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Rationalizing Academic Dishonesty and Its Effect on Nursing

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Rationalizing Academic Dishonesty and Its Effect on Nursing

by

Leah Salisbury

A Thesis
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The University of Southern Mississippi
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the prevalence of cheating in a bachelor's degree nursing program and to determine if social normalization contributed to the increase. Three major sources for the increase in cheating were identified, and these are technological advances, lack of a specific cheating definition, and cultural socialization towards academic dishonesty (Wideman, 2011; DuPree and Sattler, 2010; Jones, 2011; Burrus, McGoldrick and Schuhmann, 2007). Studies showed a positive correlation between engagement in academic dishonesty and engagement in dishonest behaviors in nursing practice, which is the biggest concern for nursing programs (Krueger, 2014; Johnstone, 2016; McCrink, 2010). The survey was emailed to 401 students across various semesters in the nursing program, and 99 students participated in the survey. The survey was two parts with the first part being a 32 item Attitudes Towards Cheating Likert scale questionnaire and the second part being two qualitative questions asking about experience with cheating and tolerance of their peers cheating. Overall, the students showed lower rates of cheating in nursing school compared to other majors, and the nursing students held a mildly intolerable attitude towards cheating. However, most students were passive or tolerant of other students cheating, as the majority felt the maintenance of academic integrity regarding other students was not their responsibility. Continuing research is needed, as dishonest acts in school translate to poor integrity in nursing practice. The largest limitation to the study is that the prevalence rates of cheating are self-reported, thus lowering the accuracy of the study since there is negativity surrounding cheating.

Keywords: cheating, academic dishonesty, survey

DEDICATION

To my beautiful grandma, Sue White,

I think often of your past dreams and plans of becoming a nurse, and I'm grateful for the opportunity that you never received. You taught me the importance of fearing God, putting family first, and being honest in all endeavors. I appreciate your unwavering love and support.

All my love,

Leah Salisbury

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

As the rates of self-reported cheating have drastically increased to levels upwards of 50% in nursing, research is divided on the reason behind this increase (Krueger, 2014; Park, Park, and Jang, 2012). The three most highly researched areas of cheating reasoning are technological advances, lack of a specific cheating definition, and cultural socialization towards academic dishonesty to produce success (Wideman, 2011; DuPree and Sattler, 2010; Jones, 2011; Burrus, McGoldrick and Schuhmann, 2007). Likely, these reasons are not mutually exclusive. Even so, it is important to understand the influence they each play in cheating habits. Different majors and forms of data collection have made comparing statistics difficult (Wideman, 2011; DuPree and Sattler, 2010; Jones, 2011; Burrus, McGoldrick and Schuhmann, 2007; Krueger, 2014; Park, Park, and Jang, 2012).

Rationalizations are used to seek acceptance and negate the severity of academic dishonesty. Rationalizations tend to use logic to justify undesirable actions. Scholars suspect that the use of rationalizations increases the normalization of cheating because it veils the negative aspects of academic dishonesty and only presents the benefits of the action (Wideman, 2011). The motive for cheating, such as the need for success, fear of parents, good grades, etc., overshadows the importance of integrity (Wideman, 2011).

Tolerating academic dishonesty is also an important factor in the rise in prevalence. Perception of academic dishonesty is driven by peer influence. If peers do not directly condemn the practice, they condone it by default (Arvin, 2009; Wideman, 2011). Tolerance may lead some moral students to begin participating in academic dishonesty.

The descriptive study focused on the prevalence of academic dishonesty and rationalizations of academic dishonesty in baccalaureate nursing students. It questioned if students have used popular rationalizations to justify acts of academic dishonesty. Concluding the study, the attitude of tolerance in students supported that cheating was increasing because it was becoming more socially acceptable.

Deriving the reason behind the marked increase in academic dishonesty in baccalaureate-level nursing programs was important for providing safe patient care. Cheating in school often translated into deficient knowledge in nursing care or a higher potential for dishonest behaviors in the workplace, which is why this research improves the nursing profession, knowledge of student nurses, and safety in clinical practice (Krueger, 2014; Johnstone, 2016; McCrink, 2010; Klainberg, et al., 2014; Harding et al., 2004; Sheeba et al., 2019; Kececi, Bulduk, Oruc, and Celik, 2011). Nursing schools are responsible for the nurses they produce, and therefore, the potential to release a dishonest nursing student into the workforce is alarming. Nursing educators can utilize the conclusion of the research when preparing examinations.

CHAPTER II: BACKGROUND

General Prevalence of Academic Dishonesty Background

Academic dishonesty, colloquially referred to as cheating, has been on the rise for several decades. Donald McCabe, the founder of the National Center for Academic Integrity, conducted a study with 50,000 college students in 2005 and found that over 70% of students admitted to partaking in at least one form of academic dishonesty (McCabe, 2005). Studies performed at other universities had equivalent cheating rates (DuPree and Sattler, 2010; Jones, 2011; Burrus, McGoldrick, and Schuhmann, 2007). Studies producing cheating rates of 50% or above are a monumental increase from a study conducted in 1963 where only 26% self-reported cheating (Vencat, Overdorf, and Adams, 2006). With self-reporting being the easiest and most popular form of collecting data, the question diverged to are the actual acts of cheating increasing or is the social acceptability and commonality of cheating increasing (Bates, Davies, Murphy, and Bone, 2005)? Furthermore, studies on academic dishonesty that collected data quantitatively and qualitatively yielded different results, thus making it difficult to correctly identify the root of the increase in academic dishonesty.

Wideman, in his literature review, found that in qualitative studies, students did not understand the meaning of academic integrity, suggesting that academic dishonesty can be improved by defining the expectations of students and educating them on what academic integrity means in their major (2011). Oppositely, quantitative studies showed that students did understand what constituted as academic integrity but chose to act dishonestly for various reasons, thus signifying a possible cultural issue (Wideman,

2011). Determining the root of the increase in cheating has been the focus of most studies on cheating.

While McCabe's large-scale study focused on a broad spectrum of majors, academic dishonesty in health science schools was comparable with a 92.8% cheating rate (McCabe, 2005; Oran, Can, Senol, Hadimli). This rate included the students who cheated and the students who knew of cheating in the classroom (Oran, Can, Senol, Hadimli, 2016). Students admitted in this report that they did not consider cheating immoral or unusual (Oran, Can, Senol, Hadimli, 2016). Oran, Can, Senol, and Hadimli's report shows support for the idea that the increase in cheating was a result of cultural changes in integrity.

