Attitudes of Student Nurses Enrolled in E-Learning Course Towards Academic Dishonesty: A Descriptive- Exploratory Study

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Abstract. The author investigated attitudes of nursing students enrolled in e-Learning towards academic dishonesty. The descriptive- exploratory design was used in the conduct of the study. Respondents were randomly selected 36 junior and senior nursing students. It revealed that nursing students perceived as neutral (mean= 2.77, mean= 3.17) in taking responsibility for promoting academic integrity in e- learning. The paraphrasing a sentence from internet source without referencing it (38.89%) got the most form of cheating. Female and level four (4) nursing students revealed as the most cheaters. The reasons not to cheat, nursing students considered punishment, and education or learning (91.67%) got the highest in ranks, and simply wrong (75%) got the lowest rank. Hence, there is a need to look on how to maintain academic honesty among nursing students in and out of the university with respect to e- learning as a means of teaching- learning method.

Keywords. Attitudes of student nurses, e- Learning course, academic dishonesty, academic- integrity,responsibility

Introduction

Academic dishonesty in the forms of cheating and plagiarism is a large and growing problem that has been acknowledged in both the public and academic realms. As research suggest that academic dishonesty is a problem affecting many school levels, academic disciplines, and countries. [1] More so, academic dishonesty is the most prevailing issues unsettled as observed by the author especially in e- learning as a new learning method for students in the college and universities. As e- learning would contribute much to student's learning as easy and available, use anytime without restraints, but it is best to acknowledge how e- learning gives academic freedom to students to use and grants due respect to the original authors. This is cited by Richards, Busch, Germanou (2009) that e- Learning encourages students to avail themselves of the myriad of resources available via the World Wide Web, the ease and speed of access to material needs to be counterbalanced by appropriate assessment by the

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student of the credibility of the source, thoughtful evaluation and analysis of the content and the appropriate acknowledgement of the owner of the original ideas [2].

However, it has been observed and noted that our nursing students who enrolled in e- learning course revealed a more prevalent forms of cheating and that supports this report by the proctors in the e- learning department that - academic dishonesty through cheating in any forms is very rampant since e- Learning prescribed in the university. This led the author to conduct a study about academic dishonesty in e- Learning course towards understanding and modifying the behaviors of nursing students. This is also to understand the prevailing attitudes to cheating of nursing students. Further, to what extent to which nursing students take responsibility for promoting academic integrity, why they would not cheat in response to a cheating, and self- reported cheating.

The specific questions the author would want to explore were the following:
a. To what extent do junior and senior nursing students take responsibility for promoting academic integrity in e-learning course?
b. How frequent do junior and senior nursing students engage themselves in cheating in e- learning course?
c. Based on gender and year level of the nursing students enrolled in e- learning course, what is most frequent in cheating?
c. Do junior and senior nursing students agree on the reasons not to cheat in e-learning course?

1. Methodology

The quantitative descriptive- exploratory research design was used in the conduct of the study. The descriptive design aided the researcher with the quantified information regarding Attitudes of Junior and Senior Student Nurses Enrolled in E- Learning Course towards Academic Dishonesty. Data was gathered through the use of a questionnaire. Participants in the study were 36 nursing students enrolled in e- learning course of the College of Nursing, University of the Cordilleras, Baguio City. Of these 36 respondents, 41.67% were male and 58.33% were female. Most of the participants are level four (4) students (58.33%) and the rest, level three (3) students (41.67%). Random sampling was utilized.

Questionnaire was the main instrument in collecting the data. The instrument was adopted from the study of Miller, A., et.al (2011) The Reasons not to cheat, Academic- Integrity Responsibility, and Frequency of cheating instrument with permission. For each data gathering procedure, permission and consent has been obtained from each respondent by reiterating the purpose of this study. [3]

Frequencies, percentages, ranking, and weighted means were used to address the research questions.

