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FEATURE

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND ACHIEVEMENT
EMOTIONS AMONG INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS IN THAILAND**

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Abstract. *Dishonest academic practices are a common concern within education yet there is little understanding of the role of emotions in this phenomenon. The purpose of this study was to understand the association between academic dishonesty and achievement emotions. A survey was conducted among 129 international high school students. Results indicated that male students find academic dishonest behaviors more acceptable than female students do while older students agree less with academic dishonest behaviors than younger ones do. Results also indicated that the relationship between academic dishonesty and achievement emotions is weak; however, the relationship is moderate when controlling for class level and gender.*

Keywords: Academic dishonesty; achievement emotions; Thailand; correlational analysis

Introduction

Academic dishonesty is a global concern for educational institutions. In Europe, one study found that 97% of medical students willingly admitted to committing some form of academic dishonesty (Taradi, Taradi, & Dogas, 2012). In another study conducted in Europe, 67% of the students admitted that they had copied from notes or a book during an exam while another 20% used some form of electronic equipment that was not permissible (Farkas & Oroszo, 2012).

In the United States, it was found that 57% of students admitted to cheating within the last 6 months at the time of the study (Hensley, Kirkpatrick, & Burgoon, 2013). In one class at a prominent university, about half of 280 students were investigated for allegations of cheating (Perez-Pena, 2012). One educator even lamented that the students' sense of ethical behavior is diminishing as they face intense pressure to achieve academically (Lindsey, 2015).

In Southeast Asia, Thailand is also facing significant challenges with academic dishonesty. At one university, a picture of students wearing "anti-cheating hats" was posted on social media causing a huge stir that such a device was even necessary (Neuman, 2013). One study conducted among Thai medical students found that almost 60% of them admitted to academic dishonesty despite knowing that such behavior was wrong (Tanawattanacharoen & Nimnuan, 2009). Furthermore, at one entrance exam for medical school in Thailand, several test-takers were caught using smart-watches in which other parties would download the answers to them from outside the building. The test-takers later confessed that they had promised to pay the persons who were assisting them over \$20,000 if they passed their exams (Mala, 2016). As such, academic dishonesty is a problem that has no borders and is an issue in the West, East, as well as in Thailand.

One aspect of academic dishonesty that has not been thoroughly explored is the role of emotions in when questionable actions are considered. Generally, academic emotions, or the emotions that drive academic achievement have largely been ignored in the context of education except when considering test anxiety (Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002; Pekrun, Hall, Goetz, & Perry, 2014). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the phenomenon of academic dishonesty and achievement emotions among international students in Thailand as this has not been closely examined. Understanding the role of emotions in academic dishonesty will be useful for administrators and teachers who are concerned with maintaining an ethical climate of excellence at their respective institutions.

Review of the Literature

Academic dishonesty is a complex phenomenon that can manifest itself in several forms. For example, academic dishonesty includes using another person's work and claiming it as one's own, which is plagiarism (Smith, 2012). Academic dishonesty can also be classified as cheating because a student may have access to information at an inappropriate time, such as before an exam is given. Other forms of academic dishonesty could be bribery, deception, and the fabrication of information (Mala, 2016). All such actions as those listed above provide students with an illicit advantage during some form of assessment (Bleeker, 2008).

In regards to cheating specifically, academic dishonesty can happen in several different ways. Cheating can be independently planned, socially-active, and socially-passive. Independently-planned cheating occurs when a student individually uses inappropriate resources during an exam such as notes without prior permission. Socially-active cheating occurs when one student obtains the answers from another student with their full consent of the inappropriateness of that behavior. Lastly, socially-passive cheating takes place when one student gains access to responses of another student without their consent (Garavalia, Olson, Russell, & Christensen, 2007). One study indicated that academically dishonest behavior is learned through context and culture (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001), and the climate of learning may serve as a catalyst for this sort of behavior.