Specific to nursing, a study conducted in 2013 with 211 nursing students found that 65% reported cheating in the classroom setting, and 54% in the clinical setting reported violating an integrity policy (Krueger, 2014). Their most common forms of cheating in the classroom were plagiarism and the reuse of former students' materials (Krueger, 2014). In the clinical setting, the most common forms were violating patient confidentiality and not rectifying errors in practice, like breaking sterile techniques (Krueger, 2014). Only 4% of undergraduate students did not recognize that they were committing an act of academic dishonesty (Krueger, 2014). Another study surveyed 544 undergraduate nursing students from 5 different institutions and found that 50% of students cheated on exams and 78% cheated on assignments (Park, Park, and Jang). The survey also reported that perceived seriousness of cheating (OR=0.74, 0.64) and perceived prevalence of peers' cheating (OR=3.02, 6.66) were significant predictors for both exam-cheating and assignment cheating (Park, Park, and Jang, 2012).

Defining Academic Dishonesty and Student Perspectives

The International Center for Academic Integrity identified integrity as a mixture of five values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. The ICAI acknowledged that these values should occur even with adversity (i.e., pressure from parents, fear of receiving poor scores, failure, and a lack of time) (Oran, Can, Senol, and Hadimli, 2016). Nursing is regarded as one of the most respected professions, but as dishonest behavior progresses, there is fear that the public's perception of the nursing profession may return to Charles Dickens' exemplification of nurses in "Martin Chuzzlewit," where the nurses are unqualified and incompetent (Oran, Can, Senol, and Hadimli, 2016). Defining academic dishonesty and understand the student perspective is pertinent to improving the increase in academic dishonesty.

Definitions of cheating vary widely among students and faculty, so quantifying prevalence rates has become difficult. An integral part of identifying cheating and rectifying academic dishonesty rates is identifying the most common forms of cheating and the terminology used to describe cheating. In a 2018 study on academic dishonesty, students felt there was no consensus about what is constituted as cheating, especially when it came to collaborative efforts outside of the class, use of former classwork, and falsely delaying tests (Wright, Jones, and Adams, 2018). Students felt that professors set the level of leniency for cheating in the classroom, and if the professor was not actively working to prevent it, then cheating was allowed (Wideman, 2011). Most university institutions identified academic dishonesty as intentionally participating in deceiving acts relating to academics, but this left a gray area for students who do not have a strong

moral compass (McCrink, 2010). In a study conducted in 2019, students had accurate responses to what constituted as academic dishonesty, and the list included both classroom and clinical practices: copying exams or assignments, plagiarizing, sharing test questions, faking absences, false documentation, not using aseptic technique, and other time-saving methods (Sheeba, Vinitha, Angelin, Emily, Mythily, Anuradha, and Selva, 2019). However, other researchers found there was a priming effect to the term cheating, so many students felt scenarios that were deemed academically dishonest, like falsely delaying a test, were not necessarily cheating (Carpenter, Harding, and Finelli, 2010).

With technology being a pertinent part of the classroom, students are tempted by time-saving methods, especially in classrooms with technologically inept professors. Photographing tests, cutting and pasting documents, and texting test answers were just a few of the ways amateur generation y and z students cheated. More technologically savvy students downloaded programs into the hard drive or hack systems (Arvin, 2009). The difference between nursing students and other majors was that nursing students are loyal to each other, and often their cheating efforts support group goals which bring back into question the idea that cultural shifts have influenced cheating (Wideman, 2011).

Tolerance seemed to be the underlying perspective of cheating by nursing students. Even students that did not participate in cheating described that they were tolerant of it if they, themselves, were not negatively impacted (Wideman, 2011). While most students could correctly identify academic dishonesty, their perception was influenced by peer dependence (Arvin, 2009). A 2010 study on behaviors, attitudes, rationalizations, and cultural identity found that students with a tolerant attitude toward misconduct were more likely to engage in misconduct (McCrink, 2010), but even in

institutions with honor codes, the students were still just as likely to cheat as students without honor codes. This study also suggested that cheating was not a result of a knowledge deficit because students in the 2019 study were able to recognize the impact of cheating on the professional level. These students realized that the lack of skills and knowledge may lead to providing inadequate care for patients in the future. If nursing students understand the impact and magnitude of their actions, then why does cheating continue (Sheeba, Vinitha, Angelin, Emily, Mythily, Anuradha, and Selva, 2019)?

Motives for Participation

The reasons for academic dishonesty is a long list, including but not limited to: lack of time, an overload of work, lack of preparation, fear of failure or punishment, desire for praise, lack of interest, poor classroom environment, lack of positive reinforcement of honesty, and lack of positive motivation from teachers (Sheeba, Vinitha, Angelin, Emily, Mythily, Anuradha, and Selva, 2019; Wideman, 2011; Tatum, Schwartz, Hageman, and Kortke, 2018). Students felt compelled to participate in academic dishonesty to remain competitive in an environment that placed great importance on grades and credentials rather than knowledge. With a system that focuses on outcomes, students explained that they felt cheating was a “means to an end” (Wright, Jones, and Adams, 2018). Students described academic dishonesty as an “indispensable part of life,” which was an alarming statement to institutions that are graduating nurses that will impact the future of a patient (Oran, Can, Senol, and Hadimli, 2016). This “means to an end” idea was also like Kereci, Bulduk, Oruc, and Celik’s idea that nursing schools are similar to collectivist societies with students seeing cheating as socially acceptable as

long as it benefits the group and not the individual (2011). Overall, the students felt that their actions do not reflect their integrity if the justification was deemed worthy (Kecici, Bulduk, Oruc, and Celik, 2011).

When looking at students, some studies believed that certain students have characteristics that make them more likely to cheat. Oran, Can, Senol, and Hadimli believed students with high ambition, low self-control, low confidence, lack of motivation, and disrespect for rules and policies had a higher tendency toward academic dishonesty (2016). Studies also hinted that the wealthier students felt entitled to cheating because of the funds used to derive the education and donorship to the universities (Kecici, Bulduk, Oruc, and Celik, 2011). Additionally, some studies suggested that future and present generations are inventive, self-sufficient problem solvers with a need for immediate gratification, stimulation, and feedback, and with the proliferation of available technology, the respect for integrity was overbalanced by society's praise for success. This suggests that the type of person that might cheat could be anyone if the payoff were worth it (Kecici, Bulduk, Oruc, and Celik, 2011; Oran, Can, Senol, and Hadimli).

