their pertinence to the subject matter and the depth of their data and conclusions. These articles spanned a variety of educational environments and student demographics across the globe. We conducted an in-depth review of these articles to glean essential insights and patterns concerning the focus on grades and its influence on student cheating. We also sought potential clues that could act as a foundation for curbing dishonest practices.

The second approach involved conducting a survey among students from a public university. The survey was designed to shed light on the prevalence of cheating, its primary causes, and students' attitudes towards cheating and society. The literature review revealed that students feel guilt after engaging in dishonest activities, a sentiment that was confirmed by our study participants.

## **3. Complexities of Academic Dishonesty (Cheating)**

One of the key points discussed in literature about unethical behaviour (cheating) of students in academic institutions is the clarity of the term "cheating", "academic dishonesty" or "academic integrity" (Apostolou, 2015; Macfarlane, Zhang, & Pun, 2014; Piascik & Brazeau, 2010). Other points discussed widely in this type of literature include factors that affect cheating like institution/teachers/peer/parents, fear of failure, methods of cheating, cheating and students' gender, cheating and religiosity, cheating and moral reasoning, students' personal achievement goals/motivation (learning and grade), students' judgements of the expenses involved in reaching such goals, their expectations for completing them, their understanding of and familiarity with the institution's policy regarding cheating conduct, students' neutralisation attitude/technique regarding cheating, effects of witnessing others' cheating, psychological causes of cheating, evaluation standards in performance tests, and what deters a student from cheating? - Table 1. Literature also discusses the importance of honor codes (Donald McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001), relationship between cheating in classroom and cheating at the work (Ma, 2013; Octavian RUJOIU, 2014; Sharron M. Graves, 2008), teachers' and academic institution's role to deal with cheating (Boysen, 2007; Diego, 2017) and role of a culture of academic integrity in coping with academic dishonesty (Marshall & Varnon, 2017; Mostafa Amir, 2019). The following sections will discuss in detail about importance to grades rather than actual knowledge, other multiple reasons of cheating linked with grades and various approaches to deal with cheating. We will also identify and suggest starting point to mitigate cheating.

**Table 1: Main Determinants of Academic Dishonesty (Cheating)**

\*Note: country name is mentioned only once (even in case of repetition)

Determinants of Cheating	Authors' institutes*	References
Emphasis on extrinsic goals (result & competition with others), not intrinsic goals (learn, develop, and master the material)	USA, Greece, Australia, Germany, Pakistan, Sweden, Romania	(Davis, Grover, Becker, & McGregor, 1992), (Apostolou, 2015), (Rettinger & Jordan, 2005), (Jordan, 2001), (Niiya, 2008), (Moss, White, & Lee, 2018), (Daumiller & Janke, 2019), (Murdock & Anderman, 2006), (Rettinger & Kramer, 2009), (Rehmani, 2013), (Anderman, 2015), (Anderman & Koenka, 2017), (Saghir Ahmad, 2020), (Simkin & McLeod, 2010), (D.L. McCabe et al., 2012), (Baird Jr, 1980),
Unsupportive academic environment, condoning teachers	USA, Germany, Pakistan, Sweden,	(Davis et al., 1992), (Jordan, 2001), (Daumiller & Janke, 2019), (Rehmani, 2013), (Anderman, 2015), (Anderman & Koenka, 2017), (Ramberg & Modin, 2019), (Rettinger & Kramer, 2009), (Saghir Ahmad, 2020), (Simkin & McLeod, 2010), (D.L. McCabe et al., 2012)
Lack of academic integrity/moral values	USA, Sweden	(Davis et al., 1992), (Rettinger & Jordan, 2005), (Ramberg & Modin, 2019), (Simkin & McLeod, 2010), (D.L. McCabe et al., 2012), (Baird Jr, 1980)
Neutralizing attitudes	USA, Australia	(Rettinger & Jordan, 2005), (Jordan, 2001), (Moss et al., 2018), (Rettinger & Kramer, 2009), (Baird Jr, 1980)
Lack of self-efficacy/self-doubt/fear of failure	USA, Australia, Pakistan	(Niiya, 2008), (Moss et al., 2018), (Murdock & Anderman, 2006), (Anderman & Koenka, 2017), (Saghir Ahmad, 2020), (Baird Jr, 1980)
Perceived norms (including witnessing others to cheat)	Romania, USA, Australia	(Ives et al., 2017), (Rettinger & Kramer, 2009), (Moss et al., 2018), (Murdock & Anderman, 2006), (Anderman & Koenka, 2017), (Zhao et al., 2022)

### 3.1 Academic Goals and Cheating – How to Address Cheating?

Research suggests that students' academic goals play a significant role in their probability of cheating. When priority of students is result (grades) and competition with others (extrinsic goals), they may rationalize cheating to achieve these goals. While students who aim to learn, develop, and master the material (intrinsic goals) are less likely to engage in academic dishonesty. Teachers and academic environment have the power to influence students' goals and consequently discourage cheating. By promoting a genuine desire for knowledge gaining and emphasizing the value of learning over grades, educators can contribute to a healthier academic environment.