Even though research is suggesting that academic dishonesty is a global concern, there seems to have been some challenges with how academic dishonesty is practiced when comparing for example, Eastern and Western cultures. For example, Martin (2012) found that issues of academic dishonesty are more prevalent in individualistic cultures, largely associated with the West; particularly that in the West, persons tend to plagiarize more than in collectivist cultures (Martin, 2012). In support of the findings of Martin (2012), another researcher found that international students, as defined as non-Western students, studying in the West were more likely to be reported for academic dishonesty than domestic students (Beasley, 2016).

Interestingly, research is uncovering that there is a difference in how Asian and Western students view the issue of academic dishonesty such as copying from someone else without their consent, collusion, unattributed paraphrasing, and plagiarism (Ehrich, Howard, Mu, & Bokosmaty, 2014; Henning, Malpas, Manalo, Ram, Vijayakumar, & Hawken, 2014; Lei & Hu, 2013). Therefore, it cannot be assumed that academic dishonesty is manifested or interpreted in the same way in different cultural contexts and or for students having different cultural orientations. Because of this obvious discrepancy, the author of this study believes that further investigation of academic dishonesty based on cultural context may be beneficial to the growing literature of academic dishonesty.

One factor that contributes to academic dishonesty in the Eastern context is ignorance of it (Ramzan, Munir, Siddique, & Asif, 2012). Awareness of school policies, as well as the development of an honor code which defines ethical academic behavior, has been found to discourage and decrease academic dishonesty (Henning et al., 2014; McCabe, et al., 2001). It appears that students who are knowledgeable and competent with academic referencing were more skillful in identifying subtle forms of plagiarism are much better at identifying actual examples of plagiarism compared to students who did not have this knowledge (Hu & Lei, 2012). It may therefore be imperative for academic

institutions to inform students on the institutions' definition of academic dishonest behaviors and possibly outline the consequences when these academic lines are crossed.

Several demographic factors also influence academic dishonesty. There are differences based on academic majors. Research has found for example that social science majors tend to cheat less than those who majored in the hard sciences such as engineering (Sendag, Duran, & Fraser, 2012). Other research has also found that older students tend to cheat less than younger ones. However, there is an increase in the acceptance of academic dishonesty from high school to master's degree levels with a decline as the students become doctoral students or older students in general (Munoz-Garcia & Aviles-Herrera, 2014; Olafson, Schraw, Nedelson, Nedelson, & Kehrwald, 2013; Yang, 2012).

Academic dishonesty has also been linked to gender, and differences have been found. Some researchers found that men tend to commit acts of academic dishonesty more often than women do and men are more accepting of this behavior (Hensley et al., 2013; Yang, 2012). However, women tend to deny being guilty of academic dishonesty more often than male students (Witmer & Johansson, 2015). This indicates that men may commit more acts of academic dishonesty but if caught they are more willing to accept guilt when compared to women who may be less likely to commit acts of academic dishonesty but will add to their unethical conduct by denying their guilt when caught. In general, being male is a significant predictor in self-reported academic dishonesty (Eriksson & McGee, 2015).

In the context of Asia, the presence of a foreign English-speaking teacher can be a predictor of plagiarism (Ledesma, 2011). Few studies have been conducted specifically in Thailand. Thomas (2016) found that developing a stimulating learning environment that leads to the development of a growth mindset could motivate students and decrease acceptance of academic dishonesty. Young (2013) found that Thais' love of fun, called *sanuk*, as well as their focus on the present moment rather than the long term contributes to academic dishonesty. This behavior also contributes to learned helplessness as the students rely on relationships rather than academic rigor to succeed (Young, 2013).

Dishonest academic behaviors remain a problem despite the differences in the Eastern and Western contexts. Furthermore, problems with behaviors that are considered dishonest in an academic setting vary by such factors as major, gender, and even the level of study. Yet, in Thailand, there is little data on the ethical compromise of academically dishonest behaviors despite an epidemic of recently questionable actions at several institutions with large-scale incidents of both cheating and attempts to prevent it as well (Mala, 2016; Neuman, 2013). Therefore, understanding how academic dishonesty is affected by these factors as

well as the context of Thailand may serve to provide insight into this phenomenon.