In a culture that is beginning to applaud the phrase "a means to an end," there are still some factors that are encouraging students to uphold moral policies. The first reason is upbringing. McCrink found that students began their moral upbringing long before entering a university. Personal cultural identity, which includes values, beliefs, and principles that guide behaviors, differs for every student, and most students had a negative association with neutralizing or rationalizing cheating behaviors (2010). Positive influences from friends and family are another reason. As previously mentioned, students are likely to cheat if it is condoned by their peers, which adversely works if their peers do

not condone cheating behaviors. Fear of God and conscience also deterred students from cheating. Even the students who did cheat neutralized their behaviors to avoid feeling guilty. Lastly, the appropriate testing environment and preparedness reduce the possibility to cheat. Students with a strong connection to faculty members were less likely to cheat because they wanted the respect of the faculty (Sheeba, Vinitha, Angelin, Emily, Mythily, Anuradha, and Selva, 2019; Tatum, Schwartz, Hageman, and Kortke, 2018).

Use of Rationalizations

Rationalization, also referred to as neutralization, is deflecting blame or legitimizing one's dishonest behaviors by using statements such as "Even good people can do bad things" and "Everyone hates references and using APA" to mask their discomfort with cheating (Wideman, 2011, p. 34). These behaviors were ones that seem valid to the individual but not society. Neutralization is a foundation for cheating. Students rationalize cheating as a necessity to surviving the fast-paced world, and a necessity cannot be looked at as solely wrong. Dishonesty, in the minds of some students, is merely a gray area like Robin Hood's stealing. It is in mass marketing, political debates, television protagonists, and corporate ladders. Students are seeing their peers rewarded after dishonesty because there are very few examples of students punished harshly for deceptive practices (Tanner, 2004). In a study by Bailey, the faculty had given many examples where students were able to escape punishment with a technicality or punishments were annulled in appeal processes. Professors and deans developed a negative relationship with trying to maintain integrity because of the numerous amounts

of vain attempts (2001). In an eleven-participant survey study, all the students identified themselves as honest students, but nine of the eleven admitted to cheating regularly (Wideman, 2011). Rationalizations skew people's perception of morally good and bad.

The culture of nursing is to care, but sometimes this nature of caring extends in detrimental forms. Caring nurses empathize and set aside judgment, which is what most students do with their peers. These same caring nurses may steal test answers to ensure that the peers who are not performing well will achieve high enough grades to proceed in the program (Wideman, 2011). These students stratify their attitudes for different forms of misconduct (McCrink, 2010). For example, students felt that copying homework with permission was more honest than copying without permission (Arvin, 2009). Though the act of copying was the same, the acts were not considered equally immoral because peers condoned the behavior (Tanner 2004).

Technology and the resourceful nature of students is a model for rationalizing cheating efforts (Arvin, 2009). One student in his interview with Wideman said "If the quiz was easy to cheat on, then I feel no guilt using the easiest method to complete it." (2010). Students saw the practicality in practice rather than the adverse reaction, and additionally, evidence supported a lack of rapport between student and professor. Another student was outraged with faculty for giving readings and requiring recall for subjects that were not directly correlated with professional practice (Tanner, 2004). This student believed he would have more resources in the professional setting. One of the most frequently used rationalizations was "using available resources" such as unpermitted internet access (Wideman, 2011; Arvin, 2009, McCrink, 2010, and Tanner, 2004). While the students believed this was inventive, resourceful, and displayed a

problem-solver mentality, professors saw unfairness in the system, making it harder to derive who was competent and ready to perform in the workplace (Tanner, 2004).

McCabe devoted most of his research to academic dishonesty at the collegiate level (2001). He found that methods to predict academic dishonesty were inconsistent; however, he determined that neutralizing behaviors positively correlated to a student's likelihood of cheating (McCabe, 2001). He also found other factors that influenced academic dishonesty (McCabe, 2001). These factors consisted of the prevalence of classmates' cheating, the academic institution's attitude towards cheating, and the attitudes and behaviors towards cheating from classmates (McCabe, 2001). This emphasized that the culture of an institution impacts the prevalence of cheating.

Future of Nursing Practice and Patient Care

The biggest concern for the future of nursing practice was if the dishonesty in the classroom would translate into dishonesty in the workplace. A study conducted with 336 participants showed a positive correlation between engagement in academic dishonesty and engagement in dishonest behavior in the clinical setting (Krueger, 2014). Dishonest nurses threaten the good standing of the nursing profession (Johnstone, 2016). Daily health decisions are based on nursing assessments and notes, so it is important to remain vigilant in the efforts to reduce cheating in the classroom and remember the relationship between error and outcomes. A shortcut in school could mean the loss of a job or patient in the future (McCrink, 2010).

Klainberg, McCrink, Eckardt, Bongiorno, and Sedholm made a connection between pressure to maintain academics and pressure in the workplace to be "error-free

(2014).” The authors found that the hospital environment was “evaluative” much like a classroom (Klainberg et al., 2014). When nursing students “reasoned” or rationalized their behavior to be falsely right to protect their self-worth, then this behavior may become ingrained (Klainberg et al., 2014). This author believed that while nursing programs taught ethical theory and the Code of Ethics, students were largely encouraged to use their moral code to direct decisions, which may not have provided the most effective or moral care to patients. This study found a correlation between academic misconduct and workplace misconduct (Klainberg et al., 2014). Students who were found to have copied exams, received unpermitted study aids, or plagiarized were the same nurses that falsely documented or did not report errors.

A qualitative and quantitative study conducted by Harding, Carpenter, Finelli, and Passow researched if cheating in school translated into cheating in the workplace (2004). They discovered that the line of thought for cheating in school was similar to cheating in the workplace (Harding et al., 2004). Similarly, Nonis and Swift conducted a similar study on 1,051 business students, and the study also revealed that dishonest behavior in college translated to dishonest behavior in the workforce (2011). Furthermore, this study showed a positive correlation between tolerance of cheating and participation in cheating (Nonis and Swift, 2001). Nonis and Swift determined that “Students who do not respect the climate of academic integrity while in college, will not respect integrity in their future professional and personal relationships” (Nonis and Swift, 2001, p. 76). Additionally, this study showed that women were conditioned to act more morally than men because of gender norms.

A longitudinal study monitored academic dishonesty among Italian nursing students and found that students normalize their cheating behaviors and become accustomed to the practice; however, their tendencies towards cheating remained stable over the span of a year (Macale et al. 2017). Honest students remained honest and dishonest students remained dishonest. The deception continues throughout clinical practice out of habit and necessity (Macale et al. 2017). Many dishonest students do not obtain the necessary knowledge to produce quality care. This study found the school was a strong predictor of how the student would be in the workplace (Macale et al. 2017).

