



## **ROLE OF PERSONALITY HARDINESS AND PEER INFLUENCE ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The present investigation was conducted to examine the role of personality hardiness and peer influence on academic dishonesty among college students. The study was descriptive in nature and the participants comprised 255 college students were selected via convenient sampling technique. The results of the study are- positive and significant association between peer influence and academic dishonesty whereas negative but significant relationship was found between personality hardiness and academic dishonesty of college students. Additionally, regression analysis revealed that personality hardiness and peer influence significantly predicting academic dishonesty of college students. Present study recommended that most efficacious strategies should be developed to discourage unproductive and dysfunctional behaviors, such as student performance of dishonest academic acts.

**Keywords:** Personality Hardiness; Peer Influence and Academic Dishonesty.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The pervasiveness of academic dishonesty among secondary school and college students is well-documented (Giluk & Postlethwaite, 2015). An increasing magnitude of dishonest academic acts has been disastrous in many incidences and its growth is largely alarming (Tadesse & Getachew, 2010). This phenomenon has recently motivated researchers from around the world to conduct empirical investigations to determine the antecedents and consequences of academic dishonesty (Bashir & Bala, 2018a; Bashir & Singh, 2018; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002; Bowers, 1964; McCabe & Trevino, 1993; 1997). Due to variations in the society, educational community and machineries over time appear to offer escalating accessibilities and temptation to cheat, yet the academic organization has not counteract that with an improved importance on teaching undergraduates about morals and ethical behavior (Gallant, 2010). However, honesty is the crux of integrity; honesty is seen as a moral imperative (Turiel, 2006). Moreover, fundamental to the mission of higher education is inculcating ethical values in its graduates (Kibler & Kibler, 1993); unfortunately, student performance of dishonest academic acts threatens this mission by undermining the value of education (Gallant, 2008).

Scholastic dishonesty is a ubiquitous phenomenon and is consequently a highly related component of investigation (Wilks, Cruz, & Sousa, 2016). To support this phenomenon, a powerful analysis suggests that academic dishonesty can be viewed from a number of theoretical and disciplinary perspectives (Bashir & Singh, 2018). Indeed, it has been operationalized and conceptualized from the lens of education

(Bashir & Bala, 2018a; Bashir & Singh, 2018); economics (Kerkvliet, 1994) and philosophy (Green, 2004). Academic dishonesty in higher education continues to receive considerable attention due to the growing concern about eroding of ethical values (Bashir & Singh, 2018). This menace could undermine the excellence of education as well as undermining the vision of grooming honest, accountable and trustworthy professionals in the future (Naghdipour & Emeagwali, 2013). The increasing acknowledgement of dishonest academic acts as a main cross-cultural phenomenon urges scholars and educators to evaluate numerous facets of dishonest academic behavior (Murdock & Anderman, 2006). Consequently, the key purpose of these researches was to control the pervasiveness and magnitude of the phenomenon, organizational and learner demographic features linked with dishonest conducts, and explanations that learners give for dishonest behavior. Although, this purpose finally has suggestions on ways that dishonest academic acts can be prohibited. What follows is a brief investigation of literature on academic dishonesty, personality hardiness and peer influence of college students.

### **Personality Hardiness and Academic Dishonesty**

Personality hardiness introduced by Kobasa in 1979, is a personality style, a set of beliefs about self and the world. It has three components, control, commitment, and challenge. Little investigation seems to have been done and ascertain effect of personality hardiness on academic dishonesty. The investigators like Grasmick, et al. (1993) discovered that dishonest academic conducts were connected to self-control and perceived opportunity. The absence of self-control was postulated to be a personality attribute that inclines individuals to involve in deviant conducts such as performance of dishonest acts. Also focusing on self-control, Coskan (2010) discovered that low self-control and high susceptibility to social influence as predictors of past behavior of academic dishonesty. However, personality hardiness has been positively linked with academic achievement (Ahmadi, Zainalipour, & Rahmani, 2013; Abdollahi, & Noltemeyer, 2016). Besides, academic dishonesty has also been interconnected to undesirable academic correlates of stress. For instance, test anxiety has been positively associated with an academic dishonesty (Shelton & Hill, 1969), and a dishonesty academic act has been negatively connected with grade point average (Scheers & Dayton, 1987). Poropat (2009) discovered that with reverence to the role of personality, institution becomes more like work as students' development through their educational vocations. Truly, learners who perform dishonest acts in an educational environment are more probable to do so at workplace (Nonis & Swift, 2001).

