Research Paper

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Academic Cheating Among Senior Secondary Students In Relation To Their Peer-Pressure

Abstract
The present study was undertaken to study the academic cheating among senior secondary students in relation to their peer-pressure. Academic cheating was treated as dependent variable whereas peer-pressure was treated as independent variable. Descriptive survey method was used for the present study. Random sampling technique was used to select the sample. The sample comprised of 600 senior secondary students of private schools affiliated to Central Board of School Education (CBSE). Academic cheating scale by Kalia and Kirandeep (2011) and peer-pressure scale by Singh and Saini (2010) were used to study the academic cheating among senior secondary students in relation to their peer-pressure. Mean, Standard deviation and ‘t’ test were used to analyse the data. The finding of the study revealed that the academic cheating of senior secondary school students with high and low peer pressure differ significantly. It was also found that significant difference exist in the academic cheating of male, female, rural and urban senior secondary school students with high and low peer pressure.

1. INTRODUCTION
Cheating can be considered as one of the most important issues in schools, because it is a major obstacle to infer the competence of the students. Sometimes any student who is not

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eligible for academic courses can pass the course by cheating and improper ways. Cheating in school is regarded as a violation of prescribed rules or standard conditions for completing school assignments and tests (Kalia, 2005). Cheating means copying from other students’ during exams, one of the forms of misconduct that has become one of the biggest concerns of educational institutions (Wilkinson, 2009). Sierra and Hyman (2008) defined academic cheating as an effort used by individuals to use data or resources on exams illegally for example, copying another student’s answer or written work (plagiarized) to get some academic credit although they acknowledge those behaviour are wrong. There are four areas of academic cheating or dishonesty: a) cheating by using unauthorized materials on any academic activity such as assignment or a test, b) fabrication of information, references or results c) plagiarism and d) helping other students engage in academic dishonesty (Pavela, 1978).

Some reasons identified for the rise of academic cheating include pressure from teachers, parents, school and peers; unhealthy environment both at home and school; peer influence etc. Students are more likely to use academic dishonesty practices when they think their assignments are meaningless and they are less likely to cheat when they admire and respect their teachers and are excited about what they are learning (Cole and Kiss, 2000). Adolescents are influenced by what their peers do and they form their peer groups around similar interests. Peer influence is at its highest at this point in their lives. If peers in their peer group are choosing academic dishonesty, then they are more likely to do the same (McCabe, 1999). Generally “peer pressure” is a term used to describe how one’s behavior is influenced by other fellows. It refers to the influence exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change his or her attitudes, values, or behavior in order to conform to group norms.

2. VARIABLES USED

**Independent Variable:** Peer Pressure

**Dependent Variable:** Academic Cheating

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

I. To study the academic cheating of senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure.

II. To study the academic cheating of male senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure.

III. To study the academic cheating of female senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure.

IV. To study the academic cheating of rural senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure.

V. To study the academic cheating of urban senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure.
4. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

I. There is no significant difference in academic cheating of senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure.

II. There is no significant difference in academic cheating of male senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure.

III. There is no significant difference in academic cheating of female senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure.

IV. There is no significant difference in academic cheating of rural senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure.

V. There is no significant difference in academic cheating of urban senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the present study descriptive survey method was employed.

I. SAMPLE

600 senior secondary school students affiliated to C.B.S.E. selected on the basis of random sampling method.

II. TOOLS USED

a. Academic Cheating Scale (2011) by Kalia and Kirandeep was used to measure academic cheating among students. The odd items versus even items were correlated using Spearman Brown Split Half method and also Guttman’s Split Half method. The Spearman Brown coefficient was .87 and Guttman Split Half Coefficient was .86 and the Cronbachs’ alpha was .91 suggesting the high reliability of the scale. On the basis of face validity and content validity, it appears reasonable to agree that Academic Cheating scale measures academic cheating among adolescents.

b. Peer Pressure Scale (2010) by Singh and Saini was selected to measure the level of peer pressure among students. This scale have high test-retest reliability (r= 0.33**, p<.01) and Internal consistency (=0.77**). The experts opined that the scale has good face validity and content validity.

III. STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

Mean, Standard deviation and ‘t’ test were used to analyse the data.

6. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

6.1 To study the academic cheating of senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure.

For the purpose of studying the difference between academic cheating of senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure, the following null hypothesis was formulated:

There is no significant difference in academic cheating of senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure.
To test the null hypothesis, Mean, Standard Deviation, Standard Error of Mean, t-value, degrees of freedom (df), and level of significance of the scores of senior secondary school students obtained from academic cheating scale was calculated with respect to peer pressure. The results are presented in Table 1:

Table 1: Descriptive statistics related to the Academic Cheating of Senior Secondary School Students with High Peer Pressure and Low Peer Pressure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group (Peer Pressure)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>‘t’ value</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Peer Pressure</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>51.56</td>
<td>28.47</td>
<td>13.4**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Peer Pressure</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>94.82</td>
<td>32.39</td>
<td></td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant at .01 level  * Significant at .05 level  NS-Not significant

Figure 1: Peer Pressure wise Mean academic cheating scores and SDs of Senior Secondary School Students

From the Table 1 and Fig.1, it can be observed that the t-value of 13.4 was found significant at 0.01 levels with 361 degrees of freedom, which indicates that the academic cheating of senior secondary school students with low and high peer pressure differ significantly. So, the null hypothesis i.e. there exists no significant difference in the academic cheating of senior secondary school students with low and high peer pressure, is rejected. Thus, we can say that academic cheating is affected by peer pressure. In terms of Mean, it can be seen that mean academic cheating score of senior secondary school students with low peer pressure i.e. 51.56 has been found lesser than that of senior secondary school students with high peer pressure i.e. 94.82. The present result is in consonance with the result of Anderman & Murdock (2007) who also stated that peer influence plays a major role among adolescents in choosing academic dishonesty over academic integrity.

6.2 To study the academic cheating of male senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure.
For the purpose of studying the difference between academic cheating of male senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure, the following null hypothesis was formulated:

_There is no significant difference in academic cheating of male senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure._

To test the null hypothesis, Mean, Standard Deviation, Standard Error of Mean, t-value, degrees of freedom (df), and level of significance of the scores of male senior secondary school students obtained from academic cheating scale was calculated with respect to peer pressure. The results are presented in Table 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group (Peer Pressure)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>‘t’ value</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Peer Pressure</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>51.14</td>
<td>27.91</td>
<td>10.35**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Peer Pressure</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>95.66</td>
<td>29.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Significant at .01 level  * Significant at .05 level  NS-Not significant

Figure 2: Peer Pressure wise Mean academic cheating scores and SDs of Male Senior Secondary School Students

From the Table 2 and Fig.2, it can be observed that the t-value of 10.35 was found significant at 0.01 levels with 178 degrees of freedom, which indicates that the academic cheating of male senior secondary school students with low and high peer pressure differ significantly. So, the null hypothesis i.e. there exists no significant difference in the academic cheating of male senior secondary school students with low and high peer pressure, is rejected. Thus, we can say that academic cheating is affected by peer pressure. In terms of Mean, it can be seen that mean academic cheating score of male senior secondary school students with low peer pressure i.e. 51.14 has been found lesser than that of male senior secondary school students with high peer pressure i.e. 95.66. The reason may be that high peer-pressure among male children can lead them to a loss of
individuality and living in bad company can force to get under the pressure or influence of bad habits like academic cheating.

6.3 To study the academic cheating of female senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure.

For the purpose of studying the difference between academic cheating of female senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure, the following null hypothesis was formulated:

*There is no significant difference in academic cheating of female senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure.*

To test the null hypothesis, Mean, Standard Deviation, Standard Error of Mean, t-value, degrees of freedom (df), and level of significance of the scores of female senior secondary school students obtained from academic cheating scale was calculated with respect to peer pressure. The results are presented in Table 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group (Peer Pressure)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>‘t’ value</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Peer Pressure</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>29.55</td>
<td>8.56**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Peer Pressure</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>93.81</td>
<td>35.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant at .01 level          * Significant at .05 level          NS-Not significant

![Figure 3: Peer Pressure wise Mean academic cheating scores and SDs of Female Senior Secondary School Students](image)

From the Table 3 and 3, it can be observed that the t-value of 8.56 was found significant at 0.01 levels with 181 degrees of freedom, which indicates that the academic cheating of female senior secondary school students with low and high peer pressure differ significantly. So, the null hypothesis i.e. there exists no significant difference in the academic cheating of female senior secondary school students with low and high peer pressure, is rejected. Thus, we can say that academic cheating is affected by peer pressure. In terms of Mean, it can be seen that mean academic cheating score of female...
senior secondary school students with low peer pressure i.e. 52.2 has been found lesser than that of female senior secondary school students with high peer pressure i.e. 93.81. It is generally seen that female have more tendency to compare themselves with siblings or other peers. Due to this reason female students can feel high pressure to get better and this high peer pressure she may get involved in academic cheating.