The importance of integrity should not be lost in the loud sounds of success, for integrity produces “sincere and dedicated care,” “ethically sound” individuals, fairness in the classroom, and an accurate prediction of student readiness (Sheeba et. al, 2019). Socialization into the profession of nursing instills the ethics and values that the community of nurses wants to continue to display in the profession (McCrink 2010). Both faculty and students have a responsibility in changing the culture of integrity and in making students behave responsibly and professionally (Kececi, Bulduk, Oruc, and Celik 2011).

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Design

This descriptive study was conducted to obtain self-reported prevalence rates and feelings towards cheating, common rationalizations, and opinions held about academic dishonesty. The participants stated their attitudes towards various forms of cheating, as well as their experience with academic dishonesty. An estimated time of completion for the survey was 10-15 minutes.

Participants

Criteria for inclusion in this study included the following: the participant must be a student enrolled and currently participating in a baccalaureate-level nursing program at a specific university in the Southern United States, and the student must be in his or her first, second, third, fourth, or fifth semester of the nursing program. Because of the possibly detrimental nature of the study, the university's identity remained anonymous. 401 students enrolled in the specific university's nursing program were contacted by email and asked to complete an online survey. Of the 401 students contacted, 99 responded, producing a 24.7% response rate.

Informed consent

Participants were provided a document that entailed the purpose, description, benefits, and risks of the study. The participants were also provided information about confidentiality and alternative procedures, essentially the ability to opt-out of the study at any time without penalty. By clicking the box at the end of the informed consent

document, the participant consented to participate in the research project and was immediately directed to begin the survey (see Appendix B). Responses were kept confidential because the survey could reveal potentially destructive information. The results from the survey were not tied to any personal identifiers. The study was approved by USM's International Review Board (see Appendix A).

Questionnaire

Before taking the survey, the participants were asked to list their age, semester of nursing school, and gender. The survey consisted of a total of 36 items: 34 items being on a Likert scale and 2 items being open-ended, qualitative responses. Gardner and Melvin 1988 Attitudes Toward Cheating Scale was used to measure opinions on cheating (see Appendix E). This scale was determined to be valid and reliable with a correlation of -.3 between ATC scale scores and acts of cheating (as evidenced by the researchers cheating on the study guide test). The ATC survey was measured by Gardner and Melvin with split-half reliability. This was obtained by correlating the total scores to a correct r and performing a Spearman-Brown formula. The r equaled 0.83 with a $p < 0.1$. The survey consisted of 34 items that could be rated strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided or do not understand (U), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD). These responses were then quantified with scores of -2, -1, 0, +1, and +2, respectively. An asterisk was placed next to questions that needed to have the answers inverted before being measured, as not to show a common theme while taking the survey. Lower overall scores indicated a less tolerant (lower than a score of 0), more condemnatory attitude towards cheating, and higher overall scores indicated a more tolerant attitude towards cheating (greater than a

score of 0). The survey was objective and worded without reference to the reader as not to sway the readers' answers. The survey addressed attitudes toward the cheater, morality of cheating, teacher behavior's effect on student attitude, and contingencies placed on cheating. Each item is worded in the form of a rationalization, a feeling or phrase used to deflect blame on cheating. The scores from this questionnaire were compared to the answers from the self-reported cheating prevalence (Gardner and Melvin, 1988). The qualitative questions on cheating prevalence and tolerance of other students cheating were used to add more direction and clarity on rationalizations by allowing the participant the opportunity to explain (See Appendix F). These questions were used to calculate prevalence rates.

Procedure

The survey was created through the online survey platform Qualtrics and disseminated through university emails via an email advertisement (see Appendix C). People who chose to participate were entered into a drawing for a \$25 Amazon gift card. After completion of the survey, the participants were asked to email my university email separately to be entered into the drawing and to maintain the confidentiality of the survey. The data was stored on my password-protected personal laptop, and the files were deleted upon completion of the thesis. Data was collected for a period of 2 weeks. An analysis was performed by Qualtrics following the completion of the data collection period. The data collection period began on October 15, 2020, and ended on November 15, 2020.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Demographics

A total of 401 surveys were emailed to baccalaureate students, and 99 students completed the survey. Of the 99 completed surveys, 95 participated in giving their demographic information (see Appendix D). *Table 1* compiles the gender, age, and race of the 95 students.

Table 1 Demographics

Demographics		
Gender	Categories	Percentage of nurses
	Female	85.3
	Male	14.7
Race		
	White	84.2
	Black	10.5
	American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.0
	Asian	3.2
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.0
	Other	2.1
Age		
	19	2.1
	20	30.7
	21	46.2
	22	15.4
	>22	5.5

Attitudes Towards Cheating Survey Results

With the William M. Gardner and Kenneth B. Melvin's Attitudes Toward Cheating Scale, the survey was internally divided into two parts: questions with asterisks and questions without asterisks. The scoring of the responses to the survey determined tolerance or intolerance towards cheating. Questions with asterisks received the inverse scoring of questions without asterisks. Chapter 3: Methodology provided more information on numerical scores assigned to each answer. In *Table 2*, the percentages of baccalaureate nursing student responses were recorded for each answer option. The mean of these responses was calculated, and from the mean, the answer was rounded so that a grading score can be applied by the question. All the averages were compiled to determine the tolerance or intolerance score of the average student. The average total tolerance score was -13 for the sample. A score lower than 0 signified a less tolerant attitude towards cheating.

Table 2 Attitude Towards Cheating Scale Survey

Attitude Towards Cheating Scale Survey								
Questions with Asterisks (reverse scoring)	Percentages of Nursing Students					Statistics		Tolerance score
Question	1- strongly agree	2- agree	3- undecided	4- disagree	5- strongly disagree	Mean Answer	Rounded mean	score
If during a test one student is looking at another student's answer sheet, the teacher should not point this out until after class because it might embarrass the student.	5.0	38.6	8.8	32.5	15.0	3.14	3	0
If a teacher sees a student cheating, it is just the teacher's word against the student's, unless the student admits he or she was cheating	3.8	23.8	26.3	37.5	8.8	3.24	3	0

