

STRESS, BURNOUT, AND ACADEMIC ENTITLEMENT: ASSOCIATIONS WITH
ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

by

Megan Christine Ximenes

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Thesis Supervisor:

Kelly Haskard-Zolnierak

Second Reader:

Krista Howard

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ABBREVIATIONS

AD – Academic dishonesty

AE – Academic entitlement

MBI-SS - Maslach Burnout Inventory – Student Survey

PAS – Perceptions of Academic Stress

ABSTRACT

Research shows that academic dishonesty (cheating) in undergraduates is consistently problematic. While stress and burnout have been robustly studied in the college student population, few studies have investigated the relationship between stress, burnout, academic entitlement, and academic dishonesty. This study examined how perceptions of academic stress, burnout, and academic entitlement (AE) are related to academic dishonesty (AD). We hypothesized a positive relationship between these variables and expected that stress, burnout, and academic entitlement will predict AD. A total of 377 undergraduate student participants completed an online Qualtrics survey during Fall 2021. The study used validated surveys to assess stress, burnout, and AE, collected demographic information, and surveyed participants about their engagement in different types of AD (cheating) while in college. Results suggested that certain dimensions of stress and burnout were related to AD. AE was related to cheating on quizzes, stress, and burnout. Stress, burnout, and AE predicted cheating on exams, daily/weekly quizzes, and assignments. These findings can be used to inform practices that support undergraduates to redirect cheating behaviors.

I. INTRODUCTION

Academic dishonesty, or cheating, may be best described as “Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours” (Whitley, 2014, as cited in Pavela, 1978). Since 1992, The International Center for Academic Integrity has collected data on academic dishonesty in undergraduate students. Their March 2020 report on 850 students across five institutions revealed that 32% of students admitted to cheating on an exam, 24% admitted to using unauthorized resources to complete assignments, 28% admitted to helping others cheat, and 15% admitted to plagiarism. Another survey by McCabe (1997) of nine institutions with 1,793 undergraduates found that in addition to eroding the integrity of academic environments and compromising individual development of morals and ethics (McCabe, 1992), academic dishonesty is deleterious to education because it can falsely rank students against each other. For example, a student who cheats may appear more competitive and unfairly earn awards, scholarships, seats in honor societies, or other competitive positions. Whitley (2014) further noted that chronic cheating may encourage continued dishonest behavior at work or result in students losing out on critical skills needed for future jobs. Given the pervasive and insidious nature of academic dishonesty, it is imperative to understand factors that play a role in why students cheat. The aim of this study is to explore whether stress, burnout, and academic entitlement are associated with academic dishonesty.

Academic Dishonesty

Research on academic dishonesty (AD) commonly focuses on personal or situational predictors (McCabe & Treviño, 1997). Personal factors or individual differences refer to inherent traits that distinguish individuals from one another (Pantoja & Walton, 2020). The American Psychological Association (2021) dictionary adds that individual differences may include “traits, moods, attitudes, decisions, judgements, abilities, or effort” (p. 1). This may be distinguished from situational attributions, which the APA dictionary refers to as external circumstances, such as luck, or any other outside pressure that causes an individual to change behavior or become concerned.

Personal Factors

Following the definition of individual differences, specific characteristics may incline some individuals to engage in certain behaviors more than others. The current study is focused on whether the individual trait academic entitlement is related to AD. Previous literature has identified academic entitlement as an individual difference associated with more academic cheating (Greenberger et al., 2008; Stiles et al., 2017).

Personal factors cited in previous work include personality traits like need for approval (Burton, 1963), conscientiousness and agreeableness (Giluk & Postlethwaite, 2014), and academic entitlement (Stiles et al., 2018). Demographic factors associated with AD include gender, age, and GPA. Historically, males have been more likely to cheat than females, younger students were more likely to cheat than older students, and those with a lower GPA have tended to cheat more than those with a higher GPA (Baird,

1980). Situational factors have included institutional policies, knowledge of peer behavior (Baird, 1980), and stress (Herdian & Mildaeni, 2022; Smith et al., 2013).