Achievement is defined as an activity or outcome that is measured by a standard (Brown & Lee, 2015). Achievement emotions are the emotions that are tied to achievement oriented activities or outcomes (Pekrun, Frenzel, Goetz, & Perry, 2007). How emotions play a role in achievement is explained by the theory of control-value.

Control-value theory is a three-dimensional explanation of emotions and achievement. The dimensions are emotions, activation, and object-focus. Emotions can be categorized as positive or negative. Activation is a measure of engagement and can be either activating or deactivating. Lastly, object-focus can be seen as where a person places their attention when considering a task. Object-focus is divided into two categories, activity, and outcome. If a person is focused on the activity, he or she is focused on experiencing a task. If a person is focused on the outcome, he or she is focused on the results of the task and not necessarily the journey of completing it (Pekrun et al., 2007).

The three dimensions of emotion, activation, and object-focus can help to identify the feelings people experience before, during, and after an achievement. For example, joy in the context of achievement emotions is a positive emotion that is activating, and outcome-focused (Pekrun et al., 2007). It is the satisfaction one experiences after completing a task well. On the other hand, boredom is classified as negative emotion, that is deactivating and activity-focused (Pekrun et al., 2007). For example, people normally do not feel bored after a lecture; rather, they usually feel so during a lecture.

Pekrun et al. (2007) indicate that the study of emotions beyond anxiety in the context of assessment is neglected in educational research. In one study, it was found that students experience various emotions in the context of achievement. Among the emotions experienced were pride, relief, anger, shame, hopelessness, boredom, anxiety, and enjoyment (Pekrun et al., 2002). Naturally, many educators would agree with indication of these emotions in the context of achievement from an anecdotal perspective. However, the work of Pekrun et al. (2002) was some of the first to establish this quantitatively, outside of the traditional context of test anxiety.

There are studies that indicate that the learning context has an influence on achievement emotion. For example, the type of feedback students received from their teacher is a predictor in their achievement emotions (Pekrun, Cusack, Murayama, Elliot, & Thomas, 2014). A teacher's competency in communicating with clarity and immediacy has also been found to influence the emotions of students (Titsworth, McKenna, Mazer, & Quinlan, 2013).

Some distinctions need to be made between the classroom environment and learning in the home through homework. The emotions that students experience during a class and when completing homework are so different that one study suggests assessing them separately (Goetz, et al., 2012). The difference between these two contexts is not clear but both the classroom setting and the homework context indicate a relationship with academic self-concept and academic outcomes (Goetz et al., 2012).

The characteristics of the students are another factor in achievement emotions. Students who have mastery approach and performance goals perceived their emotions differently from those who did not possess these characteristics (Putwain, Sander, & Larkin, 2013; Vassiou, Mouratidis, Andreou, & Kafetsios, 2016). In addition, the amount of effort a student is willing to exert academically has a strong influence on achievement emotions as well (Tempelaar, Niculescu, Rienties, Gijsselaers, & Giesbers, 2012). Lastly, if students value grades then grades can serve as a predictor for outcome-focused emotions such as joy, hope, or pride (Pekrun et al., 2007; Putwain et al., 2013). As such, cultural factors such as goal orientation, views on effort, and the personal value of grades may vary in the Eastern context in comparison to studies conducted in the West.

Achievement emotions have been found to influence academic performance. Boredom has been found to contribute to attention problems and to demotivation (Pekrun, Goetz, Daniels, Stupinsky, & Perry, 2010). Boredom has also been found to directly influence performance negatively (Pekrun et al., 2014). However, feelings of enjoyment and pride are positive predictors of grades (Villavicencio & Bernardo, 2013). Therefore, there is substantial evidence that emotions play a role in academic performance. Yet, understanding how emotions contribute to academic dishonesty is a concept that has not yet been fully examined.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of achievement emotions and academic dishonesty among international students?
2. Is there a difference in achievement emotions and academic dishonesty by gender, and class level?
3. What is the strength of the relationship between achievement emotions and academic dishonesty among international students?
4. How do the demographic variables of this study (gender and class level) modify the relationship between academic dishonesty and achievement emotion?