2. Results and Discussions

The nursing students perceived as neutral in taking responsibility for promoting academic integrity in e- learning course. This means that most unlikely or likely the students will take responsibility in reporting any incidence of cheating in the e-learning

Table 1. Academic-Integrity Responsibility of Cheating During E- Learning Course

Item	Statements	WM	INTER
	How likely is it that you would report it if you witnessed someone copying or cheating on an exam?	2.77	N
2	How likely is it that you would report someone who you knew had plagiarized or submitted another student's paper?	3.17	N
3	Students should report cheating when they witness it.	3.69	A
4	Students should be held responsible for monitoring the academic integrity of other students.	3.03	N
5	Preventing students from cheating is only a concern for the professor.	3.11	N

Legend: VUL: Very Unlikely; UL: Unlikely; N: Neutral; L: Likely; VL: Very Likely SD: Strongly Disagree; DisA: Disagree; N: Neutral; A: Agree; SA: Strongly Agree

course. But, should you report cheating when you witness it garnered an "agree" result, this would mean that once they caught somebody's cheating in any forms probably they would report it to their instructor, respectively.

However, in items 4 and 5, got a neutral results, this mean that the nursing students most likely disagree or agree at the very extent should be held responsible for monitoring the academic integrity of other students. Further, at students' perspective the monitoring such academic integrity of students would be the sole task of their instructor. It should be noted that item 5 was reversed- scored revealing a neutral result, which is agreeable with the result of item 4, which is still neutral.

Table 2 presents the frequency of nursing students engaged themselves in cheating in their e- learning course. Almost all the items except "receiving help on an assignment that exceeds that which would be acceptable to the teacher, helping someone else cheat on a test, paraphrasing a sentence from a written or internet source without footnoting or referencing it in the paper", revealed that all the respondents not able to engaged themselves in these kind of cheating in their e- learning course. This mean that the nursing students enrolled in e- learning practiced plagiarism. Further, it revealed that no citing the source and copying the exact statements of the source are most frequent practice among nursing students. This is true with the results of the study of Dietz, Underwood and Szabo (2003) that ninety- four percent of their respondents were sufficiently skilled to use the Internet inappropriately and there was widespread acceptance of Internet plagiarism with one in every two students indicated that they would probably resort to plagiarism to escape failing a certain module. [4]

Table 3 presents the frequency of cheating among nursing students in their e-learning course based on gender and year level, based on the results it is revealing that female and level four (4) nursing students incurred most of the kinds of cheating. This would mean that in your senior year, the more confident you are in engaging yourself in cheating and the more prevalent it is. That when you are in junior years maybe the start of practicing any types of cheating. Nevertheless, the results of this study is in contrast with the results of the study of Miller, A., et.al., (2011) that male students displayed more overall cheating than did female students. However, there were no literatures cited that would revealed that the more senior or junior you are in the college

Table 2. Frequency of Engaging in a Cheating Act among Nursing Students During E- Learning Course

Statements	Never (0)	Once (1)	More than once (2)	Frequently (3)
Turning in work done by someone else.	47.22	25	19.44	8.33
Writing or providing a paper for another student.	47.22	19.44	22.22	11.11
Receiving help on an assignment that exceeds that which would be acceptable to the teacher.	30.56	33.33	30.56	5.56
Getting questions or answers from someone who has already taken a test.	41.67	36.11	13.89	8.33
Helping someone else cheat on a test.	36.11	36.11	19.44	8.33
Copying from another student during an examination.	44.44	33.33	19.44	2.78
Paraphrasing (copying with rewording) a sentence from a written or internet source without footnoting or referencing it in the paper.	33.33	27.78	38.89	0
Copying a sentence directly from a written or internet source without quotes and proper referencing.	36.11	41.67	22.22	0
Turning in a paper obtained in large part from a term paper "mill" or Web site.	58.33	25	13.89	2.78
Using unpermitted crib notes (or cheat sheets) during a test.	77.78	19.44	2.78	0
Altering a graded test and submitting it (as misgraded) for extra credit.	72.22	22.22	2.78	2.78
Turning in a paper copied, at least in part, from another student's paper.	50	38.89	8.33	2.78
Using a false excuse to obtain an extension on a due date or to take a test at a different time.	77.78	13.89	8.33	0
Participating in the exchange or sharing of a stolen copy of the test.	80.56	13.89	5.56	0
Turning in a paper that you originally wrote for another class without awareness of the professor regarding its previous use.	61.11	38.89	0	0

will quantify how frequent cheating at your level. But, as cited by Dietz, Underwood and Szabo (2003) that the longer students has been at university the more likely they were to suggest that peers were using the Internet inappropriately but the third years were also more likely to indicate that they would feel guilty if they committed an act of plagiarism. Further, the authors revealed that males tended to be more willing to commit academic offences, simple cutting and pasting without referencing the source of the information was predicted by frequency of Internet use for coursework. [4]

