Feeling the Heat and the Need to Cheat: A Case Study of the Correlation between Academic Dishonesty and Responses to Common Stressors Experienced by Fourth through Twelfth Grade Students in a Private School Setting in South Louisiana

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Academic integrity is the moral code or ethical policy of academia. In the past, studies have shown that it was the struggling student who was more likely to cheat. According to academic integrity websites, today, the above-average college bound student is as likely to cheat. There is less social disapproval that goes along with cheating, it no longer holds the stigma that it used to. the purpose of this project is to determine if there is a correlation between academic dishonesty and the common stressors experienced by students. The examiner's hypothesis is that a correlation between academic dishonesty and common stressors of students will be identified. The examiner selected a private school in Louisiana for the case study. Two surveys were created, and administered by teachers at that school. The surveys were analyzed and coded to determine a "cheat code" and a "stress code" for each student in the study. A statistical analysis of correlation was chosen as the tool to give validity to the results. Results of the statistical analysis of correlation found parts of the hypothesis were accepted. A correlation between academic dishonesty and common stressors experienced by students was found to have a moderate correlation. In conclusion, the examiner was able to find a moderate correlation between the common stressors experienced by students and cheating. The struggling student was determined to be the most likely to cheat. Additionally, data was analyzed to determine cheating to take place at all grade levels and increase through the twelfth grade. The profile of a student most likely to cheat has been identified as a twelfth grade struggling male student who participates in athletics.

Awards Won:

American Psychological Association: Certificate of Honorable Mention