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between academic dishonesty and achievement emotions as perceived by international high school students in Thailand. This study views this phenomenon from a quantitative perspective involving the use of survey and correlational design.

Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design with a correlational analysis was used in this study. The survey instrument was comprised of two sections. Section 1 addressed the demographic variables of gender and class level. Section 2 consisted of 36 Likert-type statements, which measured the student's perception of academic dishonesty and achievement emotions. The Likert scale employed in this study was a 5-point scale with 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Neutral*, 4 = *Agree*, and 5 = *Strongly Agree*.

Academic dishonesty. The academic dishonesty scale was adapted from Bolin (2004). This scale assesses an individual's attitudes and behaviors toward academic dishonesty. Sample items from this scale include "It's fine to use a textbook or notes on a test without the instructor's permission" and "Students should go ahead and cheat if they know they can get away with it." The Cronbach alpha for the modified 12-item scale was 0.82.

Achievement emotions. The achievement emotions scale was adapted from Pekrun, Goetz, Frenzel, Barchfeld, and Perry (2011). This scale assesses an individual's perception of their emotions in relation to achievement. Sample items include "For me the test is a challenge that is enjoyable" and "Thinking about class makes me feel uneasy." The Cronbach alpha for the modified 24-item scale was 0.87.

Research Setting and Sampling

The study utilized the participation of two international high schools from the Bangkok metropolitan area. Using stratified random sampling procedures, the research included students in the study based on gender. The population of the two schools was over 2,400. The total sample was 129 respondents. Within the sample, 43% were female and 57% were male. For class level, 15% were freshman, 28% were sophomore, 24% were junior, and 33% were seniors.

Data Collection

The faculty at each location of the study collected data. Respondents completed both sections of the survey instrument. Prior to completing the

instrument, respondents were informed of the purpose of the study as well as their right to refusal. In addition, anonymity of the respondents was assured and all respondents were informed not to write their names on the survey.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were analyzed in this study. The means and standard deviations for the variables as well as for individual survey items were derived from the observed data. T-test and ANOVA were used to assess differences across various groups on each variable of the study. The t-test is an appropriate measure for comparing means of two different groups while ANOVA is used for three or more groups to compare means. If differences in the means was found when ANOVA was used a Tukey Post Hoc test was used to determine where the difference was. The Pearson correlation was calculated for the relationship between academic dishonesty and achievement emotions. Lastly, multiple regression was used to determine the association between academic dishonesty and achievement emotions when controlling for class level and gender.

Ethical Considerations

Permission was obtained from the schools to conduct this study. Students were informed of the purpose of the study as well as their right to refuse. Teachers knew how to answer questions from students if necessary. All information collected was anonymous to maintain confidentiality.

Results

In terms of academic dishonesty, respondents generally disagreed with the statements on the survey, which indicates a mildly negative view of academic dishonesty ($M = 2.41$, $SD = 0.56$, 95% CI [2.31, 2.51]). For example, respondents indicated that they disagree that “it’s okay to turn in work done by someone else” ($M = 1.91$, $SD = 0.96$, 95% CI [1.74, 2.08]). In addition, respondents also disagreed that “it’s fine to copy from another student during a test” ($M = 2.04$, $SD = 0.93$, 95% CI [1.88, 2.21]). However, respondents were neutral towards statements about inappropriate collaboration such as “it’s all right to collaborate on an assignment when the instructor asked for individual work” ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.94$, 95% CI [3.14, 3.46]) and “there is nothing wrong in receiving substantial help on an individual assignment without the instructor’s permission” ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.94$, 95% CI [2.87, 3.20]).

