Student self-reported academically dishonest behavior in two-year colleges in the State of Ohio

Lauren M. Ferguson

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A Dissertation

entitled

Student Self-Reported Academically Dishonest Behavior in Two-Year Colleges in the State of Ohio

by

Lauren M. Ferguson

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Higher Education

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This study investigated college students’ self-reported academically dishonest behaviors at two-year colleges in the state of Ohio. More specifically, this study investigated two-year students’ self-reported perceptions of acts of plagiarism and whether particular characteristics were related to students who chose to plagiarize.

This study replicated research from Donald McCabe’s investigations of four-year institutions and students’ self-reported cheating behaviors. This survey research used the McCabe Academic Integrity Student Survey instrument. Multi-stage sampling was used to collect data from English Composition I class sections from four two-year colleges in the state of Ohio.

The results from this current research revealed that demographic traits such as age and gender were related to the students who chose to engage in self-reported acts of plagiarism. Women self-reported cheating more than men and younger students self-
reported cheating more than older students. Students with grade point averages of 2.49 and higher self-reported cheating more than students with lower grade point averages. Cheating was self-reported most by students ages 18-31. Students between the ages of 18-24 self-reported cheating more than those ages 25-31. The students that identified pressures related to part-time or full-time work and/or caring for children or an older adult self-reported cheating more than students not affiliated with such pressures.
For my mother, who always knew that I could achieve such an accomplishment. This is dedicated to you. You always knew that I would be a practitioner in higher education.
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# Table of Contents

Abstract iii  
Dedication v  
Acknowledgments vi  
Contents vii  
List of Tables viii  

1 Chapter One 1  
1.1 Chapter Overview 1  
1.2 Statement of the Problem 5  
1.3 Purpose of the study 8  
1.4 Methodology 9  
1.5 Research Questions 10  
1.6 Significance of the study 11  
1.7 Limitations of the study 13  
1.8 Definition of Terms 15  

2 Literature Review 18  
2.1 Chapter Overview 18  
2.1.1 History of Community Colleges 19  
2.1.2 Community College Misconceptions 21  
2.2 Academic Dishonesty 24  
2.2.1 Plagiarism and Types of Plagiarism 28  
2.3 A Review of the Literature to Ethical Decision-Making and Cognitive Moral Development 34  
2.3.1 Rationalizations for Student Cheating Behaviors 37  
2.4 A Literature Review of McCabe’s Research 41  
2.4.1 McCabe and Trevino (1992) 42  
2.4.2 McCabe and Trevino (1992) 43  
2.4.3 McCabe and Trevino (1990-1993, 1997) 44  
2.4.4 McCabe and Trevino 1993, 1996 46  
2.4.5 McCabe and Bowers 1996 48  
2.5 Cheating and Reasons Why Students Cheat 49  
2.5.1 Issues facing the two-year student 52  
2.6 Conveying Message of Academic Integrity to Two-Year Students 56
3  **Research Methodology**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Research Methodology</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Ohio Two-Year Colleges</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Survey Participants</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1</td>
<td>Data Collection Process</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.2</td>
<td>Survey Response Rate</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.3</td>
<td>Method of Analysis</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Survey Instrument Modifications</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Survey Variables</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Consent to Participate for Human Subjects</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7.1</td>
<td>Pilot Study</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4  **Survey Analysis and Results**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Data Analysis and Findings</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Survey Analysis &amp; Results</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1</td>
<td>Research Question 1</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.2</td>
<td>Research Question 2</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.3</td>
<td>Research Question 3</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.4</td>
<td>Research Question 4</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.5</td>
<td>Research Question 5</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5  **Conclusions**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Summary of Conclusions</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Recommendations for Institutional Policy</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Recommendations for Administrators</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1</td>
<td>Classroom Level</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Recommendations for Faculty</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Policy into Practice</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>New Directions for Future Research</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**References**  

**Appendices**  

A  Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey Instrument  

114
List of Tables

Table 3-1  This table illustrated the multistage sampling process for this research in levels of higher, lower, and selective. 64

Table 3-2  This table illustrated the aggregate response rate for the four colleges that participated in this research. The table highlights the comparison between the total number of possible students that could be surveyed per college and the total number of survey responses received per college. 67

Table 4-1  This table illustrated the frequency of students that self-reported being informed about cheating and plagiarism policies at their campuses. The table illustrated the total percentage and number of students informed and not informed. 79

Table 4-2  This table illustrated the frequency of where students learned about academic dishonesty and plagiarism policies. It illustrated the frequency at which students perceived learning from close friends, campus administrators, student orientations, and advisor. 80
Table 4-3  This table illustrated the total number of survey participants by gender. The table illustrated the total percentage and number of participants based on whether they were male or female.

Table 4-4  This table illustrated the total number of survey participants by age group.

Table 4-5  This table illustrated a cross tabulation between the number of participants caring or not caring for children or an older adult and their grade point average.

Table 4-6  This table illustrated a cross tabulation between the number of participants working full-time and grade point average.
Chapter 1

Student Self-Reported Academically Dishonest Behavior in Two-Year Colleges in the State of Ohio

The issue of academic dishonesty or cheating is no longer an isolated issue but has developed into a global occurrence because “everyone is doing it” (Fawkner & Keremidchieva, 2004). This global occurrence has made international headline news daily. The issue of academic dishonesty and cheating is not just prevalent within the college and university setting. Cheating and stealing words, phrases, and written materials began as early as the 17th and 18th centuries (Thomas, 2000). During those time periods, no systems existed to link scholarly works and literature with their originators. Nowadays, extremely sophisticated devices and software are continually developed to detect hidden passages within scholarly work, term papers, essays, and other works that have been copied, fabricated, or stolen (Fawkner & Keremidchieva, 2004; Groark, Oblinger, & Choa, 2001).

The issue of dishonesty is also more blatant than it used to be. The culprits and perpetrators steal material by cutting-and-pasting information directly from the Internet and immediately assume ownership of contents retrieved from online sources. In 2008, incidences of dishonesty have stemmed from Cassie Edwards, a romance novelist, who
was accused of “insert[ing] large chunks of unattributed material into her work,” (Lee, 2008) to Jessica Seinfeld, Jerry Seinfeld’s wife, being accused of trademark infringement and plagiarism (Del Signore, 2008). Vocal artist Avril Lavigne settled a suit against her for copyright infringement for accusations that there were several similarities between one of her new hit singles and a 1979 single (World Entertainment News Network, 2008).

The issue of dishonest behavior is also not new to higher education (Kibler, Nuss, Paterson, & Pavela, 1988). Many argue that the incidences of academic dishonesty and plagiarism begin as early as middle school. More so, researchers and practitioners have argued that the incidences are most rampant amongst high school students (Strom & Strom, 2007). These high school students enroll in post-secondary institutions and continue the same behavior—just more frequently as a result of the change in the quantity of coursework that is assigned.

Bill Bowers first published the “large scale study of cheating in institutions of higher learning” in 1964 (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001, p. 220). He surveyed 5,000 students on 99 four-year college and university campuses and reported that at least half of the students engaged in some form of academic dishonesty (Bowers, 1964). Bowers (1964) argued that “the prevalence of academic dishonesty represent[ed] failure on the part of the college or university to achieve fundamental educational objectives” (p. 1). He also argued that the “students who cheat[ed] [had] obviously failed to internalize standards of academic integrity, and they may well have failed to master the academic and intellectual offering of the college” (p. 1). His research was designed to:

... enlarge the scope and extend the findings of previous studies by gathering data
on a nationwide basis for a more representative picture of the problem, by obtaining information that is both more comprehensive and more detailed, and by attempting to combine into a single research effort three objectives of previous research—identifying sources of cheating, evaluating remedies, and estimating rates. (Bowers, 1964, p. 7)

More importantly, his research findings at four-year colleges and universities revealed that more than a quarter of the students in the sample reported having copied from another student during an exam, and virtually as many say they plagiarized from published materials. Among those who engaged in these acts, the majority did so more than once. A smaller proportion, 19 per cent, said that they submitted as their own paper written by another student… (Bowers, 1964, p. 43)

In addition to Bowers’s research findings and contributions to the literature for four-year colleges and universities, there were significant trends that may also be affiliated with the issue of academically dishonest behavior, particularly plagiarism. First, the 1960s established the belief that the sororities and fraternities were best known for “bolstering Greek tradition of sisterhood and brotherhood” with stunts that involved copying completed examinations and term papers to achieve scholastic excellence (Moeck, 2002, p. 479). Moeck (2002) suggested that movies such as Animal House and Cheaters simply “romanticized the thrill of breaking into academic offices and stealing the precious notes or answers to examinations, thus saving the (anti) heroes from scholastic probation, dismissal, or humiliation” (pp. 479-480).
The second trend took place during the latter part of the 1960s, giving rise to commercial services selling and advertising of academic research. This surge led to large-scale accessibility for prewritten academic work for the students who were stressed out about possibly receiving bad grades and/or failing their classes (Moeck, 2002).

In the late 1980s into the early 1990s, the third trend transpired along with a change in research focus for academic dishonesty to that of the role of individual factors in relation to cheating behaviors (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001). This research still investigated four-year colleges and universities, but focused on predictor variables such as gender, grade point average, work ethic, and self-esteem.

Prior to 1990, few studies focused on the contextual factors of cheating behaviors such as faculty perspectives and attitudes, sanctions, and social learning (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001). According to McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield (2001), this change in research focus revealed that the “student understanding of appropriate citation techniques seem[ed] to have changed, and selected behaviors that students may have classified as plagiarism in Bowers’s (1964) study [did] not appear to be considered plagiarism” to today’s students (p. 220).

In addition, McCabe and Trevino utilized research findings from Bowers that initially focused on the roles of individual factors in relation to cheating behaviors (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001). Their four-year institutional studies later focused on contextual factors of cheating behaviors in terms of faculty perspectives and attitudes, presence of honor codes and institutional policies, and social learning (McCabe Trevino & Butterfield, 2001). This research spanned from the 1990s into the new
millennium. All of these researchers and practitioners focused heavily on colleges and universities, but not two-year institutions, in relation to cheating behaviors.

Statement of the Problem

Since the early 1940s, there have been numerous investigations of academically dishonest behaviors, particularly plagiarism, in higher education within four-year colleges and universities (Drake, 1941; Bowers, 1964; Pavela, 1978; Baird, 1980; Kibler et al., 1988; McCabe & Trevino, 1993; McCabe, 1993; Pavela & McCabe, 1993; Gehring & Pavela, 1994; and Sutton & Huba, 1995). Kibler (1998) suggested that the heart of the problem with academic dishonesty was that its literature review was “absent of a generally accepted definition of the subject” (p. 24). He suggested that it usually “refer[red] to forms of cheating and plagiarism that result[ed] in students giving or receiving unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise or receiving credit for work that is not their own” (p. 24). More importantly, Whitley and Kite (1998) suggested that students may lack an awareness of “inappropriate behavior,” meaning they may engage in dishonest behaviors “inadvertently because they know the dictionary definition of the behavior, [but] they cannot identify it in practice” (p. 40-41).

More important than the lack of a clear definition and true understanding of academic dishonesty, cheating, fabrication, or plagiarism, is the gap that existed in the literature as it related to two-year institutions and their students. More specifically, landmark studies often referenced in the literature that have suggested the prevalence and prominence of the issue of academic dishonesty and cheating behaviors only involved investigations of four-year institutions. A plethora of information, in reference to four-year institutions and cheating, may be found anywhere from scholarly journals, electronic
books, and Internet search engines to dissertations, masters theses, and projects (Fawkner & Keremidchieva, 2004).

These four-year investigations of academic dishonesty were based on student perceptions, prevention methods, ethnicity and religion, legal aspects, honor codes, and acceptable definitions (Clifford, 1998). Such investigations made several inferences about reasons why four-year students chose to carry out dishonest behaviors. Only a minority of four-year institutional studies focused on situational factors such as financial constraints as they related to students, student status, and whether or not students worked part or full-time while attending school part or full-time. It was only these studies that correlated demographic traits of students such as age, gender, race, and religion as influential variables.

All the literature identified that the issue of academic dishonesty and acts of dishonest behavior such as cheating and plagiarism were a serious problem that was continuing to grow. Rakovski and Levy (2007) suggested, “research show[ed] that cheating in higher education is rampant. It is caused by many factors including student perceptions about faculty and their dishonest behaviors, the use of technology, and evolving cultural norms” (p. 467). Furthermore, Underwood and Szabo (2003) argued “academic dishonesty, plagiarism, or cheating is a major problem in the evaluative educational system” and that the problem was “not confined [just] to higher education” (p. 468). To this end, Nitterhouse (2003) asserted that “maintaining academic integrity has presented long-standing challenges for higher educational institutions and individual faculty members” (p. 217).
With drastic changes in the state of the global economy within the last few decades, the accessibility and affordability of education has experienced a radical change. During this same time frame, technical and community colleges have experienced rises in total student enrollments as their costs of tuition have remained virtually stagnant while the cost of four-year institutions have continued to increase (Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), 2003). According to Ohio Board of Regents (OBOR, 2007), nationally, 45% of undergraduate students begin their academic careers at two-year institutions.

The culture of our nation has gradually evolved into one where everything is provided “on demand” and/or a need exists to reap the benefits of our results, not now, but yesterday. The nature of the two-year institution was traditionally founded on the principle mission of “being all things to all people” (Gleazer, 2004). The two-year institution, unlike the four-year college or university, strived to be competitive similar to that of the fast food industry. Similar to the McDonalds, Burger King, and Starbucks chains, they have strived to continue to test educational markets with new and innovative cutting-edge technical degree and certificate programs for students. These alternatives provided a greater number of potential students with opportunities to continue to financially survive in an uncertain economy (Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), 2003).

Parallel to the urgency of our “need to have every thing yesterday” global economy was the ever-changing and fast pace of technology. We are now considered a “cut-and-paste” generation that has no time to give credit where credit is due (Fawkner & Keremidchieva, 2004). Everywhere students turn, the haste of our fast culture generated
an urgency to hurry up and finish something because it takes too long. This “hit the ground running” sense of getting things done started by the time a true grasp of the English language had been established.

Generations were immediately introduced to the Internet, which provides an overabundance of information (Kenny, 2007; Fawkner & Keremidchieva, 2004). According to Simon et al. (2003), “student academic dishonesty increasingly involves the use of high-tech tools, which extend beyond the university’s boundaries, potentially reaching across the world to some distant source of information” (p. 194). To this end, the sense of freedom that was created by the Internet has become a double-edged sword, creating more harm than good. Many argued that such behavior begins as early as elementary and middle school. These students were completely versed in the technology, surfing the Internet, and accessing all sorts of information (Kenny, 2007; Fawkner & Keremidchieva, 2004).

**Purpose of the Study**

This descriptive survey research study investigated two-year college students’ self-reported academically dishonest behaviors at two-year colleges in the state of Ohio. More specifically, this study determined two-year students’ self-reported perceptions of acts of plagiarism and whether respondent characteristics were related to students who chose to plagiarize. This study replicated predominant research from Donald McCabe’s investigations of four-year institutions and students’ self-reported cheating behaviors. This survey research used a modified version of the *McCabe Academic Integrity Student Survey* instrument.
McCabe’s research was not focused on students’ self-reported cheating behaviors at two-year institutions; however, his research was noteworthy for the prevalence and the significance of the issue of cheating and the importance of academic integrity in four-year institutions. Researchers and practitioners have continued to investigate cheating behaviors and have cited McCabe’s research as well as modified his survey instrument throughout the literature. The current study also modified his survey instrument and adapted the instrument to reflect characteristics common to two-year students, specific acts of plagiarism, and changes with regard to the advancements of electronic accessibility of information. The main purpose of this study was to provide an overview of the prevalence of plagiarism at two-year institutions in the state of Ohio and investigate students’ perceptions of the most frequent plagiaristic acts and their levels of severity. This study also investigated whether or not respondent characteristics such as career aspirations and situational factors were influential in students’ decisions to plagiarize.

**Methodology**

This nonexperimental, descriptive survey research study investigated college students’ self-reported behaviors of plagiarism at 22 two-year colleges identified by the Ohio Board of Regents as two-year technical and public community colleges in the state of Ohio. More specifically, this study investigated the self-reported acts of plagiarism at these colleges. This research modified the *McCabe Academic Integrity Student Survey* instrument, which was used to investigate the self-reported cheating and academically dishonest behaviors of four-year students. For purposes of this study, the modified instrument will be called *Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey*. 
Multistage sampling (clustering) was used to survey students at two-year colleges in the state of Ohio. E-mails summarizing the purpose and significance of the research were sent and introductory calls with the aforementioned information were made to senior level administrators in the areas of academic or student affairs. This process was implemented in an effort to identify the willingness of these institutions to participate in this study. A faculty or instructional staff member was identified at each institution to serve as a liaison. This separated the researcher from the students and established contact between the liaison and the students participating in the research. This helped to control the ability to keep student responses confidential and anonymous. The liaison identified three to five class sections in an effort to secure at least 50 to 60 students as potential survey participants. The liaison identified both face-to-face and online class sections of English Composition I courses for this study.

**Research Questions**

1. What were college students’ self-reported behaviors of plagiarism at selected two-year colleges in the state of Ohio?
2. What acts of plagiarism did students consider to be cheating? Did they understand the concept of plagiarism and perceive it as cheating?
3. Were demographic traits (age, gender) related to students who chose to engage in self-reported acts of plagiarism at two-year colleges? Who was most likely to plagiarize—men or women?
4. Were situational components influential in the decision-making processes of two-year students that chose to plagiarize (i.e., pressure as a result of possibly failing the class)?
5. Were academic achievement/career aspirations (GPA, career goals) influential in the decision-making processes of two-year students that chose to plagiarize?

**Significance of the Study**

In a transparently global nation where a greater number of students are turning to two-year schools in pursuit of their education, there is a greater need to ensure that these students are not carrying out dishonest acts within the classroom (Rakovski and Levy, 2007). More investigations of the two-year institutions, as they relate to the issue of academic dishonesty, need to be considered due to more students attending two-year institutions, the fast pace of technology, and the prevalence of our cut-and-paste nation.