If during a test two students are looking at each other's answer sheet and talking, the teacher should not assume that they are cheating.	2.5	2.5	7.6	45.6	41.8	4.22	4	-1
Only the student knows whether he or she was cheating; therefore, no decision should be made until the student is asked whether he or she cheated.	3.8	24.1	27.9	39.4	5.1	3.18	3	0
If a student says that he or she did not cheat and gives some explanation for his or her behavior, only an unfair teacher would penalize the student.	2.5	21.5	41.8	32.9	1.3	3.09	3	0
If a student is caught cheating, that student should plead innocent and force the school to prove the accusation.	5.1	6.3	35.4	43	10.1	3.47	3	0
If a student accused of cheating admits having cheated, the punishment should be reduced to reward honesty.	6.3	32.9	19	38	3.8	3	3	0
If a teacher leaves the room during a test, that teacher is in effect okaying cheating.	1.3	7.6	8.9	50.6	31.7	4.04	4	-1
Most students who don't cheat are just afraid of getting caught.	6.3	21.5	12.7	44.3	15.2	3.41	3	0
All tests should be open book, because in real life we can always look in the book	2.5	20.3	15.2	45.6	16.5	3.53	4	-1
A student who sees another student cheating and reports it should refuse to identify the cheater.	1.3	6.3	15.2	65.8	11.4	3.8	4	-1
If over half the class is cheating on an assignment, the others are justified in cheating also.	1.3	7.6	7.6	57	26.6	4	4	-1

Students are justified in cheating if the teacher's grading system is unfair.	3.9	5.1	12.8	52.6	25.6	3.91	4	-1
Studying usually doesn't result in a better grade.	2.5	1.3	3.8	24.2	58.2	4.44	4	-1
Some students make good grades without really having to study.	2.5	12.7	11.4	39.2	34.2	3.9	4	-1
The whole purpose of going to college is to get a degree.	31.7	40.5	5.1	16.5	6.3	2.25	2	1
There is really nothing wrong with cheating, other than the risk of being caught.	0	2.5	7.6	41.8	48.1	4.35	4	-1
Testing and grading are just a game with the students on one side and the teachers on the other.	5.1	12.7	16.5	46.8	19	3.62	4	-1
College tests don't measure useful knowledge or ability	10.1	21.5	10.1	43	15.2	3.32	3	0
Most students who are accused of cheating are actually innocent	0	2.5	46.8	45.6	5.1	3.53	4	-1

No Asterisk Questions	Percentages of Nursing Students					Statistics	rounded mean	Tolerance Score
	1-strongly agree	2-agree	3-undecided	4-disagree	5-strongly disagree			
Cheating on college tests is morally wrong.	56.3	36.3	2.5	3.8	1.3	1.57	2	-1
Some sororities and fraternities keep files of old tests to use in predicting what will be on future tests. This is cheating.	25.3	35.4	16.5	16.5	6.3	2.43	2	-1
If a term paper includes a series of exact statements from a book which is not listed as a source, the teacher must assume that the student intentionally plagiarized.	19	31.7	20.3	25.3	3.8	2.63	3	0
It is cheating to ask another student (from an earlier	15.2	38	26.6	17.7	2.5	2.54	3	0

section) "What was on the test?"								
If a student is offered a copy of a stolen test, the offer should be refused.	62	35.4	1.3	1.3	0	1.42	1	-2
When a student who denies cheating is found guilty, the student should receive additional punishment for lying.	11.4	38	13.9	32.9	3.8	2.8	3	0
A student who hands in a purchased term paper should be expelled from school.	15.2	16.5	24.1	40.5	3.8	3.01	3	0
Students should report by name anyone seen cheating.	13.9	46.8	22.8	16.5	0	2.42	2	-1
Most students who cheat are unethical people.	0	20.3	20.3	43	16.5	3.56	4	1
Making up an excuse in order to withdraw from a course to avoid failing is cheating.	0	2.53	11.4	51.9	34.2	4.18	4	1
Students who cheat don't learn as much as others.	41.8	40.5	8.9	6.3	2.5	1.87	2	-1
If a student accidentally sees an answer on someone's paper, that answer should not be used.	5.1	12.7	16.5	46.8	19	3.29	3	0
Most college students never cheat.	2.5	10.1	16.5	46.8	24.1	3.8	4	1

Total Tolerance

Score= -13

From the Attitudes Toward Cheating survey, there were four questions that showed people held a more tolerant attitude towards the scenario. The four scenarios included: the whole purpose of going to college was to get a degree (majority agreed), most students who cheat were unethical people (majority disagreed), making up an excuse in order to withdraw from a course to avoid failing is cheating (majority

disagreed), and most college students never cheat (majority disagreed). Additionally, on 13 of the 34 questions, the majority showed a split decision towards the scenario; therefore, 16 questions showed a negative attitude towards cheating, and only one response average showed a strongly negative attitude towards cheating. The Attitudes Toward Cheating survey had a reliability of 0.322 using a Cronbach’s alpha (see chart 3)

Table 3 Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics			
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items		N of Items
.322	.315		34

Written Responses

The response rate was lower on the qualitative questions than the quantitative questions with qualitative question one having 72 students answer and qualitative question two having 73 students answer. For qualitative question one, which asked about participation in academic dishonesty, 32 students answered “yes,” 28 students answered “no,” and 12 students answered “skip.” Of those who responded with “yes” or “no” (disqualifying the skips), 53% of people self-reported cheating. For qualitative question 2, which asked about having knowledge of a peer committing academic dishonesty and

reporting the action, 39 students responded “yes,” 26 students responded “no,” and 8 students responded “skip.” Of those who responded with “yes” or “no” (disqualifying the skips), 60% reported knowing other students who cheated.

Table 4 Qualitative Questions

Qualitative Question 1:			
During your undergraduate collegiate career, have you personally ever participated in at least one act of academic dishonesty? This includes, but is not limited to, using unauthorized information, materials, devices, or other sources in completing course work, plagiarism, facilitating another student to cheat, reusing old coursework for another course without authorization, fabricating sources, data, or other information, or deceiving a professor for scholastic gain. If yes, elaborate on the answer.			
Answer in percentages:	yes	no	skip
	44.4	38.9	16.7

Qualitative Question 2:			
Have you ever known of a peer who participated in academic dishonesty, but you did not report his/her actions to an authoritative figure? If yes, elaborate on the answer.			
Answer in percentages:	yes	no	skip
	52.4	35.6	11.1

When nursing students were asked if they had participated in at least one act of academic dishonesty (see qualitative question 1), 28 students elaborated on their positive responses. The question was asked vaguely to allow all opportunity to explain how or why they participated in academic dishonesty. Two broad categories emerged from the responses: account of the student’s academic dishonesty and rationalizations of the dishonesty act. The most common types of cheating mentioned were using unpermitted

technology, working with other students, and reusing old coursework both personally and from other students. Most of these responses were short and did not elaborate on the “why” of the action. For example, “Yes, I used Quizlets to help confirm if I answered correctly” and “yes, a friend and myself used to take quizzes together at home.” In most cases, the students referred to their acts of academic dishonesty in the past tense.