Academic Entitlement

Work by Stiles et al. (2018) cited Stein (2013) to define academic entitlement (AE) as “preferring to receive more from one’s academic experience than one’s peers and preferring to get more from one’s academic experience than one gives to it” (p. 825). They also cited Raskin and Terry’s (1988) definition of AE as “the expectation of special privileges over others and special exceptions from normal social demands” (p. 829). In their 30-year longitudinal study, they found that academic entitlement predicted cheating in university students. Specifically, AE was significantly correlated with cheating on major exams, weekly quizzes, class assignments like homework, and helping others cheat. Stiles et al. (2018) found that age was inversely related to cheating. Females were less likely to cheat than males. Cheating was highest for term papers, lab assignments, and homework assignments, at moderate levels for helping others cheat and cheating on quizzes, and lowest for cheating on major exams. Stiles et al. (2018) found that Caribbean students cheated less than Caucasian students and noted that these results conflict with other studies reporting that international students cheat more than domestic students.

Greenberger et al. (2008) linked AE to narcissism and exploitative attitudes toward others. Beyond this, they found that students higher in AE were also significantly higher in achievement anxiety, felt more pressure from parents to perform well in academics, and engaged more in AD.

Situational Factors

Situational factors linked to AD include stress (Herdian & Mildaeni, 2022) and institutional policies and procedures (Lee et al., 2020) such as whether a university employs an honor code system or not. One study explored perceptions of peers' behaviors and found that students who believed their peers were cheating were significantly more likely to cheat than those who believed their peers were not cheating (McCabe et al., 2001). In their 1997 study, McCabe and Treviño found that students engaged in less academic dishonesty when they believed their peers would view the act unfavorably. Other situational factors have included seating arrangement, involvement in extracurricular activities (Baird, 1980) and increased test difficulty (Winston, 1975). Though stress and burnout have been heavily explored in undergraduates, the connections of these factors with academic dishonesty are greatly understudied.

Stress

Sanderson (2018) described stressors as “Any physically or psychologically challenging event, or situation. Stress describes the process by which we perceive and respond to stressors” (p. 201). Sanderson also cited Spector (2002), who stated “The stressful period that hits most college students at the end of the semester when they must take exams and complete term papers is a good example of (work) stress” (p. 201). Pitt et al. (2018) explored sources of stress in undergraduate students and identified academics, finances, work, personal, family-related, interpersonal, social support, or lack thereof, study/life balance, and starting university as key stressors in their study.

Stress causes change in the body by activating the flight-or-fight system through release of the hormones adrenaline and noradrenaline (Sanderson, 2018). These hormones are released through the bloodstream to trigger a cascade of other physiological responses like increased heart rate and blood pressure, more rapid breathing, dilating pupils, and muscle activation (Sanderson, 2018).

The consequences of stress have been robustly studied and proven to have acute and chronic detrimental effects. Research on undergraduates has identified several consequences such as psychological impairment and hindered self-esteem (Besser & Zeigler-Hill, 2012). Kibbey et al. (2021) explored outcomes of stress in undergraduates during the COVID-19 pandemic using self-reported data and found that nearly half of their sample ($N = 641$) reported increased general and health anxiety and heightened depression during the pandemic.

Stress research sometimes explores allostatic load. This refers to chronic stress with cumulative, injurious effects on the body and mind like impaired immune, cardiovascular, and endocrine system functioning (Sanderson, 2018). A meta-analysis by D'Amico et al. (2020) revealed that allostatic load was related to declined executive functioning. Executive functioning refers to higher order cognition necessary for problem solving, planning, deliberating, and organizing information (APA.org, 2021). Sapolsky (1996) has argued that prolonged release of stress hormones in the brain is also responsible for deteriorating the hippocampus, a part of the brain responsible for memory and cognition.