According to Fawkner and Keremidchieva (2004), “it has never been easier for a student to source information and use it constructively to support his or her studies. Likewise, it has never been easier for a student to employ dishonest practices by cheating, or plagiarizing the work of others” (p. 3). Inferences for research findings for four-year students who cheat were correlated to unethical behavior beyond the classroom. Although not necessarily conclusive, researchers and practitioners suggested possible links between incidences of unethical behavior in college and future unethical practices in students’ professional careers. Carpenter, Harding, Finelli, Montgomery, and Passow (2006) proposed that the long-term consequences of cheating behaviors for four-year colleges and universities “are cause for even greater concern. A student who managed to cheat his [or her] way through college not only presents a false impression of themselves to future employers, but may also have such a poor sense of moral obligation and responsibility that he [or she] cannot be expected to act ethically as a professional” (p.
More so, McCabe (1996) conducted a survey of 4,279 students at 30 different four-year institutions. His findings revealed that there were higher levels of cheating amongst students enrolled in professional programs such as technical and vocational programs—programs that two-year institutions market to potential students (McCabe, 1996).

In a more recent study of four-year institutions, Rakovski and Levy (2007) argued “if students exhibit unethical and dishonest behavior in college, they may carry those attitudes and behaviors into the workplace” (p. 466). Inferences may possibly be made that academic dishonesty and cheating behavior are also prevalent in the two-year institutions. If two-year students cheated throughout middle and high school, it is possible that they will continue to carry out acts of dishonest behavior throughout their academic career. More importantly, since these students were less likely to have been oriented to institutional and academic policies, there are greater chances of a lack of understanding of academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism. To this end, there is a need for more investigations of academic dishonesty, the two-year institution, and its students.

Research in the area of the two-year college should be included amongst the plethora of research studies that currently exists for their four-year counterparts. Currently, the gap in the literature as it relates to the issue of academic dishonesty and self-reported plagiarism suggests that the issue does not exist in the two-year colleges and the students within them. On the other hand, these institutions are enrolling numbers of students equivalent to, if not greater than, those of their counterparts. To this end, inferences must be made that a problem also exists in two-year institutions.

A minority of four-year studies have investigated the correlation between institutional type and the level of academic dishonesty self-reported by four-year
students. An insightful addition to the literature would include a comparative analysis between two-year colleges and four-year colleges and universities.

**Limitations of the Study**

1. For purposes of this study, state university and regional campuses were not included. This study was limited to the investigation of 22 two-year colleges identified by OBOR as two-year technical and public community colleges.

2. Twenty-two two-year colleges were invited to participate in this study. Four two-year colleges agreed to participate. As a result, this study yielded a small sample and a lower response rate.

3. This study yielded a small sample of four colleges; therefore, inferences were only made based on the findings from these four two-year colleges in the state of Ohio.

4. Challenges existed with the electronic survey versus the paper survey for some students who experienced problems maneuvering through the e-survey.

5. Participation in this research was strictly voluntary for students who received a survey web link for access to the *Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey*. The data collection process, at this level, was selective. The researcher had no way of knowing specific true numbers or percentages of participants based on age, gender, or grade point average. As a result, the research findings could only be interpreted for the total number and percentage of self-reported responses collected based on age, gender, or grade point average.

6. “Major challenges in survey research on academic integrity involve the choice of the dependent variable” (Kisamore, Stone, & Jawahar, 2007, p. 386).
7. The issue of academic dishonesty is a sensitive topic in nature. Due to the sensitivity of this topic, colleges invited to have their students participate in this study might have been apprehensive for this reason. The literature suggested that academic dishonesty was a critical issue for all colleges and universities, and in many cases, investigating the issue was avoided altogether. It is possible that due to the controversial nature of this research topic, participation and overall response rate was limited, which affected the overall research findings.

8. There is still some confusion about the definition of plagiarism. This study was based on self-reported behaviors of plagiarism based on participants’ understanding of plagiarism.

9. This study only focused on the variations of plagiarism and not all other forms of cheating behaviors that were included in the original survey instrument.

10. In addition to possible misunderstandings of the definition of plagiarism, the question as to whether or not students chose to be honest when they self-reported their behaviors of plagiarism. “The major problem with survey research is that it is so easy to misuse; survey methods are often applied inappropriately, perhaps because the methods are relatively clear cut and fairly simple to employ…” (Hackett, 1981, p. 603)

11. These investigations were limited to survey instrumentation developed through sampling student populations at four-year institutions as they related to their self-reported perceptions of plagiarism. Little was investigated about academically dishonest behaviors of the two-year college student; therefore the modified instrument served to represent this investigation.
12. There were also problems with the strength of control because “surveys are weak on control, or on internal validity. It is not possible to ensure that the „treatment’ or the variable under investigation is the sole cause of the observed effect” (Calder, 1998, p. 640).

**Definition of Terms**

1. *Academic achievement*: measurable based on students’ grade point average (GPA).

2. *Academically dishonest*: “cheating, lying, fraud, theft, and other dishonest behaviors that jeopardize the rights and welfare of the community and diminish the worth of academic degrees” (The Center for Academic Integrity, 1999, p. 1).

3. *Academic dishonesty*: “intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic dishonesty” (Pavela, 1978, p. 72-73).

4. *Academic integrity*: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility (The Center for Academic Integrity, 1999).

5. *Cheating (Cheater)*: “a person who or intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all form of work submitted for credit or hours” (Pavela, 1978, p. 72-73).

6. *Ego strength*: represents individuals that are “expected to resist impulses and follow their convictions more than individuals with low ego strength” (Trevino, 1986, p. 609).
7. **Fabrication**: “intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise” (Pavela, 1978, p. 72-73).

8. **Locus of control**: “the degree to which an individual perceives that a reward results from one’s attributes or behavior rather than outside forces” (Haines & Leonard, 2007, p. 9). “A personality variable manifested by the extent to which individuals believe events are contingent upon their own behaviors or characteristics” (Granitz, 2003, p. 106).

9. **Moral intent**: “individual’s intention to perform questionable behavior” (Haines & Leonard, 2007, p. 5).

10. **Moral judgment**: decision to act out based either ethically or unethically on an ethical issue.

11. **Plagiarism**: “the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statements of another person as one’s own without acknowledgement” (Pavela, 1978, p. 72-73).


13. **State community college**: means a two-year institution, offering a baccalaureate-oriented program, technical education program, or an adult continuing education program. The extent to which the college offers baccalaureate-oriented and technical programs shall be determined in its charter” (Ohio.gov, 2005).

This chapter provided an overview of the issue of academic dishonesty and the statement of the problem. The chapter revealed the purpose for this research and the research questions that this study investigated. The chapter concluded with the proposed research methodology, the significance of this research, the research limitations, and definitions relevant to this research study.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter discusses the meaning of academic dishonesty, plagiarism and the most common types of plagiarism, and why students cheat. The chapter begins with a brief historical perspective of community colleges, as well as community college misconceptions, which tied into suggestions that the issue of plagiarism and two-year colleges was quite different from that of their four-year counterpart. In addition, this chapter reviews the literature related to ethical decision-making, moral and cognitive development, and the rationalizations for student cheating behaviors. This chapter also highlights issues that may be specific to the two-year student and influential in their decision-making process to plagiarize.

Since the inception of the two-year institution, the name “community college” and its mission equated to the idea of meeting educational needs of local communities (Gleazer, 1994; Bragg, 2001). These institutions were established as a result of barriers such as cost and geography (Lorenzo, 1994). According to Lorenzo (1994), “their purpose was to provide a lower-cost, more conveniently accessible alternative to the first two years of traditional university education” (p. 113). Community colleges have been known for their five traditional components: “transfer-oriented education, career
education, general education, remedial education, and the community education” (p. 113). Traditionally, community colleges’ purpose and mission has been to “develop individuals into fully functioning and contributing members of a society” (Lorenzo, 1994, p. 112).

**History of Community Colleges**

As early as the 1920s, junior college presidents with exceptional foresight were selling ideas about “meeting community needs,” “increasing adult education,” establishing “vocational opportunities for young people,” and integrating efforts of high schools with local community institutions (Gleazer, 1994). Their colleagues and members of the American Association of Junior Colleges knew then that the curriculum needed to be “suited to the larger ever-changing civic, social, religious, and vocational needs of the entire community in which the college was located” (Bogue, 1950, xviii). James Madison Wood, president of Stephens College, encouraged the notion of educational opportunity and two decades later, he attacked the issues of retention for students in high school and college at national conferences (Gleazer, 1994). In the 1940s, Dr. George F. Zook, president of the American Council of Education felt it was only natural for the community colleges to be responsible for the local community’s educational leadership.

In the late 1940s, it was President Truman’s Commission on Higher Education that “incorporated in its findings and recommendations a concept of community college” (p. 18). Truman’s report was so profound that it postulated five characteristics that mirror the programs and services offered by community colleges to this day. These five characteristics included: (1) frequent surveys of communities (assessing needs of the market), (2) apprentice training (re-retry and workforce development programs), (3)
preparing students to live a rich and full lives, (4) meeting the needs of students interested in extended general education (transfer to four-year institutions), and (5) development of a comprehensive adult education program.

By the 1960s, the programs broadened as a result of the transition into comprehensive community colleges in an effort to widen educational opportunity (Gleazer, 1994). The community colleges’ transition was not the only aspect that experienced change. The curriculum included changes that adhered to the increase in the student population and the concept of “comprehensiveness” included an open door admissions policy (Gleazer). Open door admissions lead to the Public Junior College Act of 1965, which promoted open admission and counseling for students based on their needs (Gleazer). The 1970s brought with it a consciousness of the “educational market,” a decline in the so-called “college-age” students, and a peak in enrollment for the 25 through 44 year-old age group of students (Gleazer). According to Gleazer (1994):

By 1980 community colleges seemed to be in an advantageous position because of characteristics that they had developed to build on what appeared to be appropriate structures for a new era of education and community service and to be in the vanguard of the change required in policies, institutional forms, and citizen attitudes. (p. 23)

Two-year institutions gained more attention with students’ notice as a result of being all things to all people and providing significantly lower tuition. In addition, these institutions became well known for their technical and vocational programs that trained and prepared many adults who were looking to enter or reenter the workforce with a skilled trade. Most importantly, the distinguishing factor for most two-year institutions
were their open admissions process (Gleazer, 1994; Lorenzo, 1994), which equated to more diversified student populations. It was because of many of these reasons that misconceptions about the two-year institutions were established.

**Community College Misconceptions.** Traditionally, many myths existed about community and technical colleges and the students that attended them. Some of these myths focused on reasons why they were attending two-year rather than four-year colleges. These myths suggested that the level of these students’ intelligence was less than that of students in four-year colleges and that they lacked the ability to afford a four-year education. In many cases, these myths were not necessarily true. More importantly, these students had a number of very different reasons for not initially attending four-year institutions. Many students preferred to live closer to home for the first two years versus moving away from home immediately. Other students had not initially qualified for financial aid due to their high parental incomes. In these cases, it was more cost effective, at least initially, for them to attend a local community college and later transfer to the four-year institution of their choice (Laanan, 2000).

Over the last couple decades, many of these myths have dissipated, and total student enrollments for two-year institutions are equal to, if not greater than, some of their four-year counterparts. These increases in enrollment were attributed to lower tuition and fees, remedial, developmental education and continuing education programs, and diligent efforts to compete technologically with four-year institutions. Peaks in student enrollments, in some cases, were credited to student services offered to two-year students that might not be available to those students attending four-year institutions (Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), 2003). More specifically,
two-year institutions provided transitional instruction and program curriculum that catered to the needs of the high school and adult students entering the college environment.

Admission processes and new student orientations exhibited varied approaches as they related to students who chose to attend two-year versus four-year institutions (Gerdeman, 2000). It was argued that two-year institutions were less likely to orient their students to academic policy and student codes of conduct once a student was enrolled (Gerdeman, 2000). Four-year institutions were more likely to orient students to the “dos and don’ts” within the educational environment through numerous new student orientations and student activities that were generally linked to recruitment and retention efforts (Gerdeman, 2000). According to Gerdeman (2000), “community colleges were significantly less likely than four-year institutions to have separate guidelines for academic dishonesty distinct from any other student misconduct” (p. 3). He also argued that community colleges were more likely to rely on student handbooks and student orientations to communicate sanctions for the misconduct of its students.

Cheating or academically dishonest behaviors affected “the integrity of the learning process, an individual’s long-term behavior, and the ability of academic institutions to achieve their stated objectives” (Carpenter, Harding, Finelli, Montgomery, & Passow, 2006, p. 182). According to Dalton (1998), in research findings from the perspective of four-year students attending four-year institutions, stated:

The prevalence of student cheating can, in part, be attributed to the poorly defined and administered academic integrity standards and test environments that are sound in many classrooms. Students entering the collegiate environment do not
know the special definitions and expectations of academic integrity at the college level. Most colleges do not provide an extensive orientation to the ethics of scholarship and moral conduct in the academic arena. Students hear strongly worded admonitions about academic cheating and receive statements and rules about behavioral expectations; however, they seldom get the opportunity to discuss the meaning of scholarship, which they may encounter in college. Consequently, it is the peer culture that gives most new students their most intensive and practical orientation to academic ethics in college. (p. 4)

Technical and community colleges tended to have professional and vocational programs with very rigorous curriculums. These curriculum supported the principle mission of “being all things to all people” (Gleazer, 1994). More specifically, these programs were offered at an accelerated pace in an effort to quickly maneuver students back into the global workforce. In addition, students in these programs were enrolled for a variety of reasons. Some enrolled for continuing education purposes related to a current position or continuing education purposes related to gaining an opportunity for a new career path (Lorenzo, 1994). Others were in pursuit of short-term certification or a vocational degree in a specified area of expertise.

Group work was advocated in many of the professional and vocational programs, leading students to believe that “working together” was acceptable and not academically dishonest behavior (Fawkner & Keremidchieva, 2004). Several studies at four-year institutions proved that there were correlations between demographic traits, respondent characteristics, and influences of peer relations as they related to four-year students and the issue of academically dishonest and cheating behavior. More importantly, these
studies revealed that four-year students understood the meaning of academic dishonesty and plagiarism (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001). Furthermore, these students also self-reported that they carried out academically dishonest behaviors at least once.

**Academic Dishonesty**

In Kibler’s (1998) study, he proposed “one reason why academic dishonesty persists in colleges and universities may be that institutions are treating it as a behavioral aberration rather than as an educational developmental issue” (p. 23). Kibler also proposed that when cheating was discovered, “most institutions address only the misbehavior, without requiring the alleged cheater to confront the developmental issues involved in deciding to use cheating as a means to achieve a goal” (p. 23).

According to Kenny (2007), “with the ever-increasing availability and accessibility of the Internet, students accessed a multitude of resources in support of their studies. However, this led to an increase in their ability to cheat through plagiarizing text and claiming it as their own” (p. 14). Moeck (2002) asserted “some students think anything in the Internet is public domain [and that] many first-generation community college attendees do not know the definition of plagiarism or copyright” (p. 483). Kenny also suggested that their continued pressures of “balancing work and study have contributed to this rise [in plagiarism]” (p. 14). More so, “[d]eadline pressure, difficulty keeping up, and lack of preparation for college may play a role, too, in motivating cheating” behavior (Granitz & Loewy, 2006, p. 296).

Hughes and McCabe (2006) argued that those undergraduates engaged in some form of academic dishonesty were fully aware of their actions and that such misconduct was morally wrong. Sheard, Dick, Markham, MacDonald, and Walsh (2002) argued that...
when it comes to academic dishonesty, the “general perception [was] that the problem is
endemic in universities worldwide and some believe it is increasing. Anecdotal and
reported evidence indicated there were many ways in which students cheated, and the
now widespread use of the Internet in universities offered yet another resource for
students inclined to this type of behavior” (p. 183). There was a general consensus that
the Internet generated a greater sense of ownership for students that perused its endless
channels of information, facilitating the accessibility and abundance of information.
According to one source, “[t]he Internet has made cyber-cheating as simple as a mouse
click and has raised the bar for instructors who may be struggling to keep up with tech-
savvy perpetrators. The Internet is seductive with its ease and speed of access and sheer
bounty” (Granitz & Loewy, 2006, p. 296).

Prior to the Internet, researchers and practitioners struggled to understand why
academically dishonest behaviors continued pervasively at the college and university
level, but more importantly, what was truly an acceptable definition for such behavior.
According to Pincus and Schmelkin (2003), “one of the main issues that emerged from
the literature, related to inconsistencies in the definition of academically dishonest
behaviors and the lack of consensus and general understanding of academic dishonesty
among all members of the campus community” (p. 196). Kibler, Nuss, Paterson, and
Pavela (1988) believed that academic dishonesty or academically dishonest behavior
involved “forms of cheating and plagiarism, which resulted in students giving or
receiving unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise or receiving credit for work
which is not their own” (p. 1). Pavela (1978) proposed and divided academic dishonesty
into four definitive categories:
Cheating—intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all form of work submitted for credit or hours. Fabrication—intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Facilitating academic dishonesty—intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism—the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statements of another person as one’s own without acknowledgement. (pp. 72-73)

Academic dishonesty, as an overarching terminology, was heavily researched in light of four-year institutions and the perceptions of their faculty and students. Study after study was conducted on cheating behaviors and types of plagiarism, adding to the literature this concept of copying as a form of academically dishonest behavior. Moeck (2002) supported this notion when he suggested “cheating can exist in the form of plagiarism” (p. 481). Prior to the 1990s, Kroll (1988) investigated “what a sample of college freshmen thought about plagiarism, exploring the reasons they thought it was wrong, as well as examining some of their beliefs and attitudes about plagiarizing college papers” (p. 204).

Throughout the 1990s, scholars such as McCabe, Pavela, and Trevino saturated the literature with investigations of faculty and student perceptions of plagiarism at four-year institutions. Pulvers and Diekhoff (1999) investigated situational factors in 200 undergraduate students at two liberal arts universities in the Midwest. They suggested “large classes, inadequately proctored lecture halls, multiple-choice tests, and the use of
old tests…influence the incidence of cheating” (p. 489-490). Ward and Beck (1990), Davis (1993), and McCabe and Bowers (1996) conducted studies suggesting that women cheated less than men. The research of Weiss, Gilbert, Giordano, and Davis (1993) revealed that personality traits form a second predictor of dishonest conduct and discovered a positive correlation between Type A personality, grade orientation, and high levels of academic dishonesty. Corcoran and Rotter (1987) conducted research to determine attitudes with the likelihood of cheating behavior and Ward’s study (1986) revealed a positive correlation between self-esteem and honesty in classroom cheating situations.