For achievement emotions, the respondents were primarily neutral towards the statements, which indicate mild emotions towards academic achievement ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.41$, 95% CI [3.20, 3.34]). For example, respondents indicated that they “feel relieved after an exam” ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.11$, 95% CI [3.67, 4.06])

and that they “enjoy acquiring new knowledge during class” ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 0.78$, 95% CI [3.59, 3.87]). However, respondents stated a negative view towards exams when they responded to the statement “for me the test is a challenge that is enjoyable” ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 1.07$, 95% CI [2.41, 2.79]).

In examining differences based on subgroups of gender and academic class levels concerning academic dishonesty, there was a difference between men ($n = 73$, $M = 2.60$, $SD = 0.59$) and women ($n = 55$, $M = 2.27$, $SD = 0.49$) conditions; $t(103) = 3.30$, $p < 0.05$, with men showing more agreement with academic dishonesty. The effect size was 0.6, which indicates a moderate difference in the two means based on gender. When comparisons were made by class, no difference was found among freshmen ($M = 2.20$, $SD = 0.48$), sophomores ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 0.65$), juniors ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 0.55$), or seniors ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 0.51$) conditions; $F(3, 123) = 1.44$, $p = (0.23)$. Figure 1 is a boxplot of the link between gender and academic dishonesty.

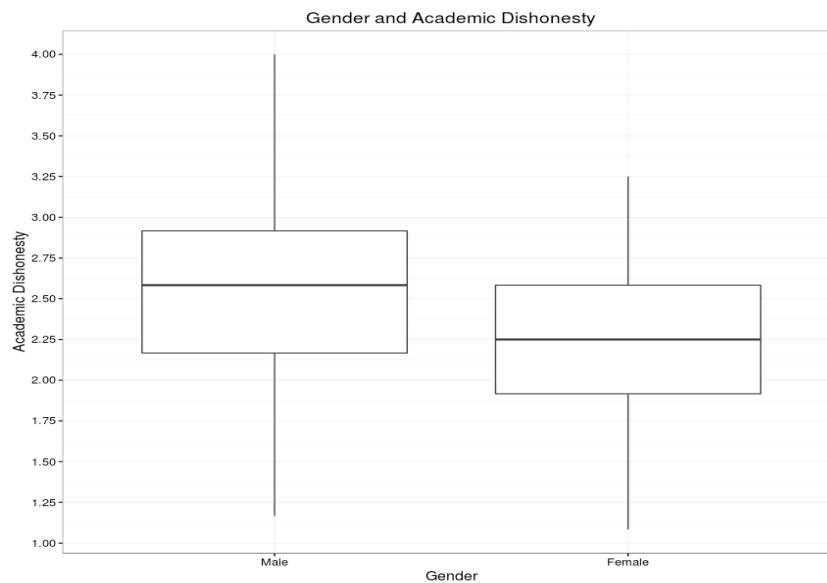


Figure 1. Gender and academic dishonesty

For differences based on subgroups of gender and class in the sample for achievement emotions, no difference was found between men ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 0.42$) and women ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.38$) conditions; $t(108) = 0.82$, $p = 0.41$. In addition, no difference was found when comparisons were made among freshmen ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.37$), sophomores ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.40$), juniors ($M = 3.31$,

$SD = 0.47$), and seniors ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 0.35$) conditions; $F(3, 123) = 0.82$, $p = (0.48)$ for achievement emotions.

Achievement emotions and academic dishonesty were found to have a weak non-significant association $r(127) = -0.11$, $p = 0.17$. However, when gender and class variables were controlled in analyzing the relationship between achievement emotions and academic dishonesty, the correlation strengthens to $r = -0.32$, conditions; ($F[5,119] = 3.94$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.14$, $R^2_{Adjusted} = 0.11$). Figure 2 shows the initial correlation between achievement emotions and academic dishonesty and Table 1 shows the results of the regression analysis that controls for gender and class level.