Davis, Grover et al. (Davis et al., 1992) discussed that cheating is for the good grades and hence for a better career. Ineffective restraints, condoning teachers, and a feeble sense of academic integrity of students are also important determinants of cheating. Problem of cheating can effectively be addressed only if students possess or activate internalised code of ethics that opposes cheating, and students' stronger commitment to the educational process be developed, and that may be accomplished by changing the current educational system. A policy about academic dishonesty must be in place in academic institution. Academic institutions must openly and uniformly support ethical behaviours. Research (Apostolou, 2015) concluded that students with performance-based goals had stronger intentions to cheat, while mastery-approach goals are the negative predictor of

cheating. This research (Rettinger & Jordan, 2005) discusses the relation among students' cheating, motivation (in terms of grade and learning) and religiosity. It was determined that while students whose main objective is to understand the topic are far less likely to cheat, grade orientation is linked to higher self-reports of cheating. It is also established that lower levels of cheating in all courses are associated with more religiosity. Cheating in classes other than religious studies was substantially connected with neutralising views. Research (Jordan, 2001) evaluating cheaters and non-cheaters found that mastery desire and attitudes towards cheating (e.g., neutralising attitude) were the next greatest predictors of cheating rates, after awareness of institutional policy. In comparison to students who did not cheat, cheaters were shown to have reduced mastering motivation and greater grades or career possibilities in the courses in which they committed cheating. The likelihood that cheaters would support arguments for cheating was considerably higher than that of non-cheaters. Cheaters have significantly less understanding of institutional policy regarding cheating than non-cheaters. Witnessing cheating and believing that peers are doing cheating encourages cheaters to do more cheating. Stressing the importance of mastery goals may help decrease student dishonesty. Presenting students with data that most students/peers do not view cheating as acceptable behaviour may also influence perceived norms and attitudes.

Study (Niiya, 2008), apart from other factors, examined how achievement goals predicted academic cheating. Research indicates that there is a positive correlation between cheating and men's performance-approach objectives (competition, particularly for those who get their sense of value from winning competitions) and a negative correlation with mastery goals (learning). Mastery objectives might not be enough to keep mastery-oriented students from cheating when they are in a scenario that is extremely appealing, there is no monitoring, and a peer invites them to do so. More males than women cheated. None of the options or objectives for women indicated infidelity. It was also mentioned that self-doubt in studies, unfamiliarity with information technology, dissociation from university life, fear of failure and sometimes impaired skills in the language lead the student to academic dishonesty. Protecting self-worth can motivate or deter cheating.

This systematic review (Moss et al., 2018) clarifies the psychological causes of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). Academic misconduct was addressed as resulting from a focus on competitiveness and success rather than development and cooperation, as well as from impulsive tendencies, low self-esteem, resilience issues, and biased cognitive processes. In addition to an emphasis on success and performance instead of a passion, viewing academic dishonesty beneficial, assumption that dishonest behaviour is accepted by their community, and confidence of individuals that they can do it successfully cause academic dishonesty. This review discusses that fostering a sense of meaning and clarity in students might curb academic dishonesty (plagiarism) more efficiently than any other intervention.

Frequency of observing other students engaging in academically dishonest behaviours and believe of students about acceptance of these behaviours were found weak but statistically significant predictors of overall academic dishonesty. Students who never engaged in academic dishonesty were more likely to see those behaviours less unacceptable than students who did engage in those behaviours (Ives et al., 2017).

Research (Daumiller & Janke, 2019) investigated how evaluation standards of performance tests impact on academic cheating. It was discovered that when appearance goals were imposed on students, they were more inclined to cheat, and the assessment standard only paid attention to the final product rather than the methods and approaches that led to the solution. Evaluation based on process and strategies rather than only on end results and its clear information to students,

elimination of cheating opportunities altogether through physical constraints (e.g., large space between students) and the full attention of the instructors help to reduce cheating. Murdock and Anderman (Murdock & Anderman, 2006) discusses the prediction about cheating based on the three motivational mechanisms, students' goals, their expectations for accomplishing those goals and students' assessments of the costs associated with cheating. Students must be motivated to cheat, the reason may be extrinsic (earning a grade), social comparative (avoid appearing incompetent), or social-cognitive (feeling inefficacious at a particular task). Cheating rates are higher when students perceive the potential sufferings from cheating are minimal, - students who cheat in one class often do not do so in all their classes.

Witnessing others' cheating, neutralizing attitude, students' learning/grade orientations and academic dishonesty by students are discussed in this article (Rettinger & Kramer, 2009). It was concluded that cheaters are more extrinsically oriented (grades), they report more knowledge of cheating, and have strong neutralising attitude. When a new student witness cheating and observe cheaters are not caught and punished, leads them to cheat, - new students learn how to behave by observing their peers. Research suggests strengthening the reporting requirements, improvement in pedagogy and an emphasis on learning rather than on performance goals by instructors/teachers will make neutralization attitude as difficult as possible. Honor codes will also make neutralization more difficult, - neutralizing attitudes were the strongest predictor of cheating.

Rehmani (Rehmani, 2013) discusses reasons of cheating of the students at secondary and higher secondary level in Pakistan. This article discusses that reasons of the cheating behaviour depend on the cultures, context, educational system, nature of examination and the purpose for which the examinations are taken. Getting better grades or marks in exams is still the major goal for those looking for work or entrance to universities. Parents and schools continue to put a lot of pressure on students to perform well on exams. Fear of ridicule in the event of failure or poor marks is another reason for feeling pressure from peers. Teaching is to prepare students for good grades rather than what they can learn and do. Examination system in Pakistan needs to be prudent to develop critical thinking in students.