Other prominent studies of academic dishonesty and four-year colleges and universities included Eisenberger and Shank's (1985) examination of the inverse relationship between a high work ethic and cheating, and a report conducted by Roig and de Tommaso (1995). This report demonstrated a positive correlation between academic dishonesty and procrastination. It was suggested that particular students have a greater propensity to cheat than others based on academic major. For example, business students self-reported the highest level of cheating among graduate professional students (of 6,000 respondents). Seventy-six percent of these students admitted they had committed some form of academically dishonest behavior. The report revealed the percentages of other self-reports by majors such as English (71%) and medicine (68%), education (57%), law (63%), and the arts (64%) (Tetzeli, 1991).

All of these landmark studies revealed several findings as they related to the four-year student. McCabe and Trevino (1997) revealed that “students with lower GPAs report more cheating than students with higher GPAs” (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001,
McCabe (1999) identified factors that can influence cheating behavior such as “pressure to get high grades, parental pressures, a desire to excel, pressure to get a job, laziness, a lack of responsibility, a lack of character, poor self-image, a lack of pride in a job well done, and a lack of personal integrity” (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001, p. 228).

According to Underwood and Szabo (2003), academically dishonest behavior “include[s] acts of plagiarism, using concealed notes to cheat on tests, exchanging work with other students, buying essays or, in some extreme and notorious cases, asking others to sit examinations for you” (p. 468). Hughes and McCabe (2006) suggested that terms such as academic dishonesty, academic misconduct, and academic integrity were often used interchangeably in the context of unethical behavior as it related to students’ academic work. They asserted that academic dishonesty or academic misconduct can easily be defined as “forging or altering university documents, writing a paper for another student, and hiding or damaging library resources” (Hughes & McCabe, 2006, p. 51).

Plagiarism and all of its most common types generally involved help from the Internet. Students used the convenience of cyberspace to aid them in “working smarter and not harder.” The concept of plagiarism neatly fit under the umbrella terminology of academic dishonesty and was the most prevalent of the academically dishonest acts. Parallel to its prevalence, both globally and within the higher educational landscape, was the recognition of the more common types that existed amongst students.

**Plagiarism and Types of Plagiarism.** The offence of academic dishonesty “includes acts of plagiarism, using concealed notes to cheat on tests, exchanging work with other students, buying essays or, in some extreme and notorious cases, asking others to sit
examinations for you” (Underwood & Szabo, 2003, p. 468). Hughes and McCabe (2006) suggested that the terms academic dishonesty, academic misconduct, and academic integrity were often “used interchangeably in reference to a range of unethical behaviors in which students engage while completing their academic work” (p. 50). Academic dishonesty and/or misconduct included “forging or altering university documents, writing a paper for another student, and hiding or damaging library resources” (Hughes & McCabe, 2006, p. 51). Academic integrity, according to Hughes and McCabe (2006) was “more than the absence of misconduct, but rather the commitment, even in the face of adversity, to the five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility”” (p. 51).

According to Hughes and McCabe (2006), “research suggest[ed] that the majority of US undergraduate students have engaged in some form of misconduct while completing their academic work, despite knowing that such behavior is ethically or morally wrong” (p. 49). In fact, “among the more common types [of academic dishonesty] are cheating on tests and homework and plagiarism from books and articles” (Jensen, Arnett, Feldman & Cauffman, 2002, p. 210). Rakovski and Levy (2007) credited technology for “exasperat[ing] the dishonesty problem” (p. 468). They suggested “computers allow for easy and undetected sharing of information by transferring word-processed documents and spreadsheets.”

In addition, the “Internet has made it very easy to obtain information” (Rakovski & Levy, 2007, p. 468). In 2001, McCabe’s study revealed that of 4,500 schools, 74% of students cheat on tests; 72% cheated on some type of written assignment; 15% downloaded a paper for use from the Internet; and some 52% copied a sentence or two
from a source from the Internet and admitted failing to cite the source (McCabe, 2001). When four-year students at these schools were questioned about using the Internet, some 90% expressed having plagiarized from sources retrieved from a written assignment (McCabe, 2001).

According to a Phi Delta Kappa report (2003), plagiarism was the “use of another’s work as one’s own without giving credit and without having written permission from the author or artist to use his or her work” (p. 7). The report offered that plagiarism “includes not only copying another’s work directly, but also paraphrasing another person’s work without giving the original author credit. It is not only cheating, it also is a form of theft” (p. 7). Hoekema (1994) defined plagiarism as the “use of someone else’s work, words, or ideas as if they were your own” (p. 206). Hoekema (1994) argued, “most forms of cheating on examinations are plagiarism; but in ordinary academic parlance the word applies to papers rather than examinations” (p. 206). Kenny (2007) defined the act of plagiarizing as “taking and using another’s thoughts or writings) as ones own” (p. 15). He also described plagiarism as a “sub-section of cheating” and suggested that “with increasing technology the issue of plagiarism has become much more complex and [that] students are utilizing much more sophisticated methods of cheating” (p. 15). Kiehl (2006) asserted “the Internet provides students with ready-made research and academic papers, and access to Web sites on a plethora of topics” (p. 199).

A Phi Delta Kappa report (2003) revealed that the most frequent “kind of plagiarism at the high school level is the verbatim copying from a source without quotation marks or proper citation” (p. 10). This report highlighted various forms of plagiarism, citing incidences of paraphrasing and cut-and-paste as the most frequent
offenses. In this report, students’ self-reported plagiarism in the form “of inadequate paraphrasing, changing only one or two words and claiming it is not technically the same as the original, [was] a careless error that students [made]” (p. 11). The report further revealed that self-reported forms of plagiarism occurred “when students „cut and paste‟ a paper from a number of sources, then cite each source and maintain that the paper [was] technically correct, though there [was] not a shred of original work in it” (p. 11).

Nitterhouse (2003) argued, “plagiarism can take several forms” (p. 217). He suggested, “plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one‟s own” (Nitterhouse, 2003, p. 217). Iyer and Eastman (2006) asserted that plagiarism needed to “be seen within a broader context of cheating that includes other unethical practices such as cheating on tests or assignments, falsifying data, misusing resources, taking credit for others‟ work, and manipulating academic staff” (p. 102).

Similar to the debate about academic dishonesty, Brown and Howell (2001) asserted, “of all cheating behaviors, plagiarism [was] identified as being a particular source of confusion” (p. 105). Nitterhouse (2001) suggested that plagiarism included but was not limited to:

- The direct coping if any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, and audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgment that it is someone else‟s
- Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgement
• Submitting as one’s own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency

• The paraphrasing of another’s work or ideas without proper acknowledgement. (p. 217)

As a result of such confusion, DeVoss and Rosati (2002) suggested “students may plagiarize because they feel that assembling sources, citations, and quotes is the primary goal of writing a paper—and that their original ideas are secondary” (p. 195). In addition, students stumbled toward plagiarism “when they fail to cite properly because they don’t entirely understand the point or argument of a primary work, or in a struggle to define what ‘common knowledge’ means, they struggle to identify which information merits a citation” (p. 195). In many cases, students had a “poor understanding of an assignment or of the rhetorical aspects of an assignment—that is, a weak understanding of situation, audience, and their purpose in completing an assignment” (p. 195).

Maxymuk (2006) stated that with the access that “electronic cut-and-paste techniques [provide] and the wealth of information freely available on the web, it has never been easier to plagiarize” (p. 44). DeVoss and Rosati (2002) suggested “issues of plagiarism are complex, and made all the more complicated by students’ increasing use of the World Wide Web as a research space” (p. 191). According to Strom and Strom (2007), “plagiarism on the Internet is a monumental problem that educators in the middle school, high school, and college are struggling to confront” (p. 110). The emergence of “technological devices have spawned new and more sophisticated approaches to deceptive conduct. Students with handhelds or cell phones can ‘beam’ or call data silently
from across the classroom or, with a cell phone, from anywhere off campus” (p. 43-44). “The practice of cut-and-paste plagiarism is widespread, with students acting as though whatever they find on the Internet can be submitted as their own work” (p. 111). Kenny (2007) asserted that the issue of plagiarism was also prevalent with group work; for example, when he suggested that students might also “submit coursework that has been written by a friend, they may use the same or similar piece of work for different courses or copy another student’s work and submit it as their own (with or without the student’s knowledge)” (p. 15).

Research has shown that it was almost impossible to determine exactly why students chose to be academically dishonest, but one of the most important ethical decisions that students made was whether “to cheat or not to cheat on their academic work” (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001, p. 220). On the other hand, it was suggested that an unlimited number of reasons why students made decisions to plagiarize exist. DeVoss and Rosati (2002) asserted that students decided to plagiarize due to a feeling of pressure to “a project or paper for another course or free up time to put in more hours at work” (p. 195). They also suggested that students’ culture varied in “how writing, authorship, identity, individualism, ownership rights, and personal relationships are perceived, and these variances in values and approaches to text affect [their] writing” (p. 195). In many cases though, these “students lack training regarding ethical practices for searching the Internet, [and] they may suppose it is all right to present the words and views of another person as their own thinking” (Strom & Strom, 2007, p. 46).
A Review of the Literature to Ethical Decision-Making and Cognitive Moral Development

Previous landmark studies generated core models and theories related to ethical decision making processes, which “had tended to emphasize either the individual role or situational variables in producing ethical/unethical behaviors” (Trevino, 1986, p. 601). According to Smith, Davy, Rosenberg, and Haight (2002), college students participated in such behaviors as a result of situational factors such as grades, peer competition, and academic stress. Smith, Davy, Rosenberg, and Haight (2002) examined cheating behaviors among 606 accounting majors at three public business schools and investigated “whether neutralizing behaviors mediate the influence of demographic (e.g. academic standing gender, etc.) and attitudinal factors (e.g. alienation), and cheating deterrents, on cheating behaviors” (p. 47). Smith et al. (2002) defined neutralization as “the rationalizations and justifications for dishonest behaviors used to deflect self disapproval or disapproval from others (Sykes & Matza, 1957, p. 49). They suggested that students who neutralize “profess to support a societal norm, but conjure up circumstances that permit them to violate the norm. This allows them to cheat without feeling that they are inherently dishonest, thereby eliminating a sense of guilt for the dishonest action” (p. 49).

More so, “Kohlberg’s (1969) model of cognitive moral development has been the theoretical foundation of many theories of ethical decision-making” (Haines & Leonard, 2007, p. 5; Rest et al., 1986). This model “addresse[d] how the cognitive processes of ethical decision-making become more sophisticated as individuals develop” (Haines & Leonard, 2007, p. 6). Later, Trevino’s (1986) Interactionist Model of Ethical Decision Making for Organizations modified Kohlberg’s earlier model linked “moral judgment to
moral action and proposed that individual characteristics influence links throughout the decision-making processes rather than simply judgments of whether the behavior was acceptable and ethical behavior” (p. 6). Rest (1986) established a model that linked individual characteristics across four stages of the decision-making process, shown in Figure 2.1 below.

![Figure 2.1. Four-component model of ethical decision-making. Rest et al. (1986). Rest (1986) established a model that linked individual characteristics across four stages of the decision-making process.](image)

Trevino’s (1986) Interactionist Model of Ethical Decision Making for Organizations highlighted the interaction between both the individual and situational components. In this model the individual reacted to “an ethical dilemma with cognitions determined by his or her cognitive moral development stage. The individual’s cognitive moral development stage determines how the individual thinks about ethical dilemmas, [and] his or her process of deciding what is right and wrong in a situation” (Trevino, 1986, p. 602).

According to Trevino (1986), the Interactionist model “proposed that an individual’s level of cognitive moral development strongly influences the person’s decision regarding what is right or wrong; the rights, duties, and obligations involved in a particular ethical dilemma” (p. 602). More specifically, the model provided a theoretical basis for understanding the individual thought processes for ethical dilemmas based upon situational influences and the neutralization process (Trevino, 1986; Smith et al. 2002).
According to Trevino (1986), “additional individual and situational variables [are] needed to interact with the cognitive component to determine how an individual is likely to behave in response to an ethical dilemma” or a decision to act out in the form of cheating behavior (p. 602). Kisamore, Stone, and Jawahar (2007) asserted the importance of “not only examin[ing] individual and situational variables, but in also investigat[ing] the interactions among them to better understand individual’s propensities to engage in and report instances of academic misconduct” (p. 382). Trevino (1986) described examples of additional variables as ego strength, field dependence, and locus of control. The Rest et al. (1986) model of the ethical decision-making process also factored in individual characteristics, accounting for demographic traits such as gender and age. Collectively, these models investigated influential variables such as obedience to authority, responsibility of consequences, and pressures as situational components that may impact the ethical decision-making process.

Many noteworthy studies of four-year institutions suggested that students carry out some process of rationalization when making decisions to plagiarize. Simon et al. (2003) suggested, “cheating and plagiarism limit the university’s or college’s ability to fulfill its mission to impact knowledge to students in a setting relatively unmarred by ethical problems or incivility” (p. 194). Apart from students’ ethical decision-making processes when it came to whether they decided to plagiarize, more important was the number of reasons why they chose to cheat in the first place. Social, environmental, and situational factors were the most influential in their ethical decision-making processes. The common patterns of rationalizations for cheating behavior included denial of
responsibility, condemnation of condemners, appeal to higher loyalties, denial of victim, and denial of injury.

**Rationalizations for Student Cheating Behaviors.** According to Lupton and Chapman (2002), cheating affected the student’s educational experience in several ways. According to them, “First, cheating behaviors may lead to inequitable grades and a misrepresentation of what a student may actually have learned and can use after graduation. Additionally, successful cheating behaviors in college may carry over as a way of life after college” (p. 18). Additionally “LaBeff, Clark, Haines, and Diekhoff (1990) suggest[ed] that the concept of situational ethics may be particularly helpful in understanding student rationalizations for cheating” (McCabe, 2002, p. 365). McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield (2001) suggested, “to understand ethics and ethical development…we have [to] study the ethical inclinations of college students in general” (p. 220). McCabe suggested “students seem to be quite skilled in developing rationalizations or justifications for their cheating and placing the blame elsewhere” (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 1999, p. 229).

McCabe and Trevino’s (1993) multivariate study included prominent research based on 28 institutions. This research investigated academic dishonesty and honor codes and other contextual influences. This study revealed, “the perception of peer’s behavior was the most influential contextual variable,” and also affirmed peer behavior as a “normative support for cheating” (McCabe & Trevino, 1993, p. 533). Their multivariate analysis also revealed the significance of social learning theory as it related to peer-related behaviors and interactions and that a majority “of the cheating in which college
students engage is driven or justified by the pressure to succeed” (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 1999, p. 231).

Prior to McCabe and Trevino’s (1993) study, LaBeff, Clark, Haines, and Diekhoff (1990) sampled 380 undergraduate students at a small southwestern university and later classified five categories of rationalizations for cheating behavior: (1) denial of responsibility; (2) condemnation of condemners; (3) appeal to higher loyalties; (4) denial of victim; and (5) denial of injury. Denial of responsibility “invokes the claim that the act was beyond the control of the individual” (McCabe, 1992, p. 369; Sykes & Matza, 1957). For example, a student’s denial of responsibility could be their fear of failure or justification as a result of peers’ behavior (McCabe, 1992). Sykes and Matza (1957) asserted that condemnation of condemners involved a shift in “focus of attention from [one’s] own deviant acts to the motives and behavior of those who disapprove of [the] violations. [By] attacking others, the wrongfulness of [one’s] own behavior is more easily repressed or lost to view” (p. 668).

According to McCabe (1992), this type of denial was “focused in issues of favoritism and fairness” (p. 371). The concept of a student’s appeal to higher loyalties suggested, “the student may not challenge the rules, but rather views the need to help a friend, fellow fraternity/sorority member, or roommate to be a greater obligation which justifies the cheating behavior” (McCabe, 1992, p. 371). Mocek (2002) suggested “some view cheating as socially acceptable and find it difficult to deny requests from friends” (p. 483). According to Sheard, Dick, Markham, MacDonald, and Walsh (2002), the prevalence of cheating was determined based on students’ “perceptions of cheating
practice among their friends and classmates. In surveys, students generally indicate[d] more awareness of other’s cheating than admissions of personal practice” (p. 184).

The denial of the victim equated to the cheater feeling “deserving of the consequences of [their] cheating behavior” (p. 370). In this form of denial, the victim felt any punishment or consequence was justified as a result of their actions of plagiarism. The strategy of denial of injury simply identified with an almost apathetic stance in the sense that “what is the harm in what I have done since no one has been hurt or affected” (p. 370). McCabe (1992) suggested that a “key element in denial of injury is whether one feels „anyone has clearly been hurt by the [act of] deviance’” (p. 370). This cheating strategy supported Moeck’s (2002) view that “many students attend college to acquire a credential, not an education. How they earn the credential is less important than simply receiving it. Any method of acquiring the credential is perceived as appropriate” (p.483).

In other cases, “some think they will not get caught and play the odds. Others enjoy the adrenaline rush of successfully breaking the rules” (Moeck, 2002, p. 483).