6.4 To study the academic cheating of rural senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure.

For the purpose of studying the difference between academic cheating of rural senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure, the following null hypothesis was formulated:

_There is no significant difference in academic cheating of rural senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure._

To test the null hypothesis, Mean, Standard Deviation, Standard Error of Mean, _t_-value, degrees of freedom (df), and level of significance of the scores of rural senior secondary school students obtained from academic cheating scale was calculated with respect to peer pressure. The results are presented in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group (Peer Pressure)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>‘t’ value</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Peer Pressure</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>54.25</td>
<td>31.14</td>
<td>8.92**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Peer Pressure</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>94.39</td>
<td>30.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Significant at .01 level  * Significant at .05 level  NS-Not significant

![Figure 4: Peer Pressure wise Mean academic cheating scores and SDs of Rural Senior Secondary School Students](chart)

From the Table 4 and Fig.4, it can be observed that the _t_-value of 8.92 was found significant at 0.01 levels with 188 degrees of freedom, which indicates that the academic cheating of rural senior secondary school students with low and high peer pressure differ significantly. So, the null hypothesis i.e. there exists no significant difference in the academic cheating of rural senior secondary school students with low and high peer pressure, is _rejected_. Thus, we can say that
academic cheating is affected by peer pressure. In terms of Mean, it can be seen that mean academic cheating score of rural senior secondary school students with low peer pressure i.e. 54.25 has been found lesser than that of rural senior secondary school students with high peer pressure i.e. 94.39. Generally it is seen that rural child possess lower level of self-control and can enforce the strategies agreed upon among their peers as they do not want to be left out of the group.

6.5 To study the academic cheating of urban senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure.

For the purpose of studying the difference between academic cheating of urban senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure, the following null hypothesis was formulated:

*There is no significant difference in academic cheating of urban senior secondary school students with high peer pressure and low peer pressure.*

To test the null hypothesis, Mean, Standard Deviation, Standard Error of Mean, t-value, degrees of freedom (df), and level of significance of the scores of urban senior secondary school students obtained from academic cheating scale was calculated with respect to peer pressure. The results are presented in Table 5:

**Table 5: Descriptive statistics related to the Academic Cheating of Urban Senior Secondary Students with High Peer Pressure and Low Peer Pressure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group (Peer Pressure)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>‘t’ value</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Peer Pressure</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>48.79</td>
<td>25.38</td>
<td>10.32**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Peer Pressure</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>95.25</td>
<td>34.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Significant at .01 level  * Significant at .05 level  NS-Not significant**

![Figure 5: Peer Pressure wise Mean academic cheating scores and SDs of Urban Senior Secondary School Students](image)

From the Table 5 and Fig.5, it can be observed that the t-value of 10.32 was found significant at 0.01 levels with 171 degrees of freedom, which indicates that the academic
Cheating of urban senior secondary school students with low and high peer pressure differ significantly. So, the null hypothesis i.e. there exists no significant difference in the academic cheating of urban senior secondary school students with low and high peer pressure, is rejected. Thus, we can say that academic cheating is affected by peer pressure. In terms of Mean, it can be seen that mean academic cheating score of urban senior secondary school students with low peer pressure i.e. 48.79 has been found lesser than that of urban senior secondary school students with high peer pressure i.e. 95.25. This can be due to the reason that parents in the urban areas put more pressure on their child to score more marks in the examination than their peer group; and under this high peer pressure the child commits the biggest mistakes of their lives by adopting the way of cheating to score high.

7. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY
- A significant difference was found in the academic cheating of senior secondary school students with high and low peer pressure.
- It was found that the academic cheating of male senior secondary school students with high and low peer pressure differ significantly.
- A significant difference was found in the academic cheating of female senior secondary school students with high and low peer pressure.
- It was also found that the academic cheating of rural senior secondary school students with high and low peer pressure differ significantly.
- A significant difference was found in the academic cheating of urban senior secondary school students with high and low peer pressure differ significantly.

8. CONCLUSION
Cheating is a burning issue in educational field mounting hindrances in the path of efficacy of educational system. Sarita and Dhaiya (2015) in their article academic cheating among students defined that parents and teachers may also increase pressure on their kids when they compare them to their siblings. Pressure can cause students to want to achieve to their highest capability. Yet, when the pressure builds up and it gets to be too much, they may break. Cracking under pressure and feeling overwhelmed may also contribute to why students choose to cheat (Kleiner & Lord, 1999; Riera & Di Prisco, 2002). So it is the duty of both parents and teachers to reduce the the pressure on child for better performance. Teachers must also provide alternatives to the students to facilitate their learning so that they do not search for alternatives.

9. REFERENCES