The other responses were broadly categorized as rationalizations. A few rationalization themes presented themselves: fear of failing, differences in types of academic dishonesty, and a survivalist-like college environment. The fear of failing was evident when a student responded, “Yes, there have been times when I was unprepared and didn’t want to fail...” A few students showed their disbelief of all academic dishonesty being equal with responses like “Yes, there have been times I’ve asked for a classmates answer to a question on small assignments like discussions, but I have never cheated on big assignments like tests or papers” and “Yes, in my undergraduate work. In nursing, never, because then what kind of nurse would I become? One that doesn’t know how to properly save a life when needed?” Most students that did not give rationalizations told about cheating accounts that happened before entering nursing school, specifically prerequisite classes. One student hinted that the nursing school environment did not permit academic honesty if one wanted to be successful, “Yes, not on tests, because looking up info doesn’t really help once you are higher up in courses because the questions are so complex. At some point, it turns into survival rather than just going to school you have so much time and money invested that it turns to high stakes.” Furthermore, a few disagreed with some of the stated forms of cheating in the question

and believed acts like soliciting advice from former students and reusing materials to not be legitimate forms of cheating.

Of the 39 students who responded “yes” to the second survey question about ever knowing someone who committed academic dishonesty and reporting it, 36 chose to elaborate on their answers. The positive “yes” responses could be separated and reviewed in the following four categories: reported cheating, afraid to report cheating, avoided reporting because of friendship, and felt no obligation to report cheating. Only two responses indicated that he or she reported academic dishonesty, with one of the responses following the statement by saying “nothing was done to the student.” A few students said they were afraid to report with responses like this, “Yes, I was a freshman and was scared to go to the teacher about it.” Protecting a friendship was also a common theme as seen in the following quotes,

“Yes. I would feel like I was betraying them if I reported them,”

“Yes, I didn’t want them to get in trouble this far into nursing school,”

“Yes. I felt it would be known it was me who reported them and did not want to damage our friendship.”

However, the majority of students responded that it was not their duty or obligation to report cheating. One of the most explanatory responses was

“Yes, it is not my duty to report cheating. I am not the university police force—I am just a customer. His cheating benefits him none in the long term, but I understand that he felt like he had to jump through useless hoops to get a degree.”

Along this same theme, 13 other students wrote phrases like “I don’t particularly care what others do,” “it was their grade, not mine,” “don’t think it is my place,” “none of my business,” and “I am not a snitch.” Most students reported that cheating was commonplace but did not largely affect other students.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the prevalence of cheating in a nursing school in the southern United States and to determine if the social normalization of rationalizations has contributed to the increase. The results showed that 53% of nursing students who replied “yes” or “no,” self-reported committing at least one act of academic dishonesty, and 16.7% of the overall sample chose to skip the question. This percentage is consistent with other studies performed on nursing students and low compared to other majors (DuPree and Sattler 2010; Jones 2011; Burrus, McGoldrick and Schuhmann 2007; Krueger, 2014; Park, Park, and Jang, 2012). The Attitudes Towards Cheating survey showed that overall students were mildly intolerant of cheating with a score of -13 out of a range of 66 and -66, the lower range showing most intolerant and the upper range showing least intolerant; however, most questions showed that the students were undecided on rationalizations. On most questions, there was not a clear consensus on what students considered morally right. There was only one question that received a consensus of being strongly intolerable: “If a student is offered a copy of a stolen test, the offer should be refused.” This question encompassed a scenario that is portrayed throughout adolescent television, which could have influenced the response. Also, this question used the word stolen, which alone has a negative connotation and potentially a priming effect on obtaining an answer.

On the reverse side, there were only four questions that showed a consensus of tolerance towards academic dishonesty. The four questions fell under four separate categories but gave considerable insight into the ethical understanding of the students.

The first question was “The whole purpose of college is to get a degree,” with which most students agreed. The foundation of college is largely to obtain knowledge, but these students recognize it as a stepping-stone or rite of passage towards a career or next phase of life. A degree is merely the result of college or proof of learning. Attitudes that shift the focus from learning to obtaining the degree devalues an education, much like how a high prevalence of academic dishonesty, if recognized, devalues the diploma.

The second question, “Most people who cheat are unethical people,” provided insight into how the students inadvertently viewed participation in academic dishonesty. The majority disagreed that cheating made someone unethical, which begged the question of what do these students consider to be unethical. Lying, fraud, and stealing are actions that are inarguably deemed unethical, and these same actions often coexist with academic dishonesty. The remarks from students who attested to knowing peers who cheated provide some understanding. One student said, “it was their grade, not mine...” which indicated that his actions did not harm others. Many other students said that reporting cheating was not a duty of theirs. The accounts lend the idea that if cheating does not directly hurt someone, then it must be acceptable.

The third question discussed an example of cheating: “Making up an excuse to withdraw from a course to avoid failing is cheating.” The students disagreed with the statement. This question did not contain a rationalization nor a broad overview of the perception of cheating in general. This demonstrated that students might not have a clear understanding of what is considered cheating. The question did not ask if this action was dishonest but rather if it was termed cheating.

Lastly, the fourth question showing tolerance towards cheating asked if “Most college students [ever] cheat.” The students decided that majority of college students did cheat, which is consistent with prior research and the self-reported cheating percentage of 53% as discovered in qualitative question one.

Additionally, the questions with split or undecided responses were not the questions that asked about specific types of cheating. In most cases, the students can determine what is cheating. Most of the undecided questions are on punishments for cheating and how the teacher should handle a cheating situation with the student. For example, should the student be expelled if found cheating? The response was divided. Another question was if telling the truth about cheating should reduce the punishment and public embarrassment for cheating. The consensus was unclear on how cheating should be handled and how bad, per se, cheating is.

The qualitative portion of the survey provided more evidence that social normalization of rationalizations may be a contender for the increase in cheating. A common theme amongst those who reported cheating was that there is a time and place that cheating should be more accepted. A majority believed cheating should not be allowed in nursing school but is common in prerequisites. Additionally, other reports thought cheating should not be done on tests, but homework and quizzes with less grade weight are not nearly as bad. Most of those who told accounts of their cheating told stories that were at least one year in the past, suggesting that blatantly stating they currently cheated was still taboo. This disagreed with the thought that rationalizations were becoming more normalized; therefore, making cheating more commonplace.

Another form of rationalization seen in these responses was a survivalist mentality. This mentality thought that the investment of time and money put into college warranted the need to succeed. One person wrote, “At some point, it turns into survival rather than just going to school you have so much time and money invested that it turns to high stakes.” This claim was supported by students that said they were afraid of failing and they did not want their friends to fail because that would hinder their progress in the program.