Granitz (2003) suggested that, in general, the ethical process began when “an ethical dilemma emerges from the environment… the individual recognizes the ethical dilemma, they then evaluate the dilemma, make a personal judgment, establish moral intent and partake in the associated behavior” (Granitz, 2003, p. 103). More so, “[c]ore models of ethical behavior have specified individual (attitudes, values, etc.) and social factors (peers, significant others, etc) as determinants of an individual’s ethical reasoning and moral intent” (Granitz, 2003, p. 101; Jones, 1991; Trevino, 1986). In terms of academic behaviors, there was a “distinction between students who approach classroom tasks with a genuine desire to understand (i.e., high intrinsic value, strong mastery or
learning goals) versus those who are more interested in external indicators of accomplishment (i.e., performance goals, ego goals, extrinsic motivation)” (Murdock & Anderman, 2006, p. 130-131). Murdock and Anderman (2006) suggested that:

In terms of cheating, perhaps a more serious problem emerges for students who are in high-ability classes but do not feel as efficacious as their peers. When students feel that they cannot keep up with their more able peers, they may be more likely to resort to cheating to appear as competent as their classmates. (p. 135)

One of the most important studies in academic dishonesty and cheating behavior was the work of McCabe and Trevino (1993) where more than 6,000 students were surveyed at 31 institutions during 1990-91 (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001). They stated, “This project was the first major, multicampus investigation of institution-level variables that influence cheating behavior since Bowers 1964 study” (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001, p. 222). In 1997, McCabe and Trevino surveyed 1,800 students at nine mid- to large-size institutions during the 1993-94 academic year. This study investigated the “relative influence of contextual and individual factors on cheating behavior (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001). These studies utilized a survey that was modified from William Bowers (1964), who was credited for first investigating academically dishonest behaviors (McCabe, Trevino, & Klebe, 2002). It was then Donald McCabe’s survey that was continuously modified throughout the last four decades to investigate the self-reported cheating behaviors of four-year students in colleges and universities nationally.
A Literature Review of McCabe’s Research

Donald McCabe saturated the literature by corroborating the research findings of sociologist Williams Bowers. William Bowers was known as the pioneer of academic dishonesty as a result of conducting the first multi-campus, landmark study in the early 1960s (McCabe & Trevino, 2002). McCabe, similar to Bowers, “acknowledged the importance of factors such as students’ high school experience and value orientation and institutional size and selectivity” (McCabe & Trevino, 2002, p. 2). More importantly, he agreed with Bowers’s feelings that “students’ college peers had perhaps the most powerful effect on their attitude toward cheating” (p. 2). McCabe (1996) suggested that the terms “academic dishonesty and academic misconduct are often used interchangeably in reference to a range of unethical behaviors in which some students engage while completing their academic work” (p. 50). McCabe’s research supported Bowers’s research conclusions and documented “significant increases in student cheating over the past three decades” (p. 2).

McCabe supported Mullens (2000) definition of academic dishonesty as:

Anything that gives a student an unearned advantage over another. It includes an of the following: purchasing an essay; plagiarizing paragraphs or whole texts; impersonating another to take a test; sneaking a peek at another student’s answers; smuggling crib notes into a test; padding a bibliography; fudging laboratory results; collaborating on an assignment when the professor asks for individual work; or asking for a deadline extension by citing a bogus excuse. (p. 23)
The “impetus for McCabe’s interest in this research stemmed from the shortage of data to help us understand how student cheating has changed over time” (McCabe & Trevino, 1996, p. 1) and to obtain a “more representative picture of trends in cheating among college students” (changes in factors such as coeducation and increases in ethnic diversity) (p. 2). Some 30 years later, McCabe and Trevino replicated Bower’s study on a larger scale. They “surveyed over 6,000 students at 31 campuses around the country, using a sample of schools generally small to modest in size that had highly selective admissions policies…Both studies asked students about academic dishonesty on tests and examinations and on major written assignments” (p. 2). McCabe’s research concluded that individual characteristics such as gender, grade point average, and institutional and contextual characteristics such as peer relationships and perceptions, extracurricular involvement, and the influence of honor codes have been influential in student cheating. More specifically, “maturity, habit, attitude, culture, and first, language are among the personal factors which explain some of the reasons why students may engage in various [cheating] behaviors” (McCabe, 2006, p. 53).

**McCabe and Trevino (1992) Role of Individual Factor.** The focus of this research was on the “role of context in influencing academic dishonesty” (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001, p. 227). This research “expanded the understanding of the relation between individual influences and academic dishonesty” (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001, p. 227). More importantly, it showed that “college students use a variety of neutralization techniques (e.g. rationalization, denial, deflecting blame to others, condemning the accusers) to explain away their dishonest behavior” (p. 227). Their research outcomes suggested that age and class rank were strongly correlated. More
specifically, first and second year students were more likely to rationalize their cheating behavior than those students in their last two years of study (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001).

**McCabe and Trevino (1992) The Influence of Situational Ethics.** The focus of this research was grounded in the ideology that “although cheating is generally seen as wrong, students identify many situations in which they feel cheating is acceptable” (McCabe, 1992, p. 365). McCabe replicated a study conducted by LaBeff, Clark, Haines, and Diekhoff (1990) that concluded that situational ethics is helpful gaining a true understanding of student rationalizations for cheating (McCabe, 1992). These researchers surveyed 380 undergraduate students at a small university that replicated use of five categories of neutralization first proposed by Sykes and Matza in 1957 (McCabe, 1992). McCabe replicated this study during the 1990-91 academic year and administered a survey to students at “thirty-one highly selective colleges across the country” (McCabe, 1992, p. 366). A total of 6,096 students participated in McCabe’s research. His research revealed that six types of cheating were most popular:

1. a failure to footnote sources in written work,  
2. collaboration on assignments when the instructor specifically asked for individual work,  
3. copying from other students on tests and examinations,  
4. fabrication of bibliographies,  
5. helping someone else cheat on a test, and  
6. using unfair methods to learn the content of a test ahead of time. (p. 367)

The outcomes of his research suggested that “almost one in five students (19.1%) could be classified as active cheaters (five or more reported incidents of cheating)” (p. 367). Additional highlights of this research indicated that the two most common
categories of neutralization as techniques were students’ denial of responsibility and condemnation of condemners (McCabe, 1992). In terms of denial of responsibility, 52.4% admitted to cheating due to situational factors such as pressure to get good grades, parental pressures, and competition to gain college admission; and 46% cited “excessive workloads and an inability to keep up with assignments as important factors in their decisions to cheat” (p. 367). In terms of condemnation of condemners, 28% of students used explanations such as “pointless assignments, lack of respect for individual professors, unfair tests, parents’ expectations, and unfair professors” (p. 369).

**McCabe and Trevino (1990-1993, 1997) The Role of Contextual Factors.** McCabe and Trevino described this landmark research as “one of the most important studies” of their work because it was “the first major, multicampus investigation of institution-level variables that influence cheating behavior since Bower’s (1964) seminal work” (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001, p. 222). During this time, most of the studies related to academic dishonesty “only sampled students at a single institution” (p. 221). This particular research and other studies that followed this one were initiated in their attempts to “address this shortcoming…” (p. 221). Some of the greater results from this research were an advancement in the “understanding of why college students cheat, provid[ing] administrators and faculty with a broader set of tools that [could] be used to curb cheating on college campuses, and help[ing] to foster academic integrity in American colleges and universities” (p. 221). Most important of these research outcomes was the 1992 formation of the Center for Academic Integrity, “a consortium of more than 200 colleges and universities united in a common effort to initiate and maintain a dialogue among students, faculty, and administrators on the issue of academic integrity” (p. 221).
This investigation involved surveying more than 6,000 students at 31 academic institutions within the 1990-91 academic year (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001). The variables studied in this investigation included: “existence of honor codes, student understanding and acceptance of a school’s academic integrity policy, perceived certainty that cheaters will be reported, perceived severity of penalties, and the degree to which students perceive that their peers engage in cheating behavior” (p. 222).

This survey research was based on social learning theory and revealed that their final variable, peer behavior, showed “the most significant relation with student cheating,” (p. 222). This study was also tied into McCabe’s 1992 study on the influence of situational ethics on cheating among college students.

In 1993-94, McCabe and Trevino (1997) replicated this study on a smaller scale, surveying 1,800 students at nine medium- to large-size universities. This study investigated the “influence of contextual and individual factors on cheating behavior” (p. 222). The research outcomes from this study revealed the primacy of the “institutional context in influencing cheating behavior. The contextual factors (peer cheating behavior, peer disapproval of cheating behavior, and perceived severity of penalties for cheating) were significantly more influential than the individual factors (age, gender, GPA, and participation in extracurricular activities)” (p. 222-223). This study also revealed that “cheating tend[ed] to be more prevalent on larger campuses” (p. 223). Finally, this study established the “serious test cheating statistic,” which incorporated four behaviors: plagiarism, fabricating or falsifying a bibliography, turning in work done by someone else, and copying a few sentences of material without footnoting them in a paper (p. 223).
McCabe and Trevino 1993, 1996, McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield 1999-

The Influence of Honor Codes. In 1993, McCabe and Trevino investigated the influence of academic honor codes on student integrity (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001). This research replicated Bowers’s (1964) finding that less cheating occurs in honor code environments” (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001, p. 224). In this study, McCabe and Trevino discovered that “one of the lowest levels of cheating occurred at a school that lacked an honor code, and one of the higher levels of cheating occurred at a school that had a long-standing honor code” (p. 224). This finding revealed that the school without the honor code had developed “a culture that emphasized many of the elements found at code schools and encouraged academic integrity without instituting a formal code” (p. 224). The school with the honor code “failed to adequately communicate the essence of its code to students and to indoctrinate them into the campus culture” (p. 224). Most importantly, this finding revealed that “it is not the mere existence of an honor code that is important in deterring college cheating” (p. 224).

In 1996, McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield replicated the 1993 study by surveying 318 alumni at two private liberal arts colleges and focusing on honor codes from the perspective of their long-term effects on behavior (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001). They stated, “[t]he study focused on alumni who had graduated from their respective colleges between 1962 and 1989, allowing researchers to test hypotheses about the long-term effects of collegiate honor codes as well as the effect of codes of ethics at their current work organizations” (p. 225). The researchers wanted to investigate whether or not “participation in multiple honor code communities” played a role in reducing dishonest behavior (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001). The results of the study
revealed that “dishonest behavior in the workplace was lowest for participants who had experienced an honor code environment in college and who currently worked in an organization that had a strongly implemented code of ethics” (p. 225).

In 1999, McCabe was interested in the gaining insight on the effect of honor codes on students, but from a qualitative perspective. At this time, little was known about “students’ thoughts and feelings about these codes and how and why they [thought] honor codes influence[d] their behavior” (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 1999, p. 212). McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield (1999) surveyed more than 1,700 students at 31 colleges and universities. More specifically, “fourteen of the 31 schools employed traditional honor codes to discourage and/or control academic dishonesty while the remaining 17 relied on more conventional policies” (p. 213).

The qualitative research that was measured and analyzed from this study was gathered from open-ended questions at the end of the survey. Students were asked to comment about the “effectiveness of the academic integrity policies on their campuses and the prevalence of cheating, both their own and that of their peers” (p. 212). The researchers analyzed their open-ended responses, discovering that “more than 40% of the almost 4,300 respondents offered comments” (McCabe, Trevino, Butterfield, 2001, p. 226). The outcomes of this qualitative study reemphasized the “differences between code and noncode campus environments” (p. 226). Most importantly, the code students “were less likely to cheat, were less likely to rationalize or justify any cheating behavior that they did admit to, and were more likely to talk about the importance of integrity and about how a moral community can minimize cheating” (p. 226).
McCabe and Bowers 1996-The Relationship between Cheating and College

**Fraternity or Sorority Membership.** Peer relations and approval, moral development, and how the two relate and influence each other were incorporated into several studies that involved academic dishonesty. McCabe and Bowers (1996) researched collaboratively based on the examination and comparison of “self-reported cheating behaviors of fraternity and non-fraternity members and the relation between student cheating and the overall level of fraternity or sorority membership on campus” (p. 1). Their primary focus for this research was “the relationship between fraternity and sorority membership and academic pursuits” (p. 1). More specifically, they said “the influence of peer disapproval of cheating on the relationship between fraternity and sorority membership and self-reported cheating” (p. 1). Similar to McCabe and Trevino’s (1993) study of contextual factors, this study was equally important because “it was the first study in thirty years to examine this relation in a multicampus survey and the first multicampus survey to examine this relationship in depth for sororities as well as fraternities” (p. 3).

This research replicated Bowers’s (1964) research and surveyed nine of the previously surveyed institutions, which had an enrollment of 4,000 students (McCabe & Bowers, 1996). The research outcomes revealed “the frequency of cheating on tests among men [was] significantly higher than that among women and for fraternity and sorority members than for non-members” (p. 2). The study revealed that the students who “perceive strong disapproval of cheating among their peers report consistently lower levels of cheating” (p. 3). This study specifically revealed a decline in peer disapproval
amongst those students affiliated with fraternities and sororities leading to higher levels of cheating (McCabe & Bowers, 1996).

Previous four-year institutional studies revealed that individual, demographic, and situational characteristics were influential in students’ ethical decision making processes. Although a gap existed in the literature for two-year studies, these situational characteristics may also be influential for these students as well. More importantly, outcomes from these studies may also correlate with reasons why two-year students choose to plagiarize.

**Cheating and Reasons Why Students Cheat**

The terminology “cheating,” under the umbrella of academic dishonesty, is referred to “a wide variety of behaviors that are regarded as unethical” (Dalton, 1998, p. 5). McCabe and Trevino (1997) asserted that it was not exactly clear why students behaved dishonestly in academia, but previous literature on cheating had generally focused on “two major streams: those that attempt to identify personal characteristics that may be predictive of higher levels of cheating and those that examine the situational or contextual factors that may lead to higher levels of cheating in different settings” (p. 379). Dalton (1998) argued, “competition and pressures for good grades are the primary reasons for cheating” (p. 6).

When students were asked why they were most likely to cheat on their academic work, at least 45% mentioned wanting to prevent failing a class and 21% admitted to cheating because they knew they would not be punished for their actions (McCabe & Trevino, 1997). Gehring, Nuss, and Pavela (1986) suggested the following as additional factors for students’ academic dishonest behavior:
• Students are unclear about what behaviors constitute academic dishonesty.
• Students believe that what they learn isn’t relevant to their future career goals.
• Student values have changed. The ability to succeed at all costs is one of the most cherished values.
• Increased competition for enrollment in high demand disciplines and admission to prestigious graduate and professional schools prompt students to cheat to improve their grades, not just to avoid failure. (p. 3-4)

According to Thompson (2006), “students plagiarize for a variety of reasons. Some students were simply overloaded, hated the required course, or hadn’t planned their time well” (p. 2443). When Strom and Strom (2007) polled middle and high schools in reference to their motives for academically dishonest behavior, the main reasons included: students needing good grades to get into college; inadequate time to do the assignment; everyone else was cheating; and the course being taken was not of importance.

According to Dalton (1998), for many students, “college is the primary gateway to the ‘good life’ of material rewards and status. The self-interested values of much of collegiate peer culture today support a utilitarian approach to personal ethics, which condones cheating as a necessary means to a desirable end” (p. 2). Dalton (1998) suggested that a combination of “increased academic competition, condoning peer culture, and weakened character education makes today’s college students more susceptible to the problems of academic dishonesty” (p. 3). Clifford (1998) asserted that the most frequently cited reasons for cheating:
Included the need for and importance of getting good grades and fear of failing, and time, stress, and workload factors, including amount of studying. Other reasons for cheating were: difficulty and/or fairness of course material; whether other students are cheating; importance of course or assignment; and need for help with homework. (p. 117)

According to Stephens (2004), “for students, maintaining a high grade point average is necessary for scholarships and advanced education. These pressures no doubt contribute to individuals’ taking the academic shortcuts of cheating and plagiarism” (p. 292). Bowers’s (1964) research of academic dishonesty revealed that:

The lack of preparation in course work apparently places more of a strain on students to violate their moral stance against cheating than do poor grades…Students who feel ill-prepared are apt to approach their exams with great anxiety, and some of them may feel that they can only pass by cheating, even though they find cheating quite distasteful. Perhaps low grade average does not place the same amount of strain on the students who have a clear aversion to cheating because many students do not know before their final grades that they will end up with low grades. In short, the fear of failure is what seems to pressure students who strongly disapprove of cheating to engage in academic dishonesty. (p. 84)

Whitley and Kite (1998) proposed that the students’ “social environments can affect their motivation to cheat” (p. 41). They suggested that these factors included “a desire to achieve at a level beyond one’s current ability, a desire to maintain a feeling of fairness in instructor-student relationships, and a desire to maintain a sense of control
over the events that affect one’s life” (Whitley & Kite, 1998, p. 41). To this end, “if students believe that they have little control over their academic outcomes, they might resort to cheating as a means of asserting such control” (Whitley & Kite, 1998, p. 44). Other landmark studies revealed factors associated with influencing academic dishonesty in colleges and universities such as “competition, pressures for good grades…lax attitudes on the part of the faculty towards academic dishonesty, peer pressures to support a friend, and a diminishing sense of academic integrity and ethical values among students” (Aluede, Omorogie, & Edoh, 2006, p. 101).

Grijalva, Nowell, and Kerkvliet (2006) asserted that “most researchers view the decision to cheat as the result of a cognitive process which involves substantial planning, but survey evidence suggest that student cheating break down into two categories: planned cheating and panic cheating” (p. 181). These authors defined planned cheating as “involv[ing] making crib sheets for tests, copying homework, or plagiarizing a paper; it occurs with full knowledge that it is wrong” (p. 181). Planned cheating, they suggested, was premeditated and “may be viewed as more dishonest than panic cheating and perceived as having a greater social cost” (p. 181). Panic cheating “occurs during a test when the student finds [him or] herself at a loss for an answer” (p. 181). In this case, the student panics and as a result decides to cheat at all costs.

**Issues facing the two-year student.** A strong argument existed within the current literature that if academic dishonesty was a global issue and that four-year students’ academically dishonest behavior continued to increase, there was also an issue of academic dishonesty and cheating behavior at two-year institutions. Gerdeman (2000) argued that “a primary issue facing community colleges is how to effectively reduce
dishonest student conduct” (p. 1). Furthermore, these two-year students were enrolled in rigorous technical and vocational programs that required them to share notes, write assignments, lab reports, and research information from take-home examinations. More importantly, they were, like their four-year counterparts, using sources such as the Internet to download information and crediting it as common knowledge (Fawkner & Keremidchieva, 2004). According to Gerdeman (2000), “cheating on exams, plagiarizing, falsifying bibliographies, turning in work done by someone else, receiving improper assistance on assignments, and intentionally facilitating cheating on the part of others are common place in American higher education” (p. 1). Coupled with a mentality that “everyone is doing it,” inferences can be made that two-year students are too. In many cases, it is the two-year student who was less likely to be oriented to institutional and academic policies. As a result, two-year students would not view such behavior as academically dishonest, cheating, or plagiarism.

Added to the lack of knowledge were the drastic changes in the economy and federal and state funding, which created changes in the funding formulas for financial aid for students. According to one source, “The rising cost of attending four-year colleges and universities has also pushed many students to begin their studies at a community college, where tuition is substantially lower and they can save on the overall cost of a college education” (Phillippe & Sullivan, 2005, p. 4). More students were turning to community colleges to avoid increasing costs of tuition at four-year colleges and universities. Over 45% of undergraduate students began their academic careers at two-year schools (Ohio Board of Regents (OBOR), 2007). In some cases, it was more cost effective for these students to attend a two-year institution and earn a two-year degree
and later transfer to a four-year school or earn a short-term certificate and re-enter the
workforce with a new skilled trade. Community colleges have offered society with an
alternative that is much more cost-effective. In addition, community colleges have
offered students more accessibility with weekend and evening classes as well as
accelerated program options.