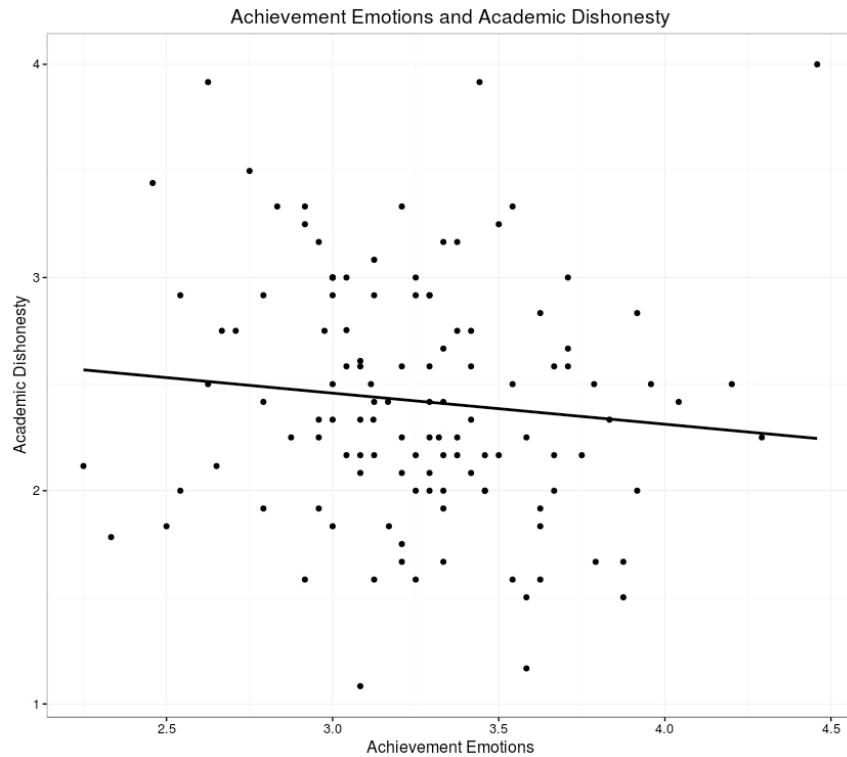


Figure 2. Achievement emotions and academic dishonesty

Table 1
Regression Analysis

	Estimate	T	Sig
(Intercept)	3.04	7.58	< 0.01
Achievement emotions	-0.21	-1.76	0.07
Sophomore	0.36	2.32	0.02
Junior	0.25	1.6	0.11
Senior	0.31	2.02	0.04
Female	-0.35	-3.64	< 0.01

An ANOVA analysis was conducted to determine the differences among groups in terms of academic dishonesty when controlling for gender and class. There was a significant effect on academic dishonesty when the data was subsetted by gender and class ($F[7,117] = 2.72, p < 0.05$). A Tukey post-hoc test found that there is a difference between senior males ($n = 16, M = 2.63, SD = 0.47, 95\% \text{ CI } [2.38, 2.89]$) and freshman females ($n = 9, M = 1.88, SD = 0.44, 95\% \text{ CI } [1.54, 2.23]$) with an effect size of 1.64, which is strong.