Research articles (Anderman, 2015), (Anderman & Koenka, 2017), (Ramberg & Modin, 2019), (Saghir Ahmad, 2020) discusses the importance of role of teachers to motivate students for learning goals and avoiding cheating. Anderman (Anderman, 2015), based on the belief that extrinsic goals lead students to dishonest academic attitude, works on strategies that can be adapted by academic institutions to help students to adopt mastery goals instead of extrinsic goals. With the believe that teachers can help students to avoid cheating and helping them set their mastery goals, this article suggests that teachers should make sure that evaluation be based on mastery of content, allow students to redo the assignment, if need so, and don't share results publicly. In most circumstances, cheating is not a practical shortcut if an academic environment is genuinely intended to promote expertise. On the other hand, cheating will benefit pupils more in highly competitive learning environments (extrinsic or performance goals). Article (Anderman & Koenka, 2017) focuses on the relation between academic cheating and achievement goal orientations. While deciding to cheat or not, students ask themselves about their goal (a good grade or really learning the material), not appearing dumb, is it worth suffering the consequences? Research concluded that the motivational climate that the teachers create in their classrooms may possibly influence the decisions that students make about academic dishonesty. Teachers need to adopt practices that emphasize mastery and promote self-efficacy, - that may be through activities/assessment methods, clearly communicate expectations for performance in advance. Talking about cheating and not publicising students' grades, may also help to curb cheating. Regarding the consequences

and costs of academic dishonesty, teachers and academic institution need to clearly discuss and make obvious the costs to students.

Ramberg and Modin (Ramberg & Modin, 2019, Ihsan- et all, 2019).) explain that pupils cheated less in schools where teachers received excellent evaluations for leadership, efficacy, collegial cooperation, and ethos. According to the study's findings, there appears to be a moderating influence of grades on the relationship between student cheating and school success. To combat academic dishonesty, it is crucial to have a pronounced and distinct educational vision, a strategy that lays out and communicates rules and consequences to both teachers and students, and a teaching staff that is supported by management in enforcing ethical behaviour in their students in a methodical way. If a school's ethos is characterized by a lack of concern for ethical behaviour, cheating will eventually become a normalized behaviour. Research article (Saghir Ahmad, 2020) discusses the views of Pakistani students towards academic dishonesty. Study confirms that students cheat to get good marks. Half of the participants said that everybody cheats and cheaters are considered smart people. Teachers may motivate their students to focus on learning and help students to overcome fear of failure to reduce the practices of academic dishonesty. Students agreed that they do not feel good when they cheat. Students believe that the university can stop students cheating. It is recommended that the policies of punishment may be implemented fairly and appropriately to discourage cheating.

These works (Simkin & McLeod, 2010), (McCabe et al., 2012), (Baird, 1980) emphasise on morality and academic integrity for coping dishonest behaviours. Simkin and McLeod (Simkin & McLeod, 2010) tested the theory of reasoned action for explaining the cheating behaviour. It was discussed that an individual's beliefs, value system, and referential figures (e.g., parents, teachers, or peers) explain subsequent planned behaviour. Desire to get ahead was the most important motivating factor among cheaters, while the presence of an ethical professor was most important among non-cheaters and positively influence students not to cheat. The opinions of family and friends are not a very important factor in a decision to cheat. This work concluded that neither opportunity, nor time demands seemed to strongly influence student cheating behaviour. It was also concluded that neither culture (acceptability of cheating as a cultural norm) nor the risks involved, discourages students from cheating. Cheating is a reasoned, deliberate action rather than an accidental or spontaneous one. Only moral beliefs deter a student from cheating. A moral culture encourages students to do what is right. Clear identification of cheating and its potential negative outcomes need to be identified. McCabe et al in their book (McCabe et al., 2012) discuss the overall assessment of the students' cheating and academic integrity in higher education. It recommends creating academic integrity culture in a campus to mitigate cheating. This research work suggests that a well rooted and well- run honor code can help in creating a strong ethical environment, however, a strong ethical environment can also be created in the absence of an honor code. Students fell pressures to demonstrate high academic achievement, pressure may come from societal expectations, family expectations to maintain high GPA, and pressure for admission to prestigious school. When peers are seen cheating, cheating may be seen as an acceptable act. It was concluded that a genuine concern of faculty and administration about academic integrity can make a difference. The purpose of this study (Baird, 1980) was to investigate the frequency, and methods of college cheating. It was concluded that academic dishonesty is increasing. Competition for grades (maximum), insufficient study time, and large workload were significant to cheating. Most of the students mentioned some degree of guilt associated with their dishonesty, while more than 70 percent felt cheating is a normal part of life.

### **3.2 Inferences**

The analysis of the literature reveals that a shift in educational focus from actual learning to merely outperforming peers in terms of grades significantly fuels student cheating during exams, thereby confirming our initial hypothesis. The aforementioned factors contributing to cheating are interconnected, leading to the pursuit of extrinsic rewards such as grades, which in turn, rationalizes academic dishonesty - as depicted in Figure 1.

The immense pressure on students from parents, peers, educational institutions, and society to achieve high grades can lead to a fear of failure, particularly when they lack self-confidence. This fear often results in academic dishonesty. The situation is exacerbated when students observe others cheating without facing significant consequences.