Generally speaking, two-year students were faced with a plethora of issues that
range from socioeconomic challenges to developmental and remedial challenges either
during their transitions from high school to college or during pursuits of their two-year
degrees. Many are more likely to “attend college part-time. Commute to school, work,
and care for dependents…mean[ing] [these] students have to work harder to achieve their
academic goals…” (Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), 2003,
p. 2). More so, “Nationally, of community college students who sought an associate’s
degree or higher, 45% earned an associate’s or bachelor’s degree or transfer to a four-
year institution within six years” (Lumina Foundation, 2005, p. 9). Many of these
students were living at home while attending college and working either part-time or full-
time jobs. According to research, “Eighty-five percent balance studies with full-time or
part-time work [and] more than half (54 percent) have full-time jobs” (Lumina
Foundation, 2005, p. 6). In many cases, students were much older than the “traditionally-
aged” student and entered the classroom for the first time due to job loss or having
recently started a family. According to the Lumina Foundation’s Focus (2005), “forty-six
percent [of community college students] were 25 or older, and 32 percent were at least 30
years old. The average age was 29” (p. 6). Furthermore, many of these students were re-
entering the classroom due to job loss to gain a new job skill in efforts to re-enter the
workforce at a higher wage. They added, “Twenty-nine percent [earn] an annual household income [of] less than $20,000” (p. 6).

According to Phillippe and Sullivan (2005), “the low tuition at community colleges, combined with the possibility of financial aid, makes post-secondary education an option for many who otherwise could not attend college because they lack financial resources” (p. 19). These institutions offered students an option for a more cost-effective education that provided a more accelerated alternative, for re-entry into the workforce. More specifically:

The aspirations of these students are equally varied. Some seek career-focused degrees that will allow them to enter or move upward in the job market. Others plan to transfer to institutions offering a bachelor’s degree after one or two years of study. Some are broadening their array of job skills by taking a set of courses or another degree in a specialized area so they can be more competitive in the workforce. A growing number of students already have degrees (associates, bachelor’s, master’s, and higher degrees) and are coming to community colleges for specific job skills that will help them change careers or advance in their current careers. (Phillippe & Sullivan, 2005, p. 19)

These students were faced with challenges at opposite ends of the spectrum in comparison to the four-year student. These students, like four-year students, decided to plagiarize for a variety of reasons ranging from a lack of self-confidence and stress-related factors to pressures from home to excel. In some instances, these students were probably not aware of what it really meant to plagiarize or, more importantly, what types of plagiarism existed. Regardless of these students’ personal motivations for carrying out
academically dishonest behavior, the long-term effects impact the higher educational landscape and economic workforce and the short-term effects were devastating to the academic environment within the institution (Carpenter, Harding, Finelli, Mongomery & Passow, 2006; Rakovski & Levy, 2007).

**Conveying Messages about Academic Integrity to Two-Year Students**

McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield (2001) emphasized the importance of new students receiving messages conveyed by campus presidents, deans and/or staff about the importance of and their commitment to academic integrity. The authors recommended that campus administration and faculty played vital roles in the education of new students in their understanding academic and institutional policies. They suggested that new college students “internalize this message to some degree and begin their college experience with a positive attitude about the need for academic integrity, in spite of their experience with cheating in high school” (p. 230). Their assertions also included the prominence of those initial messages that student received from administration. These initial message set the tone for students’ understanding that “to survive and be competitive in this new environment, they must play by the same rules as everyone else” (p. 230-231).

McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield (2001) cautioned “an institution’s failure to emphasize for its students the high value it places on academic integrity sends the message that it is not a high priority” at all (p. 231). They offered that students cannot be expected to learn academic policies on their own from manuals and websites; instead, it was the institution’s responsibility to ensure that academic dishonesty and plagiarism policies were clearly verbal and visible to students as they entered the doors.
They recommended that administrators start early communicating the importance of academic integrity. A series of orientation and transition-based student events had to create a connection for students that established an understanding of the expectations of their college experience. These experiences had to encourage “an atmosphere of integrity at the institution [by]…making explicit public commitments to integrity, acting in accordance with those statements, and taking appropriate actions on integrity violations by faculty, students, and staff” (p. 327).

McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield (2001) also offered that faculty involvement at the classroom level was absolutely critical and just as important as the message that needed to be established by administrators. The authors suggested “faculty can pursue numerous strategies, including clearly communicating expectations regarding cheating behavior, establishing policies regarding appropriate contact, and encouraging students to abide by those policies” in and out of the classroom setting (p. 229). McCabe and Pavela (1997) recommended 10 principles for faculty to help minimize cheating in the classroom. Figure 2.2 illustrated McCabe and Pavela’s (1997) 10 principles of academic integrity for faculty.
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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Principle</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Affirm the importance of academic integrity</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Foster a love of learning</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Treat students as an end in themselves</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Foster and environment of trust in the classroom</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Encourage student responsibility for academic integrity</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Clarify expectations for students</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Develop fair and relevant forms of assessment</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Reduce opportunities to engage in academic dishonesty</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Challenge academic dishonesty when it occurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Help define and support campus-wide academic integrity standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.2. Ten principles of academic integrity for faculty managing cheating in the classroom. Taken from Ten Principles of Academic Integrity by D. L. McCabe and G. R. Pavela, 1997, *Journal of College and University Personnel*, 24, p. 117-118.

This chapter opened with the significance of the inception of two-year institutions and the misconceptions that have plagued these institutions for decades. In addition, this chapter provided a review of the literature related to academic dishonesty, plagiarism and the most common types of plagiarism, cheating, and reasons why students decide to cheat. This chapter also reviewed the literature as it related to ethical decision-making, moral and cognitive development, and student rationalizations for cheating. The chapter concluded with what was suggested as prevalent issues for two-year students, what was influential in their decisions to plagiarize, and the importance of message about academic integrity being conveyed to students.
Chapter 3

Research Methodology

This chapter highlighted the purpose of the study, all research methods and research design, the sample investigated, how the researcher gathered and collected data, and the method of data analysis. In addition, this chapter revealed how the pilot study was conducted and the use of both the dependent and independent variables. Finally, this chapter concluded with details about the survey instrument modifications, the human and the subject’s process.

Research Design

Survey research was defined as “any activity which is undertaken for the express purpose of gathering information about a particular population in order to draw reliable conclusions about that population (e.g., personal characteristics, attributes, opinions, attitudes, or personal circumstances both past and present)” (Calder, 1998, p. 638). Wiersma (1995) described survey research as “broad in scope,” ranging from “status quo studies to those in which the relationships of sociological and psychological variables are determined and interpreted” (p. 170).

The survey research method was “highly flexible” and allowed the researcher to “study a wide range of research questions,” easily generalize findings to real-world
settings, and “guaranteed respondents’ anonymity” (Muijs, 2004, p. 44-45). Muijs (2004) asserted that survey research was “particularly suited for canvassing opinions and feelings about particular issues” (p. 45). Rea and Parker (1992) also affirmed that the greatest advantage of survey research “is the ability to generalize about an entire population, cost associated with conducting a sample survey is significantly less, and when implemented properly, the sample is a reasonably accurate method of collecting data” (p. 6).

The literature revealed that there were three major approaches to collect survey data: face-to face interviews, telephone interviews, and mail questionnaires or questionnaire surveys (Hackett, 1981). This research involved use of a questionnaire that was created as an e-survey. It was suggested that the advantages, in the cases of questionnaire surveys included: an ability to obtain a large sample to reduce sampling error to acceptable levels, no interviewer bias, and anonymity can be guaranteed for respondents.

It was suggested that survey research involved three major types of surveys: descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory studies. Descriptive surveys focus particularly on “the „who‟, „what‟, „when‟ and „how‟ types of questions” (Calder, 1998, p. 639). According to Hackett (1981), “descriptive surveys are probably the most widely used surveys. For example, a survey designed to gather demographic information (i.e., age, sex, ethnic background, religion, in order to describe the student body of a college or university” (Hackett, 1981, p. 600). Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2006) asserted that descriptive survey research “aims to describe behaviors and gather people’s perceptions, opinions, attitudes, and beliefs about a current issue in education” (p. 12).
There are two basic survey designs: cross-sectional and longitudinal. The cross-sectional design involves data collection at only one point in time, usually from two or more populations (Wiersma, 1995). For the purposes of this study, the cross-sectional survey design was implemented to capture college student perceptions of plagiarism. The survey was administered as a one-shot survey. A one-shot survey aims to represent the population under study, and naturally occurring subgroups. “In this design an experimental treatment is administered, and then a posttest is administered to measure the effects of the treatment” on the sample (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 670).

For the purposes of this study, the type of survey used was descriptive and non-experimental. This study used a modified questionnaire as its approach for data collection. The instrument was adapted by McCabe from Bowers’ (1964) research and was modified for the purposes of this study. This survey was used in landmark investigations of four-year institutions for the exploration of self-reported cheating behaviors. The survey design was cross-sectional and was administered as a one-shot survey.

Ohio Two-Year Colleges

There were 47 two-year degree-granting institutions in the state of Ohio. Twenty-four of these two-year colleges were state university regional campuses. The other twenty-three colleges were technical and/or community colleges. “Technical colleges provide hands-on education in a specific field. Many technical college graduates transfer to baccalaureate programs. Both state community and community colleges offer technical programs and university parallel programs providing students with a variety of options” (OBOR, 2007, http://www.ohiocc.org/pdf/ADPschools05web.pdf on p. 1).
For purposes of this study, twenty-three two-year colleges, which included technical, state community, and community colleges were extended an invitation to participate in this study. In the state of Ohio, the following two-year colleges were technical colleges: James A. Rhodes State College, Marion Technical College, North Central State College, Central Ohio Technical College, Hocking College, Stark State College, and Belmont Technical College. The following two-year colleges were considered state-supported community colleges: Northwest State Community College, Cincinnati State Community College, Edison State Community College, Sinclair Community College, Clark State Community College, Jefferson Community College, Southern State Community College, Owens Community College, Terra Community College, Columbus State Community College, Lorain County Community College, Rio Grande Community College, Cuyahoga Community College, Washington State Community College, and Zane State College. Four colleges participated in this survey research. The next section summarized each college’s campus profile.

**Survey participants.** Students at the following two-year colleges participated in this study: Central Ohio Technical College, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, Owens Community College, and Zane State College.

Central Ohio Technical College (COTC) is a technical college that offers associate degree and certificate programs in the areas of business, health, engineering, and public service technologies. Just 40 miles east of Columbus, COTC is located in Newark.

COTC’s student enrollment for the winter 2009 quarter was 3,544. The average age range for their students is 21-30, representative of 43.58% of their total student
population or 1,548 students. Of their part-time student population, 471 (or 13.32%) are male, while 1,393 (or 39.31%) are female. Of their full-time student population, 495 (or 13.97%) are male, while 1,184 (or 33.41%) are female. Combining these two populations, 967 (or 27.29%) are male and 2,577 (or 72.71%) are female.

Cincinnati State Technical and Community College is a public, two-year college that offers more than 100 associate’s degree programs, majors, and certificate programs in the areas of business technologies, center for innovative technologies, health and public safety, humanities, and sciences. In the Fall 2008 semester, Cincinnati State enrolled 8,145 students. Of this student population, 4,813 were attending classes part-time, while 3,332 were attending full-time. Cincinnati State’s population was 54% female and 46% male.

Owens Community College (OCC) is a state-assisted institution that offers associate degrees for more than 130 technical program areas in Agriculture, Business, Health Sciences, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Skilled Trades, and Engineering and Transportation Technologies.

OCC’s student enrollment for the Fall 2009 semester was 23,606 students; 20,037 at their Toledo Campus and 3,569 at their Findlay Campus. The average age of OCC students was 27.52. Some 39.9% of their students are full-time, while 60.10% are full-time. Of the total student population, 46.7% were female. Fifty-one percent of their students receive financial aid.

Zane State College is a two-year technical college that offers associate degrees in applied business or science and this college offers technical courses. In Fall 2008, student enrollment was 2,078. Of this population, 677 are part-time students, while 1,399 are full-
time. In addition, 821 students are male, while 1,255 are female. The average age of Zane’s student population is 26. Forty-three percent are 25 years of age or older. Thirty-four percent of their students pursue health as an area of study or an associate’s degree. Ninety-one percent of first-time, full-time Zane students have some type of financial aid.

**Data Collection Process**

Fowler (1988) suggested that when “there is no adequate list of the individuals in a population and no way to get at the population directly; multistage sampling provides a useful approach” (p. 26). Muijs (2004) described multistage sampling as “first samp[ling] higher-level sites (e.g. local education authorities) at random, then randomly samp[ling] a lower stage, and then randomly samp[ling] members of the population in that stage (e.g. students in a school)” (p. 39-40). The multistage sampling (clustering) method was used to reach students at two-year colleges in the state of Ohio. In other words, “a perfectly acceptable sample of students can be selected using a two-stage strategy, first selecting schools, and then selecting students from within those schools” (Muijs, 2004, p. 27).

Please refer to Table 3-1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3-1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multistage Sampling for Two-Year Colleges in Ohio</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Level</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher initiated introductory phone calls and electronic communication to senior level student and academic affairs administrators at 22 two-year institutions in the state of Ohio. The introductory phone calls and emails summarized the research purpose,
research questions/intentions and procedures and extended an invitation for participation in the study. This invitation process continued from December 2007 to September 2008. By late September 2008, four colleges agreed to participate.

The lower level of the sampling process involved gaining access to English Composition I classes. This level was more selective than random, as a result of students voluntarily choosing to complete the survey once given access. Each of the four colleges was designated a liaison that was either an administrator or faculty member. The liaison was responsible for providing survey access to students in 2-3 English Composition I courses. For purposes of this study, course selection involved both face-to-face and/or online class sections. The liaison made the survey web link available to the English class sections. The liaison selected class sections that would yield a quantity of 50-60 students.

In 1999, Pulvers and Diekhoff investigated situational factors in 200 undergraduate students at two liberal arts universities in the Midwest and suggested that “large classes, inadequately proctored lecture halls, multiple-choice tests, and the use of old tests…influence the incidence of cheating” (p. 489-490). In 2003, Kidwell, Wozniak, and Laurel suggested “the most common forms of cheating…were plagiarizing small passages and unpermitted collaboration, [because] the students did not perceive these as serious forms of cheating…” (p. 209). To this end, these English Composition I classes were selected based on the course requirements for students that involved several writing and research assignments.

The selective level of the sampling process involved the selection of the 50-60 students from English Composition I class sections. The liaison provided these students with access to the web survey link housed on the vovici.com website. Vovici.com is an
online software that provided access for building the modified survey instrument, managing the student responses from each college, and storing student responses in the aggregate. Companies such as Oracle, Cisco, Marriott, and Honda trust Vovici’s technological solutions for their research and development projects and initiatives. This software was used as a result of its ability to securely collect, analyze, and store data as a password protected database. Vovici provided two-year students with access to a secure database that safely and anonymously collected their self-reported responses and confidentially aggregated them. For the purposes of this research, each college was provided a separate web link to maintain privacy and confidentiality of survey responses. Students accessed Vovici via a separate web link for their college. The online tool provided easy access to survey participants and the researcher managing and analyzing the survey data results.

The survey required 20-25 minutes for completion. The survey did not ask questions that involved the disclosure of any personally identifiable information such as name, date of birth, or a student identification number. Once the survey was completed, all student responses were aggregated and stored in the Vovici.com database. For purposes of this research, the colleges were not identified by name but instead as survey A, B, C, or D.

**Survey response rate.** Students from four colleges completed the *Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey*. Table 3-2 illustrated the overall response rate of 22% with 120 participants across four colleges. College D yielded the greatest number of participants at 33 students, while College C yielded the best response rate at 31%. The individual response rates for the four institutions ranged from 15 to 31%. Three of the colleges (A-
22%, C-31% and D-24%) yielded individual response rates greater than or equal to that of the aggregate response rate, which was 22%.

Table 3-2

_Aggregate Survey Response Rate for Four Participating Two-Year Colleges_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey code</th>
<th>Total possible students</th>
<th>Total survey responses received</th>
<th>Total response rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study yielded a limited response from selected two-year colleges. At College A, 61 students were invited to participate in the survey during the Summer 2009 semester and 55 students were invited to participate during the Fall 2009 semester. At the end of both semesters, 116 students had been invited to participate. At semester’s end, 25 students participated in the survey, yielding a response rate of 22%.

During the Spring 2009 quarter, 90 students from College B were invited to participate in the survey. More students were invited to participate during the Summer 2009 quarter, totaling a possible 110 participants. The combined quarters yielded a total number of invitations to students equaling that of 200. At the end of both quarters, 30 students agreed to participate by completing the online survey. The overall student participation from College B yielded a response rate of 15%.

At College C, 62 students were invited to participate. During their Summer 2009 quarter, forty students were invited to participate. Collectively, both quarters yielded a
total of 102 invites to students. At the end of the second quarter, 32 students agreed to participate. The overall student participation from College C was a response rate of 31%.

At College D, 69 students were invited to participate and nearly the same numbers of students were invited to participate during the Spring and Summer 2009 quarters. The two quarters combined yielded a total number of invitations equaling that of 136. At the end of both quarters, 33 students agreed to participate by completing the online survey. The overall student participation from College D yielded a response rate of 24%.

**Method of Analysis.** Frequencies and cross tabulations were utilized to obtain data and analyze data and answer research questions 1, 2, and 3. Frequencies were run to determine the behaviors that students committed most based on the frequency of their occurrences and their level of severity to answer research question 2. Cross tabulations were also run to answer question 2 to determine cheating behavior severity in relation to age, gender, student status, and grade point average.

Questions 3 and 4 further investigated the relationship of the cheating behaviors previously identified for cheating behavior occurrence and severity, with cross tabulations that were run as they related to age and gender. These cross tabulations were run to further analyze the significance of self-reports of plagiarism to determine its significance in relation to age and gender. Finally, data from research questions 3 and 4 were used to make inferences for research question 5.