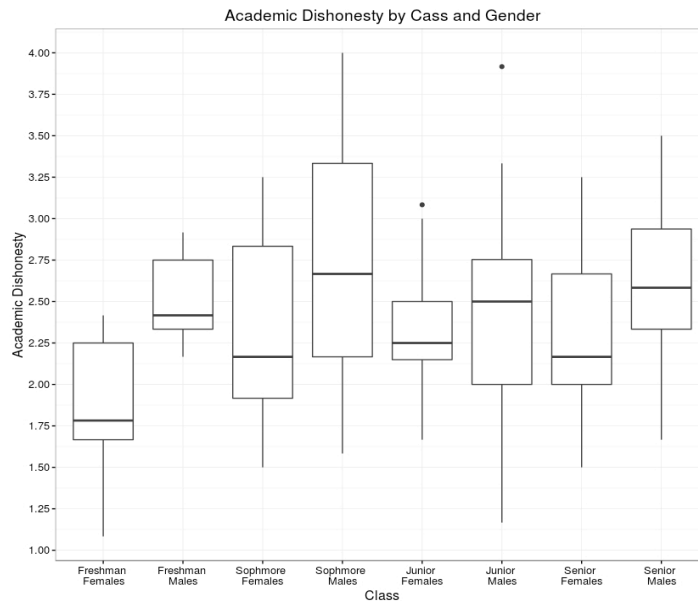


Figure 3. Academic dishonesty by class and gender

In addition, there was a significant difference found between sophomore males ($n = 16$, $M = 2.73$, $SD = 0.71$, 95% CI [2.35, 3.11]) and freshman females ($n = 9$, $M = 1.88$, $SD = 0.44$, 95% CI [1.54, 2.23]) with an effect size of 1.43, which is also strong. All other comparisons were insignificant. Figure 3 is the boxplots of the comparisons.

Conclusion

The results of this study provide several findings. First, the respondents indicated mild disagreement with academically dishonest behaviors while also expressing somewhat positive emotions towards academic achievement. Concerning academic dishonesty, respondents did not agree with copying material, or cheating on assignments and/or tests based on the response they gave to statements that mentioned these behaviors. These results are inconsistent with the findings of the study by Tanawattanacharoen and Nimruan (2009). This could be due to the difference in context since in Tanawattanacharoen and Nimruan's (2009) study, the researchers sampled medical students while the current study sampled students who are enrolled in high school.

For achievement emotions, the respondents indicated that they are optimistic about studying, as well as proud about their study abilities. However, there were mostly negative responses related to taking exams. Apprehension about text anxiety is a thoroughly documented challenge in academia (Tempel & Neumann, 2016).

A second major finding was the weak relationship between academic dishonesty and achievement emotions. This indicates that emotions by themselves are not strongly correlated with academically dishonest behavior when examined in isolation. This finding conflicts with clearly established results from studies in other context, such as higher educational institutions, that indicate that emotions affect academic behaviors such as cheating as clearly demonstrated in the findings of other studies (Karim, Kaminsky, Behrend, 2014; Donat, Dalbert, Kamble, 2014). However, the achievement emotions scales focus not only negative emotion such as anxiety but also positive emotions (Pekrun et al. 2007). Incorporating the positive emotions may influence tendencies towards academic dishonesty.

A third major finding is that the relationship between achievement emotions and academic dishonesty is strengthened when considering gender and academic class level. This indicates that when trying to understand emotions and academic dishonesty, it is necessary to consider gender and class level because this is when differences in perception of academic dishonesty are noticeable. For example, female students indicated less agreement with academic dishonesty, which is consistent with Hensley et al. (2013). Furthermore, older students were also in

less agreement with academically dishonest behaviors being considered acceptable as supported by Yang (2012). This may be that as they grow older, they are more aware of the repercussions and consequences of dishonest academic behaviors (Ramzan et al., 2012).

The results of this study lead to several recommendations. One, schools should promote a stimulating classroom experience that does not only focus on reducing negative emotions such as anxiety but also on those that could help to increase positive emotions such as enjoyment and pride. Doing so can slightly decrease acceptance of dishonest academic behaviors as positive emotions reduce anxiety or the fear of academic failure. Two, schools should focus much more on educating younger students about what academic dishonesty is as well as the consequences of these actions. Hu and Lei (2012) actually suggest that with increased awareness of academically dishonest practices there should be a decrease in academically dishonest actions.

For further studies, it would be beneficial to further study the role of emotions in the learning context of academic dishonesty through experimental means to establish cause and effect. Furthermore, the development of a scale that only measures positive emotions and not positive and negative emotions may provide clearer results in relation to academic dishonesty. Lastly, a study that includes additional variables related to the learning context such as scales that assess students' perceptions of various forms of assessment such as test, papers, and projects and their role in academic dishonesty may help explain whether or not the type of assessment affects dishonesty.

Among the limitations of this study is its reliance on the self-reported perceptions of high school students, which assumes honesty. In addition, the sample size of the sub-groups were small, which limits the generalizability of the results. Lastly, a correlational study does not allow for making inference about causation.

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