Few studies have explored the relationship between stress and academic dishonesty. Herdian and Mildaeni (2022) found a positive relationship between stress and

academic dishonesty that was facilitated by religiosity. They posited that individuals high in religiosity used it to justify unethical behavior, like cheating. The current study hypothesizes a similar relationship between academic entitlement and unethical academic behavior. Barnett and Dalton (1981) also found a significant relationship between stress and academic dishonesty. Findings by Smith et al. (2013) reflected similarities to previous work that males were more likely to cheat than females, and GPA was inversely related to cheating. Informed by Agnew's (1985, 1992) general strain theory, which emphasized discrepancies between aspirations and expectations, the researchers examined stress in three ways. First, they computed strain produced from a failure to achieve positively valued goals. Next, the researchers included strain produced by the removal of positively valued stimuli and finally, strain caused by the presence of negative stimuli. Cheating was associated with all three types of general stress or strain.

Burnout

The concept of burnout originated in human resources research to describe the fatigue experienced by professionals who frequently engage and interact with other people. Shaufeli (1993, as cited in Neckel et al., 2017) described burnout as a sociocultural phenomenon characterized by "emotional depletion, loss of motivation, and reduced commitment" (p. 107). Later work by social psychologist Maslach identified these features in human service workers, noting emotional exhaustion, disdain, and resentment toward clients or patients, and difficulties maintaining professionalism and proficiency at work. Similar to the experience of burnout in other fields, burnout in an academic setting is captured by measuring exhaustion, cynicism, and diminished feelings of achievement due to demands of school and studying (Shaufeli et al., 2002).

Burnout is related to yet distinct from stress in several ways. Both burnout and stress are internal reactions to external stimuli (Phillips, 2022). Phillips (2022) added that stress is the precursor to burnout. When stress becomes chronic and persists without relief, the body shuts down to protect itself. This explains why depersonalization and disengagement are features of burnout. A meta-analysis by Guthier et al. (2020) on longitudinal studies examining stress and burnout found corresponding relationships to job stressors and burnout over time. Specifically, they identified reciprocal connections between exhaustion and depersonalization with job stressors but not cynicism. They inferred differences may emerge across cultures because different cultures use different coping mechanisms to deal with stress and burnout. Another meta-analysis by Nahrgang et al. (2011) found that burnout hindered an employee's ability to work safely and remain engaged. It is noteworthy that there is a paucity of research investigating the relationship between stress, burnout, and academic dishonesty. Given the consequences of burnout and its proximal relation with stress, the current study aims to further explore these constructs and investigate their connection with academic dishonesty.

Current Study

The present study contributes to the current literature in four ways. First, it broadens the literature connecting stress to academic dishonesty. Second, it explores whether burnout is related to academic dishonesty. Third, it investigates correlations and predictions of academic dishonesty with academic entitlement. Fourth, it examines academic entitlement using a Generation Z sample, as academic entitlement has been more commonly studied in Millennial samples. The Pew Research Center (2019) refers to

Millennials as those born between 1981 and 1996 (ages 26 to 41 in 2022), and Generation Z as anyone born from 1997 and on (ages 25 and younger).

The literature review and theoretical background inform the hypotheses that 1) stress is related to academic dishonesty; 2) burnout is related to academic dishonesty; and 3) academic entitlement is related to academic dishonesty.

II. METHODS

Participants

A total of 377 undergraduate students were recruited from SONA systems human subject pool and participated in this study. A total of 14 cases were removed due to improper responses, leaving 363 valid cases for analysis. Participants were enrolled in Introduction to Psychology and were granted course credit for their participation. Participants consisted of freshman (75.5%), sophomores (14.6%), juniors (8.5%), and seniors (1.1%). Participants were White (37.5%), Hispanic/Latino(a) (37.7%), Black (13.5%), Asian or Pacific Islander (5.5%), multiracial or biracial (4.7%), and Native American or Alaskan Native (0.3%). Participants were mostly single (never married; 66.1%) or in a relationship but never married (33.1%), and they were on average 18 (55.4%) or 19 years old (27.8%) with a range of 18-27 years.

Procedure

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at Texas State University. Following provision of consent, participants completed an online Qualtrics survey during Fall of 2021. The survey consisted of five topics. Demographics were collected first. The second topic was perceptions of academic stress (PAS scale; a sample

item is “Competition with peers for grades is quite intense.”). The next topic was burnout (Maslach Burnout Inventory- Student Survey; a sample item is “I have become less enthusiastic about my studies”). The next topic was academic entitlement (modified version of AE; a sample item is “If I have attended most classes for a course, I deserve at least a grade of B.”). The last topic was academic dishonesty (cheating; a sample item is “Have you ever cheated on a major exam?”).