**Survey Instrument Modifications**

The *McCabe Academic Integrity Student Survey* instrument had a total of 18 questions. The *McCabe Academic Integrity Student Survey*’s first section collected data in regard to students understanding of their academic environment and, more importantly, their exposure to and understanding of their institution’s policies in regard to cheating and
plagiarism. For purposes of this study, the four point scale found in the *McCabe Academic Integrity Student Survey* was utilized. The original cheating behaviors identified were modified to include only variations of plagiaristic behaviors as defined by Pavela (1978) definition of cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication. The questions that involved cheating on examinations in class/online or copying exam items were not included in the *Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey*. As a result, nine of the original 26 *McCabe Academic Integrity Student Survey* cheating behaviors were omitted from the *Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey*. Three additional acts of plagiarism were included in the *Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey* to reflect changes in technology. The *Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey* instrument included 20 plagiarism behavior items.

The *Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey* included the addition of automatic consent process via a consent page for the students who agreed to participate and complete the survey. In an effort to confirm such consent, a separate question with information for participants to review was included. This question included information such as purpose of research, risks/limitations, benefits, and confidentiality. This question ended with a selection option which prompted participants to continue if they agreed to understanding the research, consented to being 18 years or older, and agreed to continue with the survey.

The *Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey* instrument collected data in the form of students’ self-reported perceptions. More specifically, data included students’ self-reported perceptions of plagiarism and the severity of such acts. In addition, the study collected data based on demographic traits and situational components, which were considered significant in relation to students’ rationalization processes. The following paragraphs summarized the *Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey*. 
The first section of the *Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey* also included questions in reference to the academic environment in regard to the acknowledgement and understanding of institutional academic policy, more specifically, knowledge that has been shared or made available to students about academic policy as it related to academic dishonesty via instructional staff and administrators. This section questioned students based on their perceptions of the frequency of plagiarism that may or may not have existed at their college.

The second section of the survey collected data based on students’ self-reports of their frequency of specific behaviors as well as their self-reported perceptions of the severity of these behaviors. This section also collected their perceptions of the likelihood of cheating and plagiarism at their college, the reporting of incidences of cheating behavior, possible rationalizations for cheating, and their perceptions of how others might have perceived them as someone who cheated. The students’ perceptions of severity and frequency were measured via the use of a four-point scale (never, once, more than once, not relevant and respectively, not cheating, trivial cheating, or moderate cheating).

The last section included demographic questions. These questions asked participants about their current status at their college (earning a certificate, pursuing a two-year degree, continuing education/professional development, personal enrichment/for fun), their grade point average, their gender, and their personal status (single, divorced or married). The final survey question asked students about other situational components or pressures that they balanced along with going to college, such as caring for children or an older adult and working full or part-time while attending college.
A week and a half window was allotted for students to complete the *Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey* at each college. Thereafter, the researcher began the follow-up process with each college’s liaison to ensure participants were able to access the survey web link to gain the highest possible response rate.

**Survey Variables**

**Dependent Variable: Plagiarism.** McCabe and Trevino (1993) modified cheating behaviors from an instrument originally developed by Bowers (1964), who is credited as conducting the first multi-campus study of academic dishonesty and plagiarism (McCabe, Trevino, & Klebe, 2002). This particular study investigated students’ self-reported perceptions of cheating behaviors, but more specifically, the occurrence and severity of such acts as the dependent variable. For the purposes of this study, students’ self-reported behaviors of plagiarism was the dependent variable as it related to two-year students at two-year colleges in the state of Ohio.

**Independent Variables-Demographic and Situational Characteristics.** According to McCabe and Trevino (1997) several research studies showed that demographic variables such as age, gender, and academic achievement influenced academic dishonesty. For the purposes of this study, females were coded as “1” and males as “2.” Grade point average, similar to the McCabe and Trevino (1997) study, measured academic achievement. Career aspirations were measured based on whether the two-year student is earning a certificate, pursuing a two-year degree, continuing education/professional development for current job, continuing education for reentry into the workforce, personal enrichment/for fun or none of the above.
Consent to Participate for Human Subjects

Potential participants received access to the survey web link. A separate question with an introductory letter was included in the web survey with consent information for participants to review such as the purpose of the research, risks/limitations, research benefits, and the assurance of confidentiality. This served as the letter of consent for participants. This consent question ended with a selection option that prompted participants to continue if they understood the research and agreed to continue with the survey. This consent letter emphasized the importance of answering the survey questions as honestly as possible, the guarantee of respondents’ anonymity, and the minimal risk to the participants since their participation was strictly voluntary. The researcher’s contact information was included with this information in the event there were any questions or concerns. The University of Toledo (UT) required the completion of the NIH OHSR online training modular and the submission of a hard copy of all training and education certificates to the Office of Research for final approval prior to survey deployment and data collection. This final approval process occurred prior to engagement of any human subjects for the purposes of this survey research.

Pilot Study. A pilot study was conducted prior to the formal survey deployment process for selected two-year colleges. Ten individuals were selected and participated in the pilot study. These individuals were academic affairs administrators, student affairs administrators, and faculty members in higher education at two and four-year colleges and universities. These individuals were specifically selected for their experience and expertise in the field of higher education. Combined, their experience with students in higher education spanned several decades in both two and four-year urban and suburban
institutions. Their expertise was used to provide feedback, from the student perspective, on the ease and use of the online survey from start to finish. In addition, these individual were asked to pilot this survey in an effort to retain feedback about the survey language and structure.

The pilot participants were forwarded an introductory letter that included access to the pilot survey link and information about the research purpose and methodology. They were surveyed as if they were students taking the survey as a part of the random sample. Pilot participants were asked to complete the survey, critique the survey, and provide feedback to the researcher based on the following: the survey instrument, the time required for completion, and the format and structure of the survey instrument. The feedback received from pilot participants was included within the overall modifications for the survey instrument. Based on their feedback, some survey language and portions of the survey concerning its organization were modified to reflect these suggestions.

This chapter provided an overview of the research purpose, questions and research methodology. In addition, this chapter discussed the research type, approach, and design used to capture the sample of the population investigated. Details were provided as to how the data was gathered, the modifications to the survey instrument, and the method of data analysis. The chapter concluded with an explanation of the dependent and independent research variables and closed with details about the human subjects process and the pilot study.
Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Findings

The previous chapter highlighted the research design, the sample of two-year students investigated, the process for data collection and method of analysis, and the elements of the modified survey instrument. This chapter thoroughly discussed the research findings as a result of the processes for data collection and survey analysis. This chapter summarized the research findings based on the research questions.

Survey Analysis & Results

This section methodically discussed the survey analysis and results related to each of the research questions. This chapter reviewed the survey research findings collected from students at four Ohio two-year colleges. This analysis revealed that a small percentage of these two-year students cheat and self-reported committing specific acts of plagiarism.

The four colleges surveyed yielded a small sample; therefore, frequencies and cross tabulations were run to best analyze the data. More specifically, the survey results revealed that the most frequent cheating behaviors self-reported by two-year students were associated with forms of copying, receiving unpermitted help, and forms of unpermitted group work. Women self-reported cheating more than men and younger students more than older students. Students with high grade point averages self-reported
cheating more than students with lower grade point averages. Finally, the students that self-reported cheating most were juggling part-time or full-time work and/or caring for children or an older adult.

This study posed five research questions based on the *Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey* instrument. The remainder of this chapter summarized the research results based on these research questions.

**Research question 1: What are college students’ self-reported behaviors of plagiarism at selected two-year colleges in the state of Ohio?**

Cheating behaviors were identified by running frequencies to determine the greatest occurrences of 20 specific cheating behaviors self-reported by students from the *Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey* instrument. Students were asked to self-report their cheating behavior by rating the frequency of their behavior as either *once*, *more than once*, *never*, or *not relevant*. The frequencies revealed that students self-reported committing six cheating behaviors *once or more than once*. These behaviors were working on an assignment with others (in person) when individual work is required; receiving unpermitted help on an assignment; paraphrasing or copying a few sentences from a book, magazine, or journal; paraphrasing or copying a few sentences of material from an electronic source; collaborating with others on a writing assignment that was assigned as individual work; and copying materials without using quotation marks.

Findings in each of the six cheating behaviors revealed that between 84 and 90% of students either self-reported never committing either of these behaviors or that none of these behaviors were relevant to them or their coursework.
The next few paragraphs provided specific data highlighting the percentage of total student self-reported perceptions and the total percentages of student self-reports based on the frequency of their cheating behaviors for each of the six behaviors.

**Working on an assignment with others (in person) when individual work is required.** Nearly 87% of students perceived this behavior as either not relevant or as a behavior they had never committed. Nearly 9% of students perceived they had committed this behavior at least once, while 4% perceived committing this behavior more than once.

**Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment.** Eighty-nine percent of students perceived this behavior as either not relevant or as a behavior they had never committed. Nearly 10% of students perceived they had committed this behavior at least once, while 9% perceived committing this act more than once.

**Paraphrasing or copying a few sentences from a book, magazine, or journal.** Eighty-four percent of students perceived this behavior as either not relevant or as a behavior they had never committed. Nearly 10% perceived to have committed this act at least once, while 6% perceived committing this act on more than one occasion.

**Paraphrasing or copying a few sentences of material from an electronic source.** Nearly 87% of students perceived this behavior as either not relevant or as a behavior they had never committed. Nearly 9% perceived committing this act at least once and 4% perceived they had committed this act more than once.

**Collaborating with others on a writing assignment that was assigned as individual work.** Close to 86% of students perceived this behavior as either not relevant or as a behavior they had never committed. Eight percent of students perceived committing this
behavior at least once, while 5% perceived committing this behavior on more than one occasion.

**Copying materials without using quotation marks.** Ninety percent of students perceived this behavior as either not relevant or as a behavior they had never committed. Four percent perceived committing this behavior at least once. Another 4% perceived committing this behavior on more than one occasion.

The following research question posed three separate questions within the main research question. This question served to investigate if perhaps a connection existed between specific acts of plagiarism and those acts that were considered to be cheating for students, whether students understood the meaning of plagiarism, and if which of the behaviors students perceived to be plagiarism and/or dishonest acts. The next three questions addressed and summarized the data results for the second research question.

**Research question 2: What acts of plagiarism do students consider to be cheating?**

Cheating behaviors were identified by running frequencies to determine the cheating severity of 20 specific cheating behaviors self-reported by students from the *Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey* instrument. The first research question identified that students self-reported committing six cheating behaviors based on the frequency of their dishonest behavior. Similar to the frequency of behavior occurrence, students were asked identify severity for each behavior as either *trivial, moderate, not cheating, or not relevant* to determine the frequency of behavior severity. The data revealed that students perceived all cheating behaviors to be “cheating” or, for purposes of this study, to be either trivial or moderate in severity.
Previously, six cheating behaviors were perceived by students as behaviors they had committed once, if not more than once. These behaviors were isolated to further analyze students’ perceptions of their cheating severity. The current research data revealed that five of the six cheating behaviors were tied to severity. Students considered it to be “cheating” for five behaviors. These five behaviors were identified as:

1. Working on an assignment with others (in person) when individual work is required.
2. Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment.
3. Paraphrasing or copying a few sentences from a book, magazine, or journal.
4. Paraphrasing or copying a few sentences of material from an electronic source.
5. Collaborating with others on a writing assignment that was assigned as individual work.

LaBeff, Clark, Haines, and Diekhoff (1990) suggested “the concept of situational factors may be particularly helpful in understanding student rationalizations for cheating” (p. 365). LaBeff, Clark, Haines, and Diekhoff’s (1990) research findings revealed that cheating involved a variety of forms, but the most popular involved “a failure to footnote sources in written work, collaboration on assignments when the instructor specifically asked for individual work, copying other students work, and fabrication of bibliographies” (p. 367). Their findings mirrored the cheating behaviors that were uncovered in the current research.

The current data revealed that students considered behaviors to be cheating that were similar to those behaviors revealed by research from LaBeff, Clark, Haines, and Diekhoff (1990).
Do they understand the concept of plagiarism? The data revealed that students understood the concept of plagiarism and cheating. Ninety-seven percent of students felt they had been informed about policies of academic dishonesty and plagiarism at their colleges and a majority felt that plagiarism was also occurred seldom. Students felt that they learned the most about these policies at the classroom level. Students felt they learned the least about these policies from campus staff and administrators.

Their first survey question asked students “have you been informed about cheating and plagiarism policies at your school?” Illustrated in Table 4-1, 102 students indicated that “yes,” they were informed about such academic policies at their campus, while only three indicated “no,” that they had not been informed.

Table 4-1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Students Informed About Cheating and Plagiarism Policies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, students were also asked “Where and how much have you learned about these policies?” This question included choices for where information about these academic policies might be obtained: new student orientation, campus website, student handbook, a counselor or advisor, friends, a teacher or instructor, a class outline or syllabus and a campus dean, administrator or staff. Students were asked to self-report perceptions of their understanding of such policies based on where the information was obtained by indicating learned a lot, learned some, or learned little to nothing.
Students reported the highest percentages from instructors and the class outline as places where they learned a lot of information about policies related to academic dishonesty and plagiarism. Table 4-2 illustrated the frequency at which students reported learning a lot from their instructors or the class outline. Table 4-2 also illustrated the frequency at which students perceived learning a lot from close friends (50.4%). In contrast to their highest reports for learning a lot, nearly 40% of students perceived that they had learned little to nothing from a campus administrator and 32% reported the same perception for student orientations and advisors.

Table 4-2

*Frequency of Where Students Learn About Academic Dishonesty & Plagiarism Policies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th></th>
<th>Class outline</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Learned some</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learned a lot</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learned little</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>96.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</table>

**Do they perceive it as cheating?** Students perceived four acts of plagiarism behaviors as cheating. Between 74% and 81% of the students perceived that the four acts of plagiarism were cheating. Students self-reported collaborating with others on a writing assignment that was assigned as individual work highest of the four perceived cheating behaviors.

Previously, frequencies were run to determine cheating behavior severity. To answer this question, cross tabulations were run for cheating behavior severity in relation to gender, student status, and grade point average. The cross tabulations data for cheating
behavior severity were used in an effort to determine whether students established a connection between their perceptions of the seriousness of cheating behavior and whether or not they perceived a particular cheating behavior as “cheating.”

Cross tabulations data yielded four specific behaviors. Students perceived these four behaviors as both trivial and moderate in severity. As a result, students perceived the following acts of plagiarism as cheating:

1. Working on an assignment with others (in person) when the instructor asked for individual work.
2. Working on an assignment with others (via email or Instant Messaging) when the instructor asked for individual work.
3. Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment.
4. Collaborating with others on a writing assignment that was assigned as individual work.

The next few paragraphs provided specific data highlighting the percentage of total student self-reports based on student status, gender, and grade point average in relation to cheating severity.

*Working on an assignment with others (in person) when the instructor asked for individual work.* The highest rate of perceptions was from students pursuing a two-year degree at their institution. Thirty-seven students perceived this behavior to be trivial in severity while 35 perceived it to be moderate. When controlling for the frequency of severity, 73% of students perceived this act of plagiarism as either trivial or moderate in severity.
Based on grade point average, students with grade point averages of 3.50-4.0 perceived this act to be both moderate (20 students) and trivial (23 students) cheating, while students with grade point averages of 2.50-3.49 also perceived this act to be both moderate cheating (18 students) and trivial (15 students) cheating. Almost an equal number of women reported this act as both moderate (34 students) and trivial (32 students) cheating. Women had the highest number of perceptions, with eight men perceiving the act as trivial and nine as moderate.

**Working on an assignment with others (via email or Instant Messaging) when the instructor asked for individual work.** The highest rate of perceptions was from students pursuing a two-year degree at their institution. Thirty-five students perceived this behavior to be trivial in severity while 42 perceived it to be moderate. When controlling for the frequency of severity, 78% of students perceived this act of plagiarism as either trivial or moderate in severity.

Based on grade point average, students with grade point averages of 3.50-4.0 perceived this act to be both moderate (22 students) and trivial (25 students) cheating, while students with grade point averages of 2.50-3.49 also perceived this act to be both moderate cheating (20 students) and trivial (12 students) cheating. Almost an equal number of women reported this act as both moderate (37 students) and trivial (32 students) cheating. Women had the highest number of perceptions, with nine men perceiving the act as trivial and 10 as moderate.

**Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment.** The highest rate of perceptions was from students pursuing a two-year degree at their institution. Thirty-four students perceived this behavior to be trivial in severity while 41 perceived it to be moderate. When
controlling for the frequency of severity, 76% of students perceived this act of plagiarism as either trivial or moderate in severity.

Based on grade point average, students with grade point averages of 3.50-4.0 perceived this act to be both moderate (24 students) and trivial (21 students) cheating, while students with grade point averages of 2.50-3.49 also perceived this act to be both moderate cheating (19 students) and trivial (13 students) cheating. Unlike the previous behaviors, women’s perceptions varied for this act. Women still perceived this cheating behavior as both moderate (37 students) and trivial (28 students) cheating. Women had the highest number of perceptions, with 10 men perceiving the act as trivial and 11 as moderate.

**Collaborating with others on a writing assignment that was assigned as individual work.** The highest rate of perceptions was from students pursuing a two-year degree at their institution. Thirty-nine students perceived this behavior to be trivial in severity while 42 perceived it to be moderate. When controlling for the frequency of severity, 81% of students perceived this act of plagiarism as either trivial or moderate in severity.

Based on grade point average, students with grade point averages of 3.50-4.0 perceived this act to be both moderate (22 students) and trivial (23 students) cheating, while students with grade point averages of 2.50-3.49 also perceived this act to be both moderate cheating (21 students) and trivial (15 students) cheating. Almost an equal number of women reported this act as both moderate (38 students) and trivial (33 students) cheating. Women had the highest number of perceptions, with 11 men perceiving the act as trivial and 10 as moderate.
**Research question 3:** Are demographic traits (age, gender) related to students who choose to engage in self-reported acts of plagiarism at two-year colleges? Who is most likely to plagiarize—men or women?

The data revealed that students’ gender was related to who chose to cheat or plagiarize at four Ohio two-year colleges. The data also revealed that age and grade point average were influential in who chose to plagiarize. Based on age, younger students self-reported cheating more than older students. The younger students self-reported cheating by copying and paraphrasing, while older students cheated by receiving unpermitted help. In addition, students with higher grade point average self-reported cheating more than students with lower grade point averages. Women self-reported most and more importantly, they were representative of the highest percentage of participants for this study.