In addition to the above conclusions, academic literature often highlights the importance of a strong moral sense of academic integrity, an internalized ethical code, and ethical behaviour in deterring student cheating. The genuine concern of faculty and administration about academic integrity, as well as an emphasis on morality can help mitigate dishonest behaviours. It was discussed that only a deeply ingrained moral belief can deter a student from cheating. Therefore, fostering a moral culture that encourages students to do what is right is crucial. Academic institutions should openly and consistently promote ethical behaviours. The creation of a culture of academic integrity on campus is recommended to curb cheating. It has been discussed that the presence of an ethical professor significantly influences non-cheating students and positively encourages students not to cheat. The review also highlighted the sense of remorse experienced by students following acts of academic dishonesty.

To counteract cheating, literature review discussed that it's crucial to foster an environment that prioritizes learning and mastery over competition, where teachers can play a pivotal role. The findings highlight the need for educational institutions to adopt a balanced approach to evaluation, placing importance on holistic measures of student performance beyond grades alone. Reducing instances of cheating also requires clear anti-cheating policies from academic institutions, clearly communicating this approach to students, open discussions about the repercussions of academic dishonesty, enhanced detection methods, and consistent enforcement of disciplinary actions. Providing students with data showing that most of their peers do not condone cheating could also help shift their perceptions and attitudes. Institutions should also actively promote ethical behaviour.

The literature review also suggests that eliminating opportunities for cheating entirely through physical constraints, such as ample space between students, can make cheating more difficult. The implementation of honor codes was also discussed as a method to further discourage dishonest practices.

This literature review suggests that by harnessing innate human sentiments against dishonesty, we can cultivate an environment of academic honesty and deter students from engaging in cheating behaviours. By fostering a supportive learning environment that values individual growth, skill development, and ethical conduct, institutions can mitigate the detrimental effects of grade emphasis and promote academic integrity among students. Table 2 summarizes the points (discussed above), awareness of which, may help to cope with academic dishonesty.

### **4. Questionnaire**

The survey group consisted of students from a public university in Pakistan, predominantly from the architecture department. The survey was conducted online and was designed to be anonymous, and participation was optional. The purpose of the survey was clarified to the students, who were then invited to participate. Each semester has its own WhatsApp group. The link to the



questionnaire was shared via WhatsApp groups with students across different semesters. In total, 98 students completed the questionnaire.

Literature review discussed the feelings of guilt and remorse experienced by students after dishonest actions. This study proposes that these inherent human feelings against cheating could be leveraged to foster a culture of academic integrity and discourage cheating practices among students. Consequently, the questionnaire served multiple purposes: it was used to verify the extent of cheating, identify the key factors that promote cheating among the students in the study group, and also to validate the feelings of guilt and remorse that students experience following dishonest actions.

The data from the questionnaire suggests that the primary reason for cheating among the students studied is a lack of self-belief, along with the pressure to attain high grades. A significant number of students perceive a link between academic success and dishonest behaviour, which encourages them to cheat. A substantial number of students (from our study group) admitted to feeling negative emotions due to their acts of cheating.

