Correlation of Academic Dishonesty with Criminal and Professional Behavior

Group 1
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Hypothesis

- Individuals that demonstrate academically dishonest behavior in college will subsequently demonstrate unethical behavior later on in life.
  - A lack of ethical morals relates to the community as a whole

- Examples:
  - Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of data, etc.
  - Tax evasion, fraud, forgery, lying to employer, etc.
Literature Review

Academic Dishonesty Today,
Unethical Practices Tomorrow?

> “Cheating in school and practicing unethically as a professional have a distinct correlation.”

Plagiarism, Integrity, and Workplace Deviance: A Criterion Study

> “Actual results” of plagiarism from Turnitin.com were collected and compared to a questionnaire given to participants
Literature Review

An Examination of the Relationship Between Academic Dishonesty and Workplace Dishonesty: A Multi-campus Investigation

- Students who believe that dishonest acts are acceptable are more likely to engage in them
- Students who engaged in dishonest behavior in college are more likely to engage in the same behavior in the workplace

When Cheating Leads to Moral Disengagement and Motivated Forgetting

- “The excuses people make for their dishonest behavior parallel the justifications criminals make for their crimes.”
Research Design

- Quasi-experimental
  - Participants were not selected at complete random
    - Based on those who had an email address and were from specific graduating years

- Ex post facto control group design
  - Only after data was collected were participants placed into separate comparison groups
Data Collection

- Emailed survey
  - 46 questions
  - 1,500 emails were sent to UVU Alumni from graduating years 2000, 2005, and 2010
    - Initial email: 70 completed
    - After first reminder: 23 completed
    - After final reminder: 17 completed

- Total surveys opened: 144
- Total surveys started: 130
- Total surveys completed: 110
Survey Questions

O Relevant to research topic
  O During college did you ever participate in a form of academic dishonesty?
  O Have you ever called in sick to work when you were not sick?
  O Do you believe that you behave honestly more often than most people?
Survey Results
Academic Dishonesty

- 15 people answered that they had committed some form of academic dishonesty - 11.9%
  - 8 admitted to cheating
  - 3 admitted to plagiarism
  - 1 admitted to fabrication of data
  - 1 admitted to assisting others in their dishonest acts
  - 2 admitted to other forms of academic dishonesty
  - Responses included giving out info regarding topics on a test and not abiding by a time limit on a take-home test
Professional Dishonesty

- Only 6 of 107 responses said they had committed serious professional dishonesty - 5.6%
  - 1 admitted to tax evasion
  - 1 admitted to compensation fraud
  - 2 admitted to bank fraud
  - 4 admitted to committing forgery
Professional Dishonesty

Have you ever taken office supplies for your own personal use?

0  53% Yes
Professional Dishonesty

Have you ever given a false reason to your place of employment in order to be excused from work?

Have you ever called in sick when you were not sick?
Perception of Self

- Do you believe that you behave honestly more often than most people?
  - 108 respondents
  - A strong majority of 76 respondents believed they were honest more often than other people - 70%
  - Among males - 89%
  - Among females - 75%
# Correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Dishonesty</th>
<th>Academic Dishonesty</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Believe self more honest than most?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Tax Evasion</td>
<td>Admitted</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Compensation Fraud</td>
<td>Claimed no A.D.</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Bank Fraud</td>
<td>½ admitted</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Both Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Forgery</td>
<td>25% admitted</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>3 yes / 1 no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Intoxicated at Work</td>
<td>66% admitted</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>3 Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Correlation

Many more people admitted to these minor professional dishonesties than the original 15 admissions to academic dishonesty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Dishonesty</th>
<th>Academic Dishonesty (13 of 15 answered)</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Believe self more honest than most?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>58 Taking Office Supplies (53%)</td>
<td>13 answered this question. 7 yes / 6 no</td>
<td>No apparent correlation</td>
<td>All 58 said yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 Called in sick (50%)</td>
<td>13 answered. 5 Yes / 8 No</td>
<td>Slightly Negative Correlation</td>
<td>37/56 yes (66%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 gave false reason to miss work (35%)</td>
<td>13 answered. 7 yes/ 6 no</td>
<td>No apparent correlation</td>
<td>29/38 yes (76%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Do you believe that a dishonest person can truly change and become inherently honest?
Conclusions

- There is some correlation between academic dishonesty in college and professional dishonesty (including criminal behavior)
  - Relatively low number of responses could account for the weaker correlation rather than a stronger one
Issues

- IRB approval
  - More responses if we had more time
    - At least one more reminder email could have yielded more responses
  - Low response rate
    - 130 out of 1,500 responded
      - <9%
- Self-reporting
  - How truthful were the participants?
Plan Of Action

- Nipping academic dishonesty in the bud can help reduce a significant number of crimes in the future
  - UVU could benefit from this research
    - Implementation of an honor code
      - People are consciously more aware of the actions they are taking when it comes to school work
      - Gives people that opportunity to change – it shows them where to start and what is expected of them