When people talked about knowing and reporting other people who cheated, many showed tolerance towards cheating to preserve a friendship. Not only did they not want their friendship to be disrupted or harmed by not reporting, but they also did not want their friend to fail in his or her endeavors. Most responders recognized cheating was wrong, but they saw no problem with the cheating if they were not doing it, which is the epitome of tolerance. One person went so far as to explain that they understood what it felt like to “jump through useless hoops to get a degree.” Not only was cheating tolerated but also sympathized. One person believed that everyone had cheated in some way. Some thought that the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic created more space in education for academic dishonesty. Nursing values relationships and compassion. Nurses seek to do more good than harm, and this compassion could be what drives them to not report cheating.

Based on the results of this study, it appears that nursing students are mildly intolerable to cheating. This sample of students was more intolerable than other majors, with most recognizing the importance of academic honesty in the nursing major; however, they were passive in the punishments and results of academically dishonest

behaviors. While they showed some evidence of rationalizing their behaviors, they were more likely to rationalize not reporting cheating acts in their peers. Most students who have personally known someone who cheated felt no obligation to maintain the academic integrity of the program. They have an independent view of academic integrity in which one is only responsible for his or her actions.

The mindset of having no obligation towards academic integrity was what may translate into future practice. Other studies have proven that academic dishonesty in the college classroom leads to more dishonest behaviors in the workplace, like not reporting errors and not following protocol. Nursing relies on a team. If a student does not report academic dishonesty in the classroom, then there is a low likelihood that they would report dishonesty seen on the hospital floor in nursing practice. In the end, both could cause potential harm to the patient. The unknowledgeable nurse could erroneously perform a skill, or the dishonest nurse could not report a medication error. In one of the most trusted professions, nurses find themselves in a powerful position over a vulnerable patient.

Limitations

A limitation to the study is that answers to questions on cheating were self-reported. Because of this, the prevalence rates were most likely lower than the accurate number because of the negativity that surrounds cheating. Most of the participants who completed the survey were between 19-22. Older ages could affect the attitudes towards cheating and the prevalence of cheating rates. Another limitation was that the demographic questionnaire did not allow the participant the opportunity to select their anticipated graduation date. Different cohorts could have different opinions on cheating,

especially since research showed that group mentality in academic dishonesty was common in nursing programs. The ages were an inaccurate way to gauge which cohort because all students do not enter the baccalaureate nursing track directly out of high school. The sample was not representative of all nursing students. It only measures baccalaureate degree nursing students rather than including associate degree nursing students.

Future Research

This study examined the prevalence and tolerance of cheating in baccalaureate-level nursing students and looked at the reasoning for the upward slope of cheating in college students. While there was some indication that rationalizations were used to defend dishonest choices, the majority believed nursing students should have academic integrity. In opposition, most students were tolerant of cheating taking place in their program. Only two students who had seen cheating take place reported the cheating. Most were undecided on how cheating should be punished if the person was found guilty. It is important to learn where this tolerance for other's academic dishonesty stems from and create ways to hold all students accountable for creating a profession with strong integrity. Most students even recognized that dishonest acts in school translated poorly in the profession. Nursing educators can utilize the conclusion of the research when preparing examinations. If a correlation between socialization and academic dishonesty exists, enforcing positive moral behaviors would be pertinent to instill not only fairness in the classroom, but also, the ability to disseminate between honest and dishonest actions in the school environment and the clinical setting. More research needs to be done on the reasoning for cheating in nursing school because of the detrimental possibilities it could

cause to future patients. The prevalence of cheating needs to be trended on a yearly basis to watch for rises and falls in cheating prevalence. The implementation of honor codes, additional ethical education, or strict enforcement of policies would be beneficial to determine a cause-and-effect relationship. Additionally, surveying multiple colleges across the united states would provide better clarity on how the environment influences academic dishonesty.

Creating a culture that views cheating as unethical must result from developing clear standards and involving students in the planning and implementation of policies. Faculty will also need to be committed. Consistent explanation of academic integrity policies, maintenance of test security, and removal of available technology will help deter cheating in the classroom.

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Rationalizing academic dishonesty, and its effect on the future of nursing ethics.

Principal Investigator: Leah Salisbury

Phone: 228-223-4261

Email: leah.salisbury@usm.edu

School and Program: University of Southern Mississippi Nursing

Purpose:

The prevalence of academic dishonesty has risen dramatically within the last seven decades. The research in the field of nursing ethics is divided on the reason for the steep increase in academic dishonesty: increase in technological advances, differing perceptions between students and faculty on what actions constitute as cheating, and cultural socialization towards academic dishonesty to produce success. Seeing as tolerance seems to be the underlying perspective about academic dishonesty by nursing students, this study is aimed at measuring the correlation between academic dishonesty and the social normalization of rationalizations. Cheating in school can translate into deficient knowledge in a career or a higher potential for dishonest behaviors in the workplace, which is why this research can improve the nursing profession, knowledge of student nurses, and safety in clinical practice.

Description of Study:

The opinion questionnaire consists of 36 questions that will ask the participant to state their attitude towards various forms of cheating as well as their experience with academic dishonesty. The survey should take 10-15 minutes to complete. You must be currently enrolled and partaking in nursing classes at the University of Southern Mississippi (nursing semesters 1-5).

Benefits and Risks:

This research will be a significant addition to nursing literature because it may help identify if social and cultural changes are contributing to the increase in the rates of academic dishonesty. The nursing profession requires integrity to produce safe, sincere, and dedicated care. This knowledge could help nursing professors work to shape the morality of future nurses and ensure the safety of future patients. Additionally, participants may gain a greater knowledge of what constitutes as cheating, and participants will be entered into a \$25 amazon drawing for their participation. The survey should pose no undue risks to the participant. The participant may experience mild psychological discomfort as a result of the sensitive topic of academic dishonesty. If this persists, contact the student counseling services on campus at 601-266-4829 or counseling@usm.edu. They are committed to improving mental health and wellness.

Confidentiality:

This survey is confidential. Your results from the survey will not be tied to any personal identifiers. The survey is conducted through the program Qualtrics, which will make the survey anonymous. Personalized data will not be available to any of the investigators or the public. Names of participants are only known for the purpose of sending out the Amazon gift card, but I nor anyone else will know the answers provided to survey.

Alternative Procedures:

This is a voluntary study, and at any point, you can opt out of the survey and receive no punishment for doing so.

Participant's Assurance:

This project and this consent form have been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board.

IRB Number:

IRB-20-345

I understand that participation in this project is completely voluntary, and I may withdraw at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. Unless described above, all personal information will be kept strictly confidential, including my name and other identifying information. All procedures to be followed and their purposes were explained to me. Information was given about all benefits, risks, inconveniences, or discomforts that might be expected. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided to me if that information may affect my willingness to continue participation in the project.