In a research of 799 college students, Bolin (2004) reported that attitudes toward academic dishonesty completely mediated the association between self-control and dishonest academic activities. However, self-control was not directly linked to dishonest academic acts; it does play an important role in a learner's judgment to dishonest acts due to the association between self-control and attitude towards academic dishonesty. Numerous correlational researches have investigated cheating behavior in relation to self-efficacy beliefs. For instance, Murdock, Hale & Weber (2001) discovered an inverse relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic cheating of students, after controlling for classroom goal structures,

personal goals, and other facets of the classroom milieu. Alike relationships was found between self-efficacy and cheating among college students (Finn & Frone, 2004). Although, personality hardiness is a set of personal beliefs, Grimes and Rezek (2005) discovered that individual beliefs about the societal and moral acceptability of cheating are a significant predictor of cheating behavior. However, there is scant evidence, to date, of the validity of prediction of personality hardiness in the academic dishonesty of students. Thus, the present investigation is suitable.

### **Peer influence and Academic Dishonesty**

Peer influence, according to Marathe (2011, as cited in Temesgen, 2015), is defined as the influence from members of the same group in encouraging a person to change his/her attitudes, values in order to conform to group norms. In its broadest sense, peer influence may be conceptualized as the extent to which attitude, thought and behavior of an individual is affected by the pressure of another (Bashir & Bala, 2018b). Thus, influence is the effect that a person or thing has on another and can be positive or negative (Kirk, 2000, as cited in Temesgen, 2015). Investigators frequently use the term peer influence however sometimes use peer pressure (Muuss, 1996). Scholars mean by peer influence as direct peer pressure as well as other societal processes with peers that include an influence from the peers to the adolescent (Temesgen, 2015). Empirical facts recommended that peer influence is a primary contextual element contributing to youngsters' heightened inclination to make uncertain judgments. For example, crime data show that teenagers usually commit offending actions in peer groups, while adults more commonly offend alone (Zimring, 1998). Moreover, one of the strongest predictors of offending behavior in teenage years is attachment with delinquent peers, a relationship that has been ascribed in changing gradations to peer socialization (Dishion, et al., 2002) and affiliation selections, in which risk-taking teenagers obviously gravitate toward one another (Bauman & Ennett, 1996).

Intensive investigation was conducted by McCabe et al. (2002) discovered that best predictor of academic dishonesty was students' perceptions that their friends cheat. More recently, investigation by Chapman et al. (2004) discovered in their research, learners dependably overestimated the probability that other students involved in numerous dishonest acts associated to the occurrences with which the learners themselves involved in those similar activities. Peer influence has been recognized to 'exert normative pressure over learner behavior' (Reason, 2009). Subsequently, peer behavior affects every facet of learner development (cognitive, psychological, affective, and behavioral) (Astin, 1993). For example, substantial researches carried by Bowers (1964), McCabe and Trevino (1993; 1997) all stated that peer atmosphere is one of the most dominant aspects linked with student performance of dishonest academic acts. For illustration, Bowers (1964) found a strong positive association between student performance of dishonest academic acts and their perception of peers' attitude toward academic dishonesty. Nora & Zhang (2010) discovered that peers played a substantial role in discouraging academic dishonesty by stating condemnation and notifying educators of dishonest academic conducts. In addition, Pramadi, Pali, Hanurawan, and Atmoko (2017) reported that peer influence contributed significantly to occurrences of academic cheating. Peer cheating denotes

both actual cheating rates and perceived norm of cheating. In understanding the effect of peer behavior on academic dishonesty, Jordan (2001) showed that cheaters than non-cheaters consider that more learners are involve in dishonest behaviors. These results were stable with prior investigation on the significance of group norms for understanding, and conceivably persuading dishonest behavior (Whitley 1998).

### **Need of the Study**

The present study aims to address the role of personality hardiness and peer influence on academic dishonesty among college students. Dishonesty in academic context is a big phenomenon and is thus a highly pertinent field of examination. Extensive investigation has revealed that key attributes of personality are linked with several aspects of dishonest academic behavior. To date, nevertheless, relatively little inquiry has been devoted to explore the association between academic dishonesty and personality hardiness. Investigators have revealed that performance of dishonest academic acts portend severe consequences for institutions, students, and society (Gallant & Drinan 2008; Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002). The college performance of dishonest academic acts are more probably to cheat on the workplace i.e., job (Nonis & Swift, 2001). Moreover, academic dishonesty act brings about propagation of unskilled graduates at work markets (Harding et al. 2004). This leads to diminish self-confidence of students (Lambert et al., 2003), and may accordingly spoil the image of an educational organization (Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002). Thus, scholastic dishonesty bears dissonant effect for growth of society as well as people. However, there is scant evidence, to date, of the validity of personality hardiness in the prediction of student academic dishonesty. This is somewhat surprising, given the overwhelming evidence of the beneficial effects of personality hardiness across a wide variety of works. Thus, the present investigation is timely.

### **Objectives**

1. To evaluate the relationship of personality hardiness, peer influence and academic dishonesty of college students.
2. To examine the influence of personality hardiness and peer influence on academic dishonesty of college students.