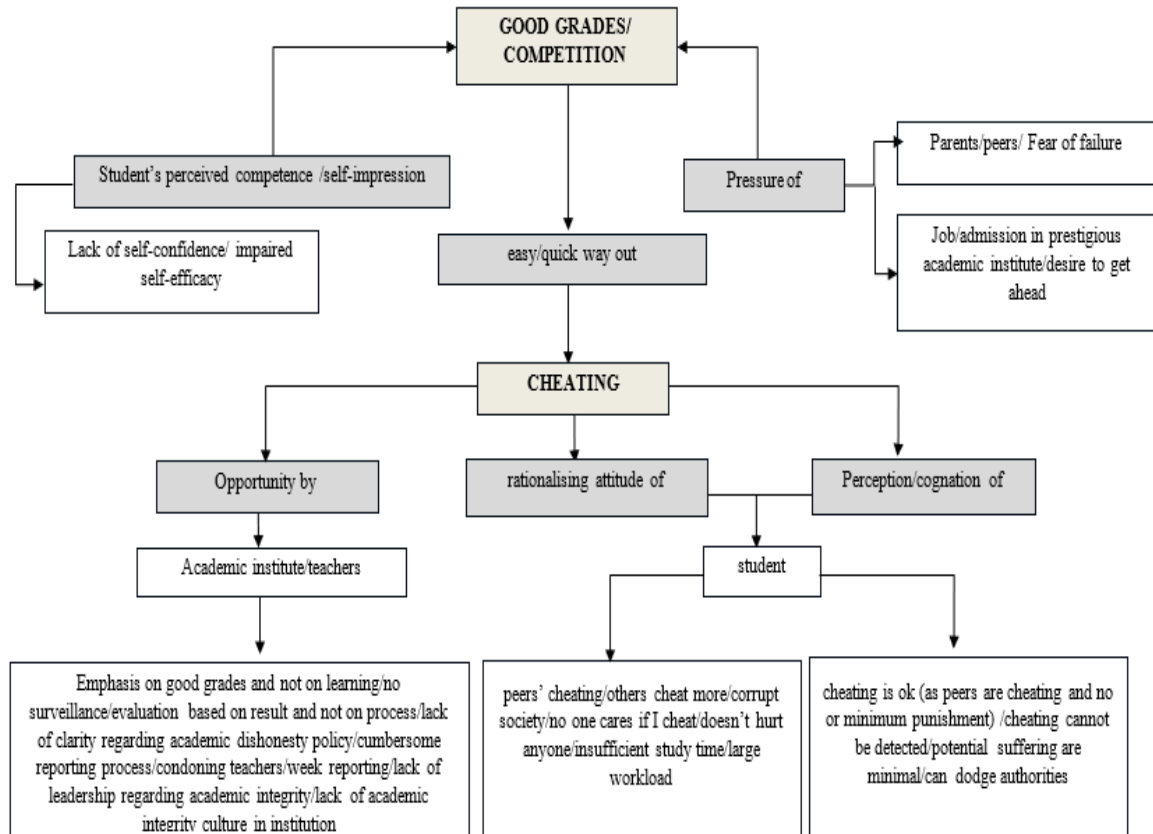
#### **4.1 Findings of Questionnaire**

More than 55% participants replied that they cheated in exam, with 36.7% occasionally and 19.4% frequently cheated. 36% replied that they never cheated in exam. These statistics shed light on the prevalence of cheating within the student population under investigation.

In reply of the question regarding the motivating factors behind students' decision to cheat, approximately 43 % mentioned fear of failure, while 30% of the participants indicated that their desire to attain high grades played a significant role in their cheating behaviour. These findings suggest that academic pressure and competition for achieving favourable grades contribute to students resorting to dishonest means. The responses revealed that 63% of participants believed cheating to be common among high achieving students and about existence of a correlation between high grades and cheating, approximately 69% of respondents believed in the asked correlation. These findings suggest that a significant number of students perceive a connection between academic success and dishonest behaviour. Most respondents (78%) believed that students who cheat on exams are more likely to continue engaging in such behaviour in the future. These responses suggest a perception among students that cheating is a persistent behaviour that individuals are unlikely to abandon.

A question inquired about students' moral stance on cheating, 77% agreed that cheating is wrong, while more than 21% students reply was negative. This finding suggests a consensus among the respondents regarding the ethical implications of engaging in dishonest practices. Question that delved into students' emotional responses to cheating, specifically whether they experienced remorse or guilt afterwards. The responses indicated that 58% students replied positively, with 28% of students consistently felt guilty after cheating, while 30% reported occasional feelings of remorse and 11% responded with no feeling of guilt after cheating. These results highlight the complex emotional landscape that accompanies cheating behaviours, with a significant proportion of students experiencing negative emotions about their actions.

**Figure 1: Good Grades/Competition and Cheating**



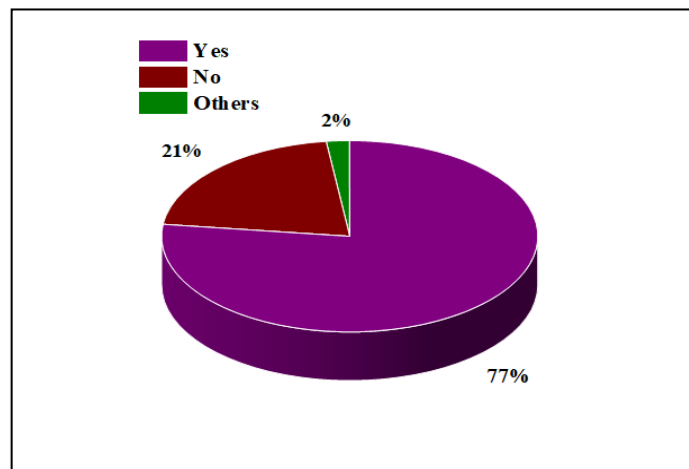
**Table 2: Approaches to cope with Academic dishonesty/cheating**

<p><b>Teachers</b> can:        (an ethical teacher acts like “moral anchor” and is most important among non-cheaters - positively influence students not to cheat).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.promote a genuine desire for knowledge acquisition/emphasizing the value of learning over grades (help students set their mastery goals)</li> <li>2.make sure that evaluation be based on mastery of content/process &amp; not on results only</li> <li>3.help student to overcome fear of failure</li> <li>4.allow students to redo the assignment, if need so</li> <li>5.don't share results publicly</li> <li>6. pay full attention</li> <li>7.clearly communicate expectations for performance in advance</li> <li>8. talk about cheating openly</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.improvement in pedagogy - an emphasis on learning rather than on performance goals</li> <li>2.clear identification of cheating and its potential negative outcomes</li> <li>3.teachers and academic institution need to clearly discuss and make obvious the consequences and costs of academic dishonesty to students</li> <li>4.presenting students with data that most students/peers do not view cheating as acceptable behaviour may also influence perceived norms and attitudes</li> <li>5.physical constraints (e.g., large space between students)</li> <li>6.examination system needs to be prudent to develop critical thinking in students.</li> <li>7. The administration should support teachers in their efforts to systematically instil and uphold ethical behaviour in their students.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Academic Institution</b> should have:        (If institution's philosophy is unconcerned for ethical behaviour, cheating will eventually become a normalized behaviour).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.a clear and pronounced educational vision and a strategy</li> <li>2.policy about academic dishonesty</li> <li>3.a deeply embedded and well-run honor code</li> <li>4.openly and uniformly support ethical behaviours</li> <li>5.strengthening the reporting requirements</li> <li>6.fairly and appropriate implementation of the policies of punishment</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Students</b>        (it's all for you)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.aim to learn and master the material (intrinsic goals)</li> <li>2. stronger commitment to the educational process be developed - final-success (positive result) is just a timely pleasure while working and walking on the path of your passion is a true satisfaction</li> <li>3.make sure that you fully understand institutional policy regarding cheating</li> <li>4.learn official language of your institution</li> <li>5.associate yourself with university life</li> <li>6.familiarise yourself with information technology and new trends in the world</li> <li>7.humans possess and need to activate internalized code of ethics to opposes dishonest behaviour</li> <li>8.witnessing peers cheating doesn't mean it's right thing to do – dishonesty is never a choice</li> <li>9.cost associated with cheating may apparently seem minimal but in fact it is not</li> <li>10.trust that high ethical &amp; moral beliefs &amp; practises make you worthy and not the dishonest practices</li> <li>11.trust and use self-capabilities which will help to build self-confidence/self-efficacy &amp; will help to get rid of fear of failure</li> <li>12.desire to get ahead is beneficial for you and others, if it is to have better version of yourself</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Others:</b> 1. only moral beliefs deter a student from cheating.        2.a moral culture encourages students to do what is right.        3.clear identification of cheating and its potential negative consequences need to be communicated openly        4.strategies that foster a sense of meaning and clarity in students might curb academic dishonesty        5.more religiosity is linked with reduced cheating in all courses</p>		