Table 3. Frequency of Cheating among Nursing Students Based on Gender and Year Level

Statements	Male	Female	Level III	Level IV
Turning in work done by someone else.	12	20	7	25
Writing or providing a paper for another student.	16	19	8	27
Receiving help on an assignment that exceeds that which would be acceptable to the teacher.	21	18	18	21
Getting questions or answers from someone who has already taken a test.	17	16	11	22
Helping someone else cheat on a test.	13	22	5	30
Copying from another student during an examination.	14	15	9	20
Paraphrasing (copying with rewording) a sentence from a written or internet source without footnoting or referencing it in the paper.	16	19	8	27
Copying a sentence directly from a written or internet source without quotes and proper referencing.	13	19	7	25
Turning in a paper obtained in large part from a term paper "mill" or Web site.	9	13	3	19
Using unpermitted crib notes (or cheat sheets) during a test.	4	5	0	9
Altering a graded test and submitting it (as misgraded) for extra credit.	5	8	1	12
Turning in a paper copied, at least in part, from another student's paper.	11	12	6	17
Using a false excuse to obtain an extension on a due date or to take a test at a different time.	10	3	3	10
Participating in the exchange or sharing of a stolen copy of the test.	6	5	2	9
Turning in a paper that you originally wrote for another class without awareness of the professor regarding its previous use.	9	5	4	10

With all the reasons not to cheat in their e- learning course, Table 4 revealed that punishment or avoiding consequences (91.67%) , and education or learning (91.67%) got the highest rank, it follows the standards or character as a reason (83.33%), and lastly, simply wrong (75%) got the lowest rank. This is supported by the study of Miller, A., et,al., (2011) that punishment and learning got the most common reasons why students not to cheat.

Table 4. Reasons-Not-to-Cheat in the E- Learning Course

Statements	Yes	No
Punishment/avoiding Consequences: Worse to get caught by the professor than get a few questions correct on the test. I would be afraid of getting an F (failure grade) on my transcript.	91.67	8.33
Standards/character : My own morals that I have developed tell me to respect my instructor and his materials. Dishonesty is a reflection of that person's character.	83.33	16.67
Simply wrong: It is not right, and would not feel right/ethical if I did look at it. I would not look because I know it would be unfair.	75	25
Educational/learning: Learning is my objective, cheating won't teach me anything. I also would rather know that I received a good grade due to what I already have learned.	91.67	8.33

3. Conclusions and Future Directions

As revealed in the study, an interesting result would be that they are agreeable to report someone cheating when they witness it. However, they are more likely or unlikely would report if they will witnessed someone copying and plagiarized or submitted another student's paper. Plagiarism or copying somebody's paper without citing the original paper is the most frequent cheating practices among the nursing students, also it revealed that female and fourth year nursing students stand out as most "cheaters". But, punishment or avoiding consequences and education or learning ranked as top reasons not to cheat. [5]

This would suggest that a closer look must be taken in consideration on the academic dishonesty among nursing students enrolled in e- learning provided that this will give impact to the academic integrity of the university. Also it must be integrated on how to solve these issues and concentrate what can be done to eliminate or lessen incidences of cheating regardless if with the aid of technology or not considering on how to understand and to what extent to modify the behaviors of nursing students towards academic honesty. [6-7]Future research can be done to enhance this study by looking into differences among nursing students based on their gender, ethnic background, and academic year towards academic- integrity responsibility on cheating. To be more appropriate of results, it would be best to conduct this study in a larger population with students and faculty as respondents in state universities.

Acknowledgment

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