Table 4-3 illustrated the total number of participants that chose to participate in this research study in terms of gender. Females represented 76.1% or 86 of the participants, while males represented nearly 24% or 27 of the participants. Across the four participating institutions, women represented 76% of the participants in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>76.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>113</td>
<td>100</td>
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The relationship between cheating behaviors and age and gender was further investigated using the frequencies for cheating behavior severity and running cross tabulations in relation to age and gender. The findings for gender revealed that men and
women’s perceptions of the cheating behaviors were fairly similar in number. Women self-reported most and inferences could be made that they cheated more than men in this study. Women’s perceptions varied the most with their self-reports of unpermitted help on an assignment that was assigned as individual work. Men’s perceptions varied the most for cheating that involved paraphrasing or copying a few sentences from a book, magazine, or journal, paraphrasing or copying a few sentences of material from an electronic source.

The cross tabulation data findings revealed that cheating also varied based on age. Table 4-4 illustrated a breakdown by age for the total number of participants. One-hundred and 10 students responded by identifying their age. Students ages 18-31 accounted for 61.9% of the participants, while 25% were 32 years of age or older. The average student age for each college was between the ages of 25 and 31.

Table 4-4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Survey Participants By Age Group</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
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<td>-------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cross tabulations revealed a correlation between age and grade point age in relation to cheating behavior for two-year students. First, students at the four colleges between the ages of 18-24 and 25-31 self-reported cheating the most. Students ages 18-24
self-reported cheating the most between these two age groups. Specific cheating behaviors were identified based on the age group. The students ages 18-24 self-reported cheating by working on an assignment with others (in person) when individual work is required, paraphrasing or copying a few sentences from a book, magazine, or journal, paraphrasing or copying a few sentences of material from an electronic source, and copying materials without using quotation marks. Students ages 25-31 self-reported cheating by receiving unpermitted help on an assignment and collaborating with others on a writing assignment that was assigned as individual work. Second, students with grade point averages of 3.50-4.00 and 2.50-3.49 who were between the ages of 18-24 and 25-31 self-reported cheating the most.

**Research question 4: Are situational components influential in the decision-making processes of two-year students that choose to plagiarize?**

Cross tabulations data revealed that situational components were influential in the decision-making processes of two-year students that chose to plagiarize at four colleges. Three situational components related to age, gender, and grade point average were significant for students. The situational components self-reported highest were caring for children or an older adult, working full-time, and working part-time while attending school. Students that were caring for children or an older adult, working full-time, and working part-time while attending school were students with high grade point averages and also the students that self-reported cheating the most.

The final question on the *Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey* instrument asked students to self-report all that apply concerning specific situational components or pressures that may or may not have been influential in their daily lives while attending
school. These situational components included the following: caring for children or an older adult, working full-time, working part-time, commuting to school more than 30 minutes, living at home, renting an apartment/condo, and homeowner. This research revealed that situational factors were influential as a part of the situational context that LaBeff, Clark, Haines, and Diekhoff (1990) alluded to in their research findings.

Trevino (1986) and Rest et al. (1986) models illustrated the LaBeff, Clark, Haines, and Diekhoff (1990) research findings that revealed that college students “use a variety of neutralization techniques to rationalize their cheating behavior, deflecting their blame to others/or the situational context…” (p. 372). LaBeff et al. (1990) uncovered students’ perceptions of pressure “to get good grades, parental pressures, and excessive workloads as being influential in their decisions to cheat” (p. 367).

The Rest et al. (1986) model of the ethical decision-making process factored in individual characteristics, accounting for demographic traits such as grade point average, gender, and age. Collectively, these models investigated influential variables such as obedience to authority, responsibility of consequences, but more importantly, pressures as situational components that impacted the ethical decision-making process for students. For purposes of this research, students at four Ohio two-year institutions self-reported highest for three of five pressures that were cross-tabbed with age, gender, and grade point average: caring for children or an older adult, working full-time, and working part-time.
Caring for children or an older adult. Three of five situational components or pressures were reported the highest by two-year students: caring for children or an older adult, working full-time, and working part-time. Table 4-5 illustrated a cross tabulation between the number of participants caring or not caring for children or an older adult and their grade point average. An equal number of students with grade point averages between 3.50-4.00 and 2.50-3.49 cared for children or an older adult, accounting for 54 students or close to forty-nine percent of the survey participants.

When cross tabulation data was analyzed for those students who cared for children or an older adult with gender, the total number of participants equaled 62. Fifty of the 62 participants were women, accounting for 44% of the total number of participants caring for children or an older adult.

Finally, cross tabulation data for age and caring for children or an older adult were analyzed for students by age. Controlling for caring for children or an older adult, students in three age groups self-reported cheating the most: 18-24, 25-31, and 32-38. The sum of all three age groups yielded a sum of fifty-four participants, accounting for nearly fifty-four percent of the total participants.
**Working full-time and part-time.** Table 4-6 illustrated a cross tabulation between the number of participants working full-time and grade point average. Similar to those students caring for children or an older adult, almost the same numbers of students were working full-time with grade point averages between 3.50-4.00 and 2.50-3.49. This accounted for 32 students or close to 29% of the total participants. The number of students working part-time with the same grade point averages was fewer at 26, but still very close to the number of students working full-time. This accounted for 23% of the total students working part-time. More specifically, of the 32 students that self-reported working full-time while attending school, 26 were women. Twenty-six students self-reported working part-time while attending school and nearly the same number were women.

Similar to the data that was run for the situational component for caring for children or an older adult, cross tabulation data for age and working full and part-time was also analyzed. Students ages 18-24, 25-31, and 32-38 self-reported cheating the most. The sum of all three age groups working full-time yielded a sum of 30, accounting for nearly 27% of the total participants. The sum of all three age groups working part-time yielded a sum of 29, accounting for nearly 26% of the total participants.
Research question 5: Are academic achievement/career aspirations (GPA, career goals) influential in the decision-making processes of two-year students that choose to plagiarize?

There was not enough data to prove that career aspirations and grade point averages were influential in students’ decisions to commit acts of plagiarism. It could be concluded that situational components or pressures were influential in students ages 18-38 caring for children or an older adult that were working and maintaining high grade point averages decisions to cheat. Inferences were made that age, gender, and situational components were influential in students’ decisions to plagiarize.

Cross tabulation data revealed a relationship between particular situational components or pressures for students attending school such as working full-time and part-time and/or the care of children or an older adult. The previous research question identified that these students self-reported cheating more than those not caring for children or an older adult or working while in college.

It was concluded that students ages 18-31 with high grade point averages self-reported cheating more than older students and students with lower grade point averages. In addition, students that were working or caring for children or an older adult (while attending college) between the ages of 18-38 self-reported cheating more than students that were older than 38 and not caring for children or an older adult or working.

This chapter revisited the research purpose, questions, and methodology. The breadth of the chapter focused on the results of the data collection process, overall survey response rate, and the research findings from the survey analysis in response to the research questions.
Chapter 5

Conclusions

The previous chapter provided a comprehensive discussion of the survey findings as a result of the data collection and survey analyses processes. The current chapter provided a brief synopsis of the survey results, interpreted research findings, provided recommendations for academic and institutional policy and practice, and generated suggestions for further research and instrumentation.

The current research surveyed two-year students at four colleges in the state of Ohio. The survey data was analyzed by running frequencies and cross tabulations to address the research questions. As a result of participation from only four colleges, the number of survey responses was limited. In addition, as a result of academic dishonesty being a very sensitive topic and a critical issue in higher education, the ability to gain a high percentage of self-reports of dishonest behavior from students was challenging.

Four colleges were surveyed that yielded small percentages (between 4% and 10%) of student self-reports of cheating behavior based on six specific acts of plagiarism. Each of the six cheating behaviors yielded between 84% and 90% of self-reports for never committing any of the 20 cheating behaviors or that none of these behaviors were relevant. As a result, it might be possible that the sensitivity of the topic of academic dishonesty was clearly influential in the self-reports made by students.
There were six behaviors that students identified with most that they admitted to committing at least once or more than once. These behaviors involved some level of copying, collaborating, or receipt of unpermitted assistance with assignments. This study revealed that students were informed about cheating and plagiarism policies. In fact, they revealed that they learned the most about these policies from class syllabi and faculty members. Despite their knowledge of academic honesty, acts of dishonest behavior were still self-reported by students.

Nine percent of students self-reported cheating due to working on an assignment with others (in person) when individual work is required, while 4% self-reported this behavior more than once. Approximately 9% of students self-reported cheating by paraphrasing or copying a few sentences of material from an electronic source at least once and four percent more than once. Eight percent self-reported cheating as a result of collaborating with others on a writing assignment at least once, and 5% more than once. Four percent self-reported cheating by copying materials without using quotation marks at least one time, and another 4% more than once. Ten percent self-reported cheating as a result of receiving unpermitted help on an assignment and .9% more than once. Ten percent self-reported cheating by paraphrasing or copying a few sentences from a book, magazine, or journal at least once, while 6% self-reported this act on more than one occasion.

This research aimed not only to determine self-reported behaviors of plagiarism for two-year students but also to investigate the relationship between cheating behavior and age and gender. Women self-reported cheating the most and inferences can be made that women cheated more than men in the four colleges surveyed in this study. This
finding varied from previous research findings for cheating and gender. Landmark research determined that men typically reported cheating more than women. This study’s findings for gender revealed that men and women’s perceptions of the cheating behaviors were similar in the number of self-reports. This research also identified that based on gender; there were specific behaviors that were self-reported more than others for men and women. In fact, women varied self-reported cheating most for unpermitted help on an assignment, while men self-reported cheating most for paraphrasing from hardcopy and electronic resources.

Similar to gender, this research also identified that based on age; there were specific behaviors that were self-reported more than others for specific age groups. Those students ages 18-24 self-reported cheating by working on an assignment with others (in person), paraphrasing from hardcopy and electronic sources, and copying without using quotation marks. Those students ages 25-31 self-reported cheating by receiving unpermitted help and collaborating with others on writing assignments. The findings for age also revealed that students ages 18-24 self-reported cheating the most between the two groups. This finding supported decades of research within the literature that younger students reported cheating more than older students.

Although this research sought to investigate the decision making processes for students who chose to cheat based on situational components and academic/career aspirations and grade point average, neither survey instrument took into account moral judgment and ethical reasoning. This research included literature that referenced the Rest et al. (1986) model of the ethical decision-making process, which factored in individual characteristics, accounting for demographic traits such as grade point average, gender,
and age. This model and others referenced to influential variables such as obedience to authority, responsibility of consequences, but more importantly, pressures as situational components that impacted the ethical decision-making process for students.

This research did not render enough data to conclude that academic/career aspirations and grade point average were influential in students’ decisions to commit acts of plagiarism. For purposes of this research, inferences were only made about the two-year students at four Ohio colleges. It could be concluded that situational pressures such as caring for children or an older adult, working full-time, and working part-time were influential in their decisions to choose to plagiarize.

The significance of this research established the suggestion that if students in four-year institutions were committing academically dishonest behavior, it was asserted that students in two-year colleges were also committing dishonest behaviors. This research was critical for institutions of higher education that involved both student services in light of the student code of conduct and academic services in concert with academic integrity standards.

This study’s findings were value-added for administrators in the aforementioned areas and had implications for the academic policies within their departments. These findings were also of value for two-year college administrators in their efforts to gauge their campus environments for students’ perceptions and understanding of academic dishonesty and plagiarism policies.

This study yielded a small sample from four two-year colleges that cannot be generalized to all two-year colleges in the state of Ohio; however, the research served to elicit conversations about the issue of plagiarism and academic dishonesty in two-year
colleges. The student enrollments of these four colleges were highly populated with adult learners. The literature previously suggested that a majority of two-year colleges lack formal student orientations for orienting incoming students to academic and institutional policies. This research’s findings revealed that students gained most knowledge about academic policies in the classroom, from faculty, and from other students. McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield (2001) stressed the importance of messages to students and by students from those received at the institutional level and classroom levels by two-year college administrators, faculty, and staff. More importantly, they emphasized the importance of the establishing a culture of academic integrity.

This study proved that students understood academic policy and the severity of cheating. This study also proved that students had the ability to learn about academic policy at the classroom level from their instructors and from their course syllabi. The researcher suggests that if a consistent message was rendered from the start of students’ college experiences and was reinforced in every class and on every course syllabus, fewer students would cheat. The researcher recommends that a commitment to academic integrity at the administrative level will have to involve faculty buy-in, for this very reason.

The students in this study cheated because they could and because messages were not visible and communicated about the importance of academic integrity. The researcher recommends that it will be imperative that a commitment to academic integrity exists from both administration and faculty. Once a shared commitment has been realized, then administration and faculty will need to work collaboratively to internalize the continuity of this message to their students. It will have to be an institutional commitment to
establish a culture of academic integrity. This culture of academic integrity would have to involve visibility and a presence of plagiarism prevention via the campus website and a commitment to include plagiarism clauses in all course syllabi. In addition, the culture would have to incorporate administration and faculty participating in the development and implementation of campus-wide trainings for the promotion of academic integrity and the development and implementation of an Academic Integrity Week with a required online plagiarism tutorial.

In the next section, the researcher provided recommendations for institutional policy. These recommendations were derived from the current research findings from the four colleges that were investigated. The researcher made these recommendations with a conceptual framework in mind that would have to involve the collaborative efforts from administration (institutional level) and faculty (classroom level) to establish a culture of academic integrity. It will be imperative that the message of establishing a culture of academic integrity be driven by administration with buy-in from the faculty to incorporate recommended strategies campus-wide and at the classroom level.

**Recommendations for Institutional Policy**

Two-year colleges, unlike their four-year counterparts, did not necessarily specialize in the first-year experience for students. Chapter 2 highlighted the history of community colleges and the differences in goal attainment, career aspirations, and degree attainment for two-year students. Much like four-year students, these students entered two-year colleges and simply began their journey based on prior knowledge of their high school experience. In a majority of the cases, with two-year students, the gap in their education from high school to college had easily spanned decades. Within this time, new
academic policies and technological capabilities were drastically different. It was the immediacy of returning to school for a trade or an associate’s degree that took precedence over familiarity with academic policies and student codes of conduct. In many cases, student orientations were general in nature and often nonexistent for two-year students. The assumption was that the information would eventually be acquired along the way.

The next section will discuss the importance of the messages conveyed to students from the institutional and classroom levels. The following were recommendations for administrators and faculty for the implementation for policy and practice.

**Institutional Level**

McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield (2001) suggested that “cheating can be most effectively addressed at the institutional level” (p. 228) and that “messages about ethics and values [should be] implicitly sent to and received by students throughout their college experience, both in and out of the classroom” (p. 229). McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield (2001) argued the importance of students hearing a campus president, dean, or a staff person such as an orientation leader talk about the importance of academic integrity. They suggested that new college students “internalize this message to some degree and begin their college experience with a positive attitude about the need for academic integrity, in spite of their experience with cheating in high school” (p. 230).

This study revealed that students were not receiving messages about the importance of academic integrity from the institutional level at their colleges. Instead, most of what students learned was received in the classroom from faculty and their syllabi. This study revealed that students understood the meaning of plagiarism and cheating and perceived that it seldom occurred at their colleges. Although students were
informed about policies, students still cheated in English Composition I courses by copying, engaging in unauthorized group work, and receiving unpermitted help on their assignments. This suggested an absence of messages from campus administration to students about the importance of academic integrity and academic honesty at these four colleges. It will be critical for the campus administration to take responsibility to ensure that academic policies for academic dishonesty and plagiarism are being both verbalized and clearly visible to students as soon enter their two-year colleges.

**Recommendations for Administrators.** The following are recommendations posed by the researcher for the role of academic integrity at the institutional level. These recommendations include the implementation of an Academic Integrity Week, critical messages from campus administration during this week, continuing education for faculty to assist with the incorporation of these messages in the classroom, and the importance of visibility and a presence of academic integrity via the campus website.

This research proved that students were receiving information about academic dishonesty and plagiarism, but not from campus administration. The researcher recommends that it is critical that students not only understood the academic policies but also understand the importance of academic integrity for their college at the beginning of their college experience. It is vital that campus administrators such as the president and provost are visible to students. More importantly, it will be important for these campus administrators to set the tone and convey the importance of academic integrity at as many campus events that orient and transition students into the collegiate environment as possible.
The researcher recommends that the messages from the campus administration be crafted to set the tone for new and returning students. The researcher recommends that two-year colleges create first week activities, similar to those at four-year colleges and universities. The researcher also recommends the inception of an Academic Integrity Week as a part of a week-long orientation for new and returning students.

The week’s activities should have a focus on the spirit of academic integrity with speakers, brown bag seminars and workshops, and guest speakers that emphasize the importance of academic integrity at the college. The University of Texas at Arlington is a great example of an institution that is sending messages that the university values academic integrity. Within the week’s activities, the researcher recommends that an orientation course about plagiarism be required for all new students as a part of their orientation process. In addition, this orientation course should also be a requirement for those students that have been previously reported for academically dishonest behavior.

It will be important to ensure that campus administration provide continuing education opportunities for its faculty to assist them with the incorporation of consistent messages of academic integrity in their classrooms as a part of their curriculums and course syllabi. This is extremely critical because the consistency of these messages will help to promote the overall culture of academic integrity.

In addition, the researcher recommends that information about academic integrity and plagiarism be made available from the campus website as a point of reference for students. Cincinnati State Technical and Community College have a plagiarism webpage with information from other community colleges about avoiding plagiarism. Cincinnati State also provides plagiarism examples for students to reference. Some two-year
colleges make this information available in student manual such as the student code of conduct. Owens Community College, Central Ohio Technical College, and Zane State reference their academic dishonesty policies within their student codes of conduct. This two-year colleges share this information with their incoming students during their new student orientations sessions.

**Classroom Level**

Faculty members were most influential to students for the education of academic policies. This study revealed that students reported the highest percentages for instructors and the class syllabus, while 40% self-reported having “learned little to nothing” from campus administration and 32% from student orientations or advisors. The researcher recommends that administrators encourage faculty members to support the institutional messages about the importance of academic integrity. The researcher recommends that faculty implement McCabe and Pavela’s (1997) 10 principles for faculty to prevent students from plagiarizing. In addition, it will be important for faculty to incorporate a plagiarism clause in their syllabi, to participate in trainings for the promotion of academic integrity campus-wide, and to participate in Academic Integrity Week as facilitators for brown bag seminars and workshops.