### **Hypotheses**

1. There exists no significant relationship of personality hardiness, peer influence and academic dishonesty of college students.
2. Personality hardiness and peer influence are not significant predictors of academic dishonesty of college students.

### **METHOD**

The present study was conducted through descriptive method of research. The method requires a sample and certain research tools for the conduct of the study.

### **Participants**

The Participants of the study consisted of 312 (161 males, 151 females) college students in Kashmir province of Jammu and Kashmir, who were selected via convenient sampling technique.

### **Instruments**

Following instruments were selected and used by the investigators in the present study:

**Academic dishonesty scale**

Academic dishonesty scale developed and validated by Bashir & Bala (2018a) to measure the level of academic dishonesty among college students. The scale consists of 23 items related to six dimensions of academic dishonesty comprised on 5-point Likert format, each statement is rated on five sequential points, (always=5, frequently=4, sometimes=3, rarely=2 and never=1. This scale has been developed with highly well-accepted and renowned scale development procedure. So, the scale possesses excellent validity and reliability.

**Peer Influence Scale**

Peer influence measure is a subpart of contextual influences scale developed and validated by Bashir and Bala (2018b). Basically, standardized contextual influence scale is combination of three combined primary influences i.e., peer influence, parental influence and institutional climate. Keeping in mind the objectives of study, only one part was used to explore peer influence of college students. Therefore, scale comprised 5-point Likert scale, each statement is rated on five sequential points i.e., (Always=5, frequently=4, Sometimes=3, rarely=2 and Never=1. This scale contains 22 items related to peer influence. For this measure Cronbach's alpha indicated excellent internal consistency for peer influence ( $\alpha = .92$ ).

**Personality Hardiness Scale**

The scale of personality hardiness was developed and standardized by Nowack (1990) in order to measure personality hardiness of an individual. The scale has 10 item pertaining commitment, control and challenge dimensions. The scale consists of 30 items on 5-point rating i.e. Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neither Agree nor Disagree=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1 and negative items were scored as vice versa.

**RESULTS**

In the present study prior to analysis and result generation data was rigorously analyzed for missing values and outliers using SPSS 21-version for each variable. Thus, research hypotheses were analyzed using bivariate correlation and multiple regression analysis. The results are presented in following tables:

Table 1: Summary of Bivariate correlation of Academic Dishonesty, Peer influence and Personality Hardiness of college students.

Construct(s)	Peer Influence	Personality Hardiness
Academic Dishonesty	.247**	-.275**

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 (2-tailed).

The perusal of Table 1 revealed that the calculated value of  $r = .247^{**}$  between academic dishonesty and peer Influence of college students confirms a positive significant relationship. Similarly, a negative but significant association was found between personality hardiness and academic dishonesty ( $r = -.275^{**}$ ). Therefore the first hypothesis of the study which was stated that "there exists no significant relationship of personality hardiness, peer influence and academic dishonesty of college students" stands rejected.

Table 2 (A): Summary of regression analysis between independent variables (Personality Hardiness, Peer influence) and the dependent variable (Academic dishonesty) of college students.

Predictor Variables	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F-Value	Sig.
PH, PI	.350	.122	.115	12.364	17.561	0.00

**Note:** PH= Personality Hardiness; PI= Peer Influence

The results presented in table 2 (A) shows the multiple correlation coefficient of independent variables i.e. personality hardiness, peer influence and dependent variable i.e. Academic dishonesty was brought to be .350\*\*. The table further revealed that calculated value of  $R^2$  i.e. coefficient of determination is .122. The calculated results suggested that independent variables show a significant relationship with dependent variable and independent variables can explain .122% proportion of variance in the dependent/criterion variable (academic dishonesty).

Table 2 (B): Summary of ANOVA for Regression

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5369.065	2	2684.532	17.561	.000
Residual	38522.661	252	152.868		
Total	43891.725	254			

Dependent Variable: Academic Dishonesty

Predictors: (Constant), Peer Influence (PI), Personality Hardiness (PH)

Table 2 (B) reported the calculated F-value is found statistically significant at 0.01 level of significance indicating the overall model of regression is a good fit for present data. The perusal of Table 2 (B) revealed independent variables significantly predicts the dependent variable  $F = 17.561$ ,  $p < .01$ , i.e. the proposed regression model is a good fit. Therefore, regression analysis is allowed and feasible.