I give my consent to participate in this research project.

Yes

No

APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACTION

The project below has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services regulations (45 CFR Part 46), and University Policy to ensure:

- The risks to subjects are minimized and reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered involving risks to subjects must be reported immediately. Problems should be reported to ORI via the Incident template on Cayuse IRB.
- The period of approval is twelve months. An application for renewal must be submitted for projects exceeding twelve months.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: IRB-20-345

PROJECT TITLE: Rationalizing academic dishonesty, and its effect on the future of nursing ethics.

SCHOOL/PROGRAM: School of PRNP

RESEARCHER(S): Leah Salisbury
Elizabeth Tinnon

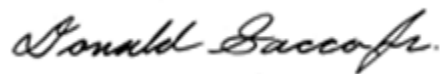
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt

CATEGORY: Exempt

Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

APPROVED STARTING: September 8, 2020



Donald Sacco, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chairperson

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Participants needed for a research survey: “Rationalizing academic dishonesty, and its effect on the future of nursing care.”

Hi, my name is Leah Salisbury, and I am a senior nursing student at the University of Southern Mississippi working on my Honors thesis. If you received this invitation to partake in the survey, then you are also a USM nursing student. This survey only takes 10-15 minutes to complete and will ask you questions regarding your attitude towards various forms of academic dishonesty.

The prevalence of academic dishonesty has risen dramatically within the last seven decades. The research in the field of nursing ethics is divided on the reason for the steep increase in academic dishonesty: increase in technological advances, differing perceptions between students and faculty on what actions constitute as cheating, and cultural socialization towards academic dishonesty to produce success. Seeing as tolerance seems to be the underlying perspective about academic dishonesty by nursing students, this study is aimed at measuring the correlation between academic dishonesty and the social normalization of rationalizations. Cheating in school can translate into deficient knowledge in a career or a higher potential for dishonest behaviors in the workplace, which is why this research can improve the nursing profession, knowledge of student nurses, and safety in clinical practice.

The survey is voluntary and anonymous, and neither I nor anyone else involved in the research will be able to link personal identifiers to your survey answers. The study has been approved by USM's IRB (IRB-20-345). If you choose to complete the survey, you will be entered to win a \$25 Amazon gift card. The winner will be contacted by email in December 2020. Thank you for considering supporting my research and the completion of my Honors Thesis. Please feel free to contact me by my email (leah.salisbury@usm.edu) with any questions or concerns regarding the survey.

Best,

Leah Salisbury

APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Gender

- Male
- Female

Race

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Other

Age (type the number only)

APPENDIX E: ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHEATING QUESTIONNAIRE

Attitudes Toward Cheating Opinion Questionnaire

Rate each item below with the appropriate abbreviation: SA for strongly agree, A for agree, U for undecided (or if you do not understand the statement), D for disagree, SO for strongly disagree

1. *If during a test one student is looking at another student's answer sheet, the teacher should not point this out until after class because it might embarrass the student.
2. *If a teacher sees a student cheating, it is just the teacher's word against the student's, unless the student admits he or she was cheating.
3. Cheating on college tests is morally wrong.
4. *If during a test two students are looking at each other's answer sheet and talking, the teacher should not assume that they are cheating.
5. Some sororities and fraternities keep files of old tests to use in predicting what will be on future tests. This is cheating.
6. *Only the student knows whether he or she was cheating; therefore, no decision should be made until the student is asked whether he or she cheated.
7. *If a student says that he or she did not cheat and gives some explanation for his or her behavior, only an unfair teacher would penalize the student.
8. If a term paper includes a series of exact statements from a book which is not listed as a source, the teacher must assume that the student intentionally plagiarized.
9. It is cheating to ask another student (from an earlier section) "What was on the test?"
10. If a student is offered a copy of a stolen test, the offer should be refused.

- II. *If a student is caught cheating, that student should plead innocent and force the school to prove the accusation.
12. When a student who denies cheating is found guilty, the student should receive additional punishment for lying.
13. *If a student accused of cheating admits having cheated, the punishment should be reduced to reward honesty.
14. A student who hands in a purchased term paper should be expelled from school.
15. *If a teacher leaves the room during a test, that teacher is in effect okaying cheating.
16. *Most students who don't cheat are just afraid of getting caught.
17. *All tests should be open book, because in real life we can always look in the book.
18. *A student who sees another student cheating and reports it should refuse to identify the cheater.
19. *If over half the class is cheating on an assignment, the others are justified in cheating also.
20. Students should report by name anyone seen cheating.
21. *Students are justified in cheating if the teacher's grading system is unfair.
22. *Studying usually doesn't result in a better grade.
23. Most students who cheat are unethical people.
24. Making up an excuse in order to withdraw from a course to avoid failing is cheating.
25. *Smart students make good grades without really having to study.
26. *The whole purpose of going to college is to get a degree.
27. Students who cheat don't learn as much as others.
28. *There is really nothing wrong with cheating, other than the risk of being caught.

29. If a student accidentally sees an answer on someone's paper, that answer should not be used.
30. *Testing and grading are just a game with the students on one side and the teachers on the other.
31. *College tests don't measure useful knowledge or ability.
32. *Most students who are accused of cheating are innocent.
33. Most college students never cheat.
34. It is lying when a student who cheated denies it.

APPENDIX F: QUALITATIVE SURVEY

*In the following two questions, your answers will be anonymous. If you choose to not answer the questions, you may simply write “skip” or “pass” in the text box provided.

35. During your undergraduate collegiate career, have you personally ever participated in at least one act of academic dishonesty? This includes, but is not limited to, using unauthorized information, materials, devices, or other sources in completing course work, plagiarism, facilitating another student to cheat, reusing old coursework for another course without authorization, fabricating sources, data, or other information, or deceiving a professor for scholastic gain. (Remember, your answer is anonymous, so please answer honestly)

36. Have you ever known of a peer who participated in academic dishonesty, but you did not report his/her actions to an authoritative figure?

APPENDIX G: ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHEATING QUESTIONNAIRE

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Number of figures/tables/illustrations	1
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Author of this Springer Nature content	no
Title	Rationalizaing academic dishonesty and its effects on the future of nursing
Institution name	University of Southern Mississippi
Expected presentation date	May 2021
Portions	I would like to reuse the scale in my own research on baccalaureate level nursing students Leah Salisbury 128 N. Seashore Ave
Requestor Location	LONG BEACH, MS 39560 United States Attn: University of Southern Mississippi Honors College
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