**Recommendations for Faculty.** The researcher strongly recommends that faculty members use McCabe and Pavela (1997) 10 principles to help them minimize cheating in their classrooms. It is recommended that faculty convey academic integrity messages to their students starting the first day of classes and then throughout the semester.

Unlike the role that administrators played within the process of encouraging a culture of academic integrity, faculty portray a role with more of a long-term aspect.
Administrators, beyond the first week events and experiences, tend to become less visible to students while the faculty tend to become more visible as a result of their interactions with students in the classroom. The administrator’s role takes a backseat and the faculty continues to drive students’ experiences. To this end, faculty will be critical stakeholders in fostering a culture of academic integrity, next to the students themselves. The researcher recommends that faculty incorporate academic integrity into their curriculum to ensure that students understand what plagiarism looks like and how to avoid it.

The researcher recommends that faculty incorporate the 10 McCabe and Pavela (1997) principles and also use other instructional tools to help prevent plagiarize in their classrooms. This study revealed that students did not rely heavily on campus websites for their knowledge of academic policies; therefore, it was recommended that faculty play a role with steering students to these resources for academic policies. The researcher recommends that faculty assist administrators with the continuity of the academic integrity messages through online plagiarism tutorials (University of Texas at Arlington). Another faculty resource are webpages such as Mississippi State University that contains a wealth of resources about university policy, resources for educators, websites for faculty to share with students, and detection services for faculty. It is recommended that faculty utilize online software. These online software resources include Google.com, Alta Vista, and Metacrawler, which have capabilities to search specific quotes and passages to detect plagiarism; Turnitin.com, a web-based plagiarism detection system; and free downloadable software like WCopyFind created by the Plagiarism Resource Center at the University of Virginia (Mississippi State University). Other recommendations for online
resources are Eve, software to detect plagiarism and copied papers and WareSeeker.com, a free downloadable software for Macs to detect plagiarism.

Finally, it is being recommended by the researcher that campus administration and faculty members work collaboratively to facilitate student orientations and academic integrity weeks to advocate for the culture of academic integrity. Faculty and administrators will need to facilitate brown bag seminars and workshops for understanding the student code of conduct and campus academic policies.

The researcher recommends faculty and administrators work collaboratively to establish a common read program with the focus on the importance of academic integrity. The common read programs are proven to get students involved with an issue and the programs are centered around book discussions and roundtable events. This is one way to establish a connection between fun events and critical issues such as academic integrity to keep students engaged with the overall message throughout their college experience.

**Policy into Practice**

Although two-year colleges served a population of students that varied from their four-year counterparts, the message of academic integrity does not have to be different for two-year students. The establishment of the academic policy, in many cases, is not the actual challenge. The challenge is in the consistency of practice for the implemented policy. The challenge is also in the ability of institutions to practice the policy from administration, down to the classroom, and then to the student. Similar to the challenge of policy to practice and, more importantly, the continuity of the policy implementation, is the ability to lose the commitment to policy at the classroom level.
New Directions for Future Research

This is first-time research that provides implications for the field of higher education for community and technical colleges. This is also research, that if broader in scope, would have rendered a greater response rate with greater implications for academic and student service administrators, faculty, and staff in the two-year college. This research proved that students continue to commit acts of academically dishonest behavior and, more importantly, this behavior occurs in the two-year college.

Initially, 22 Ohio schools were invited to participate in this landmark research for two-year colleges. Due to the sensitivity of this research topic, only four colleges agreed to participate. Although the current research findings were limited in scope, this research should be replicated and the Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey instrument should be modified for future research.

The scope of the investigation should be broadened to elicit participation from all two-year technical and community colleges in the Midwest, yielding a large multi-campus study. In addition, a request for funds should be made for further research as a result of this change in scope. This survey was deployed as an e-survey with the help of liaisons at four participating colleges. In the future, with the help of funding, the researcher should supervise the administration of the survey deployment process at each participating school. This would allow the researcher could increase student participation, similar to that of a paper and pencil survey, which yields greater response rates.

As previously mentioned in the conclusions, neither survey instrument addressed the theoretical frameworks for moral judgment and/or ethical reasoning. Future research should incorporate the theoretical frameworks for moral judgment and/or ethical
reasoning. The modified *Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey* instrument should include questions that allow the researcher to make inferences based on students’ perceptions prior to their decisions to cheat. In addition, a better way should be established to analyze intent for students in light of moral judgment and ethical reasoning. For example, questions can be asked that involve scenarios with situational components or pressures. Students could read a scenario, think through that hypothetical scenario, and then indicate whether or not cheating occurred.

Future research should also focus on moral judgment and ethical reasoning for students based on their perception of severity. Neither the *McCabe Academic Integrity Student Survey* nor the *Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey* instruments defined severity. Students were given vague options of severity levels and then asked to rate them based on their perceptions and specific cheating behaviors. In this study and previous studies, severity has been very subjective. A rating or frequency scale can be created to better indicate perceptions of severity for students surveyed. Future research should include a rating scale of *not very serious, moderate, serious, and very serious* with scales for each from 1 to 5. In addition, students could also be asked about their perceptions of the level of severity based on the cheating behavior. These scenarios can establish a measure for intent based on situational components or pressures that might be influential in their decisions to choose to plagiarize.

The literature suggests that there is not a widely accepted definition of plagiarism, which might account for some of the reasons why students cheat and why it is such a critical issue in higher education. In the current study, the data revealed that students understood the concept of plagiarism. In fact, the findings proved that students were also
informed about their academic policies for academic dishonesty and plagiarism. The ability to simply ask students how they define plagiarism could render some very interesting findings. The inclusion of an open-ended survey question that asks students to define plagiarism would allow inferences to be made about their true intentions when making decisions to cheat.

Both the McCabe Academic Integrity Student Survey nor the Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey instruments collected age and gender data from students based on questions that provided ranges. Since a majority of this research served to determine the influence of age and gender on cheating, open-ended questions would allow access to better isolate the findings for these demographics. Open-ended questions would allow the ability to pinpoint the frequency of a specific age or GPA from student self-reports.

Finally, this research has the potential to be expanded into comprehensive research. There are two focuses that would add value to the literature for academic dishonesty in regard to two-year colleges. The first focus would involve tying the theoretical framework of ethical reasoning or decision-making into the instrumentation. This future research would include that of a comprehensive study that explored the relationship between the development of moral judgment, the academic culture of the college(s), and the social climate of the larger society.

A second focus for future research would involve that of a comparative analysis between two-year colleges and four-year colleges and universities. This comparative research would investigate students’ self-reported acts of dishonest behavior and plagiarism by institutional type to determine if there is a correlation between institutional type and the self-reported acts of dishonest behavior and plagiarism. In addition, this
research would replicate the current study and modify the data analysis to include a comparison between the percentages of self-reports of academically dishonest behavior for two-year versus four-year students. The study would compare the findings to determine variances in age, gender, grade point average, and student status.

This chapter provided an overview of this research’s conclusions as well as how this research adds to the literature. In addition, this chapter provided suggestions for survey instrumentation based on the current research findings, what the current research was unable and able to conclude. Finally, this chapter ended with the researcher’s recommendations for academic and institutional policy for administrators and faculty at other two-year colleges.
References


Sheard, J. Dick, M., Markham, S., MacDonald, I., & Walsh, M. (2002). Cheating and plagiarism: Perceptions and practices of first year IT students. ITiCSE, Aarhus, Denmark.


Trkay, G, & Barker, E. (February, 2010). University of Texas Arlington. In *But I Didn’t Know that I Was Plagiarizing: Teaching Students about Ethical Information Use*. Symposium conducted at the meeting of First-Year Experience Conference, Denver, CO.


Ferguson Academic Integrity Student Survey

1) ADULT RESEARCH - INFORMED CONSENT INFORMATION FOR COMPUTER SURVEYS

STUDENT SELF-REPORTED ACADEMICALLY DISHONEST BEHAVIOR IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES IN THE STATE OF OHIO

Principal Investigator: Dr. David Meabon, Chair/Advisor, (419) 530-2666; david.meabon@utoledo.edu

Principal Student Investigator: Lauren M. Ferguson, Graduate Student, (419) 304-3171; lauren_ferguson@owens.edu

Purpose: You are invited to participate in the research project entitled, Student Self-Reported Academically Dishonest Behavior in Two-Year Colleges in the State of Ohio, which is being conducted at the University of Toledo under the direction of Student Principal Investigator: Lauren Ferguson, Chair and Principal Investigator: Dr. David Meabon, and Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Mary Ellen Edwards, Dr. Anne Hornak, and Dr. Dale Snauwaert. The purpose of this study is to investigate two-year college students’ self-reported academically dishonest behaviors at two-year colleges in the state of Ohio. More specifically, this study will determine your self-reported perceptions of acts of plagiarism and whether characteristics are related to why you might choose to plagiarize. This study will replicate predominant research from McCabe’s investigations of four-year institutions and students’ self-reported cheating behaviors. This survey research will be adapted from his academic integrity survey of student cheating behaviors.

Description of Procedures: Fifty to sixty students in English Composition classes at your institution, which included you, were selected to participate in an online Student Academic Integrity Survey. This replicated survey will serve to investigate your self-reported academically dishonest behaviors and also investigate whether characteristics exist that are related to why you might choose to plagiarize. The survey will be conducted online via a secured, password-protected website called vovici.com. This web site was researched and selected for student research that involves both the creation and implementation of survey research at the University of Toledo. It is a secured and password-protected site that is used for undergraduate and graduate research.

An administrator at your institution will provide you with a web link for the Student Academic Integrity Survey. This survey will require 20-25 minutes of your time. Only the students, like you, selected from your institution will have access to this web link for survey participation. The survey will not be asking you for personally identifiable information such as your name, date of birth, or student identification number. Please answer all questions honestly. As a result, your honest responses to survey questions cannot be linked to you as a participant and will be kept confidential. In addition, once you have completed the survey, your survey will be purged (combined) with all other student participants from your
institution. The survey includes 3 sections that will inquire about your knowledge of plagiarism, the frequency at which you might carry out such acts, and your perceptions of the severity (how serious you believe the act to be) of such acts of plagiarism. **You will need to be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study.**

**Potential Risks/Limitations:** As a result of your participation in this study, there are minimal risks involved. Please remember that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Demographical questions about age range and gender will be asked but no personally identifiable information, such as your name, date of birth, or student identification number will be asked of you as a participant. All your responses from the survey will remain confidential and will be secured within an electronic database. All surveys from your institution will be housed through vovici software, which will not be accessible to anyone other than the research team mentioned above for this study. Your responses will be kept confidential.

**Potential Benefits:** The benefits for this research outweigh the risks in that self-reported student perceptions have rarely been collected from two-year institutions. More specifically, the survey instrument being used for purposes of this research was originally adapted for four-year institutions and specifically targeted those institutions with and without honor codes. The risks that are involved only exist from the standpoint of the sensitive nature of this topic and that you are being asked to honestly self-report instances where you carried out academically dishonest behaviors.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your refusal to participate in this study will involve no penalty and will not affect your relationship with your institution or any of your classes. In addition, you may discontinue participation at any time. We would like to reassure you that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. We would also like to reassure you that demographical questions will be asked about your age and gender, but no personally identifiable questions related to your name, date of birth, or student identification number will be asked on the survey. In addition, your honest responses will not be linked to you in any way as a participant of this research. Your responses will be kept confidential.

**Confidentiality:** The researchers will make every effort to prevent you from being exposed to any potential risk involved with this research. This survey does not include any personally identifiable questions and more importantly, your responses to questions cannot be linked to you as a participant. In addition, once you have completed the survey, your survey responses will be combined with all other student participants from your institution. All your responses from the survey will remain confidential and will be secured within an electronic database. All surveys from your institution will be housed through vovici software, which will not be accessible to anyone other than the aforementioned research team.

*Please indicate by selecting either yes or no that you have read and understand the information above.*

- ☑ Yes, I understand. I am also 18 years or older and I agree to participate.
- ☑ No, I will not participate.

2) **Have you been informed about cheating and plagiarism policies at your school?**
3) If yes, where and how much have you learned about these policies? Please mark the option (learned a little or nothing, learned some, or learned a lot) based on where you learned about the policies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Learned Little or Nothing</th>
<th>Learned Some</th>
<th>Learned A Lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New student orientation program</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your campus website</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Handbook</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A counselor or advisor</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A teacher or instructor</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A class outline or syllabus</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus dean, administrator, or staff</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4) In the past year, how often, on average, did your instructors discuss school policies concerning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Very Seldom</th>
<th>Seldom/Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines on group work or collaboration</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper citation/referencing of written sources</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper citation/referencing of Internet sources</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falsifying/fabricating course lab data</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falsifying/fabricating research data</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5) Have you ever reported another student for cheating?

☐ Yes
☐ No

6) How frequently do you think the following occurs at your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Very Seldom</th>
<th>Seldom/Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriately sharing work in group assignments</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7) Specific Behaviors-Frequency

This section asks you some questions about specific behaviors that some people might consider cheating. Please remember that this survey is completely anonymous and there is no way that anyone can connect you with any of your answers.

In the column below, please mark how often, if ever, in the past year you have engaged in any of the following behaviors. If a question does not apply to any of the courses you took in the last year, please check the "Not Relevant" column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once</th>
<th>More Than Once</th>
<th>Not Relevant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Fabricating or falsifying a bibliography</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Working on an assignment with others (in person) when the instructor asked for individual work</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Working on an assignment with others (via email or Instant Messaging) when the instructor asked for individual work</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. In a course requiring computer work, copying another student's program rather than writing your own</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Fabricating or falsifying lab data</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Fabricating or falsifying research data</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Copying (by hand or in person) another student's homework</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Copying (using digital means such as Instant Messaging or email) another student's homework</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Paraphrasing or copying a few sentences from a book, magazine, or journal (not electronic or Web-based) without footnoting them in a paper you submitted</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Turning in a paper from a &quot;paper mill&quot; (a paper written and previously submitted by another student) and claiming it as your own work</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Paraphrasing or copying a few sentences of material from an electronic source - e.g., the Internet - without footnoting them in a paper you submitted</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Submitting a paper you purchased or obtained from a Web site (such as <a href="http://www.schoolsucks.com">www.schoolsucks.com</a>) and claimed it as your own work</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Copying material, almost word for word, from any written source and turning it in as your own work</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Collaborating with others on a writing assignment that was assigned as individual work</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Turning in a paper copied, at least in part, from another student's paper, whether or not the student is currently taking the</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
same course.

17. Turning in work done by someone else.

18. Submitting the same term paper to another class without permission.

19. Copying materials without using quotation marks.

20. Forging a university document.

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### 8) Specific Behaviors - Severity

This section asks you some questions about specific behaviors that some people might consider cheating. Please remember that this survey is completely anonymous and there is no way that anyone can connect you with any of your answers.

In the column below, please mark how serious you perceive each of the following behaviors to be. If a question does not apply to any of the courses you took in the last year, please check the "Not Relevant" column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Not Cheating</th>
<th>Trivial Cheating</th>
<th>Moderate Cheating</th>
<th>Not Relevant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Fabricating or falsifying a bibliography</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Working on an assignment with others (in person) when the instructor asked for individual work.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Working on an assignment with others (via email or Instant Messaging) when the instructor asked for individual work.</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. In a course requiring computer work, copying another student's program rather than writing your own.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Fabricating or falsifying lab data.</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Fabricating or falsifying research data.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Copying (by hand or in person) another student's homework.</td>
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<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Paraphrasing or copying a few sentences from a book, magazine, or journal (not electronic or Web-based) without footnoting them in a paper you submitted.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Turning in a paper from a &quot;paper mill&quot; (a paper written and previously submitted by another student) and claiming it as your own work.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Paraphrasing or copying a few sentences of material from an electronic source - e.g., the Internet -</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</table>
without footnoting them in a paper you submitted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cheating Act</th>
<th>Likely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
<th>Likely</th>
<th>Unlikely</th>
<th>Very Unlikely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. Submitting a paper you purchased or obtained from a Web site (such as <a href="http://www.schoolsucks.com">www.schoolsucks.com</a>) and claimed it as your own work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Copying material, almost word for word, from any written source and turning it in as your own work.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Collaborating with others on a writing assignment that was assigned as individual work</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Turning in a paper copied, at least in part, from another student's paper, whether or not the student is currently taking the same course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Turning in work done by someone else.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Submitting the same term paper to another class without permission</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Copying materials without using quotation marks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Forging a university document.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

9) How likely is it that:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
<th>Likely</th>
<th>Unlikely</th>
<th>Very Unlikely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You would report an incident of cheating or plagiarism that you observed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The typical student at your school would report such behavior?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A student would report a close friend for cheating or plagiarizing?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10) How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not Relevant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheating and plagiarism is a serious problem at my school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The investigation of suspected incidents of cheating and plagiarism is fair and impartial at my school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students should be held responsible for monitoring the academic integrity of other students</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers or instructors are responsible for reporting suspected cases of cheating and plagiarism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The amount of work I'm expected to complete is reasonable for my year/level and program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11) If you had cheated or plagiarized in a course and the following individuals knew about it, how strongly would they disapprove?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very strongly</th>
<th>Fairly strongly</th>
<th>Not very strongly</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A close friend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A classmate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Your parents</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A teacher or instructor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12) Demographics

What is your student status at your school? Please select one of the following options.

- Earning a certificate
- Pursuing a two-year degree
- Continuing education/professional development for current job
- Continuing education for reentry into the workforce
- Personal enrichment/for fun only

13) What is your approximate cumulative grade point average (GPA)?

- 3.50-4.00 A
- 2.50-3.49 B
- 1.50-2.49 C
- 0.50-1.49 D
- 0.00-0.49 F

14) Sex:

- Female
- Male

15) Personal Status:

- Single
- Divorced
- Married

16) Please indicate your age range:

- 18-24
- 25-31
- 32-38
17) Please complete the following question by checking all that apply.

- Caring for children or an older adult while attending school
- Working full-time while attending school
- Working part-time while attending school
- Commute to school a distance greater than 30 minutes
- Living at home while attending school
- Renting an apartment/condo
- Homeowner

Your responses to this survey will add to the literature in reference to student self-reported behaviors of plagiarism in two-year institutions.

Thank you for your time and completing this survey!

If you are having any difficulty, please contact Lauren Ferguson at laurenmelissa2001@yahoo.com