Measures

The online Qualtrics survey was comprised of five sections, including 54 questions.

Demographic Information

The first survey section included nine demographic questions on age, ethnicity, race, year in college, hours enrolled, academic major, relationship status, living situation, and grade point average (GPA). Age was collected on a ratio scale where participants typed in the number corresponding with their age. Race/ethnicity options included Asian/Pacific Islander, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino(a), Multiracial or biracial, Native American or Alaskan Native, White or Caucasian, and a race/ethnicity not listed here. Year in college included freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior. Hours enrolled options included less than 6 hours, between 6 and 9, between 10 and 12, between 13 and 15, and more than 16. For academic major, participants typed in their major. Responses for major included nursing, business, kinesiology, mathematics, chemistry, nursing, and psychology. Relationship status included single, in a relationship but not married, widowed, divorced, and separated. Living situation options included live with parents, live on campus with roommates, live on campus alone, live off campus with

roommates, live off campus alone, and other. GPA was recorded on an interval scale as less than 2.0, between 2.1 and 2.5, between 2.6 and 3.0, between 3.1 and 3.5, and higher than 3.6.

Perceptions of Academic Stress

The Perceptions of Academic Stress Scale (PAS) assessed participant's academic stress (Bedewy & Gabriel, 2015). The PAS scale includes three subscales to comprise the three dimensions of academic stress: Academic Expectations, Workload and Exams, Student's Academic Self-perception. The Academic Expectations subscale included no reverse coded items and consisted of questions like "My teachers are critical of my academic performance," and "Competition with my peers for grades is quite intense." The Workload and Exam subscale sample questions were "I believe that the amount of work assigned is too much," and "Examination time is too short to complete the answers." The Workload and Exam subscale included two reverse coded questions "My time allocated to classes and academic work is enough." The Student's Academic Self-perception subscale included "I fear failing courses this year," and reverse coded items like "I can make academic decisions easily," and "I am confident that I will be a successful student." Response options for the PAS scale ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Maslach Burnout Inventory – Student Survey

The Maslach Burnout Inventory – Student Survey (MBI-SS) (Shaufeli et al., 2002) assessed student burnout across three dimensions: Exhaustion, Cynicism, and Professional Efficacy. It is a modified version of the original Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), which captures burnout in employees at work, rather than in students. The

original scale asks 12 questions to measure low, moderate, or high degree of exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment assessment. This scale has been modified to capture stress in other fields from medical personnel, human resource workers, educators, and general use. The student scale includes 15 questions. The Exhaustion subscale includes no reverse coded items and includes statements like “I feel emotionally drained by my studies,” and “Studying or attending a class is really a strain for me,” The Cynicism subscale includes no reverse coded items and states, “I have become less interested in my studies since my enrollment at the university” and “I doubt the significance of my studies.” The Professional Efficacy subscale included items like “I can effectively solve the problems that arise in my studies,” and “In my opinion, I am a good student.” The MBI-SS asks participants how often they believe each statement on a 6-point Likert scale with 0 (*0% of the time*) and 6 (*100% of the time*).

Academic Entitlement

The Academic Entitlement (AE) scale was derived from a modified version of a scale created by Greenberger et al. (2008). This is a similar version used in the longitudinal study by Stiles et al. (2017). It includes six items on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) Likert scale. Sample items include “If I have explained to my professor that I am trying hard, I think he/she should give me some consideration with respect to my course grade,” and “If I have completed most of the reading for a class, I deserve a B in that course.”

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty included 5 items to capture the different types of cheating or academic dishonesty that students engaged in while in college. It is derived from a scale used in Stiles et al. (2017) to assess cheating on a dichotomous level where 0 (*no*) and 1 (*yes*). Items asked whether students cheated on major exams, daily or weekly quizzes, class assignments (i.e., term paper, lab assignment, homework, etc.), helped someone else cheat, or plagiarized (turning in an essay or other work that was not your own).

III. RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Participant GPA ranged between 2.1 and 2.5 (8.5%), between 2.6 and 3.0 (20.9%), between 3.1 and 3.5 (47.1%), and higher than 3.6 (19.6%). Participants reported taking between 10 and 12 credit hours (17.4%), between 13 and 15 hours (63.1%), and more than 16 hours (14.6%).

A total of 47 participants reported cheating on exams (12.9%), and 316 reported they did not cheat on exams (87.1%). A total of 129 participants reported they had cheated on quizzes (35.5%), and 234 reported not cheating on quizzes (64.5%). A total of 136 participants reported cheating on assignments (37.5%), and 227 reported they did not engage in assignment cheating (62.5%). Finally, 62 participants indicated they had helped others cheat (17.1%), and 301 reported they had not helped others cheat (82.9%). Thus, this sample reported cheating most on quizzes and assignments and least on helping others cheat and on cheating on exams. Cheating via plagiarism was omitted from further analysis due to low count. Only 5 participants reported engaging in plagiarism (1.4%).

The 18 items of the PAS ranged from 1 to 5 with 1 indicating “least stressed” and 5 indicating “most stressed.” As described in Bedewy and Gabriel (2015), participant responses were averaged to form a total score. No responses in the academic expectations dimension required reverse coding; workload and exam included two reverse coded items; and academic self-perception included three reverse coded items. The PAS contained three subscales: Academic Expectations ($M=2.95$; $SD=.783$), Workload and Exams ($M=3.00$; $SD=.723$), and Academic Self-perception ($M=2.77$; $SD=.687$).

The MBI-SS was scored according to directions given in Shaufeli et al. (2002). The 15 items were averaged on a scale from 1 to 7 with 1 indicating less burnout and 7 indicating more burnout. No items were reverse coded for the MBI-SS. Means for the three subscales include Exhaustion ($M=4.20$; $SD=1.613$), Cynicism ($M=3.12$; $SD=1.689$), and Professional Efficacy ($M=4.92$; $SD=1.031$).

Results suggested that the sample was moderately stressed by academic expectations and workload and exams and slightly less stressed by academic self-perception. The sample was moderately stressed as reflected by a normal distribution. Academic Entitlement (AE) was measured on a scale with items that had a range of 1 to 5 with 1 being less entitled and 5 being more entitled. The items were averaged to create an overall score. The mean overall score for AE was 2.91 and the standard deviation was .79. Collectively, the results suggested that this sample was higher in professional efficacy and exhaustion and moderate in cynicism.

Correlations

A Pearson’s correlation matrix was computed to assess relationships between the variables in this study. Expectedly, engaging in one method of academic dishonesty was

related to engaging in other types of cheating such that cheating on exams, assignments, quizzes, and helping others were all significantly related to each other at the $p < .01$ level. There was a positive relationship between GPA and Professional Efficacy, $r(360) = .255$; $p < .001$ and a negative relationship between GPA and PAS Workload and Exams, $r(360) = -.164$; $p < .05$ and GPA and PAS Academic Self-perception, $r(360) = -.245$; $p < .001$.

Cheating on exams was positively related to MBI-SS Cynicism, $r(360) = .142$; $p < .05$. Cheating on quizzes was positively related to MBI-SS Cynicism, $r(360) = .147$; $p < .05$, and positively related to MBI-SS Exhaustion, $r(359) = .150$; $p < .05$. There was a positive relationship between cheating on assignments and MBI-SS Cynicism, $r(360) = .163$; $p < .05$, and MBI-SS Exhaustion, $r(359) = .191$; $p < .001$. Helping others cheat was positively associated with MBI-SS Cynicism, $r(360) = .121$; $p < .05$.

There was a positive relationship between AE and cheating on quizzes, $r(361) = .122$; $p < .05$, between AE and MBI-SS Cynicism, $r(360) = .118$; $p < .05$, MBI-SS Exhaustion, $r(359) = .221$; $p < .001$. There was a positive relationship between AE and PAS Academic Expectations, $r(361) = .360$; $p < .001$. There was a positive relationship between AE and PAS Workload and Exams, $r(361) = .258$, $p < .001$. Finally, there was a positive relationship between AE and PAS Academic Self-perceptions, $r(361) = .128$; $p < .05$.