#### 4.2 Inferences

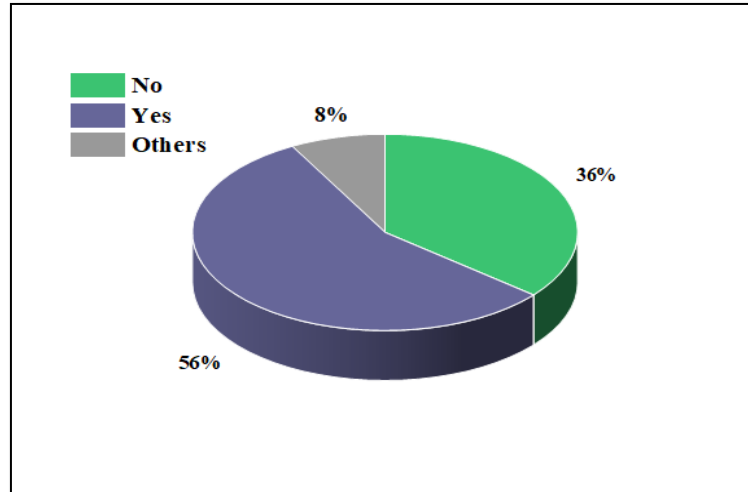
These findings confirm the widespread occurrence of cheating within our study group and underscore the importance of academic pressure for grades, competition, and fear of failure as primary factors leading students to resort to dishonest methods. Despite more than 50% of students admitting to cheating, 78% concurred that cheating is incorrect, and 58% experienced guilt after cheating. These results suggest an inherent disapproval of cheating and subsequent guilt when it occurs. This survey data corroborates the guilt experienced by students after cheating, as outlined in the literature review. It is proposed that these innate human sentiments against cheating could be leveraged to cultivate a culture of academic honesty and deter dishonest practices among students. It is recommended that educators and academic institutions assist students in managing their fear of failure and encourage them to set learning objectives rather than solely focusing on achieving high grades.

In response to the query regarding the moral stance on cheating, a significant majority, comprising 77% of the surveyed population, affirmed its ethical reprehensibility. Conversely, a minority, constituting 21.5% of respondents, expressed a contrary viewpoint, while 2% abstained from providing a response. Illustrative depiction of these data is presented in Figure 2. Notably, a notable proportion, equivalent to 21%, exhibited a moral dissonance, as evidenced by their avowal that cheating is not morally objectionable.



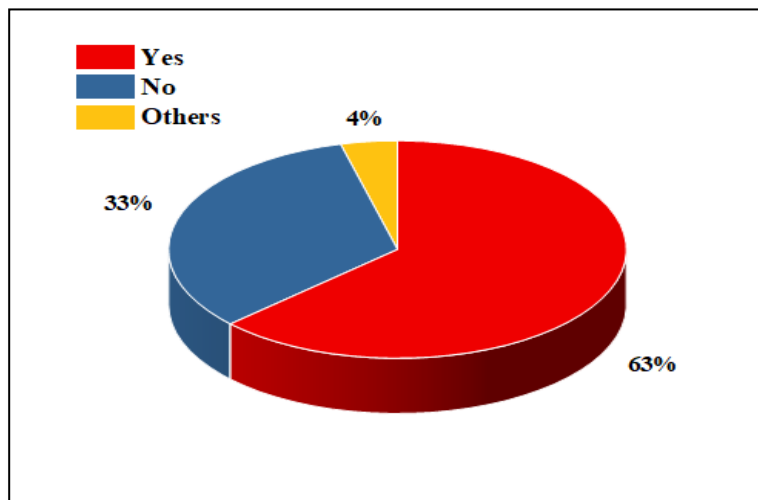
**Figure 2: Distribution of Responses to the Question "Is Cheating Wrong?" among the Target Audience.**

In response to inquiries regarding their personal experiences with academic dishonesty, 56% of the surveyed students admitted to engaging in cheating behaviour during examinations over the course of their academic careers. Conversely, 36% of respondents adamantly denied any involvement in such practices, while 8% abstained from providing a response. The revelation that over half of the surveyed cohort resorted to cheating in examinations underscores a profound challenge within the educational assessment framework. Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of responses elicited by the query, "Have you ever engaged in cheating during examinations?"