Table 2 (C): Summary of Coefficients of Regression

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	56.823	8.745		6.498	.000
Personality Hardiness	-.243	.058	-.250	-4.198	.000
Peer Influence	.320	.088	.217	3.651	.000

Dependent Variable: Academic Dishonesty

The analysis of Table 2 (C) represents the regression coefficient for constant and independent variables i.e. personality hardiness and peer influence. It is clear from table 2 (C) the values of 'B' and 't' for personality hardiness ( $B = -.243$  and  $t = -4.198$ ) and peer influence ( $B = .320$  and  $t = 3.651$ ) are found significant at 0.01 level of significance, i.e. personality hardiness and peer influence are significant predictors of academic dishonesty of college students. The second hypothesis of the study which was stated that "personality hardiness and peer influence are not significant predictors of academic dishonesty of college students" stands rejected. Therefore, regression equation formulated from all variables is given below:

**Academic Dishonesty = 56.823 -.243 X Personality Hardiness+.320 X Peer influence**

## DISCUSSION

The study was conducted to investigate the role of personality hardiness and peer influence on academic dishonesty among college students. The data was collected from 255 students via convenient sampling technique. The first results of the study were positive and significant relationship between peer influence and academic dishonesty of college students. Further, regression analysis suggests that peer influence could predict positively on academic dishonesty of college students. Meaning thereby with the increase of peer influence, dishonest academic acts may be increase. The result of the study are supported by Pramadi et al. (2017); McCabe and Trevino (1993; 1997)

While measuring relationship between personality hardiness and academic dishonesty of college students, a significant negative relationship was found between these constructs. To add, regression analysis revealed that personality hardiness predicts negatively on academic dishonesty of college students. It implies that low personality hardiness could increase the level of academic dishonesty. The results of the study are in line with researchers like Grasmick, et al. (1993) discovered that perceived opportunity and self-control were linked to dishonest academic performances. Similarly, the researchers like Coskan (2010) found that low self-control is best predictor of past behavior of academic dishonesty. At present, educational institutions tends to take a very serious adverse outlook of academic dishonesty. Investigators discovered that scholastic dishonesty is a widespread phenomenon that crosses all disciplines at the college level. But, how pervasive is it, the results of this investigation will be helpful to comprehend that which aspects are more serious to decrease the occurrence of academic dishonesty. The hardiness training should be given to students so that hardy skills of coping, social support, and self-care should be obtained through these determinations to develop the hardy attitudes of control, commitment, and challenge.

In addition, several empirical researches suggest that student performance of dishonest academic acts is more probably to occur when students sign up in highly cutthroat school environments (Taylor et al., 2003). In such school climate, students' belief of success (Whitley, 1998) and fear of failure (Schab, 1991) become motivating forces of student performance of dishonest academic acts as a means to stay alive in the climate or milieu through getting achievement using illicit means. Students are under pressure, especially by parents, to succeed and when they find themselves unable to meet the expectations, they turn towards performance of dishonest academic acts. Researchers interpret academic dishonesty from their disciplinary perspectives. Educational theorists attribute cheating to poor learning environments, disengaged faculty and a curriculum that does not teach moral and ethical principles (Austin & Brown, 1999; Underwood & Szabo, 2004). This study suggests that academic dishonesty may be reduced by increasing personality hardiness and promoting positive peer influence among college students, particularly among academically struggling students. Similarly, Kaur & Bashir (2016); Bashir & Bashir (2016) suggested that self-regulation strategies should be develop among students which could increase their hardy skills.

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATION

There was a significant positive relationship between peer influence and academic dishonesty of college students. Our result suggests that peer influence can predict positively on academic dishonesty. It implies that peer influence have a considerable role to play in the academic dishonesty of college students. Moreover, the study also revealed that personality hardiness and academic dishonesty are negatively correlated. Personality hardiness can predict negatively on academic dishonesty of college students. The study recommended college authorities should reduce the bad effects of peer influence of students as well as frequency of academic dishonesty. It is the joint accountability of higher authorities to work towards the advancement of educational society. Educational planners should include moral and value education in syllabus so that students restrict their behavior of indulgence in cheating. Moreover, to minimize using various forms of dishonest academic acts in examination so that oral, practical, project based exams should be conducted. Furthermore, it is duty of teachers to minimize unsuitable contextual environment like peer influence should be ignored which leads to bad effects on students. Positive peer communication should be developed which can increase time management skills and develop reading habits. Additionally, current results propose that personality hardiness is defensive behavior and that the personality features of hardiness may contribute to persons adopting practices which could help to reduce unethical behavior.

Future studies should include also personality traits as a related individual construct influencing the performance of dishonest activities. Furthermore, it would be necessary to further investigate teaching, assessment and monitoring approaches, in order to ascertain factors useful to disapprove students' mechanisms of academic dishonesty. As well it would be substantial to include also a measure of learners' acquaintance and elucidation of societal norms to better understanding about ethical mechanisms. To summarize, upcoming researches should emphasis on a deep examination of the interaction of individual and contextual constructs to ascertain the utmost effective approaches to discourage unproductive and dysfunctional behaviors, such as dishonest acts.

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