Binary Logistic Regression

Four binary logistic regression analyses were run to explore the association between stress, burnout, and academic entitlement with academic dishonesty or cheating. Predictor variables of burnout, stress, and academic entitlement were tested a priori with the Box Tidwell test to verify no violation of the assumption of linearity of the logit. The

subscale PAS Workload and Exams were removed from further analysis because it failed to meet the assumption of linearity of the logit. The predictor variables perceptions of academic stress, burnout, and academic entitlement contributed to the logistic regression analysis model.

Table 1

Binary Logistic Regression Results for Cheating on Exams

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald	Sig.	Exp (<i>B</i>)	95% CI Upper	95% CI lower
PAS Academic Expectations	-.386	.241	2.555	.110	.680	1.091	.424
PAS Academic Self-Perception	-.615	.322	3.653	.056	.541	1.016	.288
MBI Exhaustion	.062	.140	.193	.661	1.064	1.401	.808
MBI Cynicism	.342	.124	7.657	.006	1.408	1.793	1.105
MBI Professional Efficacy	-.127	.187	.464	.496	.881	1.269	.611
Academic Entitlement	.384	.230	2.785	.095	1.468	2.305	.935

Note. Significant results at the $p < .05$ level are in bold. Sig. = significance level.

The first regression analysis tested cheating on exams. The overall model was significant ($X^2(6) = 16.41, p = .012$) with a Nagelkerke R square of .083. Cynicism was a significant predictor of cheating on exams such that, for every one unit increase in cynicism toward school, participants had 40% higher odds of cheating on exams ($B = .342, X^2 = 7.66, p = .006$).

Table 2

Binary Logistic Regression Results for Cheating on Daily/weekly Quizzes

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald	Sig	Exp (<i>B</i>)	95% CI Upper	95% CI lower
PAS Academic Expectations	-.030	.173	.030	.863	.971	1.363	.691

PAS Academic Self-Perception	-.473	.230	4.220	.040	.623	.979	.397
MBI Exhaustion	.164	.096	2.924	.087	1.178	1.421	.976
MBI Cynicism	.139	.087	2.543	.111	1.150	1.364	.969
MBI Professional Efficacy	-.170	.130	1.689	.194	.844	1.090	.654
Academic Entitlement	.313	.157	4.005	.045	1.368	1.859	1.006

Note. Significant results at the < .05 level are in bold

The second regression analysis tested for cheating on daily or weekly quizzes with an overall significant model fit, ($X^2(6) = 18.402, p = .005$) and a Nagelkerke R square of .068. PAS Academic Self-perceptions was a significant predictor of cheating on daily or weekly quizzes such that, for every one unit increase in Academic Self-Perceptions, the odds of cheating decreased by 37.7% ($B = -.473, X^2 = 4.22, p = .040$). Academic entitlement was also a significant predictor of cheating on daily or weekly quizzes such that the odds of cheating increased by 36% for every one unit increase in AE ($B = .313, X^2 = 4.01, p = .045$).

Table 3

Binary Logistic Regression results for cheating on assignments

	B	SE	Wald	Sig	Exp (B)	95% CI Upper	95% CI lower
PAS Academic Expectations	.045	.127	.070	.791	1.047	1.466	.747
PAS Academic Self-Perception	-.390	.228	2.940	.086	.677	1.057	.433
MBI Exhaustion	.223	.095	5.509	.019	1.250	1.506	1.037
MBI Cynicism	.099	.086	1.310	.252	1.104	1.307	.932
MBI Professional Efficacy	-.192	.130	2.197	.138	.825	1.064	.640
Academic Entitlement	.190	.153	1.529	.216	1.209	1.631	.895

Note. Significant results at the < .05 level are in bold

The third regression analysis tested for cheating on assignments with an overall significant model ($X^2(6) = 19.62, p = .003$) and Nagelkerke R square of .072. MBI-SS Exhaustion was a significant predictor of cheating on assignments such that, the odds of cheating increased by 25% for every one unit increase in Exhaustion ($B = .223, X^2 = 5.51, p = .019$). The results of the fourth logistic regression tested for helping others cheat. It was omitted due to nonsignificant model fit ($X^2(6) = 8.850, p = .182$).