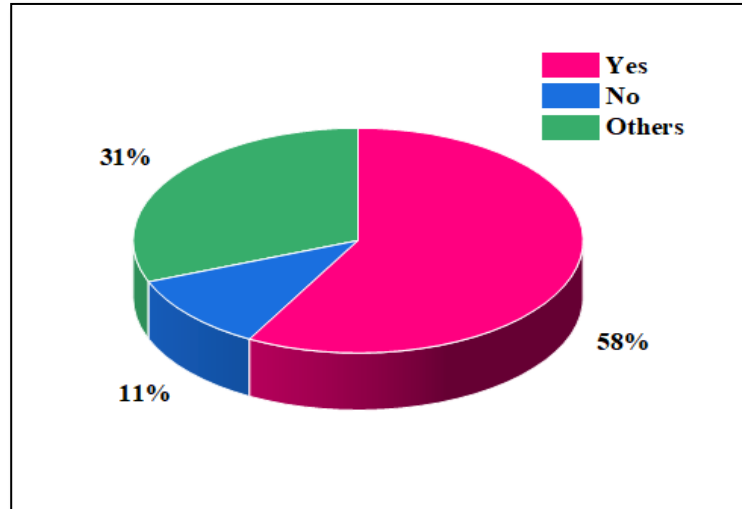
**Figure 3: Distribution of Responses to the Question regarding Survey Participant's Engagement in Cheating during Examinations**

Figure 4 displays the collected data in response to the query 'Do you believe that cheating is more prevalent among high-achieving students?' where 63% of participants affirmatively responded, while 33% negated the assertion. To elucidate the data presented in Figure 4, it reveals the perspectives of respondents regarding the prevalence of cheating among high-achieving students. Specifically, 63% of participants indicated a belief that such misconduct is more prevalent among high-achieving peers, while 33% expressed a contrary viewpoint, suggesting a perception of equal or lesser prevalence. This distribution underscores the varying perceptions within the surveyed population concerning the association between academic achievement and dishonest conduct.



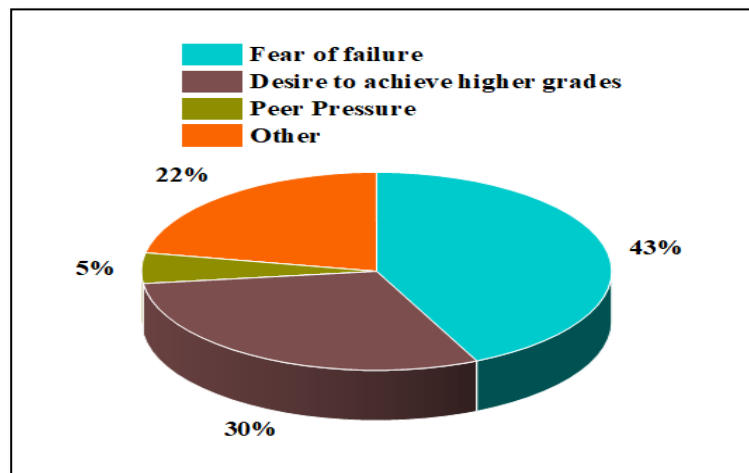
**Figure 4: Perceptions on the Prevalence of Cheating Among High-Achieving Students, as Reported by Survey Respondents**

When queried about experiencing guilt or remorse after engaging in cheating behaviour, 58% of respondents acknowledged such sentiments, contrasting starkly with the mere 11% who claimed an absence of such emotions. The remaining participants sought to rationalize their actions, thus categorized under 'Others.' Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of responses pertaining to remorse following instances of cheating among students.



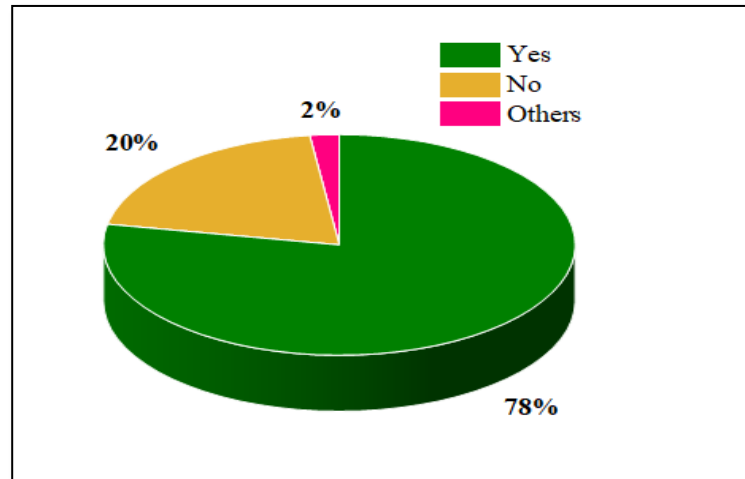
**Figure 5: Distribution of Student Responses Regarding Feelings of Guilt or Remorse Following Instances of Cheating**

Figure 6 presents the collected data pertaining to students' motivations for engaging in cheating behaviour. When queried about the underlying motivations driving cheating behaviour during examinations, 43% of respondents attributed it to a fear of failure, while 30% cited the pursuit of high grades as their primary incentive. Additionally, 20% of students identified peer pressure as a contributing factor. This data reveals the diverse motivations behind cheating behaviour among students during examinations. It suggests that a significant portion of students resort to cheating due to a fear of failure, while others are driven by a desire to attain high grades or succumb to peer pressure. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of the factors influencing academic dishonesty within educational settings.



**Figure 6: Distribution of Student Responses Regarding Motivations for Cheating During Examinations**

A significant majority of respondents, approximately 78%, are of the opinion that students who engage in cheating during exams tend to persist with such actions in their future endeavours. This indicates a prevailing belief among the student body that cheating is a recurrent conduct not easily discarded by individuals. Figure 7 illustrates the collected data regarding surveyed students' response about the long-term behaviour of students who commit academic dishonesty.



**Figure 7: Distribution of Student Responses Concerning Future Intentions of Individuals involved in Cheating Behaviour**

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

Two approaches, documentary analysis and questionnaire, enabled us to comprehend the complex elements that lead to student dishonesty in academic settings and pinpoint potential zones for implementing strategies to curb academic misconduct.

This work concluded that students' academic goals play a significant role in their probability of cheating. When priority of students is extrinsic goals only (result/grades/competition with others), they find cheating a smart and quick way out and rationalize cheating to achieve these goals, thereby confirming our hypothesis. While students who aim to learn, develop, and master the material (intrinsic goals) are less likely to engage in academic dishonesty.

Students are under tremendous pressure from parents, peers, academic institutions, and society for good grades, and all that become terrible when they lack self-confidence and hence leads to fear of failure which paves its way to dishonest behaviours. These factors are further fuelled by witnessing others cheating, including peers and society, and getting no or minimum punishment. The perception that high-achieving students are more likely to cheat indicates that a significant number of students perceive a connection between academic success and dishonest behaviour. These circumstances lead students to believe that nobody cares, or that instances of cheating will go unnoticed, potential sufferings are minimal, authorities can be dodged, and cheaters are successful and smart people. Other factors facilitating dishonest behaviour include evaluation based on result and not on process, lack of clarity regarding academic dishonesty policy, cumbersome reporting process, condoning teachers, weak reporting, lack of leadership regarding academic integrity and lack of academic integrity culture in institution. These findings align with prior scholarly publications on the subject of cheating.

Discussed factors of cheating are interlinked and are carving the path for getting extrinsic goals (grades) and hence motivate the academic dishonesty. This work discussed that teachers and academic environment have the power to influence students' academic goals and consequently discourage cheating. Schools should establish clear anti-cheating rules, clearly and openly discuss about academic dishonesty and its related costs, improve detection methods, enforce appropriate disciplinary actions. Additionally, promoting a culture that values learning, collaboration, and mastery rather than competition, for which teachers may play a significant role, can help reduce

cheating rates. The findings highlight the need for educational institutions to adopt a balanced approach to evaluation, placing importance on holistic measures of student performance beyond grades alone. Educators and institutions should focus on creating supportive learning environments that prioritize student well-being and foster intrinsic motivation. Implementing criterion-referenced grading, utilizing grading rubrics, and offering flexible grading schemes with open discussion with students, can provide students with clear expectations, reduce stress, and promote fairness.

This study also highlights the emotional consequences of dishonesty, as a substantial proportion of students experience feelings of remorse and regret after cheating. In terms of a potential strategy for addressing academic misconduct, this study recommends exploiting and capitalizing on the innate aversion to cheating and cultivating a solid sense of academic integrity. This approach can help sustain an active ethical code among students to deter academic misconduct.

It is also suggested that if parents, teachers, and academic institutions shift their focus from grades to the process of learning, it can alleviate the stress associated with grades and encourage students to truly engage in gaining knowledge.

By cultivating a nurturing educational atmosphere that highlights the learning journey, appreciates personal advancement, skill acquisition, leverages the inherent resistance to dishonesty, and promotes a deeply ingrained ethical code, students can develop a sincere dedication to academic honesty. This will encourage students to leave behind any dishonest tendencies, cultivating instead a personality that is confident and rooted in strong ethical and moral principles. This will not only serve them well beyond their university years, but also enable them to make significant positive contributions to society.

## **6. Implications of Conclusions**

The results underscore the necessity for schools to implement a well-rounded assessment strategy, emphasizing comprehensive indicators of student achievement that extend beyond mere grades alone. Educational institutions should formulate explicit policies against cheating, engage in transparent conversations about the implications of academic fraud, enhance methods of identifying dishonesty, and apply suitable punitive measures.

This work suggested that by taking advantage of the natural tendency to avoid dishonest behaviour and promoting a strong dedication to academic integrity, we can maintain a dynamic code of ethics among students. In other words, if we emphasise the importance of honesty in academic work and tap into students' innate dislike for cheating, we can ensure that students adhere to a set of ethical guidelines actively. This approach can help create an academic environment where honesty is valued, and cheating is discouraged. The study proposes the integration of moral education and training into our contemporary education system.

## **7. Future Recommendations**

Future research could focus on exploring ways to integrate moral education and training into our current education system. Comprehending the norms of a society can help in identifying viable strategies for delivering moral education and training tailored to that specific society and culture.

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