IV. DISCUSSION

Based on these results, stress, burnout and academic entitlement were related to academic dishonesty. The first hypothesis was partially supported by the unexpected negative relationship in the logistic regression between PAS Academic Self-Perception and cheating on quizzes. A negative relationship indicates that participants with more stress about their academic self-perception are less likely to cheat. While the PAS Academic Self-Perception subscale passed the Box-Tidwell test, this subscale may lack construct validity.

The second hypothesis was supported by the Pearson correlation table showing positive relationships between MBI-SS Cynicism and Exhaustion with cheating on exams, quizzes, and helping others cheat. The second hypothesis was also supported by the logistic regression indicating that participants who reported higher levels of burnout were more likely to cheat on assignments, and participants reporting higher levels of cynicism were more likely to cheat on exams. The third hypothesis was supported was supported by the Pearson correlation showing that AE was related to cheating on quizzes. Logistic regression also supported the third hypothesis because it revealed that participants higher in AE were more likely to cheat on quizzes.

This is in line with previous research linking stress with academic dishonesty (Barnett and Dalton 1981; Herdian & Mildaeni, 2022). These findings are also consistent with previous research on academic entitlement and academic dishonesty (Greenberger et al., 2008; Stiles et al., 2017). It is noteworthy that the study by Herdian & Mildaeni used a sample of Indonesian students. Work by Shaufeli (1993) asserts that burnout is a sociocultural phenomenon indicating that different cultures perceive and cope with burnout in different ways. As such, it is necessary to conduct more research to determine if this relationship is unique among U.S. samples. However, if these findings remain prominent in other cultures, it could suggest that the relationship is cross-cultural.

A 2015 study by Turnipseed identified “the dark triad” as a predictor of academic entitlement. The dark triad refers to Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. Based on these findings, it may be that academic dishonesty is rooted in academic entitlement, in a similar fashion to Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. These traits may be sourced in individuals' preferences for externalizing responsibility onto others or for the sheer excitement of getting away with cheating.

Limitations

One confound of the current study is that students may have underreported how often they cheat. Work by McCabe (1992; 1993; 1997) advises that students are hesitant to share cheating habits due to fear of punishment. The 30-year longitudinal study by Stiles et al., (2017) reported dramatic differences cheating between cohorts, such that 62.2% of their 1994 cohort reported cheating and 57.4% of the 2004 cohort reported cheating. Unquestionably, it is difficult to ascertain how truthful students were in this study.

Most importantly, these findings are correlational, so no causative conclusions can be made. To further explore this research area more thoroughly, experimental work should be conducted to determine whether manipulations of stress, burnout, and academic entitlement directly lead to academic dishonesty. Other longitudinal studies are also necessary to determine the temporal precedence of variables. In other words, longitudinal studies will be necessary to conclude whether burnout and stress occur first, or whether cheating habits occur first.

Implications

By further investigating the relationship between stress, burnout, and academic dishonesty, this research aims to better understand and potentially redirect harmful behavior in academia. One goal of identifying stress and burnout as a precursor to academic dishonesty is to provide support to high-risk students (i.e., students who report high levels of stress and burnout) so that they turn to more effective methods of coping with stress and burnout instead of cheating. Many universities include counseling, academic, or wellness centers with many stress-relief avenues for students. One option would be to offer action-oriented problem-solving tips such as time management, study tools, and academic coaching for students experiencing higher levels of stress or burnout. Other remedies might include offering ongoing yoga or meditation sessions to allow students to take a mental break and replenish energy for their studies

Since burnout is characterized by exhaustion and disengagement, it is most likely the case that students forget about these resources or do not recognize when they need them (e.g., they may not recognize when they are burned out). To account for this, another solution may be to screen students throughout the semester for burnout and to

intervene at that point. This would provide resources to students when they need it most and maximize chances of redirecting the temptation to cheat.

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